

The Drumming Crane

THE NEWSLETTER OF KOREAN FOCUS FOR ADOPTIVE FAMILIES



Fall 2003

Volume VII, Number 3

2003 KAAN Conference a GREAT Success!

After a year of planning by many local volunteers, the 2003 KAAN Conference took place successfully over the weekend of July 25-27 at the Doubletree Crystal City Hotel in Arlington, VA. Over 300 attendees enjoyed an exciting program of workshops, presentations by notable speakers, activities for kids and teens, and much more.

Starting with a panel presentation on Korean adoption sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution on Thursday, July 24, and ending with a reception at the residence of the Ambassador of South Korea on Sunday, July 27, the conference offered a strong program of workshops and activities to appeal to adoptive parents, adopted persons, adoption professionals, and members of the Korean American community. Additionally, many special events and activities gave attendees a chance to relax and have fun. Some highlights:

- Thursday's kick-off by the Smithsonian Institution at their panel program on adoption with Deborah Johnson, Deann Borshay Liem, and Chris Soentpiet
- Friday evening's social, including lessons in *baduk* by local experts, a performance of *samulnori* by the *Korean Focus Family Drummers*, and a stunning performance of *Oh Buk Chum* (Five Drum Dance) by teen adoptee Beth Maco
- The Adult Adoptee Dinner at Woo Lae Oak Restaurant in Arlington, organized by Michelle Howard and supported by AKA New York
- The moving exhibition of Korean adoptee art, *From Where We Were to Who We Are*, brought to the conference by Kim Stoker, curator, and artist Nathalie Mihee Cho Lemoine
- The Opening Ceremony keynote address by author Helie Lee, and her wonderful session on North Korea

- Honors for Associated Catholic Charities of Baltimore, and keynote address by Washington State Senator Paul Shin, at the conference luncheon, emceed by CNN Correspondent Judy Woodruff
- Senator Shin's impromptu get-together with kids and teens following the conference dinner – a once-in-a-lifetime experience
- Honors for Ted Kim and Adoption Service Information Agency, and a performance of *poongmul* by *Uttummuri* at the conference dinner
- The kids and teens Saturday program that included a special tour of the White House and lunch and shopping in Koreatown, Annandale, Virginia with wonderful chaperones from the Korean American Coalition
- The closing ceremony at the reception hosted by the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea at his residence in northwest Washington

One of the best things about the conference was the clear feedback that this conference has become a needed event in the lives of many adopted persons and adoptive families. And so, planning is already underway for next year's conference, "Building Connections, Honoring Differences." It will be held July 23-25, 2004, in San Francisco at The Clarion Hotel San Francisco Airport. Details are available at the KAAN website at www.kaanet.com. KAAN welcomes volunteers from all over the country, so if you would like to get involved with a truly unique and incredibly rewarding activity, contact KAAN at kaanet@aol.com. Hope to see you in San Francisco in 2004!

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Korean Focus for Adoptive Families

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KOREAN FOCUS FOR ADOPTIVE FAMILIES is an all volunteer, Federal 501(c)3 non-profit organization funded and directed by adoptive parents. We are committed to providing cultural and educational programs to help adoptive families support one another and to learn more about the Korean culture to which they are so closely bound. We welcome families from all stages of the adoption journey.

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AT-LARGE
VACANT

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A Note from the Editor

by Jim Omans

This past year for Korean Focus for Adoptive Families has been a very busy one. It all started in February with our annual Lunar New Year Celebration. The Korean American Youth Association was our host, the Embassy of the Republic of Korea and Green World Enterprise helped make it happen. In particular, Mr. Clifford Lee made us all feel welcome. My kids are still folding paper into the many shapes they learned to make at the Celebration, and they still talk about the Tae Kwon Do, dance and drumming performances.

The Smithsonian Institute, in celebration of 100 years of Korean immigration to America, held a series of events over the past few months. A number of Korean Focus families have attended them and we've heard favorable reviews. Several more events are coming up and I urge you to check them out.

As part of the 50th anniversary of the end of the Korean War, KFAF was a sponsor a lecture on the Hung Nam evacuation. This war story is one of the more heart breaking, yet heart warming aspects of the conflict. We are proud to have been a sponsor for this lecture.

And of course, the biggest event this past year for us was the KAAN Conference in July, held in Arlington, VA. Under the capable hands of Margie Perscheid the conference was a huge success. I heard several comments from folks that attended just how much they enjoyed it and how much it meant to their families. We've printed a letter on page 8 of the newsletter as an example of the comments we received. It is without exaggeration when we say that Margie and co-chair Michelle Howard and their army of volunteers made a big difference in the lives of those that attended. Thanks!

I must admit it was a bit surreal to be at the conference while at the same time the hotel was hosting reunion celebrations for soldiers who served in Korea during the war. One old warrior saw my son and I could see he was transported back 50 years. He wanted to give my son a hug, but was unsure how my 4-year old would react. Instead, he stuck out his hand, and my son shook it with a big smile. The old warrior smiled back, which made my son laugh.

The highlight for my son was being photographed by the Washington Post for a story on the KAAN conference, the story appeared in the paper the following Sunday. My son still talks about his picture in the newspaper – it's been on our refrigerator since July; he won't let us take it down!

Inside you will find a renewal form for KFAF. Please fill it out and mail it with a check for \$25 to the address indicated on the form. YOU are KFAF. Without you and your support, our organization cannot function.

A Better Life

by Chris Winston

On November 30, 2002, I was given the wonderful opportunity of meeting Gwang Moon Na in Mokpo, Korea. I had asked to meet a young man who had grown up in a Korean orphanage and was willing to share his story. Gwang Moon did so readily. Gwang Moon and my son, whose Korean name is Sang Moon, share part of their name in the way that Korean brother's share a name. They also share having spent time in a Korean orphanage - my son only for 2 1/2 years, Gwang Moon for much longer. They are not brothers by birth or adoption and have never met each other. But, there is something about Gwang Moon that is enticing, that reminds me of my son, Sang Moon.

I think the thing that links Gwang Moon and Sang Moon in my mind is a sense that they have a core of steel, some inner strength that you don't mess with. I was drawn to Gwang Moon. He told me that many years ago, when he was nine years old, he had a possibility of being adopted in Switzerland. He even said that I reminded him of his Swiss sponsor. She was sponsoring several children from Gongsangwon Orphanage at the time and chose one of the others to adopt, perhaps because Gwang Moon came as a package with his older brother and sister. He said that he does sometimes wonder how his life might have been different, but he does not romanticize.

He said, "I might have had a lot of conflicts and troubles adjusting to the language and culture." He said that adoptees from Europe that he has met seemed confused. He wondered if he would have been that way. Yet he really felt that if that had been his life, he would have made the best of it. Adoption is not something he longed for or wishes had been. He is intelligent and thoughtful enough to know it would have been challenging in its own way.

Somehow I also have the feeling that he would have made the best of what life offered him, either in Korea or in Switzerland. While talking with him, I had the most compelling feeling to tell him that had I met him when he was nine years old, I would have wanted to adopt him. When it was translated to him, he misunderstood. "No no no no," he said. "No, not now, when you were nine," I replied. Now, I realize the inappropriateness of my remarks to him. He was not wanting to be rescued. My comments were really about working out issues within myself and had nothing to do with him. He is content with his life. It made me think about all who work in adoption agencies and/or who are adoptive parents, who ever feel even a tinge of righteousness for "rescuing" kids from orphanages.

My son, Sang Moon, has the same compelling, intelligent, spine of steel quality that I saw again in Gwang Moon. That survivor skill challenged us quite a bit in the beginning. Our

son had a difficult adjustment to our family and to the United States. Learning English was something he wanted to avoid. Even several years later, despite his clear intelligence, his report card in sixth grade was abysmal. It didn't stay that way, yet struggles with written English persisted even into high school. We went through a lot while connecting as family. Yet, we did connect. Still he often challenged me about our adoption of him. I remember the following conversation with him when he was around the age of 12 and was dealing with racism at school.

As he pestered me, I asked him, "Do you think Caucasian parents should be adopting Asian children?" "Didn't you even think about racism?!", he shouted back. "I didn't know how to think about racism, David; I have always been in situations where my ethnicity was the majority. Would you like to move into Sacramento where there are more Asians?" "It wouldn't help Mom, YOU'D still be white."

Yet, as with Gwang Moon, I also have the feeling that Sang Moon would have made the best of what life offered him - even had he stayed in Korea. He voiced this once to a reporter at the first KAAAN conference when he was 14. He said, "If I had stayed in Korea it might have been better or it might have been worse, but this is my life. I've got new parents now."

He takes what life has to offer and makes the best of it. Like Gwang Moon, he does not want to be rescued; loved and understood perhaps, but not rescued.

Gwang Moon's Life in His Own Words

(Gwang Moon Na wrote his life story himself in Korean. It was translated into English by Da Hee Son of InKAS)

I was born as the youngest of three children in a small fishing village. My mother, having suffered too much from poverty and my father's mental illness, ran away. I remember making a big fuss asking my grandmother to breast feed me when I was four. It was when I was six years old that we had my grandmother's funeral. Knowing that my father was unable to take care of my siblings and me, my mother sneaked into our house one day and took us to our uncle. After my father came looking for us at our uncle's home, we had to leave. She made a desperate effort to support us, but it was too much for her to take all the responsibilities. She finally asked her grandfather's sister to take us to an orphanage. That was when I was in grade 2.

I started to learn how to live in an orphanage, but it was hard. Older kids from the orphanage constantly beat me up. These horrible experiences caused me to run away from the orphanage three times. These unforgettable experiences created personal problems for me. I had a difficulty building personal relationships and was always wearing a worried look on my face. I didn't have money to buy school supplies whereas other kids didn't have to worry about that. My self-esteem fell lower. On Thanksgiving Day, when I was in grade 6, my mother made a visit to the orphanage to see my

brother, sister, and me. I had such enormous anger toward her that I ran from her sight.

I remember I spent many sleepless nights worrying to death about getting art supplies when I was in junior high. It continuously floated around in my head that it would be so much different if I lived with parents. I entered a commercial high school since I had no interest in academic studies. Soon after I got into the school, I started sleeping over at a friend's house because I hated going to the orphanage. I was in the school rock band and typically started drinking and smoking. I was sinking into all sorts of social vice. My grades that used to be high in grade 10 were gradually dropping. The teachers worried and scolded me. Once when I was in grade 12, I stayed in school late practicing for the concert and fell asleep at school. When my homeroom teacher found out, he stormed at me for staying overnight in school. His scolding eventually focused on the cause of the dramatic fall of my grades. Completely unexpectedly, I got accepted into a local public university. It was after I entered the university that I started having symptoms of mental problems. Suffering from insomnia, I used to stay up all night and just managed to get to sleep by 7:00 the next morning. Having severe anxiety attacks, I began to take tranquilizers. I eventually had to quit school. I felt really sorry to the director of our orphanage, who had helped me.

I asked the pastor, who is the son of the director of our orphanage, for help to treat my mental illness. I was tempted to commit suicide so many times in the past. Now, looking back on those days, I do feel God was guiding me and protecting me from the temptation of suicide. After I received Jesus Christ in me and tried to live in his words and prayers for a year, a miracle happened: my mental illness disappeared. I was so grateful to God. Living as a new-born Christian, I got a call from a mental institute one day. I heard that my father was in critical condition in a hospital and needed a caretaker. My father, whom I had never called a father since I

was young, was waiting for me in the Intensive Care Unit in a hospital. It had been 17 years. He was lying there like that. I was speechless. It was too challenging for me to accept that this man lying there helplessly was my father. While I took care of him in the hospital, what really comforted me was this thought, "I have so many friends in our orphanage whom have never met their fathers. Compared to them I am a happy person." I really tried my best to take care of my father. He passed away 6 months later. That was a hard time, but made me mature mentally and spiritually.

Currently I am working in Mokpo Nursing Home for the Severely Handicapped. At the same time I am attending a night college for my future. My girlfriend also works there. When I'm off the work, I help my mother who's running a small restaurant. Actually, I thank God for my life as an orphan. It has given me the insight I will need to be a therapist for people with mental illness and for orphans. I work hard today, so that potentially I may even be a pastor in the future.

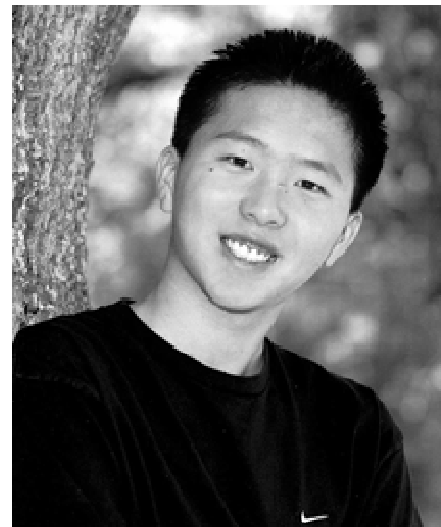
Korean Children in Need of Social Welfare Services

At one time we had a universal set of children needing social welfare services in Korea. At Gongsangwon I learned that even among themselves kids in the orphanage in Korea have already subdivided themselves into subsets. There are "real orphans", "half orphans" and "false orphans." In other words some have contact with birth family to varying degrees and some don't. Most are from poor families. Sometimes though, regardless of income level, kids are in an orphanage because of having divorced and remarried parents, single mothers or physical or mental handicaps.

Among adult Korean American adoptees there are also subsets. They were adopted at different ages. Some have contact with birth family and some don't. They come from the same variety of background circumstances as the kids who were raised in orphanages in Korea. Some have had exposure and



Gwang Moon Na



David Sang Moon Winston

connection to other adoptees and some haven't. Some have had connection to their Korean heritage and fellow Asian Americans and some haven't. Some have had wonderful experiences in their adoptive families, for some it has been a nightmare. Some continue to have good relationships with adoptive families and some don't. All have been raised in a country other than Korea.

It is not my intent to glorify life in an orphanage or the life of poor or broken families anywhere in the world. When you read Gwang Moon's story, you see that he has not had an easy time. If you lived in our house for the first six years our son, Sang Moon, was with us, you might also feel that he did not have an easy time. Yet, both Sang Moon and Gwang Moon are accepting of what life has brought to them. Both of them even have similar goals, sharing an interest in psychology. Of course, I know that we could just as easily find both someone raised in a Korean orphanage and an adoptee who have not found happiness or acceptance in their lives, because the challenges that they have faced were simply too overwhelming. The point is that no one can know whether staying in one's native country, even while living in an orphanage, or going overseas for adoption will result in the greatest happiness for any particular individual. There is too much diversity among orphans in Korea and adoptees in America to even begin to answer the question. In addition to all the other factors causing diversity in our original universal set of children needing social services in Korea, we have the inherent uniqueness of each individual and their differing reactions to life's circumstances.

Another Example

One of my best friends is a Korean American psychologist in his mid sixties, too old to have been a candidate for the adoption system in Korea. He was one of eight children raised by his single illiterate mother in Korea after his father died when he was five. During the Japanese occupation they ate tree bark, grasshoppers, grass and millet. He had one outfit he wore and told me that the sleeves got shiny from wiping away snot from numerous colds in the winter when he was a little boy. Two of his siblings died of infectious diseases. When he was nine, one night just prior to the Korean War he was walking home from a school meeting with his ten year old brother and two other boys from their village. They were shot by soldiers. His brother and one of the other boys were killed in front of him before he ran for his life.

Yet, he says to me, "I am so grateful that no one every told me I was poor. I wonder how it would have been had someone come in and taken the struggle away from me and rescued me. Who would I be?" Instead, he found a way to get himself eventually into Seoul National University before making his own decision to immigrate. He is one of the strongest people I know and I believe that strength comes from his ownership of his own survival. Yet, it seems to me that many people and perhaps countries have their strength sapped when they are in the position of needing to be rescued.

A Better Life

Once as my daughter was adjusting to the finding of her birth family, she made the statement that by allowing her to be adopted her birth family had ruined her life. I asked her, "Did they really make it worse, or better?" Her answer was, "both."

In the beginning, having been given the awesome responsibility of raising someone else's child as my own, I had a strong need to believe in the rightness of what I was doing. I did believe that by adopting my children I was giving them a better life. It kept me from being wrong about wanting to be a mother so much. It kept me from feeling too sad that my gain might be someone else's loss. But, what does better mean? Better implies an alternative between two choices. Life is not that static. There are many times when our lives branch and go in different directions, making a comparison difficult. Usually a better life seems to mean educational and economic opportunities. What happens when because of reasons of emotional or intellectual limits or even because of personal choice adoptees do not take advantage of those opportunities? Have we given them a "better life?" Must they succeed to prove us right? Or can it be more about their own individual struggle as a human being? I do believe that the onus of adoptive parents needing to provide and adoptees needing to succeed sits heavily on the relationship. Happiness and being better off are very subjective things.

Once someone said to me, "Had your daughter stayed in Korea, the best she could have been was a vendor in a market." Given the love that her married birth parents show her two sisters despite their economic challenges, and the endless garage sales our daughter loves to hold in our driveway, would that have been such a bad thing?

"Giving Back"

It is for all the reasons I have stated that both adoption agencies and adoptive parents need to avoid a rescue fantasy and approach their role with humility. It is not about feeling guilty or wrong, but about accepting our own humanity. The children who left Korea and joined adoptive families in other countries did not do so by their own choice. Adoptive parents wanted them and adoption agencies in Korea were placing them as the primary means of dealing with the universal set of children needing social services in Korea.

Unquestionably in many cases, perhaps even most cases, adoptive parents and adoptees have entered into a relationship bringing joy and love to both. The meaning of Sang Moon's and our family's adoption experience is not derived from the computer in his room, the college education we can fund for him, or his red Toyota Camry in the driveway. Instead, we find meaning in the struggle we have walked through to come together as family. It is in our, his parent's, admiration of his ability never to give up and to keep on striving. It is also in his appreciation for our continued efforts at understanding. Together it is this bond that makes our experience meaningful.

Any relationship is not well founded when one is seen as always the giver and the other always the recipient expected to be grateful. The need to be grateful gets in the way of relationship. Even in the parent-child relationship, the parent gains as much or more in personal growth than does the child. Relationships work best when both parties benefit. So I wonder about those people who sometimes express the feeling that adoptees need to "give something back." Why adoptees? Is it for being rescued? Who decides that they have been rescued? To whom do they owe? They have no reason to feel a need to "give back" any more than anyone else in this life.

The joy of community service, of making a difference in the world, is felt by every human being regardless of circumstance, when they feel something within meaningful to others. It is those who from the strength within themselves find something valuable to give, who gain from giving back. Perhaps part of Kwang Moon's motivation to become a pastor is to help others as he has been helped. My feeling is that it is more that his life experience has strengthened him, giving him something of value that he can be proud to share with others. For both Kwang Moon and Sang Moon, "giving back" is a demonstration of their strength and not their weakness, the timing of which is theirs to decide and should not be expected of them. "Giving back" is, as the word giving implies, a gift.

Feelings About Adoption

I believe in interethnic relationships and I believe in adoption, knowing full well that the outcome for any particular child, placed even in the best of circumstances, will remain unknown, clouded until the future arrives. As adoptive parents, we don't have to justify the validity of our experience. We do not have to prove that our children are better off with us than they might have been somewhere else. To think that way, I feel, is a detriment to a good relationship. It has helped me that whenever I have had thoughts about my own children's probable fates had I not adopted them, that I have not stayed in that space. I don't apologize for adopting my kids, because I am not all knowing. I adopted them because I wanted more kids, they were available and it seemed right. I do my best to give them the brightest lives I can. I feel lucky to have them, and I just value our relationships.

Editors note: Chris Winston is the Chair of Korean American Adoptee Adoptive Family Network (KAAN). This article was reprinted by permission of the author.

New Name – Same Drummers!

The Family Drummers, consisting of KFAF parents and kids, have a new name: **한국의소리** (han-guk eui so-ri), *The Sound Of Korea*. Though our name has changed, our drumming fun has not (though we hope to play up to our new name)! We meet on Saturdays in Alexandria, VA. New members are welcome, contact Debbie Dalton at deborah.dalton@epamail.gov for more information.

Center for Adoptive Families Fall Programs

THE KIDS CONNECTION

A safe and positive environment to explore feelings and thoughts about adoption and an opportunity for your children to meet other adoptees!

PROJECT SUCCEED

The purpose of the parent group is to enhance the quality of family life through the support and education of parents. The group also empowers parents to advocate for the social, emotional, and educational needs of their children.

Montgomery County

Day: Wednesdays, October 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, November 5, 12, and 19
Location: Adoptions Together
10230 New Hampshire Ave, # 200
Silver Spring, MD
Time: 6:45 - 8:00 PM

Howard/Baltimore Counties

Day: Wednesdays, October 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, November 5, 12, and 19
Location: Adoptions Together
5750 Executive Dr, #107
Baltimore, MD 21228
Time: 6:45 - 8:00 PM

Kids Connection: \$175/child, \$125 each additional child
Project Succeed: \$100/person, \$160/couple

TALKING WITH YOUR CHILD ABOUT ADOPTION

What will your child ask you about being adopted? WHEN can you expect it? HOW will you know what to say? This workshop has become a foundation for hundreds of adoptive parents who want to plan ahead for both predictable and unpredictable questions from their children. Learn how to develop comfortable communication styles about all topics related to adoption. Program presented by Nan Strauss, M.A.

Date: Saturday, October 25, 2003
Time: 9:30 am - 12:00 pm
Place: Adoptions Together
5750 Executive Drive, #107
Baltimore, MD 21228
Fee: FREE



Aid to North Korean Families

Whenever the bleak situation for families in North Korea comes up, an immediate reaction is "How can I help?" Twelve year old Emma Gilbert has found a way, and Korean Focus for Adoptive Families is proud to support her effort. Please read Emma's announcement, and help in any way you can. All funds collected as part of this effort will be donated to the World Vision North Korea Aid Project.

Hi!

I am Emma Gilbert and I am a 12 year old Koran American working on my Bat Mitzvah project. What I have chosen to do is to raise money to feed starving families in North Korea. The program that I have chosen to donate my funds to is World Vision. They are one of the few organizations that can still get food into North Korea. They have designed a clever way of giving North Korea cooked noodles instead of rice so that it cannot be stockpiled to feed their army. Instead, it goes directly to families. My goal is to provide food for three families for one whole year. You can help me by doing one of the following. I will be very grateful to you and your families. When you give me any help, just think you are helping a family in North Korea survive.

Here are some ways you can help:

1. donate items in good condition to be sold at my yard sale.
2. come and shop at my yard sale.
3. make a tax deductible contribution at my yard sale or send it to Korean Focus
4. tell a friend about my yard sale

My yard sale will be at:

Location 721 S. 20th Street
 Arlington, Virginia
 Date Sunday, October 12, 2003
 Time 9:00 am till ?

Please contact me at (703) 521-0313 if you would like to make a contribution to my yard sale.

Editors Note: Checks to support Emma's effort may be sent and made out to Korean Focus, a 501(c)3 charitable organization. We will forward all funds received for this effort to World Vision.

Asian Book Club News

by Judy Deane

The Asian Book Club comprises about a dozen Northern Virginia mothers of children adopted from Asia, and others with an interest in learning more about Asian countries. We meet for dinner and discussion once a month, on Sunday evenings, in the Arlington/Alexandria/Annandale area, usually at an ethnic restaurant that corresponds to the book we are reading. Anyone with an interest in books from or about Asia is welcome to join us. If you would like to join our e-mail list and/or come to our next meeting, please contact Judy Deane at judydeane@comcast.net or call (703) 522-4075.

Our next meeting will be Sunday, October 19 at 7:00 pm. Our book will be *Beyond the Sky and the Earth: A Journey into Bhutan* by Jamie Zeppa. We are tentatively planning to meet at Haandi, an Indian restaurant at 1222 W. Broad Street in Falls Church. But if anyone knows a Bhutanese or Nepali restaurant in the area, we would be willing to switch for greater authenticity. Stay tuned for details on location.

Friday, October 24, at 6:30 pm in the Carmichael Auditorium of the Museum of Natural History, will be a presentation by several Asian authors, including the author of *Memories of My Ghost Brother*. Several of us are planning to attend.

We've also discussed reading books about Asian countries we haven't focused on yet - hence the book about Bhutan. I have some suggestions on books about India that I'll bring to future meetings. Other suggestions are most welcome.

One of our members has offered to host a pot-luck get together for families, probably on a Sunday in November. We will discuss at the next meeting. See everyone there!

Books

Three Poets of Modern Korea by James Kimbrell and speaker Yu Jung-yul

Kimbrell and Yu have translated leading voices of three generations of Korean poets. Yi Sang, Hahm Dong-seon, and Choi Young-mi represent differing voices of Korea. Available through Sarabande Books at www.SarabandeBooks.org.

North Korea at a Crossroads by Suk Hi Kim

Some fifty years after war, the Korean peninsula remains divided at the 38th parallel. The end of the Cold War in 1989 brought changes to many communist states, but North Korea remains embroiled in international crises. Looking forward, North Korea seemingly faces four choices: collapse, further war, peaceful reunification with the south, or status quo. Available through local bookstores and www.Amazon.com.

6th Annual KAAN Conference Building Connections, Honoring Differences

The sixth annual KAAN Conference, "**Building Connections, Honoring Differences**", will be held July 23-25, 2004, in beautiful San Francisco at The Clarion Hotel San Francisco Airport. For a virtual tour of the hotel visit their website at www.clarionsfo.com. We have reserved a block of rooms at \$85 per night; this rate will be available three days prior and three days following the conference. Call 1-800-223-7111 to reserve your room. You must mention the Korean American, Adoptee, Adoptive Family Network to get our rate. It is best to call between 9:00AM and 5:00PM California time.

Workshop proposals are being solicited for next year's conference. Send your proposal to KAAN at kaanet@aol.com by November 1, 2003.

Workshop proposals for adult adoptee only sessions should be sent to Carolyn Scholl at cscholl@cvesd.k12.ca.us.

**Are you between the ages of 16 and 21?
Interested in joining an e-mail discussion group
that will allow us to get to know one another
before the 2004 KAAN conference in San
Francisco? Want to discuss activities and sessions
for our age group to propose for the conference?
My name is Camille Beck and I am a 16-year old
adoptee living in Seattle. If you are in the above
age group, please join the discussion by e-mailing
me at Kimchigirl@att.net. The group will include
regular KAAN attendees and first-time attendees,
don't be shy!**

The Korean American Coalition-DC Gala Dinner is scheduled on Friday, October 24, 2003, at the Ritz-Carlton Pentagon City. Reception 6-7, Dinner 7-9:30, Black Tie optional. Theme is America's Brave and will honor Korean American soldiers who have served in Iraq.

Cost is \$100.00 per person. KAC is a 501(c)(3) organization, a part of the dinner cost is tax deductible. Proceeds go to KAC programs such as their summer DC intern program which provides young KA's summer work placements 4 days a week and 1 day a week working on Korean American issues, leadership seminars for KA's, citizenship days and other activities. Let Mike LaBelle know if you want to attend by sending a note to rmlabelle@cox.net.

Many, Many Thanks

A Letter from a KAAN Conference Family
by Christine Dall

This is just to say thank you, thank you, thank you for all of your hard work putting the KAAN conference together. It was the first one for our family and I am SO glad I decided everyone should make the long drive to DC and back in order to attend. Each presentation gave me new things to think about (and, believe me, I have thought about a LOT over the years!) and new perspectives on so many different issues. This was one of the most important realizations I took away -- the understanding that there is great diversity in view point, experience, needs and wants as our kids grow into adults and certainly no "correct" approach to any one issue. It was especially helpful to me to hear from "older" adoptees as my kids are in their teens and the issues and their phases of life are quite different than when they were younger and I had lots of books and other parents of adoptees to help me through.

I was thrilled that my 19-year-old son and his friend both said the sessions were "excellent" and the whole conference was a "valuable experience" for them (young men said this!!!). My daughter, Leah, is all set to attend the next conference and bring one of her KA friends along!

My challenge now is to keep the many topics raised by the conference out and on the kitchen table for discussion more than they have been in the past. Thanks to you, we now have a common experience to use as a springboard to talking and a rich outline of new topics, which was completely missing before DC. Also, I have to say that Mr. Shin was an absolute wonder. It was very moving for us to hear his story and especially his positive approach to life, and I appreciated that he came to so many of the sessions and spoke there as well. What a remarkable, wise human being he is and a terrific model for our kids. Reuniting with the Korean Ties people and two families from our trip was great fun and making new connections with people from the Boston area who were there was an added bonus. The caliber of speakers and panels was uniformly top notch - Wow! Thank you and your wonderful colleagues who spent so many hours and solved so many problems on our behalf preparing the conference -- it was, as they say, seamless -- and you have done something meaningful for us all.

- Christine Dall

Adoption Links is a new organization for adoptees and adoptive families in the DC, MD, and Northern VA areas. It was started by a network of adult adoptees that formerly made up the Washington, DC chapter of Also-Known-As, Inc. The group is devoted to providing programs and events for the international adoption community from an adoptee's perspective. They are currently seeking more members to plan and participate in events. Visit www.adoption-links.org for more information.

Kamsahamnida!

by Margie Perscheid

The 2003 KAAN Conference was a huge success due to the hard work of our volunteers who contributed their time, resources and support to make the conference possible. In addition to the many conference sponsors, session participants and day-of volunteers, Korean Focus for Adoptive Families and KAAN thank the following who helped plan conference activities, solve logistical problems, or raise funds. The conference could not have taken place without you. Many heartfelt thanks to:

Ann Bullock	Maude Lee	Grace Song
Wendy Cosby	Nathalie Lemoine	Kim Stoker
Janet Farley	Kathy Lique	Rev. See-Eun Sul
Marcy Gitt	Mary Maco	Tawni Traynor
Noreen Hannigan	John McLaughlin	Rebecca Waxler
Leslee Hecht	Nancy Pritchard	Nancy Wiley
Shirley Kang	Barbara Ronnow-Bunker	
Gie Kim	Theresa Williams	

KAAN and Korean Focus for Adoptive Families are deeply indebted to Ambassador Han Sung Joo and his staff at the Embassy of the Republic of Korea for welcoming KAAN to the Ambassador's reception on July 27.

We extend our deep gratitude to the Overseas Koreans Foundation, the Centennial Committee of Korean Immigration, and CCKI of Greater Washington, for their generous donations.

Very special thanks go to Ted Kim, President of ASIA (Adoption Service Information Agency). Mr. Kim's financial contribution, guidance, enthusiasm, and moral support were invaluable. KAAN and Korean Focus were proud to honor Mr. Kim and ASIA at this year's conference. We deeply appreciate ASIA's support.

KAAN and Korean Focus recognize and are very grateful to Also-Known-As (AKA) for their financial and organizational sponsorship of Friday evening's Adoptee Dinner.

KAAN and Korean Focus sincerely thank the Korean American Coalition Summer Interns (Grace Ham, Alex Kim, Brian Kim, Jane Park, and Nathan Shinagawa) and their coordinator Gie Kim for accompanying the kids and teens on the Saturday field trip.

KAAN and Korean Focus are grateful for the support of Terry Hong and the Smithsonian Institution Asian Pacific American Program's Korean American Centennial Commemoration.

We thank the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute, who assisted with Sunday evening's recognition of the

contributions of legislators to adoptive families, and were also deservedly recognized for their achievements.

We extend many thanks to our friends at the Korean American Youth Association for your unending support for our families and for the conference.

Thank you, Kim Stoker, Nathalie Mihee Cho Lemoine and the artists of *From Memory and Back Again: Where We Were to Who We Are* for making the exhibition possible.

We thank our performers: *Uttummuri* (and instructors Hyun-Sook Cho, Chi Park, Sae Park and all the members of the Korean American Cultural Center), *The Korean Focus Family Drummers*, and Beth Maco (*Oh Buk Chum*).

Thanks also go to Keith Arnold and the Friday evening *baduk* teachers. What a wonderful way to spend the evening!

To everyone who helped on the days before, during, and after the conference: If you set up a table, stuffed a bag, manned the registration booth, ran an errand, hung some artwork, organized handouts, helped pack up afterward – anything at all – KAAN and Korean Focus thank you for your time and support! Without you we couldn't have done it!

Editors Note: The 2003 KAAN Conference Co-Chairs were Margie Perscheid and Michelle Howard. Their vision, commitment and hard work over the past year made the conference the huge success that it was. Korean Focus and KAAN express their thanks. The letter on page 8 of the newsletter is but one of many kind remarks we heard during the conference that Margie and Michelle made possible.

Films about Korean adoptees screened at 2003 DC Asian Pacific American Film Festival

Two films about Korean adoptees have been elected to appear at the 2003 DC Asian Pacific American Film Festival. "Made in Korea", being screened at the Corcoran Gallery of Art on October 13, is a feature length documentary on three Korean adoptees living in San Francisco. Each provide frank and touching commentary on growing up adopted and the challenges on coming out as lesbian women to their adopted parents and friends.

"Neither Fish, Nor Fowl" is a feature length film about a Korean adoptee who struggles to find a cultural identity while growing up in Germany. The film will be screened at the Goethe Institute on October 16.

The film festival runs from October 9-18 at various locations in Washington, DC and is sponsored by the nonprofit organization APA Film. All screenings are free and open to the public. Visit www.apafilm.org for updates on the film schedule and to sign up for the mailing list.



The Kids Page

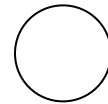
Drum Fun – Reading Music!

Every wonder how drummers learn complex drum songs?
The secret is learning to read drum music!

A filled in circle means hit the drum with your left hand



An unfilled circle means hit the drum with your right hand



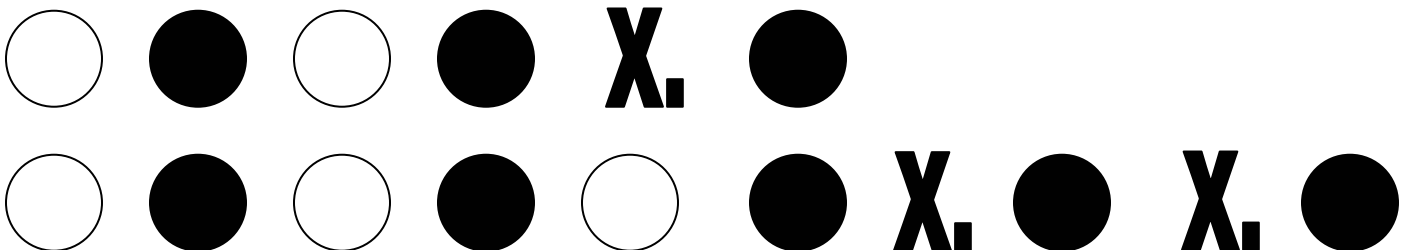
An "X" with a dot to the left means hit the side of the drum with your left hand



An "X" with a dot to the right means hit the side of the drum with your right hand



Give this a try!



The Teen Page

Fitting In



Wandering the streets of Seoul, I blend in perfectly. Fitting in or being the odd man out is not a problem here. As I continue walking, I try to distance myself from my parents. Now, they stick out like sore thumbs. I feel like I actually belong here, which makes me feel more confident. Throughout the day, I keep pretty quiet so my secret won't be revealed. I see a friend down the street and I yell, "Hey, what's up?"

Oops. Maybe I don't fit in as much as I thought I did.

- Max Gilbert

Max visited Korea in 2001 with a group of families on the Korea Homeland Tour. He wrote his thoughts this year for a school assignment. He is a freshman at Washington and Lee High School in Arlington, Virginia



If you would like to submit your article, poetry, story or artwork for ***The Teen Page***, please send it to KFAF Newsletter Editor Jim Omans at omans@erols.com. We'd love to share your thoughts by publishing them in the newsletter!

Let's Make Pot Stickers!

by Jim Omans

Ok, so the recipe below may not be up to Martha Stewart's standards and certainly is not up to Korean standards, but for the cooking challenged, it's a fairly painless way to make meat dumplings – a Korean staple. Give it a try!

1/2 c. ground pork	1/2 c. ground chicken
1/2 c. raw chopped shrimp	4 Tbsp. chopped fresh cilantro
2 scallions, finely chopped	2 garlic cloves, minced
1/2 tsp. ground black pepper	2 tsp. sugar
2 Tbsp. soy sauce	1 tsp. finely minced ginger root
2 Tbsp coconut milk	

gyozo skins

lettuce leaves for lining bamboo steamer

Mix together all ingredients (clean hands are the best method for this). Moisten edges of gyozo skin, put 1 tsp of filling in center of skin, fold in half and crimp. All ingredients are available at local grocery stores. You may need to go to an Asian market for the gyozo skins. Steam in a vegetable or bamboo steamer until translucent. Makes about 50 potstickers.

Try freezing them on cookie sheets lined with wax paper covered with plastic wrap. When frozen, pop the potstickers into zip-lock bags. Steam them frozen from the bag and serve with soy sauce. Do yourself a favor and make at least double the recipe. They go fast!

Many thanks to Susan Orr for sharing her recipe with us. These things are like potato chips, there is no way you are only going to eat one!

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November is National Adoption Awareness Month!