

ORIENTATION ON KOREA

I. KOREAN CULTURE

A. Language

1. Spoken. The Korean language, unlike Chinese, is atonal. The verb is always at the end. If you use an interpreter speak in short, complete sentences. Speak a little slower and avoid idioms. Sad to say most Koreans do not know English well enough to converse.
2. Written. Korea has their own alphabet known as *hangul*. (The Korean language is called *han-gung mal*.) It is a phonetic alphabet made up of 14 vowels and 10 consonants and is not hard to learn.

B. Customs

1. Taking off shoes. Whenever you enter someone's house or you enter a restaurant where people are sitting on the floor, you should take off your shoes.
2. Bowing. Koreans often bow to each other. It is not a deep bow but somewhat of a nodding of the head from the shoulders. They also shake hands but generally men and women do not shake hands with each other.
3. Sitting on tables. In the past Koreans who saw team members sitting on the tables thought it to be somewhat impolite. (The tables are a little weak anyway.)
4. Accepting gifts. If you receive a gift, express profuse appreciation, but do not open it in front of the donor.
5. Face to face conversation. Koreans are used to close contact. Westerners like to have their "space."

C. Food

1. Food is generally hot, spiced with red pepper. The most common side dish is kimchi. Kimchi is usually made of cabbage but some varieties are made of cucumber and Chinese radish.
2. Rice is commonly eaten with every meal as the main food. It is short grain, clingy rice, somewhat sweet and very tasty.
3. The eating utensils are chopsticks and a flat spoon. The spoon is used to eat the soup, which accompanies most Korean style meals.
4. Fast food restaurants abound – Burger King, McDonalds, KFC, Popeyes, Subway, Pizza Hut as well as more upscale steak places such as TGI Fridays, Outback, etc but they are usually also quite expensive.

D. Affluence

1. Seoul. Korea has one of the highest per capita incomes in Asia. There is very little poverty. Seoul is a very modern large city with skyscrapers, modern communications, and a well-developed public transportation system consisting of buses, subways, taxis, etc., not to mention private cars. However, like most big cities, it is quite congested.
2. The stores. Almost everything can be found in the stores. There are department stores, convenience stores and small shops that specialize, such as a drug store, hardware store, etc. These stores are generally much smaller than in the US.

E. Education

1. Korean level of education is generally quite good and most Koreans excel Americans in math. Elementary education is co-educational but middle and high school generally is not. Middle and high school students usually wear uniforms so it is easy to tell who is a student.
2. Koreans go to school from March to early July (first semester) and from September to mid-December (second semester) and also in February (except college).

F. Climate, Size, Topography, Population

1. Korea has four distinct seasons and Seoul corresponds roughly with Washington, DC-southern Pennsylvania. There is also a rainy season, usually in July. August is very hot and humid. Winters are dry, cold but with not much snow.
2. South Korea is roughly the size and shape of Indiana but the terrain is more like Pennsylvania with a major mountain range, the Taebek running down its spine. It is also more mountainous on the eastern side.
3. The population of South Korea is roughly 45 million with perhaps half under the age of 25.

G. Currency

1. The money that is used is called won. The coins are 10, 50, 100 and 500 won. These roughly correspond to the penny, nickel, dime and half-dollar. The paper bills come in denominations of 1000, 5000, 10,000 and 50,000. Except in a tourist shopping center such as Itaewon, Korean money is the only medium of exchange.

H. Clothing

1. Koreans generally wear western clothes and are very fashion conscious. However, what you think is fashionable and what they think is fashionable may be different.

2. They have a distinctive traditional dress they wear on special occasions called a *hanbok*. For the women it consists of a short jacket and a long skirt. It is called a *chima chogori*. For men it consists of baggy pants, tied at the ankles and a vest and jacket. It is less commonly seen that women's traditional clothing.

I. Religion

1. Korea is about 20% Christian, 20% Buddhist and 60% nothing, i.e. Shamanistic and Confucian.
2. Korea has the highest percentage of Protestants in Asia and has some very large churches, reputedly the world's biggest. Even conservative Christianity in Korea is plagued with new evangelicalism, the charismatic movement and contemporary Christian music. The largest denomination in Korea is Presbyterian (about 70%) but with many different kinds. Some of the Presbyterians are liberal but most are conservative.
3. There is no stigma associated with being a Christian. Koreans consider Christianity to be progressive because of its association with modern education.

J. Attitude Toward Foreigners

1. Americans. Koreans are interested in and very friendly towards Americans.
2. Others. Koreans generally have a somewhat negative attitude toward southeast Asians such as Filipinos, Myanmarans and Pakistanis considering them to be inferior.

II. WITNESSING

A. Directly

1. Koreans are not reluctant to talk about religious things but the greatest difficulty is the language barrier.
2. Koreans are open to the gospel and you are very unlikely to encounter any hostility.

B. Tracts

1. Koreans usually will willingly take a tract from a foreigner. We have had a good response from previous teams who have passed out tracts at subway stations and college campuses.
2. There are no restrictions to propagating one's faith. Preaching on subway and buses is permitted though not encouraged.

IMPORTANT KOREAN PHRASES

A. Common Expressions

Hello? Ahn yong ha seo

Thank you. Kamsa hamnida

Excuse me. Me ahn hamnida

You are welcome Chonmaneyo

How much is (this)? Olmayo?

Goodbye (to the one going) Ahn yong he ka seyo

Goodbye (to the one who is staying) Ahn yong he kay seyo

Please read (this) tract. Chon do ji ilgobo chuseyo

Where is ____? _____ odi issoyo?

My name is _____. Neh irumun _____ imnida.

B. Words

Bible Song gyong

Tracts Chon do ji

Bathroom Whajong shil

Pastor Moksa

C. Numbers

1	il	6	yook	100	peck
2	e	7	il-gop	1000	chon
3	sahm	8	yuh-dol	10,000	mahn
4	sah	9	a-hohp		
5	oh	10	ship		