

“BECOMING JAPANESE:” IDENTITY UNDER JAPANESE OCCUPATION**GRADES:** 9-12**AUTHOR:** Katherine Murphy**TOPIC/THEME:** Japanese Occupation, World War II, Korean Culture, Identity**TIME REQUIRED:** Two 60-minute periods**BACKGROUND:**

The lesson is based on the impact of the Japanese occupation of Korea during World War II on Korean culture and identity. In particular, the lesson focuses on the Japanese campaign in 1940 to encourage Koreans to abandon their Korean names and adopt Japanese names. This campaign was known as “sōshi-kaimei.” The purpose of this campaign, along with campaigns requiring Koreans to recite an oath to the Japanese Emperor and bow at Shinto shrines, were to make the Korean people “Japanese” and hopefully, loyal subjects of the Japanese Empire by abandoning their Korean identity and loyalties. These cultural policies and campaigns were key to the Japanese war effort during World War II.

The lesson draws from the students’ lives as well as two books: *Lost Names: Scenes from a Korean Boyhood* by Richard E. Kim and *Under the Black Umbrella: Voices from Colonial Korea 1910-1945* by Hildi Kang.

CURRICULUM CONNECTION:

The lesson is intended to use the major themes from the summer reading book *Lost Names: Scenes from a Korean Boyhood* to introduce students to one of the five essential questions of the World History II course: How is identity constructed? How does identity impact human experience? In first investigating the origin of their own names and the meaning of Korean names, students can begin to explore the question “How is identity constructed?” In examining how and why the Japanese sought to change the Korean people’s names, religion, etc during World War II, students will understand how global events such as World War II can impact an individual. This content will be revisited later in the year during not only the World War II unit but in several units where we challenge students to make connections between global events and individual lives (i.e. impact of Enlightenment writing and European revolution on the life and decisions of Simon Bolivar in Bolivia)

CONNECTION TO STUDENTS’ LIVES:

The lesson begins with students examining the origin of their own names and their own identity, so they can begin to empathize with the impact of Japanese policies on the Korean people. Historical empathy and empathetic inquiry are key elements in historical understanding. It is also important for students to investigate and understand the impact of global events such as World War II on individual lives. Furthermore, this lesson is planned for the beginning of the year so students can share the origin of their names, learn about each other, and begin to understand the diversity within our classroom.

OBJECTIVES AND STANDARDS:

1. Students will be able to explain the impact of Japanese occupation during World War II on the Korean people, their culture, and their identity.
NCSS Standard: Theme IX: GLOBAL CONNECTIONS
 Students will examine the local and individual implications of global processes and events.
MA Standard: WHII.28 Explain the consequences of World War II.

2. Students will be able to empathize with the narrator of *Lost Names* and the Korean people.
NCSS Standard: Theme IV: INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY
 Students will explore the influence of peoples, places, and environments on personal development and identity formation.
MA Concept and Skills Standard 7: Show connections, causal and otherwise, between particular historical events and ideas and larger social, economic, and political trends and developments.

3. Students will be able to explain the connection between Korean names and Korean culture and history.
NCSS Standard: Theme I: CULTURE
 Through experience, observation, and reflection, students will identify elements of culture as well as similarities and differences among cultural groups across time and place.

Common Core Standards

- RH 1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources
- RH 2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source
- RH 3 Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics

MATERIALS REQUIRED:

1. Class set of *Lost Names: Scenes from a Korean Boyhood* by Richard E. Kim or class set of Chapter 4: *Lost Names*, pages 87-115. If this book is unavailable, you can still proceed with the lesson (see Procedure 1).
2. Class set of handout “Korean Names and Naming” (See attached Handout #1)
3. Class set of *Under the Black Umbrella: Voices from Colonial Korea 1910-1945* by Hildi Kang, pages 117-122 (See attached Handout #2)
4. Short-answer quiz (See attached Handout #3)

INTRODUCTION and EXPLORATION:

In preparation for this lesson students will explore the origin of their name by asking their parents where their first, middle, and last/family name comes from. In the first activity of the lesson students will explore connections between their names and other aspects of their identity (ethnicity, religion, traditions, etc.), so they understand the humiliation and anger incited by the Japanese policy of “Sōshi-kaimei.”

PROCEDURE:

THE DELIVERY OF THE CONTENT:

1. In preparation for the lesson students should read or review Chapter 4: Lost Names in *Lost Names: Scenes from a Korean Boyhood* by Richard E. Kim. If you are unable to get copies of *Lost Names* by Richard E. Kim, you can still proceed with the following questions in which students have been asked to investigate the origin of their name. Students should investigate the origin of their name by answering the following questions:
 - a. What is the origin of your last/surname?
 - b. What does your surname mean?
 - c. Are there any interesting stories about your family/surname?
 - d. Ask you parents, why did they choose your given (first and middle) names?
 - e. Are there any interesting stories about your given names?
 - f. What does your name reveal about your identity or background? Religion? Language? Traditions?

Day One:

2. Do Now/Bell Ringer: When students arrive they should begin working on the following questions. This activity should take 3-5 minutes and gets students focused on the upcoming lesson and requires students to make connections to their homework and their own lives.
 - a. Respond to the following question: “Who am I?” Consider: role in family, background, interests, and physical characteristics. See <http://www.facinghistory.org/resources/strategies/identity-charts> for additional ideas for creating identity charts and <http://www2.facinghistory.org/Campus/rm.nsf/sc/IDCharts> for a sample identity chart using the Facing History model.
 - b. Last night you investigated the origin of your name. How does your name reflect characteristics your identity? For example: My last name is Murphy which is Irish in origin, and reflects my heritage and my religion, Catholic.
3. Next student will get into groups of 3-4. Each person in the group will share their story about the origin of their name and what their name reveals about their identity. This activity should take about 10 minutes. As the students are discussing their names, the teacher should be walking around the room and monitoring the conversations, and asking probing questions such as: *What does your name tell us about who you are? Your interests? Your heritage? Your family?*
4. When each group has finished, they will return to their seats and regroup as a class. The teacher should write on the front board, *What do our names reveal about who we are?* or *What do our names reveal about our identity?*
5. Next, tell students that they are going to learn more about the significance of Korean names. Students will read the handout “Korean Names and Naming” and answer questions. See attached Handout #1.
6. Wrap Up: *What does the structure of Korean names reveal about Korean history and culture?* This question is intended to parallel the line of questioning earlier in the lesson when the students investigate what their name reveals about their history and culture. This question is also intended to serve as a bridge to Day Two where students will explore why the Japanese sōshi-kaimei campaign was so intense.

Day Two:

1. Do Now: As students walk into the classroom assign them a letter and number (1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2D, 3A, etc.) and ask them to respond to quote that corresponds with their letter as designated below). If you have 24 students in your class then you should have 6 groups of 4. They should spend 3-5 minutes responding to their quote and question(s).

- a. “‘I don’t care about losing my name! I am just cold and *hungry*’ And only then do I give in to a delicious sensation—and I begin to cry. My father is at my side. ‘We’ll go home now.’
With tear-filled eyes, I look up at him. ‘I am sorry, but...’
‘Yes?’
‘But—what good can all this do? What good will all this do for us?’ I say defiantly, flinging my arms wide open to encompass the burying ground, with all its graves and the people; ‘What good will all this do to change what happened!’
To my surprise he says quickly, ‘Nothing.’
‘Then, why do you?...’
‘That’s enough now,’ he says. ‘Someday, you will understand.’” (*Lost Names*, 114)

What does the young boy not understand? What does the father mean when he says “Someday, you will understand.”

- b. “When we are in front of the graves of our ancestors, my father wipes the snow of the gravestone... The three of us are on our knees, and, after a long moment of silence, my grandfather, his voice weak and choking with a sob, says, ‘We are a disgrace to our family. We bring disgrace and humiliation to your name. How can you forgive us!’ He and my father bow, lowering their faces, their tears flowing now unchecked... and I, too, am weeping, though I am vaguely aware that I am crying because the grown-ups are crying.” (*Lost Names*, 111)

What does the grandfather mean when he says “We bring disgrace and humiliation to your name”?

- c. “[Father] gives me a hug. ‘I am ashamed to look into your eyes... someday, your generation will have to forgive us.’ I don’t know what he is talking about, but the scene and the atmosphere of the moment, in the roaring wind and with the snow gone berserk, make me feel dramatic.
“We will forgive you, Father,” say I, magnanimously.

...”I hope our ancestors will be as forgiving as you are,’ he says. ‘It is a time of mourning.’ And, only then, do I understand the meaning on his sleeve and those of his friend.” (*Lost Names*, 110)

What does the father mean when he says “I am ashamed”? What does the father mean when he says “It is a time of mourning”?

- d. “...the teacher gestures abruptly, as if to touch my face. ‘I am sorry,’ he says. My father gives him a slight bow of his head.

‘Even the British wouldn’t have thought of doing this sort of primitive thing in India,’ says the Japanese.

I am at a loss, trying to comprehend what he says and means.

‘...inflicting on you this humiliation...’he is saying, ‘...unthinkable for one Asian people to another Asian people, especially we Asians who should have a greater respect for our ancestors...’” (*Lost Names*, 109)

What is the teacher trying to say?

2. After students finish the “Do Now,” introduce the concept *sōshi-kaimei*. “*Sōshi*” means “creating a family name” and “*kaimei*” means “changing a given name.” There is a great description of it on page 117 of *Under the Black Umbrella* (see attached Handout #2).
3. After you introduce the concept have all of the 1’s get into a group, 2’s, 3’s, 4’s, etc. So, in each group you will have 1 student who responded to each of the 4 quotes (a, b, c, d). Once in their groups of 4 ask students to respond collectively from the following question, drawing on their quote for evidence and *Lost Names*. Questions:
 - i. *How did the Korean family in “Lost Names” respond to the name-changing campaign?*
 - ii. *Predict: In what other ways do you think Koreans responded to the campaign?*
 - iii. *Why would the Japanese want to change Koreans names?*

This should take 10-12 minutes.

*You can modify this by having students who all read quote A get into one group, students who read quote B in one group, etc. to have them discuss the quote before breaking off into their “number groups”.

4. Ask one representative from each “number group” to report out their group’s comments in the discussion to the class.
5. Ask students to return to their seats. Next tell them that they will read the testimony’s of Koreans who lived through the Japanese occupation and compare their predications to the true stories told by Koreans themselves. Distribute Handout #2 to each student (*Under the Black Umbrella*, 117-121).
6. As they read they should respond to the following questions:
 - a. Considering the historical context of WWII, what is the purpose of the *sōshi-kaimei* campaign?
 - b. There is no evidence that this was a government campaign, rather than a law with legal consequences. So, why did many Korean’s change their names?
 - c. Why would the Korean people refuse to change their names?
 - d. How did many Korean people hold on to their heritage while still changing their names?
7. After students finish reading and answer the questions, ask the class as a whole to reflect on the question *What is the purpose of the sōshi-kaimei campaign?* Record student responses on the board.
8. Next, ask them *Do you think the Japanese campaign was successful?* Ask them to take into consideration the primary sources they just read. Were the Japanese successful in

their aim to make the Koreans “Japanese”? Strip Koreans of their heritage and identity? Make them loyal subjects of the Japanese emperor, etc?

9. Wrap Up: *Reflect on the Japanese name-changing campaign and the Korean response. Where else in history have we seen these policies and responses?* The purpose of this question is for students to make connections to other parts of the curriculum. Possible answers could include: Nazi control of identity during the Holocaust and Jewish response by still celebrating Shabbat in the concentration camps or changing their names; Spanish colonization of the Americas and mass conversion to Christianity as a means of control and the native response of creating a hybrid religion taking indigenous elements and Christian elements, etc.

THE APPLICATION OF THE CONTENT:

The activities and questioning in this lesson are designed to serve as a case study. The concepts developed in this activity can then be applied to the study of a variety of topics in world history. When we study events like the European colonization of the Americas, European imperialism in Africa and Asia, fascism in Italy and Germany, and communism in the USSR and China, students can apply understanding of the purpose of cultural policies like *sōshi-kaimei* to understanding of cultural policies like Nuremberg Laws, assimilation, etc. Similarly, students can apply understanding of how Koreans maintained their identity under Japanese occupation to understanding how Jews maintained their identity in the Holocaust, Indians under British imperialism, native Americans under Americanization campaigns, artists and musicians under the totalitarian policies of Stalin, Mao, etc.

The concepts in this lesson can be extended in a variety of ways. Using Chapter 11 in *Under the Black Umbrella* students can explore other methods the Japanese used to try to make the Koreans “Japanese.” Students could also investigate how Koreans maintain their heritage in an increasingly globalized world.

ASSESSMENT:

The structure and design of this lesson allows for several opportunities for informal or formative assessment. The homework assignment, “Do Now” questions, Handout #1 and Handout #2 questions can be collected and assessed for student completion and comprehension. Throughout the lesson there is collaborative group work which allows the teacher to walk around the room and listen to individual student comments and assess their understanding. This lesson can also be assessed by a short-answer quiz. See attached Handout #3.

RESOURCES:

Armstrong, Charles. *History of Korea, Part I*. Podcast audio, Korea Society. Accessed August 8, 2011. http://www.koreasociety.org/korean_studies/lectures/history_of_korea.html

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Institute, Korea University, 1990.

Facing History. "Identity Chart." Accessed August 20, 2011.
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Kang, Hildi. *Under the Black Umbrella: Voices from Colonial Korea, 1910-1945*. Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 2001.

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HANDOUT 1: KOREAN NAMES AND NAMING

There are approximately 250 surnames in Korea which originate from the Silla and Koryŏ Dynasty. Approximately 55% of all Koreans have one of five surnames: Kim, Lee/Yi/Rhee, Park/Pak, Choi, Chung/Jung. According to the 2000 census, there are over 9 million Kims in Korea, but not all Kims are the same. All Korean family names, including Kim, are separated into different clans named by their place of origin (pon'gwan). Today there are over 250 pon'gwan for Kim. Of these, the two major Kim clans are the Gimhae Kims (over 4 million people) and the Gyeongju Kims (over 1.7 million people).

The pon'gwan and the family name are inherited from a father to his children, People in the same paternal lineage share the same combination of the pon'gwan and the family name. A pon'gwan does not change by marriage or adoption. In fact, when a woman gets married she does not take on the name of her husband. Some clans grew so large they were organized further into sub-clans called "-pa" (literally means "branch"). A Korean last name could look like this: [region] [last name]-ssi [subclan]-hu [sub-sub-clan]-pa [number]-daeson. Koreans can trace their ancestry back through their father's line to a place of origin with the help of the comprehensive genealogies published by clans. These genealogical books are known as jokbo.

“Another long-standing custom is for each Korean to have two given names - one a personal name and the other a generational name, chosen by the parents, grandparents, or an onomancer (name-giver). A male generational name is given to the first son born in a family, and a female generational name is given to the first daughter. Thereafter all additional sons and daughters in the family are given the same generational names. As the family branches out over generations, the generational names continue in the male and female lines, so that eventually very distant relatives may have a common generational name that goes back to a remote ancestor.



A great deal of thought goes into the selection of both personal names and generational names, and it is still common for parents to seek the help of onomancers. The object is to select a name that fits the child based on time of birth and the parents' expectations for the child.” (DeMente)

Confucianism, introduced by the Chosŏn Dynasty (1392-1910), has greatly influenced the development of Korean names. Confucian influence is reflected in the paternal structure of naming and the Confucian concept of filial piety, or respect and reverence for one's ancestors encourages Koreans to carry on and honor the family name.

Questions:

1. Summarize the article in 3-4 sentences using your own words.
2. From this information, what significance does a Korean name carry?
3. How does the history and practices surrounding Korean names compare to your culture's naming practices? How are the naming practices similar? How are the naming practices different?

HANDOUT #2

Excerpts from *Under the Black Umbrella*, pages 117-121

words of the Emperor, but of course we pecked.

Each of these special days had its own speech and we had to memorize them in civics class. The proclamations, of course, were totally serious. *Ch'in omni* ("We the Emperor, consider") *wa ga* ("our") *ko so ko so* ("divine imperial ancestors").

But kids, you know, are not the least bit impressed with speeches, and we made games out of them. We stood facing each other with great ceremony, arms crossed over our chest, intoning heavily "*Ch'in omni*," throwing our arms wide to embrace the universe "*wanana ga*" and, surprised! one kid would quickly reach over and tickle the other under his outstretched arms "*ko so ko so, ko so ko so*." Gales of laughter!

When I was about nine and in fourth grade, we lived in Kanggye and actually had Japanese neighbors who also had fourth- and fifth-grade children, just like us. We became good friends, exchanged comic books, and went to each other's birthday parties. On rainy days we'd play marbles, and then we found out that in their own Japanese schools the kids also poked fun at the Emperor's speeches, but they, of course, didn't dare do it in public. They even did some things we hadn't thought of.

CHOE KILSŌNG, (m) b. 1911, teacher, Kyōnggi Province:

After the Second World War started, every morning during the morning assembly we bowed our heads toward the east where the Emperor was supposed to live, and we recited the oath. Our principal supervised this, but when he was away, I had to do it. When I had to direct the school to bow to the east, it really bothered me. I didn't like it at all. I'm not sure why, but inside I thought, you rascal, while outwardly I still had to bow my head.

NEW YEAR'S DAY

KIM P. [ANONYMOUS], (f) b. 1931, housewife:

The Japanese celebrated January 1 as their New Year's holiday, but we Koreans celebrated the lunar New Year several weeks later. In order to wipe out Korean customs, some Japanese teachers took their students on trips on the day of lunar New Year.

We might have a picnic or a work day. We might dig air-raid shelters or

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Change by Corston

day, but they took us far away from home so we could not celebrate as a family. It was on purpose, to break our traditional holiday.

KANG SANG'UK [KANG SANG WOOK],

(m) b. 1935, physicist, North Pyōngan Province:

In the far north where I lived, the Japanese did not destroy our lunar celebration. At the lunar New Year we kids made a huge bonfire of rice straw. Only kids, no grownups. The grownups didn't mind because we were way out in the field. We went from house to house and begged good things to eat, then gathered back in the field and let loose all our excitement, yelling and jumping up and down in front of the bonfire.

On the night before the bonfire, we tried to stay awake all night long, because everyone knew that if you fell asleep on that night, your eyebrows would turn white. I remember putting white powder on my kid brother when he fell asleep.

CHANGING TO JAPANESE NAMES

In 1939, in order to bring about a "more perfect union," the government encouraged Koreans to abandon their Korean names and change both their family and personal names to Japanese. "The campaign was universal and intense, but no real search has yet found an actual law to that effect. Rather it was a bureaucratic campaign. That may seem a trivial distinction when compared with the overall insult of the thing, but in fact, if people refused — and many did — the government had no legal recourse. The whole point was for the government to be able to say that the people had changed their names 'voluntarily.'"²⁸⁴

Of our fifty informants, only four families refused to change their names. All others complied, for without a Japanese name citizens could not enter schools, get jobs, or obtain ration cards. The government stopped issuing permits and postmen stopped delivering packages to those with Korean names. However, many Koreans built into their new names some ingenious reflection of their Korean name, hometown, or a significant family attribute.

PARK SŌNGP'IL,

(m) b. 1917, farmer/fisherman, South Kyōngsang Province:

I got beaten up many times by the Japanese because I resisted changing my name to Japanese. Everybody around me changed theirs, but I had lost

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Becoming Japanese

my grandfather and then my father, and had taken over the responsibility of eldest son. That is why I tried not to change my name. But I got tired of being so badly beaten.

Out of desperation, I wrote to my aunt in Seoul, the one who had been arrested for the Independence demonstration. I asked her, should I do it? By return mail, she said, "Do you have *two fathers*? If you have two fathers, then change your name to the name of your Japanese father." She was furious!

So I held out a while longer, but I couldn't stand any more persecution. I finally changed my name to Otake. The O in Chinese characters is Korean *Tae*, the first syllable of the place where I was born. The *take*, meaning bamboo, is for the huge bamboo grove behind our house. So my name signified that I was born in Taehyön township in the house with the bamboo grove in back.

CH'U PONGYE, (f) b. 1913, housewife, South Kyöngsang Province:

We never changed our family name; we kept my married name of Pak. Our son did change his name to Parku Toshio, but my husband was very stubborn. My own family did not change their name, either. My brother, working in the city office, I don't know if he changed his name or not, but I'm sure he did it to keep his job. We saw each other often, back and forth, but did he tell me those things? No. He never told me about any hard times. He just minded his own business and didn't bother anybody.

YI CHAE'IM, (f) b. 1919, housewife, Kyönggi Province:

My grandfather, the scholar, after we were forced to change names, was so upset he would not eat or even drink for many days.

KIM P. [ANONYMOUS], (m) b. 1924, township office worker:

I changed my name to Tomikawa, meaning "rich river." The characters in Korean read *Tu ch'ön*. I chose the name myself. I had no particular reason, it just seemed like an easy name to pronounce. My grandfather objected, but since I was working, I had to change it. I am the only one in my family that did change, because all the others were still farmers. They didn't have to worry about losing their jobs.

YANG SONGDOK,

(m) b. 1919, electrical engineer, South Ch'ungch'öng Province:

Every family had big discussions whether to go along or resist. My eldest brother, who took over the rice dealership, didn't change his name at all, because he was dealing mostly with other Koreans. But for those of us who had to go to school or get jobs, we had to come up with the new names.

This was just a tactic to make Koreans into Japanese. They didn't do this blindly, you know. They had very sinister plans. The purpose of changing names was obviously to make us sound Japanese, so that the younger generation would know nothing but the new names, and their thinking and their attitudes would become Japanese. This was all part of their long-range plan to eliminate any vestige of Korean consciousness.

KIM WÖN'GÜK [KIM WON KEUK],

(m) b. 1918, Tobacco Authority officer, North Hamgyöng Province:

My clan had several meetings with lots of debate about whether to go along with the name change. Some were dead set against it, but finally after several meetings, they gave in.

I attended some of the meetings just to listen—I was too young to speak up. Those in favor said that without a Japanese name you could not do business with the Japanese, could not get jobs, could not send your children to school—in fact, could not do much at all. They said it was only a formality, our hearts were still Kim and we would always remain Kim. So we should just go along.

The patriarch of our local clan, an elder who commanded respect, at the third meeting, gave his opinion, which counted heavily. He said we should not draw undue attention to ourselves. Not stir up trouble. So the factions gave in and went along with the patriarch.

At least in our region, those who did not change their name to Japanese were the first targets of the draft to the factories.

Some Koreans took Japanese names in an arbitrary fashion, often defamably illogical. In the name changes that follow, however, one can see the effort made by interviewees to hold on to their Korean heritage.

Korean Name Character and Meaning	Japanese Name and Meaning	Reason for Choice
Kim 金 gold	Kanekuni 金國 gold country	Retain "gold" 金 but use its Japanese pronunciation
	Kanezawa 金澤 gold pond	Retain "gold" 金 A popular Japanese name
	Kareshiro 金城 gold castle	Retain "gold" 金
	Kaneda 金田 gold rice field	Retain "gold" 金
Chioc 崔 J = mountain	Iwamoto 岩本 rock origin	We wanted a meaning to show our faith
	Yamamoto 山本 mountain origin	Chioc character is written with "mountain" on top, so we kept the mountain part
ak 朴	Orake 大竹	"O" = "Tae" first syllable of the place where I was born. "Take" = bamboo. It signifies I was born in Taedyön township in the house with the bamboo grove in back.

Korean Name Character and Meaning	Japanese Name and Meaning	Reason for Choice
Pak 朴	Kido 木戸 wooden door	Kept the tree 木 from Pak
	Masaki 正木 Upright tree	Kept the tree 木 from Pak
	Matsumoto 松本 Pine origin	Pine trees 松 are in Kyöngju and Yi's clan is from Kyöngju
Yi 李 木 = tree	Kimoto 木元 Tree origin	Kept the tree from the top of Yi 木
Kang 康	Nobukawa 信川	Used the Chinese characters for the Kang ancestral seat which are read Sin ch'ön in Korean and Nobukawa in Japanese.
Kang 姜	Oyama 大山 Large mountain	Named after the mountain in the ancestral seat of his clan read Tac san in Korean and Oyama in Japanese.

