

2009 SUMMER FELLOWSHIP IN KOREAN STUDIES TRAVEL LOG

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Introduction:

When I applied for the Korea Society's 2009 Summer Fellowship in Korean Studies last February, I did so with a dual purpose. First, I hoped to gain a better understanding of Korean history in order to incorporate information gained from the fellowship into my classroom. By travelling around the country to visit important cultural sites, by listening to traditional music, by taking photographs, by sampling Korean food, I hoped I would be able to document for my students the rich tapestry of Korean history, so that they would see Korea as a unique society worthy of study in its own right, rather than as a mere bridge from China to Japan. I was particularly interested in the way Korea had maintained its cultural identity over the centuries. Personally speaking, after a lifetime spent in the study of the Greeks and Romans, I also sought the chance to experience my own odyssey, by going to Korea to "see the townlands and learn the minds of many distant men," to quote Fitzgerald's translation of Homer.

My second purpose was to gain insights into the nature of contemporary Korean society as a way of growing in the understanding of the Korean students who attend the school where I teach. Students arrive in the school with much knowledge about the United States while we members of the faculty know very little about Korea. I felt it was important that someone on the faculty go to Korea to learn as much as possible about the forces within Korean society which have led so many students to come to the school. It was my intention to share this information with the faculty and administration through a series of presentations at faculty meetings and in-service days when I returned, as a way of promoting better cultural understanding.

As detailed below, the Summer Fellowship in Korean Studies was an intense experience that profoundly affected me on many levels. I reveled in the constant barrage of sensations—new sights, sounds, smells, tastes and tactile experiences that made each day an adventure. It was both stimulating and exhausting to spend each day absorbing new experiences. The reading list which we each received

before departure will become an invaluable guide over the next several months as I process all of the information and integrate the experiences into my professional life as a teacher. My first objective, therefore, is well on the way to being met, and I find I am eager to bring my experiences to the classroom. My second objective will be more of a challenge, because I found that my own encounters with the daily lives of Koreans were necessarily limited by the demands of our schedule. Therefore, the lectures at Yonsei University on contemporary issues were extremely helpful and utterly changed my perceptions of the Korean students in my school. Finally, there was an unanticipated bonus, my colleagues in the program. It was energizing to share the experience with so many articulate, creative, passionate educators, to create professional and social bonds with them and to share ideas about lesson plans and activities.

I owe an immeasurable debt to The Korea Society for choosing me as one of its twenty educators for the 2009 Summer Fellowship in Korean Studies. It was an honor to be chosen for such a great adventure. I owe thanks as well to the Korea Foundation and the Freeman Foundation for their overwhelmingly generous financial and logistical support that made the fellowship possible. Everything about the trip was first class, from the accommodations and food to the facilities at Yonsei University and the transportation to, from and around Korea.

The Program:

Day 1 - June 24

Early on the morning of June 24, we landed at Seoul Incheon International Airport where a representative of the Korea Foundation met us. Those of us who flew out of JFK waited until those who departed from Los Angeles had arrived and cleared immigration; when all had arrived, we boarded a bus which brought us to Seoul and our hotel, the Best Western Premier Seoul Garden Hotel. Mrs. Yong Jin Choi of The Korea Society greeted us and led us to breakfast in the hotel, which she paid for. As we were eating, she explained that due to the early hour, only a limited number of rooms were available for immediate check-in. Therefore, she asked which people were in dire straits and needed a room, and offered to take the rest of us for a walk while the hotel staff cared for our luggage.

The walk took us south from the hotel toward the Han River and an exercise path along the bank. It was delightful to get fresh air and to stretch after a fourteen-hour-long plane ride. Each of us tried the fitness equipment along the path, then walked back to the hotel where the remaining rooms were now ready. We checked into the rooms, freshened up and rested until meeting later that afternoon for our first experience of exploring Seoul. The accommodations were clean and comfortable, with a table for writing, a television for keeping track of breaking news and an immaculate bathroom.

After we met in the lobby, Mrs. Choi took us to a neighborhood convenience store where we bought subway passes, then led us to Mapo Station for a quick tour of some sights in downtown Seoul. It was

tremendously helpful for the program that on the very first day we became familiar with the transit system of Seoul, thus opening up the entire city for exploration in small groups or alone. The first stop was a visit to the National Folklore Museum, where we saw the stone and wood sculpture outside, taking special delight in the zodiac statues and comparing the wooden carvings to totem poles of the American Pacific Northwest. When we entered the museum, we were free to wander for a specified time, so that each could pursue individual interests within the museum. Musical instruments and exhibits on daily life in the Joseon Kingdom caught my eye.

From the National Folklore Museum, we took a bus to City Hall and headed to the Lotte Department store in the underground mall. Here we had the opportunity to sample Korean food in the food court, which seemed bewildering at first. There were so many different types of food, and the process of choosing food at one place, then ordering and paying at a central register, then waiting until the receipt number appeared on a board before picking it up at the counter taxed our jet-lagged brains, but the food was well worth the wait. The people at the food court were helpful and very tolerant of confused foreigners, which added to the charm of the experience. Finally, we were free to wander through the mall for a short time, which gave a chance to see the sorts of consumer items available. Then, weary from the travel, we returned to the hotel.

Day 2 - June 25

After a leisurely morning, we met at 10:00 in the lobby to travel to the Sangdo Buddhist Meditation Center. All of us are in agreement that this day was one of the highlights of the entire trip, for several reasons. First, we all experienced profound insights into the nature of Buddhism as we participated in the activities. The simplicity of the rituals for lunch encouraged an introspective frame of mind which in turn laid the foundation for the dharma lecture and guided meditation. Next, the peaceful, meditative approach to the day stood in stark contrast to the stresses of travel we had all just endured and prepared us for the days to come. Third, much of what we learned at the Meditation Center laid the foundation for what we would experience at Jogyesa Temple, Haeinsa Temple, Seokguram Grotto and Bulguksa Temple. The Meditation Center experience provided a context for images and rituals we encountered later, making them more comprehensible. Finally, we all felt a sense of bonding as a group from the visit which fostered the ability to share impressions and exchange teaching experiences.

Navigating the subway from Mapo to Sangdo with twenty people, some of whom had yet to purchase passes, took longer than expected, and so we arrived at the Meditation Center a little later than planned. As a result, we were unable to observe the 11:00 prayer service. The staff of the center nevertheless greeted us cordially, had us remove our shoes and gave us a quick course in proper etiquette when entering a Buddhist temple. Then the staff member in charge of education gave us a lecture on the history of the Meditation Center and taught us how to perform prostrations properly. He then led us upstairs to experience a typical lunch served in Buddhist monasteries.

Our instructor for lunch was a charming Buddhist nun, whose English was impeccable and who radiated joy as she led us through the ritual of eating. She explained the meaning of every motion as we unpacked our four bowls onto our floor mats, then chose volunteers from among the group to serve the rest of us. Our sometimes clumsy attempts to follow her lead earned encouraging words rather than rebukes. Most importantly, eating in silence while thinking about the labor of all those who had grown and prepared the food freed the mind to appreciate the food and the simplicity of its preparation. As I realized I had taken too much food, and was hurrying to finish, I found myself thinking about the teachings of the Buddha, that desire is the cause of pain in life.

This theme of pain and desire was the main topic of the abbot's dharma lecture. The abbot Misan Sunim, who holds a Ph.D. in comparative religions from Oxford University, explained the teachings of the Buddha with a gentle eloquence, reviewing the sources of pain in our lives and how, through meditation, we can remove ourselves from desire and learn to live in the present rather than the past or future. He concluded the lecture with a guided meditation in which we sent out our thoughts of love to the universe. The total effect of the lecture and meditation was a feeling of peace.

One of the features of the afternoon was that the staff had many things to keep us engaged in the experience. After the lecture, we made Buddhist rosaries, a simple bracelet of twenty-two speckled beads and one clear bead with an image of the Buddha and a swastika. As people sitting in awkward positions attempted to thread the beads, there was much laughter and a sense of camaraderie. We learned that the beads represented blessings to be sent out to individual people as we strung them, so in effect, our families and friends became part of the experience. After we had accomplished the project, the education leader had us stand and perform a series of twenty-one prostrations, which was an effort for western knees and hips unaccustomed to the repetitive motion. Next, helpers set out lotus tea with fruit and cookies for our enjoyment. In this relaxed setting, the abbot answered our questions for the better part of an hour, covering topics ranging from Buddhist beliefs and practices to relations between Buddhists and the current president of South Korea. As we left the Meditation Center, we all shared a profound sense of peace and gratitude for the generosity of the staff who had gone out of their way to ensure that we had an extraordinary experience.

That evening we attended the Korea Foundation's opening dinner where we met two of the graduate assistants, received our course materials and became acquainted with the teachers from the IIE program. After a short video about the mission of the Korea Foundation and preliminary logistical remarks about the next day's program, we ate dinner. The food was delicious, but several of us were surprised to receive a western-style dinner rather than a traditional Korean dinner.

Day 3- June 26

After breakfast we traveled to Yonsei University for our orientation to the program and our first lecture. At the university we signed up for insurance, received yet another food allowance to supplement what

we had received from the Korea Society before leaving the United States, and heard presentations from the graduate assistants, the “Dream Team” as Dr. Hyuk Rae Kim called them. These presentations included logistical information for the program, a quick guide to places of interest in Seoul by Gio Lee and the basics of reading hangeul by Cedar Bough Saeji, all of which were very informative and helpful.

Before leaving for Korea, we had each received orientation materials from the Korea Society. Among the things mentioned was the caveat that lecture styles in Korea could appear dry or boring to American students who are accustomed to a less formal approach. Nothing could have been further from the truth. Beginning with Dr. Hyuk Rae Kim’s morning preliminary remarks, every lecturer was engaging, interesting and relevant to our purpose for being in Korea. Far from being dry, some were so witty that I began to think that our Korean professors could moonlight as stand-up comedians! All were very clearly experts in their fields and brought to their lectures a wide variety of international academic experiences as well as perspectives earned in government think tanks.

In his preliminary remarks, Dr. Kim laid the foundation not only for his own seminar later in the day, but for all the seminars dealing with contemporary aspects of Korean society. Through a series of autobiographical examples, he deftly set out issues confronting South Korea today: the immense economic growth in the last two generations, the parallel huge demographic shift within Korean society and finally, the pressures these have put upon traditional Confucian values. After a break for lunch provided by the university that featured several Korean delicacies, we returned for Dr. Kim’s seminar lecture that picked up where he had left off in the morning. Starting with the simple facts of explosive economic growth (per capita income rocketing from \$87 in 1962 to over \$20,000 in 2009) coupled with a plummeting fertility rate (6.2 in 1962 falling to 1.08 in 2007), he outlined how South Korea had reached this state and the implications for change in the future. Shifting demographics have moved South Korea from a young society to an aging society far more rapidly than western societies, faster even than Japan. This shift is paralleled by a rapid growth in Christianity, with Catholicism being the fastest growing sect, as well as a trend toward an increasing number of foreign marriages driven by an imbalance in the sex ratio. Dr. Kim presented these demographic and economic facts against the background of the political evolution of South Korea from dictatorship to democracy.

It was clear from his preliminary presentation and lecture that Korean society is in a state of rapid flux where traditional society and contemporary society coexist in dynamic tension. Christianity has prospered in part because of a willingness to adapt Confucian, Buddhist and shamanistic values and even practices to its own ends. As capitalism and free markets spread in South Korea, so did a desire for democracy and freedom. Businesses frequently exhibited a Confucian ranking system and old boy network, which new ideas such as women’s rights have called into question. My personal conclusion from this is that the South Korea we visited resembles the paradox of Heraclitus’ stream—we cannot step into the same stream twice, because the stream moves on. Had we visited Korea ten years ago after the economic crisis or were we to visit Korea ten years from now, potentially after a reunification with the north, we would not experience the same Korea.

After the seminar, we toured the campus, visiting the oldest part of the university, then the bookstore and library. Finally, we headed to Iris Hall in the Sangnam Building for our welcome banquet. Dean Kim and representatives of the Korea Foundation greeted us and we enjoyed a remarkable buffet filled with a vast array of Korean and Chinese dishes, some very familiar, such as kimchi, and some very exotic, such as jellyfish. A pleasant evening filled with food and conversation completed the day.

Day 4 - June 27

This day we returned to Yonsei University for two lectures. In the first lecture, Prof. Chung Min Lee, dean of the School of International Studies, discussed challenges faced by East Asia in the next few decades and how Korea fit into the nexus of relationships between wealthy and poor nations. Citing demographic and economic data, Prof. Lee highlighted the growing world-wide competition for resources, especially fuel, and how this has created pressure points along the frontier between wealthy and poor nations. As competition increases, so, too, does the need for security, but this brings about the security paradox—any measure taken to increase the security of one's own nation can actually result in lessening the security of the nation's neighbors, a tipping point that destabilizes a region. As a case in point, Lee argued that any increase in South Korea's defenses would have a ripple effect in northeast Asia as North Korea, Japan, China and even Russia would feel compelled to make corresponding changes in their defense systems.

Shifting focus, Prof. Lee then looked at South Korea's specific need to maintain its economic growth despite lacking most resources and sources of energy. He pinpointed Korean education as key to the solution. Only by cultivating the creativity of the Korean people can Korea truly hope to maintain its economic growth. Korea needs to develop innovators of the scale of a Bill Gates or Steven Jobs to create technologies which will drive the future economy. In order to develop creativity in Korean society, education will be key. Finally, he turned to the question of succession in North Korea, and how the death of Kim Jong Il will set in motion a process which should ultimately lead to a reunification with the south. This reunification will pose challenges far greater than those faced by Germany twenty years ago because the technological and economic gulf between the two Koreas is far greater than the gap between the two Germanies in the late 1980s. Reunification "must be gotten right the first time," because history will not allow for second chances.

What was striking about Prof. Lee's lecture was the perception that reunification with the north is inevitable, something that is almost never heard in the American media. He believes that although the Kim family has stressed the dynastic principle in its leadership, Kim Jong Un lacks the gravitas to succeed his father, which will put real power in the hands of the military elite. The problem is that the cult of personality in North Korea has undercut the independent prestige of the military, so in Prof. Lee's estimation, the military will be unable to rule in its own right as the military in Myanmar does. Reunification becomes the only viable option for the north in his analysis. More than any other lecture, Prof. Lee's

stimulated discussion and debate among the teachers on their free time, especially on the point of the costs of reunification.

The second lecture of the day followed lunch. Prof. Michael Kim had the daunting task of summarizing Korean history in ninety minutes. His approach was revisionist, based on the premise that Korean national history as currently taught is a post-occupation nationalist construct that overemphasizes the uniqueness of Korea, as well as the uniqueness of China or Japan. If nationalist lenses are abandoned, then it is clear to see that separate historical nations such as “Korea,” “China,” and “Japan” are oversimplified modern constructs imposed upon evidence that is far more ambiguous. For example, the tendency to see Korea as bordering China throughout its history neglects the fact that Chinese control over the northeast waxed and waned for centuries allowing many small semi-independent kingdoms to rise and fall as buffer states between Tang, Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing China and the Silla, Goryeo and Joseon Kingdoms. Thus, much cultural interaction between China and Korea often took place through intermediaries. Similarly, discussions in Korean history about the Three Kingdom period oversimplify the narrative by de-emphasizing the role of smaller kingdoms such as Gaya and the interaction between these kingdoms and Japan. He summarized his preliminary remarks by saying that “Korea is not China; Korea is not Japan; Korea is not the ‘Hermit Kingdom.’”

Having cleared the ground in this fashion, Prof. Kim then touched briefly upon the highlights of Silla and Goryeo before focusing on the late Joseon Kingdom. As a historian who specializes in the period of the Japanese occupation, Prof. Kim looked at elements in late Joseon society that paved the way for Japanese intervention and annexation, as well as prepared the ground for a certain degree of collaboration with the occupiers. Resistance to societal change in the late Joseon Kingdom increasingly disenfranchised large segments of Joseon society, notably the “illegitimate” sons of the second or third marriages by yangban elite. As these sons were marginalized by conservative customs, Joseon society alienated talented people who could have brought fresh ideas and reinvigorated Joseon society. These disenfranchised welcomed Japanese reforms of society, and built a certain degree of collaboration, even in the face of a colonial administration that became increasingly brutal in the decade preceding World War II.

Prof. Kim’s lecture was a very clear indication of the vigor of scholarly debate in Korean academic circles. He freely admitted that his views about Korean history were often 180° opposite to the accepted nationalist school of Korean history, but stressed that he believed this was because nationalist histories oversimplify the past. As a case in point, he brought up the history of the hangeul script, which nationalists use as an example of Korean innovation and national pride. While he gave great credit to King Sejong for the innovation, he pointed out that the Neo-Confucian scholars of Sejong’s court resisted its use, thus relegating the script to a diminished role among the lower classes. As someone who came to Korea in part to study how the Koreans maintained their separate identity, I found that his lecture led me to realize that my own perceptions of Korean history reflected this nationalist slant.

After the lectures we went to the National Center for Korean Traditional Performing Arts. Just as we arrived, an outdoor performance began of poongmul traditional music and dance with roots in shamanism. The vibrant colors, pounding percussion and piercing sounds of the wind instruments combined to create a joyful atmosphere as the dancers and acrobats performed. It was a brilliant introduction to the energy and pageantry of Korean folk music. One of the highlights was seeing two of our number brought out onto the floor to attempt to keep plates spinning on sticks, to which the entire crowd reacted with good humor. The outdoor performance was followed by an indoor concert featuring different types of music ranging from court music to more modern compositions within the traditional vein. All of the performers were skilled in their art, making the concert very enjoyable.

Day 5 - June 28

At the beginning of the day we had the option of visiting a service at Jogyesa Temple followed by a trip to the Cheong Wa Dae, visiting the Yoido Full Gospel Church or visiting Myeong-dong Cathedral for mass. Being Catholic, I chose the third option and thus had a chance to participate in the English-language liturgy at the Cathedral. Since Catholicism is the fastest growing sect of Christianity in Korea, I wanted to see how it has adapted to the country. The hymns were very familiar, reflecting the influence of the American Catholic Church. At the English-language mass it was clear that the cathedral serves a large multi-ethnic community in addition to its Korean congregation. After the conclusion of the Mass, the cathedral filled rapidly for the next liturgy, attesting to the size of the congregation.

Our group then walked leisurely through downtown Seoul, past Jogyesa Temple to Gyeongbok Palace and the National Palace Museum. We arrived in time to witness the pageantry of the changing of the guard. While the IIE teachers proceeded to the Folklore Museum, The Korea Society teachers had a period of time to examine the collection in the Royal Museum. One of the highlights of the museum's collection was the reconstruction of a Joseon water clock which used water flowing from one container to another to activate levers which set off chimes for the hours. Another was the large collection of clothing from the end of the Joseon kingdom. After viewing the collection we met together for lunch at a traditional Korean restaurant not far from the Folklore Museum. The lunch was excellent, being served in a large number of courses that allowed us to sample a wide variety of food including soups, dumplings, several kinds of fish, rice and noodles.

After lunch we rode to Cheongduk Palace, where we had a guided tour of the complex. The guide led us through the different parts of the complex, explaining the purpose of each building. She also explained the color scheme that is used not only at Cheongduk Palace but at temples and palaces elsewhere in Korea, which was very helpful. After touring the audience hall and royal living quarters, we proceeded down to the hidden garden, which was so peaceful and secluded that it was hard to realize that we had not left Seoul. The beautiful ponds and pavilions nestled in the woods suggested the luxury in which members of the Joseon court lived. The peace and solitude were ideal for the leisure activities of the court such as painting, writing poetry or listening to music.

As a light rain started to fall, we headed to Insadong where we had a chance to do some souvenir shopping and eat. The specialized crafts shops in Insadong were delightful, and many of the group purchased prints, calligraphy materials, and even pottery.

Day 6 - June 29

This day was another highlight of the trip, the visit to Goyang Foreign Language High School. All of the teachers enjoyed the excursion and were impressed by the students that we met.

After boarding the buses at the hotel, we headed to Goyang. As we neared the school, we were about a half hour early, and so the buses stopped at what we thought was a highway rest stop. It turned out to be the headquarters of the Veterans of the Korean War. Several teachers had the opportunity to meet the president of the association and to ask questions about veterans and the war.

When we arrived at the high school, guides greeted us and led us to the auditorium for our official welcome ceremony. The English language teachers introduced three students who were in charge of our program. The three girls all spoke excellent English, and in their cheerful way, they welcomed us to their school and explained the day's program, in addition to telling us a bit about the daily lives of the students. Next, the principal gave her welcoming remarks. After the preliminary formalities, the students treated us to a performance by the school's praise band, which performs for the religious services on the campus. This group was very enjoyable. The ensemble was a typical mix of western instruments—keyboard, flute, electric bass, electric guitars, drum kit—and vocalists. They were very talented and polished as they performed Korean Christian rock with obvious enthusiasm. After they had finished, a second ensemble appeared, a traditional Korean percussion group who meet voluntarily to practice during their lunch time. They were phenomenal! To see young students steeped in traditional music taking such pride and delight in that music was heartwarming. The energy of their performance was infectious. As they beat out their syncopated rhythms in call and response it was hard to keep from tapping feet and clapping along. What was so endearing was the way the students looked back and forth, both encouraging each other and seeming to challenge each other to outperform each other.

After the performances, we walked across the campus to the cafeteria where we enjoyed a lunch unlike any I have seen served in an American school. The seaweed soup, beans and rice, prawns, beef strips and japchae noodles prompted me to ask if this was a typical lunch or something special for us visitors, but the teacher in charge said the only thing special was the dessert. The food was good and far more healthy than at a typical American school.

After lunch, we were paired with a student who led us around the campus, showed us the sights and answered our questions about the school and daily life. Most of the students were English majors, although mine was a Chinese major / English minor whose English was very good. He explained how the

school had been founded and the system of language majors and minors. English is the most common language taught both as a major and as a minor, but Chinese and Japanese are also quite popular. Recently, the school began instruction in Spanish. Most of the students board at the school, living in one of the dorms, but he actually was a native of Goyang, and lived about a five-minute walk away. He went into more detail about the school's 7/11 system, where the students are in classes or guided study sessions from 7:00 AM until 11:00 PM each day, with five minute breaks between classes to change classrooms and use the restrooms, plus lunch and dinner time. The system seemed very rigorous, yet as I walked around, I did observe some typical teen behavior which reassured me that the students were normal kids who occasionally did silly things as an outlet for their pent-up energy.

Finally, we returned to the auditorium, where the students and teachers had arranged a trivia contest for us. We formed five groups of eight teachers plus their guides and answered a series of questions about Goyang Foreign Language High School and Korea. It was a spirited way to end the day.

What made the day so valuable was that we got to interact with students and hear their descriptions of life in a Korean private school. As intense as the 7/11 system seems to an American educator, it was still less rigorous than the system described by Prof. Kim in his opening lecture. The level of English spoken by all the guides was also astounding, and is a key factor in Goyang's success rate in placing graduates in American universities.

After returning to the hotel and having some free time for rest and dinner, we reassembled in the hotel lobby to travel to the Namsan Hanok Village for the annual Korea Foundation concert for foreigners. This year's concert featured two radically different groups, Yeol and wHool, who nevertheless share a common vision of performing music that is a fusion between traditional Korean and western music. Yeol is an elegant gayageum quartet whose members play modernized versions of the traditional instrument, the strings having been increased in number from twelve to twenty five, and electronic EQ having been installed in the sound board. Their program consisted of intricate renditions of western pop tunes such as "Stairway to Heaven" and "Fly Me to the Moon" along with a few original compositions which highlighted the delicate, harp-like qualities of the gayageum. In effect, Yeol is a modern version of court music. On the other hand, wHool is a rock band built around traditional drumming and reed instruments, supported by electric guitar, electric bass, keyboard and drum kit. wHool took the raw energy of the poongmul music we had experienced at the National Center for Korean Traditional Performing Arts and at the Goyang Foreign Language High School and by electrifying it, created a driving, mesmerizing sound that had everyone clapping along. Finally, both groups took the stage together for a grand finale that brought all the sounds together.

The concert was great fun, but the understanding of it was definitely enhanced by our previous experiences of traditional Korean music. It could also be said that the concert symbolizes the modern state of Korea. A major reason why Korea has been so successful in the modern world is that Koreans have been able to take foreign ideas and change them subtly to reflect Korean values.

Day 7 - June 30

Yet another highlight of the workshop was our trip to the DMZ on a gray, foggy day. It began with a briefing at Yonsei University by Steve Tharp, a retired U.S. Army colonel and Korea specialist, who continues to reside in Seoul and work as a liaison between U.S. and ROK forces. Mr. Tharp gave us an overview of the Korean War and the armistice which led to the creation of the Demilitarized Zone, which extends two kilometers on either side of the Military Demarcation Line (MDL), the actual border between North Korea and South Korea. He emphasized the closeness of the border to Seoul and how the very real threat from the north has gone on for so long that people in Seoul are accustomed to it. He also mentioned that periodic saber-rattling from the north can be largely discounted, because despite periodic declarations from the north that the armistice is null and void, the North Koreans have continued to abide by the armistice. He added that provocations from the north such as the U.S.S. Pueblo incident are almost invariably intended to divert attention away from other issues, such as the assassination attempt on President Park. Thus, current atomic tests and rocket launches can be seen as diverting attention from the looming succession and the hardships of the North Korean people as aid from the south has dried up under the current administration.

After the briefing, we boarded our buses to head north to the DMZ, passing numerous guard posts along the way that look for infiltrators from the north. After we reached the Paju checkpoint and entered the DMZ proper, we entered a world far different than anticipated. While literature on the DMZ noted the presence of flocks of birds that have turned the border into a de facto wildlife sanctuary, nothing really prepared me for the shock of seeing verdant woodlands and rice paddies within the most heavily fortified border in the world. The mist gave a Brigadoon-like other-worldliness to the experience. Granted there were soldiers at outposts here and there, but they were relatively few and mostly lightly armed.

Our first stop was at Infiltration Tunnel #3. The surreal nature of the DMZ was highlighted here by the brightly-colored standing letters "DMZ" and cute figurines of a ROK and DPRK soldier side by side—both ideal for photo ops, the sculpture of people putting back together the halves of Korea and most of all by the souvenir shop. The amusement park atmosphere, complete with tram ride down to the tunnel, stood in stark contrast to the deadly serious nature of the conflict that the tunnel represented. Wearing blue hardhats that saved us from cuts and bruises, we descended a slanting path down to the tunnel level, about 73 meters below the surface of the ground. Then, crouched over to avoid hitting our heads on the low overhanging rock, we walked the 265 meters to the barricade at the end of the tunnel, just shy of the border. Along the way we witnessed the evidence of how the north tried to disguise the tunnel as an abandoned coal mine, plus dynamite holes drilled from the north. What was most sobering was the fact that this was only one of four tunnels found to date, but reports by defectors put the number of tunnels as high as twenty. It was clear even to a casual observer that these tunnels represent a major effort by the north to infiltrate the south and bypass some of the defenses should a war break out, and thus are a clear violation of the spirit of the armistice.

From the tunnel we headed next to the Neutral Nations' Supervisory Commission for a briefing by the commanding officer, Swiss Major General Jean-Jacques Joss, on the history and the mission of the NNSC. He elaborated on the role of the neutral nations in monitoring the armistice, a role somewhat changed by the end of the Cold War and fall of the Soviet bloc. This change has led to a greatly diminished role for the countries monitoring the north side of the border. Czechoslovakia was told to leave and Poland only sends observers once a year. He also mentioned that whenever there is a deserter from the north, officers of the NNSC are present at the interrogation to insure that no coercion is used. After the briefing, the officers treated us to an American-style buffet lunch, complete with corn dogs and kimchi. An officer of the NNSC sat at each table to answer any questions we might have about the DMZ and the NNSC mission there. Finally, after lunch, I also had the opportunity to talk with another officer about the surreal nature of the DMZ. He said they call the place "Absurdistan," because it is so peaceful, but it is like the eye of a hurricane. He also talked about the wildlife he has seen in the DMZ, huge flocks of birds that are endangered species outside of the DMZ.

Our next stop was Camp Bonifas, where after a quick security check we boarded a bus with our guide, Sgt. LaPierre, a U.S. soldier with an abundance of information about the DMZ and a very dry wit. He took us through the area of tank traps and minefields to the reception center at Conference Row. Here we received another briefing before assembling to enter the conference building under the careful surveillance of a North Korean guard across the road. Inside the conference room, we each crossed over into the north and took pictures under the watchful eyes of three very alert ROK soldiers. Finally, we returned to the steps of the reception center where we took pictures of the North Korean guard watching us while a high-powered camera on the North Korean side took pictures of us to be identified through face recognition technology. It was all an unnerving reminder of how the game of confrontation is played out on a daily basis.

Leaving Conference Row, we passed by a series of landmarks in the Joint Security Area (JSA) on our way back to Camp Bonifas. Stopping briefly at lookout post #3, we saw the line of stakes that mark the MDL, and could barely make out the "Peace Museum" on the other side where the armistice was signed in 1953. Moving on, we passed flocks of birds nesting in the bushes and came to the spot where Maj. Bonifas was murdered in 1976 while attempting to cut down a tree that obscured the line of sight between posts 3 and 4. Moving on again, we came to the bridge where Cmdr. Blucher and the crew of the U.S.S. Pueblo finally crossed over to freedom after their captivity in the north. Finally, we returned to Camp Bonifas in Panmunjom and visited another souvenir store.

Our last stop in the DMZ was at Observation Post Dorasan, overlooking the highway and railroad to Kaesong and the factories established there by treaty in 2002. After a briefing by an officer from New Zealand, we stepped out onto the observation platform and peered into the mist to see what we could. Finally, we boarded the buses and returned to Seoul for a free evening.

The trip to the DMZ was an unbelievable experience, totally different from my preconceptions. At every stop we received briefings about the history of the DMZ or the current security status which served to highlight just what a dangerous place it really is. Guides told us repeatedly not to make gestures, not to take photos of certain things so as not to stir up the North Korean guards. At the same time, the natural beauty of the DMZ was breathtaking—I will always remember the sight of herons stalking their prey in rice paddies framed by groves of trees. On top of these competing images of tense standoff versus peaceful nature preserve were the trappings of the tourist trade—souvenir shops, statues and the multicolored letters DMZ. The entire impression served to undermine the image of relations between the two Koreas that is prevalent in American media. The truth about the situation is far more complex than the oversimplifications we routinely receive. It was also noteworthy that Prof. Lee's assessment of the inevitability of the reunification was echoed by comments in almost all of our briefings, despite candid admissions that nobody knows for certain exactly what is going on in the north.

Day 8 - July 1

This day began with a series of three lectures. The first by Prof. Soon Yong Pak was an overview of the modern educational system in South Korea. This lecture was very valuable for getting a sense of how Korean education has changed since the early 1960s in almost every respect: the number of students advancing from elementary school to middle school, the number of students advancing from middle school to high school and the number of students advancing from high school to colleges and universities. At the same time, the average classroom size has decreased as the teacher-student ratio has improved. Prof. Pak also described the way in which schools are organized along national, regional and local lines, with a great deal of central control over the curriculum.

Then Prof. Pak went on to elucidate some of the stresses within Korean education that derive from a series of high stakes tests to determine what track a child will follow. The high value that Koreans have traditionally placed on education, dating back centuries, has been exacerbated by the well-founded belief that education is the key to social advancement. Although the dropout rate in Korea is low, the perception that public schools are too rigidly traditional to prepare students for high-powered careers in the modern world has led to a great increase in the number of private schools geared for high-achieving students. These schools pride themselves on their ability to place their graduates not only in the best Korean universities (e.g., Seoul University or Yonsei University), but in international universities as well, especially the American Ivy League Universities. Over the last few decades, therefore, parents have used exorbitant amounts of their income to pay for after-school study courses to prepare middle schoolers for the all-important placement exams and high schoolers for the SAT, TOEFL and other college admission exams. The stresses on the students are tremendous as they spend their pre-teen and teen-aged years in school and after-school classes until midnight or later every day. More recently, parents have increasingly opted to send their children to schools overseas deemed superior to Korean public schools, creating an educational exodus and a corresponding social phenomenon known as "Father Goose Syndrome." Typically, the mother will accompany the child overseas, leaving the father at home

to work in Korea to support the family abroad.

Of all the lectures we received, this lecture gave me the clearest picture of the Korean students attending my school, especially when combined with the anecdotes told by Prof. Kim in the first lecture and the experience of visiting a private high school. The hard work and academic success that have been a hallmark of these students are now part of a social context. Understanding what these students have been through in their schools in Korea as well as gaining insight into their goals in coming to the United States for high school was invaluable.

Our second lecture was the most theoretical one that we received, a presentation on Korean economic development by Prof. Joon Ho Hahm. Prof. Hahm's background in academia as well as in government think tanks that worked with the IMF and World Bank during the financial crisis of the late 1990s gave him the ability to share his insights into the reasons for Korean economic growth. He focused on an equation for calculating productivity in a nation's economy, a theoretical model that although a bit difficult for a non-economist to follow, soon made clear the reasons for economic rise of Korea. He clearly explained how a shortage of capital in the 1960s led the government to encourage personal savings and a deferment of purchasing consumer items. As the overall capital increased and the productivity of the Korean workers remained high, rapid economic growth occurred, a "catch-up" effect. Once Korean standards of living as measured by productivity rose sufficiently, then the rate of expansion began to slow, since productivity is a curve that flattens as it increases. At the same time, Korea has shifted from a capital-accruing society to a consumer society. Finally, since free trade is crucial for improving an economy, Korea's ability to upgrade its exports (from wigs to textiles to automobiles to semi-conductors) has enabled this growth to continue, despite occasional downturns as in 1997. The rapid recovery from the crisis of 1997 bodes well for Korea's ability to rebound from the current world-wide financial crisis.

This lecture worked well with Prof. Lee's lecture in explaining the growth of the Korean economy, as well as highlighting what Prof. Lee had said about the need for Korea to foster creativity to develop the next generation of technical innovation. It is clear from Prof. Hahm's lecture that for Korean prosperity to continue to expand, the evolution in exports must continue beyond semi-conductors. To develop the creativity that will lead to innovation and export evolution, education is key. As Prof. Pak made clear, changes within the Korean educational system are occurring to help foster this creativity, but families are pushing even harder to give their children broader educational experiences which will allow them to be at the cutting edge.

Our final lecture of the day was by Prof. Eungi Kim on the topic of Korean Culture. Prof. Kim was the most dynamic speaker that we heard, and his broad topic of cultural symbols and practices went a long way towards elucidating aspects of Korean culture that we encountered throughout the country. He divided the lecture into three parts: symbols, language and values. In the first part, by using a vast number of images he elucidated the meaning of common Korean symbols such as the taegeuk, the Korean flag, the Rose of Sharon, bujok talismans and amulets, the tiger, the Buddhist swastika and the

Christian cross. Although the cross is not native to Korea, Prof. Kim included it because of the rapid expansion of Christianity in Korea during the last century. While discussing charms and amulets, Prof. Kim showed us several examples of charms that are specifically produced with students in mind to help them pass crucial exams. Thus, contemporary issues in Korean society intersect with age-old shamanistic practice. Even though students will generally say they do not believe in the charms, older friends and relatives will buy the charms for them to ensure success, perpetuating the ancient practice.

Turning to language, Prof. Kim began by emphasizing well-known truths about how the language of a people reflects and shapes the world view as it expresses the core values of the people. Citing the example that Eskimos have many different words for snow, reflecting the Eskimos' environment, he made a parallel point about the Korean language having three different words for rice, depending on whether the rice is on the stalk (byeo), a raw hulled grain (ssal) or cooked rice (bap). Language, therefore, expresses and to a degree shapes values as various studies have shown. Whereas Americans prize individualism and prefer direct speech, in Asian societies communal values stressing harmony are prized. Therefore, in an attempt to be polite, Koreans will be less direct in expressing criticism and will often politely refuse things two or three times before accepting an offer. Obviously, this can lead to misunderstanding between Americans and Koreans, something that is important to recognize in business, politics and personal relations.

While discussing the pride Koreans take in their language, Prof. Kim made the observation that Korean is the 11th most common language in the world. Its vocabulary is only about 35% native Korean and about 60% Sino-Korean, reflecting the immense cultural influence China has had upon Korea. Instinctively, I drew the parallel with English, in which Greek and Latin roots make up about 60% of the vocabulary, reflecting the Norman influence as well as British and American affinity for classical civilization from the Renaissance onward. In much the same way that Greco-Roman classical art and literature informed British and American education well into the 20th century, so too, did Neo-Confucian values, art and literature inform Korean education. The strength of these values can be seen in the resistance to the use of hangeul by scholars who preferred the older system derived from Chinese characters. In contemporary Korea, although hangeul is used exclusively for popular literature and the news, Chinese hanja characters do still occur in official documents and academic writing.

Finally, as time was running out, Prof. Kim turned to Korean norms and values, and the way Korean customs express them. As he went through such practices as bowing, treating superiors with respect by using formal titles, and the polite use of honorific forms, it became clear just how Neo-Confucianism continues to impact Korean society today. This can be seen in such Korean values as filial piety as expressed by ancestor worship, the emphasis on family and deference to the elderly, collectivism, social harmony and conformity. Prof. Kim's lecture reinforced and clarified what I had read in guide books about social behavior in Korea.

After the lectures, we went to see a live performance of the martial arts comedy "Jump!" When we ar-

rived in the theater, it was about half full, with many elementary school groups present. The show was very funny, as the characters engaged in martial arts routines woven around four skits designed for broad physical comedy. Each member of the troupe demonstrated an amazing ability to execute complex martial arts moves with a mixture of grace and athleticism that was beautiful to watch. The way in which the cast also spoofed the genre of martial arts movies contributed to the fun, as did hearing all the children laugh uncontrollably at each pratfall. The show was an unexpected delight well worth seeing. From the theater, we walked along the streets until we reached the Cheongyecheon stream, a beautiful oasis in the midst of the concrete, glass and steel city Seoul has become. As we strolled along the banks, we could see why the space has become a magnet for people seeking a little peace amid the hustle and bustle of Seoul.

Day 9 - July 2

On a rainy day we headed to Yonsei University for our last two lectures. In the first, Prof. Yul Sohn outlined the rise of East Asian economies in world trade and where Korea fits into this pattern. The growth of the Chinese economy has fundamentally shifted the global balance of economic power by decreasing America's relative place within the world economy. As the Chinese economy has grown, it has gradually displaced the United States as the number one trading partner of both South Korea and Japan. Since exports drive the Korean economy, this critical shift in economic ties will lead to an increased focus of the Korean economy upon trade with the rest of East Asia. For example, 90% of the increase in Korean exports in 2002-2003 was due to a rise in trade with China. As this trade develops, capital investments between the two countries are increasing as Korean firms seek to invest in Chinese industry and vice versa. The network of relationships is helping to drive a Chinese push to replace the dollar as the standard for trade with a regional currency. While the reality of the dollar's role in international trade beyond East Asia undermines this push, it has accelerated the degree to which China, Japan and Korea swap dollars among themselves to aid in foreign trade.

At the same time that trade is bringing Korea closer to its East Asian neighbors, counter forces act to keep ties with the United States strong. Because the strategic relationship with the United States brings political security and the prestige of American universities continues to lure Korean students who are the key to Korea's continued economic growth, there has been a movement in Korea to increase the amount of trade with the United States, something that is also welcome in America. The Free Trade Agreement between the United States and South Korea (KORUS FTA), which was signed in 2007 but still awaits approval in the Senate, would go a long way to shoring up ties between the two countries. The problem is, Korea is more interested in a speedy passage of the agreement than America is. The stumbling blocks to passage, a tough US stance on beef exports, "screen quotas" on movies and the imbalance in automobile imports have all worked to convey the image that the United States is no longer a "beloved partner" in trade at a time when the Chinese government has been more accommodating.

Finally, as China's economic rise has usurped much of the role of the United States as a trading part-

ner, it has also disrupted the old economic view of the East Asian economy, the “Flying Geese” model with Japan at the forefront trailed by rest of Asia. At a time of Chinese ascendancy, Korea is turning to regional production networks to increase efficiency and profitability in manufacturing. Japan pioneered this approach by having different components of the Toyota Tercel manufactured in Japan and South-east Asia, while the final assembly took place in Thailand, but increasingly these networks are moving into the growth regions of China. Korean investment is playing a key role in this shift, which opens these areas with their abundant cheap labor to Korean businesses.

Korea is therefore striving to compete in a rapidly changing world, and especially East Asian, economy. Sandwiched between the economies of China and Japan, Korea is working out strategies that will allow it to maintain economic growth. This involves maintaining some ties with the United States while expanding ties with China and exploring new options such as energy supplies from Russia.

Taken together with the other lectures on economic issues, it is clear that Korea faces challenges in maintaining its economic growth and must pursue a balancing act between greater powers in order to do so. Personally, it seems likely that the economic lure of China, when paired with the centuries-long cultural influence of China may combine to push Korea further from its America-centered orbit of the last sixty years. The wild card in the mix which was only hinted at in the lecture, will be how the costs of reunification will impact the Korean economy. A benefit that might help offset the costs would be that without the obstacle of North Korean interference, Korea could develop a reliable source of energy in Russia, which brings with it new geopolitical and economic stresses.

Our final lecture, by Prof. John Frankl, dealt with the history of Korean literature. In his overview, Prof. Frankl touched upon the different periods of Korean literature from the Three Kingdom period to the present. Although people tend to think of the literature of the earliest periods as “Korean,” Prof. Frankl emphasized the cultural diversity on the peninsula as it was broken into small kingdoms often isolated from each other by topography, and subjected to outside influence, especially the Chinese literary tradition. In addition, he pointed out two other features that complicate our understanding of early Korean literature, “lag” and “embeddedness.” Lag is a feature of the earliest Korean narrative histories, the *Samguksagi* (History of the Three Kingdoms—1145 C.E.) and the *Samgukyusa* (Remnants of the Three Kingdoms—1285 C.E.). Although written during the Goryeo Kingdom, both works deal with events that transpired centuries earlier. Furthermore, since there were no professional authors or poets in early Korean society, literature for the sake of art and leisure did not really exist. Therefore, what poetry we have, such as the “Song of the Oriole,” is embedded within a larger narrative work. It also exhibits what Prof. Frankl called the “artifact” nature of early poetry—each fragment we have is valuable precisely because it is so rare. Finally, Prof. Frankl touched upon one last feature of early Korean literature, the context. It is critical to understand who wrote a piece of literature, and when it was written to correctly understand the intent of the work. For example, the *Koryosa* (History of Goryeo) appeared in the Joseon Kingdom as justification for the overthrow of the Goryeo Kingdom by the Joseon Kingdom.

Moving on to literature in the Joseon Kingdom, Prof. Frankl said that the increased stability of the culture meant that lag becomes less of a feature while embeddedness still remained. A new issue arose with King Sejong's development of the hangeul script, called hunmin chongum at the time. Although today it is seen as a major national achievement, at the time the literate aristocracy rejected it as a cultural barbarism, preferring the Chinese script. Only two works specifically commissioned in hangeul remain from the time of Sejong, *The Song of the Dragon Flying to Heaven* and *The Tale of Hong Kiltong*. All the rest of Joseon literature down to the end of the 19th century appeared in classical Chinese. Thus, literate society was bilingual, using the vernacular in daily business, but classical Chinese for all literary endeavors. This struck me as an obvious parallel to the role of Latin in European literature down through the Renaissance and into the late 18th century.

Touching upon the famous poetic exchange between Yi Pangwon and Chong Mongju, Prof. Frankl showed how these embedded poems written in the 17th century about events in the 14th century typify the Confucian nature of much of the literature from the Joseon Kingdom. In the first poem, from 1641, Yi asks Chong to shift his alliance from the Goryeo Kingdom and support his father. Yi becomes a model of the Confucian value of filial piety, praising and supporting his father. In the second poem, written in 1666, Chong refuses to change sides, becoming a model of the Confucian virtue of loyalty. Both poems, perhaps preserving an echo of an historical exchange in the late 14th century become competing, yet complementary models of correct Confucian behavior. This theme of Confucian values is also a feature of the Pansori epics which are written down in the Joseon period.

In the modern era, Korean literature of the occupation reflects tensions within Korean society as it grapples with western technology, Japanese influence and the disappointment with the failure of America and Wilson's Fourteen Points. Using a series of novels, *Tears of Blood* (1906), *The Heartless* (1917), *Three Generations* (1932) and *Peace under Heaven* (1938), Prof. Frankl showed how there is an inverse relationship between the themes of cultural modernity and technology. The earlier works have a more modern sensibility about customs and morals while the later works portray more traditional values. In the first two novels, America is seen as the hope for Koreans, but after the failure of the March 1st Movement in 1919, America appears as a corrupt and morally bankrupt place.

Finally, Prof. Frankl talked about the themes of post-war Korean literature. The scars of the division of Korea and the horrors of the war can be seen in such works as Hwang Sunwon's short story "Cranes" which depicts the dilemma of boyhood friends made enemies by the war. Traditional Confucian values appear in the story, for the North Korean soldier has remained loyal to family and friends, while the South Korean soldier has left everything behind and become rootless. Social issues from the 1960s through the 1980s appear in such works as *Seoul, 1964*, *Winter*, set in an atmosphere of mistrust immediately after the military coup, *A Little Ball Launched by a Dwarf*, concerning the social costs of urban expansion, and *Identical Apartments*, which deals with social conformity. At the present, women writers appear to dominate the Korean literary landscape. The overview of Korean literature that Prof. Frankl presented was a tantalizing look at what literary sources there are for understanding Korean society,

some of which may be adaptable for use in the classroom.

After the final lecture and a free lunch period, we traveled to the National Museum to see the collection of artifacts from various periods in Korean history. To see the entire collection would have taken all day, but in the nearly two hours that we had, I saw the portions relating to the earliest periods of Korean history, the Joseon Kingdom, and the galleries containing Korean painting, ceramics and Buddhist artifacts. What was most unexpected was the beauty of the artifacts from the small kingdom of Gaya, which tends to support the argument that artistic sensibility imported from Gaya contributed greatly to the artistic achievements of the golden age of the unified Silla Kingdom. It was also delightful to see the breadth of the ceramics collection, which contained numerous exquisite celadon works as well as beautiful porcelain vases with dragon and bamboo motifs from the Joseon era. Finally, the delicacy of Korean landscape paintings from the Joseon Kingdom stands out as another highlight. The amount of painting surpassed any collection of Korean art I had previously seen, and so it was invaluable for getting a sense of the different motifs, and the mastery of the brush that are characteristic of Korean painting.

When the visit to the National Museum came to an end, we were given the choice of returning to the hotel or going to see a baseball game between the LG Twins and the Busan Tigers. Fortunately, I chose the latter. The game was a remarkable experience not only for baseball fans but for any social studies teacher who has to teach about cultural diffusion and the transformation of ideas when they arrive in a new location. On the surface, baseball in Korea seems very familiar to an American—the stadium looks like any number of newer baseball stadiums around the United States, such as Cellular Field in Chicago, complete with a jumbotron scoreboard for instant replays and giving the statistics of the players. Koreans have intensified the American feel of the stadium by having American fast food chains present in the stadium (KFC and Burger King.) Despite the overt American nature of the ballpark and game, Korean fans have injected a large dose of Korean culture into the experience, transforming the game. Besides American fast foods, fans can purchase dried squid. Cheerleaders have never caught on in American baseball, although they are fixtures in other American sports such as football and basketball. A Confucian sense of community and group identity dominates the way in which cheerleaders lead the fans in chants and songs known by all. The boisterous support of one team is not turned against the opposing team. There are no boos, catcalls or obscene gestures at the opposing team. Instead, there is a Confucian avoidance of direct conflict—supporters cheer mostly when their own team is at bat, thus allowing the fans of the other team equal opportunity to cheer when their team is at bat. Getting caught up in the spirit of the home team fans was tremendous fun for all of us, and we all agreed it was more fun than a game in America.

Day 10 - July 3

After checking out of the hotel, we began our field trip to the south. The field trip would take us to many impressive sites while also engaging us in a variety of cultural activities to enhance our experience of

Korean culture. We were fortunate throughout the trip that the weather cooperated and so we did not have to contend with heavy rain, only one or two mild showers.

Our first stop of the day was at the Suwon Hwaseong Fortress, a World Heritage site, where we began our stay with the archery experience. Each of us had the opportunity to try a traditional Korean bow while firing a total of ten arrows at targets a good distance away. The targets proved more difficult to hit than expected, but it was fun nevertheless. Using traditional bows did give an insight into the kinds of bows that we saw in various museums around the country. Bows in museums are unstrung and have a heart-shaped appearance, but when strung, the bow is bent backwards to a normal appearance. This accounts for the unusual springiness of the bow, which made it such an effective weapon for hunting or in war. When we finished the archery exercise, we had time to walk along the fortress wall for about a half mile in a curve that crossed the road. The wall is impressive in its size and the uniformity of its masonry. The guard tower and redoubts offered good views of the surrounding countryside, clearly underscoring the defensive nature of the fortress. Although we only visited a small segment of the wall, it gave a clear indication of the sophistication of Joseon engineers who built the entire complex.

Our next destination was the Early Printing Museum in Cheongju, which we reached after a lunch stop at a buffet restaurant that offered a huge variety of food. In the museum, the first thing we did was to watch a video about the history of printing in Korea and the development of moveable metal type which was used to produce the Baegunhwasang Chorokbuljo Jikjimsimcheyojeol, the oldest book in the world still extant that was printed with moveable metal type, predating Gutenberg's Bible by almost eighty years. Next we broke into two groups for a tour of the museum. While one group was led by the museum curator, our group was led by a docent, a retired high school principal who had a great deal of knowledge about and enthusiasm for the early printing techniques. While he showed us early printed works, I was astounded at their almost pristine state of preservation, something I rarely encountered as a student working in rare book collections. Clearly, the papers and inks used in Korean printed books had a lower acid content than what is found in western books, and methods of climate control were more advanced than in the west, as we later found out on the way to Haeinsa Temple. The description of the process by which bronze type was made was utterly fascinating, and the animatronic exhibits helped in the explanation. By using a kind of lost wax process, craftsmen cast little type "trees" (more closely resembling sea anemones), each branch of which bore its "fruit"—a piece of type that could be removed and filed down to a uniform size and smoothness for use in setting type. Scholars then placed the type on a block in columns separated by bronze dividers. Once the block was complete, the type could be locked into place and used for printing. Unlike Gutenberg's process which used a press with heavy weights to press the type onto a waiting piece of paper, the Korean method placed the paper on top of the block, and the printer gently smoothed the paper along the type to produce a clean image. The bronze dividers produced the lines between columns of type that are a characteristic of early Korean books. Finally, an exhibit showed how monks proofread the text, correcting it in red in much the same way that medieval European monks acted as rubricators to correct mistakes in manuscripts with red ink.

Our last destination for the day was the charming town of Jeonju with its extensive quarter of traditional hanok houses and the Gyeonggijeon Shrine. The shrine is an extensive complex of buildings that once formed the center for the provincial government, once the Yi dynasty moved the capital of the Joseon Kingdom from its home in Jeonju north to Seoul. Today, the traditional architecture has formed the backdrop for Korean historical dramas portrayed on television. Our guide led us through the gates to the outdoor portrait gallery that enshrines the painting of Yi Seonggye, the founder of the Joseon Kingdom. The painting was not the original, which was destroyed in a fire, but one that was created in the 19th century to replace it. I was struck by the fact that even the original was not done from life, but by an artist who relied on descriptions of Yi Seonggye found in early Joseon sources. His portrait was surrounded by portraits of other members of the dynasty, each done in accordance with their descriptions. The grounds of the shrine were very peaceful and served as a park for the people of Jeonju who came to enjoy the shade. One monument stood out, the shrine for the umbilical cord and placenta of King Yejong which matched shrines that we had seen in the Royal Museum in Seoul. Although this shrine has been restored and moved from its original location, it was interesting to see it in the context of the architecture of Gyeonggijeon.

Since Jeonju is also the home of the traditional Korean dish, bibimbap, we visited a local restaurant to sample the specialty in its original form. It was very different from elsewhere in Korea, since the rice and red chili paste had to be added and everything stirred together with a chopstick by the customer. It was a delicious meal, and was the best bibimbap I had in Korea. After dinner and a final stroll through the town, we boarded the buses and traveled through the mountains to our hotel, the Muju Tirol Ski Resort. While the Austrian decor and dirndls on the wait staff were definitely out of place in the midst of Korea, the hotel was very comfortable.

Day 11 - July 4

Our journey continued as we headed from Muju to Haeinsa Temple, home of the Tripitaka Koreana, a beautiful site tucked into a narrow valley in the mountains. We were promised a twenty-minute “brisk walk” to reach the temple, but the uphill trek was a bit more strenuous than that. Along the way there were many sights—a mountain stream, quaint shops selling herbs and beautiful trees. When we all assembled at the bottom gate, our guide explained the significance of what we were about to see. There would be 108 steps leading to the top of the temple complex, each step representing one of the desires that are sources of pain which can be eliminated through properly following the Buddhist eight-fold path. Each gate would have a special significance. She then explained how the lowest gate was atypical of temple gates. Normally gates have four posts to support the roof, two posts on each side. The lowest gate had only two posts, one per side. The one post per side represented the necessity for the faithful to abandon all outside thoughts and focus on oneness with the Buddha. She added that the building of such two post gates is very difficult because the weight of the roof must be balanced precisely, lest it tip and fall.

Passing through the gate we walked along a path flanked on the left by a row of fabric panels with Buddhist blessings printed upon them. Reaching the next series of steps, we climbed up to the gate protected by four guardian spirits whose paintings adorned the interior of the gate. Finally reaching the top, we entered the main temple compound. As the guide explained the significance of the different features of Haeinsa temple, we began to fan out to examine the pagoda, the prayer maze and the different shrines. Each shrine contained a precious gilded image of the Buddha as well as statues or painted images of Bodhisattvas. The outside of the wooden temples were decorated with beautiful painted images of the life of Siddhartha Gautama, his attainment of enlightenment and his preaching.

Continuing our climb we reached the Janggyeong Panjeon, the repository of the 81,258 woodblocks of the Tripitaka Koreana, one of Korea's greatest national treasures. Our tour guide had explained the lengthy process by which the wood for the blocks had been seasoned before carving as well as the extensive climate control measures that the monastery had developed centuries ago which maintained a uniform temperature and humidity for the woodblocks, thus preserving them to the present day far better than modern methods. What was most astounding about the blocks is that the uniformity of the carving gives the impression that this huge work was carved by only one artist. At the top of the 108 steps, just beyond the repository, we encountered the last shrine and statue.

Haeinsa temple made a lasting impression on all who visited. The workmanship exhibited in the gates, statues, paintings and above all, the Tripitaka give testimony to the patient pursuit of perfection, symbolic of Buddhist practice. I was also struck by the quiet devotion of those who wandered through the prayer maze or prayed in the temples. Everywhere the eye encountered beauty and serenity. As a working monastery, Haeinsa was an island of calm, a perfect location for a life of contemplative discipline.

As a gentle rain began to fall, we stopped for lunch to experience another specialty, a bulgogi soup prepared at a restaurant close to the entrance to the temple. After lunch, the buses drove us to a traditional village where we would experience making yeot, the traditional taffy made from rice that has been boiled down to a molasses-like consistency. The ensuing hilarity as we paired off to pull and twist the taffy made for an entertaining experience and brought back childhood memories of making Pennsylvania Dutch-style taffy at home with my mother. The finished product was very tasty. When the taffy was done, we wandered around the village and took part in various traditional activities such as walking on stilts, balancing on a low see-saw and riding swings. The light-hearted excursion was a contrast to the more intellectual experiences we enjoyed, but did provide insights into traditional Korean country life.

Late in the afternoon we reached the vicinity of Gyeongju and stopped to visit Cheomseongdae Observatory, built in the 7th century at the command of Queen Seon-deok. Passing by a few of the royal burial mounds built by the Silla Kingdom, we reached the observatory and learned how the queen had ordered it built partly in response to being snubbed by the Tang king. After he insulted her for being as barren as a peony, she set out to prove that the Silla Kingdom was a center of the arts and sciences

at least the equal of the Tang Kingdom. The symbolic nature of the architecture of the observatory is remarkable, the number of stones equaling the number of days in the lunar calendar and the number of courses of stones above and below the window signifying the number of months in the year. The square platform at the top represents the four compass points and the platform itself allowed observation of the heavens to predict the solstices and equinoxes that mark the season.

From the observatory, we passed through a field of lotus plants on our way to Anapji Pond. It had rained before our arrival, and so each waxy lotus leaf contained beads of water that rolled around the interior of the cupped leaves as they swayed in the wind. The beauty of the field was matched by the park around Anapji Pond. The man-made pond with its irregular shape provided each of us with tranquil views of the pavilions and island, giving an insight into Silla ideas of beauty and harmony with nature. It was fascinating to see the replicas of artifacts found when the pond was drained which were on display in the main pavilion.

After visiting Anapji, we ate dinner at a luxurious restaurant, where we sat on mats on the floor in rows facing each other, with nothing between us. The restaurant help then brought in low tables laden with a huge variety of different dishes which they set on the floor between us. Since Gyeongju is so close to the sea, most of the dishes were varieties of seafood, including at least four or five different types of fish. Once again, everything was delicious. When we finished eating, we checked into the Gyeongju Hilton.

Day 12 - July 5

Mrs. Choi rejoined us this day for our trip to the Gyeongju National Museum. Our first stop on the museum grounds was at the enormous bell of King Seongdeok, a masterpiece of bronze casting. The delicate ornamentation along the top and bottom contrasted with the massive size of the bell (height: 3.3 meters; weight: 25 tons) and served to show the high degree of Korean bronze casting abilities during the Silla Kingdom. The guide recounted for us the story of the three castings of the bell until it rang clearly without breaking.

Moving inside, we examined the museum's extensive collection of artifacts from the Silla Kingdom. Mrs. Choi's expertise in the Silla Kingdom's connection to the Silk Road enabled her to elucidate the significance of many artifacts for us. Prominent among these artifacts were golden cups of a Mediterranean style introduced into the south Asian kingdom of Gandhara by Alexander the Great's conquest of the area, which later passed along the Silk Road through Han China and ultimately reached Korea by the time of the unified Silla Kingdom. Glass vessels of a type produced in Syria in the late Roman to early Byzantine period also give evidence to the trade along the Silk Road. Finally, many artifacts related to the nomadic peoples of the north, such as the ornamental buckles and horse bits from the Xiongnu. The golden artifacts that adorned Silla crowns and headdresses reflect antler motifs common among the arts of nomadic peoples reaching from northern Manchuria to the western Russian steppes that were

home to the Scythians. By visiting the museum with Mrs. Choi, we began to see Korean artifacts in the cultural context of trade across medieval Asia. This fundamentally altered the understanding of societies which did not exist in a vacuum, but as part of a cultural continuum.

Pictures alone can not really prepare one for the richness of the Silla artifacts. The abundant amount of gold testifies to the power and wealth of Silla. The consummate artistry, whether in small artifacts, such as earrings or pendants, or in major pieces such as the Silla crowns and belts testifies to the skill and patience of Silla craftsmen. The intricate chestlaces, reminiscent of Egyptian pectoral jewelry, blend mastery in glasswork (the countless blue glass beads), gold work, and the carving of jade into objects of exquisite beauty that adorned Silla royalty. It was also a treat to visit the exhibit of goods excavated from Anapji Pond and see the original artifacts whose replicas we had seen the day before. Simple artifacts such as candle snuffers and scissors gave clues to the daily life of the people of the Silla court and balanced the opulence of the royal jewelry excavated from tombs.

Our next stop was at the park containing the Silla tumuli. Once again, pictures alone can not prepare one for the sensation of wandering amid the tumuli, and being overshadowed by one steep mound after another. Since only two or three of these mounds have ever been excavated, it was also tantalizing to walk among them and wonder what treasures lay buried in each. After visiting King Michu's grave, we followed the path to the Cheonmachong tomb, which we could enter to see a reconstructed grave in situ and a cross section of the mound, elucidating the building techniques. In the tomb we saw numerous reproductions of artifacts now on display in the National Museums in Seoul or Gyeongju, many of which we had just seen that morning. Afterwards, we visited an Italian restaurant for lunch and had time to wander around the town. Along with two others, I climbed to the top of a mound next to the restaurant and was treated to a view of Tumuli Park, the surrounding town and the mountains, which gave a sense of the size of Gyeongju and the vicinity.

After our lunch break, we visited an activity center that caters to elementary students to experience two traditional crafts. First, we made scented soap, which we poured into molds so the soap would emerge in the shape of a pagoda. As the soap was hardening, we also made traditional prints using plaster molds, mulberry paper and ink. The process was unlike any printmaking I had ever done. We first placed a sheet of the mulberry paper over the mold, then thoroughly wet the paper and blotted it so that it conformed to the shape of the mold and created a relief. Next, we daubed ink the consistency of black shoe polish onto the relief, which created a positive print in the shape of the mold. As our prints representing the bell of King Seongdeok and the Cheomseongdae Observatory dried, we enjoyed a tea ceremony, and people tried on reproductions of Silla robes and crowns. Although some of the teachers did not rate this activity (or the taffy making) as very important for their overall experience in Korea, I personally enjoyed the hands-on experiences because they broke up the day in creative ways and stimulated laughter. Also, one of my Korean students who lives in Seoul had remarked that her class made yearly field trips to Gyeongju, and thus I envisioned student groups from all over Korea taking part in these activities at one time or another in their educational careers. In addition, the prints and soap are

lovely keepsakes of the trip.

Boarding the buses, we drove up into the mountains to Seokguram Grotto to see the colossal granite statue of the Buddha. The steepness of the winding road was impressive, and the view of the surrounding countryside should have been breathtaking, but the afternoon haze detracted somewhat from the view. When we arrived at the parking lot, we got out and walked past the temple bell and through the gate. We had about a twenty-minute walk through the woods along a gentle path until we reached the staircase to the grotto, where we paused to read a sign's description of the contents of the grotto and hear our tour guide explain the history of the grotto. When we climbed the staircase to the grotto, we knew what to expect at the top, but actually seeing the statue and the surrounding images of Bodhisattvas was very moving. The care and precision of the carvings in the grotto once again attested to the skill of Silla craftsmen as well as the way the Silla rulers welcomed the new religion into their kingdom. As we descended from the grotto, we passed brightly colored prayer lanterns and roof tiles signed by people from all over the world, both of which attested to the continued spirituality of the grotto.

After walking back to the buses, we drove part way down the mountain to visit Bulguksa Temple, the last of the major Buddhist sites we would experience in Korea. Although the original complex was mostly destroyed during the Japanese invasion of the 16th century, enough remained for modern restoration to highlight the skill with which the original architects had built the Silla complex in the 6th century. This temple complex contained many of the same elements we had seen at Haeinsa, such as the three gates, but there were many differences, the most notable being the stairways that form bridges to the upper levels (symbolizing the movement from earth to heaven), and the twin pagodas in the courtyard, one of which was encased in a scaffolding for restoration work. The architectural details of the temple complex were fascinating—brightly-colored carved dragon heads projected from the corner rafters of the main temple while stylized deer heads with antlers hid amidst the beams of the gate overlooking the staircase. The painting of the architectural elements was among the most intricate that we saw, and the color yellow was far more prominent at Bulguksa than at Haeinsa. The grounds surrounding the temple complex were landscaped in an artful way to enhance the sense of serenity and the symbolism of moving from this world into communion with the Buddha.

Our last stop of the day was at an outdoor restaurant where he enjoyed Korean barbecue cooked on grills mounted in the tables. The mushroom slices and cloves of garlic joined marinated slices of beef on the barbecue. When these ingredients were cooked we placed them on lettuce, cabbage and sesame leaves with other cooked vegetables rolled them up and ate them.

Day 13 - July 6

After checking out of the hotel, we left behind the Silla world of Gyeongju and traveled to one of the most modern sites in Korea, the Hyundai Heavy Industry shipyard in Ulsan. The economics lectures that we heard in Yonsei had stressed the importance of exports in the modern Korean economy. Not far

from the shipyard we saw a sight that drove the point home: thousands of Hyundai cars lined up on the docks waiting to be loaded onto waiting ships specially designed for the transport of automobiles. In the entire time I was in Korea I saw few foreign cars, mostly German, and only one American car, a Chevrolet. No clearer image of trade issues between the United States and Korea that hinder implementation of the KORUS FTA was needed.

When we reached Hyundai, we were told that photography would be restricted to within the headquarters building, presumably to prevent industrial espionage. Inside the building, we watched a video that highlighted how Hyundai Heavy Industries had developed into a world leader in shipbuilding, power plant design and the construction of oil drilling platforms. It also showed how Hyundai has developed a community around the shipyard that provides housing, shopping, schools and recreation for workers and their families. This reminded me of the history of my own hometown (Endicott, New York) where the Johnson family invested much of the profits from their shoe factories into the community and held it together during the Great Depression. The ability of Hyundai to embrace this model of paternalistic capitalism through community planning has enabled the company to build a strong, motivated, loyal workforce.

After the video, we toured the small museum dedicated to the rags-to-riches life of Asan, the founder of Hyundai. It was fascinating to see how he began as a humble delivery boy during the Japanese occupation, then progressed to running an auto repair shop during and after the war. Through key risks taken at various times, he built an industrial empire spanning several fields of technology. Characteristic of this entrepreneurial risk taking was a story he narrated in a video clip of how in the early 1970s he convinced a Greek shipping company to order some ships so that he could arrange loans from banks in London, so that he could afford to build the facilities that would allow him to build the ships. Somehow it all worked out, and the shipyard was begun.

The next room housed scale models of different ships designed and built by Hyundai, as well as a model of a diesel engine for powering one of the vessels and a model of the shipyard facilities. It was clear from the models alone just how Hyundai has revolutionized the design of different classes of ship, especially the Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) transport ships. Originally, these were a top-heavy design with two or three LNG-carrying spheres arranged in a line along the top deck. Such ships became common in the 1980s and many continue to ply the seaways. Hyundai redesigned the ships along a more stable, streamlined plan with the non-aerodynamic spheres replaced by a sleek superstructure which affords more protection to the cargo in heavy seas. There was also a model of a fast Aegis-class destroyer designed and built for the South Korean Navy which shows how American military technology has been adopted and adapted to suit South Korean defense needs.

Leaving the headquarters building, we toured the shipyard by bus. It immediately became apparent that one of the keys to Hyundai's success in shipbuilding was its systematic division of labor. In large warehouses, components of each ship's hull are assembled into a series of modules which are then

transported to the drydocks and welded together to build the ships. There were at least ten ships in varying states of completion, their size and hull configurations determined by the customers' needs. Several were double-hulled ships for the transport of oil and gas, while others were more simple container transports. The largest of the ships, the Athenian Victory was over 300,000 tons, a very large ship. The shipyard was a model of industrial efficiency.

After leaving Hyundai, we headed to Gwaereung with a short stop to eat lunch at a buffet in a Lotte Mart mall along the way. At Gwaereung, we saw the royal tomb, a mound decorated with kerb stones carved to depict the signs of the zodiac. Most importantly, we studied the guardian sculptures, representing people from the court of the king. Mrs. Choi pointed out the most unusual of these, a statue of someone from the west, whose features and costume were not Korean or even Chinese. While there is some debate as to the ethnicity of the figure, with Persian and Uighur having been suggested, it is clear from the statue that not only goods but also people traveled along the Silk Road as part of the process of cultural diffusion.

After leaving the tomb at Gwaereung, we drove back to our hotel in Seoul. Along the way, we watched a movie of the Pansori epic Chunhyang. Set in the Joseon Kingdom, this story richly illustrated the customs and costumes of the period while telling its story of two lovers of vastly different social status and their trials until they are finally united. The interweaving of the story with a performance of the epic tied it in with the performances we had seen at the Center for the Traditional Performing Arts. When we finally reached Seoul, we had the evening free.

Day 14 - July 7

We had a free morning and so several of us took the subway to visit the Korean War Museum in Seoul. Others opted to do this two days later on our last full day in Seoul. The museum contained far more than I expected. Outside the museum were the powerful statues symbolizing the suffering of the Korean people during the war as well as the statue of the reunited brothers, one from each side. The statue drove home the fact that the Korean War was very much a civil war that divided families, in much the same way that the American Civil War did. Also outside the museum were many planes, tanks and artillery pieces from the war and the decades that have followed.

On the upper levels there were numerous exhibits dealing with the phases of the Korean War, especially focused on the Korean experience in the war. In addition, on the lower level there were exhibits pertaining to the history of war in Korea since the time of the three kingdoms. Through a mix of artifacts and reproductions, the exhibits traced the evolution of warfare in Korea up to the modern era. The exhibit that stood out the most was a large wooden scale model of one of Admiral Yi's turtle ships that was large enough to see into the interior and thus get an idea of what the crew's living and combat quarters were like.

That afternoon we traveled to Yonsei University for our program evaluation and final ceremony. After filling in questionnaires we gave oral feedback to Prof. Kim. Finally, we went to the auditorium for our farewell ceremony, which was very touching. We all received several gifts from the program's organizers, including a keepsake certificate that is as impressive as a college diploma and a CD with about five hundred photos of the group as we experienced Yonsei University and visited various sites in Seoul. A group of our teachers had put together a Power Point entitled "Korea the Beautiful" as a way of expressing our thanks to the Korea Foundation for funding the experience.

After the ceremony, we traveled across town to our farewell banquet in a Chinese restaurant on the 27th floor of the Taepyeongro Building. The banquet was served in a steady stream of delicious courses, most of them seafood of one type or other. I especially loved the crab egg drop soup and the jellyfish with cucumbers; both were unusual tastes. After speeches, a toast and two songs by members of the group (including a rewriting of an Irish song, "The Wild Rover," which I sang), the official Korea Foundation part of the trip came to an end. Most members of the tour went out afterwards to celebrate the successful completion of the trip.

Day 15 - July 8

The first activity of the day was to be a visit to Gyeongbok Palace, and its Confucian College during the Joseon Kingdom with Prof. Mark Peterson of Brigham Young University. Although I missed the activity, I learned from conversations with those who went that Prof. Peterson gave a thorough presentation on various aspects of Confucian education, richly illustrated with numerous anecdotes about the methods of teaching and the scholars who taught there. One highlight was a visit to the spot where Queen Min was assassinated on the palace grounds.

The next activity was a visit to the weekly Wednesday protest by the Comfort Women outside the Japanese embassy, where I caught up to the group. Every Wednesday for the last seventeen years, these women have gathered to demand a formal apology from the Japanese government for the way in which they were systematically used to satisfy the sexual needs of Japanese soldiers. It was profoundly moving to see these old women who responded to the barbarous treatment in their youth by the Japanese armed forces with such quiet dignity. It was also noteworthy that on this day, a Japanese group was present in support of the Comfort Women, and one of their number addressed the crowd through an interpreter. This peaceful protest was a testament as well to the growth of democracy in South Korea which can allow the peaceful assembly of people to express their opinions.

That evening, a group of us including Mrs. Choi traveled to the World Cup stadium to see a soccer match between FC Seoul and Incheon United. The game, which ended in a scoreless tie, was another example of cultural diffusion in sports, this time modeled on European traditions rather than American. As at the baseball game, the crowd was very loud as it chanted and sang throughout the match, but perhaps in a bow towards European traditions of "football hooliganism," the crowd was also more de-

monstrative in its chants against the visiting team. There were occasional shouted obscenities and rude gestures from the crowd, and the concession stands removed plastic caps from water bottles as they sold them to prevent fans from throwing them onto the pitch.

Day 16 - July 9

Our last full day in Seoul was a free day, and our first real experience of the monsoon rains in Korea. I took advantage of the day to meet with two of the Korean students who attend my school, one from Seoul and the other from outside Seoul. Due to the rain, we traveled by subway to the COEX Mall where we spent the afternoon walking around, shopping, comparing experiences, eating lunch and visiting the mall's small Kimchi Museum. It was a fun excursion to see a normal bit of teen life in Korea.

That evening we got together for a last time as a group to give some feedback to Mrs. Choi about our experiences. We then got our instructions for checking out and getting the airport shuttle the next morning.

Day 17 - July 10

As I was in the earliest group to leave, I checked out of the hotel by 6:30 AM, met with the other three who were leaving and caught the shuttle to the airport. All the travel back to my final destination, Syracuse, New York, went off without a hitch.

Final Thoughts on the Summer Fellowship in Korean Studies

I have found it a daunting task in trying to write a thorough report of everything I experienced in Korea. We packed so many experiences into seventeen days. As I said in the introduction, the fellowship in Korea filled me with countless sights, sounds and tastes that were unlike anything I had ever experienced elsewhere in the world. I come away from the adventure with a profound respect for what Koreans have achieved in the last half century as they turned their country around from being one of the world's poorest nations to being one of the richest. I am also filled with admiration for the long history of Korean cultural achievement dating back to the period of the Three Kingdoms.

The most important highlights for me were the visit to the Buddhist Meditation Center, the trip to the Goyang Foreign Language High School, the visit to the DMZ, the baseball game and the trip to Haeinsa Temple, Seokguram Grotto and Bulguksa Temple. I must add that all of the experiences seemed to fit together to give me a complex impression of Korea, past and present. The information from the lectures and my own observations on small aspects of diet, dress and customs will go a long way in helping me integrate the experience into the classroom and in making my colleagues more aware about issues relating to Korea and our students from Korea.