

A STUDY GUIDE FOR *LOST NAMES* AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR VARIOUS SHORT STORIES

GRADE LEVEL: 6-12

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SUBJECT: Language Arts, English

TIME REQUIRED: Sessions will vary depending on the number of stories discussed.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Develop an understanding of the political and social situation in Korea during and after World War II
2. Be able to relate Confucian behavioral ethics to to every day situations
3. Begin to develop an understanding of the tragedy of war in general and civil war in particular

MATERIALS REQUIRED:

- Map(s) of Korea
- Kim, Richard. *Lost Names: Scenes from a Korean Boyhood*, University of California Press, 1998.
- Pihl, Marshall R., Bruce Fulton, and Ju-Chan Fulton, eds. and trans. *Land of Exile: Contemporary Korean Fiction*. New York: M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 1993.
- Hong, Myoung-Hee, trans. *Korean Short Stories*. Seoul, Korea: Il Ji Sa Publishing Co., 1975.

(NOTE TO TEACHER: The short stories are appropriate for grades 9-12 only.)

BRIEF BACKGROUND ON THE JAPANESE OCCUPATION OF KOREA:

1. The victory of Japan in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905 gave Japan power over the Korean peninsula.
2. "The Treaty of 1905" gave control of Korean internal affairs to Japan.
3. Violent protests were put down by force.
4. In 1910, a new governor was appointed.
5. Police and newspapers were taken over by Japan, and Korea became a colony of Japan.
6. A large percentage of rice and industrial goods produced in Korea were shipped to Japan.
7. On 1 March 1919, Koreans demonstrated for independence.
8. The Koreans failed to drive out the Japanese, but for a while, conditions improved slightly until Japan began to build up for World War II.
9. Economic conditions worsened and Japanese control tightened.
10. Koreans were forced to learn Japanese and eventually were forbidden to use Korean.
11. The Japanese also forced the Koreans to replace their names with Japanese ones.
12. After World War II, Korea was divided at the 38th parallel: the Soviet Union installed a Communist government to the north, and the United States endorsed a Republic for the south.

BACKGROUND ON RICHARD KIM:

1. Richard Kim grew up in northern Korea prior to and during World War II.
2. His wish was to be faithful to the narrator in *Lost Names*, a young boy.

3. His family was politically conscious. His father spent years in a Japanese prison because of political activity.
4. Kim points out that there were both "good" and "bad" Koreans as well as "good" and "bad" Japanese.
5. The scene where the rubber balls are flattened is autobiographical.
6. The beating at school is a real incident.
7. Kim joined the military during the Korean War.
8. After the war was over, he moved to the United States in 1954.
9. His immediate family, including the grandparents, were very fortunate. They fled to the South as refugees; whereas his relatives, especially those on his mother's side, who stayed in North Korea died. Eventually, he and the rest of his family emigrated to the United States.
10. Kim was very close to his father and regarded him to be "almost a saint."

PROCEDURE:

1. Discuss the location of Korea, and ask what advantages and what problems Korea's location might present to its people and government.
2. Discuss the historical background of the Japanese occupation and colonization of Korea prior to and during World War II.
3. Discuss the biographical information about Richard Kim.
4. Assign readings of Richard Kim's *Lost Names* to the students.
5. The study guide below may be discussed in class or assigned as outside work according to the level of students being taught.
6. Discuss the futility of hope expressed in *Lost Names* in light of Korea's division between the Soviet Union and the United States.
7. Discuss the historical background of the Korean War and the difficulty of living in a country torn by civil war for the people of Korea.
8. Assign selected short stories from the anthologies above. Students may be divided into groups that are each assigned a different story to read and discuss. Examples of possible discussion questions for the short stories follow the study guide for *Lost Names*.
9. Each group should prepare a presentation of its short story to the class in order for students to become familiar with all the stories assigned. Suggest to the students to research of the authors and the localities of the stories assigned.

EVALUATION:

- Grades should be based on the students' preparation in answering the questions, comprehension of the stories, and presentations.

STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR *LOST NAMES*:

"Crossing"

1. Why was the narrator's father jailed?
2. Explain the significance of this quote: "Look, you, too, are working for foreigners, as their hound." (p. 6) Why does the mother think the detective is a "hound"?
3. What is the narrator's family's religion?

4. Explain the significance of this quote mean: "...as if people are so stupid and naive, as if forcing a man to say what they want him to say would change his soul..." (p. 12).
5. Why are so many Koreans leaving Korea?
6. What does the thin ice of the Tuman River symbolize for the narrator?

"Homecoming"

1. What are the duties of the eldest son? Which Asian philosophy advocates this duty?
2. The following quote is an example of what literary device:
"Well, you should. A boy his age ought to know what his father is really like."
"He is too young. Someday. Time will come."
3. Why do you think the Japanese flag is flying at the Korean school?
4. Why do you think the Japanese and Korean children are separated in school?
5. Why do the students bow to the East?
6. State the years Japan annexed the following countries/regions: Korea, Manchuria, China Proper
7. What happened at Nanking in December 1937?
8. Why does the song "Danny Boy" seem strange to the children?
9. Why is it "not smart to sing foreign songs."
10. The narrator thinks he is beaten for singing a foreign song, but why is he actually beaten?
11. Why is the boy served wine?
12. What happens to the boy's teacher at the police station?
13. Why is the teacher's death ironic?

"Once upon a Time, on a Sunday"

1. Why must students go to school on Sundays during summer vacation? What do they do there?
2. Are all of the Koreans anti-Japanese?
3. What are "Special Volunteer Soldiers"?
4. Why does the narrator challenge his classmate to a race when he knows he will lose?
5. What does this tell you about the narrator?
6. These values can be attributed to which Asian philosophy?
7. Why are the Korean children not taught the Korean language or history in school?
8. What does the father mean when he says, "Let's hope he was crying for himself. It is a small beginning"? (p. 80)

"Lost Names"

1. Why have the Korean farmers stopped growing extra food?
2. "My father is wearing a Korean man's clothes: white pantaloons-like trousers, with the bottoms tied around his ankles, a long-sleeved white jacket, a blue vest, and a gray topcoat. My father is seldom seen in our native clothes, except when he has to attend a wedding or a funeral. He is wearing a black armband on the left sleeve of his gray topcoat. He is not wearing a hat." (p. 100) Why is the father dressed in this way?
3. What does the name "Iwamoto" mean?
4. Why do you think he chose that name?
5. Explain the sense of shame the father and the Japanese teacher feel. How are they different?
6. What is the meaning of the black armband?
7. What is the symbolic meaning for the loss of their names?

8. Why have the Japanese insisted on the name changes?

"An Empire for Rubber Balls"

1. What did the boy say as he was being beaten?
2. Why and how did the uncle die? Who killed him?
3. Why does the boy weep on the stage?

"Is Someone dying?"

1. What happened to the narrator's maternal grandfather?
2. Where is the narrator's father taken?

"In the Making of History-Together"

1. What is it like during the rainy season?
2. Describe the boy's physical condition after he leaves the labor camp.
3. What does the Korean community burn?
4. Why does the narrator save the Japanese monk and his wife?
5. How does the narrator feel about his compassionate decision?
6. How does the Japanese commandant at the detention camp die?
7. How long did the Japanese occupy Korea?
8. How old is the narrator at the end of the novel?
9. What are the terms of the Japanese surrender to the town?
10. Does the takeover happen peacefully or in battle?
11. What are the years of the setting of the novel?
12. What is the mood at the end of the novel?

ANSWERS TO THE STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR *LOST NAMES*:

"Crossing"

1. for his resistance-movement activities against the Japanese (p. 5)
2. The Korean detective is working for the Japanese who are foreigners. Calling him a "hound" implies that the detective is acting like a Japanese dog by doing their bidding, but he will never be considered their equal.)
3. Christianity (p. 6)
4. One can force a person to say something, but one cannot make him believe it.
5. The Japanese are buying up land cheaply by threats and coercion, thereby forcing people out. (p. 17)
6. courage and determination in the face of great danger; persistence and perseverance (p. 21)

"Homecoming"

1. to stay home and help his father manage the household (p. 22); Confucianism
2. foreshadowing
3. Korea is occupied by Japan, and the Japanese want the children to respect Japan. (p. 27)
4. The Japanese think they are superior. (p. 30)
5. It is the direction of the Japanese emperor and his imperial palace in Tokyo. (p.30)
6. Korea (1910), Manchuria (1934), China proper (1937)
7. Over 4,000 Chinese civilians were bayoneted to death by the Japanese in Nanking in December of 1937. (p. 32)
8. The song is in English, a language they've never heard. (p. 35)
9. The Japanese would not like it. (p. 40)
10. for lying about singing; he did not understand the Japanese question (p. 42)

11. He has proven he is brave. (p. 52)
12. He is beaten. (p. 52)
13. He is accused of being a Japanese spy when in actuality he wants to fight the Japanese. (p. 53)

"Once upon a Time, on a Sunday"

1. Sunday morning assembly; attend lecture, perform calisthenics, submit homework (p. 62)
2. no (p. 62)
3. Koreans who are sent to be soldiers in the Japanese army (p. 69)
4. He feels sorry for the classmate because he is poor and not bright and wants him to save face in front of the other children. (p. 72)
5. He is sensitive and cares about all of those under his care as a class leader. (p. 71)
6. (Confucianism)
7. The Japanese are trying to make them love and honor Japan and be a colony in support of the Japanese government. (p. 72)
8. The teacher must decide if he is going to be loyal to Korea or to Japan.

"Lost Names"

1. It is being requisitioned by the Japanese. (p. 95)
2. protest (p. 100)
3. Rock-foundation (p. 105)
4. It represents his feelings about religion (Peter is a rock); he wants to be a strong foundation for others to follow. (p. 106)
5. The father feels shame in losing his name, the link with his ancestors and his country. The teacher feels shame at treating other people so badly. (p. 110)
6. mourning (p. 110)
7. Death of their culture (p. 115)
8. To show the Koreans that they and their culture are not important--only Japan and the Japanese are (p. 115)

"An Empire for Rubber Balls"

1. "My father says Japan will lose the war in two years and when that day comes I will come back and kill you all." (p. 135)
2. He was working with the "wrong" group of Koreans in exile, the non-Communist faction; the Soviets shot him along with Japanese officers. (p. 136)
3. Because of a mix of Korean pride and compassion for everyone (p. 142)

"Is Someone dying?"

1. She was beaten after a church service (p. 159)
2. To a detention camp (p. 159)

"In the Making of History-Together"

1. It rains heavily every day, but the sun comes out often. (p. 160)
2. He has a mild case of dysentery and suffers from malnutrition. (p. 161)
3. The Japanese shrine, Japanese flags, bamboo sticks and wooden rifles (p. 164)
4. His father would have done it (Christian compassion) (p. 169)
5. "...neither angry nor ennobled-just a little sad, though without knowing why" (p. 170)
6. Hara-kiri, then his head is severed by his deputy (p. 171)
7. 36 years (p. 176)
8. 13 years old (p. 182)

9. The Japanese will turn the station over to the committee if they will guarantee the safety of the Japanese and allow those who want to leave, go unharmed. The Japanese will turn over the weapons for a receipt. (p. 189)
10. peacefully (p. 195)
11. 1932-1945 (p. 195)
12. Joyful and hopeful for the future

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR THE SHORT STORIES:

(Some background on the Korean War is important for the understanding of the stories. Either provide students with the background or have them do the research themselves before reading the short stories.)

Suggested stories from *Land of Exile*:

"The Wife and Children"
 "Mountains"
 "Kapitan Ri"
 "The Boozer"
 "A Dream of Good Fortune"
 "Winter Outing"
 "A Shared Journey"

Suggested stories from *Korean Short Stories*:

"Silent Parallel"
 "Illusion"

General questions for all stories:

1. What does the story tell you about Korean values?
2. What does the story tell you about the living conditions in Korea during the Korean war?
3. What is the author trying to say?

"THE WIFE AND CHILDREN" BY CH'AE MANSHIK"

(Explain what was happening in Korea in 1948)

1. Does the narrator know his family might not survive?
2. Is he being irresponsible?
3. What could possibly make him leave again?
4. Why does he not give her any money?
5. What is the woman's role in a family?

"MOUNTAINS" BY HWANG SUNWON

1. We do not know on which side the men are fighting. Why not?
2. Why does Pau not take the men to the village he knows?
3. What is Pau going to do with the girl?

"KAPITAN RI" BY CHON KWANGYONG

1. Why is there so much repetition of his name and title?
2. Which is better: loyalty or survival? Explain.

"THE BOOZER" BY CH'OE INHO

1. How old do you think the boy is?
2. How do you think he became a boozer?
3. Whose fault is it?
4. Is there any hope for him? What will happen to him?
5. Why do you think the author made the character a "boy"?

"A DREAM OF GOOD FORTUNE" BY HWANG SOGYONG

1. For which character do you feel the most sympathy and why?

2. What do you think will happen to Misun's unborn child? Will his life be better or worse or the same? Why?

"WINTER OUTING" BY PAK WAN-SONG

1. What do you think is the greatest tragedy in this story?
2. What positive things came out of the woman's tragedy?
3. Who is the most unfortunate character in the story and why?
4. What brought the narrator contentment in the end?

"A SHARED JOURNEY" BY IM CH'ORU

1. Where are the characters going? Literally? Figuratively?
2. What is the man hiding from?
3. Why had they "aged too quickly" (p. 270).
4. Why does the woman seem unhappy at the man's reappearance (p. 274).
5. Explain the significance of this quote: "Complete ignorance sometimes makes people brave" (p. 277).

"SILENT PARALLEL" BY CHOI BUM-SO

1. What does the title mean? What does it symbolize?
2. What might each of the two main characters symbolize?
3. What does the cutting and stealing of the two trees symbolize?
4. The village people hurry to plant two others. Why? What does their action symbolize?
5. If one considers the trees as a metaphor for the separation of Korea, explain the significance of the boys tied to the trees yet trying to hold hands.

"ILLUSION" BY PARK KYUNG-LI

1. What did Chi-yong do to prepare for the coming of the U.S. soldiers? Why did she do these things?
2. What will the grandmother and children do?
3. What is an illusion? What does the title mean?