COMPARING EXPERIENCES OF FORCED CULTURAL ASSIMILATION: NATIVE AMERICANS AND KOREANS

GRADES: 9-12 **AUTHOR:** Sue Babcock

SUBJECT: World History, Global Studies

TIME REQUIRED: Five class-periods

OBJECTIVES:

1. To learn about the Japanese occupation and annexation of Korea (1910-1945) as well as Japanese attempts to force Koreans to adopt their culture by having all Korean children attend Japanese schools.
2. To learn about the U.S. government's assimilation policy towards Native Americans, including its efforts to force Native American children to attend boarding schools.
3. To write an essay comparing the United States' Native Americans assimilation policies to Japan's Korean assimilation policies and assessing the impact of both sets of policies on the targeted populations.

MATERIALS REQUIRED:

- Handouts 1-22 (attached)
- General background readings (may be helpful for both the teacher and the student)
- Primary documents from Korea during the Japanese occupation (letters, diaries, memoirs, etc.) as well as period photos

BACKGROUND: "Japanese Occupation of Korea." *Korea Lessons for High School Social Studies Teachers.* New York: Korea Society, l999.

In the late nineteenth century there was a general race for colonies among the major imperial powers as each nation tried to carve out spheres of influence. In Northeast Asia, China, Russia and Japan competed to colonize Korea. Other powers, like Britain, France and the United States were involved indirectly in Korea's colonization. Korea, which was just emerging from its self-imposed isolation at the time, was forced to navigate between the rival colonial ambitions of its large neighbors.

In the centuries before when Korea was faced with external danger, it had turned to China for protection. But by the late nineteenth century, China had been weakened by Western powers, particularly Britain and Russia, and faced a major threat in the growing power of Japan. Japan, which was rapidly industrializing, had created a modern army and navy and viewed Korea and Manchuria as areas of expansion. Meanwhile, Korea's Chosŏn rulers were moving toward reform more slowly and still looked to China for protection. This protection, however, looked less certain after China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese War (l895). Japan further established its influence over Korea following its triumph over Russia in the Russo-Japanese War (1905). Koreans resisted Japan's attempts to expand its influence over Korea, despite the indifference of outside powers like Britain and the United States.

After a series of maneuvers, which included assassinations of members of the Korean royal family, the Japanese officially annexed Korea in 1910 and renamed it Chosen.

Koreans struggled to maintain their culture under Japanese rule. The Japanese banned Koreans from teaching their language and history and burned many historical documents. Koreans were forced to take Japanese names and to speak and teach in Japanese. Many Korean farmers were forced off their lands while others were forced to produce grain for Japan. Buildings were seized for Japanese military and government purposes, and many Korean businesses were handed over to Japanese officials.

The occupation of Korea went through several phases, some relatively benign, others very oppressive. Korean nationalists were divided and could not maintain a united opposition stance. Some groups wanted close ties to the West and called for reforms based on Western ideas. Other groups sought a return to Confucian values and Korean traditions. Still others, influenced by the 1917 Russian Revolution, agitated for a Communist state in Korea. These political and ideological divisions, formed under Japanese occupation, are still present in Korean society today.

Early in the occupation, it seemed possible that Korean nationalists might unite to oust Japan. Half a world away, U.S. president Woodrow Wilson was negotiating a new framework for global politics at Versailles. Wilson had publicly called for all nations to be to able to exercise self-determination. For Koreans, longing to rule themselves, Wilson's pronouncement was a ray of hope amid frustration with Japanese rule. Koreans' frustrations reached a boil when the last Korean king died. Rumors spread that he had been assassinated by the Japanese. Japan stoked public anger further when it restricted public mourning for the king. On March 1, 1919, an independence movement erupted when students in Seoul protested against Japanese rule, and publicly read a declaration of independence.

The Japanese violently suppressed the uprising. Thousands of people who had demonstrated or were thought to be sympathetic to the independence movement were arrested and imprisoned. Many died from beatings, torture and poor prison conditions. Others went into exile and continued to work for Korean independence from Manchuria, Shanghai or the United States.

Japan's crackdown drew widespread criticism, and in the l920s the Japanese government responded by easing some of its restrictive policies in Korea. They allowed the publication of some books and magazines in Korean and began to invest in education, roads and government buildings. The Japanese claimed that they were modernizing Korea and providing opportunities for trade. But by the l930s, the Japanese government itself was increasingly under the control of the military. The assassination of moderate officials, both in Korea and Japan, removed those who advocated lenient measures in Korea. As Japan began a campaign to conquer Manchuria and China, it increasingly perceived Korean independence as a threat. The Japanese government proclaimed that Korea was an integral part of the Japanese empire, so its language, religion and culture had to be Japanese as well.

During World War II, Japan employed Koreans in its military efforts. Koreans were drafted into the Japanese army or forced to work under dangerous, slave-like conditions. The Japanese military kidnapped thousands of Korean girls and women and forced them to serve as "comfort women" in military brothels, where they were raped by Japanese soldiers. Japan still refuses to accept responsibility for this policy, creating bitter feelings between Korea and Japan.

The Japanese occupation of Korea lasted until l945, when it was defeated in World War II. Following the war, Korea was divided by the allies that had defeated Japan. Russia occupied Korea North of the 38th parallel. And the United States occupied Korea South of the 38th parallel.

Though Korea recovered its independence at the end of World War II, the long and painful history that Korea and Japan share causes friction between the two countries to this day. Many issues left over from the colonial era have not been resolved, nor have the feelings of Koreans been healed. The legacy of the era still affects how these two major countries view their roles in the Pacific Rim.

(Note: If the teacher wants to devote more time to this issue, s/he could have the students research the issue of "comfort women," the Japanese textbook controversy, the Japanese apology for the war victims, the Japanese prime minister's trip to the Japanese war memorial at Yasukuni Shrine, Korea's longtime ban of Japanese cultural products and the effort to recover the remains of Koreans who died while performing forced labor in Japan.

PROCEDURE:

Day 1

1. Ask students to define culture and explain its importance to individuals and groups. Brainstorm what may occur when one culture is able to dominate another culture.
2. Brainstorm reasons why a dominant culture may want to destroy the culture of the subordinate group.
3. Brainstorm possible effects of destroying a culture, both on the dominant group and on the subordinate group.
4. Name times in history when one group has tried to destroy or change the culture of another group. Discuss the possible motives of the dominant group.
5. Read aloud and discuss Handout 1: Definitions of Genocide.
6. Read Handout 2: The Dawes Act aloud. Students should take notes on the reason for the change in U.S. policy and the major provisions of the Dawes Act. (Note that the "surplus" land after the allotments, around two-thirds of many reservations, was sold to whites.)
7. Provide some background on Colonel Richard Pratt and his reasons for supporting the establishment of Indian boarding schools.
8. If appropriate for class, discuss Pratt's phrase "kill the Indian, save the man." (Note that Pratt was not a racist and held Indians in high regard, unlike many whites of his time.)
9. Explain homework and provide students with an overview of the establishment, goals and operation of the Indian boarding schools. Readings on Colonel Pratt and the Carlisle Indian School may also be provided. These are easy to find on the internet. In Montana, students may read sections from the *Montana Indian Education* pamphlet, pages 20–24 (*A New Approach—Federal boarding Schools*; *Carlisle Indian School*; *R. H. Pratt—Who*

was he?; *Student Recruitment*; *Students' Trip Back East*; *Boarding Schools in Montana*). Students need to take notes from the readings for later use in writing their essays.

Day 2

1. Review the Dawes Act (1887) and the assimilation policy, emphasizing that many policymakers who wanted this policy were sympathetic with the plight of Native Americans.
2. If time is available, provide more information on Colonel Pratt and the Carlisle Institute, the most famous of the Indian boarding schools, as well as information on other off-reservation and on-reservation schools. The class might also discuss Jim Thorpe and the famous Carlisle sports teams.
3. Divide the class into groups of three or four. Pass out a set of photos of Native American children before and after their hair was cut and were dressed in "white man's clothing", and as well as other photos of the students at the boarding schools, to each group. Pass out Handouts 3, 4, 5 and 6 to each student in the group.
4. In their groups, have students examine the photos and take turns reading aloud from the handouts. The group will then discuss the effect of the boarding school experience on the Indian children.
5. As a class, discuss the effect of removing a child from his/her family, cutting his/her hair, dressing him/her in "white" clothes, changing his/her name and punishing him/her for speaking their native language. What do these actions say to an individual about their culture? What might be the short- and long-term effects on individuals and on the group? After the discussion, leave time for the students will take notes on the boarding school experience on Native American children.
6. As homework, assign students the task of taking notes on Handouts 8, 9 and 10.

Day 3

1. Discuss homework notes, including students' positive and negative reactions of Native Americans. In a class discussion, encourage the students to evaluate the policy of assimilation in light of various factors, such as the times, the effects and the long term consequences. Note that this was and still is a complex topic.
2. Ask students whether or not assimilation policies ever be used. Ask students to provide criteria for a more humane and more effective assimilation policy.
3. Introduce/define "imperialism." Provide background on the Western imperialism especially of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Asia.
4. Provide information (students should take notes) on the rapid rise of the modern, industrial Japanese state, which allowed the country to become an imperial power. Provide information about Korea, including the historical influence of China, the Chosŏn kingdom and its annexation by Japan in 1910. Provide information on the reasons why the Japanese to want to Koreans to adopt Japanese culture.
5. As homework, assign the students to read handouts 11–18. Have them take notes on the methods the Japanese used to assimilate the Koreans into the Japanese empire.

Day 4

1. Discuss student notes on the homework reading. What similarities exist between white Americans' view of Indians and the Japanese view of the Koreans? What similarities can

you find in the assimilation policies of the U.S. and Japan? What differences? What may account for the similarities and what may account for the differences? (Students should take some notes from this discussion to help them in writing their essays.)

2. If necessary, the teacher should provide some information on the importance of family in Asian societies.
3. Read Handout 9: Changing of Family Names as a class.
4. Introduce *Lost Names: Scenes from a Korean Boyhood* and provide some background information on Richard Kim (from the article in *Education for Asia*). For homework, assign students to read the first excerpt from *Lost Names* and take notes on how the Koreans in the book reacted to changing and registering their new Japanese names.

Day 5

1. Discuss the first excerpt from *Lost Names*.
2. Compare the rationale for name changes under U.S. and Japanese assimilation policies.
3. If there is time, read an additional section of *Lost Names* on the families going to the cemetery to apologize to their ancestors for the changing of their names.
4. If there are pictures of Koreans during the Japanese occupation, especially Koreans in Japanese dress and male students in military uniforms available, have students study the photos and compare them to the photos of Native Americans presented on Day 2. (Note that in both situations, male students were dressed in military uniforms.)
5. Discuss the essay format.
6. Tell students that they may choose to begin their essay by briefly describing the historical background and rationale for the assimilation policies of the U.S. and Japan.
7. Tell students that they must state (highlight or underline) a thesis. Their thesis may be that the policies have several fundamental similarities. Their thesis may be that even though some striking similarities in the policies, there are several important differences. These are only two ideas to get them started.
8. Tell students that the essay needs to be a minimum of 300 words and preferably typed.

RESOURCES:

Adams, David Wallace. *Education for Extinction*: *American Indians and the Boarding School Experience: 1875-1928.* Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1995.

Breen, Michael. *The Koreans: Who They Are, What They Want, Where Their Future Lies.* New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1998, 2004.

Brinkley, Alan. *Unfinished Nation: A Concise History of the American People*, 4th ed. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2004.

Child, Brenda J. *Boarding School Seasons: American Indian Families 1900-1940.* Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1999.

Child, Brenda J. and K. Tsianina Lomowaima. *Away from Home: American Indian Boarding School Experiences, l879-2000*. Phoenix, Arizona: Heard Museum, 2000.

Churchill,Ward. *Kill the Indian, Save the Man: The Genocidal Impact of American Indian*

Residential Schools. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2004.

Juneau, Stan. *A History and Foundation of American Indian Education Policy*. Helena, Montana: Montana Office of Public Instruction, 2001.

Kim, Richard E. *Lost Names: Scenes from a Korean Boyhood*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1988.

Naham, Andres. *Korea: Tradition and Transformation*, Seoul: Hollym, l996.

HANDOUT 1: DEFINITIONS OF GENOCIDE

1. *Physical Genocide* includes both direct/immediate extermination (murder) and what are referred to as "slow death measures". Slow death measures include "subjection to conditions of life which, owing to lack of proper housing, clothing, food, hygiene and medical care or excessive work or physical exertion are likely to result in the debilitation (and) death of individuals; mutilations and biological experiments imposed for other than curative purposes; deprivation of (the) means of livelihood by confiscation, looting, curtailment of work, and the denial of housing and of supplies otherwise available to the other inhabitants of the territory concerned."

2. *Biological Genocide* includes involuntary "sterilization, compulsory abortion, segregation of the sexes and obstacles to marriage," as well as any other policies intended to prevent births within a target group.

3. *Cultural Genocide* includes all policies aimed at destroying the specific characteristics by which a target group is defined or defines itself, thereby forcing them to become something else. Qualifying acts include the "forced transfer of the children…forced and systematic exile of individuals representing the culture of the group…prohibition of the use of the national language…systematic destruction of national or religious monuments, or their diversion to alien uses…"

Churchill. *Kill the Indian, Save the Man: The Genocidal Impact of American Indian Residential Schools,* pp. 5-6.

HANDOUT 2: THE DAWES ACT (1887)

Even before the Ghost Dance and the Wounded Knee tragedies, the federal government had moved to destroy forever the tribal structure that had always been the cornerstone of Indian culture. Reversing its policy of nearly fifty years, Congress abolished the practice by which tribes owned reservation lands communally. Some supporters of the new policy believed they were acting for the good of the Indians, whom they considered a "vanishing race" in need of rescue by white society. The action was designed to force Indians to become landowners and farmers, to abandon their collective society and culture and become part of white civilization.

The Dawes Severalty Act of l887 proved for the gradual elimination of most tribal ownership of land and the allotment of tracts to individual owners: 160 acres to the head of a family, 80 acres to a single adult or orphan, 40 acres to each dependent child….

In applying the Dawes Act, the Bureau of Indian Affairs relentlessly promoted the idea of assimilation that lay behind it. Not only did agents of the bureau try to move Indian families only to own plots of land, they also took many Indian children away from their families and sent them to boarding schools run by whites. They moved as well to stop Indian religious rituals and encouraged the spread of Christianity and the creation of Christian churches on the reservation.

Brinkley. *The Unfinished Nation: A Concise History of the American People*, p. 450.

HANDOUT 3: CUTTING OF THE HAIR OF NATIVE AMERICANS

The boarding schools were to strip all outward signs of the Indian children's identification with tribal life so they could begin to lead a "civilized life." Usually cutting the Indian children's hair was the first step as for many whites, as long hair was considered a "symbol of savagery." The following is an excerpt from David Wallace Adam's *Education for Extinction.*

> For boys the stripping away process began when the school sheared off their long hair. Shortly after arriving at Carlisle, Luther Standing Bear noticed "some white men come inside the school grounds carrying big chairs." The interpreter informed the boys that the men had come to cut their hair. While sitting in class, Standing Bear noticed that one by one the boys were being quietly removed: first Ya Slo, then Whistler. Each returned looking strange in his short hair. When it came to Standing Bear's turn, he comments that "it hurt my feelings to such an extent that the tears came into my eyes." All the short-cropped Sioux boys felt strange. "We still had our Indian clothes, but were all 'bald-headed.' None of us slept well that night; we felt so queer. I wanted to feel my head all the time."
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> …The reason for the short haircuts went deeper than cleanliness. At the heart of the policy was the belief that the children's long hair was symbolic of savagism; removing it was central to the new identification with civilization.

Adams. *Education for Extinction*, p.103.

HANDOUT 4: CHANGING OF THE DRESS OF NATIVE AMERICANS

The second step in the civilization process called for changing the students' dress. It made little difference whether students arrived wearing elegant buckskin or threadbare trade blankets; shortly after their arrival, their traditional clothing was exchanged for the standard school uniform. Indian service regulations held that each boy should be provided with two plain suits, with an extra pair of trousers, and each girl with three dresses. In some instances, boys also received a Sunday suit of better quality. The annual clothing ration also included the necessary underwear, nightclothes, and finally, boots….

It should be noted that the clothing at the off-reservation schools was much better than at the on-reservation schools. At the on-reservation schools the clothing was poor and often well worn to the extent that officials worried that it led to a lowered self esteem in the children.

Adams. *Education for Extinction*, pp103-4

HANDOUT 5: CHANGING THE NAMES OF NATIVE AMERICANS

Yet another assault on tribal identity came in the form of new names. The policy of renaming students was motivated by several concerns. First, many student arrived at school with names that the teachers could neither pronounce nor memorize. Most teachers had little patience with such names as Ain-dus-gwon, John Sang-way-way, Wah-sah-yah, Min-o-ke-shig and Mah-je-ke-shig. As one Indian Office official observed at a national educational conference, "a teacher would be at a disadvantage in trying to be either affectionate or disciplinary with an eight-syllabled girl like Sah-gah-ge-way-gah-bow-e-quay." Second, some students had name that, once translated, were perceived to be ridiculous and occasionally humiliating—such as Mary Swollen Face, Nancy Kills-a-Hundred, Sam Slow-Fly, John Bad-Gum, Ada Parts-His-Hair and Lizzie-Looks-Twice.

It is difficult to judge how students actually experienced the renaming process or what meanings they ascribed to it, but three instances from Carlisle are suggestive. Luther Standing Bear recalls that after a few days at Carlisle the interpreter announced: "do you see all these marks on the blackboard? Well, each word is a white man's name. They are going to give each one of you one of these names by which you will hereafter be known." The first boy stepped forward and with a long pointer touched one of the names, which was written on a piece of tape and attached to the back of his shirt.

> When my turn came, I took the pointer and acted as if I were about to touch an enemy. Soon we all had the names of white men sewed on our backs. When we went to school, we knew enough to take our proper places in the class, but that was all. When the teacher called the roll, no one answered his name. Then she would walk around and look at the back of the boys' shirts. When she had the right name located, she made the boy stand up and say "Present." She kept this up for about a week before we knew what the sound of our new names was.

Adams. *Education for Extinction*, pp.108, 111.

HANDOUT 6: ENFORCING THE "NO INDIAN" RULE IN INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOLS

School administrators and teachers were convinced that students would not become proficient in English unless they were forced to use it and not their native language. The school officials wanted to encourage compliance but often resorted to punishment. Some were extremely successful as noted in this letter from a Sioux girl in l881. It also should be noted that student letters were censored and at times destroyed. Thus, the record is not complete.

> Dear Sir Capt. Pratt:
>
> I write this letter with much sorrow to tell you that I have spoken one Indian word. I will tell you how it happened: yesterday evening in the dining-hall Alice Synn talked to me in Sioux, and before I knew what I was saying I found that I had spoken one word, and I felt so sorry that I could not eat my supper, and I could not forget that Indian word, and while I was sitting at the table the tears rolled down my cheeks. I tried very hard to speak only English.
>
> Nellie Robertson

Adams. *Education for Extinction,* p.141

HANDOUT 7: RECOLLECTIONS OF A WHITE FEMALE TEACHER OF NATIVE AMERICANS

In the early years, when students were taken directly from the camp and spoke no English, they entered the classroom with feelings that ran the gamut from hopeful expectation to suspicious hostility. What new experiences, both pleasant and traumatic, lay ahead? Who was their teacher and what would she do? Meanwhile, on the other side of the desk stood the teacher, whose special responsibility it was to reshape every aspect of her Indian pupils' personal and cultural beings. As Cora Folsom, a Hampton teacher, described the scene:

> A class of boys and girls from eight to twenty-five years of age, ignorant of every rule of school or society sits mute before you. The sad, homesick faces do not look encouraging. Everything is new and strange to them. The boys' heads feel bare without the long braids. The new clothes are not easy and homelike. They do not understand one word of your language, nor you of theirs, perhaps, but they are watching your every look and motion. You smile and say "Good Morning;" they return the smile in a hopeless kind of way, but not the "good morning." By a series of home-made signs, which they are quick to interpret, they are made to understand that they are to repeat your greeting, and you are rewarded with a gruff or timid "Good Monink," and thus another gate is opened to the "white man's road."

Adams. *Education for Extinction*, p.136.

HANDOUT 8: SEPARATION FROM FAMILIES: RATIONALE, HOMESICKNESS AND RUNAWAYS

For many Indian children who lived and worked at boarding schools, often enduring many unhappy years before they again saw their homes or families, running away became a common occurrence, indeed even a universal thread that united boarding school students through the decades. The institution was designed to separate children from all that was familiar to them—their families, tribes, languages, traditions—their very identities. Beginning with the Apache students at Carlisle in 1879, government boarding schools isolated children from their loved ones. Ironically, long-term boarding school students became "runaways" in order to maintain family as well as tribal ties.

As one reservation superintendent at the Fort Belknap Agency in Montana said to a Flandreau boy in 1918, it was in his "best interest" to remain at school for the summer. As he explained:

> When you return to the reservation you will be so settled in habits of sobriety and industry that you will not be affected to your detriment by influences both on the reservation and in its vicinity which tend to destroy the good work of the schools which you have been attending.

Countless parents wrote to the government boarding schools pleading for the return of their child because a brother had died, a mother was sick, a father injured or a grandparent aged. Ojibwe families always wanted to be together at maple sugar time and loved to instruct their children during the important work of the wild rice harvest. More than one parent encouraged the administrators to "do the right thing because we never bother you about anything much" and send their child home. The lonesomeness of parent for their children, who most often attended boarding schools at great distances from their families and communities, sometimes even exceeded the homesickness of their children.

Child. *Boarding School Seasons: American Indian Families 1900-1940*, pp. 6, 51, 53–54.

At about the same time, a youngster who'd run from the Round Lake School (Saskatchewan) in 25-degree below zero weather and became lost in a blizzard was found when a search was initiated *four days later*. In l941, three boys who'd run from St. Anne's School (Ontario) simply vanished, never to be seen again (it is theorized that they drowned, their bodies then washing into Hudson's Bay).

Churchill. *Kill the Indian, Save the Man,* p.58.

HANDOUT 9: LETTER FROM A RUNAWAY STUDENT TO HIS FATHER

Dear Dad,

I suppose you will be surprised to know that I am here. I know I have made a big mistake and it is hard for me to think of the grief it will cause you Dad.

Dad I was discouraged I just went mad. I realize what I have done and am very sorry. I'll go back next year and like it. The main thing is getting out of here and home now. I have had good luck in the bum world but I don't like it somehow. We left Flandreau Saturday afternoon about four o'clock. We slept in a straw stack Saturday night. Stayed there all day Sunday. 1:30 we caught a passenger out of Pipestone to Wilmar from there we rode a dead-header to Minneapolis. We walked all day and slept in a straw stack. In the morning we finished our journey to Hudson. Here we got each an orange, three graham crackers, [for] 30c. We bought a loaf of bread, can of sardines, three milky ways and some chocolate peanuts. We then caught a time freight from there to Spooner. We road between the cars from Hudson to New Richmond. Otherwise we road the blinds and a dead-header all the way. We walked 29 miles from Spooner to Hayward and then ten miles to my partners home.

They are good to me here. Insisted I stay till I get rested up. I was going on, but they insisted. It is a nice place.

Dad I just want to forget the cause of my running away. I have to get home Dad. Write and tell me what you think. I hate to start bumming for home but I can't raise any money.

I'll promise I'll do my best to make up for my mistake.

Your son,
Victor

Child. *Boarding School Seasons: American Indian Families 1900-1940,* pp. 92–93.

HANDOUT 10: ONE REMEMBRANCE—MITCH WALKING ELK

Native American singer and songwriter Mitch Walking Elk, himself a veteran of the boarding school system, evoked the spirit of Indian resistance to boarding school life in his sweeping pan-Indian anthem that pays tribute to five hundred years of Native American survival in the face of warfare, removals, the abrogation of treaties, cultural genocide, termination and racism, simply titled, "Indians." Walking Elk, of Cheyenne-Arapaho-Hopi ancestry, attended and was expelled from several Oklahoma Indian boarding schools during his youth. Walking Elk rode for three days before being captured by the police in Cherokee country. Many survivors of the boarding school experience, perhaps even those early Ciricahua pupils at Carlisle, would agree with Walking Elk's interpretation, "They put me in the boarding school and they cut off all my hair, gave me an education, but the Apache's still in there."

Child. *Boarding School Seasons: American Indian Families 1900-1940,* p. 8.

HANDOUT 11: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE HISTORY OF THE PERIOD

The Japanese were only copying what Western powers had been doing in Asia. Most Koreans saw the annexation of 1910 as a usurpation of their country even though the emperor Sunjong had approved it. Some saw it as an opportunity for progress and modernization. However, it turned 14,700,000 Koreans into Japanese subjects and ended the Chosŏn kingdom. It also brought about a more bitter experience than the Koreans could have expected under any other power.

Breen. *The Koreans: Who They Are, What They Want, Where Their Future Lies,* p. 104.

HANDOUT 12: "THE BROKEN PEOPLE"

The Japanese masters approached the job of absorbing Korea with fundamentalist zeal and intruded deeply into every aspect of Korean society, with the advantages of the modern police state. The aim was to annihilate Korean culture and identity, and absorb the people into a greater Japan, as second-class citizens. Japanese became the official language. Korean was taught as a second language, but later even its use was forbidden. Later, too, Koreans were forced to abandon their names and adopt Japanese names.

Seoul became known as Keijo (Kyongsong, in Korean). The colonial authorities destroyed 85 percent of all the buildings in Kyongbok Palace, the main royal residence, and erected their own government offices in front of the palace ground with deliberate geomantic intent. Viewed from the air, this and the city hall building half a mile away were shaped to form the word 'Japan' in Chinese characters. The tallest building in the capital, such as the Chosun Hotel and the Bank of Korea, were all newly built by the Japanese. There was a Japanese Shinto shrine on Namsan Hill in the city centre and monuments to Japanese heroes, including one built in the l930s to three officials killed in a bomb attack by a Korean terrorist.

Breen. *The Koreans: Who They Are, What They Want, Where Their Future Lies*, p. 105.

HANDOUT 13: THE JAPANESE JUSTIFY THEIR ANNEXATION OF KOREA

In order to justify their need to take over and civilize their neighbors, the Japanese convinced themselves that, despite being of the same race, that the Koreans were actually hardly human. "If you look closely," said one member of Japan's parliament, "they appear to be a bit vacant, their mouths open and their eyes dull, somehow lacking…Instead, to put it in the worst terms, one could even say that they are closer to the beasts than to human beings."

A Japanese travel writer, in a not untypical description, wrote that the seven major products of Korea were 'shit, tobacco, lice, *kisaeng*, tigers, pits and flies.' He was especially struck by Korean toilet habits and referred to Seoul as the "shit capital of the world," for, allegedly, humans as well as their animals tended to relieve themselves wherever they felt like it.

Breen. *The Koreans: Who They Are, What They Want, Where Their Future Lies*, p.105.

HANDOUT 14: EFFECT ON THE KOREANS' VIEW OF THEMSELVES

Koreans began to be bombarded with such images of themselves. It was only a short step to the conclusion that their backwardness was the result of a natural inferiority. What had their slothful, dependent, superstitious and diseased ancestors ever produced that was worth preserving? With the Japanese control over modern education, young Koreans would lose touch with their heritage and settle into the Japanese assumptions. It is difficult to overemphasize the depth of their intellectual assault on the Korean mind. This was Korea's introduction to the civilized world of trains and telephones and great power that had hitherto passed them by. Coming into this world, they found their position—at the bottom. The majority of Koreans at this time were uneducated. There were of course sophisticated Koreans, but it was even harder for them to resist this negative view of their sorry nation.

Breen, *The Koreans: Who They Are, What They Want, Where Their Future,* p. 106.

HANDOUT 15: EDUCATION ORDINANCE (AUGUST 1911)

The colonial government issued an education ordinance in August 1911 which stated that the purpose of education in Korea was to produce "loyal and obedient" and useful subjects of the Japanese emperor. It adopted a system of four-year primary education, a four-year secondary school program for boys and a three-year secondary curriculum for girls. However, only a handful of schools were established during this time which a large number of private schools were closed. The ordinance made the study of the Japanese language compulsory at all approved schools and banned instruction in Korean history and geography. All textbooks which had been previously used in Korean schools were confiscated and only those approved by the Japanese were allowed.

Naham, *Korea: Tradition and Transformation*, p. 250.

HANDOUT 16: EDUCATION ORDINANCE (MARCH 4, 1938)

In the name of assimilation, Korean language instruction was first simply discouraged while the movement for the use of Japanese was stepped up: in l938 [Korean language instruction] was abolished in all public schools. By both covert and overt means the use of the Japanese language was forced upon the Koreans. Failure to speak Japanese denied the Koreans many rights and privileges, including that of securing ration cards and public certification.

After l935, compulsory attendance at Shinto ceremonies created numerous problems for Korean Christians. An increasing number of ministers and members of Christian churches were imprisoned because of their refusal to participate in the Shinto rituals, and a growing number of Korean private schools and social and cultural organizations were closed.

On March 4, l938, another new educational ordinance was issued…this ordinance brought about the following changes: the names of Korean primary and secondary schools were made identical to those in Japan; schools for Koreans and Japanese were put under unified regulations; and separate normal schools for Koreans and Japanese were replaced by integrated normal schools.

Naham, *Korea: Tradition and Transformation*, p. 255.

HANDOUT 17: PLEDGE OF THE IMPERIAL SUBJECTS, OCTOBER 1937

The memorization of these pledges was required of all Koreans.

Type A

1. We are the subjects of the great empire of Japan.
2. We shall serve the emperor with united hearts.
3. We shall endure hardships and train ourselves to become good and strong subjects.

Type B

1. We the Imperial subjects shall serve the nation loyally and faithfully.
2. We the Imperial subjects shall, through trust and love, cooperate to strengthen our unity.
3. We the Imperial subjects will endure hardships and train ourselves to promote the Imperial way.

Naham. *Korea: Tradition and Transformation*, p. 255.

HANDOUT 18: JAPANESE RULE—LANGUAGE AND RELIGION

Towards the end of the Japanese rule of Korea, local newspapers were closed and all types of associations were replaced with government-controlled federations. Protestant denominations were ordered to merge.

Use of the Japanese language was expanded in schools to the point that not only was Korean study halted, but also all class instruction was to be conducted in Japanese. Pupils could receive corporal punishment for speaking Korean. Leaders of the Korean Language Society were tried in the l940s for completing a dictionary.

The authorities introduced the Japanese Shinto religion with a vengeance. Koreans were required to worship at Shinto shrines. This issue divided Christians into pragmatic and principled camps. Thousands of pastors and believers were arrested, thrashed and tormented by police torturers. Many continued to resist. Some died under torture, but many gave in.

Breen. *The Koreans: Who They Are, What They Want, Where Their Future Lies,* p. 114.

HANDOUT 19: JAPANESE RULE—CHANGING FAMILY NAMES (REPRINT #1)

But the ruling which caused the most widespread anguish, for it touched all Koreans, was a Japanese demand that they change their names. After this decree went out, all around the country, Koreans lined up outside police stations and government offices in comatose disbelief as they registered their new Japanese names. At schools, the new names were offered up to the emperor in Shinto ceremonies. Many of the elderly, in befuddled resistance, refused to choose and had names selected for them. For a people who could trace their male ancestry back centuries and whose fundamental sense of meaning in life derived from the imperative to continue their lineage, this was the final subjugation. For generations, a destitute Korean father above the slave caste had at least been able to bestow his name on his child. Now even that was taken away. Many Koreans submitted their new names for registration wearing black armbands and went afterwards to pray at their ancestral tombs. Parents begged their bewildered children to forgive them, and a new generation of nationalists discovered themselves in the crucible of their parents' misery.

Breen. *The Koreans: Who They Are, What They Want, Where Their Future Lies*, p.114.

HANDOUT 20: JAPANESE RULE—CHANGING FAMILY NAMES (REPRINT #2)

(Note: The following excerpt is from *Lost Names*: *Scenes of a Korean Boyhood* by Richard E. Kim. The book is both an autobiographical and fictional account of a boyhood and early adolescence in Korea at the height of the Japanese occupation, from l932 to l945.)

But after all, there is no school that morning—for me and a few other children, that is. When I arrive at the school, our teacher is already in our classroom. He is a young Japanese, a recent graduate of a college in Tokyo. He is twenty-four years old, soft-spoken and rather gentle with the children. He is lean, in fact, so lean that we give him a nickname the moment he is assigned to our class: Chopstick. Always pale-faced and looking in poor health, he likes to recite Japanese poetry in class, though we hardly understand it…

The bell rings, and we sit up straight, hushed.

The teacher stands up, looking at a piece of paper in his bony hand. He keeps silent for a long time, looking out the windows. It is almost like a blizzard outside—the wind roaring and howling, the snow whipping down, slanting at nearly a forty-five angle. The snow is so heavy and thick that I can barely make out the other buildings across the frozen pond.

"Well," he says.

And I bid the children rise from their chairs, and, when they do, I command them to bow to our teachers. We all bow our heads to him; then we sit down.

"Today," he says, without looking at us, holding up the piece of paper in front of him, "I must have your new names. I have the new names of most of you in this class, but the principal tells me that some of you have not yet registered your names. I shall call your old names, and those who are called will be excused from the class immediately, so that they can go home and return with their new names, which have been properly registered with the proper authorities in town. Do you understand what I am saying?"

Without waiting for our reaction, and still without looking at us, he calls out several names. My name is called.

"You may be excused," he says, crunching the piece of paper into a ball in his fist. "Report back as soon as you can."

He gets down from the platform and says, "The rest of you will remain quiet and go over your homework." With that announcement, he abruptly turns away from us and walks out of the room.

I put my shoes on outside the classroom and, brushing aside the questions from the bewildered children, I start running away from the school as fast as I can in the blinding snow and choking, icy wind, running and skidding and stumbling in the deep snow. My new name, my old name, my true name, my not-true name? I am plunging and slogging through the snow, thinking, "I am going to lose my name; I am going to lose my name; we are all going to lose our names…."

* * *

My grandmother says, "Leave the boy home. He will catch cold."

My father says, "No Mother. I want him to come with me. I want him to see it and remember it." My father is wearing a Korean man's clothes: white pantaloon-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.

"Have some hot soup before you go," says my grandmother.

"No, thank you, Mother," says my father, holding my hand. "Stay with Father and keep an eye on him."

My grandmother nods. "It is the end of the world," she mutters angrily. "Damn them! damn them!"

Outside, by the west gate, four of my father's friends are waiting for us. They are dressed like my father—all wearing black armbands on the left sleeves of their gray topcoats. I box to them, but no one says a word either to me or to anyone else. On the small stone bridge outside the gate, they pause for a moment, whispering among themselves. The stream is frozen and covered thick with snow. Passers-by box to the group. The four men—my father's friends—are the bookstore owner, an elder of our Presbyterian church, a doctor and a farmer who also has an apple orchard. The snow is slashing down on us, and my ears are cold, even with ear muffs on. Snowflakes get inside my collar, making me shiver. We walk down the street; my father is in the middle of the group, holding my hand. I slip on an icy patch and stumble, and the bookstore owner helps me up and holds my hand. In the snow-covered open-air market place, which is closed down during the winter, the wind howls even more strongly, shrieking through the electric wires and telephone poles. The snow is beating down so hard that I have to bow my head and face sideways, but the men are walking straight up, occasionally returning, in silence, the bows from the other men on the street. We go past the town hall, past the Japanese department store and shops, and through the main street, where most of the shops are—the bakery, the barber shop, the watch shop, the restaurant. The clothing store, the bicycle shop, the grain store, the pharmacy, the doctor's office, the dentist's office, the hardware store, the bank, the grocery store…and the townspeople are looking out from their shops and offices—some bowing to us, some waving at us—and, as we continue down the main street, we are followed by other people, and more and more people join us as we come near the end of the main street. My father and the bookstore owner are still holding my hands, and I have to try hard to keep up with the men, though they are walking very slowly. At the end of the main street, we come to an intersection and turn to the right. It is an uphill road, and the snow-laden wind slips down from the top of the hill, almost blowing me off my feet, and I feel the men's hands tighten their grips on mine. At the top of the hill, there is a small Methodist church and, across from it, the police station. We struggle up the snow-packed hill, by the long stone wall of the police station, and enter its main gate. Inside, on the station grounds, in the deep snow, a long line of people barely moves along. We walk over the crackling snow and stand at the end of the line. We exchange bows with the people standing in line. No one says anything—I, my father, the bookstore owner, the doctor, the farmer, the elder of our church, and all those people who have preceded or followed us…

I am freezing with cold. I stamp my feet, crushing the icy snow on the ground. Without a word, the bookstore owner opens the front of his topcoat and pulls me inside and covers me up, except for my face, which is snuggled against the back of my father. He turns, looks at me, and fixes my ear muffs. He neither says a word to me nor smiles at me. I know when to keep quiet.

The line, hardly advancing, gets longer and longer. New people are lined up even outside the station grounds.

Someone comes to us. Someone from the front of the line. He is a young Korean man. He bows to my father. "Please, sir," he says, "come and take my place."

My father shakes his head. "I will wait for my turn here. Thank you anyway."

He stands silent for a moment.

"It is all right," my father says. "Go back to your place."

He bows to my father once more and says, before he returns to the front of the line, "I am dying of shame, sir;" then, his words nearly lost in the howling snow, "I don't know what I can do."

A little while later, a Japanese policeman comes toward us. When he comes near to us, I can tell that he is an inspector. He is wearing a black cape. I see his long saber peering out of the bottom of his cape. I can hear the clank the saber makes against his black leather riding boots. He salutes my father. He has a long turned-up mustache. "It is an honor," he says to my father, "to see you in person here. You could have sent one of your servants."

My father is silent.

"Please come with me," say the Inspector. "I can't have you line up out her like a common person. Please."

"I will wait for my turn, just like everyone else," says my father. "They have been here longer than I have."

"Come with me," insists the Inspector. "Please."

Afraid and, to my shame, trembling, I look up at my father.

My father looks at the inspector and then at his friends.

Other people are watching us.

I feel the hands of the bookstore owner tighten on my shoulders.

"If you insist," says my father.

The Inspector looks down at me. "You must be freezing," he says. His white-gloved hand reaches out for my snow-covered hair.

I duck my head inside the topcoat of the bookstore owner.

"Bring the boy with you, by all means," says the Inspector.

I hear my father's boots crunching on the snow. I free myself out of the bookstore owner's hands and nearly bump into the back of my father.

He takes my hand. "Come with me."

The Inspector walks beside my father. His black cape is billowing in the wind and snow, flapping and flapping—and his saber jingling and clanking. We walk toward the front door of the granite station building. As we pass by the people in the line, they bow to my father silently. My father's head is bowed, and, without looking at the people, he goes slowly, holding my hand.

The Inspector opens the front door and holds it for us. A Korean detective inside the building quickly bows to my father. "You really didn't have to come in person, sir," he says in Korean. "I would have been glad to have registered your new name for you if I had known you were coming in person. In this cold."

We are inside the station. Other people in the line are admitted inside one at a time. The air is steamy and warm. The hallway is swarming with black-uniformed policemen, all wearing sabers. The wooden floor is slushy with melting snow.

The Inspector ushers us into a large room immediately to the right of the hallway by the door. There are two big tables, each with a policeman sitting behind. At each table, by the side of the Japanese policeman, a Korean detective sits on a chair, apparently interpreting for those Koreans who cannot understand Japanese.

The Korean detective who met us at the door brings a chair from the back of the room. He offers it to my father.

My father does not sit down.

The Inspector tells the detective to bring some tea.

One of the men sitting at one of the tables facing the Japanese policeman cannot speak Japanese and has to have the words interpreted. The man is old: he helps out in the open-air market place on market days, doing odd jobs.

The Japanese policeman, dipping a pen in an inkwell, does not lift his face from a large ledger on the table when he says to the Korean detective by his side, "Tell the old man we will pick out a name for him if he can't make up his mind."

The Korean detective picks up a sheet of paper and shows it to the old man, translating the policeman's words.

The old man shakes his head, looking at the paper, which contains a long list of names. "Anything," he mumbles. "It doesn't matter."

The Korean detective does not translate those words. Instead, he puts his finger on one of the names and says, "How about this one, old man?"

The old man says, "It doesn't matter which. No one's going to call me by that name anyway—or by any other name."

"Then, this will be recorded as your new name." The Korean detective tells the policeman the old man's "new" name—a Japanese name.

"All right," says the policeman. He writes the name in the ledger. "What about his family members?"

The Inspector comes back into the room, accompanied by another Japanese policeman. I know him. He is the Chief of Police.

My father exchanges bows with the Chief of Police.

The Chief of Police says, "Such inclement weather, and you honor us by being here in person. Is this your son?"

I edge nearer to my father.

The Chief of Police, a short man with bushy eyebrows and large eyes behind dark brown tortoise-shell glasses, look at the Inspector and says, "Well, I trust the Inspector here will take care of your matter as speedily as he can. Anything, anytime I can be of any help or service, please call on me. I am, indeed, honored by your presence here in person."

My father and he exchange bows again. The Chief of Police goes out of the room, his black leather riding boots jangling and dragging his spurs on the wet floor.

My father takes out a piece of paper from his vest pocket. He hands it to the Inspector. "I assume," he says, "this is what you want, Inspector. I hope you will be pleased."

The Inspector looks at the paper. "Yes, yes," he says. Iwamoto….Ah—it is a very fine name, sir. It does justice to your person. It reminds me of your house by the mountain and, also, of your orchard, with all those rocky mountains around it. I will have it registered. You needn't wait for the certificate, needless to say. I will have someone bring it to your house later."

"Iwamoto…Iwamoto." I mouth the name. Our new name. My new name. "Iwa"—rock. "Moto"—root…base…foundation. "Rock-foundation." So this is our "new" surname, our Japanese "family" name.

"Come," my father says to me.

The Korean detective leads us out, with the Inspector by my side. At the front door, which the detective holds open, the Inspector gives my father a salute. "I thank you, sir, for taking the trouble to come in person."

We step out in the cold. The snow is turning into a blizzard. The long line of people is still standing outside, hunched and huddled, rubbing their ears and faces, stamping their feet in

the snow. My father pauses for a moment on the steps, one arm around my shoulders, and says:

"Look."

Afraid, bewildered, and cold, I look up at his face and see tears in his eyes.

"Take a good look at all of this," he whispers. "Remember it. Don't forget this day."

I look at all those people lined up, from the steps all the way to the gate and outside. I feel a tug at my hand, and I follow him down the steps. We walk by the people slowly, my father not speaking. They bow to him, some removing their hats. My father, bowing back, approaches the group of his friends still in line. In silence, they shake hands.

Then, we move on along the line of people standing in the snow. Some shake hands with my father; most of them merely bow, without words. We are outside the gate. There, too, a long line has formed and is still forming all the way down the hill, past the gray stucco Methodist church…and I am thinking, "We lost our names; I lost my name; and these people are all going to lose their names, too, when they walk into the police station, into that half-empty large hall, when a 'new' name, a Japanese name, is entered in the big ledger with a pen dipped into a dark blue inkwell…"

"What does our new name mean, sir?" I ask my father when we are down the hill and on the main street.

"Foundation of Rock," he says shielding my face from the bitter-cold snow with his hand. "…on this rock I will build my church…"

I do not understand him.

"It is from the Bible," he says.

* * *

By twelve o'clock, all the children in our class have new names. As soon as each class submits to the principal a complete list of all the new names, the class is sent out of the school to go to the Japanese shrine to pay its respects of the gods of the Empire and make its report to the Emperor—to announce that we now have Japanese names. At least once a week, each class is required to go to the shrine for an hour of meditation and prayer for the victory and prosperity of the Empire…

The snow is coming down hard as we struggle up the narrow, icy path in file. Whenever there is a strong wind, the heavily laden pines shower down on us swarms of little icicles and snow. My bare hands are freezing, my bare ears are numb, and my feet are wet and cold with snow that slips inside my boots. Everyone's cheeks are red and raw from the icy wind. We gasp our way up the mountain. There is a small plaza at the foot of the stone steps, and the wind at the clearing is unbearable. The lashing, biting wind shrieks and whines all around us. The town below is invisible—lost in the blizzard, smothered by the raging snow. At the command of our teacher, I have to coax the children to gather and stand in formation. Then we kneel down in the snow, with our head bowed. The teacher tells the priest, who has come down the steps from the shrine up above, that we are all there to report to the gods and the Emperor our new names. The priest, dressed in a purple-and-white priest's garment, wears a small sort of hat on his bald head. The teacher gives him the list of our new names. The priest reads the names one by one, slowly, bowing his head to the shrine above with each name. Then the priest chants something in a sing song voice, and, when he finishes the chanting, we all bow, not standing up. Snow clings to my pants, and my hands are wet from the snow. We look like a group of snowmen, covered as we are from top to bottom with the snow. At last we are dismissed by the priest, who goes back up the

stone steps into the shrine, back to the sanctuary of his gods and the spirit of the Emperor that resides in it.

Kim. *Lost Names: Scenes from a Korean Boyhood*, pp 98-108.

HANDOUT 21: APOLOGIZING TO ONE'S ANCESTORS

(Note: The following excerpt is from *Lost Names*: *Scenes of a Korean Boyhood* by Richard E. Kim. The book is both an autobiographical and fictional account of a boyhood and early adolescence in Korea at the height of the Japanese occupation, from l932 to l945.)

About four miles out of town, between our house and the orchard, the cemetery lies at the foot of a hill that gradually rises up to become a craggy, rock-strewn, barren mountain. It is what the townspeople call a common burying ground, one that is used by poor people who cannot provide their dead with a private cemetery—with the hope that someday, when they can afford a family burial plot, they will exhume the dead and move them to their own, private graves. My family is not poor—now; it was poor in the days of my great-grandfather, when he was young, and, of course, before their time. All our known ancestors are buried in the common burying ground, where I am now plowing through the deep snow in the wailing wind—my grandmother's parents are buried next to each other.

Twenty or thirty people are moving about the burying ground. Some are in white; some, in gray, like my father and my grandfather. All are shrouded with white snow; now, some are kneeling before graves; some, brushing the snow off gravestones; some, wandering about like lost souls….

Halfway to the graves of our ancestors, we meet my father's friend the doctor and his old mother, who are coming down the hill. No one says a word, but the old woman silently touches the sleeve of my grandfather's gray topcoat. Her gray hair is undone and down in the fashion of women in mourning. Her hair is coated with snow and her eyebrows, too. She is weeping, leaning on the arm of her son. We part in silence.

Whenever we pass people on their knees before the graces of their ancestors, we bow our heads. Some people are on their way out of the grounds, and we move past each other without words, just bowing to each other.

When we are in front of the graves of our ancestors, my father wipes the snow off the gravestone. The names chiseled on the gravestones are filled with ice, so that I can barely distinguish the outlines of the letters.

The three of us are on our knees, and, after a long moment of silence, my grandfather, his voice weak and choking with a sob, says, "We are a disgrace to our family. We bring disgrace and humiliation to your name. How can you forgive us!"

He and my father bow, lowering their faces, their tears flowing now unchecked, their foreheads and snow-covered hair touching the snow on the ground. I, too, let my face fall and touch the snow, and I shiver for a moment with the needling iciness of the snow on my forehead. And I, too, am weeping, though I am vaguely aware that I am crying because the grown-ups are crying.

My grandfather unwraps a small bundle he brought with him and takes out three cups and a bottle of rice wine. He fills the cups with the wine, for all of us.

We hold the cups in our hands and pour the wine over the graves, one by one, with my grandfather filling our cups with more wine before each mound. The pale liquid forms a small puddle for a second on the hard snow before it trickles down into the snow, as if someone inside the mound beneath the snow-packed earth is sipping it down.

Then, my grandfather fills our cups once more, and we hold them up high before our eyes for a moment and then drink.

My grandfather would like to be alone for a while. My father and I make a final bow to the graves and leave him.

More people are trudging in the snow, coming up to the burying ground. Here and there, I see people on their knees in front of the graves, some crying aloud, some chanting, wailing mournful words. An old man in white—gasping in the freezing air and the blowing snow flurries, supported by a young woman, also in white and with her hair disheveled, stumbles in the knee-deep snow. He comes up to my father.

The old man stretches out his wrinkled, gnarled hand to my father, touching him. His long, white beard is caked with snow. His small, bleary eyes, opaque and watery, peer out of the hollows formed by his high cheekbones.

His tremulous voice says to my father, "How can the world be so cruel to us? We are now ruined—all of us! Ruined!"

My father does not speak.

The young woman says, "Come on, Father, we must hurry home."

The old man says, "Now I lost my own name and I am as dead as…"

"Please!" the young woman begs.

And—suddenly—I am repelled by the pitiful sight of the driveling, groveling old man, whose whining muttering is lost in the bitter wind and swirling snow. Turning away from him, I stride down the path made by my footsteps. I stop and turn around to see if my father is following me.

He is still with the old man, who is now clutching at the arm of my father, openly wailing, and my father stands silently, with his head bowed. The young woman, too, standing behind the back of the old man, is weeping. Beyond them, I see my grandfather on his knees before the graves.

The snow keeps falling from a darkening sky, millions and millions of wild, savage pellets swirling and whishing about insolently before they assault us with malicious force. I watch the people everywhere, all those indistinct figures engulfed in the slashing snow, frozen still, like lifeless statuettes—and I am cold, hungry and angry, suddenly seized with indescribable fury and frustration. I am dizzy with a sweet, tantalizing temptation to stamp my feet, scratch and tear at everything I can lay my hands on, and scream out to everyone in sight to stop—*Stop! Please stop!*—stop crying and weeping and sobbing and wailing and chanting….Their pitifulnes, their weakness, their self-lacerating lamentation for their ruin and their misfortune repulse me and infuriate me. What are we doing anyway—kneeling down and bowing our heads in front of all those graves? I am gripped by the same outrage and revolt I felt at the Japanese shrine, where, whipped by the biting show and mocked by the howling wind, I stood, like an idiot, bowing my head to the gods and the spirit of the Japanese Emperor…and I remember my father's words: "I am ashamed to look in your eyes. Someday, your generation will have to forgive us." *Stop! Stop! Stop!* I want to shout out into the howling wind and the maddening snow. How long—for how many generations—are you going to say to each other, "I am ashamed to look in your eyes"? Is that going to be the only legacy we can hand down to the next generation and the next and the next?

"Oh, we are ruined!" Ha! What is the matter with you all, you grown-ups! All this whining, wailing, chanting, bowing to the graves, sorrowful silence, meaningful looks, burning tears…that is not going to save you from having to cry out, "Oh, ruination!" Damn, damn, damn—like my good old grandmother would say—Damn!

And—with the kind of cruelty only a child can inflict on adults—I scream out toward those frozen figures:

"I don't care about losing my name! I am just cold and *hungry*!"

And only then do I give in to a delicious sensation of self-abandonment—and I begin to cry.

My father is at my side. "We'll go home now."

With tear-filled eyes, I look up at him. "I am sorry, but…"

"Yes?"

"But—what good can all this do? What good will all this do for us?" I say defiantly, flinging my arms wide open to encompass the burying ground, with all its graves and the people; "What good will all this do to change what happened!"

To my surprise, he says quickly, "Nothing."

"Then, why do you?..."

"That's enough now," he says. "Someday, you will understand."

I am not soothed by these words, which are vague and hollow to a child's comprehension of here and now. I do not respond to him.

He bends down, bringing his face close to mine. There is a strange smile on his face. "Today," he says, "you, too, have made a small beginning." Ah—Father—always a riddle.

"Come on," he says, extending his hand to help my grandfather onto the path. "Let us all go home now."

It is dark, and, with the coming of darkness and the night, the wind is dying down, and the snow is falling straight and calmly. The blurry figures of the people move about the burying ground like ghosts haunting the graves in the snow.

At the bottom of the hill, my father asks, "Would you like me to carry you on my back?"

I nod unabashedly and climb onto his back, nuzzling my frozen face against him, clinging to his broad shoulders.

And so, in such a way then, the three of us, the three generations of my family, bid farewell to our ancestors in their graves, which we can no longer see in the heavy snow, and join the others from the town to find our way back to our home.

Today, I lost my name. Today, we all lost our names.

February 11, 1940.

Kim. *Lost Names: Scenes from a Korean Boyhood,* pp.110-115.