

Korean and Korean- Americans

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History of Korea

A traditional Korean pavilion with a tiled roof and a mountain in the background, reflected in a pond with lily pads.

➤ **History of Korea**

➤ **History of Korean-American Immigrants**

Geography of South Korea



Politics of South Korea

- Representative Democratic Republic
- President is the head of the state, and a multi-party system.
- Executive party is exercised by the government.
- Legislative power is vested in both the government and the National Assembly.
- The Judiciary is independent of the executive and the legislature and comprises a Supreme Court, appellate courts and a Constitutional Court.

Language

➤ Language: Korean

- Hangeul: Korean alphabet

- Created by King Sejong during the Chosun Dynasty in 1443

- King Sejong created hangeul for the common people so that all people may be able to read and write easily in written words.

Language

➤ **Honorifics:** used when you talk to someone who is older, or has a relatively high social status, another way to explain it would be saying you are using a polite style of formal style of words.

- Different ways to say things depending on how your relationship is with them
- Examples
 - Regular way to say house is “jip” but honorific way to say house is “daek”
 - Regular way to say age is “na-ee” while honorific way to say house is “yeun-she”

Language

➤ Language of Korean-Americans

- Konglish: Korean words being used in mainly English sentences.
- Konglish has a different meaning in Korea vs. US
 - Koreans use Konglish such as “hand phone” to describe cell phone and “notebook” to describe laptop
 - Korean-Americans would use Korean words in mainly English sentences to aid in understanding to someone who speaks mainly Korean
 - Examples: Can you nopyyuh (높여) the volume on the TV?
Instead of saying TV, they would say te-le-bi.

Interpersonal Relationships

➤ Visiting a home

- Always remove your shoes before entering a Korean home (follow the lead of your host if unsure).
- Being invited into a Korean's home is considered a honor (especially if it is for a meal) so it is essential to treat it as such. Be polite, respectful and observe their custom.
- Bring a gift to reciprocate your host's kindness.

Interpersonal Relationships

➤ **Taboos in South Korean culture**

- Do not wear your shoes in places of worship or people's home
- Do not place your thumb between your middle and index finger while making a fist as this is an obscene gesture
- Do not use red ink. This is a symbol of death
- Do not use the number four if possible
- Do not stand too close to people you are meeting the first time – keep an arm's length between you

Interpersonal Relationships

➤ The Concept of **Kibun**

- **Kibun** is a word with no literal English translation; the closest terms are pride, face, mood, feelings, or state of mind.
- If you hurt someone's kibun you hurt their pride.
- Important to maintain a peaceful, comfortable atmosphere at all times.

- **Nunchi** is the ability to determine another person's kibun by using the eye.
- Since this is a culture where social harmony is crucial, being able to judge another person's state of mind is critical to maintain the person's kibun.

Interpersonal Relationships

➤ Naming Conversations

- Names operate in the reverse of Western cultures; family name (surname), and their given name.
- Very impolite to address a Korean with his or her given name. They should be addressed using their professional titles, or Mr., Mrs., etc., until permission is given otherwise.

Interpersonal Relationships

➤ Meeting and Greeting

- Bowing is the traditional way to greet in South Korea
- Your left hand should support your right forearm when shaking hands
- Korean women do not always shake hands and may slightly nod instead of a full bow
- Always bow to individuals when departing

Interpersonal Relationships

➤ Communication Style

- Can be complicated in South Korea due to an inherent dislike of saying 'no' as it is considered poor etiquette.
- Discussions can be prolonged due to the avoidance of declining or refusing.
- Good posture and positive body language is most beneficial in meetings; patience and politeness must be maintained throughout.
- Do not use excessive or overt body language.
- Use two hands, or support your right arm with your left, when passing on business cards, gifts, or when receiving an item.

Greeting, Displays of Respect and General Etiquette

- **Bowing** is a traditional way for Koreans to greet each other: to say hello and goodbye.
- **Handshakes**
- **General etiquettes** to know
 - Direct eye contact can be seen as a challenge and impolite, especially when meeting someone with higher social status
 - Seen as rude to be putting up on a furniture
 - During meal, do not eat until the oldest of the table starts eating

Status, Role Prestige

➤ **Status and Role Prestige in South Korea**

- Status and role prestige matter a lot in South Korea
- Social prestige of college graduates

➤ **Status and Role Prestige in Korean-American in the U.S.**

- Since 1980 to now, 78% of Korean-Americans over 18 were born outside of the U.S.
- Only 43% of Korean-American speak English fluently
- Education is important for Korean-Americans: 53% have a bachelor's degree or higher; 18% has acquired master's or higher
 - 28% of U.S. population have a bachelor's degree; 10% has acquired master's or higher

Marriage, Family, and Kinship Structure

➤ Marriage, Family, and Kinship Structure

- It is seen as an important role as a man to continue the family line
- Traditional family setting seen as a “benevolent monarchy”
 - Eldest male (usually father or grandfather) is the head of the household
 - Eldest son usually inherits bulk of the wealth as well as family leadership when their parents pass away
- Marriage is seen as a union between families
 - Arranged marriages are not as common in South Korea anymore
- Traditionally, Koreans would have large families, often having three generations of family live together.
- Koreans emphasize on the obedience of the elder, or someone of superior in the family setting

Marriage, Family, and Kinship Structure

- Marriage, family and kinship structure of Korean-American in the U.S.
 - 56% of Korean-American are married
 - 51% of U.S. adults are married
 - 64% of Korean-American say having a successful marriage is one of the most important things in their lives
 - 34% of U.S. adults

Marriage, Family, and Kinship Structure

- 67% of Korean-American say being a good parent is one of the most important things in their lives
 - 50% of U.S. adults
- Conflict between parents and children in Korean-American society
 - Parents have a more authoritarian style of parenting
 - Goes against the American norm

Gender Roles; Reproduction

➤ Gender Roles in South Korea

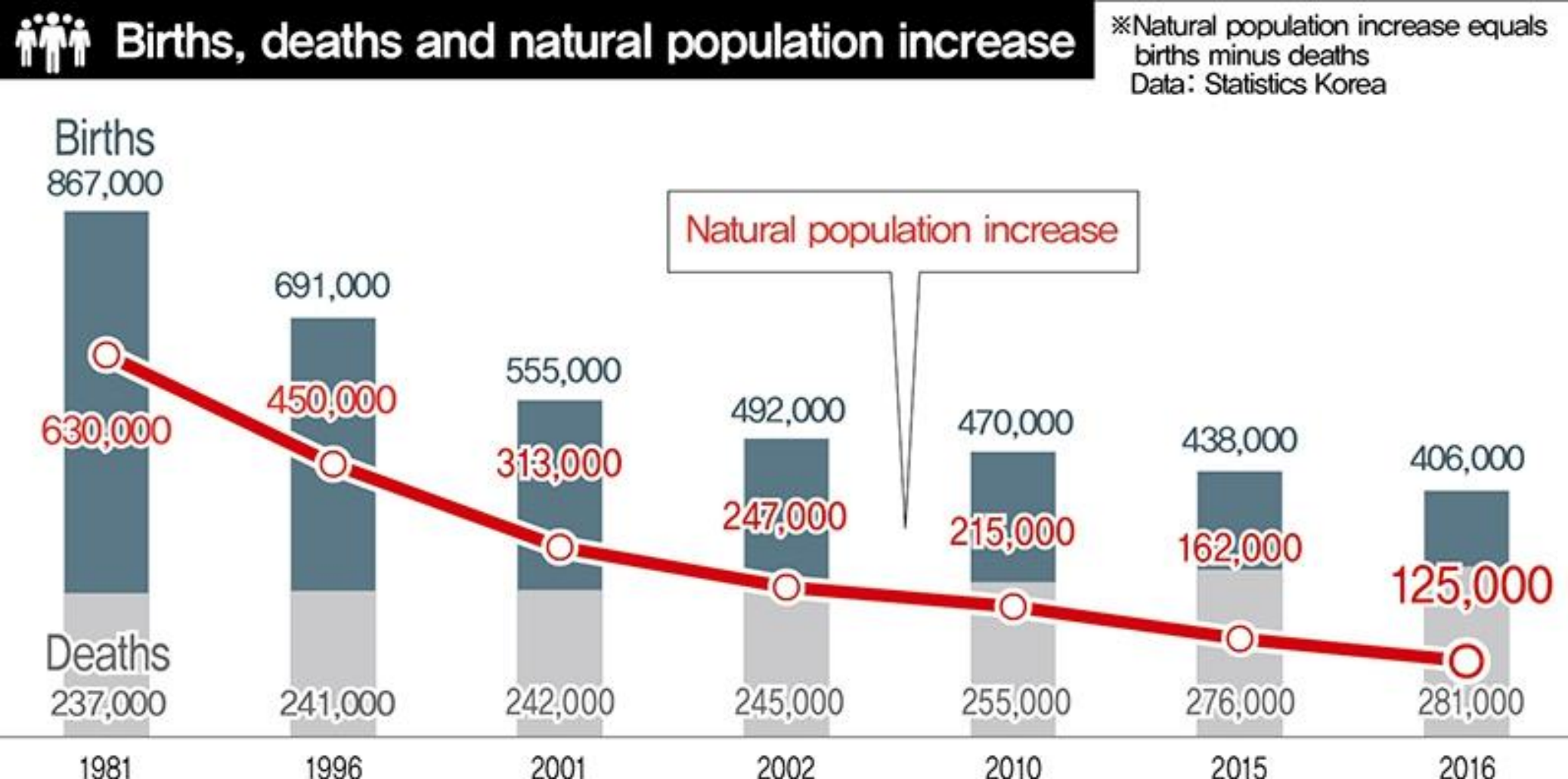
- Gender roles are apparent in South Korean society
- In contemporary society of South Korea, many women are attending school, often getting a college degree and starting a career

➤ Gender Roles in Korean-American in the US

- Many Korean-American women are required to work along with their husband
 - More marital conflicts due to women's active economic roles and shifts of attitude of other gender roles
 - Many Korean-American still emphasize the importance of a traditional ideal of marriage

Gender Roles; Reproduction

➤ Reproduction: lowest number of births ever recorded in South Korea (2016)



Childhood and Socialization

➤ Childhood and Socialization of Koreans in South Korea

- Early education for Koreans
 - Even at a young age, many Korean students feel the pressure to do well in school.
 - Education system in Korea is highly test driven
 - In the contemporary Korean society, you need to have a college degree to have a better change at acquiring a job
 - Hagwon: after school program, many students are enrolled in – Math, English, Chinese, music (piano, violin, etc.), etc.

Childhood and Socialization

➤ **Childhood and Socialization of Korean-Americans**

- Korean-Americans respect harmony just as Koreans in South Korea do
 - However, their culture is Americanized and know how to interact and balance socialization between Korean-American and people of other race
 - Not a lot of family members and relatives live in the US, so Korean-Americans have to depend on other Korean-Americans or solely on their family, which develops an individualistic culture
- Many Korean-American children grow up in a mixed culture.

Adolescence, Adulthood and Old Age

➤ Adolescence, Adulthood and Old Age of South Korea

- Teenagers rarely hold part-time jobs
- High school students usually choose their college majors in the second year of high school (equivalent to junior year here in U.S.)

Adolescence, Adulthood and Old Age

➤ Adolescence, Adulthood and Old Age of Korean-Americans

- Identity crisis and the importance of identity as Korean-American
 - A lot of times, the Korean-Americans feel as though they do not belong in both Korean and American culture.
 - Many Korean-American children reject the Korean culture because their American friends think that the culture or food they eat are “weird.”
 - As young adults, many accepted and understand that they are bicultural; and it is okay to accept both cultures

Korean/Korean-American and Disabilities

➤ South Korean View of Disabilities

- South Koreans tend to seek little help and leave everything to fate. The person with a disability is often cared for by parents, who usually expects their child to “outgrow” such conditions. People who have scientific education believe that disabling conditions may be overcome with appropriate medical intervention and actively search for medicine, therapy, or surgery from health professionals.

Korean/Korean-American and Disabilities

- Many South Koreans with disabilities and their families suffer from shame, helplessness, denial, withdrawal, and depression. Some people view acquired disability as the representation of bad luck or misfortune.
- Korean-Americans are more likely interested in receiving relevant services from professionals and organizations for their disabilities and they depend more on scientific research than those who live in South Korea.

Services and Sources In California

- Korean-American Special Education Center
- Joy Center for the Disabled
- Many local Korean churches offer disabilities ministries
 - SaRang Disability Ministry at SaRang Community Church, OneMind Ministry
 - Cho-un Korean United Methodist Church at Orangevale in CA
 - Rooftop Ministry, New Community Baptist Church, h
- Korean American Community Foundation of SF, Directory of Organizations, <http://www.kacfsf.org/organizations/>
- API Legal Outreach, <http://www.apilegaloutreach.org>
- Korean American Family Services, <http://kfamla.org/>



Korean in the U.S. Fact Sheet

(September 2017)

<http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/fact-sheet/asian-americans-koreans-in-the-u-s/>

Reflection

Reflect on your learning from today's presentation for your tomorrow's practice.

- **What area did you learn the most and how will you practice differently with the new learning?**