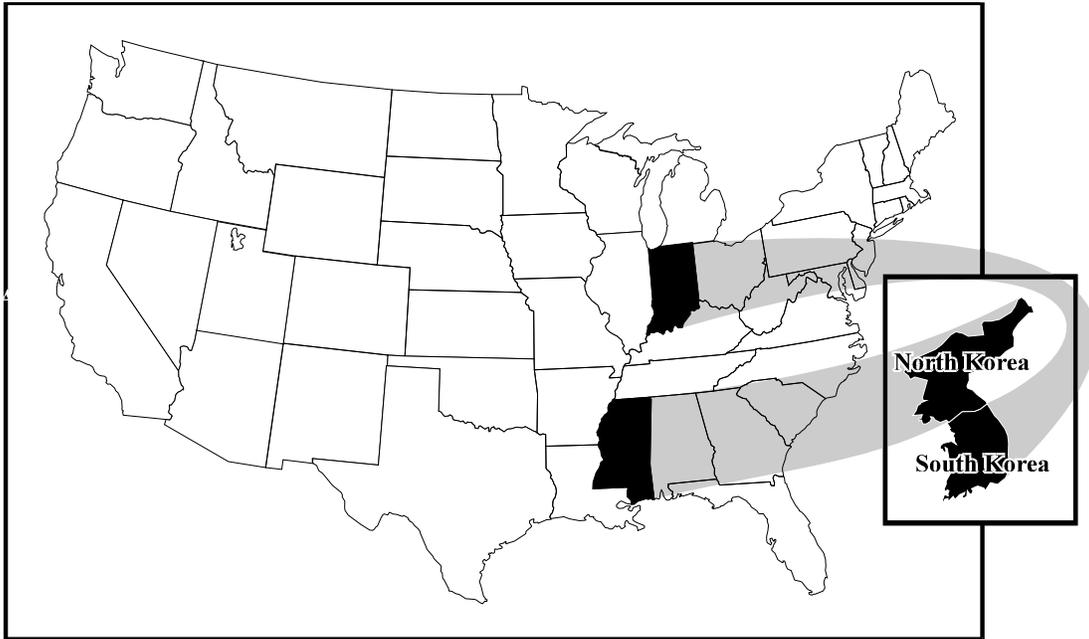
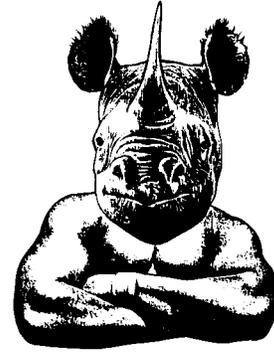


North Korea



<u>Population</u>	23,486,550
% under 15 years	30%
<u>Commo</u>	
TV	1:67
Radio	1:5
Phone	1:20
Newspaper	no figure
<u>Health</u>	
Life Expectancy	Male 67/Female 73
Hospitals	1:74
Doctors	1:370
IMR	27:1,000
<u>Income</u>	\$1,000.00 per cap
<u>Literacy Rate</u>	99%

1. Religious Groups *"Buddhism and Confucianism, some Christianity and syncretic Chondogyo. Autonomous religious activities now almost nonexistent; government-sponsored religious groups exist to provide illusion of religious freedom." (CIA 1996 Factbook)*



a. State enforced belief

(1) Overview *"Between 1945, when Soviet forces first occupied the northern half of the Korean Peninsula and the end of the Korean War in 1953, many Christians, considered "bad elements" by North Korean authorities, fled to South Korea to escape the socialist regime's antireligious policies.*

The state co-opted Buddhism, which had weakened over the centuries. P'yngyang has made a concerted effort to uproot indigenous beliefs. In the early 1990s, the practices of shamanism and fortune-telling seem to have largely disappeared."

(2) Kim Il Sung

"Many if not most observers of North Korea would agree that the country's official religion is the cult of Kim Il Sung. North Korean Christians attending overseas conferences claim that there is no contradiction between Christian beliefs and the veneration of the 'great leader' or his secular church's philosophy.

This position does not differ much from that of the far more numerous Japanese Christian communities before and during World War II, which were pressured into acknowledging the divine status of the emperor."



(3) Freedom of belief *"Different official attitudes toward organized religion are reflected in various constitutions. Article 14 of the 1948 constitution noted that 'citizens of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea shall have the freedom of religious belief and of conducting religious services.' Article 54 of the 1972 constitution, however, stated that 'citizens have religious liberty and the freedom to oppose religion' (also translated as 'the freedom of antireligious propaganda'). Some observers argued that the change occurred because in 1972 the political authorities no longer needed the support of the much-weakened organized religions.*

In the 1992 constitution, Article 68 grants freedom of religious belief and guarantees the right to construct buildings for religious use and religious ceremonies. The article also states, however, that 'No one may use religion as a means by which to drag in foreign powers or to destroy the state or social order.' North Korea has been represented at international religious conferences by state-sponsored religious organizations such as the Korean Buddhists' Federation, the Christian Federation, and the Ch'ndogyo Youth Party."

(4) Temples and churches

"Many churches and temples have been taken over by the state and converted to secular use. Buddhist temples, such as those located at Kmgang-san and Myohyang-san, are considered 'national treasures,' however, and have been preserved and restored. This action is in accord with the chuch'e principle that the creative energies of the Korean people in the past must be appreciated."



b. Christianity

(1) Pyongyang *"Before 1948 Pyongyang was an important Christian center; one-sixth of its population of about 300,000 residents were converts."*

(2) State supported efforts "In the late 1980s, it became apparent that North Korea was beginning to use the small number of Christians remaining in the country to establish contacts with Christians in South Korea and the West. Such contacts are considered useful for promoting the regime's political aims, including reunifying the peninsula.

In 1988 two new churches, the Protestant Pongsu Church and the Catholic Changchung Cathedral, were opened in Pyongyang. Other signs of the regime's changing attitude toward Christianity include holding the International Seminar of Christians of the North and South for the Peace and Reunification of Korea in Switzerland in November 1988, allowing papal representatives to attend the opening of the Changchung Cathedral in October/November of the same year, and sending two North Korean novice priests to study in Rome. Moreover, a new association of Roman Catholics was established in June 1988.

A North Korean Protestant pastor reported at a 1989 meeting of the National Council of Churches in Washington, D.C., that his country has 10,000 Protestants and 1,000 Catholics who worship in 500 home churches. In March-April 1992, American evangelist Billy Graham visited North Korea to preach and to speak at Kim Il Sung University."



c. Buddhism "A limited revival of Buddhism is apparently taking place. This includes the establishment of an academy for Buddhist studies and the publication of a twenty-five-volume translation of the Korean Tripitaka, or Buddhist scriptures, which had been carved on 80,000 wooden blocks and kept at the temple at Myohyang-san in central North Korea. A few Buddhist temples conduct religious services."

2. Ethnic/Racial Groups (See South Korea study)

a. Korean cultural preservation *"Since the establishment of the Han Chinese colonies in the northern Korean Peninsula 2,000 years ago, Koreans have been under the cultural influence of China. During the period of Japanese domination (1910-45), the colonial regime attempted to force Koreans to adopt the Japanese language and culture.*

Neither the long and pervasive Chinese influence nor the more coercive and short-lived Japanese attempts to make Koreans loyal subjects of the Japanese emperor, however, succeeded in eradicating their ethnic, cultural, and linguistic distinctiveness.

The desire of the North Korean regime to preserve its version of Korean culture, including many traditional aspects such as food, dress, art, architecture, and folkways, is motivated in part by the historical experience of cultural domination by both the Chinese and the Japanese."



b. Chuch'e (choo-cheh)

"Chuch'e ideology asserts Korea's cultural distinctiveness and creativity as well as the productive powers of the working masses. The ways in which chuch'e rhetoric is used shows a razor-thin distinction between revolutionary themes of self-sufficient socialist construction and a virulent ethnocentrism.

In the eyes of North Korea's leaders, the 'occupation' of the southern half of the peninsula by 'foreign imperialists' lends special urgency to the issue of cultural/ethnic identity. Not only must the people of South Korea be liberated from foreign imperialism, but also they must be given the opportunity to participate in the creation of a new, but still distinctively Korean, culture."

3. Gender Issues

a. Domestic violence *"There is no information available on violence against women."*

b. Role of women *"In contemporary North Korea, women are expected to fully participate in the labor force outside the home."*



Apart from its ideological commitment to the equality of the sexes, the government views women's employment as essential because of the country's labor shortage. No able-bodied person is spared from the struggle to increase production and compete with the more populous southern half of the peninsula.

According to one South Korean source, women in North Korea are supposed to devote eight hours a day to work, eight hours to study (presumably, the study of chuch'e and Kim Il Sungism), and eight hours to rest and sleep. Women who have three or more children apparently are permitted to work only six hours a day and still receive a full, eight-hour-a-day salary."

c. Equality *"The Constitution states that 'women hold equal social status and rights with men.' However, although women are represented proportionally in the labor force, few women have reached high levels of the party or the Government. In many small factories, the workforce is predominantly female. Like men, working-age women must work. They are thus required to leave their preschool children in the care of elderly relatives or in state nurseries. However, according to the Constitution, women with large families are guaranteed shortened working hours.*

...it appears that women are not fully emancipated. Sons are still preferred over daughters. Women do most if not all of the housework, including preparing a morning and evening

meal, in addition to working outside the home; much of the responsibility of childrearing is in the hands of t'agaso and the school system. The majority of women work in light industry, where they are paid less than their male counterparts in heavy industry. In office situations, they are likely to be engaged in secretarial and other low-echelon jobs."

4. Conflicts

International disputes

"Short section of boundary with China is indefinite; Demarcation Line with South Korea." (CIA 1996 Factbook)



"Even now Pyongyang threatens to renege on the suspension of its nuclear program and suspected weapons development program...Pyongyang continues to practice brinkmanship to gain concessions and weaken the U.S.- Republic of Korea (ROC) alliance. Despite the threats of famine and mass starvation, North Korea has not released its strategic wartime food supplies. Pyongyang continues to send sabotage and assassination teams into South Korea." (1997 Strategic Assessment from the Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College)

5. Holidays and Festivals *"The North Korean government has discontinued traditional Korean seasonal festivals. However, there are some national and commemoration days that can be observed if local authorities feel that production will not be disrupted. These include:"*

- a. Constitution Day (27 December)
- b. Independence Day (9 September)
- c. Kim Il Sung's Birthday (15 April)

- d. Kim Jong Il's Birthday (16 February)
- e. Liberation Day (15 August)
- f. May Day (1 May)
- g. New Year's Day (1 January)
- h. Workers' Party Day (10 October)

6. Customs

a. Freedom of religion *"The 1992 Constitution provides for the 'freedom of religious belief,' including 'the right to build buildings for religious use.' However, the same article adds that 'no one can use religion as a means to drag in foreign powers' or to disrupt the social order.*

In practice, the regime discourages all organized religious activity except that which serves the interests of the State.

As late as the early 1980's, foreign visitors were told that there were no churches in the country and only a handful of Buddhist temples. However, in recent years, the regime has allowed the formation of several government-sponsored religious organizations. These serve as interlocutors with foreign church groups and international aid organizations. Some foreigners who have met with representatives of these organizations are convinced that they are sincere believers; others claim that they appeared to know little about religious dogma, liturgy, or teaching."

b. People with disabilities

"Traditional social norms condone discrimination against the physically disabled. Disabled persons are almost never seen within the city limits of Pyongyang, and several defectors and other former North Korea residents report that disabled persons are routinely assigned to the rural areas.



According to one report, authorities check every 2 to 3 years in the capital for persons with deformities and relocate them to special facilities in the countryside. There are no legally mandated provisions for accessibility to buildings or government services for the disabled."

c. Chuch'e

(1) Development "Chuch'e is a significant break with the Confucian past. Developed during the period of revolutionary struggle against Japanese imperialism, chuch'e is the product of Kim Il Sung's thinking.



Chuch'e emphasizes the importance of developing the nation's potential using its own resources and reserves of human creativity. Chuch'e legitimizes cultural, economic, and political isolationism by stressing the error of imitating foreign countries or of becoming excessively 'international.'

During the 1970s, Kim Jong Il suggested that chuch'e ideology be renamed Kim Il Sung Chuui (Kim Il Sungism). Kim Il Sungism, epitomizing chuch'e, is described as superior to all other systems of human thought, including (apparently) Marxism." (Library of Congress Country Studies/Area Handbook--North Korea)

(2) Flunkeyism "The government opposes "flunkeyism." Kim Jong Il, depicted as an avid student of Korean history in his youth, was said to have made the revolutionary proposal that Kim Yushin, the great general of the Silla Dynasty (668-935), was a "flunkeyist" rather than a national hero because he enlisted the aid of Tang Dynasty (618-907) China in order to defeat Silla's rivals, Kogury and Paekche, and unify the country. Chuch'e's opposition to flunkeyism, moreover, is probably also a reaction to the experience of Japanese colonialism."

(3) Self-sacrifice *"Apart from the North Korean people's almost complete isolation from foreign influences, probably the most significant impact of chuch'e thought and Kim Il Sungism with regard to daily life is the relentless emphasis on self-sacrifice and hard work.*



The population is told that everything can be accomplished through dedication and the proper revolutionary spirit. This view is evident in the perennial 'speed battles' initiated by the leadership to dramatically increase productivity; another example is the bizarre phenomenon called the 'drink no soup movement,' apparently designed to keep workers on the factory floor rather than going to the lavatory.

Moreover, chuch'e provides a 'proper' standpoint from which to create or judge art, literature, drama, and music, as well as a philosophical underpinning for the country's educational system."

d. Culture

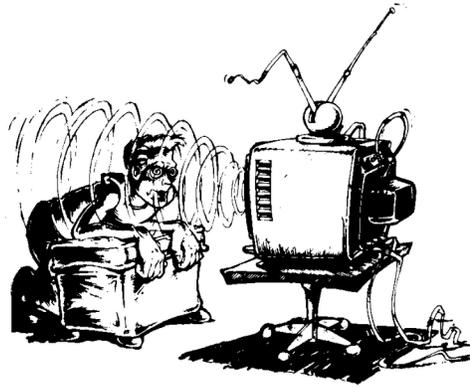
(1) State purpose

"The role of literature and art in North Korea is primarily didactic; cultural expression serves as an instrument for inculcating chuch'e ideology and the need to continue the struggle for revolution and reunification of the Korean Peninsula. There is little subtlety in most contemporary cultural expression. Foreign imperialists, especially the Japanese and the Americans, are depicted as heartless monsters; revolutionary heroes and heroines are seen as saintly figures who act from the purest of motives."

(2) Themes *"The three most consistent themes are martyrdom during the revolutionary struggle (depicted in literature such as The Sea of Blood), the happiness of the present society, and the genius of the 'great leader.'*

(3) Kim Il Sung "Kim Il Sung himself was described as a writer of 'classical masterpieces' during the anti-Japanese struggle. Novels created 'under his direction' include The Flower Girl, The Sea of Blood, The Fate of a Self-Defense Corps Man, and The Song of Korea; these are considered 'prototypes and models of chuch'e literature and art.' A 1992 newspaper report describes Kim in semiretirement as writing his memoirs--'a heroic epic dedicated to the freedom and happiness of the people.'

(4) Control "The state and the Korean Workers' Party control the production of literature and art. In the early 1990s, there was no evidence of any underground literary or cultural movements such as those that exist in the Soviet Union or in China. The party exercises control over culture through its Propaganda and Agitation Department and the Culture and Arts Department of the KWP's Central Committee.



The KWP's General Federation of Korean Literature and Arts Unions, the parent body for all literary and artistic organizations, also controls cultural activity."

(5) Foreign importation "The population has little or no exposure to foreign cultural influences apart from performances by song-and-dance groups and other entertainers brought in periodically for limited audiences. These performances, such as the Spring Friendship Art Festival held annually in April, are designed to show that the peoples of the world, like the North Koreans themselves, love and respect the 'great leader.' During the 1980s and the early 1990s, the North Korean media gave Kim Jong Il credit for working ceaselessly to make the country a 'kingdom of art' where a cultural renaissance unmatched in other countries was taking place. Indeed, the younger Kim is personally responsible for cultural policy."

e. Traditional survivals

(1) **Confucian thought** *"Confucianism clearly does not serve as a formal ideology or social ethic (being condemned because of its history of class exploitation, its cultural subservience to a foreign state, and as a contradiction of the chuch'e ideology). Yet its more authoritarian and hierarchical themes seem to have made the population receptive to the personality cult of Kim Il Sung."*

(2) **Filial piety** *"Some aspects of filial piety remain salient in contemporary North Korea; for example, children are taught by the state-controlled media to respect their parents. However, filial piety plays a secondary role in relation to loyalty to the state and Kim Il Sung."*



(3) **Kim Il Sung** *"Kim Il Sung is not only a fatherly figure, but was described, in childhood, as a model son. A 1980 article entitled "Kim Il Sung Termed Model for Revering Elders" tells of how he warmed his mother's cold hands with his own breath after she returned from work each day in the winter and gave up the pleasure of playing on a swing because it tore his pants, which his mother then had to mend.*

'When his parents or elders called him, he arose from his spot at once no matter how much fun he had been having, answered 'yes' and then ran to them, bowed his head and waited, all ears, for what they were going to say.'

According to Kim, 'Communists love their own parents, wives, children, and their fellow comrades, respect the elderly, live frugal lives and always maintain a humble mien.'

The personality cult of Kim Il Sung resembles those of Stalin in the Soviet Union in the 1930s and 1940s and Nicolae Ceaucescu in Romania until his overthrow in 1989.

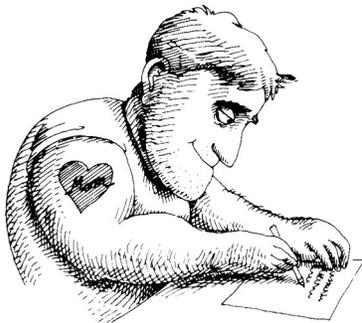
But in North Korea, special attention is paid to the theme of Kim's benevolence and the idea that North Koreans must repay that benevolence with unquestioning loyalty and devotion, recalling old Confucian values of repaying debts of gratitude.

Kim's birthday, April 15, is a national holiday. His eightieth birthday, celebrated in 1992, was the occasion for massive national celebrations. The state-run media similarly depicts Kim Jong Il in a benevolent light."

(4) Kim Jong Il *"The 'dear leader,' or Kim Jong Il, is also described as a filial son; when he was five years old, a propagandist wrote, he insisted on personally guarding his father from evil imperialists with a little wooden rifle.*



One enthusiastic Japanese writer related in a 1984 book how the younger Kim, learning of the poor living standards of lighthouse keepers and their families on a remote island, personally arranged for various life-style improvements, including water storage tanks, television sets, special scholarships for the children, and 'colorful clothes, coats and caps of the kind that were worn by children in Pyongyang.' In the writer's words, 'the lighthousemen and their families shed tears of gratitude to the Secretary (Kim Jong Il) for his warmhearted care for them.' The writer also described the 'bridge of love,' built on Kim's order in a remote area in order to allow thirteen children to cross a river on the way to school. He emphasized that the bridge had absolutely 'no economic merit.'"



7. Resources for Further Study

Crossette, Barbara. "Hunger in North Korea: A Relief Aide's Stark Report." New York Times, 11 Jun 1997.

Faison, Seth. "Grim Tales of Want From the North Korean Border." New York Times, 27 April 1997.

Gripping narrative of economic desperation among North Koreans on the border with China.

Kristof, Nicholas D. "A Hungry North Korea Swallows Some Pride." New York Times, 29 May 1997.

Kristof, Nicholas D. "How North Korea's Hopes Were Scuttled." New York Times, 15 Nov. 1996.

Impact of the submarine infiltration on negotiations between North and South Korea.

Kristof, Nicholas D. "In the Two Koreas' Icy Rivalry, Signs of a Thaw." New York Times, 26 Jan 1997, p. A4.

Kristof, Nicholas D. "North Korea's Favorite Son Wins the Top Ruling Title." New York Times, 9 Oct 1997.

After three years, the formal mourning period for Kim Il Sung appears to have ended.

Myers, Steven Lee. "44 Years After Korean War, North Agrees to 4-Party Talks." New York Times, 1 Jul 1997.

Myers, Steven Lee. "It Takes One to Start a War, but Four to Make Peace." New York Times, 10 Aug 1997.

Discussion taking place between diplomats from China, the United States, South and North Korea.

Myers, Steven Lee. "Two Koreas and the U.S. Talk About Talks on Declaring Peace." New York Times, 6 Mar 1997, p. A5.

Opall, Barbara. "Despite hardship, N. Korea bolsters military." Army Times, 15 Sep 1997, p. 25.

Pollack, Andrew. "A Philosophical Marxist Ideologist." New York Times, 19 Mar 1997.

Description of Hwang Jang Yop, a high ranking North Korean defector.

Pollack, Andrew. "North Korea's Famine Strains Quality of Mercy." New York Times, 6 May 1997.

Pollack, Andrew. "North Korea Inches Toward Talks to Finally End '50-'53 War." New York Times, 21 Feb 1997.

Pollack, Andrew. "The Real North Korea: The Bustle of a Mausoleum." New York Times, 23 Sep 1996, p. A4.

Account of the lethargic, silent spirit within North Korean cities.

WuDunn, Sheryl. "North and South Korean Boats Swap Fire in Seoul's Waters." New York Times, 5 Jun 1997.

Clash occurring in the Yellow Sea, south of the demarcation line.



"Make your mother proud."