

- Holiday celebrated with ceremonies at the ancient rock Altar of Tangun, on the summit of Mt. Mani on Kanghwa Island, about twenty-five miles west of Seoul.

i. Samil-jol (sahm-il-chuhl, 1 March)

- Independence Movement Day, celebrating the anniversary of the independence demonstrations in 1919
- Protest demonstrated against the Japanese occupation (*Samil* means "three-one," signifying third month, first day) which occurred in 1910, depriving Koreans of many freedoms.
- March 1 movement was a turning point; an estimated 2 million people took to the streets in peaceful demonstrations and a Declaration of Independence was read at a rally in Seoul.



- Demonstrations met with thousands of arrests, close to 23,000 Koreans being killed or wounded.
- Independence leaders formed a provisional government abroad
- Day marked by the reading of the 1919 Declaration of Independence at Pagoda Park in Seoul.

j. Shampoo Day (day 15 of the sixth lunar month)



- Cold Water Shampoo Day (Yoodoonal) is spent near a stream or waterfall. People bathe and wash their hair to ward off fever and other heat-related ills during the coming year.
- Macaroni, flour cakes, melons, and other fruits offered at family shrines. For scholars, Shampoo

Day sees picnics, wine drinking, and poem composition.

k. Silla Cultural Festival (SHIL-lah, October, every other year)

- Three-day festival to celebrate the country's ancient Silla Kingdom.

• Celebrations held in Kyongju, the capital of the Silla Kingdom, and throughout the Kyongju Valley, where there is a great treasure of historic buildings: the Sokkuram Grotto, one of Asia's finest Buddhist shrines with a granite dome; Ch'omsongdae, a seventh-century bottle-shaped stone structure that is the world's earliest known extant observatory; royal tombs; palaces; and pleasure pavilions.

- Silla Kingdom in the southeastern portion of what is now Korea flourished from 57 B.C. to A.D. 935. It defeated two rival kingdoms, unifying all three in 676. Unified Silla Period is considered a Golden Age of Buddhist sculpture.
 - Festival features concerts, wrestling matches, Buddhist pagoda dancing, games, contests, and processions with elaborate floats.

l. Sol (SOHL, first day of the lunar month)

- Lunar new year celebrated largely by rural people and is a two-day national holiday.
- January 1 and 2, also national holidays, are celebrated more by residents of cities.
- Tradition calls for families to gather in their best clothes and for children to bow to parents and grandparents to reaffirm family ties.
 - Soup made of rice and dumplings called *duggook* is served. It is customary to play *yut*, a game played with wooden blocks and a game board.

m. Tano Festival (tahn-oh, fifth day of the fifth lunar month)

- Ancient spring agricultural festival that started as a planting ritual and time to pray for a good harvest.

- Falls between the planting of rice seedlings and their transplanting to paddy fields.



- Festivities include swinging contests for girls
 - Boys and men often take part in *ssirum*, native Korean wrestling.

n. Other Korean holidays include

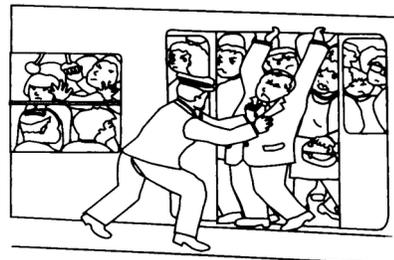
- (1) Buddha's Birthday (in May; lunar calendar)
- (2) Children's Day (5 May)
- (3) Christmas Day (25 December)
- (4) Constitution Day (17 July)
- (5) Memorial Day (6 June)
- (6) New Year's (1-3 January)

6. Customs

a. Gestures and Taboos

- **Business Cards** Use respect when exchanging cards. Often using two hands to deliver and receive the cards can show such respect.
- **Boisterous behavior** Avoid loud talking or laughing, unless for an informal occasion.

- **Space** Do not be offended by the closeness of personal space in public places.



- **Men first** Men generally have first place in going through doors, and walking ahead of women.
- **Back** Some Koreans may walk through you and another with whom you are talking. This avoids the impolite walking behind another person's back.
- **Sidewalks** The left side is often the walking side.
- **Laughter** Many Koreans cover their mouths when laughing.
- **Sunglasses** Remove sunglasses during discussions
 - **Graciousness** Wait to be seated when entering a conference or dining room. Humility is highly valued.

b. Freedom of religion *"The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government respects this provision in practice."* (Human Rights Practices--South Korea, 1996, U.S. State Department)

c. People with disabilities *"Although new measures aimed at creating opportunities for the disabled have been taken, public facilities for their everyday care and use remained inadequate. However, there is no legal discrimination against disabled persons in employment, education, or in the provision of other state services."*



New public buildings are required to include facilities for the disabled, such as ramp access to entrances, a wheelchair lift, and special parking spaces."

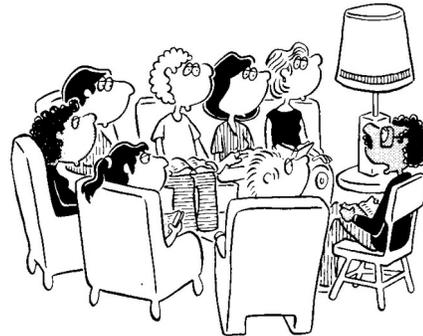
d. Social values--neo-Confucianism *"The social values of contemporary South Korea reflect the synthesis and development of diverse influences, both indigenous and foreign. Probably the most important of these is the neo-Confucian doctrine of the Chinese philosopher Zhu Xi (1130-1200), first introduced into Korea during the closing years of the Koryo Dynasty (918-1392). The rulers of the Choson Dynasty (1392-1910) adopted it as their state ideology. The*

most important Korean neo-Confucian philosopher, Yi Hwang, also known as Yi T'oe-gye (1501-70), had a great influence on later generations of Confucianists not only in Korea, but also in Japan." (Library of Congress Country Study--South Korea)

(1) Social ethics "Neo-Confucianism combines the social ethics of the classical Chinese philosophers Confucius (Kong Zi, 551-479 B.C.) and Mencius (Meng Zi, 372-289 B.C.) with Daoist, or Taoist, and Buddhist metaphysics. One of the doctrine's basic ideas is that the institutions and practices of the ideal human community are an expression of the immutable principles or laws that govern the movements of the cosmos.

Through correct social practice, as defined by the Confucian sages and their commentators, individuals can achieve a kind of spiritual unity with heaven. Neo-Confucianism defines formal social relations on all levels of society.

Social relations are not conceived of in terms of the happiness or satisfaction of the individuals involved, but in terms of the harmonious integration of individuals into a collective whole that mirrors the harmony of the natural order."



(2) The Five Relationships "Neo-Confucianism in Korea was becoming rigid and increasingly conservative by the mid-1500s. The practice of neo-Confucianism emphasized hierarchy in human relations and self-control on the individual level.

Society was defined in terms of the Five Relationships (o ryun in Korean; wu lun in Chinese) that had been formulated by classical Chinese thinkers, such as Mencius, and subsequently sanctified by the neo-Confucian metaphysicians: 'between father and son there should be affection; between ruler and minister there should be righteousness; between husband and wife there should be attention to their separate functions; between old and young

there should be a proper order; and between friends there should be faithfulness.'

Only the last was a relationship between equals. The others were based on authority and subordination, including the first relationship, which involved not so much mutual love as the unquestioning subordination of the son to the will of his father."

(3) Hierarchy and inequality *"Throughout traditional Korean society, from the royal palace and central government offices in Seoul to the humblest household in the provinces, the themes of hierarchy and inequality were pervasive. Persons were expected to nurture 'sincere' attitudes, which meant not so much expressing what one 'really' felt as 'reflecting on' or 'clarifying' one's thoughts and feelings until they conformed to traditional norms.*

There was no concept of the rights of the individual. The ideal man or woman was one who controlled his or her passions or emotions in order to fulfill to the letter a host of exacting social obligations."



(4) Educated ideal *"In the context of wider society, a well-defined elite of scholar-officials versed in neo-Confucian orthodoxy was legitimized in terms of the traditional ethical distinction between the educated 'superior man' or 'gentleman' and the 'small man' who seeks only profit. This was a central theme in the writings of Confucius and Mencius.*

Confucianism as a political theory proposed a benevolent paternalism: the masses had no role in government, but the scholar-officials were supposed to look after them as fathers look after their children."



(5) China ties *"Just as the father commanded unquestioning obedience in the household and the scholar-official elite did so in the nation as a whole, there was also a hierarchy in international relations. China, the homeland of neo-Confucianism and the most powerful nation in the region, was the center of Choson Korea's cultural universe for most of the dynasty's duration."*

(6) Personal variety *"Foreign observers have been impressed with the diversity of the Korean character as expressed in day-to-day human relations.*



There is, on one hand, the image of Koreans as self-controlled, deferential, and meticulous in the fulfillment of their social obligations; on the other hand is the Korean reputation for volatility and emotionalism, for being the 'Irish of the East.'



The ecstasy and euphoria of shamanistic religious practices, one of Korea's most characteristic cultural expressions, contrasts sharply with the austere self-control of Confucian ancestor rituals. Although relatively minor themes in the history of Korean ethics and social thought, the concepts of equality and respect for individuals are not entirely lacking."

e. Traditional social structure "In Choson Dynasty Korea, four rather distinct social strata developed: the scholar-officials, collectively referred to as the yangban; the chungin (literally 'middle people'), technicians and administrators subordinate to the yangban; the commoners or sangmin, a large group composed of farmers, craftsmen, and merchants; and the ch'ommin (literally despised people), at the bottom of society. To ensure stability, the government devised a system of personal tallies in order to identify people according to their status."

(1) Yangban (YUHNG-bahn)



"In the strictest sense of the term, yangban referred to government officials or officeholders who had passed the civil service examinations that tested knowledge of the Confucian classics and their neo-Confucian interpreters. They were the Korean counterparts of the scholar-officials, or mandarins, of imperial China.

The term yangban, first used during the Koryo Dynasty, means literally 'two groups,' that is, civil and military officials. Over the centuries, however, its usage became rather vague, so that the term can be said to have several overlapping meanings.

Strictly speaking, a yangban lineage was one that consistently combined examination success with appointments to government office over a period of some generations. During the Choson period, examination candidates had to show several generations of such ancestry on both sides to be admitted to the civil service examinations. A broader use of the term included within the yangban two other groups that could be considered associated with, but outside of, the ruling elite.

The first group included those scholars who had passed the preliminary civil service examination and sometimes the higher examinations but failed to secure government appointment. In the late Choson Dynasty, there were many more successful examination candidates than there were positions.

The second group included the more remote relatives and descendants of government officials. Even if these people were poor and did not themselves serve in the government, they were considered members of a 'yangban family' and thus shared the aura of the elite as long as they retained Confucian culture and rituals."

(2) Chungin (CHOONG-yihn)

"Below the yangban yet superior to the commoners were the chungin, a small group of technical and administrative officials. They included astronomers, physicians, interpreters, and professional military officers, as well as artists.



Local functionaries, who were members of a lower hereditary class, were an important and frequently oppressive link between the yangban and the common people. They were often the de facto rulers of a local region."

(3) Sangmin (SAHNG-mihn)

"The commoners, or sangmin, composed about 75 percent of the total population. These farmers, craftsmen, and merchants alone bore the burden of taxation and were subject to military conscription. Farmers had higher prestige than merchants, but lived a hard life."

(4) Ch'ommin (CHUN-mihn)

"Below the commoners, the 'base people' or ch'ommin did what was considered vile or low-prestige work.



They included servants and slaves in government offices and resthouses, jailkeepers and convicts, shamans, actors, female entertainers (kisaeng), professional mourners, shoemakers, executioners, and for a time at least, Buddhist monks and nuns.

Also included in this category were the paekchong, apparently descended from Inner Asian nomads, who dealt with meat and the hides of animals, were considered 'unclean,' and lived in segregated communities. Slaves were treated as chattels but could own property and even other slaves. Although numerous at the beginning of the Choson Dynasty, their numbers had dwindled by the time slavery was officially abolished at the end of the nineteenth century."

f. Emergence of modern society



"In 1894 a program of social reforms, known as the Kabo Reforms, was initiated by pro-Japanese Korean officials. Yangban and commoners were made equal before the law, the old Confucian civil service examinations were abolished, and slavery and ch'ommin status was ended.

Modern forms of government and administration, largely borrowed from Japan, were adopted. In the years before annexation, a self-strengthening movement and government reforms attempted to regain Korean control of the pace and direction of change. However, it was only following the Japanese annexation in 1910 that the rapid social transformation of Korea began."

(1) Rural changes *"Rural society was radically transformed. Traditionally, all land belonged to the king and was granted by him to his subjects. Although specific parcels of land tended to remain within the same family from generation to generation (including communal land owned by clans and lineages), land occupancy, use, and ownership patterns often were legally ambiguous and widely divergent*

from one part of the country to another. There was no institution of private property during the Choson Dynasty.

The Japanese, however, conducted a comprehensive land survey between 1910 and 1920 in order to place landownership on a modern legal footing. Farmers whose families had tilled the same soil for generations but could not prove ownership in a way satisfactory to the colonial authorities had their land confiscated. Such land came into the hands of the colonial government, to be sold to Japanese land companies, such as the Oriental Development Company, or to Japanese immigrants.

...the survey also helped to confirm, or in some cases even to improve, the position of some members of the existing Korean landlord class. Many were former yangban who cooperated with the Japanese.



Those yangban who remained aloof from their country's new overlord often fell into poverty. The farmers themselves either became tenants or were forced to leave the land. During the depression of the 1930s, thousands emigrated to the cities or overseas. Many others fled to the hills to become 'fire-field' (slash-and-burn) farmers, living under extremely harsh and primitive conditions. By 1936 this last group numbered more than 1.5 million people."

(2) Japanese innovation "The Japanese built railroads, highways, schools, and hospitals and established a modern system of administration. These changes were intended to link the colonial economy more effectively to that of Japan. The new, modern sector required technically trained experts. Although the top positions were invariably occupied by Japanese, Koreans worked on the lower levels as secondary technical and administrative personnel."

(3) Japanese rule

"The great majority of Koreans suffered under Japanese rule. A large number of farmers were forced off their land after 1910; industrial workers and miners working for Japanese-owned firms were often treated little better than slaves. Under colonial agricultural policies, rice cultivation was maximized, although most rice was grown for consumption in Japan."

Nevertheless, development under Japanese colonial rule provided some foundation, however unintentionally, for South Korea's impressive post-1945 economic growth. A small group of Korean entrepreneurs emerged who fostered close ties with the colonial government, and Japanese business interests established family-held firms that were the precursors of South Korea's present-day chaebol, or business conglomerates. It is a tribute to their acumen that these entrepreneurs were able to survive and prosper in a colonial economy dominated overwhelmingly by Japanese capital."

(4) Post 1945 developments *"Three developments after 1945 were particularly important for South Korea's social modernization."*

(a) Land reform

"The first was the land reform carried out by United States and South Korean authorities between 1945 and 1950. The institution of private property was retained, but the American occupation authorities confiscated and redistributed all land held by the Japanese colonial government, Japanese companies, and individual Japanese colonists. The Korean government carried out a reform whereby Koreans with large landholdings were obliged to divest most of their land. A new class of independent, family proprietors was created."



(b) Refugees and repatriates "The second development was the great influx from North Korea and other countries of repatriates and refugees. In the 1945-49 period, between 1.5 million and 2 million Koreans returned to South Korea from Japan, the northeast provinces of China, and other foreign countries. With the establishment of a communist state in North Korea, a large number of refugees fled to South Korea and were joined by many more during the Korean War. A conservative estimate of the total number of refugees from the north is 1.2 million. Most of the northerners settled in the cities--new recruits for the country's industrial labor force."

(c) Korean War "The third development was a direct result of the Korean War. Traditionally Koreans, like their Chinese and unlike their Japanese neighbors, considered the military to be a low-status occupation. Korea did not have its own armed forces during the colonial period, although some Koreans served in the Japanese military, especially after 1941, and a handful, such as former President Park Chung Hee, received officer's training.



The North Korean invasion of June 1950 and the three years of fighting that followed cast the South Korean military establishment into the role of savior of the country.

And since the coup d'état of May 1961 that established Park Chung Hee, the military establishment has held considerable political power. Roh Tae Woo, elected president in 1987, was a retired general with close connections to the military elite.

Universal military conscription of men has played an important role in South Korea's development, both in political socialization and in integrating a society divided by strong regional prejudices. It also has exposed the nation's young men to technical training and to a disciplined way of life.

During the three decades after Park's 1961 coup d'état, the goal of the military elite was to create a harmonious, disciplined society that is both technically advanced and economically efficient.

Economic modernization, however, has brought social changes--especially in education and urbanization--that have had a corrosive effect on the military's authoritarian view of society and have promoted the emergence of a more contentious, pluralistic society than many in the military have found desirable.



g. Aspects of social class in contemporary South Korea

(1) Education *"Education remained the single most important factor affecting social mobility in the 1990s. With the exception of the military, whose top echelons were educated at the Korea Military Academy, the postwar elites of South Korea shared one characteristic: they were graduates of the most prestigious universities. There was a well-defined hierarchy of such schools, starting with Seoul National University at the top and followed by Yonsei University and Korea University (known as Koryo in Korean). Ehwa Woman's University was the top institution for women.*



Despite impressive increases in university enrollments, the central importance of education credentials for social advancement has tended to widen the gap between the middle and lower classes. Income distribution is more unequal than in Japan or Taiwan, with pronounced disparities between college and secondary-school graduates. Many workers know