

KOREAN CULTURE

AN OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

This Thesis is in part a formal requirement as set out in the 2nd to 3rd Dan Black Belt Grading Syllabus in accordance with the International Tae Kwon-Do Foundation of New Zealand.

The Topic of this Thesis is Korean Culture. An Overview; have chosen such a Topic because I see this to be an important and necessary aspect, in addition to the art and physical component of Tae Kwon-Do, for both students and instructors practising the Korean Martial Art of Tae Kwon-Do, Chang Hun style to acknowledge. Since being a Korean Martial Art and thus a cultural future of Korea, we as practitioners of the Art, should really have knowledge of the culture that exists in the country in which Tae Kwon-Do originated and as well as being the birth place of General Choi Hong Hi, father and founder of Tae Kwon-Do.

Thus, it is of the purpose of this Thesis to provide an introductory overview of the Korean Culture (noting however, that not all aspects of the Korean Culture, is documented in this Thesis) for both students and instructors of Tae Kwon-Do, in addition, to enhance ones knowledge of the relationship between Korean Culture and Tae Kwon-Do.

The Korean people, as far back as history records and probably much further, have inhabited a peninsula Extending due south of Manchuria, curving gently east and then west, forming a rabbit like shape. They possess a culturally unique, homogeneous national identity, closely related to, yet independent of that of their powerful neighbours, China and Japan. A small country with a distinctive history and culture influenced in part by others, but having its unique stamp, Korea has maintained its national identity. Throughout history Koreans have been victims of foreign attacks but the spirit of the Korean race and nation has never ceased.

The legendary past of the nation stretches back nearly 5,000 years. Accordingly to historical records the Korean people's sphere of activities once covered Shantung and Shansi provinces in China and almost the entire territory of Manchuria.

By the time of the Three Kingdoms (57 BC-668 AD) their domain extended from the Chekang Province in China to the Japanese islands, the northern portion occupied by the Koguryo Kingdom and the southern part occupied by the Shilla and the Paekche kingdoms, in the east and in the west, respectively.

The three-way struggle amongst the three kingdoms -or supremacy over the entire Korean peninsula raged for nearly 700 years until 668 when the Shilla Kingdom conquered the Koguryo Kingdom, having conquered the Paekche Kingdom five years before. At that time the Korean peninsula was unified with approximately the same borders as those of the present day.

The Shilla kings presided over a cultural renaissance as brilliant as it was relatively brief. At this time, the Korean kings established a "younger brother" relationship with the emperors of China unlike any form of international linkage earlier known in the Orient. Korean culture came to incorporate the cultures not only of China and of various tribes of northeast Asia, but also of many other tribes living west of the Chinese mainland. The archaeological remnants left behind by this ancient kingdom include remarkable jewellery, pottery and Buddhist relics still to be seen around the ancient capital city, Kyongju.

Buddhist influence entered Korean culture mostly through China. Thus the philosophy of Buddhism presented itself as an entirely new world of thought to the Korean people, mostly through Chinese characters. These borrowings were modified to suit local conditions, and eventually were passed on to Japan. By the end of the Shilla period, Buddhist culture had become indelibly stamped on Korea, so much so that it came to be identified almost wholly with Korean culture.

The long years of peace and prosperity after the unification of the Korean peninsula by the Shilla Kingdom, however, led to the decadence of the nobility and to the rise of powerful clan chieftains who weakened the power of the Shilla kings.

General Wang Kon was one of those military chieftains who helped to defeat the Shilla Kingdom and who succeeded in founding a new kingdom named Koryo, from which the present English appellation of "Korea" is derived. The last king of Shilla offered his kingdom to General Wang Kon, signifying the peaceful transfer of government.

The Koryo Kingdom ruled the peninsula for 475 years, through a succession of 34 kings. Buddhism flourished as the state religion and social and ethical principles of Confucian origin served as the moral standards. Innumerable temples were built throughout the country, and the arts found ready expression in Buddhist sculpture, painting, architecture and literature. The people of Koryo succeeded in developing a Buddhist world of their own, as evidenced by publication of the mammoth Tripitaka Korean, historically significant as the first example of Woodcut, block-type printing.

The publication of the Tripitaka Koreana was begun in 1011 by royal command of the eighth Koryo king, Hyonjong, from more than 5,000 volumes of Buddhist scripture imported from China. It took more than 16 years to engrave all the woodblocks necessary to complete the project, which eventually comprised more than 6,000 volumes. Later, in 1232, movable, metal printing type was invented and used for the first time in the world in Koryo, over 200 years before Gutenberg first used movable lead-cast printing type in Germany in 1450.

The Koryo civilization flourished for many centuries during which the first civil service examination system was inaugurated, schools for education of the young were established, and taxation laws were instituted to stabilize national revenues.

During this era bronze coins were used, and the art of printing was highly developed, Koryo was renowned for its highly refined celadon ceramics, considered by many the most graceful ever made by man and still treasured in museums around the world.

Continual harassment of Koryo by northern invaders of central Asia, who had conquered China and who threatened both central Europe and Japan, was climaxed by the Mongol invasion of the kingdom in the 13th century when the Mongols crossed the Yalu River and marched on the capital city of Kaesong, the present day P'yongyang. Pressed hard, Koryo finally concluded a peace treaty under which the Koryo king accepted the overlordship of the Mongol Khan. The Mongols eventually withdrew after the failure of their invasion armada to subdue Japan, but their continuing influence at the Korean court resulted in political splits and eventually in a revolt in support of renewed nationalism. The Choson Kingdom was established in 1392.

General Yi Song-g ye enthroned as the first king of the New Kingdom in 1392 moved the capital city from Kaesong to the site of the present day Seoul. The early period of the kingdom brought major reforms in political and social structures. Buddhism, which had once wielded great power during the previous kingdom, gave way to Confucianism, which the New Kingdom espoused as the state cult.

Remarkable cultural strides were made during the first 70 years of the Choson Kingdom. The man most responsible for the brilliant age of culture was King Sejong, the most enlightened ruler of the kingdom. His encouragement and personal interest led to many scientific and technological inventions and cultural innovations.

King Sejong first developed the Korean language and "han-gul", the Korean alphabet of 28 letters, which was later reduced to the present 24 letters. It was simple in form and of such phonetic adaptability and clarity that anyone could learn to read and write it in a very short time. He also made contributions to the study of astronomy by constructing sundials and astronomical observatories. With the aid of scholars many literary works were published in the native language he had fostered.

In the 16th century, the Choson Kingdom suffered its first foreign invasion by Japan. Toyotomi Hideyoshi, the new shogun of Japan at that time, requested the Choson government to grant his troops free passage up the Korean peninsula to facilitate their planned invasion of Manchuria and China. The Japanese answered the Korean refusal with an invasion in 1592. The Japanese took less than three weeks to capture Seoul after disembarking at Pusan.

With Korea's very existence thus at stake, there emerged a great national hero, Admiral Yi Sun-shin, who invented the "turtle warship" (Kobukson), the first ironclad warship in the world's history. With a fleet of these turtle warships he attacked the huge flotilla of Japanese vessels and defeated the enemy in battle after battle. The Japanese were finally driven back to their own shores.

During the next 300 years the Choson Kingdom shut itself off completely from the rest of the world, largely because the invasion by the Japanese and the subsequent aggression by the Manchus showed how troublesome it was to live in open contact with warlike neighbours. This was a period of the "Korean dark ages", a period during which Korea came to be known as the Hermit Kingdom.

Despite remarkable achievements such as the invention of movable printing type, an efficient phonetic Korean alphabet to replace the Chinese ideographs, and the success of the ironclad warships, by the late 19th century Korea found herself in no position to resist, or even properly comprehend, the encroachments of Western Technology, trade, and imperialism.

The Choson Kingdom basked in complacent isolationism until 1866 when Western influence was physically felt. First there occurred the state persecution of Catholics, including the execution of nine French Jesuits. The French government dispatched a punitive fleet to Korea, which was driven back by Korean soldiers. Then in 1871, an American flotilla under Admiral Rodgers was sent to repeat Commodore Perry's exploits in Japan. But it was Japan, the latecomer on the scene, which succeeded in opening Korea in 1876. This was soon followed in 1882 by a treaty with the United States and other major powers contending in the area. Korea thus became the scene of bitter rivalry for domination among Russians, Japanese, and Chinese because of the strategic importance of the peninsula's location, as well as its potential for exploitation. Japan emerged victorious over the others by defeating China in 1890 and then Russia in 1904.

Japan annexed Korea on August 29, 1910, in the 4243rd year after the legendary founding of Korea by Tangun, thus putting an end to the 500 year old Choson Kingdom. Then began a -36 year "dark age", during which the Japanese made every effort to erase any trace of Korean national identity, even to the extent of forbidding use of the national language, burning all the books written in Korean, and attempting to substitute Japanese names for all personal Korean names. Koreans however were not entirely without hope for the restoration of their independence. In March 1919 Koreans raised a nationwide peaceful protest demonstration against Japanese rule, hoping for support from the Versailles Peace Conference, which had trumpeted national self-determination as a principle of international law. This provoked further brutal persecution by the Japanese, but attracted virtually no notice abroad. However, the occasion served symbolically to focus the Koreans' new sense of nationalism and independence. The independence movement was advanced from time to time by students or religious groups protesting Japanese rule, until it ended in 1945 with the defeat of Japan at the end of World War II.

No sooner had the Korean people heard the bells of liberation ring in 1945 than they found their fatherland divided into two parts at the 38th parallel. The northern half of the peninsula fell into the hands of Russia, and Americans held the south. Provisions contained in the Cairo Declaration and later resolutions of the United Nations in September 1947 insured general elections in Korea under United Nations supervision. In accordance with the resolutions, the United Nations Commission for Korea was dispatched to Seoul in January 1948 to supervise the elections under which a unified Korean government would be formed. However, North Korea, which had rejected the United Nations resolutions, obstructed the entry of the United Nations Commission into North Korea, and the general elections were held only in the area south of the 38th parallel to which the commission had access. On August 15, 1948, three years after Korea was liberated, the government of the Republic of Korea (ROK) was Officially proclaimed. The United Nations approved the Republic of Korea as the legitimate government in the South.

The Korean War, a most tragic period of fratricide for the Korean nation, broke out on June 25 1950, less

than two years after the establishment of the governments. To North Korea's surprise 16 nations, acting under a United Nations resolution, assisted South Korea in the fight against aggression. However, Red China entered the fighting on the side of the North, and the war reached a stalemate, ending with a negotiated truce signed in 1953, setting up a demilitarised zone (DMZ) close to the 38th parallel, consisting of a 249.5 kilometre long Military Demarcation Line cutting across the waist of the Korean peninsula.

In the Republic of Korea, recovery from wartime devastation was slow until the 1960 expulsion of the aged and authoritarian president, Syng-man Rhee. After a year of political confusion during which many unruly demonstrations occurred and two governments attempted to restore order, an army junta seized power in a peaceful coup, instituted rigorous, long overdue reforms, and eventually restored democratic civilian government in 1963.

During the past decade, progress in all fields has been rapid. Though still menaced by a belligerent North Korean neighbour, South Koreans now face the world with fresh confidence, pride, and optimism, based on the factors that have kept them one nation and one people for so long: a common language and culture, a clear sense of national identity, and a stubborn determination to shape their own destiny.

THE LAND

The Korean peninsula, stretching almost directly south from Manchuria, is approximately 966 kilometres long from north to south and includes some 3,300 islands scattered along the 8,694 kilometre long coast. About 200 islands are habitable. The land is bounded by Manchuria and Siberia on the north, by the East China Sea on the east, by the narrow Korea Strait on the south and by the Yellow Sea on the west. It is about 114 kilometres wide at its narrowest point and has an average width from east to west of about 386 kilometres. It is separated from China's Shantung peninsula to the west by a 188 kilometre wide expanse of the Yellow Sea and from Manchuria on the northwest by the Yalu or Amnok-gang River and from Russia on the northeast by the Tumen or Tuman-gang River. The shortest distance between Korea and Japan is 204 kilometres.

The peninsula and all of its associated islands lie between 124°11' and 131°55' east longitude and between 33°07' and 43°01' south latitude. The standard time is based on the meridian passing through the centre of the peninsula along 127°03' east longitude. The time difference with Washington, DC is ten hours, and with London, eight hours.

The peninsular area is about 223,600 square kilometres. The land is presently divided into two parts along the 38th parallel, the Republic of Korea in the south and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the north. The Republic of Korea's administrative control covers about 45 percent of the total peninsular area.

A very large part of the agricultural land of Korea lies on its south side and all the long and navigable rivers are in the south. The majority of the harbours are on the Yellow Sea. Geographically Korea seems to face toward Manchuria and China to the west and Russian Siberia to the north with her back toward Japan.

Due to its geographical location, forming a bridge connecting the islands to the south and the landmass to the north, Korea has been an international thoroughfare. In fact, Korea in ancient times was a sort of relay station, transmitting to Japan the brilliant culture of China.

The major portion of the country is characterized by hills and mountains, which account for nearly 80 percent of its territory. Many of these mountains are the result of volcanoes, for example the highest of them, Mt Paektusan, or "Mount of Eternal Snow", in the extinct crater of which now lies a lake. Volcanic action also created many hot springs throughout the country. Most parts of the peninsula were formed on a granite foundation, and most mountains are made of beautiful sandstone, marble and other building stones.

Low hills are predominant in the south and west and gradually yield to higher mountains in the east and north. Thus the western and southern slopes are gradual and meet with plains, low hill and dwindling river basins, while the eastern slopes plunge directly into the nearby East Sea.

The Nangnim Sanmaek Mountain Range in the north and their southern extension, the Tlaebaek Sanmaek

Mountain Range, form the east-west peninsula division and the watershed along the East Coast. While rarely exceeding a height of 1,200 meters, the numerous peaks form a rugged, steep terrain. The "roof of Korea", the Kaema Plateau, has an average elevation of 1,500 meters above sea level. Mt Paektusan, located in the northwestern corner of the plateau is the highest peak at 2,744 meters.

Many of Korea's highest summits occur along the Nangnim Sanmaek and Tlaebaek Sanmaek ranges: Mt Nangnimsam (2,014m), Mt Kumgangsan (1,638m), Mt Soraksan (1,708m) and Mt Tlaebaeksan (1,546m). These peaks form a spectacular panorama of granite pinnacles and deep narrow canyons with many waterfalls and rapids. Lesser ranges and lateral spur insure that one is seldom out of sight of mountains anywhere on the peninsula.

The peninsula as a whole is "tilted", lifted in the east and somewhat sunken in the west and south, a process that began in the late Mesozoic Era. Thus the East Coast is a nearly unbroken, precipitous shoreline of cliffs and rocks where the Tlaebaek Sanmaek rear up from the sea. Beaches are usually found where streams empty into the sea, often taking the form of coastal lagoons enclosed by sand spits and bars. The emergent shoreline and relatively short tidal range make these beaches and their facing waters particularly clean and popular. Ullungdo is the largest of the few islands off the East Coast. The west and south coasts are extremely irregular shorelines as the rolling terrain follows the peninsular tilt into the East Sea and Pacific waters. Most of Korea's 3,400 islands are the result of these nearly hidden ridges and mountains, the most notable exception being the inactive volcanic island of Chejudo, some 138 kilometres off the southwest coast.

The Pacific tidal currents force themselves into the Yellow Sea, thus forming a tidal range of 6 to 10 meters and broad mud flats along the west and southwest coasts, as well as such fine harbours as Inchon.

Most of the peninsula's myriad islands are found off the southern and southwestern shores. The length of the southern coastline is nearly eight times its straight-line measurement. The mud flats common to the west coast are also found on the western third of the southern coast, while the eastern and central portions show submerged, almost fiord-like valleys and a much lessened tidal range, which results in the fine harbours of Pusan and Mokpo, as well as broad, clean beaches.

Most of Korea's rivers flow into the Yellow Sea and the Pacific waters to the south after draining the gentler western and southern slopes of the peninsula. The streams that do flow east from the Tlaebaek Divide are short, straight and fast.

The gradual descent to the west and south has resulted in a relatively large number of streams for a territory the size of Korea. Five rivers exceed 400 kilometres in channel length: the Amnokkang River (790km), the Tuman-gang River (521km), the Han-gang River (514km), the Kumgang River (401km) and the Naktonggang River (521km). In the summer the rivers swell with the rainfall, which accompanies the monsoon, often flooding valley plains once or twice a year. In other seasons the plains are relatively dry.

In modern times the rivers have become increasingly important as sources of irrigation water. More than 70 percent of Korea's rice fields depend on river water irrigation, and large-scale, multipurpose dams provide flood control and produce electricity, as well as industrial water supplies.

THE PEOPLE

Although the Korean peninsula has long been a political buffer zone between China and Japan, Korea has been able to preserve a homogeneously distinct culture and language. The Koreans are descendants of several Mongol tribes, which travelled into the peninsula during prehistoric times. By the beginning of the Christian era they had become a homogeneous people. Even today regional differences are minimal with the possible exception of Chejudo Island. Minority groups are nearly nonexistent, apart from 30,000 long-time Chinese residents, living mostly in Seoul.

Korea's proximity to China has permitted the flow of people and ideas in both directions and, although Koreans have borrowed from and contributed to the Chinese culture, they remained a unified race, speaking their own language, pursuing their own culture and maintaining a uniquely independent tradition. Koreans

are proud of their long history, which spans more than 5,000 years.

There has been a cultural and inter-racial flow from Korea to Japan since ancient times. There is considerable historical documentation which supports the fact that Koreans have contributed immensely to the Japanese racial stock, as well as to Japan's cultural and social development. This evidence spans a period 2,000 years.

Koreans are usually smaller than Westerners but taller than the Japanese and southern Chinese. They are graceful, robust and noted for their endurance under the most adverse conditions. They carry themselves with the dignity of a proud race. Koreans might be considered the most friendly in Asia. They have a keen sense of humour, are quick to laugh but also quick to show anger in a somewhat 'Irish' manner.

The family is the most important social unit in Korea. Family relationships have a powerful influence in Korean society at home as well as at work. Young people are still taught to show respect for parents and elders. Though Confucianism was a strong traditional force in the past, its ethical requirements still sway the thinking of the average Korean. Children must obey their parents and teachers, wives are at the command of their husbands and at work a hierarchy of juniors to seniors is rigorously maintained.

Education and academic scholarship are still considered important steps to top positions and social distinction, although now wealth has become an important factor in the class structure. Parents will go to extraordinary sacrifices to ensure that their children enter the correct elementary, middle and high school from a prestigious kindergarten, which they hope will lead to passing the entrance exams to one of the best universities.

The old class system has been invaded by a new "in-between" group of businessmen and skilled workers in the cities and towns. Many are willing to pay to provide their offspring with the education believed to be the prerequisite for success. As a result the literacy rate is one of the highest in the world, though modern education is a fairly new trend, as it did not really begin to develop until after liberation in 1945.

Korea has a relatively small percentage of total family surnames. If you should shout, "Mr Kim" on any Seoul street you would probably find several people answering your call. Kim, Pak and Yi are the most common Korean surnames. Koreans place the surname first, followed by the given name. Adults usually address each other by their position or surname but never by their given name. E.g. the wife of a household would be addressed as the mother of her son (given the son's name).

The population of the Republic of Korea is over 41 million (1986 census). The annual growth rate had declined over 20 years by 1.25%. Due to successful family planning programs the present annual growth rate is 1.24%. Nearly a quarter of the population lives in Seoul. Many Koreans choose to work overseas and many emigrate. It is estimated that over one million Koreans now live abroad with the largest number in Japan and the United States.

Foreigners are now a familiar sight in the capital city but in the rural areas they are still an oddity. Koreans are nevertheless friendly, helpful and extremely hospitable and will willingly share their home, food and time with you.

THE KOREAN LANGUAGE

Koreans all understand, speak and write the same language which has been an important factor contributing to the spirit of national unity, which has characterized the Korean people. The grammar of the language resembles that of Japanese but here the resemblance ends. Both Koreans and Japanese use Chinese characters, along with their own alphabets, in their written language but spoken Korean bears no resemblance to either language. Linguistic and ethnological sources support the view that the Korean language belongs to the Ural-Altaic language group of central Asia, which includes Turkish, Mongolian, Hungarian and Finnish.

The political and cultural influences of China upon Korea over the centuries have left an indelible mark upon both the written and spoken Korean language. A large portion of the Korean vocabulary comes from the

Chinese culture, especially its Confucian classics, though it has been assimilated phonetically into Korean. For centuries however, there was no distinct Korean alphabet, and Korean could only be written using an awkward system of Chinese characters which was so difficult to learn that only a few educated scholars were able to write the language.

King Sejong the Great (the 4th monarch of the Yi Dynasty of the Choson Kingdom) ordered his scholars to devise a simple method of writing down spoken Korean so that even the common people would be able to express their thoughts in writing. They successfully produced a set of symbols consisting of 11 vowels and 17 consonants. (In 1933 it was standardized to ten vowels and 14 consonants). The alphabet called hanlgul was introduced to the people in December 1443. Today it is acclaimed as one of the world's great literary achievements and the most remarkable phonetic alphabet ever produced.

This simple hanlgul alphabet can quickly be learned so that reading Korean is not difficult even for a foreigner. This phonetic alphabet has enabled Korea to have one of the highest literacy rates in the world. The ease of printing hanlgul and the development of hanlgul typewriters and computers have brought communication skills within the realm of all Koreans.

Traditionally during the dynasty period, books were written in vertical fashion from the right to the left side of the page. All old Korean books and many new ones, too, begin where Westerners would expect to find the last page. Foreigners do find the Korean language difficult to learn but those who make the effort are rewarded by the responsiveness of the Korean people and by the added pleasure a greater knowledge of Korea gives.

CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS

The recent economic development, rapid expansion of school education, and increasing contact with the outside world (many foreigners visit Korea nowadays and many Koreans go abroad on business and other errands) - all this is bringing on swift changes in the thinking, feeling, and behaviour of the people in this country, with the result that old customs are being replaced by new ones almost visibly. Customs in Korea by definition are those traditions that have existed over generations, and this implies that they were handed down from the days when xenophobia and isolationism ruled the minds of the people. But today, the Republic of Korea is an open society, and rapidly developing at that.

In present day Korea, folkways old and new, customs traditional and newly imported exist side by side, or one is slowly giving way to the other. If Korean Society, despite these changes, keeps its equanimity and harmony, it is so because the Koreans are born modifiers and harmonisers. It would be tantamount to try to stop time itself if we said in these changing times, "We do it this way in Korea".

Be that as it may, the best way to go about describing Korean customs and folkways is to present dying customs as well as emerging customs with an indication of their relative force.

CLOTHING

Korea was once called the nation of the white-dressed. In many Chinese classics, such as Wei-shu and Sui-shu, the custom of wearing white clothing is mentioned. Although it is true that Koreans preferred white to other colours, other colours were also worn. Official dress at court, costumes of court entertainers, military clothes, and dress worn by lower government officials were of many colours. The common people wore coloured dresses for special ceremonies. Today, white clothing is worn by women only in mourning and almost never by men.

On days other than special occasions, common people wear coloured clothes of all shades except black. Young girls and children favour brilliant colours, but women of middle age and older, and men generally, prefer grey and other subdued colours. The cloth used in olden times was of plain weave, cotton or hemp; silk cloth was considered expensive and wool was never used.

The traditional dress has always been of two pieces - upper and lower - and the style varied according to the

sex of the wearer. Korean dress has always been cut loosely for comfort and not for style or manoeuvrability.

Korean dress, the female dress especially, was made to cover as much of the body as possible, and several layers of underwear were worn. Buttons or hooks were not used, but a long, cloth string tied both male and female attire. No difference in status was noticeable in the dress of women and children, but it was evident in that of the adult male.

For weddings the bride and groom wore special clothes, but only at the ceremony on other occasions such dress was not used. Mourning clothes were cut quite differently from ordinary clothes. They differed according to sex, marital status, and relationship to the deceased. Mourning dress was made of coarse hemp and the material was the same regardless of status.

The hair style of both the unmarried man and woman was the same; the hair was divided in the middle of the forehead and braided to hang down the back, so that, seen from the back, it was hard to tell whether one was a boy or a girl. Single people worn nothing on the head. However, after marriage, the hair styles of men and women were different. Men combed the hair up and bound it in a knot (sangtlu) on the top of the head; this was bound with a band (manggon). Each adult male had two hats - a black round hat (tlanggon), and a bamboo reed hat (kat), the latter being fitted over the former for formal outdoor wear. Women parted their hair in the centre, pulled it into a large knot, called a nangja, at the nape of the neck, and inserted a long, large hairpin through the knot. Women usually did not wear hats or bonnets, but in P'yongyang Province they put a white cloth around the head. Hairstyle declared marital status. The bamboo reed hat or kat used to be worn by the yangban or the gentry until near the end of the Yi Dynasty, when class distinction was abolished and anyone who could afford-one wore it.

There were many kinds of shoes of various materials: straw, hemp, wood, and leather. The shape was generally like that of a boat. There was no difference in shape between the left and right shoes, nor was there any difference according to status. The difference in shoe was only in the material and the quality of workmanship.

The common Korean generally did not wear earrings, necklaces, bracelets, or anklets. Korean women did wear rings, however. Usually, two large ones, about 15mm in width, were put together on the third or fourth finger of the left hand. These were usually of precious metals and stones, such as gold, silver and jade.

But all this has changed. Today, the traditional dress is rarely worn by men, except for a few elderly men. Some women, especially country women, on the other hand, wear traditional clothing every day and many others, including children, do so on special occasions.

FOOD.

Korean food consists of staple grains, subsidiary dishes, special foods, and drinks. Staple grains are rice, barley, and millet, cooked singly or mixed. Cooking is done simply by boiling in water.

There are various kinds of subsidiary dishes. Anything edible, whether vegetable, fish or meat, is used. Fresh edibles are eaten either raw or cooked - cooked by roasting, broiling, grilling, steaming, stewing, drying, curing, pickling, etc. They are cut to various sizes and shapes according to their nature, and are usually highly seasoned by red pepper, garlic, spring onion, ginger, soy sauce, salt, sesame oil, and baked sesame seeds.

Among Korean subsidiary dishes the best known and the most widely served throughout the year is kimchli, or pickled cabbage and radish, invariably seasoned with spices and condiments.

Subsidiary dishes are served, not one by one as in Chinese cuisine, but all at once, giving the uninitiated a feeling of sumptuousness. Korean etiquette does not stipulate which dish should be eaten first.

The Korean, as a rule, has three meals a day. Breakfast used to be considered the principal meal of the day and, therefore it was not unusual that guests were invited for breakfast. Lunch is usually simple and often

the leftovers from breakfast. Dinner, or the evening meal, is almost the same as breakfast, but conventionally less elaborate than the morning meal. Increasingly, however, the Korean breakfast takes on Western efficiency. Milk, toast, and eggs are fast becoming standard for the Korean morning meal.

For the traditional Korean meal, one table is prepared for each person. Cooked rice and soup are served in separate bowls and side dishes are put on the table in smaller bowls or dishes; a separate vessel being used for each different dish. Normally, at least five different side dishes are served, and in wealthy homes more than 15 dishes may be offered.

Food is eaten with a spoon and a pair of chopsticks. There is no fixed dining room in a Korean home, so that the meal table is carried to the room where the person wants to eat.

On holidays, birthdays and other festive occasions, special food is prepared. The most common traditional foods are tteok (rice cake) and wine, which are both made mainly of rice. For special soft drinks honey, fruits, leaves, roots, flower petals, embryo buds, and other ingredients are mixed to produce various flavours.

In food, as in clothing, it can generally be stated that the contemporary trend is toward efficiency and efficacy, rather than sentiment and tradition.

HOUSES

A common prototype of the Korean house was a rectangular, L or U shaped single-storied structure, built chiefly with wood and clay. The roof was not very high and was thatched largely with straw. The simplest form of the Korean house consisted of a living room, another room, and a kitchen, with the toilet set apart and away from the living quarters. The structure and size of a house differed according to the size of the family, the range of social intercourse, and wealth. A larger house would consist of the main family quarters at the centre, a closet, a maid's room, a barn, and a toilet at the sides. At the front part of the inner yard were quarters for the master of the house and for male guests, and adjoining the gate was a room or rooms for servants.

Today, however, it would be difficult to point out a "typical" Korean house for nearly all-recent houses are concrete or Ferro concrete structures. Though not widely recognized, this change, from predominantly wood structures to predominantly concrete structures, entails a subtle yet far-reaching change in the life style of the Koreans.

The Korean house, old or new, is built to protect its inhabitants from cold weather, and is somewhat low, the rooms being not very large. There are not many doors or windows, the greater part being walls. Some of the rooms have ondol floors which are heated via subfloor-level flues. This system of heating is so ingrained into Korean life that the most fashionable, Western-design houses built in recent years are, with few exceptions, provided with a few rooms with concrete floors heated by means of a heat-radiating network of pipes.

In a traditional Korean home, there is little furniture and seating is on the floor. Bedrooms and dining room are not specially provided, so usually a living room also functions as a bedroom and a dining room. The room used by the housewife is a place for family gatherings and the centre the house of management. Therefore, this room is equipped with wardrobes, bedding, cash box, and other paraphernalia. The front quarters used exclusively by the master of the house, if he is an educated man, are equipped with a desk, shelves, books, and a few cushions. Normally, the master retires to the housewife's room for the night.

KOREAN LIFE CYCLE

In the past babies were usually born in the mother's room. However, for a first child, an expectant mother would go to her own mother's house for the crucial event. Nowadays, more and more women go to maternity hospitals for delivery.

The meal for a mother after the birth of a child, then and now, consists of seaweed soup and rice. It is said that any food other than seaweed soup is harmful for the mother.

After childbirth, to give thanks to the Samshin Halmoni, the spirit guarding childbirth, a table with a bowl of clear water and a bowl of rice used to be placed in a corner of the delivery room - a custom from time immemorial, though waning in recent years.

Another dying custom is the custom of tying a rope or inchul across the gatepost for 21 days. In the case of a baby boy, pieces of charcoal and red peppers are fastened to the string, and in the case of a girl an inchul with pieces of charcoal and green pine branches is hung. No visitors, even relatives, are allowed to visit a house with an inchul for three weeks.

This particular custom, along with the observance of a series of other religious or superstitious rituals, as described in the following paragraphs, stems from the high rate of infant mortality that once prevailed.

Naming and Feasting

For the naming of a child there are many prescribed rules and a child is named only after a lapse of some time. For a boy a temporary name called a birth name was to be replaced by a proper name upon attaining maturity. A girl would have no childhood name.

On the 100th day after birth, a sumptuous banquet is held, even today. If the child is the first and male, the banquet is especially elaborate. Many varieties and large quantities of food are prepared and a large number of guests are invited. Parents also present rice cakes to the neighbours. The guests invited to the 100th day party come with presents, often in the form of gold rings.

On the first birthday of a child another big party is given, which is called the tol banquet. The child is dressed as resplendently as possible, often to its dismay and discomfort, and is set before a tol table with an assortment of rice cakes and symbolic items such as a hank of yarn, money, stationery, and a book. The adults enjoy predicting the child's fortune as the child picks one of the items. If it picks the yarn it is supposed to live long; if the writing-brush it is presumed to possess a scholarly talent, if money it will be blessed with wealth, etc. When this routine is over, relatives and acquaintances are invited to enjoy the food and congratulations and presents are bestowed.

CHILDHOOD

The Korean regarded the unmarried as children, regardless of age. The unmarried, both male and female, used to divide their hair in the middle of the forehead and braid it to hang down the back. With the hair worn this way, a boy or girl was treated as a minor. Boys and girls were not to play together - even sit together - after they reached the age of seven. Girls had to stay in the house all the time. Grown-up men as well as young boys could not go freely into a room where girls and women were quartered.

Until they were married, girls learned cooking, sewing, spinning, weaving, etiquette, moral behaviour, etc. under the guidance of their mothers and assisted in house management. A boy, if well provided for, went to school, and if not, assisted in the family trade while learning social behaviour from his elders.

MARRIAGE

Koreans married comparatively early and the richer and higher in social status, the earlier they tended to marry. The situation is different nowadays, but until a generation ago there were many who married around the age of 15. At that time grooms were usually younger than brides, often by as much as 3-4 years.

In marriage primary emphasis was on the succession of lineage and prosperity of the family, not on the welfare and connubial happiness of the couple themselves. The choice of one's future husband or wife and the decision of when the wedding day would be were entirely up to the parents.

In the old days there was a rite to mark the attainment of maturity of a child, whether male or female, called

kwallye, but the ceremony has not been observed for centuries. Often the kwallye and wedding were held at the same time.

The wedding ceremony varied widely according to locale, social status, and family convention but in all cases the bride went to the groom's home to live. This is so even today, although the modern trend is that the newly-weds establish separate homes independent of their parents, whenever feasible.

A match is decided by a kunghap, which means the matching of the prospective couple's dates of birth which includes the hour, day, month, and year by the lunar calendar. The union is decided only when it is judged that the match is auspicious. This custom persists today with an unyielding force.

Marriage is considered the most important single event for the entire family as well as the bride and groom, and one to be witnessed by many acquaintance and close relatives.

Until very recently, a wedding would entail an inordinately large expenditure due to the inevitable banquets and exchange of gifts.

The latest trend is to cut cost and dispense with receptions and banquets.

The reader will obtain some insight into the Korean family system from the following excerpt from "Family System by Ch'oe Chae-sok, professor of sociology at Korea University. The article originally appeared in Korean society (1975) published by the International Cultural Foundation, Seoul: marriage can be explained as a union between man and woman to create a new family and share sex, economic, and emotional life. In the traditional Korean family, marriage, it seems is more a union between the families concerned than a coupling of individuals. As marriage signifies more the joining of a bride to the already existing home of her husband than the creation of a new family, matrimony is not an affair, which is related only to the immediate couple.

For this reason the social standing or wealth of the other party is held to be very important in arranging a marriage. Therefore, a marriage arranged by a go-between is considered more ideal than a love marriage in which individual intentions are the deciding factor. The arranged marriage is set in progress by an intermediary who has detailed knowledge of the social standing and economic abilities of both families and about the personalities of the individuals concerned. Plying between the houses of the two families, the intermediary explains to the parents of one party the family tradition and personality of the other party and vice versa. Interestingly enough, the parents (especially the fathers) of the individuals who are to be espoused are called honju (master of marriage). With these explanations the intermediary tries to persuade the parents of both sides. When the "masters of marriage" agree to the proposed marriage, the bride-to-be and her future husband are allowed to see each other and their marriage is finally decided upon. It was once customary that the spouses knew almost nothing about each other until the day of the wedding. What is worse, parents often made agreements to espouse their children when they were still at a tender age.

In recent years, however, love-marriages are becoming increasingly common. Even in arranged marriages, young men and women have a certain period of dating after they are introduced to each other by the intermediaries, a compromise pattern, so to speak one most salient feature of Korean marriage is that those who are related on the father's side both descending from the same progenitor are forbidden to marry.

Legally, the practice of forbidding endogamy was fixed formally in 1461 and another decree was promulgated in 1669 forbidding marriage not only between persons having the same surname and the same ancestral origin but even between persons having the surname but different ancestral origins. Nevertheless, marriage between the latter did not die out; and in 1905 the government decided to forbid officially only marriage between persons having the same surname and the same ancestral origin.

The latter practice, it seems, had its origin in the Confucian code of rites and came to permeate Korean society in a thorough manner when the consciousness of blood ties among paternal kinsfolk grew stronger. Although there were some exceptions, groups of paternal kinsfolk, each having the same surname and the same ancestral origin, became units of exogamy.

Although the marriageable age has become older in recent years due to the educational system and various socio-economic conditions, one outstanding feature of marriage in traditional society was early marriage. In a society in which succession to the family line was valued highly, it was natural that parents made haste to have sons early. The system of arranged marriage further promoted the trend of early marriage. The custom of obligating the bridegroom to live with the family of his bride at her parent's home for a certain period and the system of adapting a girl as the son's future bride also influenced the trend of early marriage. Other factors which accelerated early marriage were the requisition of virgins as tribute, the legal prohibition of marriage imposed on commoner virgins during the period when a royal spouse was being singled out, and other special circumstances. The trend, however, of early marriage mainly affected the yangban (aristocracy) commoners and those lowly people whose positions were socially and economically low could not marry early and the dominant trend among them was to later marriages. Age disparity between husband and wife also differed between noble and commoner families. In the former the dominant pattern was that the wife was older than the husband, but in the latter the husband was in most cases older than the wife. Although these features characterized marriage in old Korea, they have become less noticeable nowadays. Especially in cities, the traditional pattern of marriage has almost disappeared in the current of westernisation.

FAMILY LIFE

The traditional family consciousness expresses itself in 'filial piety', which attaches the greatest importance to the father-son relationship. Filial piety does not indicate attitudes of parents toward their children, but it consists in devotion of children to their parents.

The Koreans are taught that "filial piety is the basis of all conduct" and they are educated along this principle in the life of Koreans as well as preceding all other human relations. Parents are the absolute, often likened to heaven and parental instructions are considered absolute, demanding strict obedience. Even though a son believes what he asserts is right, he should not disobey the wishes of his parents. Even though his parents cannot perform their roles properly, it is the son's moral obligation and duty to serve his parents with all sincerity. When he violates this norm, he is censured for his moral deficiency.

Filial piety concerns not only one's parents and home but one's attitude toward others and one's conduct in society: and so, to perform one's official duty faithfully, to treat one's friends warmly, to protect one's body, and to behave oneself with prudence also constitutes filial piety which is an absolute norm and value for Koreans, so much so that they are exhorted to practice it constantly and abide by it even at the sacrifice of their lives.

The status of women in Korean families is very low. It is thought to be an ideal husband-wife relationship when the husband commands his wife well and the wife obeys her husband. The wife should devotedly serve not only her husband but her parents-in-law, brothers-in-law, and sisters-in-law. As women should cherish their chastity most, it is regarded as ideal for them not to marry again even if their husbands die. These norms were formed not on the basis of the husband-wife relationship but on the basis of the father-son relationship; and this also indicates that the former is subordinate to the latter.

Men and women, whether they are single or married, are extremely restricted in Korea with respect to their social contact.

What is worse, a sense of mutual alienation exists even between husband and wife; it is commonly found in rural villages that the inner room and the male guest room are divided from each other, and the wife shuns going out in company with her husband and vice versa.

The Confucian adage that, when children turn seven years of age, they should not sit together still hampers the full enforcement of coeducation at school.

The Koreans also attach very great significance to *chip* (family). Family is a paternal system transcending time, which was inherited from the progenitor of a clan and will be linked to offspring. The greatest concern of each family in Korea is how to maintain and develop the work left by the ancestors and hand it down to the descendants. This concern manifests itself in three ways: inheritance of the spirit displayed by the ancestors through memorial rituals; maintenance and expansion of the family estate; and acquisition of a son

to insure continuity.

The continued existence of family simply means an endless sequence of father-son relationships from the progenitor to the offspring. Therefore, failure to beget a son means the extinction of the family. Here arises the practice of treating sons preferentially and holding the father-son relationship in a higher position than the husband-wife relationship.

A leader is necessary in order to further develop the family, which has been inherited from the ancestors and is to be handed over to the descendants. He is the patriarch. It is the generally observed rule that the oldest son of the patriarch becomes a new patriarch upon the latter's death. He is agent for the representative of his family. The patriarch, whose responsibility it is to succeed to the family, is the head officiate at memorial rites honouring the ancestors, a manager of the family property and a supervisor of all the family members. With the patriarch in the centre, the positions and roles of all family members are decided according to the rule of distinction between men and women, the order of seniority, and the rule of civility between superiors and inferiors.

Since the family is inherited by the eldest sons of all generations, the second, third, and younger sons create separate families of their own. The family the eldest son has inherited is called the "big family" and the families established by the second and third sons "small families".

Groups of these big and small families which are connected with each other through the same progenitor are consanguineous to each other or form the same clan. Families of the same clan are obligated to co-operate with each other with a sense of intimacy while living nearby.

A family is a unit of a clan as well as a component of society. The social life of the Korean people is based on family or on human relations within the family. All society groups are regarded as large families. The rule of seniority is applied outside the family in its entirety. The obligation to pay respect to superiors and treat elders politely is nothing but an extension or an enlargement of the rule of seniority between father and son and among brothers within the family.

The traditional sense of family, however, has undergone a rapid change in recent years; the Western principle of family life has come to exert many influences on the daily life of the Korean people. The change in family life took place largely in two directions. One was the modernization of families as a direct consequence of the introduction of modern Western currents of thought.

The former change was brought about by the transformation, on a limited scale of a self-sufficient agricultural -society into a capitalise society. The latter change was promoted mainly by Christian mission work, literary products, movies, newspapers, magazines, and other mass-communications media, and school education. The individual or social stratum which first came into contact with the change acted as a carrier of the change to other individuals and social strata.

In the structure of roles in Korean families, the division of labour by sex is clear, the roles of men distinguishable clearly from those of women. When parents and their son and daughter in-law live under the same roof it is noticeable that their roles are differentiated. Generally speaking, however, it cannot be denied that the roles of the father generation are still being transferred to the son generation.

The Korean family, as we have seen, shows the following basic features:

The family is, in short, a paternal system transcending time. It may be proper to interpret families as groups, which exist in a system transcending time. For members of the family it is of paramount importance to maintain and develop the family. Any individual deed or word which runs counter to this duty is strictly forbidden.

Family is a social unit and a system, which has priority over individuals. In external relations, therefore, men act not as independent individuals but as members of a family.

There must always be a patriarch in the family to supervise all members of his family. The patriarch is one

who succeeds to the work left by his ancestors and assumes the whole responsibility in maintaining and developing the family line. Therefore, the patriarch is the central figure in developing the family and a concrete representative of the family in dealing with the external world.

There exists an order of rank among family members. As the permanency of the family is of paramount value, the authority of the patriarch who assumes the highest responsibility is recognized and an order of rank came into being among those who can participate in succession to the family line and those who cannot.

The position of women is particularly low.

The father-son relationship occupies a dominant position over the wife-husband relationship. A family exists not on the basis of husband and wife but on the basis of father and son.

Family is not differentiated from the clan. There is a strong tendency to regard clansmen as members' of the same family. Such words as chiban (in-family, that is, close relatives) and ilga (part of one's family, that is relatives) have the same connotation.

THE 60TH BIRTHDAY (HWAN'GAP)

Another important event in one's life is the 60th birthday. Ostensibly, this is the day when one has completed one's zodiacal cycle, which is no doubt an auspicious occasion, but the real reason for its importance in the past may have been the fact that no many people live that long. On this day, one dresses up in the best possible clothes, is offered the richest food and drinks, and receives best wishes for longevity and felicity from one's children and grandchildren. Relatives and acquaintances are invited to a grand banquet. The number of guests present at the ceremony and festivities used to be regarded as an indication of one's social standing, although the present-day trend is to observe this birthday in a small private gathering.

DEATH

When a man is on his deathbed his children and family must assemble around him and observe his death. Tradition called for loud wailing by the bereaved, after the last breath was drawn. This is called kok, or keening. At the same time the coat which the dead man usually wore would be tossed upon the roof. This rite is called chlohon, the invocation of the spirit of the dead. Both these latter customs seem defunct nowadays.

The corpse is cleaned with perfumed water, changed into a shroud, and put into a coffin, laid out straight and bound round with hemp cloth at seven places. The top of the coffin is covered with red brocade, on which is written in white letters "so and so's holy coffin".

The children of the dead man dress in mourning clothes made of hemp cloth and sit on a straw mat outside the room where the coffin is placed. One of the long lasting customs is the large gathering of funeral guests. Even today, the size of such a congregation is regarded as the ultimate greatness of the deceased. Unlike the case of weddings, this custom is less frowned upon.

The funeral procession leaves the house on the third or fifth day - any mourning beyond this is considered no longer decent but ostentatious. After the coffin is placed on the grave, a mound about one meter high is made over it. The mound is sodden later to keep it from eroding. It is usual to mark the grave with a tombstone and sometimes with stone table and tomb pillars. A tomb site is looked after reverently with special care by the bereaved. This is because of the belief that the prosperity of the descendants depends directly on whether an ancestral tomb is properly selected and looked after. The location of a grave is determined through consultation with a geomancer, a custom still common today, especially among those who are well off.

ANNUAL CUSTOMS

For thousands of years, Koreans have reckoned time according to the lunar calendar. Contrary to common

belief, the lunar calendar has always been adjusted to correspond with the solar year by intercalation or adding a whole month to the lunar year once every so many years. This can be demonstrated by the fact that the solar calendar is divided into 24 equal portions, or chol (chieh in Chinese), of which the equinoxes and solstices are used as fixed points. Even before the solar calendar was introduced to the Orient, the lunar calendar showed those chol or season nodes, which are important dates especially in agriculture. Give or take one or two days, these nodes fall more or less on the same day by the solar calendar but not on any regular day when reckoned by the lunar calendar. The most important of the chol are of course the equinoxes and solstices but ipchlun (li-chun in Chinese; the advent of spring) is given more weight than others because it is the first node of the year, which marks the impending spring. These are 'several of the special holidays reckoned by the lunar calendar even today.

The first day of the first month, New Year's Day, or Sol, is one of the biggest holidays of the year. People dress in their best, take a rest from work and all the family gathers together to observe the ancestral ceremonies. A feast is spread out and the young members of the family make New Year's obeisance to the elders. Then the young ones go around the neighbourhood to offer New Year's greetings to their older relatives and acquaintances. The recent trend is that the lunar New Year's Day is being replaced by its solar counterpart, especially in the cities.

Another important date by the lunar calendar is Chlusok, or the Harvest Moon, which falls on the 15th day of the Eighth Month or usually some time in September by the solar calendar. As this date marks the harvest time, it is regarded as a Thanksgiving Day, and is celebrated almost as enthusiastically as New Year's Day.

There are a few other important days in the lunar year. The 15th day of the First Month is regarded as important since it is the first full moon of the year. People crack various kinds of nuts and blast firecrackers to exorcise harmful spirits, insects and animals. In the evening a variety of traditional games takes place under the moonlight. Tug-of-war, stone fights, with mock fights with torches take place between neighbouring villages. These are fought by youths and middle-aged men before thousands of spectators who come from far and near. These games are played to win or lose, and tradition has it that the winning village will be blessed with bumper crops. Such games perhaps started to determine the priority in drawing farming water from a common source.

Some time during the First or Second Month is a day called Hansik. This is the 105th day after the winter solstice, falling about the fifth of April by the solar calendar. On this day, rites for ancestors are observed early in the morning, and the whole family visits the tombs of their direct ancestors, to pay respects to them, tidy up the tombs, and plant more turf if necessary.

The fifth day of the Fifth Month is called Tano Day, which is another big holiday. According to ancient records, people on this day rested from work, dressed up in their best, and feasted as they did on New Year's Day. Special vents for this day include wrestling matches for men in which the champion receives a bull as a prize, and swinging competitions for women in which the winner gets a gold ring.

The Tenth Month is the month for kimjang. During this month kimchli or pickled vegetables, an indispensable subsidiary food for Koreans, is prepared to last the three months of winter, so that every household is busy with this important work. Women take great care to make kinchli tasteful. During this month a set phrase of greeting is, "Have you finished kimjang?"

The Twelfth Month, called sottal, is a time when people set things in proper order and settle accounts, to prepare for welcoming in the new year. An honourable man is not supposed to carry his debts over to the next year.

By tradition one must stay awake on the night before New Year's Day. Records tell that in the old days the court held exorcising ceremonies, called narye, to expel evil spirits. Ten dancers of narye in chloyong masks danced to the accompaniment of music. In rural areas they also expel evil spirits and usher in fortune with a musical performance of nongak or farmers music, called megu. The megu starts at the village centre and moves around to each house.

In addition to those traditional holiday which are based on the lunar calendar, there are the following

designated national holidays:

New Year Holiday (January 1st-3rd)
Independence Movement Day (March 1st)
Arbor Day (April 5th)
Children's Day (May 5th)
Memorial Day (June 6th)
Constitution Day (July 17th)
Liberation Day (August 15th)
Armed Forces Day (October 1st)
Foundation Day (October 3rd)
Han'gul Day (October 9th~the day commemorating the promulgation of the Korean script in 1446)
Christmas Day (December 25th)

In addition to the foregoing, Buddha's Birthday has recently been designated a national holiday. This day is the eighth day of the Fourth Month by the lunar calendar, which falls in solar May.

In order to conserve and develop forest resources, a forestation day has been established for the autumn season, in addition to the present April one. This day falls on the first Saturday of November.

SOCIAL MORES

The Korean gentleman is not to show his emotions, and, therefore, he is slow in showing them. He does not, even in a joyous humour, shout, laugh loudly, clap his hands, jump up and down, tap the shoulders, embrace or dance. He just smiles gently or holds the hand of the other softly. Nor does he show anger; he merely stares at the other. When he commits an unintentional error or blunder, he smiles in the way of asking for forgiveness. Such a smile is to be construed as a silent apology, not an act of insolence or callousness.

GREETINGS

When two persons meet each other the younger greets the elder first. - In greeting, the younger goes up to the elder to do SO. When an inferior greets his superior in a room he makes an obeisance by kneeling and bending at the waist, stands up again, and remains standing until told to sit down. This mode of greeting is now reserved for special occasions, such as New Year's Day, birthdays and reunions after long absence. Some conservative families, however, retain this custom as a daily routine. When outdoors, one just makes a bow. The Korean does not use such greetings as "Good Morning", or "Good Evening", but he says, "Have you been in peace during the night?" "Have you had a peaceful sleep?"

DECORUM IN BEHAVIOUR

When one hands something to or gets something from an elder he must do so with both hands or with the right hand supported by the left. To smoke and drink alcoholic beverages in the presence of an elder used to be frowned on - a fast-dying custom. Even if an elder gives permission to smoke or drink a young must turn himself away from the former when doing so.

It is considered bad manners to sit too close to an elder, to remain seated when an elder enters or to stand above and look down on a sitting elder. It is also thought to be uncivil to touch an elder's head, to tap him on the shoulder, to offer to shake hands with him, to put a hand on his shoulder, to pass by the head of a man who is in a recumbent position, to step over a man, or to stretch out one's legs in the presence of others.

BEHAVIOUR IN BODILY MOVEMENT

Koreans traditionally did not sit on chairs regardless of status, except at official meetings, nor did they use beds.

When they sat, they did so on the floor. The use of chairs is a relatively recent innovation. Even today, however, most people have more occasion to sit on the floor than on a chair. A grown-up man, when he

intends to look respectable, puts his posterior on the floor and bends one leg at the knee, putting the ankle of the other leg on it, which is roughly the same as Buddha's sitting posture. One sits in a straight kneeling position with the posterior on the balls of the feet when one sits before a very elderly or respected person, such as when a student sits before his teacher at a lesson, or when one apologizes to a person for having committed a grave mistake. A woman usually sits with the posterior on the floor, one leg erect bent at the knee, and the other bent horizontally and tugged inward. Sitting with both legs stretched to the side or to the front is regarded as rude.

Bowing styles vary according to whether one is indoors or outdoors and according to sex. When in the room, a man kneels with both hand palms down slightly to the front, almost touching, and bends his waist until his forehead touches his hands. After a moment he stands up with his hands, palms inward, meeting just below the breast then bends the waist a little again before finally straightening up. Outdoors, one bows at the waist as deeply as possible with hands clasped in front, and after a while lifts up the head, straightening one's body, having bent the waist a little bit again. This custom is becoming more and more abbreviated. A woman makes obeisance indoors by getting into a sitting posture with the backs of her hands touching the forehead, then by bending the waist to touch the head to the floor, and then stands up. This kind of obeisance is regarded as the highest token of respect and it is made on the occasion of New Year's greetings, before offering a congratulatory drink to an elder on his 60th birthday, and to a greatly honoured person. On an ordinary occasion a woman bends the waist supporting the upper body with both hands at the sides on the floor. For women there is no obeisance outdoors. Upon necessity they may offer a passing greeting, but tradition dictates that women once outdoors do not acknowledge men's presence, and vice versa - another fast dying custom.

As a rule one bows once for obeisance, but on the occasions of wedding and ancestral rites one bows twice. Winking, a man and a woman walking together, or holding an intimate conversation in public used to be frowned on. Embracing and kissing are regarded as unrefined. Eating in the street or while walking is considered uncivilized.

MAN AND WIFE

According to certain extant Chinese records, in ancient times, or before Confucianism was introduced, association between men and women in Korea seems to have been quite free. The records tell of men and women drinking, dancing together, and even bathing in the same river. However, since the time of the Koryo Dynasty association between the sexes has followed rather strict mores. According to tradition, during the invasion of the Mongol (Yuan) Korean women were not allowed to go out, resulting in a rigidification of the relations between the sexes. However, it may have been, it is a fact that men and women remained at a distance from each other during the period of the Yi Dynasty. From their youth, women had to stay home and meeting, talking, or associating with strange men was strictly forbidden. The taboo became so strict that a man did not go into the inner yard of even his closest relatives, not to speak of the living room of the house. A grown daughter or a daughter-in-law could hardly visit the room of her father or brother alone.

The strict rules governing the relations between men and women originated to protect women, but with the passing of time they gave rise to various strange customs. In a society where it was considered immoral to meet or get to know a member of the opposite sex, it was inevitable that women became introverted and inhibited, gradually losing contact with and knowledge of the outside world. Often, if a male child was not born, the man would take a concubine in hopes of getting a male heir. Although these customs are things of the past, their vestiges are still discernible in Korean society today, which remains largely male-orientated.

RELATIVES

The Korean people have traditionally, and still do, maintain close family ties; that is to say, relatives mean much more in Korea than they do in other countries.

The Korean kinship concept is not limited to immediate relatives but extends to all people of the same clan, that is, those with the same family name tracing their ancestors to the same family seat. Strangers begin treating each other as relatives when they learn that they share the same family name and the same family

seat. Their given names are so devised as to indicate their relative position in the family tree. Therefore, it often happens that an old man ranks equally with the sons of a much younger man in the, same family group. A person regards as his relatives the offspring of a family into which a sister of his father is married or the offspring of the brothers and sisters of his mother.

Relatives are prohibited by law and convention from marrying each other. One cannot marry any of the offspring of the brothers and sisters of his mother. One cannot marry even a stranger with the same family name and the same family seat. Any violation of this ban would not only bring harsh social censure as an incestuous marriage, but is a violation of existing law.

In conclusion, the folk customs of Korea have changed much due to the close and frequent contact with Americans and other foreigners since 1945 when the country was liberated from Japanese rule. The change was accelerated by the Korean War of 1950-53.

The stringent, social rule banning contact between the sexes, even so much as exchanging a single word in public is now gone forever. Men and women go to College together, sing and dance together, and elderly people discreetly look aside as a young couple strolls past them hand in hand. Also gone is the old-fashioned, time-consuming greeting with a profound bow.

And yet, nearly all secondary schools in the Republic are either exclusively for boys or girls, although a few have recently started coeducational classes.

Though drastic changes have taken place in nearly all aspects of the nation's life, some old customs, and values die-hard. Sexual morality, especially for the younger generation, remains rigid and all indications are that it will remain so for some time to come.

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