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**The Korean American dream: Ideology and small business in
Queens, New York**

Park, Kyeyoung, Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1990

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A

**THE KOREAN AMERICAN DREAM:
IDEOLOGY AND SMALL BUSINESS IN QUEENS, NEW YORK**

by

KYEYOUNG PARK

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in
Anthropology in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1990

1990

KYEYOUNG PARK

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Anthropology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

**THE KOREAN AMERICAN DREAM:
IDEOLOGY AND SMALL BUSINESS IN QUEENS, NEW YORK**

BY

Kyeyoung Park

Adviser: Professor Roger Sanjek

This thesis deals with consequences and implications of small business activities among Koreans in Queens, New York City. Based on field research, this study focuses on the impact upon their cultural ideologies of this shift to small business. As Koreans espouse the notion of anjong (establishment), with its emphasis, on small business success, they create change in gender roles, kinship obligations, class structure, concepts of ethnicity, religious practice, and political organization.

Through an interpretation of their daily life experiences, I show that there is change in the system of ideas, and these dynamics can be explained by such contextual factors as age, generation, gender, socio economic status, migratory and legal status, and family developmental cycle.

PREFACE

New York City is a mosaic of intense ethnic and racial complexity in which Korean immigrants and their children are one component group. In New York City's borough of Queens, where two-thirds of the city's Koreans live, they do not reside in exclusive ethnic neighborhoods, forming their own enclaves. In the neighborhoods of northwest Queens one encounters mixed populations of Asian Americans (including Korean Americans), Latin Americans, African Americans, and white Americans living on the same block, and often working in the same locations. Here Koreans' most meaningful interaction with other ethnic group occurs in the context of small business. Korean green grocers serve mixed clienteles of customers, and hire non-Koreans. Some interaction with other groups may also be seen in interracial dating and in housing and rental arrangements.

It is in predominantly African-American neighborhoods in New York City, such as Harlem in Manhattan, and Bedford-Stuyvesant, Bensonhurst, and Flatbush in Brooklyn, that Korean-Black conflict has arisen during the 1980s. A typical case arose early in 1990. According to the New York Times (5/8/1990), "a minor scuffle in January in a Korean-American grocery in Brooklyn has turned into an ugly boycott aimed at driving all Korean merchants out of a largely black neighborhood in Flatbush. There are several

versions of the original incident. A Haitian customer says she was pummeled by store employees without provocation when she tried to buy some plantains and peppers. The Korean store owner says the woman refused to pay for the goods, started an argument, and was restrained. Despite charges of a brutal beating, hospital records indicate only a facial scratch."

My research was conducted in a part of New York City where such incidents have been rare, and where Koreans live as well as work. In 1984, I joined the New Immigrants and Old American Project, directed by Dr. Roger Sanjek at Queens College CUNY, and supported by the National Science Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the City University of New York, Queens College, the Elmhurst Economic Development Corporation, and Con Edison. Our team members conducted research within the white, African American, Latin American, Korean, Chinese, and Indian populations. I have gained much knowledge by working with Project members Chen Hsiang-shui, Madhulika Shankar Khandelwal, Rosalia Danta, Milagros Ricourt, Steven Gregory, Elena Acosta, and Priti Prakash.

As a Korean American woman who only recently arrived in the United States of America myself, my research was affected by my own experiences within and outside the Korean American community. When my research findings began

to be presented in talks and writing, the interest of many Korean Americans in my work was intense. This was most evident in my findings about the status of Korean American women in the workplace and household. This aspect of my study provoked strong reactions from some Korean American men who did not want such an analysis to be presented to the larger public, either Korean or non-Korean. In my personal experiences I encountered racial and sexual bias from more established American ethnic groups. These experiences only reinforced my interest in exploring the nuances of gender roles and race relations.

My key theoretical interest has been in analyzing the ideologies of Korean Americans. This included exploration of how Korean Americans feel about, think about, and evaluate their lives in America. I placed special emphasis on small business enterprise. Not only has this economic activity been of great importance to Korean Americans, but it has influenced pervasively their social, political, and cultural orientations.

I focus on systems of ideas as confluences of will, attitudes, world views, consciousness, philosophy, beliefs, values, and knowledge as they work as rationales for individuals in real life situations. I stress that people formulate their ideologies in many ways--by generating new ideologies, or by employing old ideologies in new ways. I

hold that individuals are also influenced by variation in the cognitive universes of others, despite the overriding processes of ideological formation that make a social system appear legitimate and natural to its members.

In studying international migration and the resulting new poly-ethnic neighborhoods, we have to bear in mind, that immigrants bring cultural baggage with them, but, as they live in America, they also are influenced by American culture, including its various ideologies. However, Koreans adopt American culture selectively, according to their many individual and collective experiences. As a result, they modify their own culture, grafting their trees on the American one. As people undergoing radical change, Koreans modify and reformulate their ideologies. They try to make sense of their new life in America and at the same time they refocus their understanding of Korean culture.

My approach to systems of ideas have benefited from the work of anthropologists and Marxists, and with their continuous reformulations of the central anthropological concept of "culture". I follow Geertz who defined culture as "webs of significance," and the analysis of it be not an experimental science in search of laws, but an interpretive one in search of meaning, to be read "from the native's point of view" (1973;1979). More recently Wolf urged that

"the culture concept came to the fore in a specific historical context" and "the explanation of cultural forms must take account of that larger context, that wider field of force" (1982: 387). These directions crystallize in the position of Ong (1987:3) that "Cultural change is not understood as unfolding according to some predetermined logic (of development, modernization, or capitalism) but as the disrupted, contradictory, and differential outcomes which involve changes in identity, relations of struggle and dependence, including the experience of reality itself."

Recent cultural analyses by cognitive anthropologists give attention to the question of the organization of "cultural models." Cultural models are "taken-for-granted models of the world that are widely shared (although not necessarily to the exclusion of other, alternative models) by the members of a society and that play an enormous role in their understanding of that world and their behavior in it" (Quinn & Holland 1987:3). I find also congenial the orientation in Marxist approaches that ideas are not in a static condition, but they move, and are subject to the causal or influencing factors of economic conditions, and more specifically, to different positions of access to the means of production. This tradition from Marx and Lenin has been developed by Lukacs (1971), Gramsci (1971), and Williams (1977).

One of the most important creations of Korean immigrants in New York is the notion of "anjong" (establishment) and "anjongul ch'atta" (being established). They mean by this the establishment of one's own small business as a route to realizing the American dream. In striving for this ideal, they remind themselves of the Korean proverb: "one will be rewarded as hard as one works." In the pursuit of "anjong" they reweave their gender and kinship relations, as we will see in the rise of a Korean American women-centered and sister-initiated kinship structure. Also as a result of this pursuit of establishment they have developed new concepts of class, of ethnicity and race, and of religious ideas and practices. "Anjongul ch'atta" therefore plays the central role of an "ideology" in the lives of first-generation Korean Americans in Queens.

In my discussion of the Korean American dream, I want to distinguish those concepts that come directly from my informants and those concepts I developed to analyze Korean American ideas. In the first category is not only chagigage katki (establishing one's own business), but also such concepts as ilchomose (the one-and-a-half, one-point-five, or knee-high generation, refers to those who arrive with their parents as teenagers), kukche kyorhon (international marriage), miukpyong (the American fever),

pigongsik imin (informal immigrants), tongyangkye (people from the Asian continent), kodup nam (born again), pangŏn (speaking in tongues), han (unsolved longing), chŏng (deep affection), tutŏn kwangye (deep or thick relation) and ppaek (social connections) among Korean Americans. These and other Korean terms also appear in the glossary on page 424-426.

The second category requires some explanation. For anjong or anjongul chatta, I discuss a series of stages of establishment. My informants do not all think about anjong in terms of these precise stages. For a single man, anjong means primarily marriage and beginning a family. At the next stage, for a couple, anjong means establishing their own business. By the time a couple is operating their business successfully, anjong means having children, and inviting parents from Korea to join them in America. At the final stage, anjong means to buy a house in a "good" suburban neighborhood. As an analyst, I will also elaborate certain other Korean concepts in a way that not all of my informants can articulate.

Pseudonyms. To protect my informants' privacy, I use pseudonyms. As far as organization leaders are concerned, however, I identified their real names when discussing events of a public nature. These activities are part of

Korean American history in New York City. I interviewed these leaders directly about their involvement in the community organizations, and it would not be difficult for Koreans in New York City to figure out who they are. My interviews with other informants were designed to represent Korean American livelihood and struggle, and not to reveal private stories.

McCune-Reishauer System. Korean words in the Han'gul script have been Romanized according to the McCune-Reischauer Romanization System (see "Romanization of the Korean Language," Transactions of the Korea Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (Seoul), Volume 29 (1939), pp. 1-55.) Informants' names, however, are written the way Korean Americans spell them.

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I deeply appreciate the help of my advisor, Professor Roger Sanjek of the Department of Anthropology, Queens College, City University of New York. Without him, it would not have been possible for me to complete my dissertation. His tremendous efforts not only guided my research by providing direction and detailed advice, but he also gave limitless time and energy to discussing, editing, and polishing my drafts. In particular, I was lucky to learn from him his approach to ethnography and fieldnotes. Equally important, he put my interest in "studying ideology" in proper and broad perspective.

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I owe much to the Korean American community in New York City. My informants have shared their personal life stories with me, introduced me to events in the community, and spent time and energy in supporting my research. They were willing to be interviewed, whether green-grocery workers at pizza parlors near their work sites, or garment factory workers in their homes at 9 or 10 o'clock at night, or a nurse at 1 o'clock in the morning at a diner near her hospital, after work. In some cases I had to wait six months until one informant could take time off from two day and night jobs.

To the following individuals I am particularly thankful: Mr. Kim Sung Soo, president of the Korean

American Small Business Service Center of New York, Mr. Pyun Chun Soo, president of the Korean American Association of Flushing, Mr. Hong Chong Hak (John), founder of the Queens Korean Culture Society, Mrs. Lee Han Young, Chair of the National Korean Parents Council; Mr. Chun Sung Jin, founder, and Mr. Hong Seong Ha, chairman of the board, of the Korean American Association of the Mid-Queens; Ms. Kim Nanwon, founder of the Young Korean American Service and Education Center. I also became a member of Korean American Women for Action, the Board of Directors of the New York Asian Women Center, and adviser to the Korean American Association of Mid-Queens. In 1989 I became a vice-president of the Korean American Association of Flushing to work for empowerment of Korean Americans.

My research was conducted as part of the New Immigrants and Old Americans Project at Queens College, CUNY, directed by Dr. Roger Sanjek. A Korean American Scholarship from the Korean American Scientists and Engineers Association also provided much-appreciated help. I also wish to register my appreciation to the Asian/American Center, at Queens College where from 1987 to 1990 I have worked as Research Anthropologist. I acknowledge the support and help of my colleagues at the Center. We constantly discussed and shared our research findings and other aspects of life in the Asian communities in Queens.

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GLOSSARY

anch'al
anjong
ansu chipsa
Binari

안찰 (安察)
안종 (安宗)
안수칩사
비나리

pulgogi
chaetpap

불고기
채밥

chagikage katki

차기개 (차기개)
차기개 (차기개)

changno
changnogyo
changsu mudae

창노
창노교
창수무대

chipsa
cho
chong
chunse

칩사
초
창 (情)
춘세

ch'ilsun
ch'inmokhoe
ch'inmok kye
ch'ogajok

칠선
친목회
친목계
허아죽

ch'on

촌 (村)

ch'usok

추석 (秋夕)

han
Hangyuhreh
Haninhoe

한 (恨)
한씨회
한인회 (韓人會)

hanuli mun'ojida

하늘이 무너지야.

Hanintongsin

한인통신

hoegap
hongik ingan

회갑 (回甲)
홍익인간 (弘益人間)
인종 (人種)

injong
ingwa ungbo
insam

인종
인화음보
인삼

sacred blow
establishment
hand-laying deacon
ritual presented to
the sky, earth, and
human beings for the
fulfillment of
communal undertaking
roast meat
enjoying boiled rice
offerings to Buddha
establishing one's
own business
elder
Presbyterian
folksong contest for
longevity
deacon
set
deep affection
paying a large
refundable deposit
on occupancy, but
without monthly rent
a 70th birthday
a social gathering
friendship kye
kinpersons who
immigrated to
America through a
wife's connection
the basic unit of
genealogical
distance
the Mid-autumn
Festival
unresolved longing
one people
Korean Association
of Greater New York
The sky is going to
collapse.
Korean
communication
a 60th birthday
people who love
other human beings
race
causality
ginseng

isan kajok	이산 아육	divided
kalbi	갈비	family
kamnigyo	암리고	Korean beef spare
kayagum	가야금	ribs
kechu	계주 (계주)	Methodist
kiil	기일 (忌日)	Korean zither-like
		instrument
		kye organizer
		in memory of a
		relative on the
		anniversary of the
		day of their death
kijang; Han'guk kidokkyo changno hoe	이강; 한국 기독교 장로회	Presbyterian church
		in the republic of
		Korea
kimch'i	김치	pickled vegetables
kkakkuthan	깨끗한	clean
kodup nam	고독남	born again
komo	고모	father's sister
kwonsa	권사 (권사)	exhorter
kujong	구정	Lunar New Year Day
kukche kyorhon	국제 결혼	international
		marriage
Kwangju	광주	city
kye	계 (계)	Korean rotating
		credit society
migukpyong	미국병	the American fever
minjok	민족	ethnicity or nation
minjung undong	민중 운동	people's movement
nakch'al kye	낙찰계	bidding kye
namyon	남양면	noodle
nui (or nuna)	누이 (누나)	sister
nunch'iboda	누척이보다	studying one's face
obbi nal	오비날	parents' day
oesamch'on	외삼촌	wife's mother's
		brother
Onni	언니	sister
paegil	백일	baby's first hundred
		days
panch'an	반찬	side dishes
pangon	방언	speaking in tongues
pansanghoe	반상회	a neighborhood
		association
p'ansori	판소리	folktales sung to
		drum accompaniment
pigongsik imin	비공식 이민	informal immigrants
ponho-kye	반호계	sequence kye
poram	보람	just reward
ppaek	부산	social connections
Pusan	부산	city
P'yongyang	평양	city
sidaek	시아댁 (시아댁)	husband's family

sal'puri	살풀이	including families of his brothers dance of exorcism now considered a Korean
samchon	삼촌 (三寸)	classical dance relative within three degrees of relationship, uncle
Sangnokhoe	상록회	Senior Citizens Society
sarangbang Seoul sidaek	사랑방 서울 시댁	a drawing room the Capital husband's family
sikmo	식모	houseworker
songgyōng	송경	Holy ghost
sonbe	손배	a senior
taekwondo	태권도	Korean martial arts
tangnae	탕내 (堂内)	relatives within eight degrees of relationship
toenchang tchige	전장찌개	Korean stew of miso sauce, meat, and vegetable
tol	тол	baby's one-year birthday
tongsōng kido	동성기도	prayer in unison
tongyangkye	동양계 (東洋界)	people from the Asian continent
ttosuni	또는	very tough and
tutoun kwangye	투어은 관계	bright girl
walgadak	왈가닥	deep or thick relation
yangban	양반 (兩班)	slang for a wild girl
yejang; Han'guk yesu changno hoe	예장; 한국예수장로회	the two classes of nobility, civil and military
Yombul	염불	Presbyterian church in Korea
Yōsōnghoe	여성회	chanting Buddhist prayers
yumo	유모	Women's organization nanny

Part I:

From Korea to Queens

Chapter 1

Korean Migration to America

Korean immigration to America can be interpreted as one outcome of the American political, economic, missionary, and military involvement in Korea from the late 19th century until today. Taking this viewpoint, I. Kim (1981) has focused on Korean immigration as an interplay between Korea's internal politics, economy, foreign policy, and the international trade policies, economy, and immigration policy of the United States. The history of Korean immigration to the United States can be summarized in Table 1.

Immigration to United States Before 1965

In 1888, a small number of Korean students, political exiles, insam (ginseng) merchants, and migrant laborers began to arrive on American shores (Hurh & Kim 1980:25). However, the total number of Koreans in the United States was estimated at less than fifty before the first large wave of Korean immigrants reached the Hawaiian shores during the period of 1903-1905. This phase of Korean immigration brought a total of 7,226 Koreans to Hawaii as contract laborers for sugar plantations (W. Kim 1971:1-4; Choy 1979:69-72). Most of them were brought as strike breakers against Japanese workers, who initiated strikes

and demanded wage increases after they had served their time as contract laborers. A letter written by Horace N. Allen, Chief of the United States legation, to Sanford B. Dole, then the Governor of Hawaii, indicates how these Korean workers were seen at this time:

The Koreans are a patient, hard-working, docile race; easy to control from their long habit of obedience. They are usually very keen on getting a foreign education.... Koreans are a more teachable race than the Chinese; they eat more meat than do the latter people, though their chief article of diet is rice. If Koreans do get to the islands in any numbers, it will be a God-send to them [the Koreans] and I imagine they will be found to be unobjectionable and of good service as laborers (qtd. in H. Kim & Patterson 1974:85-86).

About two thousand of these Koreans later remigrated to the United States mainland, most remaining on the West Coast. The class origin of these early immigrants is unclear, but most seem to have been peasants or urban workers in Korea. The majority were young bachelors between the ages of 20 and 30. Coming from the port cities throughout Korea, they were largely uneducated and engaged in semiskilled or unskilled occupations, but with some exposure already to Christian missionaries (Hurh & Kim 1980:31). In 1905 the Korean government, which was degraded to a de facto Japanese protectorate, suddenly

forbade emigration. The Japanese government wanted to protect Japanese immigrants in the Hawaiian Islands from the competition of Koreans. After the conclusion of the Gentlemen's Agreement between the United States and Japan in 1908, however, Koreans in Hawaii were granted permission to bring their wives and family. Subsequently, more than 800 "picture-brides" came to join their husbands between 1910 and 1924.[1]

Prior to the passage of the Immigration Act of 1924 (also referred to as the Immigration Quota Law, National Origins Act, or the Japanese Exclusion Act), immigration of Chinese and Japanese laborers had already been restricted by the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 (renewed at every ten-year intervals) and the Gentlemen's Agreement between the United States and Japan of 1907-08. A 1907 agreement whereby the San Francisco School Board rescinded its segregation order and Japan agreed to withhold passports from Japanese workers seeking to come to the United States... With the San Francisco school segregation issue out of the way, the two governments were able to reach an agreement in 1908. As part of the agreement, the Japanese government voluntarily withheld passports from Japanese laborers who wanted to go to the United States. The agreement also closed Japanese immigration to the United States through Hawaii, Mexico, and Canada (H. Kim 1986:257). Koreans were excluded as under Japanese protectorate at time of signing.

From 1925 to the 1950-1953 Korean War, only a few Koreans entered the United States. Between the Korean War and 1965, some Korean immigrants did enter the United States as war orphans, or wives and relatives of American servicemen stationed in Korea. Although it is not clear how many Koreans came to New York City in this period, those who did were the first Koreans to settle in Queens, one of the five boroughs of New York City. B. Kim summarizes the demographic profile of the typical Korean war-bride wife in America:

a relatively young to early-middle-aged woman, with a median education level of eighth grade. Her husband has an even chance of being either a few years older, or much older or younger than she. He is likely to be employed in military service or engaged in skilled or semiskilled work. The couple has two or fewer children and have practically no organizational affiliations, with extremely limited participation in social activities (1977:103).

Immigration to the United States: 1965 to Today

New Korean immigrants can be classified into two groups, one group arriving after 1965 and the other after the 1976 Amendment to the Immigration Law. These two groups differ in terms of who the immigrants are, and the circumstances under which they came.

The Immigration Act of October 3, 1965 (PL 89-236) set an annual limit of 170,000 immigrants from the Eastern Hemisphere and 120,000 from the Western Hemisphere, with a maximum of 20,000 for any individual country, exclusive of immediate relatives of American citizens. The hemisphere limits were abolished in 1976, and a worldwide annual quota for legal immigrants set at 270,000, with up to 20,000 from any one country. The 1965 law, taking effect in 1968, ended the national origins quota system in favor of a system of graded preferences, including preferences for family members of persons already in the United States, and workers with skills needed in the United States (see Appendix A). Although work skills remained one emphasis in the 1952 law, there was a major shift in policy to family reunification as a rationing criterion. The first, second, fourth, and fifth preferences allotted up to 74 percent of a country quota to close family members of United States citizens and permanent resident aliens (Bouvier and Gardner 1986:14). Also admittedly beyond the numerical limits were spouses, parents, and unmarried children under age 18 of United States citizens, and refugees (Gardner, Robey & Smith 1985:9).

Labor qualifications were the criterion only for the third preference (members of the professions, scientists, and nonperforming artists of exceptional ability) and the sixth preference (skilled and unskilled workers "in occupations for which labor is in short supply"), with 10

percent apiece. No worker under these preferences could enter the United States unless the Secretary of Labor certified that the alien would have no adverse effect on wages and working conditions. "It places the burden of proving no adverse effect upon the applying alien" (Keely 1980:16).

With this new legislation, the Asian share of total immigration to the United States increased from 7.6 percent (1961-1965) to 27.4 percent (1969-1973), exceeding the European share (27.3 percent in 1969-1973) for the first time in American immigration history. In the 1970s, Asian immigration rose to 34 percent. During the 1980s, Asian immigration (48 percent) surpassed migration from Latin America (35 percent) (Hurh & Kim 1980:49, 51).

The 1960s and 1970s in Korea was a period of rapid urbanization and industrial development, which led to the rise of a new middle class. Many of this new stratum would eventually immigrate to America to realize their aspirations for economic well-being, causing a brain drain of educated professionals from Korea. During these years Korean immigration began in earnest (see table 1). By 1973 some 20,000 Koreans annually obtained immigration clearance under occupational and family reunion preferences. The Korean share of total United States immigration mounted. In 1965 the top three countries sending immigrants from the Eastern Hemisphere to the United States were the United Kingdom, Germany, and Italy. In 1975, they were the

Philippines, Korea, and China (Hurh & Kim 1980:49). From 1965 to 1985, 463,481 Koreans immigrated to America on the basis of their skills and their family relationship to those already here. The earlier wave of Korean new immigrants, up to 1976, were mostly medical professionals--doctors, dentists, pharmacists, nurses, medical technicians--and scientists, engineers, and other skilled workers.

A most important category was nurses. By 1974, one-third of Korean immigrant professionals admitted to the United States were nurses. Nurses made a major contribution to the establishment of the Korean community in New York City, first by working in their profession, and later, for many, by turning into immigrant businesswomen, along with their husbands. Many Korean husbands, in fact, were sponsored for immigration visas by their nurse wives.

Other Koreans came here as re-migrants after working as miners, construction and transportation workers, seamen and nurses in West Germany, Vietnam, and the Middle East. Still more remigrated to America after migrating to South American countries, Canada, or Japan. There were also many students-turned-immigrants.

The second wave of new Korean immigrants came after President Gerald Ford signed the Immigration and Nationality Act Amendments of 1976, which limited entry of professionals to the United States. One of the amendments downgraded professional immigrants like nurses, physicians,

and dentists from the third preference to the sixth preference. This meant that before entry, they too would have to find an American employer willing to hire them (I. Kim 1981:30). As a consequence, the proportion of Korean and other immigrants admitted under the employment-related third and sixth preferences dropped. The percentage of Korean entries under the occupational preferences reached its peak of 45.1 percent in 1972; after that it began to drop, falling to 22 percent in 1975 (I. Kim:31). Since 1980, that proportion has been just 3.9 percent for all immigrants (Bouvier & Gardner 1986:17).

As a result of this 1976 legislation, the principal channel by which Koreans could migrate to America was family reunion. While the earlier pre-1976 wave of Korean new immigrants included mainly middle-class professional migrants, the later wave included Koreans of a variety of class backgrounds, and educational and skill levels.

Another change occurred in 1978 when the Korean government lifted the limit of \$1,000 that Korean emigrants could convert to dollars and bring out with them. Since then, those immigrants who are able may bring more capital out than did early wave immigrants. In 1979, it was raised to \$3,000 for each Korean emigrant to the United States. Later in the 1980s, the Korean government became more flexible in that they allowed each Korean immigrant family take up to \$100,000, and in 1990, it is raised to \$200,000 for each family (Paek Su Yong, Bank of Korea, personal

communication, July 1990).

Many post-1978 immigrants are now from the richer classes, but it is also true that many other recent immigrants are from lower income groups. These persons have kin or family here who invite them to America, through family reunion preferences. Still others attempt to come by illegal means, without proper documents, sometimes across the Mexican border or through another country. With these newest waves of Korean immigrants, there is increasing stratification by wealth and education in the New York Korean American community.

The Korean Community in America

The United States Census counted Koreans as a distinct ethnic group for the first time in 1970. Earlier, Koreans were included in the "other Asian " category. According to the 1970 count, there were 70,598 Koreans in the United States. In 1980, 357,393 Koreans were counted, making up 10.3 percent of all Asian Americans (Gardner, Robey & Smith 1985:5)

Yu estimated the annual rate of natural increase for the Korean community in America at 3 percent in 1985. By then, the Korean population was increasing each year by 50,000, including 20,000 by natural increase, and 30,000 immigrants (Yu 1986). As of 1989, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Korea, there are more than one million Koreans in the United States (Korea Times

9/13/1984).

Some 43 percent of Koreans live on the west [coast] (Gardner, Robey & Smith 1985:11). The Korean communities in Los Angeles and New York are, respectively the first and second largest aggregations of Koreans in America. The 1980 census data showed that there were 103,000 Koreans in California and 33,000 Koreans in New York, but this undoubtedly underestimated the numbers. Several factors made it difficult for them to be interviewed and accounted for fully. Besides language and cultural barriers, Koreans work from early in the morning till late, and are thus away from the residential locations that Census enumerators visit. According to estimates of Korean community leaders in 1989, there are some 200,000 Koreans in New York and 300,000 Koreans in Los Angeles (Korea Times 12/31/1989).

Koreans in Queens

Although the 1980 Census underestimated the total number of Koreans, it did show that in New York City more than 62 percent of Koreans live in the borough of Queens. We find Koreans in several Queens neighborhoods (see Appendix B). Many live along the No. 7 subway route, extending from Sunnyside and Woodside, through Elmhurst, Jackson Heights, and Corona, to Flushing. Forest Hills, Bayside, and Little Neck contain other concentrations of Koreans. The largest concentration is said to be in Flushing [2], and the second largest in Elmhurst [3].

According to a Chemical Bank Report (1983), there were 40,000 Koreans in Flushing, and they comprised the largest Asian group there. By 1989 the Korean American Association of Flushing claimed 65,000 Koreans in Flushing. Korean language newspapers frequently report that there are at least 115,000 Koreans in Queens. However, nobody knows the exact figures, and like all ethnic figures, these seem to escalate for political reasons. Korean numbers in Queens, in particular, seem to grow in competition with those for the Chinese community (Korea Times 12/31/1989).

Even before the 1960s, some Korean students had settled in Queens in Sunnyside, enjoying the quick public transportation to Manhattan. Several pioneer Korean Flushing residents were businessmen who participated in the 1964 World's Fair in Flushing Meadow-Corona Park, and who decided to stay in America. In Elmhurst, two large apartment buildings in front of Elmhurst City Hospital were initially occupied in 1971 by a few Korean nurses and their families. Today they house three hundred Korean households that have moved into Elmhurst since then.

During the 1980s, Broadway, a major Elmhurst commercial strip, has been revitalized by immigrant businesses, many of them Korean owned. According to the Korean American Association of Mid-Queens, representing many of these businesses, in 1985 Korean-owned stores and professional businesses in Elmhurst, and nearby Jackson

Heights, Woodside, and Sunnyside, amounted to 250. According to a 1986 Survey, out of 912 Elmhurst businesses, Koreans ran 105, the largest number of businesses for any of Elmhurst 40 nationalities, with the exception of "Americans," who operated 200. The Korean businesses included dry cleaners (13), fish stores (8), gift shops (8), groceries (8), fruit and vegetable stores (7), delicatessens (6), restaurants (6), beauty salons (5), real estate offices (5), clothing stores (4), and other businesses (Yuan 1986:15).

Since then, the number and variety of Korean small businesses in Elmhurst has increased. By 1989, the stores included supermarkets, groceries (carrying either western or Asian foods), green groceries, fishshops, delicatessens, bakeries, restaurants, stationeries, giftshops, candy stores, general merchandise stores, fashion stores, jewelry stores, video rental stores, shoe stores, dry cleaners, shoe repairs, beauty salons, real estate office, driving schools, language schools, insurance agencies, travel agencies, a chess parlor, moving agencies, car-repair shops, sign companies, construction firms, security companies, refrigeration companies, handicraft stores, offices of medical doctors, dentists, and Certified Public Accountants, and lawyers, and a Korean owned medical center, pharmacies, Korean herb doctors and acupuncturists, a fortune teller, garment factories, a bowling alley, massage parlors, and bars.

While I was doing my fieldwork, I noticed more and more Korean vegetable and fruit stands, beauty salons, travel agencies, real estate agencies, restaurants, bars, and massage parlors, opening for business in Elmhurst, and also new Indian food and electronics stores, and various Chinese stores. I also observed many more non-Korean businesses hiring Korean employees, including real-estate agencies, beauty salons, and law firms. At the same time, Korean stores hired Latin American, Chinese, or white American employees. In general, most businessmen in Elmhurst tried to hire a range of bilingual staff members in order to cater to the multi-ethnic local population.

The greater Elmhurst area also has seen the development of Korean social and political organization, evident in the Korean American Association of Mid-Queens, the Elmhurst Korean Senior Center (Sarangbang), the Korean-American Senior Center (in Woodside), the Young Korean American Service and Education Center (in Jackson Heights), Young Koreans United of New York (in Jackson Heights), the Korean-Americans for Peace and Justice (in Corona), Asian-American Mental Health Services Korean Unit, the Korean Blind Foundation in the United States of America, Professional United States of America Photographer Club, forty-four Korean churches (14 in Elmhurst; 6 in Jackson Heights; 24 in Woodside) [4], and a Buddhist temple. In January 1986, two Korean women and one man were appointed to Community Board 4 (Elmhurst-Corona).

Community Boards, formed of citizens appointed by New York City Councilmembers and Borough Presidents, advise on land use issues, oversee municipal services, and make formal budget recommendations.

Most Korean residents of Elmhurst have come to the United States in recent years, mostly in the late 1970s or the early 1980s. Many live in rented one-bedroom apartments and single-family houses, in nuclear families of fairly young husbands and wives, some with and others without children. This picture is also true of the Korean community in Flushing. In Sunnyside, however, according to a minister whose church is located there, many Koreans are single men or women, attracted by the neighborhood's fairly small-sized apartment complexes.

In the first phase of my fieldwork I interviewed 18 Korean immigrants, focusing on their life-stories. I then conducted household and thematic interviews with 91 Korean immigrants. I also conducted interviews with 16 activists and leaders in the Korean community organizations. Equally important, I observed more than 50 events, such as monthly meetings of the Korean American Association of Flushing, the Korean Parade, the Korean Mid-autumn Festival, Queens Festival, and others in which Koreans in Queens participated.

The statistical presentations that follow concern the 91 households in which I did my interviews, plus data from my other 18 interviews where it is complete. (For this

reason, some tables include a total of more than 91 cases.) Some 83 out of the 91 households are composed of first generation adult immigrants. Among the 109 households 69 were located in Elmhurst; 13 in Jackson Heights; 17 in the rest of Queens; 3 in New York City; and 7 in New Jersey. The workplaces of my informants (one from each household) were mainly in Queens: 55 in Elmhurst, 9 in Jackson Heights, and 10 elsewhere. The remaining 23 were mainly in Manhattan and 12 work in Long Island or New Jersey. All my informants either live, work, or attend church in Queens.

The Migration Process

Although those who have arrived since 1965 are often called "new immigrants," I will refer to Korean immigrants who arrived between 1965 and 1976 as "the early wave" of Korean immigrants. While this "early wave" came mostly through occupational preference, those after 1976 came mainly by family reunion.

Among my 91 informants, 18 came here by occupational preference, including 4 medical doctors, 1 nurse, 2 medical technicians, 4 pharmacists, 1 beautician, 2 automobile mechanics, 1 welder, and 1 cook. I. Kim (1981) has pointed out that most emigrating under this preference were from Korea's highly educated middle or upper class, but as one can gather, not all of my informants fit this profile. Most of the medical professionals applied for immigration

visas directly, but the automobile mechanics and other skilled workers paid fees to Korean agencies (see I. Kim 1981:60-64) which applied to obtain work permits for them. A common pattern was for men to come first, and, after familiarizing and establishing themselves in America, to later bring their families from Korea. Many female nurses however came by themselves, and met their husbands here. Some of these men had come here legally on business visas but overstayed illegally.

Among my informants who came here by occupational preference, two automobile mechanics are now retired. Cook and his wife, a waitress, have worked for the same employer since they emigrated to America 20 years ago. The nurse is now a real-estate saleswoman, and the pharmacists now run their own drug stores. However, all four medical doctors have remained in their profession; they now live on Long Island, though some continue to keep offices serving Korean patients in Elmhurst or Flushing.

Among the early wave immigrants, I met several men who came as students and decided to stay. One of my informants quit his studies, married a nurse, and went into business with his wife. He now runs a successful Korean grocery and supermarket. Three men came to work in a branch office of a Korean company. After living a few years in America, they decided to stay, and applied for immigrant visas under the sponsorship of their company. One now runs a Korean restaurant which he began as a

coffeeshop.

Mr. Kim, a pharmacist, immigrated to America in 1973. In Korea he had worked for a pharmaceutical company for a year, and for the past three years he has run his own drugstore.

In Korea I had been informed that in America it is hard to get a job as a pharmacist immediately, so I studied camera repair for a few months. I was supposed to repair five cameras a day. In six months I took stock of what I had done in my life. After another six months, I started to work as an intern at a hospital in the Bronx. While in Korea it takes four years to finish pharmacology, it takes five years in America. Therefore, I was supposed to add 1,000 hours more, which is equivalent to one year and two months work. Although it was not difficult to do, it was not easy to do the work without pay. At that time there were many pharmacists from such countries as Korea, India, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Taiwan. Thanks to their better English many of those from India and Pakistan took internships and got a job fairly easily compared with those from Korea and Taiwan. To make matters worse, the job market was oversupplied, making it very difficult to get employment. Now it is impossible for pharmacists from foreign countries to immigrate here. But, it is less difficult to be hired now. Then, due to the

city fiscal crisis, it was hard to be hired as a pharmacist, I remember. After passing the exam, I got a job at another hospital in the Bronx.

Some early wave Korean immigrants also came to America by way of South America, Germany, or Canada. Mr. Lee, a garment factory owner, was born in Pyongyang, North Korea, and later moved to South Korea:

I was informed by my uncle who had studied in Brazil that the living in any South American country is good. He told me there was no racism. So I immigrated to Paraguay first as an agricultural immigrant, and later to Argentina in 1965. At that time the minimum wage was better in Argentina than in the United States. I remember that it was only 50 cents for a good meal, and one could earn \$3.00 for one day's work in Argentina. In Buenos Aires, I ran a knitting mill. There were few Koreans. For ten years my business went well, employing ten workers. However, after I came to the United States to buy a machine, I decided to stay here. Immediately after I left, there was economic chaos in Buenos Aires.

In Germany and Canada, Koreans worked as miners, nurses, and ministers. One of my informant, Mrs. Yang, was a nurse in Germany; another, Reverend Chung, was a minister in Canada. A few early wave immigrants were sponsored by female relatives--a mother's sister, for example, who had married an American servicemen stationed in Korea.

Among the later post-1976 wave of Korean immigrants are two groups--those who brought in large amounts of capital; and those who arrived with empty hands. The latter group migrated through the family reunion provisions of the United States immigration law, and many of them were poor in Korea. The former group brought in their large sums of money after the Korean government lifted the \$1,000 limit on capital outflow in 1978. These "later wave" of new immigrants are even more diverse in terms of class origin than the early wave of new Korean immigrants. Since 1978, the capitalist arriving from Korea have been small in numbers compared to the majority migrating through family reunification. And a few still emigrate through occupational preferences, as pharmacists, nurses, or ministers.

Mrs. Park is a typical recent immigrant. She and her family immigrated to America in 1984. They immediately bought a handicraft store with money they brought from Korea. The store cost \$20,000 for "key money" to the former owner, \$3,000 in rental deposit, and \$900 in monthly rent. In Korea, her husband ran a transportation company.

My daughter has invited us to immigrate here. She is an American citizen and used to be a nurse. Her husband is a German American. My daughter used to live in Elmhurst till January 1985. We lived for seven months at my daughter's place, together with her family, until they moved out.

In general, the early wave of new immigrants came here to practice their careers, and achieve economic well-being. The later wave of new immigrants also came in hopes of economic well-being. Those who are rich come to invest; those who are poor come to survive.

As economic conditions change in Korea, and the audience for Korean stories of success in America grows, the more Koreans think about emigration as an alternative. Thus far I have mentioned those that have immigrated through legal channels. Now I turn to those who came here without proper documents. Among my informants ten came on tourist visas or other non-immigrant visas, and seven came without documents. Seven of the tourists have regularized their status in the United States, but three still do not have a green card. Those who are middle and upper class in Korea find it easier to manipulate the immigration procedures, in various ways, usually through sponsorship of Korean relatives already here. But lower class Koreans who have no kin to sponsor them are desperate and will enter the United States by illegal means. For many, this entails being smuggled into the United States by way of South America, Mexico, or the Caribbean.

Among my informants, two entered via the Bahamas, one through Paraguay, and four by crossing the Mexican border. Before they left Korea, they were briefed on their migratory arrangements, and paid large fees to Korean brokers which included a share for local Latin American

brokers. When crossing the United States border, if they are caught, their kin, friends, or brokers must pay a "bond of delivery for aliens." They are released until a final decision on their case is made. In most cases, deportation to Korea follows. Despite such experience, a few of them are ready to make the attempt again.

Overall, only 20 percent of my informants (N=91) came here through occupational preference. Among these, the majority were medical professionals. Another 54 percent migrated through family reunion, either invited by immediate family members (parents and children) with green cards, or by a brother or sister who was an American citizen. Some 4 percent came as students who later decided to stay permanently. A larger group, some 15 percent, came with tourist, visitor, business, or non-immigrant employment visas. According to the Immigration and Naturalization Service, in 1981-1982, 100,000 Koreans came to the United States on non-immigrant visas, including 8,000 students; we do not know how many of these 100,000 eventually remain in America (Korea Times 9/6/1985). Finally, 7 percent of my informants entered the United States illegally.

This increasing number of people entering the United States without proper documents are termed pigongsik imin (informal immigrants) in Korean. A 1985 National Research Council study defines such an immigrant as "a noncitizen physically present in the United States who entered the

country illegally and has not regularized his or her situation, or who has violated his or her terms of entry" (Levine, Hill, & Warren 1985:225). About half the illegal immigrants in the United States are not illegal border-crossers but are "visa abusers"--people who entered the country legally on temporary non-immigrant visas, and remained or work illegally.

Among my informants who lacked proper documents, Mrs. Chung, first, went to Mexico. In Mexico, although she looked for Koreans, she found only Japanese. Eventually she met Mr. Park, who treated her to a Korean dinner. He couldn't believe that a woman would want to be smuggled into the United States. With his help, she travelled to Tijuana, which is within four hours of the border. There she took a bus from the airport, which dropped her at a Chinese motel. The motel was full of professional brokers, including three Koreans. She was so glad that she started to cry. As a result she made contact with a Korean broker in Los Angeles, who instructed her by telephone as to what to do step by step. She needed \$1,500 in all. She paid \$10 for bus fare to the airport, and paid \$20 for a Mexican translator. Her group was taken on a ten minute bus ride to the border. She saw fields on one side and a stony open area on the other side. They were instructed to say "OK" to whatever questions were asked. They began walking. She was wearing high heels and hurt her feet seriously. After some time, they came to an artificially made tunnel under

an electrified wire fence. They crawled into the tunnel and the group of four Koreans and one other person waited there from 6 A.M. to 6 P.M. Then they boarded a farm truck, carrying vegetables and fruit, and crawled behind the seat to a space under the produce. After one hour they arrived in San Diego and were moved to a van. In the next hour they transferred to different trucks seven times. Finally, Mrs. Chung was dropped near Korean Town in Los Angeles. There she had to pay the rest of the fee. Her husband was shocked at her arrival, believing she was still in Pusan.

Mr. Kang feels that he was deceived by brokers. He met a migration broker through his father's brother in Korea. He gave him 6,000,000 won (in 1984, about \$10,000). The broker told him that there was a way to enter America directly and legally. Later, it turned out that everything was illegal, except his passport for training in agricultural technology.

Seven were in his group. They went to Mexico city by plane. Then he flew to Tijuana where they met the original broker. He reassured the group, and told them not to worry. He then introduced a Mexican agent. They were taken by bus to the nearby border, 30 minutes away. There they were told to walk, and climb up a steep valley, but during daytime they had to hide, and at night they could only crawl. There were 27 in the group, including a five-year old child. With no food, they crawled 500 meters, then

stopped. In this manner, they progressed for two days. It was hard to see anything at night, but they crossed the border. Then they took a van for two hours. For three more days they did not have any food, and slept on the ground. On the next morning they boarded another car, but 14 miles later they were caught by an inspector.

They were so hungry that they cried, but for three days they were held without food. All were caught. They were kept for 15 days in a detention camp. Mr. Kang said that the Mexican food in the camp was very good. Then, his father's brother paid a \$3,500 "bond of delivery for an alien," and he took a plane and arrived at La Guardia airport in New York City. It took him seven months to clear his debt, paying back \$500 per month. During this time, and afterward, he worked "off the books" in a Korean green grocery. Now that he has lived through such hardships, Mr. Kang feels that nothing can frighten him, no matter what it is.

Women-initiated Migration

At the beginning of Korean immigration history, it was males who came as laborers to sugar cane plantations in Hawaii. A few more men came as political refugees, students, or merchants. If women came at all, they came as "picture brides" to join their husbands.

Beginning with the Korean War, however, Korean immigration entered a new period of female-initiated migration. Through the 1950s most Koreans who came to America were war-brides married to American servicemen and their kin. Since the Amendment to the Immigration Law in 1965, women have continued to play an important part in Korean immigration. Under the occupational preference many more women than men came as nurses, or in other health care occupations. Although since 1976 fewer persons can apply for occupational preference, there is a continuing influence of women on the Korean immigration stream. Through family reunification it is more often women than men who can and are willing to invite family members to migrate to America.

Those women who came as war-brides or nurses, and have become American citizens, often sponsor their kin. What is more, as the Korean government does not allow dual citizenship, either husband or wife will have to decide who will be naturalized. It is more often wives than husbands who obtain United States citizenship. And among those who came here temporarily, sent by a company or to visit, it is more often women than men who want to stay in America. "If Korea is a country for men, America is for women," Koreans in Queens frequently comment.

In the New York Korean community, people call those who came to America through a wife's connection, ch'ogajok (kinspersons who are immigrated to the United States

through wife's connection). This expression is frequently used by men to imply that they have too many relatives who have come through a wife's connection. Men often complain, "They [meaning the wife's family] try to influence or undermine my authority as the head of the household. I don't feel comfortable dealing with them. And yet obviously I cannot ignore them."

In the past, Korean immigrant men visited Korea to be introduced to a woman for marriage. They were seen as desirable prospective husbands by young women in Korea. In particular, many women hoped that in America they would be better treated by men, with less sexism. Women thought of migration to America as a wonderful idea. But in recent years it is often the case for immigrant men to be rejected as suitors by women in Korea. People have come to know, from family, kin, or friends, that if they immigrate, they can expect hardship in the form of working long hours at stores, green groceries, or sewing factories. Today young women from middle or upper class families are reluctant to join a new husband in America. Others from middle or lower class backgrounds are still willing to go to America, ready to experience the hardships that await them.

Downward Mobility

While current trends are producing greater diversity among Korean immigrants, as far as immigrant population already here is concerned: most are young; most are married; the

majority is highly educated; many were white-collar workers in Korea; and most have been exposed to urban culture in Korea. (My data are consistent with the 1980 census data for New York, and with the picture in Los Angeles.)

Of my informants, 58 percent (N=91) are between ages 21 and 40 years, as can be seen in Table 2. Some 67 percent (N=91) are married. Singles are 21 percent; and divorced, separated, or widowed are 12 percent.

Among my informants, 25 percent are college graduates, and another 28 percent attended college. Some 75 percent of my informants were employed in Korea; the remaining 25 percent were housewives. Some 56 percent had held white collar jobs as professionals, proprietors, managers, civil servants, or skilled workers.

In New York, however, only 17 percent (N=109) hold white collar jobs. The majority, 73 percent, are involved in small business, either as employer (36 percent) or employee (37 percent). The rest, 10 percent, are unemployed, students, or retired. It is evident that many Korean immigrants experience downward mobility from white collar positions to small business. Because of difficulties with licensure and language barriers, many former Korean professionals do not have jobs comparable to those in their home country.

Many work in low-paying, dead-end jobs like Mrs. Lee--a teacher in Korea, and now a garment factory worker.

At first it hurt my pride. But, I came to think that I would make the desperate effort, however. I envied those who did well. The first day I earned only \$6.00 for ten hours work. On the second day I earned \$12.00. It was difficult to do a manual job, and it was not easy to work under someone, compared with what I had done in Korea. In my class as a teacher, I was in charge of the students. As I worked with many workers here, sometimes it led to friction. However, I tried to consider garment work as only the first step. And I could maintain close friendships with fellow church members, regardless of our different levels of education.

Notes

- [1] "This term originated from the manner in which marriages between Japanese residents already in the United States and their future spouses were arranged and consummated. The husband usually sent his picture to his home country and had a close relative or friend arrange his marriage to a woman, who was, in turn, asked to send her picture to her future husband. Their marriage was, therefore, strictly speaking, completed by proxy. After the marriage was thus consummated, picture-brides were allowed to join their husbands in the United states, under the agreement made between the United States of America and Japan in 1908, which was called the Gentlemen's Agreement" (H. Kim 1986:452-53). Regarding "Picture Brides" from Korea, see Chai (1981)
- [2] Flushing (Community District 7), part of the Colony of New Netherlands was founded with the granting of lands to English colonists, who came from Massachusetts, in 1645 (Kupka 1949). The first occupation of the settlers of Flushing was farming. This was followed by the establishment of nurseries beginning in 1737; until 1840, Flushing had a monopoly on the nursery business. In 1898 Flushing became part of New York City. The population of the

village at that time was 12,000. Some of the benefits of consolidation with Greater New York City during the first fifty years of this century were miles of paved streets, connection with the IRT subway line in 1928, 2,000 acres of land developed into Kissena Park, and Flushing Meadows Corona Park. Downtown Flushing, the city's sixth largest shopping district, was experiencing vacancies and an exodus of high-priced shops when Asian businesses began to enter in the mid-1970s (Gottlieb 1985).

- [3] In 1652, farmers from England first settled in the center of what is today Elmhurst and named it 'Newtown', which came to include Elmhurst, Corona and neighboring settled in later years. Like Flushing, Elmhurst became part of New York City in 1898. The term 'Elmhurst' was bestowed by a real estate agent in 1890 (Tauber and Kaplan 1966). Many ethnic groups have resided in Elmhurst. German, Irish and Swedish immigrants were the first wave of 19th century new residents here. Cubans came in the early 1960s, and then other Latin Americans after the new immigration law in 1965. Chinese first moved into Elmhurst in the 1950s or 1960s. In 1970, 85% of Queens residents were whites, but in 1980, whites were less than 65%, 18% were blacks, 14% Hispanics, and 5% Asians. In Elmhurst, the population changed even more rapidly

than in most parts of Queens. In 1970, the community had 23% Hispanic residents, 70% whites, 3% blacks, and 4% others (including Asians). In 1980, Community Board 4 had a total population of 137,000. Among them, only 34% were whites. Fifteen percent of community board 4's population was Asian in 1980, and 83% of them lived in Elmhurst. Among the Asian immigrants, Chinese were the largest in number with 9,500, Indian and Pakistanis 4,500, Koreans 2,500, and the Filipinos 2,500.

- [4] As of 1989, The Council of Korean Churches in New York claims on about 400 Korean churches in the New York area. Some 301 Korean churches were listed in the Korean church directory of New York, published by The Council of Korean churches of Greater New York in 1989. Out of these 301, 44 churches were in Flushing, 130 in the Borough of Queens, 211 in New York City. The other 90 were elsewhere New York State, and in New Jersey and Connecticut.

Chapter 2

Korean Immigrants and the American Dream

"One will be rewarded as hard as one works"

(Korean proverb)

Before emigrating from Korea, Koreans have preconceived ideas about America. They come with their dreams, and with specific ideas about how American society works. Until recently, Koreans held a rosy picture of America as a paradise, full of gold, a free and equal society, everybody kind to each other, and with a clean and safe environment. These themes were expressed by many of my informants.

Mr. Lee migrated to America in 1955, first to Los Angeles for his studies, and later to New York. Today he runs a delicatessen in Elmhurst. "While I was coming by ship, even the weather was very good. Heaven be praised! I was happy to spend \$50 on drinks. I certainly thanked the Korean military academy for offering me a scholarship to study in America."

For Mr. Won, a garment factory owner, America offers far more opportunities than Korea.

In Korea, without inherited property, you will have to start to live your life in a rented room. And yet, if you are not thrifty enough, you cannot expect to be

better off very soon. To a great extent, without property or special skills, it is almost impossible to improve your condition very much. Still, I do not deny that there is also a limit to mobility here.

Mr. Pyo, a medical technician, migrated to America in 1969. At the time he came here, he thought that: "America is full of gold, similar to paradise, and everybody is treated well and kind to each other. In reality I was coldly treated, and I could not see any money on the street. I had to work very hard."

The Korean American Dream

The Korean American dream includes several themes. The most powerful theme is that one will be rewarded as hard as one works. This phrase echoed recurrently in many of my interviews. The theme emerges in both American and Korean proverbs. But the way Koreans understand it is purely Korean. For Koreans, success following hard work is more in the order of things than the result of competition, as it is for Americans. Koreans interpret it according to similar Korean expressions--"If you do good to others, someday they do good to you"--and cultural notions of ingwa ungbo (causality), and poram (just reward). The saying has much to do with the Korean immigrants' firm belief in opportunity for success in America.

They often reveal this view in their comparisons of America and Korea. According to Mr. Chung, a fish market owner.

I made a good decision to come to America, at just the right time. In Korea, when I went broke all of a sudden, I hurt my pride. It was due to the unstable economy in Korea: with a little wind, a small twig cannot stand. In Korea, as one knows, political connections or other good connections influence every aspect of a person's life. Without such a background, if you are broke, it is hard to recover. Here there is little difference between rich and poor. What is most important is that if you work hard, you will be rewarded to some extent.

Mr. Pai, a cab driver, said that, "In America everybody is paid well for as hard as one works. However, I feel that I have no time for myself. At first I wanted to have my own business. But, after two years, now, I realize I have got to do it only step by step."

Mr. Kim owns an automobile body shop. He stated, "Here one can get what one works for. In Korea, even though you try hard, still you cannot get what you want. For example, in Korea you can have a job, but you cannot get paid enough to live on. Because of the limited market there, you cannot succeed in small business."

The second important theme in the Korean American dream is the espousal of freedom and equality. Koreans think of America as a free society, one offering both personal and political freedom. Ms. Sung thinks that she made a good decision to come to America. "Here you can do whatever you want to. For example, I was able to study while working part-time. You can use a car wherever you want to go. Besides, it is much more convenient in terms of eating and shopping." But it is another matter to live with such freedom. Mr. Pai, a beer distributor, said.

Here is better than in Korea, at least for me. People and the American government do not seem to interfere in what is not their business: much freedom; less friction between persons, including colleagues. In Korea I aspired to come to America. Once I came to New York, I discovered things are more complicated. America is becoming crippled by disease; the co-residence of many different people leads to crimes. Too much freedom disturbs the ancient and good relationship between parents and children in Korea.

Mr. Choi works at a green grocery in Jackson Heights, and has been in America for three years. He still sees America as an equal society. "Unlike Korea, here we do not have to care about the boss's social position, nunch'iboda (studying one's face). Moreover, here people can easily lead a Bohemian life, especially in New York. But I feel

nervous about so much violence."

These elements of the Korean American dream evidently are not experienced in exactly the same way by all Koreans. Class background, gender, and experience in the United States all produce variation. Women and those of low-income backgrounds in Korea attach more importance to the ideology of opportunity and equality, where middle and upper class men stress freedom. The Korean immigrant elderly experience American society as more restricted than do younger immigrants.

For three years, Mrs. Choi's husband complained about immigrant life in the United States, and insisted that they return to Korea. She was also very concerned about education for her daughters, and worried when she saw Korean mothers going to work, and returning home to experience many problems with their children. Nonetheless she stated,

Even though we decided to return to Korea, I figure there is no job available for women like me. It will be inconvenient to live; we will earn less. How nice it is here! Here is a free society, and we are rewarded according to whatever work we do. We do not have to worry about our later life, since the poor and the not-highly-educated can then rely on welfare.

Because of his difficulty with language and transportation, her husband Mr. Choi did not want to remain in America. In Korea, he feels, he is free to do wherever he wants.

Still, he believes that there is an abundance of resources in America, and notes the inexpensive kalbi (Korean beef spare ribs). Furthermore he comments on Americans' sense of equality--they are kind enough to help somebody repairing a car, or to give driving directions in detail.

As they live longer in America, many Korean immigrants temper their American dream. They find, contrary to their expectation, America is not paradise. It is not full of gold, even if they work hard. It is also a racist society. Mr. Kim, a pharmacist, feels,

It is good to live in America. I do not have to pay attention to politics carefully, and I feel free. I have little interest in politics here. Unlike Korea, unless you do something wrong, they do not bother or examine you. For instance, in Korea when I was running a drug store, the police always asked for money. But I think that in Korea I knew only of the good aspects of America; that it would be a paradise, and one can make money so easily. Now I have lived here over ten years. From my experience, I feel a kind of discrimination as a minority, visibly or invisibly.

James, a Certified Public Accountant, said, "It is hard to compare. In Korea, America is thought to be a country of freedom, which could be seen in American movies. To a great extent, America is only seen as good by Koreans in Korea. I no longer see it this way."

The Korean American Dream and Migration

The characterization of the phenomenon of migration in 1889 by Ravenstein, in his Seventh Law of migration, well describes the Korean immigration to the United States today.

Bad or oppressive laws, heavy taxation, an unattractive climate, uncongenial social surroundings, and even compulsion ... all have produced and are still producing currents of migration, but none of these currents can compare in volume with that which arises from the desire inherent in most men to 'better' themselves in material respects (Ravenstein: 1889).

Kim (1981:9-10) has outlined the specific 'push' and 'pull' factors accounting for current Korean migration to the United States. He identified, first, such demographic factors within South Korea as population growth, internal migration, urbanization, industrialization, and the changing occupational structure of the South Korean economy. He also discussed South Korea's internal politics and its international relations, pointing out that the threat of war with North Korea reinforces the desire of South Koreans to emigrate. More specifically, Kim examined "overurbanization" and the decline of traditional sources of income produced by the economic, labor, and education

policies of the Park Chung Hui regime which ruled South Korea from 1961 to 1979.

In addition, Kim explored the economic influence of the United States as a factor in 'pushing' emigrants out of South Korea. In the early 1950s, for example, overproduction of grain in the United States, and its free distribution to South Korea, contributed to a drop in South Korean grain prices, depopulation of rural areas, increased urbanization, and, eventually, to emigration. He also discusses the "Americanization" of South Korea in the form its cultural and economic dominance took after World War II, especially during and after the Korean War (1950-1953). In the decades since then, the development of South Korean export industries have been weighted heavily to the United States market, thus strengthening the linkages between the two nations.

Korean immigration to America is unlike that of turn-of-the-century European immigration in that most Korean immigrants are of middle and upper class origin, and highly educated, as is also true of recent immigrants from other Asian countries. They come not because they could not survive in their home country, but because they desire the better economic well-being that they dream about in America (Kim 1981: 96-98). This particularly marks those "early wave" new Korean immigrants (those arriving between 1965 and 1976). "Later wave" new immigrants, from 1976 till the present, have other reasons to immigrate as well.

While it is certain that early wave Korean new immigrants sought better economic well-being, and were not satisfied with middle-class life in Korea, they also were motivated by particular dream of making the fortunes they believed were possible in America. Similar attitudes flourish in Korea even more strongly today, as the volume of migration, and Korea-United States communication, feeds a cultural colonialism from America.

Several informants told me stories similar to this one: "Without my deep thought, I was just eager to go to America. I was told again and again that America is a wonderful and beautiful country, full of gold, indeed paradise in this world. In a word, I had the American fever (migukpyong)." Both this "fever" about America, and class position and resources in Korea, motivated Korean middle and upper class members to migrate to America.

Korean "fever" about America is more than interest in American culture. Neither the American-influenced cultural colonialism--rooted in American political, economic, and military involvement in the Korean peninsula--nor the "fever" it has produced have been seriously studied. Yet, migukpyong, "the American fever," is a cultural reality, discussed and articulated by Korean immigrants.

What about the later wave of new immigrants? They had even greater problems of economic survival by the late 1970s and 1980s than did the "early wave" immigrants.

Their prospects as workers in companies and factories in Korea offered little opportunity to a middle class level of existence. The "later wave" informants told me, "If we had remained in Korea, it would be impossible for us to educate our children. However, here we can afford to give our kids piano or violin lessons. So for that, we are very grateful, owing to immigration to the United States."

As the Korean economy changed, it became difficult for some Koreans to make a living, and more began to think about emigration. The polarization of success and survival in Korea motivates those in the oppressed classes to realize their aspirations for upward mobility and commodity consumption in America, if that is not possible in Korea.

As I. Kim puts it,

One of the psychological consequences of the booming economy is that consciousness of social mobility has been much intensified even among those unsuccessful in achieving a higher status. This mobility consciousness stimulates the inclinations of mobility-oriented Koreans to emigrate to the United States, where better economic opportunities are expected (1981:96).

But even beyond considerations of political freedom and economic well-being, other self-evaluations of prospective migrants are important in understanding personal motivations for emigration. The total judgment of

one's own self situation is the basis for each person's consideration of migration. The question becomes: how is this evaluation process structured? First, many, in Korea rely on Korean and American mass media, and this exposure provides one basis of information from which people evaluate their own life situations. Koreans have been well exposed to American life and the mass media (including the American Forces in Korean Network) since the Korean War in 1950 (Min 1990:188).

Second, today one finds few Korean families without at least one emigrant relative in America. This makes available evaluations and information about American life through networks of kin or friends. These contacts bring not only news, but also judgments and perceptions to Korea, and in some cases, operate actively to recruit Korean immigrants. These evaluations and perceptions help shape understandings about what is possible in America. Mr. Lee's decision to emigrate, for instance, was influenced by his uncle who had studied in Brazil. Mrs. Lee's family were doing very well in Korea. Her husband was a promising architect. Her family decided to immigrate to Canada and eventually to America, as they were greatly influenced by their friend, a member of the same social club. Now they live nearby the friend in New York City. Mr. Kang was cheated by an immigration broker introduced to him by his uncle, and was led to pay a big sum of money, only to be smuggled, he sadly learned, into America.

It is also striking that the "American fever" and other ideologies of migration seem to differ among immigrant women and men. As they are exposed to the American notion of "ladies first," Korean women dream of America as place where they will be treated much better than in Korea. Some women, like Mrs. Park who now works at a nail salon, perceived America as a place in which women are independent economically. This was the major reason for her agreement with the family decision to immigrate.

Much eagerness by women to immigrate to America is evident in Korea, regardless of educational level. During the 1950s and early 1960s, it was only poor women who socialized with American servicemen and who were likely to immigrate to America as war brides. Yet, by the late 1960s, increasing numbers of Korean women immigrated to America, either as nurses or students. By the 1970s, many other women who were interested in American life were ready to marry Korean men who planned to live in America, no matter who these men were. Even some highly educated women with advanced degrees tried to come to America by marrying emigrant men of lesser education. This overturned the Korean notion that men were allowed to marry women of lesser educational level, but women were supposed to marry only men with equal or greater education.

In the late 1980s, a new situation emerged. As it became known that in America life working at a grocery or garment factory is bitter, and that it was not so easy to make money, some women of middle or upper class families no longer wished to go to America. Their marriage choices were now restricted to men in south Korea.

For men, who find it still difficult to obtain a decent job in Korea, even with college education, the desire to come to America remains strong. And interestingly, as they hear that in America Korean success is tied to small businesses, some even turn to small businesses in Korea. As men give up the hope of being "salary men" in order to be small businessmen, some now remain at home, while others continue to immigrate to America. And as overseas Koreans see their home situation improve both politically and economically, especially following the political reforms in 1987, an increasing number in America consider returning to Korea.

The question of why Koreans immigrate to America is complex. Sometimes, I heard statements that reflected an emphasis on some reasons over others. When they were asked to talk about why they migrated, quite often, those with children mentioned better educational opportunities for their children in America. But, one informant, who works for a Korean driving school in Elmhurst, pointed out,

Many Korean immigrants say that they decided to immigrate to America in order to offer their children a better education. They tell a lie by saying so. They want to justify their emigration to themselves, and to save their face in front of others. In fact, I think that they run away from the home country in order to enjoy better economic well-being. Otherwise, why do they work 24 hours, not even taking care of their children properly? In my opinion, if they think of their children's education as the most important reason for migration, they could send their children abroad later.

In Korea, the "Confucian tradition" values everything related to education, even though formal education was not available beyond elite class in the past. "My children's education" as a motive for migration is more easily justified than "my material success", which was not emphasized in the Korean Confucian tradition. Nonetheless, it is indeed part of the complex of factors motivating many Koreans to immigrate that they perceive better chances for their children in America. They firmly believe in their children's education as a route to social mobility. Statements about migration for the sake of children's education involve at least four considerations: education as a marker of class status; the ability of children to provide care for their elderly parents; a concern for

generational continuity stemming from the tradition of ancestor worship; and the denial of more selfish motivations in leaving Korea for America.

More broadly, the macro-political situation cannot be treated as separated from individual economic motives. The relationship between migration and the Korean political and economic situation is very close. Migratory considerations in this regard are related to class background. If one is from a middle or upper class background, political impediments to mobility can be readily listed; if one is poor, and from a lower class background, economic upward mobility is paramount. Yet for all persons, economic recession is tied to the country's degree of political turmoil.

For instance, one of my informants said that he decided to leave Korea, because his business did not go well. "I used to run a factory in Seoul. Student demonstrations were serious and greatly influenced my employees. How could I run my factory peacefully?" So he declared bankruptcy and emigrated to America. Political and economic motives influence each other.

For many Koreans the idea is powerful that one should stay in Korea if he or she considers the political situation important. From this viewpoint, only if one suffers for one's political activity are "political reasons" a valid excuse for migration. If one merely does

not feel good about Korea's political instability, but one has not been mistreated for political beliefs, one should not justify emigration with "political reasons".

Nevertheless, it is apparent that as a result of political developments in Korea, emigration does increase. For example, in the 1976 "ax-murder incident" at the DMZ (demilitarized zone) in Korea, two American officers were killed, reportedly by North Korean soldiers, following a dispute over trimming tree branches. Immediately after, Kim (1981:34) reports, deep anxiety over another Korean war swept through some elite segments of the population of Seoul. The impact of such political incidents occurs over a long term. This incident had little effect on emigration in 1976, but in subsequent years, the numbers of those seeking to leave increased.

Few informants specify clear political reasons for immigration. However, their comparison and evaluation of life in Korea and America includes such considerations, intermixed with those others we have examined. While Koreans often talked about how badly they felt about dictatorship and political instability in Korea, they rarely mention it as their primary reason for immigration.

The Korean American Dream and Migration: Immigrant Voices

In sum, as can be seen in Table 3, only 3 percent of my informants mentioned political motives. Some 48 percent mentioned economic reasons including securing resources for their children's education; 38 percent mentioned familial or kinship considerations; and 11 percent mentioned sociocultural reasons, some overtly referring to "American fever." Economic reasons for migration are those most readily offered. They include three subcategories: for those of lower-class origin, migration is for survival; for most middle and upper class immigrants, migration is for better earnings and economic well-being; for some others, those who are bankrupt or fired in mid-career migration to America offers a new beginning.

In the following cases, I will illustrate each of these sets of circumstances. An early wave immigrant who came before 1976, Mr. Kye, came to learn about new medical technology. Mr. Kye ran a drug store before he left Korea. As a pharmacist he immigrated to America in 1974 under occupational preference.

I had made up my mind to learn new technological developments in America and return to Korea. However, now I feel hopeless about medical technology. That's because, in my opinion, it is monopolized by America and there is a rigid division of labor internationally. All we can do is to study, endlessly but never catch up. Perhaps we can achieve our own

momentum in the newly developing disciplines, like computer science. [In the mid-1980s, Mr. Kye returned to Korea.]

Mrs. Sim is another early wave immigrant. Although she also expressed concern about children's education, poverty was the main impetus for immigration, and she came here through occupational preference. Mrs. Sim's family followed her husband's employer from Korea to America. Before leaving Korea, the employer operated a hotel where Mr. Sim worked for ten years as a chef specializing in French food. In 1962, it was fairly easy to migrate, it took only three months to go through the formalities for departure. She asked herself,

Will it be better to live in America than in Korea at least? Because we were poor in Korea, we doubted whether we could educate our five kids well in Korea. I was right in that here we found we could educate three children up to college, working together. My husband has worked for twenty-two years as a chef at the oldest Korean restaurant in New York, Arirang House. Now all of our children own cars. We also helped three sons set up their own businesses already.

The next case illustrates how some Koreans continue to be faithful to the migratory goal of their children's education. Mr. Kim also has been in America for twenty-two years.

I thought of my children's education when I headed for America. If possible, I wanted to return with big money too. However, now I have changed my mind. I will return no matter whether I have money or not. I now realize that if I worked as hard as I did here, even in Korea I would be certain of a good life. I came here only for my children's education. My youngest child is soon going to graduate from college, and I plan to return then to Korea.

Most typically Korean immigrants express a combination of reasons--opportunity for children's education, self-improvement, and higher a living standard. Mrs. Choi, a grocery owner, said,

My husband and I decided to immigrate to America in order to live better and to give a better education to our children. As I had been a nurse for sixteen years, I could appeal on the basis of occupational preference. Still we had to wait for eight months.

Mrs. Park came to America in 1984. Her daughter, who immigrated as a nurse but no longer works as one, invited Mrs. Park and her family to join her. "I thought of educating my youngest son here and of making a fortune in America. That's because I heard that in America it is easy to make a fortune, and that all legitimate trades are equally honorable."

Many people came through familial ties, the importance of which is second only to economic reasons. In order to understand this, it is necessary to understand Korean kinship. Korean culture puts much emphasis on family bonds. For example, if the household head decides to migrate, each family member is supposed to follow, no matter how old they are, and especially if they are unmarried. This effects persons at each stage in the life cycle. Some in their 20s or 30s immediately follow the decision of the householder, not wanting to be left in the country by themselves. Others, including older parents and young children, join adult relatives later, through family reunion. A few also migrate because of a family dispute in Korea.

Mr. Pi used to work as a general manager for a company producing electronic accessories in Seoul. He came to America in 1977.

Since all of my brothers and sisters decided to go to America, I simply joined. First, my younger brother, after having quarrels with his company, got employment in Germany as a miner. Later, he married a Korean nurse in Canada, and they went to America. In total, six more brothers and sisters have come to New York directly. Even my parents had come, but they have since passed away.

Mr. Won runs a garment factory. He and his family were invited by his eldest sister, who first came here as a student, and stayed. He said. "Almost all of my family was in America, so we had to join them, on the one hand. On the other hand, we hoped for economic success too."

Mr. Han, a worker at a green grocery, was sponsored by his parents, who had in turn been invited by his older sister, married to an American mechanic. I asked why she married an American. He said that she did so because of poverty in his family. As for himself, he stated. "I did not want to come, because I wanted to finish school and military service. However, it was inevitable, as the whole family was migrating to America".

Mr. Zion is 81 years old. He immigrated to America in order to join his only son, a minister. His daughter-in-law used to be a nurse. He said, "I used to run a big real estate agency in Korea, I had to sell it to come here, which I regret."

Mr. Min and his family members were invited by his second sister, married to an American. Now he works at a general merchandise store. When I asked why he thought of immigration, he related the following story.

After going broke, my father and the family relied on my eldest brother, who was rich enough to support us all. But after my marriage, my eldest brother changed his attitude, pushed to do so by his wife. Although

the family tried to put up with her bad treatment, it was too painful. Therefore, they thought of becoming independent of my brother. At first, when my sister suggested it, my parents were not willing to go to America. To tell you the truth, my eldest brother was a stepbrother to my brother and me. After his mother's death, my father had remarried. My eldest brother contributed only \$4,000 for all four family members to come here, and it was difficult for us to complete the arrangements for our departure.

Mr. Sung runs a sewing machine store in Jackson Heights, assisted by his wife. According to him, in Korea his wife was in favor of emigration, but he did not want to leave. He said that the reason his wife wanted to leave was that she had problems with his family, in particular with his mother.

Doctor Park had a political motive for emigration, although he came to the United States through occupational preference as a medical doctor. At first Dr. Park came on an A-2 visa to enter a training program. After six years, he decided to become a permanent resident. After another five years, he became an American citizen. When I asked why he decided to immigrate, he said, "Well, it seemed to me to be dirty and money-grubbing to be a medical practitioner in Korea. I didn't like it at all. In addition, because of my hatred of the Korean dictatorship, I made up my mind to leave."

Fascination with America, and curiosity about this new world were offered as reasons to leave Korea by some now in New York. Mr. Choi runs a chess parlor in Elmhurst and sells Korean herbs.

In Korea I had an American foster-father whom I knew since I was twelve years old. Because of my foster father's influence, I did not care for Korean food, which is very hot and spicy. I was very close to my American foster-father, learning English and much about American culture from him. My foster-father was an American colonel in Korea, and later died in Texas.

Mr. Chun, now a fish-market owner, came to America through the occupational preference as a welder. But, he said,

Since my childhood, I dreamed about going abroad. As I started to learn English, I became curious about English-speaking people. Once I came here, I realized that what I had learned in Korea was useless, because it was so different in every sense. I applied to immigrate in 1972, and then started to learn the special skills of a welder at a factory, without pay, for eight months.

Mr. and Mrs. Park are both pharmacists. They came to America in 1977. She said that it was her husband who wanted to immigrate. According to her, he said,

We have been in Korea around thirty years, why don't we try to go to a new world, with great ambition, and with a frontier spirit? We both thought that Korea is small, and we are not very crazy about Korean food. We would suffer less than others from going abroad since my husband has been in Katusa (Koreans Attached To the United States Army), and he is familiar with Western food to some extent. However, I opposed his desire for immigration as I heard that life in America is tough and bitter. But I was curious about America, to be honest with you. After we petitioned, we hesitated for six months. But after getting a visa, in one month we decided to leave, using the category of occupational preference.

Others, especially professionals such as doctors and ministers, express both the desire to learn more, and a curiosity about America.

Doctor Lee came to America primarily to popularize Korean medicine. He also thought he might educate his children better than in Korea. Doctor Choi hoped for intellectual growth in a new environment, and she applied for immigration. She now is proud of her creative writings in English, which reflects her American experience.

Reverend Ha was serving the Air Force in Korea when he was invited by Reverend Kim at Yongnak Church in Los Angeles. He had dreamed about studying in the United States for a long time, and was happy to accept.

It is likely that the changing political and economic situation in Korea will continue to spur migration for some time to come. And regardless of positive developments in Korea, or negative changes in American immigration law, affecting Korea and other Asian Third World countries, it is certain that many Koreans will come to America for family reunion, which indeed is the principal way to immigrate to America at present.

However, nobody knows where new Korean emigrants will go if the American economy enters a recession, or worse. In the past they have followed the flow of capital and labor to the Middle East and Vietnam, as well as Germany, Canada, South America, and the United States. Considerations of events in Korea by potential Korean emigrants will matter as well. After the political reforms of 1987, and the 1988 Olympics in Seoul, many overseas Koreans noticed new economic growth and political liberalization in Korea, and thought about returning home [1]. This was particularly true of middle or upper class Korean immigrants. In addition, the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act in the United States forced some Koreans who could not regularize their immigration status to return to Korea. They were now unable to find employment in the United States under the "employer sanctions" provision of this legislation.

Korean Evaluation of Migration

The rest of this dissertation analyzes how Korean immigrants in Queens come to terms with their Korean American Dream. In preview, I will conclude this chapter with a few glimpses of how these new immigrants feel about their life in America. Some told me that it is better for them to earn money here and send it home than to live in Korea, where poor resources and overpopulation are problems. Others like Mr. Yu, a grocery worker, admitted to making a wrong decision in coming to America.

Before coming to the United States, I thought that there is nothing more important than money. That's why I came here. But as I have lived in America, I learned the important lesson that money isn't everything. Now I miss my family, which is more important than making money. Here life is indeed miserable. Can you call this is a decent life for a human being? I work as a cashier at a vegetable stand from 8:00 P.M. to 8:00 A.M., a dangerous and tough job. During the daytime I have difficulty falling asleep. Everyday is the same. I send all my money to my wife and two kids in Korea, except the money I need for transportation. I have never eaten in a restaurant. I eat simple meals at the store. Koreans shouldn't come here like me, being smuggled into this country. If they do, they will live a life of fear of

being deported. What is good about this life? If you work as hard as you do here, even in Korea you can succeed.

As there now has been a continuous stream of immigrants from Korea for more than twenty years, there has been considerable reflection by many Koreans on their immigration to the United States. Many believed and were influenced by what the early wave said about America. Mr. Un is an example. He came to America by fifth preference, invited by his sister in Kentucky. He came because people told him that America is wonderful, and because in Korea the imported American goods that appealed to him were very expensive, he said.

Some, while still in Korea, corrected their popular image of the Koreans' good life in America as they heard more from emigrant family members. Although America was still extolled by many, Ms. Sung rather trusted what her mother said.

In Korea, America is said to be a much better country than Korea. But, after hearing about my mother's experience in America, I tried to prepare for the hardships there. Nonetheless, I thought it would be good for me to experience the new world. I learned, it is indeed not easy to live in America. Unless you inherit money from your parents, you come here with empty hands, and will have to work hard.

Many of the early wave, now old-timers, have strong opinions about the later-wave Korean immigrants. Some resent later-wave immigrant capitalists, who succeed in America without the efforts they themselves made. To Mr. Kang, it should be the poor, not the rich, who immigrate to America. He approves of Korean laborer, agricultural worker, or poor farmer immigrants, who will work very hard and, if they succeed, see America as paradise. But he notes that those who can come here now are not from those strata. He does not understand the persons who come here with sums as great as \$400,000. They are liable to lose their money, because without proper knowledge of America and its laws, it is extremely difficult to succeed here. He guesses that such wealthy people came here because of the unstable political situation in a divided Korea, and their anti-government feelings.

Some early wave immigrants are now critical of themselves and their compatriots. Mrs. Li thinks that many Korean immigrants forget why they came to America--for their children's education--and neglect their American-raised offspring. She, a dry cleaner, worries that the second generation is contaminated by the negative aspects of American culture, like individualism and pleasure-seeking. With no leisure time spent together by Korean immigrant families, if a family does not go to church together, it becomes difficult to communicate with children, she said.

Koreans come here with their American dream. They dream that one will be rewarded as hard as one works. This dream includes elements of opportunity, freedom, and equality, stressed differently by men and women, and by different age groups. The dream is underpinned by many different personal motivations for migration: political and economic reasons, family considerations, sociocultural reasons, and "American fever." Most immigrants also state concerns for their children's education as a motivation for migration. With this introduction to the Korean American dream, in the following chapters, we will see how these immigrants seek to realize it in their daily experience in New York City.

Notes

- [1] According to the Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in 1989 there were 6,176 overseas Koreans who had returned permanently to Korea, a 44.5 percent increase over the previous year (Korea Times 1/4/90). The situation for some of these returnees has been described as "reverse brain drain," in which South Korea's surging economy and liberalized political environment have been encouraging thousands of expatriates, many of them academic scientists, to come home (The Chronicle of Higher Education 11/15/1989).

Chapter 3

The Gravitation to Small Business

Korean immigrants are distributed in the United States labor force differently from the mainstream of Americans. Relatively few Koreans are waged or salaried employees in large organizations. To a greater degree even than other new immigrants, Koreans have gravitated to independent small businesses. This circumstance sets them apart from the majority of American workers.

The Korean concentration in retail and service businesses, and the proportion of Korean families in such business, appears to have increased over the past two decades. A 1973 Los Angeles survey found 25 percent of Korean families in small business (Bonacich, Light, & Wong 1976). Later surveys in metropolitan New York and Atlanta (I. Kim 1981; Min 1983) found 34% of Korean families engaged in small business. In marked contrast, only 7 percent of the general United States working population is self-employed. Even lower percentages of African Americans (2.4 percent) and Hispanic Americans (3.8 percent) operate small businesses (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1983:72, 99, 119).

There is widespread public recognition inside and outside the Korean American community of this concentration by Korean Americans in small business. Much media

attention has been devoted to this phenomenon--from television documentaries, to newspaper feature stories (e.g. 'Koreans living in the City; Growing force in business,' New York Newsday 10/2/1988; 'Korean Grocers,' Daily News, 1/11/1989) to the 1989 film 'Do the Right Thing.' In a recent Queens neighborhood newspaper letter-to-the-editor, Koreans were invited by a white local resident to take over a family-owned Italian delicatessen. They were portrayed as the only people who could now operate such businesses. "For some reason it closed, reportedly and understandably because the children did not want to put in the long hours their parents did. I have a message for the Korean community--Please, please open an Italian deli in Woodside! I won't put in the long hours to do it. But you will." (The Woodsider, June 1987)

In my research, I purposefully sought to include workers, business proprietors, and professionals. The professionals were 17 percent of my 109 informants. It turned out that 37 percent were workers. The small business proprietor group amounted to 36 percent. Min in his 1982 survey found that majority of Korean businesses in Atlanta have assets of less than \$100,000. Only about 10 percent of the stores have 10 or more workers. The typical Korean business is a small family business which is run by two adults (usually husband and wife) with no employees (1988:50-51). This description can be applied to small businesses run by my informants, except garment factories.

Occupational Categories

worker 40

business proprietor 39

professional 19

others 11

N= 109

Workers (N=40)

in Korean workplaces

green grocery: 13

garment factory: 8

office worker: 5

grocery & supermarket: 4

coffeeshop: 1

construction worker: 2

general merchandise store: 1

wholesaler: 1

giftshop: 1

baby-sitter: 1

cab driver: 1

in other workplaces

factory: 1

restaurant: 1

Business Proprietors (N=39)

grocery and supermarket: 6
green grocery: 5
fish market: 4
dry cleaner: 3
garment factory: 3
restaurant: 3
wholesaler: 2
beauty salon: 2
handicraft and Korean dress salon: 2
meat market: 1
fashion store: 1
stationary: 1
hardware store: 1
sewing machine store: 1
chess parlor: 1
travel service: 1
realty office: 1
automobile bodyshop: 1

Professional (N=19)

medical doctor (including Korean medicine): 4
pharmacist: 4
accountant and CPA: 3
medical and dental technician: 2
minister and youth minister: 2

real-estate broker: 2

nurse: 1

engineer: 1

My panel of informants is probably more heavily weighted to small business than the overall Korean population, but it is certainly a representation of this economic center of gravity in the Korean community. It is no exaggeration to say that "at least 70% of Koreans in New York City are involved in small business, either as employers or employees, and their family members, if we figure the total number who depend upon the 9,500 Korean businesses in New York City (S. Kim 1986:66)." And like these small retail or service businessmen, some Korean professionals are independent practitioners serving the Korean immigrant community. Relatively few such professionals work for American-owned companies. Even the many ministers in the 400 New York area Korean Protestant churches depend on small business owners and workers, as we shall see in Chapter 10.

Why Koreans Enter Small Business

There is really nothing surprising about the kind of businesses in which Koreans seek to realize their American dream. They are the businesses immigrants in America have operated for 100 years--labor-intensive produce stands, convenience stores, and garment factories (Light & Bonacich

1988:8). Scholars have viewed the movement of new immigrant groups into such businesses in terms of a theory of "ethnic succession". "If the supply of native owners is leaking out of a small business industry, then immigrants may take up ownership activities in response to a replacement demand" (Waldinger 1986:30). As I. Kim (1981:111) explains,

Korean immigrants [in New York City] are able to buy shops from white minority shopkeepers, especially Jews, because the second-or third-generation children of these older immigrants have already entered the mainstream of the American occupational structure, and so they are reluctant to take over their parents' business.

Next, we need to ask why it is Koreans, more than other ethnic groups, who are buying these businesses. Since the late 1960s, as Koreans entered the United States, so did other immigrants, such as Chinese, Filipinos, Indians, and many Latin American and Caribbean groups. Some immigrants--Indians, Filipinos, and Caribbeans especially--were better equipped in terms of English language skills, and found jobs as workers in public and private American-run organizations and firms. But immigrants other than Koreans were also able to run labor-intensive businesses, and many did. All of these groups, however, show a much greater concentration than

Koreans of small businesses serving those within their own immigrant ethnic community. In New York City, "large immigrant concentrations have spawned small businesses that serve the needs of new arrivals, ranging from Soviet-style restaurants and pastry shops along Brighton Beach Avenue and Haitian and Jamaican bakeries and groceries in East Flatbush, to Korean beauty and barber shops in Flushing" (Foner 1987:7). Unlike these other examples, the Korean ones do not serve Koreans exclusively. To a greater extent than any other group, Koreans have opened businesses in mainly white and mainly black neighborhoods, as well as in the multi-ethnic neighborhoods like those I studied in Queens.

Bonacich has pointed out (1972; 1973) that Koreans have entered the businesses that white Americans were no longer interested in, and which African Americans do not enter in substantial numbers. In New York today, Koreans will be found doing business regardless of the ethnic or racial composition of the community. Korean dry cleaners or grocery store owners, for example, seek locations in any residential community; a Korean coffeeshop, or delicatessen operator looks for a good business district, full of office workers.

Koreans who do business in a low-income black neighborhood such as Harlem are usually at the beginning stage of a business developmental cycle in which they hope

to later move into an economically more diverse neighborhood, where higher rents require more accumulated capital. Many, I found, describe the ideal business location as an ethnically-diverse community, such as one half Latin American and half black (See Chapter 8).

Min & Jaret (1985) have linked Korean immigrant small business success in Atlanta, a predominantly black city, to hard work and frugality, and to the cooperative efforts of family members. They did not find Korean business success dependent upon contacts with large American corporations, or based upon any particular Korean ethnic characteristics or ethnic solidarity. Light & Bonacich (1988:18-19), however, in a synthesis of previous studies, attributed Korean success in small business to "class resources" and "ethnic resources". In terms of class resources, they pointed out that Koreans were highly educated in their country of origin, often arrive in the United States well-endowed with money, and are of middle or upper middle class origins.

In terms of particular ethnic resources, they stress that Koreans pass on business information among themselves; work long hours; mobilize unpaid family labor; maintain patterns of nepotism and employer paternalism; worship a Calvinist deity; utilize alumni, family, and congregational solidarities; think of themselves as sojourners; express satisfaction with what others see as poorly-remunerated

work; and utilize rotating credit associations to finance their business. Several of these "ethnic resources" no doubt characterize other Asian, Latin American, and Caribbean entrepreneurs in New York City, but their scope and force are certainly pervasive among Koreans.

Still, the New York City Korean concentration in labor-intensive small business also involves an element of coincidence in that many European immigrant small business proprietors were aging and retiring at the time Koreans arrived in substantial numbers. What Koreans were able to bring to the stage of "ethnic succession" were an ample supply of labor to run labor-intensive small businesses; moderate sums of capital to open such businesses; and a simple command of English adequate for these businesses.

Although many immigrants previously held white-collar jobs in Korea, in New York their education was of little use. Their certificates are unrecognized. Their unfamiliarity with English made it difficult to obtain jobs comparable to those they had in Korea. But the earliest Korean businesses, such as vegetable stands and sewing factories, would hire other Koreans, who sooner or later hoped to open their own businesses, once they gained a base of experience and capital.

Another factor is the changing regional economy of New York in which many factory jobs disappeared at the same time that Korean immigrants arrived; "a 30 percent overall

decline in manufacturing jobs (1969-77), with a significant expansion in certain manufacturing branches; increased poverty, unemployment, and deterioration of several areas of the city, along with a boom in gentrification and an associated high consumption capacity for real estate and the services sector" (Sassen-Koob 1981:16-17). Most jobs in the expanding service sector are, in fact, low-paid, short-tenure jobs, including jobs in domestic service. Many of these have been "filled by women and youths from minority groups" (Tabb 1982:79). In addition, as one of my informants at a Korean vegetable stand in Jackson Heights, who had worked at an American factory in Boston, pointed out, Koreans resent the low wages and racial discrimination they encounter working with and for Americans. They also dislike the formal and superficial work relationships with American colleagues. They contrast these with those in Korea, or at Korean-run workplaces in America.

An Ethnic Enclave Economy?

In establishing their place in the labor market, immigrants may form what Portes & Bach call (1985) "ethnic enclaves," where a group's culture, identity, and internal solidarity are preserved. For such an enclave to emerge, there must be substantial numbers of immigrants of the ethnic group, sufficient sources of capital, and an available supply of

ethnic group labor. Portes & Bach cite the Koreans of Los Angeles and the Cubans of Miami as examples of established ethnic enclaves. In such enclaves, newly arrived immigrants can survive with little knowledge of the host culture and language. If such a situation marked the New York Korean community by the 1980s, in terms of relationships with both non-Korean distributors and customers, many Korean small businesses had one foot in and one foot out of their ethnic enclave.

Korean small businesses are independently owned but they are dependent on non-Korean as well as Korean suppliers, workers, and customers. Except for a few Korean grocery stores and restaurants, most Korean businessmen have customers who are not Korean. And before the Immigration Reform and Control Act in 1986, Korean businessmen hired both non-Korean and Korean workers.

Bonacich (1979; 1988) has argued that immigrant small businesses find their niches within American corporate capitalism. Either the profit-motivated marketing strategies of large corporations leave gaps in the economy, which Korean immigrants conveniently and efficiently fill, or American monopoly capitalism utilizes Korean immigrants as middlemen to distribute corporate products cheaply to less affluent customers. In Bonacich's view, Korean small business is not even business per se, but "a form of utilization of cheap immigrant labor by American capitalism."

It may not be necessary to go this far. A few kinds of Korean businesses, such as import-export trades with Korea, or even nail salons, do show more or less autonomous development. Nonetheless, it is somewhere between either a totally separate ethnic enclave economy, or a totally dependent middleman minority, that the day-to-day terrain of most Korean small business in fact lies.

Korean sewing factories depend for orders on outside contractors or jobbers, who are in turn dependent on manufacturers, through chains of subcontracts. Waldinger reports

For today's prospective immigrant garment entrepreneurs, the survival of the contracting arrangement is decisive in influencing them to enter the garment business. Because manufacturers purchase the raw materials and engage in the required interactions with designers, merchandisers, and suppliers, prospective entrepreneurs need only two essentials to set up their own businesses: skills that one can pick up as a worker in a shop and connections to a reliable source of family or ethnic labor (1990:166).

In the case of retail businesses, they are supplied by wholesalers, who may be supplied by other wholesalers, importers, or direct producers. In the service sector, dry cleaners, for example, are dependent on outside firms to

differing extents. Some are just drop stores, totally dependent on outside cleaning agencies; others are self-sufficient enough to handle all cleaning tasks themselves.

These are each highly competitive markets, in which Koreans and many other old and new immigrant ethnic groups encounter each other, and Korean entrepreneurs have been slowly moving to higher levels in each industry. The following diagrams show the basic business structure of these Korean small businesses. They all extend outside the Korean American community.

Characteristics of Korean Business

Most Korean businesses are quite small. In 1972, the United States Census Bureau found that only 21 percent had any paid employees, and for these the average number of employees was six. In Elmhurst, the majority of small businesses, except garment factories run by Koreans, have less than 10 employees. Most Korean small businesses are leased establishments. In Elmhurst in 1986 only 9 percent of the 105 Korean store locations were owned, and in neighboring Corona only 5 percent of the 20 Korean stores were owned. In contrast, for the longer-established Italian American businesses in Elmhurst, ownership of location was 25 percent, and in Corona, 47 percent. (Yuan 1986:9, 25). Korean businesses are also young. As of

Garment industry and Korean sewing factory

marketing -- manufacturer -- designer

|

jobber

|

trucking companies

|

Korean subcontractor

(garment factory owner)

|

manager

- broker

/

/

\

|

Merrow	Singer	odd jobber (such as pressing	home
(skilled	(unskilled	and packing)	work
worker)	worker)		

Fruit and vegetable business and the Korean green-grocery

farm

|

marketing system

|

wholesalers at Hunts Point Market, the Bronx

|

|

Korean green-grocer

(with help of Korean buyer, deliver or driver)

/

manager

/

/

\

\

\

worker

worker

cashier

worker

worker

in charge in charge

for salad bar

for flower

of fruit of vegetable

|

|

customer

Dry-cleaning business and the Korean Dry-cleaner

specialized cleaning company or Korean dry-cleaner

|

Korean drop-store

|

customer

|

customer

1986, the oldest Korean business in Elmhurst is only 10 years old. On the contrary, the oldest American business in Elmhurst was 65 years (Yuan 1986:7).

In New York City, Koreans now tend to dominate several of the retail business lines in which they are active. As of 1989, there are 1400 Korean vegetable stands out of 1500 in New York City (Korean Retailers Produce Association's calculation; see Daily News 1/22/1989). In the dry cleaning business, Koreans run 2000 of a total of 3000 stores. Both Korean fish stores and sewing factories in 1987 numbered between 500 and 600 nearly half of all stores in these categories.

By 1986 that there were so many nail salons run by Koreans in New York City that competition had become fierce (New York Times 2/21/1986). In 1989, Mr. and Mrs. Kwak, who run a nail salon in Westchester County, told me that they estimated some 1500 nail salons run by Koreans in the tri-state area. There are several reasons for this nail salon boom. Unlike for barbers or hair dressers, New York State does not require licenses for manicurists. Anyone who knows how to give a manicure can open a nail salon. The start-up capital for this business is relatively low, about \$20,000. It takes six months for Korean women to become skilled, after which time many open their own businesses.

Korean small business men and women often work more than twelve hours daily, and six or seven days a week. In Light and Bonacich's Los Angeles study, the average Korean business family worked 9.1 hours more each week than did the average non-Korean business family. In all, Korean business families contributed 23 percent more labor time to their family firm than did American business families (1988:173).

Light and Bonacich document that for both the United States and in Los Angeles, mean receipts of Korean-owned firms fell short of means receipts for all firms (1988:165). They also found that employees of Korean firms earned 48 percent of what employees of American firms earned. However, the smallest wage discrepancy between Koreans and Americans occurred in retail and service industries. Here employees of Korean firms earned 81 percent of the general wage rate for their industry (1988:170).

According to an August 1987 survey by the Korean American Small Business Service Center of New York, 85 percent of Korean small business proprietors keep their stores open more than 10 hours per day. Some 70 percent use family labor; 73 percent suffer from insufficient operating fund; 55 percent have problems of competition with other nearby Korean stores; and 57 percent acknowledge problems with their employees. For 94 percent, efforts to increase profits are made through improved service, as they

can not afford either capital investment in their businesses, or to hire additional staff (Korean American Small Business Service Center of New York News Letter 8/15/1987).

Even so, elements of the Korean entrepreneurial story vindicate this Horatio Alger route to their American dream. Starting a business in Los Angeles permitted the Korean immigrant on average to increase his income by 82 percent (Light & Bonacich 1988:176). Obviously, such favorable returns have encouraged Korean entrepreneurship elsewhere, too, including New York City (Light 1984; Min 1984:344; Young 1983).

Green grocers

The Korean fruit stands started popping up about fifteen years ago [in the mid-1970s]. They arrived just in time. Earlier groups of immigrants were abandoning the trade, and it was an open question as to whether New Yorkers would be condemned to wandering in all-night supermarkets in neighborhoods of dubious virtue. Single people trembled. Then, like the Seventh Cavalry, like a cool breeze, like a check in the mail, the Koreans arrived, opening their impeccable emporia all over town. It was the greatest event in the lives of single people since the invention of the VCR (New York Times, October, 1989).

While Koreans in New York are perhaps best known as green grocers, this is only one of many different types of business in which they are involved, amounting to 9,500 businesses in all (S. Kim 1986:66).

Young (1983:60) described the daily schedule of a Korean greengrocer:

4 a.m. to 6 a.m. - shop for produce at Hunts
Point market

6:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.- prepare for day's sales
(clean, trim, stack, and
arrange produce)

8:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.- open for business
clean up,
store unsold produce

In Queens, I found that there are in fact two kinds of daily schedule, depending on when one goes to the Hunts Point produce market. Some go to shop at midnight, while others who are better established, go early in the morning, like Young's typical proprietor.

Mr. Suh has a vegetable stand on Grand Avenue in Elmhurst. As he explained, around 1 or 2 a.m. he goes to the market to shop. He opens his store around 8 a.m., and starts arranging his fruits and vegetables as attractively as he can. He works making sales until his wife takes her turn, after preparing his lunch. He then goes home to eat, and sleeps for five or six hours. He said, "If I hire anybody to deliver goods or work as a cashier instead of

myself, I will have little profit, and the business cannot run well." He feels that the proper selection of inexpensive but good quality produce is a complicated task he can not assign to anyone else.

Many green grocers have earlier worked for other green grocers, and then later opened their own store. Young (1983) found that owners generally agreed that a person should work in a green grocery for at least six months in order to learn the business before opening a store. For Mr. Ryu, who lives in Elmhurst and operates a vegetable stand in Jackson Heights, the apprenticeship took six years. Over that time, not only did he work in a green grocery, but his wife also worked there as a cashier, in a business which they eventually bought out.

Korean small business owners develop different strategies to cater to customers in different neighborhoods. In Manhattan, often an owner employs a manager to take care of the store, which is open for up to 24 hours. Manhattan green grocers hire more workers, including managers, than those in Queens. In 24-hour stores, typically there are a manager and other workers employed during the daytime, and a manager who doubles as cashier, and one other worker to take care of fruit and vegetables, at night. In Queens, a green grocer often goes to market and manages the store by himself.

In Manhattan the smaller space, due to higher commercial rents, requires more intensive use than in Queens. Wages are also higher in Manhattan. In both places, preparation includes cutting, wrapping, and packing. A Manhattan store often includes a self-service salad bar, with hot dishes, to satisfy health-conscious New Yorkers looking for quick, convenient meals. Green grocers also try to provide different food items to suit the tastes of various neighborhoods.

In the Reagan years, a reorganization of green grocer business strategies emerged. This was a response to Korean-Korean competition, increasing commercial rents, reduced consumer purchasing power resulting from federal cutbacks in food stamps, and economic recession. Greengrocers began to sell flowers and additional grocery items, to establish salad bars, and to rent video tapes.

There was also a growing number of partnerships and new business corporations in the retail produce trade (Young 1983:70). Two organizations were reported to own chains of stores. A few Koreans even entered into the wholesale produce business. This business is more complex, and required, as of 1983, at least \$1.5 million in start-up capital. Koreans still do not have direct access to the produce marketing system and to farms, which, Korean green-grocers say, continue to be dominated by Jewish Americans.

While green grocers enjoy a quick cash return on their work, they must contend with the frustration of substantial downward mobility. Some lament, "All that we do is deal with rotten tomatoes." Moreover, these small businessmen feel that as an ethnic minority, city government officials take advantage of them, with inappropriate fines and citations. On the other hand, unlike professionals working in the mainstream white American society, they are aware of the marginal economy of small business, and the multi-ethnic society of New York City. For those who are most successful, difficulties center on expansion or reinvestment decisions.

Dry cleaners

In the early years of the new Korean immigration, the dry cleaning business was not popular among Koreans. It required more capital than green grocery or seafood stores. Korean small business investors were slow to become involved with this business. But in the late 1970s, Koreans who had accumulated savings from more labor-intensive operations began to purchase dry cleaning businesses from owners of other ethnic groups. Post-1978 Korean immigrants who were able to bring capital from Korea also did so.

Unlike in green grocery or seafood stores, dry cleaning workers are usually not Koreans, due to their lack of skill in dry cleaning operations. By the late 1980s,

however, more Koreans have become familiar with dry cleaning jobs as a result of growing Korean ownership, now about 50 percent of the New York City market.

This business is called a "clean" (kkakkuthan) business. It is seen as not difficult to run, and profitable. Moreover, one does not have to work long hours, or work Sundays. These days, Koreans also often run shoe-repair shops, which are more labor-intensive than dry cleaning. Some of these repair businesses are actually operated as part of a dry cleaning establishment; others are run in their own stores. The Korean Dry cleaners' Association estimates there are as many as 400 Korean shoe-repair shops in New York.

My informant, Mr. Yi stated that the dry cleaner business creates something from nothing, by getting the customers' clothing, and making them clean. The business depends on seasonal cycles to some extent, but in general is stable economically. Mr. Yi sends out all clothing to a specialized Latin-American owned dry cleaning factory. In order to save wages, he does shirt washing and pressing himself. He also accepts fur coats for storage.

While Mr. Yi works alone, dry cleaners with more capital operate on a larger scale. Mr. Jo employs six workers at his Joel Dry Cleaner store in Jackson Heights; he lives nearby in Elmhurst. His father actually owns the business. A cousin runs a laundry in Forest Hills. After failure in the wig business, Mr. Jo's father and the cousin

became dealers in gems and curios from South America. With 50 percent of the capital from savings in this business, and the rest borrowed from his cousin, Mr. Jo's father bought the dry cleaning shop. Mr. Jo's mother, who used to work at a garment factory as a pattern-maker, quit to join this family business.

According to Mr. Jo, the laundry business in July and August is very slow. With the fall change of season, it is better. Except for cleaning fur coats and white shirts, everything is done at his store. Fur coats are brought to a company specialized in that item, and white shirts are sent to a Jewish-owned business in Jamaica. Those specialized items are picked-up and delivered to the Joel laundry.

There are four full-time and two part-time workers, including a Turkish tailor and a South American presser. This tailor came to look for a job through an advertisement in a Korean newspaper and he works very diligently. According to Mr. Jo, there are still few Korean workers in the laundry industry.

Mr. Jo mans the counter and does spot cleaning by himself. He complains about the heat and the long working hours, from 7 in the morning to 7 in the evening. He finds the work tedious, and repetitious. Sometimes, he said, it is also hard to deal with customers' complaints, as when they lie--like bringing clothes back to complain about the cleaning job, when in fact they have already worn them.

Fish store

There are about 500 Korean fish markets in New York City. Though Koreans entered this business very soon after the rise of Korean green grocers, this is less known to the public as a predominantly Korean area of enterprise. Fewer workers are hired than by green grocers, only one or two at each fish market. As with green groceries, many Koreans bought out fish markets from aging immigrant Italians.

In the 1980s, fish markets, like green groceries, also went through a process of diversification. Many in Manhattan now sell fried shrimp, clams, and fish and chips, or even sushi and sashimi. This creates a need for more workers. It is usually women who are hired to fry fish. Besides the owner, who is also the cashier, two or more workers clean, cut and wrap fish selected by customers. With experience gained here, these workers can later work at sushi bars in Korean-Japanese or Korean restaurants.

The owners of seafood stores go to buy fish early in the morning at the Fulton fish market in lower Manhattan. There, most wholesalers are Italian; only one is in Korean. Fish market owners do not spend as much time there as green grocers do at the Hunts Point produce market. But at the Fulton market, they do gather at one cafe to exchange market information, and socialize among themselves. In this business, the owner needs to be familiar with his neighborhood in order to know which kind

of fish his customers like most. Korean fish market owners call themselves "fish doctors" who practice "surgery" on fish, at the request of their customers.

Through a friend from his Pyongyang hometown, Mr. Chin got his first job in America 13 years ago at a fish store, then considered the largest in New York City. The Jewish owner treated him very well, and he learned a lot. After working there six years, he bought his own seafood store. He begins his day arriving at the Fulton fish market between 2 and 4 a.m.

According to him, 90 percent of the wholesalers are Italians, and are Mafia-controlled. The other 10 percent are Jewish. His employee opens his store at 7 a.m. everyday except Sunday. Now in his fifties, Mr. Chin has become a fish expert. He said:

How wonderful a food fish is! If I drink, and accompany it with fish, I have no hangover. If I drink with meat, I usually develop a serious headache. I like this business; it is very neat in its own way. Expenses are minimal. There is very little inventory, and the profits are very immediate. I pay \$1100 a month for rent. That is the cheapest rent in this good neighborhood. About 90 percent of my customers are whites, such as Italians and Jews. They are very particular about quality, regardless of price. I offer really good fish. In my experience, Latin Americans do not seem to like fish. The other

10 percent of my customers are Korean.

Garment Industry

Mr. Pi, a garment factory owner, estimated that in 1984, there were more than 2000 garment factories in New York City. He guessed that 99 percent of the clothing manufacturers, who supply work to these shops, were Jewish or Italian, most located in the garment district from 29th Street to 50th Street. In Chincona there were 600 garment shops. There were 200 or 300 Korean ones, with 80 percent in Manhattan, and 20 percent in Flushing. By 1989, however, according to a Korean organizer for the ILGWU (International Ladies Garment Workers Union), there are around 1,500 garment factories run by Koreans in the New York City area, including some in New Jersey. In recent years, many have relocated from Manhattan to Queens, looking for lower rents.

A few Korean women had worked in Chincona garment factories as early as the late 1960s. Gradually Koreans who amassed enough savings bought garment factories, using their wives' work experience for business guidance. Now Latin Americans and Chinese work alongside Koreans in the the Korean-owned garment factories in Elmhurst and Corona, Queens. These factories receive subcontracts from jobbers who get their contracts to produce quantities of garments, from the primarily Jewish Manhattan manufacturers.

Mr. Pi observes:

Koreans are very skillful with their fingers, but they are quick-tempered. As is often said, they lack esprit de corps, too easily speaking ill of others.

Compared with Korean workers, Latin Americans and Chinese are patient, viewing their jobs as near to their mission in life. Within a month, most Korean workers learn all that is needed, and try to get jobs in another shop where they can get better pay.

It is for this reason that Mr. Pi is reluctant to hire Koreans. However, he knows that garment shops make a great contribution to Korean survival in New York City, with some 7,000 or 8,000 Koreans working in the garment industry. Until recently most Korean workers could not begin at basic pay rates, as they had never worked in the garment industry in Korea. But now some even learn sewing industry skills before coming here.

To some extent, Mr. Pi is critical of the Korean garment industry, saying that it is "eating the chicken it has raised" by violating labor laws.

But what can I do about that? If it was otherwise, Koreans could hardly compete with other contractors. Workers seem to be in too much hurry to succeed. They think, if a husband and wife work hard for two years and set up a small shop, why cannot I? Also, they are quite encouraged by the ideology of America as the country of freedom. These days, they seem to acquire egoism even before coming to America.

Compared to the days when he migrated, he thinks jobs are now more easily available to new immigrants. But he said that today there are no workers with whom he can have an easy conversation.

New York gained dominance in producing women's clothing decades ago, in a period of more formal dressing. However, as Waldinger (1986:61) explains, life-style transformations since the 1950s and rising labor-force participation among women have changed the fashion industry. Women now dress more casually: blue jeans are a fashion for women as well as men. In 1909, 61 percent of women's clothing workers were employed in New York; by 1941 it was only 39 percent (Waldinger 1986:54). As more clothing is now produced overseas, the garment industry in New York is declining, and Korean garment factory owners develop new strategies to obtain and profitably fulfill contracts.

In the Korean garment factory, there are one or two managers (one often a wife or relative of the owner), several skilled "Marrow" machine workers, many more "Singer" machine seamstresses, and a few unskilled assistants. The Marrow machine is used to finish jobs, making a clothing item from parts by sewing them together. Marrow operators must be skilled, and are better paid than Singer operators. For both categories, most Korean factories choose the piece-rate wage system over time-rates system, in order to obtain the fullest advantage of their

workers.

Some employees work overtime or take work home. Those working overtime are not paid proper over time rates. Those who do homework earn less than they would during regular hours. To avoid conflict with potential labor union organizers at their factory, Korean employers attempt to treat their workers better by improving working conditions, but, at the same time often find it necessary to do work for jobbers or contractors without a union contract. If workers joined a union, owners say, the increase in wages might threaten the survival of the Korean garment industry itself by seriously eroding the marginal operating capital of Korean owners. In a few cases, Korean garment factory owners have been forced to open union shops, and let their workers become union members.

Mr. Lee has been in the garment industry throughout his life in Korea, Argentina, and the United States. Since his arrival here in 1976, he has operated a knitting factory in Corona. It was a small factory, and he invested his family's entire savings in it. "While in Buenos Aires I worked only till Friday, and I did 50 percent through contract and 50 percent directly through orders and sales. Here in New York, all I can do is to subcontract from Jewish contractors. In addition, in South America I did not have to work myself. There my native Indian employees did everything."

When he opened his factory in 1976, the others in that part of Queens were Latin American owned. He now employs forty workers, mostly Latin Americans, and does not issue any home piecework, at least during the slow season.

Capital Formation

There has been an evolution of Korean small business in the past two decades, from labor-intensive green grocery, fish store, or garment factory, to more capital-intensive dry cleaner, gift shop and delicatessen. This, however, has not been a replacement of old businesses with new businesses, but an expansion of the variety of small businesses. One can still say that the green grocery is a stepping-stone for Korean small business proprietors. New Korean entrepreneurs continue to enter at the labor-intensive and, save, and hope to reinvest in a more capital-intensive business later. With such an evolution clearly understood within the Korean community, Koreans in New York smart from their portrayal by other New Yorkers as "Moonies" who buy businesses by receiving money from the Reverend Sun Myung Moon.

Since the late 1960s, the picture of capital formation by Korean entrepreneurs has changed. Until the mid-1970s, it was common for new immigrants to get a start in business, and free room and board, from their kin. Thus, a husband and wife could save and establish their own store in two or three years.

Mrs. Chung's eldest son migrated first to Argentina and later remigrated to America in the late 1960s. Mrs. Chung's daughter and her husband then came from Korea, and the eldest son bought a vegetable stand for them. While they learned the vegetable business, they saved some money, thanks to free room and board from the brother. He also later helped two other sisters' families in similar ways. Eventually Mrs. Chung emigrated, and now lives in Elmhurst with her third daughter who runs her own store in Jackson Heights.

From the mid-1970s, with the increase in Korean immigration, it became more common to receive loans from kin or friends, and to combine this with personal savings to acquire a business. Since the beginning of the 1980s, with more cash in circulation in the Korean community, and also more now arriving from Korea, it has become more possible to organize and join the Korean rotating credit association, or kye.

Before the limit was lifted in 1978 on the amount of money Korean immigrants could bring out of Korea, few persons could think of joining rotating credit clubs, and none of opening a business immediately on arrival here. I cannot emphasize too much the primary importance of savings all through the 1960s and 1970s. In a way, the Korean immigrants are well-prepared for saving in that they could at first find little here to buy. When coming to America, they would bring almost everything they needed, including

clothing. In addition, they had little time to spend money because of long work schedules.

As better-established Koreans accumulated savings and business earnings, loans to kin and friends became possible. One did not have to worry about when to return such loans, and some were even made without interest. Often a Korean employer was a financial supporter when his former employee wanted to establish his own business. When these loans bore interest, they became another way to invest one's capital, but some were extended out of pure friendship.

Not all Korean would-be business owners followed the same path. An unmarried man takes more time to establish his own business, as he will first save money for wedding and other marriage expenses. Since the late 1970s, as more single men have migrated, such waiting periods are more common. What is more, if one has to adjust one's visa status here, experience will delay opening one's own business for several years.

Since 1978, there has been an increase not only in single-male labor migration, but also in capital migration. Some people are able to bring large amounts of money from Korea, and this is the common way to open a dry cleaning store, without prior experience in this business. The following case shows how more easily a business is set up in these circumstances than for earlier immigrants.

Mr. and Mrs. Lee, both teachers in Korea, immigrated in 1982 to the United States, sponsored by Mrs. Lee's sister, a nurse. Mrs. Lee worked in a garment factory for two years. During that time her husband attended English classes at Queens College, and worked at various sportswear, grocery, and green grocery stores. In 1984, they spent three months looking for a business to buy. Eventually they bought a dry cleaning store near their home in Elmhurst. They purchased it from a Korean owner, locating it through a Korean newspaper advertisement. They invested all of the \$56,000 that they brought from Korea.

During the 1980s, the most important way Koreans raise business acquisition capital has been through their own financial institution, the kye (pronounced "kay") rotating credit clubs. A kye consists of a group who pool their funds on a regular basis, and each in rotation takes the entire pool until all group members have received it. In this manner, all but the last receive some advance use of the pooled savings. The organizer receives the first draw, which gives him or her the maximum amount of credit among Kye members.

Rotating credit associations are a worldwide phenomenon (Ardener 1964; Bascom 1952; Bonnett 1981; Geertz 1962). With origins in south China, Japan, and West Africa, these associations frequently differed with regard to size, criteria of membership, amount of funds, and

sanctions imposed on members (Bonnett 1981:4). Among West Indians in New York City in the 1920s, money from these associations was used to bury the dead; membership in these "benevolent societies" also gave a sense of pride (Bonnett 1981:58). Prewar Chinese and Japanese immigrants to the United States made extensive use of rotating credit associations for the purpose of capitalizing small, and medium-business enterprises, as well as for other purposes (Light 1972: ch.2; Woodrum, Rhodes, & Feagin 1980). But today, "Hui, the Chinese rotating club, is not as important as described for earlier immigrants" (Chen 1990:201).

Between 1903 and 1918, Koreans on the Pacific coast and in Hawaii also utilized rotating credit associations for business capitalization (Moon 1976:192). Among contemporary Korean immigrants, however, the kye is incomparably larger in monetary size, and more central to business success. Furthermore, Koreans may join several rotating credit clubs, and kye pools can be as great as several hundred thousand, or even one million dollars. Many Korean community organizations in New York City start off as rotating credit societies. Korean restaurants are booming by catering to meetings of rotating credit clubs. In Korea, kye are also organized by women, but here it is common for both husband and wife to attend monthly meetings, with membership by family.

The kye rotating credit association has a long history in Korea. In the past, it played a more important social than economic role; "all voluntary associations are termed kye (the original meaning is bond) of various types" (see K. Chun 1984:127). H. Lee (1936:250) reports that the first known record of kye occurred in a 1663 census book. The kye is used in Korea generally as a means of meeting any financial or labor needs. Some evidence suggests that as Korean villages become increasingly involved in a cash economy, they begin to establish money kye on the basis of these earlier forms of mutual cooperation: equal payments are made each month by all of the participants and no interest is earned or paid (K. Chun 1984: 137-38). Kennedy (1973:27) distinguished five types of kye. One was a work-exchange that involved no money. Two involved mutual aid for consumption expenses for weddings and funerals. The "industry kye" and the "money-making kye" involved payment of interest within the membership group, and investment in farm or business.

Koreans in New York, as in other parts of America, are familiar with kye, and use it for both social and business purposes. I concur with Light & Bonacich (1988:255) that survey research fails to uncover the extent to which kye is used for business capitalization, as opposed to its use for real estate investment or consumption. H. Kim (1977), for example, in a study of 52 Korean firms in Los Angeles, found only one owner who acknowledged using kye as a source

of capital for business investment. Young (1983) found only one of forty Korean business owners in New York City, who acknowledged kye participation. Kim & Hurh's study of 94 Korean business owners in Chicago revealed that 34 percent had accumulated some of their own capital through the rotating credit system (1984:35).

My experience is like that of Light and Bonacich's assistants, whose ethnographic studies uniformly reported more kye use than did Los Angeles surveys. Some Los Angeles Koreans believed kye was illegal in the United States, a misconception that explains in part their reluctance to admit participation in surveys (Light & Bonacich 1988). Another reason for such reluctance, I suggest, is the Korean government policy that discourages people from joining kye, and supports bank deposits which the government can use. Another is simply that when asked to identify the source of business capital, people mention personal savings, loans, or gifts from others, and do not add that rotating credit clubs are where such sources of funds are stored or originate.

Among my interviewees (N=91) 40 percent were kye participants. Although most joined only one; one-fourth belonged to more than one kye. As Koreans in Queens see it, these rotating credit clubs play the double role of friendship and mutual aid. I suspect that among those financially secure Koreans who use rotating credit clubs for business investment, their use will persist even when

greater familiarity and use of the American banking becomes common.

Many such participants do join some kye purely for friendship and mutual aid, ch'inmok kye, and other kye for business investment purposes. In the former case, people may contribute different amounts of money according to how early each takes their turns. Such social kye, organized by a kyechu, involve only standard numbers of participants, either 10, 12, 20, 24, or 36, or several hundred. When all pay equal amounts, it is often for consumption purposes, for a large household purchase, like jewelry, household item or the costs of a social event. Kye members get together monthly, either at a home or a restaurant, with plenty of food.

In business investment-oriented nakch'al kye precisely calculated amounts of interest are paid. For example, "Eight people each contribute \$250 a month, creating a \$2,000 pool.... members bid for the cash by offering various rates of interests.... the \$2,000 loan goes to the highest bidder, who immediately distributes the entire interest payment to the members" (Time, July 1988). Bidding is not possible in the more socially-oriented ch'inmok kye.

Yet another combined form of kye, ponho kye are also found. The organization of ponho kye follows a standard format. "Each month one member receives a lump sum of cash comprised of the contribution of all the others; and though

the lump sum received by each member remains constant, the amounts contributed by each of the members varies according to the rank order of her turn" (Janelli & Yim 1988-89:172-73).

In Queens, Koreans acquire business capital through savings, kye, loans from kin or friend, capital brought from Korea, and also bank loans. As illustrated in Table 4, they rely heavily on savings and loans from kin or friends. Some 48 percent relied on savings alone; 35 percent enjoyed loans or gifts. 16 percent brought capital from Korea and only 2 percent utilized bank loans. In several cases, there was a combination of several different capital sources. And if one traces the source of "savings," often it is in past capital brought from Korea, a kye or several kye, and loans. While those who have come to America in the 1980s may now bring substantial capital from Korea, those with longer residence in America have appealed more and more to Korean communal resources in America for business capital.

Securing Labor and Business Information

When scholars depict immigrant businesses within an "ethnic enclave economy" (such as Chinese businesses in Chinatowns), they mention both fellow ethnic customers, and the labor of the family or kin of store owners. In his 1981 survey of Korean New York green grocers Young discovered that.

Of the forty stores, only three did not employ any family members.... Of the thirty-seven owners who employed at least one family member, thirty-five did not pay them regular wages. Of the thirty-eight owners who were married, thirty-four were assisted in the store by their wives. As expected, none of the wives were paid a regular wage.

Thus, Young calculated,

If an owner can cut his fixed expenses in half by using two unpaid family members (his wife, son, or brother), and by working eighteen hours instead of ten hours per day, fixed expenses would be reduced by \$750, or profits increased by the same amount.... Let us assume that there is no opportunity cost for using unpaid family labor and working long hours as a means of reducing fixed, out-of-pocket expenses.... By not paying three workers \$750 per week in wages, the owner saves \$39,000 a year. This "family profit" can be added to the gross profit of \$78,000, bringing the

grand total to \$117,000 (1983:62).

My research was in the mid-1980s, some five years after Young's on green grocers. I interviewed professionals, who are also employers, as well as business operators and workers. Overall, I found less use of family labor and most often, a combination of family and wage labor. In all, 38 percent of the Korean firms my data cover relied on family labor. For business operators, 81 percent used family labor or both family and wage labor, but only 27 percent of them relied solely on family labor. In such businesses as stationeries, fashion stores, fish markets, dry cleaners, and handicraft stores, owners relied less on family labor, but also had fewer workers in total.

The use of family and wage labor also have an interesting relationship in these Korean firms. In a way, wage labor plays the role of a reserve army. When family labor becomes available, non-kin employees tend to be fired. Kin labor is sometimes exploited, taking advantage of hopes they will be later supported in starting their own business. In other instances, family or kin employees are supported to establish their own businesses, leave, and are replaced by wage laborers.

In Los Angeles, Light & Bonacich (1988:178-79) found that the percentage of firms employing nuclear or extended kin was 56.8 percent. I found that 49 percent of family labor consisted of husbands and wives; 29 percent were

parents and children; 11 percent are siblings or their family members; another 11 percent were other relatives. It is clear that great reliance comes from immediate family members, and not from extended kinship ties. According to INS Annual Reports (1985), such immediate kinship claimants constituted 87.9 percent of the Korean immigrants admitted between 1966 and 1981.

This use of family labor is particularly important in the earliest years of immigrant life. When Korean immigrant husbands begin to run stores, in most cases wives join them, which is very different from Latin American grocery owners (Young 1983). It is almost required that successful Korean immigrant men have wives to work with them. Men are advised within the Korean community to get married first, to achieve marital stability, and then to establish their own business. No matter whether one calls it a "family profit" (Young, 1983), or a "family sacrifice" as I see it, it is certainly beneficial for men (if problematic for Korean women) to utilize a wife's labor in business.

It was also the case I found that "unpaid" family labor (see Young 1983), can be compensated in many indirect ways--in residential accommodations; in support in terms of capital, labor, and business information in the longer run; and in support for weddings and other expenses. The following case illustrates the Korean use of family labor.

Mr. Yi, now in his seventies, has three sons and four daughters. He lives with his wife, third son, and second daughter and her husband. In addition, his third and fourth daughters, who attend college, stay at his home during summer vacations, and assist on occasion in the third son's store. His eldest son lives in the same Elmhurst neighborhood as Mr. Yi, and runs a general merchandise retail store in Manhattan. His second son runs a wholesale store for handbags, in "Koreatown", between the 20s to 40s street on Broadway in Manhattan, and lives with his family in Flushing. His eldest daughter is married and lives with her family in Woodside. She assists her husband, a gas mechanic, by taking telephone messages. Mr. Yi's second daughter's husband works for an insurance company. His third son runs a fried fish store near the central Manhattan post office at 34th Street and 8th Avenue. Half the capital for this business was brought from Korea by Mr. Yi and his son. At first, this son hired a skilled worker, but has since replaced him with his mother, Mrs. Yi. Mr. Yi also goes to this son's fish store by subway, working there from 8 A.M. to 3 P.M. selling logo.

For Mr. Nam, who runs a Korean supermarket, it was a family decision to immigrate to America. His wife and children longed for American life, and he did not. It was

decided to leave Korea by vote during a family conference. In Korea, he had a successful business career as a manager of Korean Air Lines, managing director of another company, and head of a transportation company. Once they arrived here, he could find no better job than casual work. At first, all family members worked at a doughnut shop. After six months, Mr. Nam opened a Korean restaurant, hiring one restaurant worker. The business survived only because all his family members cooperated.

As far as securing their current business or job is concerned, 53 percent of my informants (N=79) did so through personal connections; 21 percent through newspaper advertisements, mostly in Korean newspapers; 3 percent through an agency; and 21 percent by beginning their own business, or in other ways. Even though they rely heavily on personal connections, particularly for their first job, Koreans use schoolmates, former co-workers, and church members as well as family or kin. With more years of residence in America, however, Koreans rely less on personal connections and more on formal channels or self-employment. In the garment industry, Waldinger (1986:157) found that non-immigrant firms recruit workers more through market mechanisms, while immigrant firms rely heavily on the mobilization of kinship and ethnic ties.

Consequences of the Gravitation to Small Business

As the following cases illustrate, the motivation to open a small business is strong among many Korean immigrants still striving to do so. Mr. Choi works six days a week for a Korean green grocery in Jackson Heights, and he lives in Elmhurst with male roommates.

Although I am exhausted physically, I am willing to bear it in order to learn enough to set up my own grocery store eventually. A grocery needs continuous care. For the first time in my three-year immigrant life here, I had fun when I went to Atlantic city recently. Soon my wife, whom I married six months ago in Korea, and her family are going to join me. I am afraid that when they see me doing this blue-collar work, they will be greatly disappointed in me.

However, I am determined to set up my own business in one or two years. Then they will think me all right.

Mr. Pu has been in America since 1973. He used to work for Korean Air Lines, and was sent to their branch office in New York. After three and half years, he decided not to return to Korea. Instead, he bought a laundromat in New Jersey owned by a Korean, with savings and loans from a relative and a friend. It cost around \$27,000. It was in a poor neighborhood, and with little in operating funds, he went out of business in one year. Next he sublet a vegetable stand in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, through someone his wife knew. He was inexperienced, business was very

competitive, and in another year he failed again. Then he became a partner in a candy store in mid-Manhattan, again through a contact of his wife. Both partners needed more capital; their sales were small, and they ran a deficit. After one year, Mr. Pu sold out to his partner.

He then got a job as general manager in a retail clothing store. Although he had problems with customers, he put up with it for two years. At last, through a friend from his previous workplace, he got a job in an American factory. The factory produces soap and tooth paste. Most workers are American, except for three Koreans and two Filipinos. Mr. Pu makes \$500 a week, but if he works overtime, he sometimes makes \$1,000, which nets \$600 excluding taxes. There are no close ties among the workers, but the work itself is not difficult.

Between Korea and America, I cannot say easily which is better. Koreans are diligent and sincere, but, they are individualists and egoists. So, it is hard for us to be united. Though Americans are good at greeting, they are hardly ever intimate, and they are hypocritical, speaking ill of you behind your back. Here, Asians are not strong enough numerically. While working here, I am going to study accounting in order to be an independent accountant.

This strong interest in small business, as the following chapters will show, leads to many consequences in

all aspects of Korean immigrants' lives. One notable impact is the increasing stratification inside the Korean immigrant community. This stratification of Korean American professionals, small businessmen, and workers is hard to fit into traditional models of "class relations." Professionals may or may not own their means of production, depending on whether they are sole practitioners or not. Self-employed small businessmen do manual work themselves in addition to using wage labor. Most workers are employed by Korean shopkeepers, and differ from factory workers who are seen as more typically proletarian. Although we can identify different Korean views of stratification within the community, overriding these viewpoints is the fact that, first, Koreans see themselves as an ethnic minority in American society.

Social stratification among Koreans also is compounded by age, gender, generation, time of migration period, legal status, and citizenship. In fact we see cleavages and differences in opinion between older and newer immigrants, documented and undocumented, people belonging to the professional, small business, and working classes men and women, and first, "knee-high," and second immigrant generations (see chapter 4).

The majority of Korean immigrants in Queens are concentrated in small business, either as owner or worker at stores, or self-employed professionals. If we analyze

class relations from the "objective" perspective of having or not having control of the means of production, then, professionals and small businessmen belong to the petty bourgeoisie, and workers belong to the working class. In my focus on class in its "subjective" meaning to Koreans, I found a different status accorded to professional and to businessmen.

Koreans also rank certain kinds of professionals with higher status than that paid to others, a ranking we might not find among Americans in general. An accountant, for example, is given a great deal of respect. This is because many Koreans are small businessmen who need help from accountants. This has nothing to do with the Korean culture in which they were brought up--in Korea accounting is not a highly-respected occupation. The respect for doctors and lawyers, however, does seem to derive from ideas brought from Korea. In Korea, it is difficult to become a lawyer within the legal system based on European Continental law; medical doctors in Korea enjoy a social position like that accorded American medical doctors. What is most critical for all these professionals here is whether or not one has one's own business, as it is for all Koreans in America.

Conclusion

Koreans find their American dream in establishing their own small businesses. They think small businesses will indeed provide them with such important aspects of the American dream as opportunity, freedom, equality, and independence. Because of problems with language and credentials, they find it difficult to obtain jobs comparable to those in Korea. So, they turn to small businesses. Important contributions to their success come through a traditional Korean financial institution, *kye*, and the use of family and kin labor.

Although the reasons for this Korean turn to entrepreneurship in America are complex, I. Kim (1981:299-300) has tied it to Korean national character. Light and Bonacich (1988:299) partially disagree with Kim, arguing that traditional culture did not endow Koreans with an entrepreneurial character. But Light and Bonacich could have given closer attention to what they call "cultural factors." Their usage omits Koreans' strong family kinship ties and rotating credit clubs. To an anthropologist these are dimensions of culture where one would normally begin (see K. Park: 1990) [1].

For Koreans in Queens, the enthusiasm for small business is the most important parameter of their social lives. Along different points on the road to success in small business, I see rising a new social stratification of the Korean American community. As a result, even

professionals are seen first as solo practitioners, offering services similar to small businessmen. Most workers are factory or service workers for Korean small businessmen, many of whom dream of joining.

Notes

- [1] The evaluation by Light and Bonacich (1988) of Korean culture as lacking the ethic of hard work is not persuasive. They backed up their position with superficial sources while not citing studies (available in English) that document that Korean people indeed work hard: Charles Dallet (Traditional Korea. New Haven: Human Relations area Files, 1954), Chungmin C. Han (Social Organization of Upper Han Hamlet in Korea. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1949), and Eugène Knez (Sam Jong Dong: A South Korean Village. Ph.D. dissertation, Syracuse University 1959) (see K. Park 1990).

Part II:

Consequences of Gravitation to Small Business

Chapter 4

The Notion of "Establishment"

Koreans in large numbers turn to small business as the means to realize their American dream. As a result, the small business career and its success become the most significant criterion by which Korean immigrants talk about each other, and evaluate their own lives. In this chapter, I will explore what Korean immigrants mean by "establishment" (anjong), a notion that applies to both work and consumption. Koreans use this concept to assess small business career pathways, from the earliest plans to open one's business, to the success signaled by purchase of a home in the suburbs. I will also show what "establishment" means to those Korean immigrants who are not small businessmen, the workers employed in Korean-owned businesses, and to professionals, many of whom depend on Korean immigrant clients. As we will see, some professionals indeed turn into businessmen. So did many workers before the 1980s, when it was more possible to set up a businesses in a few years than it has become since.

"Establishment" as the Key to Understanding Class Structure

According to the 1980 United States census the median family income of the Korean family was similar to that of white Americans. However, more than 13 percent of Korean

families had incomes below poverty level, a proportion nearly twice that of white Americans, among whom the poverty level was seven percent (Gardner, Robey & Smith 1985:33-34). This indicates that the successful, well-educated, early 1970s Korean immigrants now had less well-off compatriots among them. Another figure also showed the increasing social stratification among Korean Americans: "The percentage of professionals among the Korean immigrants who arrived in the U.S. in 1974 was about 11 percent, but in 1984, the percentage declined to 4 percent" (Hurh, 1987:16).

With this background, there was increasing polarization and tension between different social strata within the Korean community in Queens in the mid-1980s. While established professionals or businessmen tended to live in spacious suburban areas in their own homes, workers lived in crowded rented apartments, or might even rent a bed for a few hours. Korean small businesses were experiencing problems in labor relations. The decision in 1983 by the Korean Produce Retailers Association to raise wages for green grocery workers was not put into effect by the many store owners. Workers at several Korean sewing factories went on strike, demanding union representation.

There are many definitions of "class," and the concept is controversial in social science and political debate. Here I do not intend to discuss it extensively. As we saw in the last chapter, it is difficult to limit a

consideration of stratification and differentiation in the Korean American community to "objective" classes alone. Moreover, identification of "objective" class needs to be distinguished from uncovering the processes of class formation, or examining class consciousness.

The concept of class has a central importance in Marxist theory. Marx argued that "it is always the direct relation between the owners of the conditions of production and the direct producers which reveals the innermost secret, the hidden foundation, of the entire social edifice' (Capital III, Ch. 47). In its most general sense, many scholars would agree to define "class" as "shared position in the social relations of production" (Wright 1980:326). While Wright went on to attempt to give more empirical definition to class, a more general statement (from Lenin 1947:492) seems adequate to address class from an "objective" perspective.

Classes are large groups of people which differ from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social reproduction, by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated in law) to the means of production, by their role in the social organization of labour and, consequently, by the dimensions and method of acquiring the share of social wealth of which they dispose.... Classes are groups of people one of which can appropriate the labour of another owing to the different places they

occupy in a definite system of social economy.

In this classical sense, "the social organization of labor" and "the acquisition and disposal of social wealth" become the important categories.

Since then, there has been new understanding. As Bottomore pointed out, "class interest" itself is no longer conceived (as it was in general by Marx) as an objective and unambiguous "social fact", but rather as having a sense which is constructed through interaction and discussion out of the experiences of everyday life and the interpretations of those experiences in political doctrines, hence as something which may assume diverse forms, as is indicated in one way by the historical divisions in the working class movement (Bottomore 1983:76). As a next step, in a work such as The Making of the English Working Class by E. P. Thompson, what we come to understand is the historical process in which classes are formed and reformed.

In this vein, looking at Koreans in New York, we see, first, two different categories, the petty bourgeoisie (professionals and small businessmen), and the working class. Next, adding the subjective dimension to these "objective" classes, we confront historically specific groups, Korean professionals, small businessmen, and workers. For a holistic understanding of class relations, finally, we need to consider the processes of class formation and reformation. This entails understanding the process of "establishment" as Korean immigrants in Queens

understand and practice it.

The Notion of "Establishment"

Mr. Kang, who owns a real estate agency, pinpoints a change occurring in human relations among Koreans living in America--an increasing social "Gryness." As he puts it, "As they live longer in the United States, people seem to lose the sense of duty or justice between friends, or between brother and sister. For example, it is hard to borrow even \$10 or \$100 here. But in Korea we could borrow \$1,000 with no problem."

Mr. Chung, who owns a fish market in Elmhurst, sees, on the other hand, a more positive aspect to human relations in the Korean American community--a decreasing importance of the need for connections, ppaek. In Korea, he could not recover from his business losses, because of his lack of connections. Here, personal effort is its own reward.

As you know, in Korea a political connection or another good connection matters in every aspect of a person's life. Without such background, once you are broke it is hard to recover. Here, there is little difference between rich and poor. And if you work hard, you will be rewarded.

A pharmacist, who owns a drug store in Elmhurst contrasts Korean students with immigrants, noting the dark side of the drive to "establishment."

Those who come here in order to study do not seem to change very much. But in the case of the immigrants, as they become preoccupied with their survival for a long time, they become inhumane, under great stresses which they did not have in Korea. As they live here longer, they are "Americanized." They know only themselves. They fail to be guides for the newly arriving Koreans.

In Chicago, Hurh predicted that "conflict between the suburban-'old-timers' and the Koreatown-'newcomers' is bound to increase" (1987:16). Mr. Chun, the owner of a fish store in Washington Heights, Manhattan, expressed a similar view. The detached but "established" people who are comfortably settling in the suburbs are quite visible to him. His model of social stratification divides established suburbanites and new immigrants, "Without considering serving other Koreans in need, once they make money, they tend to hide themselves, living in the suburbs. They hardly think of the welfare or status of second or third wave Korean immigrants."

The difference between established small business employer and new employee is here symbolized in terms of different residence, but for some the underlying appropriation of one group's labor power by the other is also evident. Mr. Kim is a garment factory worker. He sees the distinction between the two social strata: the old-timers who exploit workers, and the workers themselves.

Because I couldn't live well in Korea, I came here. However, living here is even worse. It is more difficult to make a living by doing heavy labor. Here, if I stop working for even a while, I won't be able to survive. As Koreans live here longer they are getting worse, even exploiting workers.

Mr. Park, the presbyter at the Korean church that I studied during my research (see chapter 10), analyzed the church's membership. "It is four years since we have had the church at this address. In general, Koreans seem to get together to socialize following church. We hardly see workers, compared with many professionals and businessmen attendants." It is interesting to note that he was unable to notice worker church members, of whom I observed many. This was likely the result of the prominence of small businessmen, who shared the presbyter's own class position.

The owner of a sewing machine store expressed his view of the class structure explicitly in relation to the increasing importance of money in America.

I feel close to friends of mine with the same economic condition, length of residence in America, and hobbies. Particularly, now I feel that in terms of the standard of living my life is similar to those with three or four year's residence in America. Here in America, one does not mind another's business anymore. We come to care less about hierarchy in social life as we used to do in Korea. What concerns

us is only how much money one has. One doesn't have to pretend, one can just be frank.

Is there in fact a "class" of established Korean small businessmen? Yes, as a cultural model in the Queens Korean community; no, in "objective" class terms. Looking more carefully at this question, first, there is a great deal of downward mobility in both objective terms and in personal self-evaluations. As some green grocers lamented, "We deal only with rotten tomatoes." This does not mean that they are ashamed to be green grocers. In embracing American ideological slogans such as "all trades are equal," they do find comfort. As they live here longer, however, they come to realize that even in America there is little esteem for the greengrocer, or other small businessmen, and they recall the higher station they used to enjoy in Korea.

We need to distinguish the "objective" face of "mobility" studied by scholars from its subjective dimension to new immigrants themselves. Koreans do find ways to realize their American dream in terms of mobility. If we look at the Korean grocery worker who moves up to grocer, and to owner of several groceries, this is apparent. But if we realize that it is a Korean college professor who becomes an American grocery worker, and later a grocer, then mobility is more difficult to assess.

In short, the earlier statisticians often used binary or dichotomous, not linear occupational classifications... Only incidentally did they examine

individual career patterns. Thus, they developed their methods without questioning whether their respondents had the same notions of occupational ranking that they had (Conk 1978:66).

Notwithstanding the increasing Korean working class in New York City, even for "established" small businessmen, it is problematic to maintain their small enterprises.

Korean small businesses are confronted with so many problems: more than 85 percent of business owners themselves work up to 10 hours [a day]; more than 70 percent of businesses are relying on family labor; more than 73 percent lack operating funds; 54 percent of them feel overcompetition among the same kind of business; 57 percent also express problems with labor relation; 94 percent barely maintain the present store, without much profit (The Korean American Small Business Service Center Newsletter 1987) [my translation].

Bonacich is cautious in using the term "success" for Korean small business.

If we mean by "success" making millions of dollars, or even hundreds of thousands, Korean enterprise could not be deemed successful except in rare instances.... If, on the other hand, we mean by "success" survival and modest growth to the point where many people can make a decent living by American standards, we must conclude that Korean immigrant enterprise is largely

successful (1980:178).

When Koreans say aniong, their image of "establishment" is far from a "life style of the rich and famous." It means, rather, settling down--a sense of comfort in being ready to start another race, now that one has solved basic problems of survival.

Professionals, Workers, and Small Businessmen

As I have mentioned, 17 percent of my informants were professionals, 36 percent businessmen, 37 percent workers, and 10 others. Here I would like to examine their work and efforts toward "establishment". By looking closely at each occupational category, I will show the day-to-day infrastructure in which attempts to realize the Korean American dream take place.

Professionals. In Elmhurst and Corona, I found medical doctors, dentists, medical and dental technicians, nurses, lawyers, accountants, Certified Public Accountants, insurance brokers, real estate salespersons, teachers, professors, designers, artists, civil servants, and acupuncturists. Most of them were highly educated in Korea or America, or both. Many have worked for American organizations and companies; some time afterwards, many then open their own professional businesses serving mainly Korean clients. The most important professional category is medical doctor. Some 15,000 Korean medical doctors

immigrated during 1965-1975, and many have turned to private practice (I. Kim 1981: Ch. 5).

Medical technicians and nurses who still work for American hospitals, often feel limited in realizing their work potential and in acceptance by their American employer. If they cannot achieve independent professional status, some are ready to turn to a completely different arena of small business in their search for establishment. Korean nurses often were recruited to work in third-class hospitals in remote areas, or do the lower-level jobs because they did not command English as well as American, Filipino, or Indian nurses.

Ms. Ahn, works as a Registered Nurse for a private Queens Hospital.

My colleagues are quite international: five Indian, three Filipino, two Korean, one Thai, one Jewish American, one Irish, one Israeli, one Black American, two Italian American, and one Cuban. I have worked for five years as an operating room nurse. Half of my colleagues are very experienced. Most nurses work in the ward, taking care of patients in need of intensive care. They have a shift from 7 A.M. to 3 P.M. Nurses in the operating room have a 9 to 5 shift. Nurses with same shift socialize together. In terms of hierarchy in the nurses' world, there are supervisors (always more supply than demand); head nurse (it takes several years to move from staff nurse, to head

nurse); staff nurses, who are RNs; nurses' aides; and porters, who are male. For operating room nurses, promotion is very slow. Besides nurses, there are MDs, physician's assistants, surgeon's assistants, and medical technicians.

She has no problems with her supervisor. Regarding MDs, however, she said, "If they get on my nerves, I try to get on their nerves." Because of their high status, the doctors socialize among themselves. At her hospital, 80 percent of the MDs are Jewish. Many medical technicians are American some are Latin American, and only a few are Chinese. Some 70 percent of her patients are white. "In general, Asian patients are passive and more cooperative, and have a good reputation at the hospital."

Dr. Choi specializes in internal medicine. In his Corona office he works with a gynecologist and a podiatrist. He said, "In Korea, nurses seem to cover more fields, but here nurses specialize. For instance, they just give drugs, and other things are done by nurses' aides. Besides, I have to check whether the nurse did it right or wrong."

Dr. Song is a gynecologist. He came to America in 1974. Three years ago he opened his own office in Elmhurst. Now he works both at his office and Flushing Hospital and Medical Center. His wife helps him with work in his office. They have hired a Korean receptionist and nurses. He compared his work at hospital and his office.

"As I work at my own office, I take more responsibility, besides being kind to patients and more diligent." As he sees Korean patients, here, he said.

They are not punctual. They should follow the American way, for example, making appointments about seeing doctor. Nevertheless I feel bad about patients without health insurance. I cannot hospitalize patients or give adequate medical treatment without insurance. Whereas in Korea I could do everything including operation by myself and I could take their circumstances into consideration. Here I am limited by the system."

His overall evaluation about his life in America is, "I can have my own private life as medical doctor. Life here is rather simple. Whereas in Korea my family and I were bothered a lot due to complicated social life, particularly, social expectation from a medical doctor such as service for the community."

These cases illustrate the different work environment that Korean medical professionals confront in America. While many doctors and nurses face such difficulties in their work, pharmacists have difficulties in even obtaining work. New York was the only state where from the late 1960s foreign graduates were allowed to take the pharmacist licensing exam. Since then, 1500 pharmacists from Korea have immigrated to the United States, but only 600 of them passed the New York State examination. Of those, 70 became

solo practitioners. Perhaps the 900 who failed the examination have gone into small businesses like wholesaling, green grocery, or dry cleaning (Korea Times 1/15/1986). In order to take the exam (which no longer exists), it was necessary first for foreign pharmacists to complete 1000 intern hours. Many of my informants remembered the difficulties in getting a pharmacy certificate.

Mr. Lee has run a pharmacy in Elmhurst for three years. He came to America in 1972. Initially he began with a job at a Korean green-grocery, which he found in advertisement in Korean newspaper. He remembered. "Although I have never done manual work in Korea, this was a good challenge. Since I knew some English, I would use spare time in teaching my coworkers the language." After that job, he was hired in city hospital. Post graduate like him could take examination only after fulfilling 1,000 hour internship. He worked in volunteer program, but with full benefit. Finally in three years he got a stable job in private hospital as staff pharmacist. He recollected.

It was surprising to me that in hospital entire medical staff were Jewish except the black director. There was no promotion for me. It seemed to me that pharmacists were not treated well, here."

He transferred to another medical center in two years. Then he left his job at the hospital and decided to run his own pharmacy.

This case presents some of the obstacles that made it difficult for Korean immigrants to obtain professional jobs comparable to those they had in Korea. Even skilled workers--engineers, car mechanics, welders--encounter similar problems. Interestingly, among these Korean immigrants who came here with such skills, many learned them in order to qualify for immigration preference. These persons were often thus deliberately downwardly mobile. But even those who were not face difficulties working here.

Mr. Hong was born in Seoul, and worked as an auto repairman for more than thirty years. For ten years he ran his own automobile body shop. After arrival in America, he worked as a car mechanic for an American company in New Jersey. After three years, he moved to another American company in Manhattan, where he worked for two more years. Then, he quit. "It is like piece work. So I couldn't expect a pension and I was not in good condition in terms of health." It took him several years to master the tools different from those used in Korea. But, "Obviously, my most serious problem was communication."

While medical professionals and skilled workers qualified for immigration visas under occupational preference, accountants and lawyers did not. Most Korean accountants and lawyers now in America studied here to acquire such professional credentials. By the mid-1980s there were estimated to be around 20 lawyers in New York City whose clientele was mostly Korean, and a similar

number working for American law firms. By 1989, 100 Korean lawyers were counted.

There are also many Korean insurance and real estate brokers. In Korea, real estate salesmen are mostly older men, and many insurance brokers are women. Perhaps half of the Korean households in New York City hold a life insurance policies. Here, most of these brokers are young or middle-aged men.

They generally work five days per week, and maintain reasonable working hours. Some pharmacists, MDs, CPAs, and real estate brokers who are solo practitioners serving mostly Koreans do take advantage of their Korean customers, who are neither familiar with the American social system, nor with English. Stories of sharp dealings, when they become known, circulate in the Queens Korean community.

For professionals with jobs in American workplaces, relationships with employers or fellow employees seem to be formal and superficial. According to Hurh & Kim's Los Angeles study (1980:266), the degree of life satisfaction increases with length of residence for immigrant Korean females, but rises much less for Korean males. For male professionals and skilled workers, however, it rises and then falls. As they have more opportunities to work in an American workplace, they enter more into the mainstream of American society, but, they also encounter racial and ethnic discrimination as do small business owners or workers in Korean firms. In many cases we find these

professionals eventually turned to small business.

One of my professional informants, an accountant, explained why he quit his job at an American company, and became self-employed. Mr. Kim, a Certified Public Accountant (CPA), now has his own office in Elmhurst. After obtaining his MBA and CPA degrees, he was hired by an American accounting firm, where he worked from 1977 to 1983.

The longer I worked, the higher my position. Of course, I felt the pressure. But gradually I got tired of being a salaried man. I wanted to use my own ability. More important, as I already had a chance to help Korean clients on the side while working there, I felt that with my assets I could be of help to even more Koreans. I had a new understanding that I am tongyangkye [Asian]. In the American company, I could do only what was assigned by my company. I could not increase the number of clients, who were mostly white. That's why I decided to work by myself.

Workers. How different is it for Koreans to work for Korean employers than for non-Koreans? Some characteristics of the Korean workplace in America are typical of any small businesses. Thus, when we observe a patron-client relationship between Korean employer and employees, how are we to interpret it? We do see Korean employers sharing activities, eating with, and concerning

themselves with the lives of their workers. Some even give free assistance in terms of capital, labor, or business information to employees about how to establish their own businesses. It is a mistake to treat this as a carry-over from the home country when paternalistic relationship of personal protection mixed with exploitation exist in many "petty bourgeois" enterprises. We also see Korean employers exploit employees by paying less, or asking for more work than what was agreed, and caring little about working conditions.

When work tasks are completed at the typical Korean workplace, employees are not supposed to rest, sit down, or read a newspaper. They are expected to repeat jobs they have already done. This is driven to the point that spinach may be washed and trimmed several times, and the spinach thus deteriorates faster. The following case describes a green grocery worker's job on the night shift.

'There is little difference in salary whether one works day or night.' Mr. Kang has been paid \$280 for the past five months. Although he can get up to \$320 elsewhere, he stays here because of an easygoing boss. 'And if one works at night, one doesn't even have to pay attention to the boss.' As he moistens these fruit and vegetables through the night, his hands become numb with cold. 'During the day there are the boss, a female cashier, and four other workers--one for the salad bar, one for the

vegetables, a manager, and a watchman.' At night Mr. Kang is the manager, and works with a male cashier. He arrives at work around 9 P.M. and he is then expected to eat dinner. As he awakens just before work, he has no appetite. He attends to the carrot, scallion, and spinach boxes until 11 P.M. by cutting, trimming, and displaying these items for sale. 'Then I smoke one cigarette.' Around midnight, he and the cashier eat rice and kimch'i, each by turn. It is 3:30 a.m. when he finishes the vegetables. Then, he has a half-hour break to smoke. 'After this, I begin to setup the fruit outside.' He preserves the orange juice and salad at the salad bar by icing it. Around 8:45 a.m. he finishes, passing on his job to the daytime workers. 'He comes home around 10:20 A.M.

Mr. Park, another green-grocery worker, holds a more critical attitude toward his employer. Mr. Park works at a green grocery on Broadway in Elmhurst. He lamented,

It is purely a matter of labor exploitation. My concern is that I want to be treated as an equal human being. I do not care as much about the pay. The employers treat us like slaves. It is worse if one doesn't speak good English. It is clear in their language and behavior--they seem to look down upon us, not to mention giving us less pay. As established immigrants, the employers in general play the role of a house guardian-deity or god.

There are many labor law violations, particularly of minimum wage regulations. Additionally, pension, sick day, benefits, and vacation are rarely covered. While professionals and workers were not reluctant to tell me their income, employers were less forthcoming. Unlike American businessmen, they are less able to determine their net income, costs, or profit, due to their patron-client form of management, and use of family labor.

Professionals and skilled workers working for others often earn incomes no better than that of workers. Among 33 informants told me their income, 17 earn below \$15,000 per year; 11 between \$15,000 and \$20,000; 4 between \$20,000 and \$25,000; and only 1 from \$25,000 to \$50,000.

below \$200 (yearly \$10,000)	: 8
from \$200 to \$250(\$ 12,500)	: 2
from \$250 to \$300(\$ 15,000)	: 7
from \$300 to \$400(\$ 20,000)	: 11
from \$400 to \$500(\$25,000)	: 4
from \$500 to \$600(\$ 30,000)	: 1
total	33

In sweatshops, skilled Merrow workers are paid better than the majority of Singer seamstresses who earn piece-rate wages as low as \$180 for a six-day work-week. Ms. Lee, now a Merrow worker indicated other problems with her job.

If I have to work on high-grade garments, requiring much care, I cannot even eat meals, due to my

indigestion. And sometimes when I repeat the same work for a long time, like making men's jogging clothes and T-shirts, I will be absentminded, thinking about something else. I then make mistakes for which I will have to be responsible.

Overall, there is little security or stability in the jobs that Korean workers hold. At sewing factories it is hard to get work after the busy season. In these Korean workplaces, workers are not paid at an hourly rate, but either a weekly wage, with low average earnings for long hours, or worse, by piece-rate. As a result of piecework, quarrels sometimes occur between workers over the preferred work tasks. Finally, there is little room for promotion or raises at workplaces like greengroceries or sewing factories.

Mr. Yun, a manager at a Korean greengrocery in Corona, said,

My starting salary a few years ago was \$200, while the store was renting from still another store. Now I could get \$250 as starting pay. If one works for six or seven months, the pay can be raised to \$280 or \$300. After one year's experience, I can get from \$330 to \$350, if I am lucky enough to work as a manager. But, that's the upper limit, no matter how much experience one has at a green grocery.

The working environment of sweatshops is often horrible, and many of the sewing factories are located in

basements, which are not well-ventilated. Because of work-produced dust, workers often have problems with their lungs or throat. Piecework leads workers to postpone trips to the rest room, resulting in problems with digestion, or constipation. Ms. Kim, a seamstress, illustrated her work schedule.

Even with four year's experience in garment factories, one cannot get a better wage than \$450. I work for a sewing factory on Broadway in Elmhurst from 7:30 a.m. to 6 P.M. We have coffee breaks around 10 a.m. and 3 P.M. for ten minutes, and 30 minutes for lunch.

She also explained the atmosphere in the factory in which she works.

Sometimes our boss distributes boiled pork, which according to Korean folk culture, gets rid of accumulated dust. And workers take turns bringing snacks for each other. Or, if they celebrate a special occasion at home, they also bring those special dishes to work.

I observed that workers were enjoying Chinese glutinous rice cake, "Chinese Tamale," brought by Chinese woman worker at another Korean garment factory in Elmhurst.

Another seamstress who works for a sewing factory in Long Island City, Queens, said,

As the sewing machine is operated by power, it is not necessary to have skill, but it is necessary to have enough energy to keep operating on the sewing machine,

as it is not for domestic use but for industrial use. Sometimes even old ladies can still do it. Anyone can learn the machine, but not everyone can learn how to sew fast. As I watched how others used their hands, I was able to learn easily. At first I earned \$120 per week, which is the same as what I earn now. Although I am highly skilled, due to the lack of work orders, I cannot make more money.

Workers at vegetable stands, surprisingly, are often undernourished because of the poor meals provided by employers. They also have work problems with store structures that are crowded and inconvenient to work around. Mr. Yun explained, "It depends on the circumstances of the store, but in the case of the Manhattan store where I worked, we had to carry all goods to the basement because of the narrow space. Here, they order goods from a Latin American food company which not only delivers goods, but also shelves them."

Immigrants without legal work-visa status are vulnerable to employer threats. Mr. Chung recollected that when he worked at a Korean bar, the owner preferred to hire people without green cards, whom he could pay lower wages.

Despite all these work conditions, several ideological factors combine to thwart the growth of class consciousness among workers. These include fears about joining labor unions, the Korean "familism" that permeates organizations including small businesses, and the strong desire by many

workers to start their own businesses. In Korea, people were not allowed to join labor unions until recently, and for many Koreans, fear and reluctance to join unions persists in America. Familism, a property of the Korean family and kinship system, gives little acknowledgment to the individual. One should not think of one's self apart from one's own family and group. This identification of individual and group is carried over to identification with one's work organization by workers, and is encouraged by paternalistic Korean employers (see pp. 129).

The ideology of establishing one's own small business as the route to success for Korean immigrants in the United States is prevalent in the Korean American community. Immigrants hear repeatedly that if one works hard, beginning one's own business is almost guaranteed. When one works for other Koreans, therefore, one considers this a transitional status. By the late 1980s, however, this was more likely to remain dream than reality. New Korean immigrants arrive in a different economic context, and more and more people will remain workers, despite their American dream.

It took six years for Mr. Lee to begin his own green grocer business. He spent all the money that he brought from Korea in Colorado before coming to New York. He worked at various Korean green groceries, and his wife now works with him at the store they bought with 70 percent of the purchase price from savings, and 30 percent from loans

from a friend and kin. In his opinion, this route of hard work and saving is not possible any more. "Now Koreans bring more capital, immigration from Korea is increasing, and so is the demand for and the price of stores. It is no longer possible, as it was in the mid-1980s, for Koreans to have their own stores by working hard and saving."

Mr. You, who works for a green grocer in Elmhurst, expressed a similar view. "Well, you may rent a store, but without operating funds you won't be able to run it. It was possible three or four years ago for any Korean to run a green grocery after working for some time, but not any longer. Now there is overcompetition among Korean greengrocers. And with rising commercial rents, you have no place to succeed."

There seems to be a more hierarchical structure emerging in the Korean community, not just among businessmen, professionals, and workers, but within the universe of Korean firms. Garment factories or vegetable stands have managers who are neither owners nor workers; at Korean restaurants, there are chefs and skilled workers above unskilled kitchen workers and waitresses. In Korean construction firms, there are skilled and unskilled workers. Cab drivers may be either self-employed, or work for a Korean cab company. Among the several hundred "Koreatown" wholesalers in Manhattan are scores of large capital-rich importers, some of whom own factories in Korea, and who supply many small Korean businesses

throughout New York City and America.

Still, in the Korean community in Queens, for most professionals, small businessmen, and workers, operating one's own small business remains the route to establishment, aniong. Other occupations are only transitional, or perhaps will become possibilities for their children's generation.

Consumption and Status

Although it was difficult to obtain solid, quantified data, I heard much discussion of, and could observe, Korean "conspicuous consumption" in Queens. Korean newspapers would whimsically report that if one sees an East Asian in a Cadillac, or wearing a mink coat and carrying a Gucci handbag, it is a Korean. On the other hand, they also reported that Koreans more often were robbed, for exactly that reason. In 1988, there was even a campaign not to drive Cadillac, organized by the Korean American Small Business Service Center.

The symbolic display of "establishment" in these forms occurred, of course, only among a privileged group of Koreans. Most working business proprietors were not exempt from labor. Yet, for other Korean immigrants who did not enjoy them, such symbols of establishment harmonized with their commitment to the Korean American dream. The situation closely resembled that depicted for late 19th century capitalist American by Veblen in his Theory of

Leisure Class.

In modern civilized communities the lines of demarcation between social classes have grown vague and transient, and where ever this happens the norm of reputability imposed by the upper class extends its coercive influence with but slight hindrance down through the social structure to the lowest strata. The result is that the members of each stratum accept as their ideal of decency the scheme of life in vogue in the next higher status, and bend their energies to live up to that ideal. On pain of forfeiting their good name and their self-respect in case of failure, they must conform to the accepted code, at least in appearance (1899:84).

In terms of consumption, Korean professionals, small businessmen, and workers exhibited a wide range of variation. More than half of the professionals and many businessmen own homes, while other small business owners and workers rent houses, apartments, rooms, or only a bed. Most professionals and businessmen own more than one car. Most workers own none. While many professional and business families can afford to and do buy traditional Korean clothes to wear on Korean holidays and other special events, workers cannot. It is not rare for workers to eat instant noodles, namyon, and other simple foods provided by their employers at work. As professionals frequent American restaurants in their work, they acquire greater

familiarity with American food than do businessmen or workers.

Most professionals and businessmen own televisions, stereo sets, and VCRs as well as western living room and dining room furniture, and Korean articles of furniture, such as mother-of-pearl bureaus, wardrobes, or cabinets, and sacred paintings. Any worker who has a television is fortunate; instead of stereos, they might own cassette recorders. Businessmen and professionals tend to purchase discounted cut-rate goods or shop at outlet stores in malls, and some do buying at fancy department stores. Workers buy from street peddlers.

In terms of health care, I asked my informants about the use of folk medicine, regular health checkups, consultation of nonmedical Korean folk specialists, the use of hospitals or clinics, and provision of health insurance. Workers are poorly covered in all these areas; and professionals are covered better than business owners.

Leisure time uses also index a growing stratification between established Korean Americans and immigrant workers. The term 'leisure,' as Veblen used it, "does not connote indolence or quiescence. What it connotes is nonproductive consumption of time. Time is consumed non-productively (1) from a sense of the unworthiness of productive work, and (2) as an evidence of pecuniary ability to afford a life of idleness" (1899:43).

Some workers and businessmen enjoy group drinking in

bars, or visit massage parlors. Professionals enjoy sports and picnics, and established businessmen are obsessed with golf. Golf tips are publicized in the Korean daily newspapers. Koreans are highly conscious of the line between those who can afford to play golf--perhaps some 10,000 in the New York area by 1989 and those who cannot. It is interesting to note that increasing numbers of professionals learn to play golf in order to socialize with small businessmen clients. Workers who enjoy bowling, pool and ping-pong, do not necessarily envy businessmen golfers. Yet, at the same time, I do not think they would reject this sport if they were to become "established."

At Korean churches most religious offices are occupied by professionals and businessmen.

Apart from sangnokhoe groups for the elderly, there are no organizations directed toward worker concerns. Alumni associations are important to professionals. Businessmen, however, seem to be the only participants in civic organizations, sports clubs, rotating credit clubs, or other social clubs. They also join their own business organizations like the Korean Dry Cleaners Association of New York (see Chapter 9). Professionals also tend to buy homes sooner than businessmen, who need to reinvest profits in their business.

Implications of Becoming Established

As professionals move to the suburbs they pay less attention to the Korean community. Several informants noted this, and believed that for this reason professionals assimilate into American society faster than other Koreans. Some also expressed the opinion that professionals tend to look down on businessmen and workers for their ignorance of the American legal and social system, their limited English, and their obsession with making money. The long history of Confucianism in Korea provides a certain logic to the critique of this obsession with money-making. In the context of a Korean American dream, Confucian ideology seems to have lost some of its force. For instance, a Korean American newspaper has published many complaints from Korean patients about malpractice and monetary exploitation by Korean doctors. (Many Korean medical doctors responded by withdrawing ads from these papers.) Korean newspapers have also reported several cases of the swindling by Korean real estate agents of new immigrants with savings to invest.

A further example of un-Confucian professional behavior was provided by one of my informants, a dry cleaner.

When Mrs. Lee and her husband bought a new car, they purchased automobile insurance from a Korean company. Six months later, they got a letter from the Department of Motor Vehicles in Albany that their

uninsured car had been sold by New York State to someone else. They were shocked to learn that the insurance company did not process their registration and insurance. Finally they had to pay a fine. Eventually the insurance company accepted responsibility. Later Mrs. Lee heard that many Koreans before them were exploited in the same way by this company.

Established Korean businessmen grow more and more distant from workers. In their opinion, workers do not desire to stay on the job permanently, or prefer to be idle. As one businessman sees it, "A worker tries to figure out how to run the business. As soon as he achieves his goal, he does not care about the job. Sometimes we do not want to hire Koreans for this reason. However, they do learn the work fast, and are efficient compared to other people." Sometimes business owners install video cameras to watch employees as well as customers.

To workers, businessmen seem to enjoy an easy life. In vegetable stands in Manhattan, they point out, employers often have a manager take care of the store almost all the time. Employers tend to exploit workers by paying low wages, or by not hiring enough workers for the task involved. As workers are easily found due to the increasing number of Korean immigrants, it is difficult to retain employment. Some employees even slander others to curry favor with their employer. People seem to be more

and more frustrated as it becomes ever more difficult to realize the dream of establishing one's own business (chagi kage katki).

Despite the fact that in terms of educational level and former job experience most workers are no different from businessmen or professionals, workers must be patient during the several years needed to amass the savings with which to establish themselves. The ideology of social mobility among Korean immigrants is perpetuated despite the incomplete realization for many of the Korean American dream. Underneath the continuing quest, we note increasing antagonism between different classes, and growing awareness of conflict within the Korean American community.

Chapter 5

Establishment and the Domestic Cycle

In this chapter, I examine the impact of immigrant small business on the organization of domestic life. As Korean immigrants seek to realize their American dream as self-employed small business proprietors, one of the most important means to success is the full use of family and kin labor. Since most Korean immigrants begin their businesses with limited capital, the labor of family members is critical.

In their quest for establishment each Korean immigrant seeks to move through successive stages in a domestic organization cycle. At each stage, one is influenced by both opinions of others and one's own evaluation of whether or not to move on to the next stage. Serious discussions are held to analyze whether a man, and then a couple, are doing well enough to: get married, have babies, invite parents and siblings from Korea, buy a business, buy a house, support financially one's parents, or launch other relatives. At each step, the Korean cultural concept of "establishment" (anjong) is considered, with different meanings according to the successive stages of the domestic cycle.

Following Yanagisako (1979), I will separate

conceptually families, co-residential groups, and domestic functions. These distinctions prod the ethnographer to explicate the exact ideology and composition of social units, and to describe precisely the functions they perform, and not leave it to the reader to fill in with his or her own cultural assumptions.

Following Yanagisako's distinction between family and household, for the Korean immigrants I studied, households were larger and more inclusive than the number of family members contained within them. For 90 households, size varied from one to seven individuals; mean household size was 4.2. Mean family size was 3.7. Some 19% of my 91 informants live with those who are not family members. The forms of household organization included 50 percent composed solely of nuclear families (husband and wife with or without children), and 20 percent of stem families (two married couples of two adjacent generations, with or without other unmarried children) (see appendix C).

Statistics do not tell what is actually going on inside the Korean immigrant household as it passes through the stages of establishment [1]. My study of households follows Sanjek's point that "the set of universal activities provides a more comprehensive basis for analyzing and comparing households over time and between cultures than does the household composition approach" (1982:58). As Korean households in Queens go through

metamorphosis, they "exist within a political-economic context of employment structures, relations to the control of production, and classes" (Sanjek 1982:99). Small business and the stratification associated with it molds Korean American household form and composition, and produces a predictable, culturally recognized set of transformations, as a snake sheds its skin in autumn.

Korean immigrant families and households reorganize according to the necessities of immigrant life. Family and kin, even those who were not close in Korea, tend at first to live together. Over time, individual family members leave to form new households by marrying, or to join another family. American immigration law allow most people who migrate to come only if they are related by blood to a sponsor. Since migration for Koreans is normally a family decision, not an individual one, it was typical for a couple in their 20s or 30s to bring their children, and then later invite their parents and siblings to the United States. Koreans who come to America have no choice but to rely on family members in a foreign environment. Even in the two-decade old Korean community of New York, there are few channels other than family, kin, or friends to which a recent immigrant can turn.

We must also relate immigrant household form to housing conditions. Many Korean immigrants live in rented apartments or rented single-family homes. In Korea, it is

more common to live in private houses. Moreover, as Koreans invest their money in business rather than housing, the proportion of homeownership is lower for Korean immigrants than Americans in general. In Korea it is possible to live in housing by chunse, paying a large refundable deposit on occupancy, but without monthly rent. Such arrangements are not possible in America.

American housing differs from Korean construction style and room arrangement. Many who lived in apartment buildings in Korea are disappointed in the small size and poor maintenance of apartment buildings in Queens. They find walls are thin compared to those in Korea. The smaller housing space available to Korean immigrant households impedes realization of their traditional norm of co-residential living by three or four generations. Few of them find it comfortable to live together in a small space and still maintain proper social distances. Therefore, they often find themselves living with non-kin roommates or housemates. Yet, even non-kin renter roommates or housemates share cooking, dishwashing, cleaning, and other tasks. In these arrangements, people apply the standards of Korean domestic organization.

The Korean notion of household coresidence implies sharing meals, no matter how many families constitute a household. In the American context Korean immigrants organize the many households of unmarried single persons by

sharing all domestic activities among household members; often the oldest household member is responsible for paying rent, or decisions about other household expenses.

Kin-related roommates may share finances, but if a man works for his kin without pay, and is promised support toward establishment of his own business, he will be provided free room and board. One of my informants co-residing with his sister did not pay rent while he worked for her husband in the Bronx. After he found a job on his own in Manhattan, however, he was expected to pay his sister rent for the room. (Nevertheless, he is still pressured to help his brother-in-law in the business after he finishes his own job.) Meals for Koreans involved in small business, either as employer or employee, are taken at the workplace. Many co-workers thus share three meals a day (see appendix C).

My data show that most Korean immigrants work for kin members during the initial settlement period. This presents a more exacting, but also more ambiguous, work situation for kin than for paid workers. New kin employees are trying to save for themselves, while also being cooperative and agreeable, hoping to gain business information and assistance from their relative-employer. Once independent in his own business, the former employee will in turn establish a labor supply of his own kin members.

After establishing a small business, Min (1986:33) points out, a husband and wife need to work together and share drudgery and hardship. This, in turn, reinforces the conjugal tie. Bonacich, however, suggests that involvement in small businesses leads to marital problems in the Korean community (1988:125).[2] Hong (1982:130) reports that Koreans in Los Angeles appear to be less happy with their marriages than the general married population of the United States--even though a substantial majority of Koreans describe their marriage as "happy" or "very happy."

For Korean immigrants in Queens, the organization of domestic life [3] is connected fundamentally to their new activities in small business. Yet try as they may, only a few Korean American households will complete the full cycle of establishment (owning one's own business; bringing parents and siblings from Korea; and a home in the suburbs.) Many are not able to pass through all of its stages, due to business failure, a mismatch between their goals and available relatives and immigration law, expenses for education and rituals, and other factors.

Korean immigrants may arrive through, and at first depend on interpersonal connections, but the critical question is how soon they can start their own business. When a man invites a family member, he must be ready to accommodate him. This decision will be influenced by how "established" he is, and how this is perceived and

evaluated by fellow Koreans in the Korean American community. A woman immigrant who does not marry in Korea is forced to search for a husband in New York. (Single women are said to be contaminated by American ideas, and are less welcome as wives by men in Korea.) After marriage, these Korean American couples enter a stage similar to that experienced by single men. However, in these cases (and also for war-brides married to Americans), the wife plays the more important role through chain migration in deciding who is going to be sponsored, and when. One reason for this is that more women than men hold United States citizenship. Until 1976, women, as nurses or war-brides, migrated in greater numbers than men, and initiated the developmental cycle. In recent years, however, more single men have been initiating the cycle. In either case, after several years' struggle, and when the couple feel secure, they invite either or both sets of parents. Current immigration law makes it easier than before 1976 to invite parents and children. Next, the parents invite their other children, the siblings of the initiators of the cycle. These siblings move out into their own households as soon as they marry. (This follows Korean ideals of household composition.)

The parents then tend to progress through periods of residence in each of their children's homes, forming stem family households in sequence. This differs dramatically

from the cultural rule of parents living with the eldest son, as they do in Korea. As each child arrives in the United States, and marries, the parents may move into the new household. In many cases, parents will have rotated through the homes of first their daughters, then the third son and the second son, and finally, the eldest son. This sequence reflects the order in which the children have immigrated, and has much to do with marital status in Korea, army service, and the cultural orientation toward American life of each of the children. Those who are most reluctant to immigrate to America, frequently older siblings, tend to come last, if at all. Often daughters come first, and the eldest son is the last to migrate.

Domestic decisions about household composition and location are based on the varying ideological understandings of each generation and their experience in Korea and America. In Korea the eldest son often migrates from the countryside to the urban areas first, for higher education. Later other siblings join him, and after these siblings have married, their parents often move from the countryside and live with their urban-based children. In urban Korea the daughter's family may try to live near her parents' household, but in America, it is the parents who are eager to live with their daughter.

The daughter-in-law here is often reluctant to accommodate her parents-in-law from Korea in her new

house. The couple will first consider the reputation of the school district as a priority in choosing where to buy a house. The elderly parents may be reluctant to join their children's family in an American suburb.

In this context, the American welfare system may play an important role in domestic decisions. In the United States, unlike Korea, children do not have to live with their parents to guarantee their support in old age. With SSI (Supplemental Security Income), or housing in a senior citizen residence, elderly parents may remain in the Queens Korean community, living by themselves even after their children achieve "establishment". Contrary to their original intention, neither parents nor children may feel comfortable living together over a long period of time, either because of the smaller living space in apartments, dislike of suburban isolation by parents, or changed expectations from both sides.

Even when the original couple is about to buy a roomy house in suburban Long Island or Bayside, the elderly parents may prefer the company of other Korean elderly, and the convenience of the Korean shopping and social life in Flushing or Elmhurst, where newly immigrating Koreans continue to arrive and settle. As parents living independently, they may rely on a combination of welfare, their children's support, and their own employment. When they live with children, parents tend to live in their

daughters' households.

At the beginning stage, kin and families tend to cooperate with each, but as each family member establishes his or her own business, and forms an independent household, cooperation decreases. However, I have come across few Korean families in which all the children are fully established. It is common for parents to keep moving to the households of their less established children, usually providing childcare and other household services.

In the following sections I will explore in more detail the stages that the Korean American household undergoes through its American transformation.

Five Stages in the Cycle of Establishment

Single Men (N=17). Mr. Lee works at a grocery in Elmhurst and lives in Sunnyside. A community college graduate, he came to America in 1983 for further study and stayed. He lives with four male roommates, all high school graduates, in a two-bedroom apartment. He occupies the living room, which has no curtain to provide privacy, and pays \$90 a month toward the rent. Roommate A is 50 years old, roommate B 41, roommate C 40, roommate D 30. Mr. Lee is 27 years, and unmarried. He eats rice and kimch'i at home for breakfast, and takes both lunch and dinner, mostly western food, at the grocery where he works. His employer is his

mother's sister's husband. At home, the oldest roommate does most of the cooking. Other housework, such as dishwashing and cleaning, is managed by turns. No one does any ironing. Mr. Lee said. "I have never done housework in Korea, as my family members did it for me. Here, as it is necessary to do it, I feel annoyed, sometimes reluctant to do it. However, thanks to a gas range and hot water, it is much more convenient. Shopping is easier than in Korea.

Mr. Kang works at a green grocery and also lives in Elmhurst. He is 25 years old, and recently divorced. A high school graduate, he is an undocumented worker in America, where he has now been for six months. He is a Buddhist, but now cannot attend temple because of his legal status. He lives with six other male roommates, from 25 to 46 years in age. Mr. Kang described his daily routine.

I take namyon^c [noodle] as breakfast, and Korean food at lunch at the store where I work. I eat pizza or Chinese food for dinner in a restaurant. At home we do not cook, though, we do have a kitchen. At the store my employer's wife cooks for the employees. At home, most housework is managed by taking turns. This is the first time in my life to do any housework. Living with others I feel responsible for what I am doing, and in a way it seems imperative for me to do it.

Mr. Yun is 40. He came to America in 1982 and lives in Corona where he is a manager at a vegetable stand. He lives in a rooming house--four very small rooms in a single family house. His wife, and two daughters and a son, are still in Seoul. He stated:

I take namyon with my colleagues at work, and eat excellent Korean food for lunch. I either cook at home, or eat takeout food for dinner. Often my colleagues and I get together to drink after work. As I do all my housework, because of my situation, I think Korea is more convenient for me. Here, I do not even eat properly. However, I admit that household facilities are more convenient here.

Mr. Kim, a 31 year-old college graduate, works at a green grocery. He has been in America for two years. Mr. Kim is the leaseholder of a one-bedroom apartment, and his other roommates are always changing. They do no vacuuming. Anybody who feels the house is dirty cleans it. He said:

In terms of housework, I do not mind the difference from Korea. But, in terms of work, here it is much more difficult. When I get up in the evening for work, I feel my body is as heavy as a lump of iron. I feel so tired that I cannot get up easily. In Korea, I used to work at the Yugong gas company as a welder, and later as a foreman. There I was supposed to work

12 hours, and in fact I worked 15 or 16 hours. And yet, I did not feel so tired as I do here.

Among these single men, there are four groups. The first is that of young men who are not yet married. The families of these men are mostly in Korea. Many of these men are undocumented. But whether they come legally or not, they dream of "establishment." Until they are acknowledged by other Koreans to have made enough money, they do not think of marriage. Then people come up with marriage proposal, or at least are eager to introduce women as possible spouses, at church. They sometimes delay marriage until they have their own businesses. Until then, they are very clear about working and saving money. Once one is married, one is considered more trustworthy for business loans.

Second are the married men who left their families in Korea. They may belong to any age group. Their situation is worse than that of the single men because they are under pressure to send money in order to support their family members in Korea. In some cases they send virtually all they make, leading very frugal lives alone in America.

The third and fourth categories of single persons are women, either unmarried or divorced. They may be nurses or other professionals, or nonprofessionals. The major difference between single men and women is that more single women have legal status.

The many single men who left wives and children in Korea, and who are undocumented, have no way to sponsor them. Even when one is able legally to invite one's family here, it usually is after a long period of single life. A man will wait until he and others feel he is established enough to invite them. So, Korean immigrant "single" men are not necessarily young or unmarried. They may be middle-aged, with children in Korea.

With no women available to do their housework, these Korean men for the first time have to do dishes, clean kitchens and bathrooms, vacuum, dispose of garbage, and do laundry themselves. These tasks are conducted either individually or with a division of male household labor. As a result, there is both a rise in independence for men, who now handle housework, and the rise of a communal life style among men. This communal life is managed in various ways. For instance, if one does laundry, another person vacuums, and a third does other kinds of cleaning. Or, they may take turns, each doing laundry for a month. Sometimes tasks are managed by a head tenant, someone who is older, or more experienced at certain tasks, particularly cooking. In other households, whoever comes home first cooks rice before the others arrive.

To a Korean woman, it is intriguing that single Korean men develop these domestic skills relatively easily, due to their unique living situations. Some older men or young

single males confessed that although they started to do housework out of necessity, they found it interesting, a new field to plough. At the same time, many single men do rely mostly on instant food such as namyon, or buy already-prepared foods at Korean groceries, and heat them up at home. Often single men eat most meals at work. To a lesser extent, this applies to single women too. But single Korean women give little attention to cooking for themselves, and often skip meals. Even some married women informants stated that when their husbands are away from home, they neglect to cook, or eat very simply.

To conclude, this first stage of domestic organization is found commonly among workers, particularly men, and those who have not lived long in America. People at this stage are struggling to save money. They are eager to move on to the next stage by inviting family members from Korea. If they are not married, they are under social pressure from family and community to prepare themselves to marry.

Married Couples (N=13). Mr. Pi is a yellow cab driver in his early 30s. His wife is a waitress at a Korean restaurant. They live in a one-bedroom apartment in Elmhurst. It is two years since he immigrated to the United States, at his wife's invitation, after they fell in love and married in Korea. His wife first came to America through her sister's invitation three years earlier.

While I work from 5 in the evening to 5 in the morning, my wife works from 11 in the morning until 11 at night. We therefore have little time to see each other. As another consequence of this busy schedule, I also participate in housework, at least cooking rice and warming up dishes already prepared. I also wash dishes. The rest of the housework, such as cleaning, is done by my wife.

Min (1986) stated that in many characteristics the Korean American family is more traditional than the American family, but more modern than the Korean family in Korea. However, the Korean American family is in fact more "modern" than even the American family. Korean American women have a higher labor force participation rate, and a lower fertility rate, than other American women. However, these statistics need to take into account the household transformations of the "establishment" cycle. At some stages, the Korean American household looks more traditional than the American one, but at other stages it appears more modern.

Korean women tend to join the family business as their husbands establish it. Before this, they work independently. However, housework at this stage before children are born is not divided equally, and most of the burden is left to the wives. Men participate in meal preparation as far as cooking rice, a fairly easy task. In

America people cook rice mostly in an electric rice cooker, while in Korea they use the rice cooker only to keep rice warm. Here technology helps those men who share housework.

In dish washing, women here also get some help from husbands, since it is considered more a man's job than cooking. It is not common yet to see Korean men wash dishes, but it is most likely when a couple lives by themselves. The male contribution will decrease when there are other family or kin members in the household.

In these Queens Korean households, 61 percent of ironing is done by women; in 11 percent by men only; and in 25 percent by both, but many informants made comments like this: "Do you think we need to iron? We wear only casual work clothes here. Unlike Korea, I hardly have any need to do ironing. Here it is only when I go to church on Sunday that I have a chance to dress up." In America people tend to dress less formally, and many Koreans at this stage have jobs which do not require carefully ironed garments.

Washing clothes is done in 53 percent of the households exclusively by women; in 9 percent by men; and in 35 percent by both. Some 63 percent do laundry in public places, in laundromats or apartment basement laundry rooms, and 37 percent do it at home. It is a new situation for Korean immigrants to use public laundromats, which are not favored as yet in Korea. Here 86 percent use washing machines; and 14 percent do laundry by hand. It may be

surprising that many people still rely on washing by hand, but some will say, "You know, I tried to wash it by machine. The clothes did not come out as clean as by hand. In terms of hygiene it is no good. So I keep doing it by hand." Some who use laundromats, but do have machines in the basements of their apartment buildings, told me, "It's dangerous. It is almost deserted. Especially after I heard that many women were raped while doing laundry with no one around, I stopped going there."

At this stage husband and wife are eager to work as hard as possible, and to save in preparation for their future small business. As a result, some couples leave children in Korea. Others delay having babies until they feel themselves established here. This stage is as difficult as any other for wives, who must do most of the housework. She does not yet have any help from other family members or kin. It is a much more difficult stage than the first years of marriage in Korea, where women get housework assistance by employing household workers, as well as from nearby family or kin.

Couples with children (N=36). Mr. Paik is in his mid-40s. He came to America in 1972 as the manager of a New York branch of a Korean company. In 1976 his wife joined him. After that they lived in Elmhurst for three years, and now live in New Jersey. Every Sunday they return to their old

neighborhood to worship. They run a fish market, and live in a rented apartment. In addition, he owns a vegetable stand which he has asked his brother-in-law to run for him. At home, he said,

Most of the housework is done by my wife. My children do the dishes and help their mother with laundry. We have three daughters, 14, 13, and 3 years-old, and a one year-old son. On weekends our children help us in the store. We give them an allowance. As far as day care is concerned, we pay the Korean Episcopal church in our neighborhood \$230 a month, and they pick up our 3 year-old daughter. We also hire a Korean woman baby-sitting lady to take care of one year-old baby, paying her \$400 a month.

Families at this stage include those who immigrated to America with their children. If children are young enough to need a baby-sitting, the families who have their own business can afford to hire one. In other cases, the parents of a couple often visit their adult children, whether in Korea or America, and for these periods can be baby-sitters. Sometimes children stay with other relatives in America who are established enough to take care of them. But older children who live with their parents make a contribution of their labor to the family business, and this occurs under the ever more competitive conditions Korean immigrants face.

My 36 families at this stage include 42 percent who have two children; 36 percent who have three children; 22 percent who have only one child; those with more than three children who comprise under 10 percent. These numbers accord well with the substantial drop in fertility that accompanies Korean immigration. The United States Census for 1980 reported 2,097 children per 1,000 Korean immigrant women age 35 to 44. The comparable figure for women of this age group in Korea is 4,036. (For native-born American women was 2,652 in 1980.) In other words, a Korean immigrant woman has on average two children, in comparison to four children for woman who remain in Korea.

Why the lower fertility rate of Korean immigrants? Min (1986) relates this to two factors. First, that Korean immigrants are in many ways a select group whose fertility would be lower than average in Korea anyway. Second, that the difficulties of adjustment for Korean immigrants serve as a restrictive force on fertility. These factors undoubtedly play their role, but they work through the cultural presence of the high motivation toward "establishment", and the desire to realize the Korean American dream. For many Korean immigrants, it is not until they are established in their own small business that they plan to have babies. And those who already do may leave their children with their parents in Korea, postponing united living arrangements (and more children),

until this stage of establishment is reached.

Once it is, the impact of small business is perhaps nowhere greater than in the use of child labor by Korean immigrant entrepreneurs. In Korea, children in middle and upper class households (including college students) are prohibited from doing anything beyond their studies. In America, however, the parents find themselves facing a different norm. They see American parents paying their children for their labor (in allowances, or rewards for housework). They also place a value on the use of their children's labor as a simple and cost-free way to save wage expenses and to advance their business.

Some Korean parents are critical of the American parental attitude. They think that it is wrong to let their children accumulate money in this way and thereby develop a financially calculating side to the parent/child relationship. But, because they usually speak English better than their parents, the children's labor contribution in the store is highly valued. In some cases, the picture emerges where the youngster takes care of the cash register after school and on weekends, the middle-aged couple manage other store activities (taking care of fruits and vegetables, in the case of a green grocery), and the grandmother remains in the kitchen behind the store. In some extreme cases, parents force their children to work long hours in the store because they are obsessed with the

idea of making money quickly, and accelerating their "establishment." Still, many other parents do not want their children to do anything other than study.

Because many parents at this stage are so preoccupied with business, they hardly have time, energy, or emotional reserve to give to their children. In Korea, the mother would stay home and take care of the children. In the United States it becomes difficult for parents even to communicate with their children because of the hard work and long hours.

Another factor that affects the parent-child relationship is the Korean parents' expectations that teachers should educate their children in both knowledge and morality. This stems from the fact that in Korea teachers are expected to do and they do so, following Confucian influences. They are soon disappointed in the lack of moral education provided in American schools. To make matters worse, parents tend to lose authority over, and respect from, their children because they have to rely on them for translation, interpretation, and other purposes.

As far as daytime baby-sitting and childcare is concerned, parents are dependent wholly on elderly Korean women. If they cannot yet afford to hire a baby-sitting, and they do not have one of their own mothers to help out, it is common to see a couple at work in their business with

babies and children about. In a few extreme cases, a few informants reported, they saw that parents give their babies sleeping pills, and leave them in the store van while they work. I personally observed Korean children playing at a beauty salon and in a restaurant.

Childcare outside the immediate household is best conducted within the kin network. Babies or young children are taken care of by either the mother at work, or, preferably, by her mother or mother-in-law, or non-kin older women through kin connections. Some also leave or send their children to kin in Korea, usually their mother or mother-in-law, or a brother or sister. The few paid Korean baby-sitters so far have mostly been old women from the local Queens Korean American community. A few parents prefer old men as baby-sitters, for boys.

Most baby-sitters live nearby in the neighborhood. Some of them move in as a member of the household. If they live with their husbands, old women tend to confine child care to their grandchildren. But if they are widows, they tend to work as paid baby-sitters. This situation is new to Koreans; in Korea no elderly women earn their livelihood in baby-sitting. The only thing that comes close to this are those middle or upper class households which hire a young woman yumo (nanny), cha'nmo (cook), or sikmo (housemaid).

In my interviews, I asked about the specifics of childcare arrangements--such jobs as dressing, feeding,

bathing, putting to bed, supervising, disciplining, watching homework, and giving allowances. Of course, many older children do these tasks themselves, but almost half of childcare work is done by the children's mothers. the other persons who do childcare tasks are primarily co-resident paternal or maternal grandmothers. Fathers assist to a lesser degree. One-third still needed some assistance in their childcare arrangements. I suspect that in America, because of the language and culture problems, more husbands are concerned about their children's education than in Korea. Despite this trend, monitoring homework is done mostly by mothers.

Giving an allowance is something new to most Korean immigrants. Some see it as a very cold and calculating practice. Others try to adopt this American custom with the hope that their children will learn how to manage finances. It is mostly given by the mother. Only a few fathers gave allowances to children. Even in Korea, it is usually the wife who is in charge of family finances, a practice that seems to continue in America. Men here will say that the pay check is too small for them to deal with, or that women inherently are good at money matters.

So, to which school do my 61 Queens Korean parent informants send their children? Some 45 percent send them to public schools; 30 percent to non-religious private schools; and 25 percent to parochial schools. Some Korean

scholars state that because college in Korea is very expensive, many Koreans immigrate to the United States to provide their children with opportunities for higher education (Hurh et al. 1979; Kim 1978:189; Min 1987). Certainly an increasing number of Koreans, for whatever reasons, do want their children to get an education in the United States. People are aware that admission to a good university is very competitive in Korea; some also think American universities are better than Korean ones.

According to the 1980 Census, the Korean group shows the highest level of suburban residence of all ethnic groups. Koreans show an eagerness to buy houses in affluent suburban areas where they can send their children to private schools to better prepare them for good colleges. Some who send their children to parochial schools, in particular Roman Catholic schools, are Protestants. This is because they believe such institutions emphasize moral education. A few families also send their children for instruction at Buddhist temples, even though they are Protestants. This decision is made out of the conviction that Buddhist education imparts training in Korean culture, including its moral values.

Mr. Um is critical of Korean children in America; they do not seem to pay attention to keeping the language alive, he feels.

I see children who came here at the age of four or five who, when they are seven years old, have already forgotten Korean. Chinese children first of all try to learn Chinese, and then, later, English. If our knee-high generation Koreans do not speak Korean, they won't get jobs at American workplaces looking for bilingual staff.

Mr. Kong pointed out what he feels are the bad effects of Americanization on children. "American democracy is fine, but strong individualism leads to a loss of proper morality, and a further breakup of the family system. Unlike Korean children, American or Korean American children do not appreciate what parents do for them, supporting their studies and so on. They think of it just as a parental duty." He is furious about his own son's attitudes. Although he works hard to support his son, his son says, "You supported me because you are supposed to do so. That's your matter; I have nothing to do with that."

Mrs. Shin balances her views with a sense of the difficulties Korean children go through at school. "Adults here do not seem to change a lot. But children here have lots of problems: their parents are always at work; they do not know how to deal with the stresses coming from their new life in America. They begin to make bad friends, and may not pay attention to their studies.

Families with Coresident Adult Relatives (N=27). Mrs. Kim and her husband are pharmacists. They live in Elmhurst with their 9 year-old daughter and Mrs. Kim's 61 year-old mother. Her mother does baby-sitting and most of the cooking. Her husband does dishes, most ironing, and occasionally the laundry, at home. Most house cleaning is done by her or her mother. "Before my mother came, my husband used to cook simple things that required boiling water, and do the dishwashing. But now, he does less and less."

Mr. Un lives with his brother's family, which includes the brother's wife and two sons. His brother works at a Korean photo shop in Manhattan, and his sister-in-law at a garment factory. "Most of the housework is done by me, as I am currently unemployed. On Sunday I do laundry at the laundromat. I take care of my nephews, including preparing food for them."

Mr. Choi, in his late 30s, runs a fish market in Washington Heights, Manhattan. He also bought a shoe repair shop in Bronx for his father-in-law to run, with a Latin American helper, in order to earn pocket money. He lives in a rented apartment in Sunnyside with his wife, two sons, and his parents-in-law. Mr. Choi came to America in 1974, his wife in 1980, his parents-in-law in 1982. Most housework is done by his wife or his mother-in-law, while he or his father-in-law take out the garbage. His wife and

mother-in-law do laundry, and together take care of the four year-old boy and the one year-old baby.

Mr. Kim, in his 40s, owns an automobile bodyshop in Corona, and lives in Elmhurst. He has six workers, including his two brothers. The price for the shop, when he bought it in the early 1980s, was \$145,000, of which he had to pay half as down-payment. He lives with his wife, teenage son and daughter, and the two brothers. He came to America in 1979. His wife has worked as cook in a grocery for three years. Now that Mr. Kim is "established" to some extent, his wife is able to take some time off to do the neglected housework. She wants to open her own business, and he wants to help her, but they do not have a clear idea yet of what business will be best. At home, most cooking and cleaning is done by his wife. Laundry depends on who has free time at a particular moment. The teenage children do nothing but school work. Both Mr. Kim and his wife supervise and discipline them, and his wife provides them with an allowance.

Some couples with children and other coresident relatives are closer to "establishment" than others. In some cases, a couple may invite their parents to join them even before their first child is born. Others invite siblings, uncles, or aunts after children are in their teens, and the couple's parents already have been sponsored. By this stage, the family already has a family

business. In some cases, their other brothers and sisters are even more "established" and own houses.

In these cases, we see Korean families becoming more complex, adding both lineal and collateral household members. The relationship between grandparents and grandchildren is particularly important for those able to reach this stage of the domestic cycle. Most grandparents do baby-sitting; and only 25 percent of them do not. In addition, grandparents contribute housework, and in some cases work in family business. For households at this stage, only 3 percent of baby-sitters are non-kin, among my informants, none used formal day-care centers. Mothers preferred grandparent baby-sitters and reported difficulties in getting good, elderly female baby-sitters. On the other hand, the old women who do this work complain that people try to exploit them by not paying decent wages for their services. Another significant problem is generational differences between mother-in-law or mother (or elderly sitters), and daughters who adopt American childcare standards in varying degrees.

In these families with adult relatives, cooking is still mostly done by women. In only 7 percent of these households do men participate at all. But here, the women involved are mothers, grandmothers, sisters, daughters, and aunts. Clearly housework overall is managed by more women than the wife-mother.

During my research, many informants read their own implicit meanings in my questions about housework and gender ideas. A few even seemed to be embarrassed. For instance, when I was conducting an interview with Mrs. Chung in front of male household members, she seemed to be proud of her contribution to household work. The men were subdued. Then they started to argue about who was or was not committed to a democratic division of household labor. I didn't know what to say. Although I was primarily interested in learning the facts, the informants went beyond answering the questions. They were very sensitive about their own norms or ideals. More often than not, while women seemed to take pride in answering questions about housework, men hurried to explain why they could not do more.

Many women seemed to feel these questions put them in a good light. And of course both men and women knew that I was a woman, and would be writing about Koreans in America for a broader audience. But a few women did not understand why I asked such questions. In their mind, it is only to be expected that women do the housework, especially cooking. In other cases, a few of men explained why it was less difficult for them to contribute to housework in America than in Korea. According to them, Korean culture and the structure of housing make it difficult for men to do so in Korea. In Korea, since most men get together with

their colleagues after work, they have little time to help their wives or mothers. Also, they said, the kitchen structures and facilities in Korea make it less convenient for men to help their wives. They contend that here in America, it is better facilities that make it easier for men to take part in housework.

In a mail survey study of men's changing family roles Ahn (1986) compared families in Korea with immigrant Korean families in the New York metropolitan area. He found that husbands' increased participation in Korean immigrant families was correlated with their wives' employment outside the home, and the lesser availability of other adult females in these households. My research certainly confirms this. Ahn concluded that the use of American-style housework technology was not significantly related to husband's housework, before or after immigration. He also concluded that husbands' "western" values had a stronger impact on housework participation in Korea than in the United States.

In general, I found that males of lower socioeconomic status tended to do more housework, principally because they live alone or in male-only households. Otherwise, I could see little difference in terms of any criteria other than age or family developmental cycle stage. Some elderly men and some single men confessed that even though they started to do housework out of necessity, they found it

satisfying, a new challenge for them. This scenario might arise in households where the labor of older women is more valued in the family business than in the household, leaving elderly males alone at home to do the necessary housework.

Vacuuming is done by men in these households more than any other category of housework (see appendix) [4]. Still in 42 percent of households vacuuming is done by only women, and in 37 percent only by men. I suspect the reason why vacuuming is done more frequently by men than other tasks of social reproduction is related to traditional notions of male and female. Vacuuming is regarded as a job needing physical strength, and as machine-related, both considered more men's work than women's.

In cleaning bathrooms, it is interesting to note that the highest proportion of participation by all household members marks this task. I think this is due to the Korean notion that a bathroom should be cleaned each time by whoever uses it. As Koreans shower as often as possible in America, it is difficult for a wife or mother to clean the bathroom all the time. Even though a bathroom is cleaned after each use by family members democratically, it is women who in most cases sweep up hairs, or scrub the bathtub. The more occasional heavy cleaning of sink, bathroom floor, and bathtub still is done by the housewife more often than other household members.

Some of my informants recalled interesting episodes regarding Korean use of American bathrooms. One remembers how he regularly flooded the bathroom, since he at first washed his body outside the bathtub, as he used to in Korea. Some continue to use special rubber or straw-mat slippers restricted to the bathroom.

In addition, many Koreans here, particularly if they are old, insist on the Korean custom of sleeping on the floor, using either a Korean or American mattress. Some also prefer the Korean pillow which is hard, and stuffings with millet husks.

Mrs. Mun, who runs a meat market in Elmhurst with her husband, thinks that Korean elders, especially women, are greatly exploited. "As far as I can see, the Korean elderly seem to work too much to support their children and their businesses, for example, taking care of babies and housework like my mother." Mrs. Chung, in her 60s, expressed the despair shared among many elderly Korean. "Other Korean elderly women have told me that they do not want to come to America because they cannot go freely where they like, and they have to cook for their working son and daughter or daughter-in-law."

Mr. Han, in his 50s told me,

I think it is good for Koreans to migrate here, but only for the young generations, not for the elderly, since we experience strong homesickness. However,

parents need to understand their children and the way of life here. Most problems with adult parent-child relationships stem from the specific characteristics of American society, not from the children's intentions.

Some expressed more critical views of how the Korean elderly are doing here.

They should work as hard as the American elderly, if possible, with a firm belief in God. I also hope that they will change their attitude of treating their daughters-in-law differently from their own daughters. In particular, our Korean senior citizen centers should be run in a new way, not letting them just eat and play.

Many elderly Koreans encounter elderly people who are not Koreans. They are critical in many ways of how Americans treat the elderly. Mr. Paik, in his twenties, a store employee, said,

When I was living in Sunnyside, all of a sudden I no longer saw the white old man who lived near me. At his funeral, no one showed up. Next to my apartment, when the super rang the bell, another old man was found dead. How horrible it is! The American old people seem to lead very lonely lives. Of course, that's partly due to the American social structure and partly because those old people want to do so.

However, I know that in fact the elderly want to be with someone.

In Korean households at this stage of establishment, the most difficult relationship is between grandparents and grandchildren. While the grandparent generation speak only Korean, grandchildren speak only English. There is a communications breakdown. The grandparent generation also has problems with their own children, including disputes provoked by the traditionally volatile Korean mother-in-law and daughter-in-law relationship (see chapter 7). Although adult children sponsor their parents' immigration in order to live together, and to take care of them in their old age, all generations encounter difficulties living together in America.

"Established families" and the Korean elderly. When a family becomes established enough to buy a house, there is usually a change in terms of the living arrangements of co-resident household members. In many cases, the elderly grandparent generation members move out to live independently. My research was conducted in the core Queens areas of Korean settlement, so I did not include "established" families in suburbs in my direct field of participant observation. I did, however, learn about their lives from some who continued to maintain business and church in Elmhurst and nearby areas, and from their elderly

parents, whose situation I focus on here.

When adult children buy a house in suburban neighborhoods in Queens, the family group, in some cases, continues to live together. If the house is in either New Jersey or Long Island, however, where there are few other accessible Korean elders, the elderly face a big decision, to put up with suburban isolation, or to live by themselves in a rented, co-op, or condominium apartment. If available, one solution often chosen is for the elderly couple to move in with other adult children who are not yet established, and live in Elmhurst, Woodside, or Flushing.

Each kin-connected household may show a different stage of progress toward "establishment." But, for all, cultural values of filial piety emphasize that children should care for parents at home. Ideally, when a father reaches age 60, the eldest son assumes responsibility for the patrilineal stem-family estate, and for ancestor worship (Janelli & Janelli 1982; Lee 1975, 1984). Neglect of parents is considered immoral, a breach of traditional values (Choi 1964; Park 1975). A 1981 A-San Foundation study in South Korea found that only 4 percent of the elderly lived alone, and some 93 percent lived with family members (Koh & Bell 1987). Another recent national study found that 79 percent of South Korean elders lived with their adult children (Park et al. 1984). Korean immigrants bring with them cultural values that stress

multi-generational residence, especially for the elderly.

Kiefer et al. (1985) studied 50 elderly Korean immigrants in San Francisco, using both open-ended interviews and psychological assessments of morale, self-concept and symptomatology. In terms of residential arrangements, they found:

Elders living in two- and three- generation households often had problems of crowding, overwork, and strained social relationships, yet they tended to exhibit more positive morale and better self concept than those who lived alone or with a spouse only. Apparently the stresses of social life were less devastating than the stresses of loneliness, helplessness, useless and boredom (1985:480).

Koh & Bell (1987) interviewed 151 Korean elders in New York City, asking about their living arrangements, service needs, and formal and informal social support. The major problems they identified were "lack of proficiency in the English language; health conditions; loneliness; transportation; income; and housing" (1987:60). While 82 percent had adult children living in New York City, only 51 percent resided with their children. The rest lived alone, with a spouse, or with non-kin [5]. Unlike the situation in Korea, but like that of older people in America in general (Troll et al. 1979), the majority actually preferred to live alone, regardless of current residence

patterns; and the majority had weekly telephone contact with, or received visits from, their adult children. These studies of Korean elderly and their families confirm that residence patterns in the United States are diverging from cultural preferences and practice in Korea.

My research in Queens revealed considerable cultural disruption for many of these elderly Korean immigrants. Some felt useless because they are not employed as they were in Korea. They found their advice unwanted, and less respect was paid them by the younger generations. They were as disappointed to see "knee-high" and "second generation" Korean youth smoking and acting "loose" as they were to find American youth disrespectful of the old.

In Korean families, the leading role of the eldest son who is responsible for ancestor worship, and enjoys a primogeniture inheritance in Korea, changes in America. The eldest is often the last to migrate, and when he arrives he finds that younger siblings are more adjusted to life in the United States, and that the hierarchical age grading among them is reversed according to their length of residence here. Different expectations from both generations, and smaller apartments, make elderly parents and adult children, who are not yet established uncomfortable residing with one another.

There are four strategies I identified by which elderly Koreans tried to make the best of their lives

during this final stage of the domestic cycle. First, some elderly continue to live together in three-generation families, as in Mr. Pang's household. He is a medical technician living in Elmhurst with his wife, three children, and his 76 year-old father and 65 year-old stepmother. Mr. Pang's household is "established"; he sponsored his parents immigration from Korea. Since then they have all lived together. He has not moved out of the Korean community in Elmhurst, because his parents get along well with their older Italian neighbors there. They garden together, and sometimes exchange foods such as Italian spaghetti and Korean miso casserole.

In the second strategy, the elders set up a separate household by themselves, as in the cases of Dr. Mun and Mrs. Pai. Dr. Mun lives in Long Island with his wife, two sons and a daughter. He is 53 years old. He and his family came to America in 1974. They lived in New Jersey for seven years, and then moved to Long Island. While they lived in New Jersey, his parents lived with them, but decided not to move into the Long Island house. Instead, they moved into a condominium apartment that Dr. Mun bought for them in Elmhurst, where his medical office is located. His wife works at the office as a secretary. His father also helps, for example running errands to the bank. Dr. Mun and his wife eat lunch with his parents in Queens, and dinner with their children in Long Island.

Mrs. Pai came to America in 1981. For a few months she stayed with her adult son and his family in Forest Hills, Queens. Then, for two years she lived with a roommate in Elmhurst. Recently, she moved to in a co-op in Elmhurst. She works baby-sitting for two children, which is not easy for her. Basically, her daughter-in-law wanted her to move out of the Forest Hills house, and now the daughter-in-law cannot ask for her help with childcare. Mrs. Pai said, cynically,

Well, my son used to be a devoted son in Korea. I sold everything to get money for my son. Then they bought a new house. There, I thought I could live with them. However, it did not work out that way. Soon my son bought a co-op apartment for me. At first he paid the monthly \$500 mortgage and maintenance cost. But, now I pay one-third, considering that he needs to support his own family.

Now Mr. Pai sees her son only once a week.

A third strategy falls somewhere in between these cases. Some elderly couples rotate residence periods among several adult children, who are either married or single. Mr. Chung is 27 years-old and lives with his father and mother who are 72 and 71. His parents came to America in 1981. Three years ago, he and his parents lived with his brother's family in a house in Elmhurst. Next year Mr. Chung's wife will immigrate to join them. He works at a

green grocery run by his brother. His parents receive SSI, and he also contributes his own salary to household expenses.

In the fourth strategy, elderly women develop new ways of organizing domestic life, living separately from their husbands. This is quite unconventional in Korean terms. Mrs. Chung came here first, in 1977, and her husband followed in 1978. On their arrival they lived in Brooklyn. At first their children lived near them. Their eldest son immigrated first to Argentina, and then to the United States. He then sponsored and supported other siblings in beginning businesses. After all the elder Chung's children left Korea they had to come as well. Now the old woman stays with her daughter's family in Elmhurst taking care of her grandchildren. She occasionally visits her husband in Brooklyn, but no more than once several months.

Even though they still have a cultural preference for multi-generational co-residence, it is evident that Korean immigrants are not always able to realize such traditional cultural norms in the American context of Queens. The overriding organizational factor in domestic arrangements is now the drive to "establishment," to achieve the Korean American dream. This entails a new domestic cycle and set of stages of household composition and decision-making.

Korean values and norms have not vanished, but they intersect with evaluations by self and others of how far along a household is toward "establishment". The realities of everyday living reveal the transparency and malleability of culture.

Notes

- [1] Sorensen, in discussing the developmental cycle of the Korean and Japanese traditional families, notes, "[A]ny particular sequence of structural types...was not a fundamental feature of the system, but was rather the result of the intersection of principles of family organization with demographic and economic variables. The average life span, age at marriage, and fertility of marriage affected which of the culturally allowed structural possibilities would actually be realized" (1982:310-11).
- [2] According to her, small business contributes to family breakdown in the following ways: first and foremost, it typically absorbs most of the time and attention of both parents, leaving little time to spare for the children; second, immigrant small business can put stress on the relationship between husband and wives; finally, and perhaps most important, the hardships of immigrant entrepreneurship are undertaken on the presumption that the family will accumulate capital and climb up the social ladder (1988:125).
- [3] For studies of family developmental cycles in Korea, see Sorensen (1990) and Janelli and Janelli (1982)

- [4] Hurh and Kim found in their survey of Koreans in Los Angeles that in one half or more of the families, it is the wife who actually bears the heavy burden of performing four items: grocery shopping, housekeeping, laundry and dishwashing. "In two task items, disposal of garbage and management of family budget, the burden of performance is evenly distributed between the husband and wife, although they are not so expected"(1980:211).
- [5] Korean immigrants 65 years old and over constitute only 2.6 percent of total recent Korean immigrants(U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1984:12), whereas the people in the elderly age category comprise 3.9 percent of the Korean general population(Korean National Bureau of Statistics, 1984:41). Koh and Bell reports that in New York City 19 percent of Korean elderly people live alone, and another 25 percent live with spouse alone (1987:66-71).

Chapter 6

Women's Viewpoints

Korean women's immigration has brought for many a delayed Industrial Revolution in that for the first time they enter the paid labor market. They are thus freed from some traditional social burdens and constraints, just as new industrial workers were nearly two centuries ago in England. In this chapter, I explore how Korean women immigrants live and evaluate their new lives in America, and what meaning "establishment" holds for them.

First, I examine women's employment, and analyze how marriage is tied to economic arrangements. By doing so, we will see the relations between Korean immigrant women's productive and reproductive activities. Next, I discuss the influence of American culture on Korean women. Finally, I look at women's viewpoints toward their jobs and their responsibilities for housework, and the new choices they face in struggling with the Korean American dream.

Women in Small Business

Korean immigrant women's work is organized around the goal of "establishment." Most work either in sewing factories or small family businesses. A smaller percentage of women work as professionals, including nurses, pharmacists, and medical doctors.

It is true that some women in Korea do work in the paid labor force, but as far as my informants were concerned, few had been so employed, and especially not if they were married. While the 1980 United States Census showed 54 percent of Korean women here in the paid labor force, in Korea that year only 29 percent were employed outside the home (Korean National Bureau of Statistics 1980). (In 1980, 51 percent of all American women were in the labor force.) The contrast was even greater for married Korean women. In 1980 the 56 percent in America were labor force, while in Korea only 19 percent of married women worked outside the home. Here, then, their likelihood of paid employment is thus three times greater than in Korea.

When immigrant men plan to open a business, Korean patriarchal ideology plays a role in that wives and other kin are expected to cooperate in whatever way they can. The business is directed, however, by the male household head. Whether they have professional training or not, Korean women commonly start to work here in either factory jobs or as employees in small business, and later join their husband's business.

Mrs. Choi, like many in her profession, worked first as a nurse. She later joined her husband to run a grocery.

At first, in Philadelphia, my husband worked at an American-owned automobile bodyshop, through a Korean pastor's introduction. I worked as a nurse at a hospital for two years. Then we opened a Western-style grocery with \$10,000 in savings brought from Korea. We have run this store for seven years. It was very difficult, but we tried to bear it, and we did. Although it is hard work, we are our own bosses. We feel comfortable, and we have a clear chance now to realize our future, without too much stress.

Mrs. Park shows a more typical profile: first working for an American electronics company, then a garment factory, and later joining the family vegetable stand business. She got her job at the electronics company in Brooklyn only by being accompanied by her husband, since he could translate.

What I did was to try to read a person's face, not expressing any opinion because of my difficulty with the language. As I worked hard, my boss liked me. I could only greet my co-workers. I worked there for a year. Then I found work at an American garment factory, through a friend's introduction. It was also in Brooklyn. For three years, it was very difficult for me. Then I ran a fish market with my husband. It was very nice to have my own store. It was a tough

job, though. For five or six years I worked cutting fish, but then I became paralyzed, and could breath only with difficulty. I was treated with acupuncture, and advised to rest.

Among the varieties of Korean immigrant business, most are male-initiated. Although they depend upon their wife's labor contribution, when the family opens business, men often register the stores under their own name. This makes it difficult for either men or women to give fair recognition to the woman's contribution to a family business.

Until recently, vegetable stands and fish markets usually were started by men. Men bore the physical demands of buying in the wholesale market and transporting produce to the store. However, as more owners have come to use delivery services, or employ a market buyer, they need not go to the wholesale markets themselves. It has thus become possible for women to run these kinds of stores on their own. Still other businesses are ordinarily initiated by women. These include beauty salons, nail salons, and fashion stores. Korean nail salons now comprise up to 80 percent of the 900 nail salons in New York City. As Korean immigrant couples found first their economic niche in running vegetable stands or fish markets, immigrant women entrepreneurs now find it in nail salons, and for similar reasons. Such businesses require only a relatively small

initial investment, a simple command of English, a readily available supply of labor, and no certificate or license.

Korean women also may experience downward mobility in terms of their professional status. In Korea, Mrs. Nam, a beautician, had worked as a hair dresser for three years. In Manhattan, she had to start as a sweeper, and only later was promoted to hair dresser. It was a large beauty salon, and worker turnover was small. She had to work hard at first, and faced communication problems. Otherwise, the customers were agreeable. She recollected,

In Korea once you were a professional skilled hairdresser, you did not have to do all the work by yourself. There were always plenty of helpers for each skilled hairdresser. After four years of experience here, I wanted to set up my own beauty salon. I became interested in a store in Elmhurst. It was run by a Greek. My husband [who already had his own business] and I have invested all of the savings we made throughout our immigrant life in that store, investing \$10,000 at first, and then later the same amount again [it was in the mid-1980s]. It was possible only through my husband's cooperation.

This case illustrates a variation some women experience on the course to "establishment." Like most women, Mrs. Nam started as a worker for someone else. But rather than join her husband's business, as many women do,

she continued earning wages. Then she opened her own business, with her husband's cooperation. At the time other Korean couples reach the Nam's stage, some women continue in the family business, and others, depending on their children's ages and household composition, discontinue work. Nurses and other professional women usually join a family business after working at an American workplace. Beauticians, after working in an American beauty salon, often open their own business. Of course, there are also exceptions to these general patterns. And some women continue as workers after many years in America, still stages away from full "establishment".

Factory workers

While in a family business a woman's economic contribution may be taken for granted by her husband, and even by herself, women workers and professional women are objectively and subjectively aware of their own separate pay check, and thereby of their potential economic independence.

Almost from its inception, the New York garment industry has depended on immigrant labor. Irish, Swedes, and Germans comprised the first flow, and later, by the turn of the century, Jews and Italians made up the majority of the industry's labor force (Fenton 1975; Fitzpatrick 1971). Black women from the south and Puerto Rican women

began to enter the apparel industry in the 1930s. In the face of New York's transformation from a production center to a "spot market" and the need of employers to remain competitive within the entire global organization of apparel production, the exodus of key labor force groups posed a serious threat. New immigrants were drawn into this labor vacuum. They included Chinese, Dominicans, Colombians, Haitians, Central Americans, and Ecuadorians (Pessar 1987:108).

Garment factory work is the most easily available job for Korean women, as it is for women of other immigrant ethnic groups. This is so regardless of age or social background. A typical Korean-run sewing factory is owned and operated by a group of family members. Male workers are hired for pressing, packing, shipping, and other odd jobs, and women work as seamstresses. Ms. Kim works as a seamstress at a garment factory in Long Island City. There are 30 to 40 people working there, among them one-third are Korean, and the rest white American or Latin American.

At my factory we usually make one-piece dresses, and sometimes we make pants, quilted clothes, and winter coats. For example, I sew scores of pockets or hundreds of shoulder-holders. We are supposed to sew each part of both sides. Sometimes we sew darts. I am very proud of what I am doing. When I saw clothes made by me, labeled with a brand name in a good

department store, I was very satisfied. Here I make very good quality goods, whereas in Korea they make cheap clothes.

Ms. Chung works at a Korean garment factory in Elmhurst as a "Marrow" operator. She makes \$400 per week. She said, I cannot breathe because of too much dust in this basement. As I am a skilled worker, the manager gives me only the most difficult part to sew. This factory produces men's clothing. My legs and shoulders hurt because of the long hours of sewing. However, when I receive my weekly wage on Saturday, I can forget how painful it is.

Mrs. Gu compared work as a waitress with sewing at a garment factory.

It is much better to work at a garment factory, particularly for a housewife. There are set working hours. But in the restaurant there was no particular closing hour. If there were customers for a party, they might go home later than the usual time. Besides, many immigrant single men customers proposition waitresses. But, when I work on T-shirts, I have to breathe cotton dust. I think I earn fairly good money. A man can make the same amount of money only if he works till 8 in the evening. When it is very slow, like summer vacation around August or September, I work part-time somewhere else. Autumn,

around October, is the best season to work at a garment factory.

Service and Office Worker

Among women service workers, young women more often work as cashiers or saleswomen in small shops, and middle-aged or older women work at nail salons and salad bars. Older women also work as baby sitters or cooks.

Mrs. Park, in her early 30s, immigrated to America in the early 1980s. She and her husband have two children. After two years, once settled in Forest Hills, she went on her own to a nail salon. She was hired immediately. She had to adopt an American name, and her employer chose "Grace" for her. As most customers are American women, for their convenience Korean manicurists call each other by American names, but add Onni (sister in Korean) after "Grace" and other such names among themselves.

"Grace-onni" explained how she became a nail salon worker.

At first I observed how pedicure is done, and also learned from my sonbae, [a more experienced worker]. In doing pedicures, first I soak the feet in water and then cut the toenails. Next, I remove skin which has become hard. Finally, I color the nails beautifully. I did pedicures for two months, and then I moved on to manicures. Depending on the size of the salon, one will have to do pedicures for some time. Basically, a

manicurist takes care of nails, including cleaning, and coloring. If a customer needs skin waxing, we pull out hairs from eyebrow, leg, face, or armpit. If there is more to be done--for instance, if nails are weak or split--we will have to wrap the nails with cloth gauze. In some cases we will do all ten fingers and attach artificial nails. If necessary, we attach "linen" or "silk" for further strength. Moreover, we may add "acrylic powder" and "glass jelly". A "Full Set" means to do all ten fingers, including "glass jelly" treatment.

There were twenty Korean women of different ages and educational levels working at "Grace-onni's" nail salon. Seven or eight workers were beginners. At first, "Grace" worked six days a week, and got \$180 for a 10-hour workday, from 10 A.M. to, often later than, 8 P.M. In tips, a beginner earns another \$150. "Regular" customers come at least once every one or two weeks. The most inexpensive treatment costs \$7.00. The more often a manicure or pedicure customer comes, the more she wants done. After about a year, two-thirds of customers will want a "full set." Customers are assigned to each worker by the manager, who considers each worker's capability and skill. Most Korean manicurists are in their 30s, but some are high school students, and others are in their 50s. Many of them are college graduate.

Women cashiers at a green grocery are paid for their official activities, but are also expected by the Korean community to remain in a "women's place." The store's "housework" is heaped on them; they are expected to cook meals, do dishes, and clean up for their employers and male employees. Ms. Chun has worked as a cashier at a green grocery. "I could get \$200 or \$250 per week by working 12 hours a day. On top of that, I had to cook for the male workers at the green grocery. My legs were so swollen from overwork that my foot muscles cramped up."

Ms. Choi, in her early 30s, worked as cashier at a coffeeshop located in lower Manhattan. Most customers were white American office and bank workers.

I earned \$180 for five days a week. At that time I was not healthy, so it was very difficult. I had to work harder, as I had known the manager before.

Sometimes I had to help with kitchen work. [I asked why only women work as a cashiers, and not men]. If it doesn't pay well, no men will be interested in it! They usually find better jobs. I do not feel discriminated against in terms of sex, because men and women traditionally were supposed to do different jobs.

Sunyoung, also in her early 30s, graduated from college in America. She first worked as an administrative assistant at a Korean-owned forwarding company. Most other employees were Americans.

I have learned a lot. Since I was young at that time, I was favored by my colleagues. Unfortunately the company went bankrupt. Afterwards, I got a job at a Korean company trading various kinds of shirts. I worked there only a year. The working conditions were terrible. I was so shocked at it. In many senses, the former company was much better. This company didn't observe regulations on overtime, vacation, or bonuses. In short, this company didn't treat workers as human beings, but as working machines. For example, I couldn't get out of the office even by 7 P.M., as the boss was watching.

Professionals

Korean professional women who work in mainstream American offices rather than in the Korean community often experience racial or ethnic discrimination. Many Korean nurses work in third-class hospitals that are generally shunned by American nurses. Inside the hospital, Korean nurses do night-shifts, or work on weekends. They often must be subservient to other nurses, they complain, and find that patients do not want to be treated by Asian or Korean nurses.

Influences from American Gender Ideology

In America, as Koreans see it, not only are women in a better position economically, but people have different ideas about male-female relations, including the proverbial "ladies first" attitude. Korean immigrant women hear before migration that in America gentlemen treat ladies as if they were fragile dolls, and follow a medieval European spirit of chivalry. Many soon realize that this behavior is only a formality, and not as important as they had imagined in Korea.

If Korean men in America change their attitudes and treatment toward Korean women, it is less acculturation to these American formalities than a matter of women's economic independence. Despite all this, Korean men or even conservative women, are ready to criticize a woman for speaking up or acting more assertively than in Korea.

"Women sound so ugly when they raise their voices. Probably they have learned something from the American culture, but not in a proper way, only in their own distorted way," one man told me.

As Ortner & Whitehead (1981:23) aptly put it, "although the complex of meanings surrounding any particular kin role will vary greatly from culture to culture, one can anticipate certain very general repercussions on the image of women depending upon which type of cross sex bond - wife, mother, sister - is highlighted by prestige concerns." "Because wives are

normally sexual partners, and mothers and sisters normally are not, an emphasis in wives will tend to give more ideological prominence to the sexual aspects of women in general." In America, woman as wife or sexual partner is more strongly emphasized than woman as mother, as it is in Korea. This American ideology of gender places the Korean immigrant women under pressure to pay more attention to appearance and beauty. The Korean American dream now defines both the attractive wife and the successful husband as partners who enjoy the fruits of "establishment". (I owe Laurel Kendall for this insight.)

In Korea, if a married woman is preoccupied with her appearance, rather than with exclusively taking care of her family and household, she is criticized and socially ostracized. Korean women in America also ask their husbands to wear wedding rings. While grumbling about it, many Korean men do so, which they do not do in Korea. This is because they understand that in the United States men and women actively approach each other, regardless of marital status, owing to the high divorce rate and instability in male-female relationships.

Many of my informants have learned to apply the American concepts of "ladies first", and "going out." Others, however, do not enjoy the pressures from American culture, including the drive for an "active sexual life," on their marital relationships.

Ms. Suh's statement reveals the female interpretation of "ladies first." "Americans in general lack deep affections, [chong]. However, American men behave better as gentlemen toward women than do Korean male students, who do not care about female students. They usually do not open a door for girls, a lack of gentlemanly manners. Well, other Asian students are the same."

Mr. Ha said that it took him some time to understand "going out." He had to ask his American friends again and again in order to get a clear idea about it.

According to their explanation, once a man and woman start to "go out" regularly, they ought to be faithful to each other, at least they should not see anyone else. Two individuals make a serious decision about "going steady." Yet, they seem to break up so easily. In Korea there is no concept of friends who are of opposite sexes. Once a girl starts to see a boy, they make decision about marriage. To a Korean mind, it seems that even after "going steady" the break up can be very quick and easy. I see it among those knee-high or second generation Korean American young people, too. They do not seem to have any difficulty with seeing each other steadily and then breaking up. With no shyness! This is not possible for Asians.

In America, women are respected more than in Korea, he added, but American men do it because women are weak, not because American men really respect women. At work, he observed, when a capable person is needed, men are preferred over women because men do the job better and faster. In addition, in the American family, he observes, it is still the wife who cooks, if husbands do help a lot more with housework.

Mrs. Pai told me of her novel experience in a Korean American Roman Catholic church.

I was surprised at the old ladies with full makeup, unlike those in Korea. They say that their husbands also want them to wear makeup, like American women. Also in relation to this, I can point out changes from the way Koreans used to dress. Before migrating to America, I planned to sell some Korean clothing to Koreans in the United States. So, I brought Korean dresses and also women's underwear, which I found immigrant women here don't wear much. I brought them to a Korean beauty salon in Elmhurst, and I made only \$11 for six pairs of panties.

Ann, a nurse, going further, spoke of new pressures in terms of sexuality. She feels considerable pressure here to become sexually active. "As a single, unmarried woman, I feel less social pressure on me to marry in America than in Korea. However, I feel that in America people pressure

me by asking how my love-life is, and assuming that I have to have an active sex life."

Mrs. Nam fears "bothering" her husband, being aware of American ideas of human relations that include "non-interference."

As Americans are self-centered, Korean Americans here learn to adopt that attitude. It becomes difficult to handle feelings between husband and wife, or parents and children, because they have different expectations of each other. For instance, I worry whether I bother my husband, but I do want his concern. As time goes by, I come to better understand the American way of life which, in the past, I didn't like. Life here is too bitter, and everybody is too busy with their own affairs. In my own case, it is a problem to get enough attention from other family members, including my husband. At first my husband used to help me, but not now. [She said this is because he spends his free time at a newly established Korean chess parlor in the neighborhood]. Here women have too many things on their minds to feel good.

Sunyoung told me,

It was not until 1980 that I came into contact with other Koreans. As far as I could see, in the past Korean immigrants suffered, and were not successful at all. But now the Korean immigrants are not only rich

in the material sense, but also in culture. For instance, in the past I would rarely see Koreans enjoy cultural performances at such places as Lincoln Center, or the operas in Central Park. I used to go to concerts alone. Sometimes I tried to take my friends whom I came to know through church. They were scared and viewed my actions as wrong. Concretely speaking, if one is said to have "been to Greenwich Village," they do not see you as a "good girl."

In this case we see that Korean immigrant women are subject to two different gender ideologies in America--public pleasure-seeking, and Korean Christian conservatism--in addition to gender expectation from Korea. These views can clash in the same household.

A middle-aged Korean woman was pleased to show off her new, fashionable pair of boots to her son in his late 20s. The son was silent for a while, and then told his mother indignantly, "Pass them to me. I'll throw them away. They are proper for young girls, not for you." After hearing this, his father asked him, "Son, guess who bought them? I bought it for your mother. Who is the boss in this family?" Here American ideas of female beauty and enjoyment met with opposition from Korean notions of the proper mother. It is also interesting to see that the son's opposition was blocked by his more American-oriented father.

Women's Views of life in America

Korean women's viewpoints are formed within a particular constellation of workplace, household, cultural, and demographic factors. Korean women in America show a high rate of labor force participation and, as we have seen, work under particular conditions. United States Census data in 1980 showed that in California more than 25 percent of Korean immigrant women held low paying jobs, with the greatest concentration in the operator category where they are nearly four times as numerous as white women (Chu 1988:203). Despite high levels of education, many suffer from a language barrier--51 percent of Korean immigrant women said that they do not speak English well or at all, which is a higher percentage than any other Asian immigrant group (Gardner, Robey, & Smith 1985:28). Demographically, there is a severe imbalance in adult sex ratios: overall there are 71 men to 100 women and only 53 men to 100 women in the 20 to 39 year old age group (Yu 1986:19).

After living for some time in America, Korean immigrant women, seem to react in two different ways. Especially after revisiting Korea, some regret their decision to come here, realizing they live a hard life. They imagine that if they had not come to America, they could have enjoyed a peaceful, less stressful life, being merely a housewife, and even hiring a maid, due to the low

cost of labor in Korea. Others, who also might envy the comforts of Korean women in Korea, do not regard the life of a housewife as desirable. On the basis of their own experience, they now say that it is important for women to work outside the home, and thereby to be independent in an economic sense, which they find more possible in America.

Ms. Kim works at a sewing factory. "I think that it was a good decision for me to come to America. Everything that women need is available to us. What is more, women can have better jobs in terms of pay than in Korea. If I stayed in Korea, I would only have suffered a lot."

Mrs. Choi never worked in Korea, but here she works as a waitress in a Japanese restaurant. "Although I am often tired and sullen, I can recover due to my strong belief in God. Thanks to God, my kids study hard. They study while I am working, for which I am grateful, and enjoy a sense of reward."

Significantly, both men and women perceive that women change a lot much more than men do, in this immigrant society. Men's behavior changes too, as my data reveal, but it is interesting that few people see things this way. One-sided change on the part of women is what is most apparent to Koreans here. Mr. Han, a worker at a green grocery, put it this way:

While Korean men don't seem to change greatly, Korean women seem to change completely. They became more frank and open. There then seem to be lots of problems. As they want to do things differently, it doesn't fit with a Korean way of life. For instance, they even may look down on their husbands, which women didn't do in Korea.

As Deaconess Ahn sees it,

Here, as Korean women can work and thereby support themselves, we can have greater pride in ourselves. By working, I can give an allowance to my children. How nice this is! In Korea, when I needed more money than my husband's salary in order to pay tuition for my children, I didn't know what to do. So now I thank God. On the contrary, my husband, like many Korean men, didn't like American life at all at the beginning of our life here. He regretted his situation, and felt lonely and tired of his life. Almost every day he complained, I remember. I figure that's because he is addicted to the life of a Korean gentlemen.

Mrs. Choi said,

My husband had an easy life in Korea, so he had difficulty with his new life in America. Often he used to say, 'Let's go back to Korea, I beg you.' Then I used to respond, 'Please, let's not look back on what is past.' Now my husband understands me. My

children are healthy, both mentally and physically, which makes me proud. They grew up without any difficulty, and with a strong belief in God. They are thrifty, and sincere.

Women's Perceptions of Work

In Korea, women tend to discontinue paid work upon marriage. Here in America, it is the birth of a child, not getting married, that stops Korean women's employment. What, then, accounts for this difference in continuing to work by Korean married women in the United States?

Once they migrate, they often join husbands who are earning an average of \$1,000 a month by working in a small Korean firm. They soon realize that this is not enough to support a family, as in New York City they spend at least \$600 to \$700 a month for rent. So, women have to work, for the whole household, and not just a woman's personal financial needs.

However, more is involved than simple calculation of such necessity. Some Korean women do decide to migrate in order to improve their own degree of economic independence. Also, as one of my informants put it, even if one tries to stay home, soon you find yourself isolated, with nobody at home to talk to. This is quite different from Korean households where housewives are rarely the only person at home. There are also more important

considerations arising from the Korean American dream. Here you work in order to make money, no matter who you are, or in what condition you find yourself. Here it is those Korean women who do not work that begin to feel foolish or useless.

Here everybody knows that women can make a significant contribution to the family economy--as much as men in fact. Gender ideology has shifted from its pattern of organization in Korea. It is clear to Koreans here that if a man remains single, it is impossible for him to save enough to start a business. Thus, in the Korean American ideology of small business success, wives are considered as economically valuable assets. But unexpectedly, after finally establishing a family business, women often find that they are more occupied with running the store than are their men.

Mrs. Lee, who runs a green grocery with her husband, is tired of doing both store work and housework. She said, Even if you don't work, staying home and doing housework will also make you tired. I feel that I take better care of the store than my husband. He says that he needs to have his own time, getting together with his men friends. It seems that women do not have similar needs. So he often goes out, asking me to take care of the store. Sometimes he just rests at home, making excuses about his advancing age. He

leaves no room for my needs, thinking that I am never too tired to take care of the store.

It is true that most Korean immigrant women take jobs outside the home, and this is nearly revolutionary. However, looking at the kinds of jobs they get, and how they are treated, it is not a rosy picture. Only by adopting the Korean American dream, with the idea that in America all trades are equal, can they feel they are on the way to "establishment," and avoid feeling ashamed in these jobs. They would never engage in such occupations in their home country, and the jobs do not provide any positive self-esteem. As with Korean immigrant men, there is downward mobility, particularly poignant for former professional women. Yu reports that in Southern California, fifty six percent of the wives who worked in Korea reportedly held professional occupations, but only 12 percent currently hold such positions. None worked as a semiskilled or unskilled worker in Korea, but 35 percent of the working wives hold such jobs now (1982:62). However, in Korea, they could not be paid as well as here, even with their occupational downward mobility. What is more significant is whether they can get a job. Also, they experience a new place in the hierarchy of gender and racial or ethnic categories that segment the United States labor market.

Women, they learn, have less chance to be promoted, to get a raise, or to ever become a manager, whether in American or Korean owned firms. Mrs. Chung, who works at a Korean vegetable stand, earns \$300 a week. Now, she would begin at a cashier's starting salary of around \$220. At her level, however, she is more likely to be fired than to be promoted. A male green grocery worker starts at around \$240 a week, and in two or three years can earn \$400 as a manager. Men's work, taking care of the fruit and vegetables, is considered more important, and a harder task than women's work at the cash register. In offices, a woman is supposed to work only as a secretary, receptionist, or typist, regardless of her education. Men have more chance of becoming familiar with and advancing in more rewarding business arenas.

Korean women are generally low-paid workers in labor-intensive businesses such as garment factories, nail salons, retail stores, and salad bars. They are the foundation of the small business route to the Korean American dream.

Without women seamstresses, it is impossible to run a garment factory. Vegetable stands survive only by taking advantage of women's labor as cooks for staff and for salad bars. Without Korean women, there would be no nail salon boom in New York City. Furthermore, even immigrant men's labor at the lowest levels tends to be feminized, as men

make sandwiches or other prepared food at a delicatessen or grocery, tasks that notions of man's place would never permit in Korea. Yet, the Korean cultural dichotomy of gender in private space persists. Men may do cooking, cleaning, and other such tasks in the public domain; but women should do them in the home.

Women's Reevaluations of housework

Depending on their experience of doing housework in Korea, women here evaluate housework differently. Older women who have lived in rural Korea are likely to feel housework here is easier than in Korea. Mrs. Chung, in her 60s, asked,

How can you say that it is even work at all to clean a kitchen or bathroom here, compared with cleaning a kitchen in Korea? There it is a tough job, but not here. Even in the case of ironing, are there any clothes here which really need ironing? For me it is next to nothing to cook three meals and to make kimch'i and panch'an [side dishes] here, compared with the labor in Korea.

Ms. Suh remembered having to make wood fire, for fuel. It is much more convenient here. Since I lived in the countryside, I had to make a fire in order to cook. Here, we can save time by cooking with gas. I can have hot water at any time. In addition, I can take a shower as often as possible. How nice it is to live in America!

Mrs. Lee who runs a green grocery, has developed a "superwoman" self-presentation to deal with the multiple burdens of work and housework.

I don't have to sweep and mop by kneeling down, which is very inconvenient. Here, as we cover our floor with carpets, I don't have to bother to do that. We can wash our clothes by machine, which is fast and convenient. [I asked whether she felt tired doing housework after leaving her business.] If you think of it as work, you feel more tired. It is okay if you can just manage it efficiently. After all, it is what women are supposed to do. I always consider how I can do both my store work and housework more sensibly.

Men and women seem to have quite different opinions about housework here. With the new situation of women's employment, women find it more difficult to handle duties at home. This causes some men and women to develop the notion that Korean women here are too quickly Americanized, and therefore become lazy in the home.

Occasionally, some men try to share the housework, out of sympathy for their wives. It was interesting to see how one husband and wife responded to a question I raised. When I interviewed Mr. and Mrs. Chung, she was peeling apples and oranges. When he answered that he shares housework with his wife, his wife interrupted, "How come you tell a lie? What makes you think you do?" They argued

for a while. Finally, they agreed she does most household chores.

As more women work outside the house, some try to bear up to the superwoman image but others gradually come to neglect housework. This follows the usually brief period when Korean men tend to help their wives with housework in the beginning stage of immigrant "establishment." Once they are secure enough to start their own businesses, such housework contributions end. At this point their wife's labor power in the firm also becomes less critical, and if they are successful they begin to use wage labor as well as family labor. Some Korean men do acknowledge that women have a substantial burden in this immigrant society, however. If some men tend to help their wives with housework, even a little bit, many men do nothing at all.

Mr. Chung owns a fish market in Elmhurst. At home either his wife or his daughters do most the housework. He says,

Only a silly man, like someone without a gallbladder, would do the cooking for his wife. Well, it might be good to alternate such work, but, you know, a man's job is very difficult. Men get tired out. Anyway, housework is easier here. That's because we eat a simpler diet. People care less about eating formal meals. The cooking facilities are better, too.

When I brought up housework with Mrs. Shin, she got furious. "My husband helps me with housework exactly twice a year. He used to help me a lot at the beginning of our life in America, but not anymore. He is very good at talking about it, but not at doing it."

In the case of Mr. and Mrs. Hong, we see a modicum of sharing in housework by the husband. Mr. Hong, in his late 50s, told me:

As far as cooking is concerned, most is done by my wife. As far as doing dishes and cleaning is concerned, 30 percent is done by me. Vacuuming and garbage disposal are done jointly, or by me. Although most housework belongs to women, here it is inevitable for me to help my wife with household chores.

Besides, my wife has a problem with her health, so I help her more. To me it is much more convenient here, since we can use the better vacuum, oven, and the more conveniently designed bathroom.

What is debated now by women in the Korean American community is not so much equal sharing of housework, but men's effort to help with it at all. In some exceptional cases where men do more housework than in Korea, a more positive marital relationship often develops. Mrs. Park, a pharmacist, elaborated on this.

In Korea I did such things as putting out garbage, ironing, and washing clothes, and my husband merely took care of the charcoal briquettes [for cooking and heating.] Cleaning was done by the maid. Here, since I can share some of the housework with my husband, I feel much better, and he also seems to feel good about his involvement in it.

New Gender Consciousness

Not only do Korean American men and women come to have different attitudes toward each other, but these attitudes differ among members of each sex. Among women we see different ideas depending on a woman's class and occupation here, her housework experience in Korea, and her length of residence in America. Among men, some see women with sympathy (although this does not mean they share the housework burden); other men think women lead an easier life here than in Korea; still others object that women here become rebellious. According to different women's viewpoints, some men are relaxed in their attitudes, and withdraw into playing golf. Some women think that young men, especially those born here, tend to treat women better: but older men almost never change. Other men became more critical of women. Those who share in housework here more than they did in Korea are few.

The experience of Japanese American immigrants in the pre-World War II period supports an argument that women's entry into the labor force leads to realignment of gender attitudes in the household. Farming and small-business families engaged in household-based enterprise reproduced traditional Japanese gender relations in the household. In contrast, issei families who shifted from these economic activities to multiple wage-earning displayed greater discontinuity (Glenn 1986:216). In the Korean American case, the pattern is somewhat different. Most Korean American women begin as wage workers, and shift to family businesses after their husbands establish them. With this stage of "establishment" as their initial goal, the distinction between wage and family business work is less sharp for Korean women than it was for Japanese women. The variety in male-female attitudes does not have any single such determining cause. Class, age, and experience are each involved.

In a few cases professional couples develop mutually positive gender viewpoints. There were only a few professional couples among my informants. Mrs. Park is from one of these.

In my view, what is good about America is the fact that women can argue for their opinions, and can have jobs. Personally I don't have any complaint. My husband, unlike the typical Korean husband, listens to

me a lot, and always tries to help. Be that as it may, it is true that women get a stronger voice in America when they make money on their own.

Older women, now in their 60s, often refer to how it used to be in Korea, younger women, even if born in the countryside, have only the experience of an urbanized Korea in the 1960s and 1970s. Mrs. Chung, an older woman, is rather critical about young Korean women's complaints of their heavy load of housework in America.

Men have too much responsibility for supporting their families. Here they are really busy with their family's survival. Still, when you see them enjoy golf, I know it is much better for them here. Women enjoy more freedom in America, too, by talking back to their husbands. But they are confused. Here ladies are respected, but not in Korea.

Overall, women do tend to adjust to life in America.

It is men who do not. Mr. Ha explained.

While my mother feels very comfortable about life in America, I don't. I feel it is inconvenient to follow the American way of life. For instance, I feel it is inconvenient and impractical standing in lines. Here I can never spend my leisure time usefully.

Mr. Ha also believes that Korean women in America have become spoiled to the extent that they consume money without considering how much they earn. When they see a

new immigrant, like himself, carefully consider spending even ten dollars, they laugh at him, saying this is typical of new immigrants. Moreover, he observes that Korean American women do not want to take care of their mothers-in-law. He criticized this.

They don't want to do the basic job they are supposed to do. If I have a wife in the future, I don't want her to work. I have seen too many cases of women's employment leading to failure in married life. If a woman becomes independent economically, she is liable to divorce her husband, even over something minor.

Interestingly, young Korean women do not necessarily see any change in men of their own generation. Older women like Mrs. Choi in her 50s, may be more observant.

I think that Korean guys tend to be dependent on their parents or parents-in-law. They are usually authoritarian, especially toward women. To make matters worse, if their wives work, they like to stay home. How naive they are! On the contrary, young guys educated in the United States, if they are properly educated, are very thoughtful and considerate. So, to be honest with you, I would like to have a US-educated son-in-law. However, these young guys should also have a strong belief in God.

Theresa, a young woman, works as an organizer for the International Ladies Garment Workers Union. One of her Korean female union members told her, "My son is also knee-high generation like you. But it would be unfortunate to have one of these useless young women as my daughter-in-law." Theresa felt insulted. She expressed her opinion of this for me.

Those women brought from Korea to marry a knee-high generation man, like my sister-in-law, are no good either. She thinks only about her appearance: how to dress in full feather. She is an extravagant person. She has a bossy manner, which I hate. However, it is true that Korean girls who grow up here make difficult wives. Although most of them prefer to marry a Korean, they are not looked on with favor by Korean men.

These knee-high generation men have their own views of women, and of the way to organize housework and domestic duties. Mr. Choi, for example, told me, "I observe most Korean customs, but it is okay for either the husband or the wife to stay home in order to take care of the children. Children need parental attention, regardless of which sex gives it."

New Choices for Women

The new situation of husband and wife as co-workers greatly influences their marital relationship. Bonacich stated that small business puts stress up on the husband-wife relationship (1988:125). Min, on the contrary, argued that it reinforces conjugal ties (1986:33; 1990).

Some couples develop a new dimension to their marital life by spending so much time together, and discussing business matters. Husbands in Korea work, and come home late after socializing with their colleagues; wives stay home and take care of housework. There is little time for verbal communication between them. In the absence of any ties of mutual interest, some married couples become bored with each other. Commitment to the more joint married relationship many Korean couples experience here is only one of the new choices Korean immigrant women face in America. It is certainly still the most common choice they make, but it is made by women who are also developing a new gender consciousness.

The new situation of choice for Korean women also occurs in a context of an increase in the number of women remaining single, an increase in the divorce rate, and an increase in cases of marital separation or other new domestic arrangements for older women. The divorce rate for Korean women here in the United States has increased dramatically. While in Korea 6.2 out of 1,000 women over

15 years old are divorced, in America the figure for Korean women is 36.8, a sixfold increase. Real figures may be even higher, as this figure is based on cases formally reported at the Korean consulates. For Korean men, while in Korea the figure is 3.6 divorces per 1,000 men, it increases to 15.0 when they immigrate to the United States (Korean National Bureau of Statistics 1984; United States Bureau of the Census 1984). This figure is still well below the figure of 93.7 per 1,000 for American men.

The Context of New Marital Decisions.

When a young Korean American man is about to marry, usually he will make a trip to Korea. This is because he or his family think that most young Korean women in America are contaminated by American culture. With money he has saved in his years of life in America, the young man will first purchase several new suits. Then, over several months until he finds his intended spouse, he is introduced to woman after woman.

Mr. Han is 28 years old, and works for a Korean green grocer. His new wife is still in Korea. His wife quit her job as secretary in her father's company four months ago in order to prepare for her journey to America. Mr. Han met her through the introduction of a friend of his mother. It took him only ten days to make his decision.

Mr. Chung is 27 years old and works in his brother's green grocery. Next year his wife will arrive. They married a few months ago. It took him four months to find a wife, after numerous introductions.

Korean women in America complain, "There are already more women than men in the Korean American community, and yet the guys bring more and more girls from Korea. Who can guarantee that girls in Korea are virgins? People don't realize that girls are apt to be less [romantically or sexually] experienced here, because of the lack of opportunities to meet Korean men."

Nonetheless, I found that single women, whether not yet married, divorced, or widowed, tend to exhibit greater self-confidence than women in Korea, largely due to their greater economic independence. Single women make more decisions about their lives here than they would in Korea. Ms. Choi made it clear that it is less difficult for single women to live alone in America than in their homeland.

There are many good aspects about life here from my point of view. I don't have to hear those worrisome statements, such as 'Why aren't you married yet?'; 'It's a big disaster'; 'There must be a problem with you'; or 'You must be lacking something.' As I can be independent economically here, I feel wonderful. As to negative aspects about America, I would list drug-addiction, immorality, and the high divorce rate.

Now she feels that she was herself too excessively attached to the search for love, which did not deserve such energy. It is nothing in comparison to love of God, she asserted.

Ann, still unmarried, came here with an occupational preference visa as a nurse. At first she planned to return to Korea in two years. Now she is ready to remain in America, "How nice it is that nobody here calls me an old maid."

Youngmi is herself a divorcee, in her late 30s. She said:

When my husband, a third generation Korean-American man and I divorced and he left for Hawaii by himself, I felt that the sky was going to collapse, hanulyi munojida. However, I feel fine now. This decision should be made more by one's own point of view than by social considerations.

Jennifer is 27 years old and came to America when she was 12 years old. Recently, she broke off an engagement with her fiance. She talked about her ex-fiance:

Fortunately, he was looking for an active and tough, walgadak woman. However, as I saw him more and more, I found him to be very traditional, a mere mama's boy. He is a formalist and cares about good family background, education, and professional background, what Korean seniors orun like but which I hate. I used to wear clothes indecently on purpose as kind of

social protest, which he used to criticize a lot. I think he is lacking practice considering his theoretical ideal. He is indecisive. After all, he might be a victim to so called ilchomose (those who came as children from Korea to America): he lacks strong ideals and will, unlike Korean men in Korea; nor he is in the mainstream of the American society.

Interracial Marriage

I encountered a few cases of interracial marriages. In Korean, kukche kyorhon [international marriage] refers specifically to Korean brides of American G.I.'s. It is commonly held that many of these marriages end in divorce. In fact, in a military base near Seattle, 80 percent of the intermarriages between white service men and foreign-born Asian women ended in divorce (Hoyt 1974:123). In Queens, people nowadays try to distinguish young professional Korean American women's marriages to white American professional men from these Korean G.I. brides, some of whom, whether still married or now divorced, are part of the Queens Korean community.

Mrs. Kwon talked about how difficult it was for her to approve her daughter's marriage to an American man.

I sent my eldest daughter to study here. Although she was good in her studies, she married an British student. I was terribly disappointed. It was not

easy for me to support her financially. I had my own dreams for my daughter. So, I told her that I would never come to America, and I didn't attend her wedding. I would not let her come to Korea, where she would be treated as a war-bride, and held in contempt. My daughter's father-in-law was a veteran of the Korean War: in fact he was a general in the US army. He felt bad that his son and daughter-in-law could not visit Korea, as if a white married a black in America. However, my daughter eventually visited Korea, bringing her daughter. After seeing her, and my granddaughter, I felt better. But I couldn't get rid of the feeling of betrayal.

Mr. Um also married an American, but his marriage did not have a happy ending.

In my fourth year in America I met my ex-wife. After four months, we decided to marry. However, I felt that although she was ready to marry me, at some point she would divorce me. Her daughter from her first marriage didn't like the idea of her mother's marriage to me, an Asian man, so she left home. She used to say, 'I understand if you have him as your boyfriend, mother, but why do you have to have him as a husband? I don't understand.' Although the daughter came back in two months, we felt awkward. Finally my wife did divorce me.

New Decisions in Sexuality.

Young Koreans in America constantly compare American male/female relationships to Korean ones. Some young Korean couples are even brave enough to live together before marriage. This is rare for middle class Koreans, though it is common in the working class (Laurel Kendall, personal communication). More commonly, from the woman's viewpoint, Korean men take advantage of both American and Korean dating cultures by asking women to be faithful to them, following the Korean mores, and at the same time adopting what women see as the American attitude of reluctance to make a commitment to one woman. In Korea, if a man does not actually marry a woman to whom he promised marriage, and with whom he then has had sexual relations during their courtship, he could be taken to court, and jailed.

There are also changes in marital relations among middle-aged couples. Mrs. Lee, a green grocer, told me.

So far I know little about the real world. I didn't even know how to use birth control, which surprised my gynecologist. But unlike me, most Korean women I see are crazy about leading a luxurious life. They are vain creatures. They become very aggressive toward the opposite sex by paying so much attention to their physical beauty. In my case, I have never bought any

clothes or jewelry at a department store. So, I don't want to make friends with those women. As a result, I don't even want to go to church.

Mrs. Lee also spoke of what is seen by many Koreans as a pathological aspect of their community here: the penetration of massage parlors into the Korean immigrant family environment. According to a gynecologist, I interviewed, many Korean wives are under great stress, taking care of both job and home. Often, their sex lives are adversely affected, resulting in reduced interest or desire. They worry whether their husbands will turn to a bar hostess or massage parlor for sexual attention. (In Korea it is not uncommon for Korean men to turn to bar hostess or sometimes prostitutes but it is new for Korean wives to seek professional advice about marital relations.)

The next generation have their problems, too. Korean girls who have grown up here have difficulty finding husbands. Most of them prefer marrying a Korean man, as they more easily understand each other, and share the same culture. Yet, they are not seen as desirable by Korean men. Theresa was especially negative about the male knee-high generation, especially those who came to the United States when they were teenagers.

Unlike the knee-high female generation, they are conservative, arguing for the Korean style. Because they came here as children, they were raised in

families with this orientation. Those males who were born here and brought up here, or those who come here after college education in Korea, are much better.

Because Koreans enter the segmented labor markets of New York City, they face limitations in the kinds of jobs men and women can get. One ironic result is that it is not rare for women to earn more than men. Mr. Yu, 30 years old, expressed this point.

Korean women try to live as human beings equal to men. As a result of this, some women go too far: they are too frank and easy going. In Korea, they were extremely good at thrift, but not here. On the contrary, males are the same here. As Korean women become independent in the economic sense, there are many problems related to this. For example, if a wife earns \$400 per week by working at a garment factory, and a husband earns only \$300 working at a fruit stand, she is liable to have a sense of her own superiority.

Mr. Pai is a yellow cab driver and his wife is a waitress at a Korean restaurant. He also pointed to difficulties in marital relations, due to women's employment.

It is meaningless to maintain a married life here. Look at my family. My wife and I work at different times. I do not see my wife's face except on

Saturday. Besides that, I cannot see friends. Nor do I even see any acquaintances as often as I did in Korea. [I asked about Korean women here.] They get bold. As they get economic power, they seem to laugh at their husbands. I expect a more respectful attitude from women. And that includes my wife.

His wife works from 11 in the morning to 11 at night, while he works from 5 in the evening to 5 in the morning.

Although his case is extreme, the problem is a typical one in the Korean immigrant family.

Mr. Won runs a garment factory in Elmhurst. As he sees it, Koreans living in America experience profound changes in family life. He pinpoints the stresses of work in creating a very difficult situation between husband and wife.

When both husband and wife work together, there seems to be conflict between them. When both of them come home, tired from work, each can ask the other to share housework. The wife doesn't have great respect for her husband any more, since he does menial jobs, such as working at a green grocery. All family members are sullen, full of complaints toward each other, and toward their work. Many Koreans don't act to the best of their ability because of the language barrier. They find they are trying just to maintain their daily lives, without remembering the original dream of what

they wanted to do in America. They are too frustrated to do anything about their dead-end situation.

Korean immigrants are influenced by both Korean and American gender ideologies, and by their daily experience as men and women, as husband and wives. The factor of women's employment here is revolutionary for most Korean women. By being economically independent, many develop a new self-confidence. Others cannot be enthusiastic over time about their employment, particularly because they are caught in those jobs the segmented labor market offers English-deficient immigrants. Yet Korean American women come up with new viewpoints, and for some, creative ways to deal with their daily lives. Some women decide to divorce, separate, or not to marry at all. If women are learning to stand up for themselves, due to their new employment status, many men feel that their wives have become less obedient, less "Korean" and more "American." American realities do not match American dreams for those still struggling for "establishment", or even for many who find it.

Chapter 7

The Reorganization of Kinship

Familial connections are one of the two important channels through which Koreans can migrate to America. What is more, since 1976 when the occupational preference was restricted, kinship has become the principal channel.

This has led to the rise of Ch'ogajok, or those who entered the United States through kin ties to women. This cultural category arose because more women than men migrated before 1976, first as war-brides and then as nurses. It was therefore women more than men who could invite their family members to immigrate. Ch'ogajok literally means "those who are related to the wife's family." For most Korean married couples in Queens, the number of members of the wife's family in the United States outnumbers those of the husband's family.

In this chapter I analyze the form and content of immigrant Korean kin relations. I look at kinship first in terms of exchange, identifying the conditions and channels by which kin are in contact with each other. Then, I examine conflict among kin. Finally, I focus upon some of the distinctive characteristics of Korean kinship in America.

Exchange Among Kin and Small Business

Small Businesses provide a major arena for interaction among kin in the New York City environment. Often brothers and parents work in their sister or daughter's business, one brother works for another brother, or a father or mother work in their son's business. Sometimes a sister works in her brother's business. Many other more complex permutations of kin working for kin occur as well.

Koreans recognize that in the United States kinship relations become stronger because of shared business interests, and that in this way one simply has more opportunity to see one's kin than in Korea. Business activity may even lead to firmer ties with particular kin still in Korea. Mrs. Park, who runs a handicraft store, makes frequent trips to Korea in order to import clothing and handicraft items. While in the United States, she leaves important business decisions to be made by her sister-in-law in Korea. As a result, the two women are in close contact by telephone calls in between Mrs. Park's visits.

Work schedules here influence contact with kin. If one's work hours are similar to those of kin, one can develop more "deep" or "thick" relations (tutoun kwangye) with that kinsperson than with others. For example, Mr. Shin runs a sewing machine store in Elmhurst, and lives with his family in Flushing. Because of similar work

schedules, he and his family see his brother's family every week. He can visit his brother-in-law's family less often, however, because one man is usually at work while the other is free.

Those who are "established" are able to offer crucial help to their kin in Korea. This is especially important for those who are not well-off in Korea and cannot immigrate without sponsorship and material assistance from kin in America. Once such a Korean immigrant arrives in America, the newcomer and his or her family will be helped by their established kinsperson. Typically a newcomer will stay with their relative for some time until they gain their bearings in American society. They receive free room and board, and help in finding their own employment and housing.

The help provided also depends on the receiving kinsperson's resources and living standard in Korea. For example, Mrs. Shim's family, now in America for more than twenty years, began to send money to Mrs. Shim's sisters in Korea after seven years of immigrant life. According to Mrs. Shim, her sisters were in need, unlike her husband's sister, who married a rich man. As a result, she said, the Shims became close to her sisters, but not to Mr. Shim's sister. It is noteworthy that once they were sufficiently established, they offered help to the wife's kin rather than the husband's. If they had established themselves

earlier, however, they might have received pressure from Mr. Shim's kin in Korea to assist his sister before she married her well-to-do husband.

In terms of telephone calls, letters, visiting, exchanging money, giving gifts, taking care of property, supporting children or older persons, and offering rituals in the name of absent kin, a dense network of contacts ties together kinspersons in the United States with those still in Korea. Interestingly, clothes are presented by kin in Korea to those in America, and not vice versa. This is because Korea produces better quality clothing in terms of price. (In addition, Koreans find it difficult to buy what they like in terms of design, size, and material in America. Many Koreans here, in fact, make special visits to Korea for primarily shopping.)

There are several Korean companies that specialized in sending gifts from Koreans in the United States to friends and kin in Korea. On Korean holidays, in particular, these services are in great demand. On such occasions exchanges of money and gifts, and expressions of personal concern, are obligatory. Especially to her sidaek (husband's family, including families of his brothers) it is a daughter-in-law's duty to send money and other gifts. This, however, is a much less important practice among Koreans in the United States. Should any Korean immigrant here fail to meet proper kin obligations, however, pressure

from other kin will be applied indirectly, making the shirker of responsibilities well aware of what one is supposed to do. Those most scrupulous in maintaining these kinship proprieties are those who, before they are established, leave their children with kin in Korea.

Contact Between Kin in the United States

Koreans here maintain active social interaction with their fellow immigrant kinspersons. In a Los Angeles study (Hurh & Kim 1984:90), about half of the respondents reported at least weekly contact with kin beyond household members. Among Koreans in New York City, I found most often daily kin contact for my Queens informants. This depends, of course, on distance and particular relationships. People do follow Korean kinship norms, but this is affected by residence and involvement in small business.

If a kinsperson lives beyond the New York area, but in the United States, regardless of genealogical distance Koreans call them at least annually on special occasions, or at the change of season. However, if they are one's parents, children, or siblings, or those of one's spouse, monthly telephone calls are proper. Parents or children of Queens Koreans should receive weekly telephone calls, even if living in Los Angeles. If any other kin live in New York City, or especially in Queens, one makes at least weekly telephone calls. If one has kin residing in the

same Queens neighborhood, one makes daily, or at least every other day, contact, regardless of genealogical distance. My informants generally met these culturally articulated norms of kin contact.

Such patterns of kin contact are maintained by a household with both the husband's and the wife's kin. This is in great contrast to Korea where a man does not usually think about his wife's kin as relatives in the same way that patrilineal kin are thought about. According to a study in Korea by Un-Hui Kim (personal communication), although in practice couples and their children are frequently in close contact with the wives' families and kin, the husbands find it difficult to include them among their relatives when conceptualizing kin obligations.

In terms of face-to-face contact, Korean immigrants will see their own parents and children daily, making visits if they live in separate households in the same neighborhood or the same Borough. Siblings who work in the same business, even though they live in different neighborhoods, have daily contact. Other siblings make either daily or weekly visit. I also found that close ties to mother's kin, such as mother's sister or brother, often form when those kin live in the same neighborhood, or both live in Queens. These kin also make weekly visits to each other. This is also novel in terms of the patrilineal Korean kinship structure. In the case of a man's other

in-laws, visits are less frequent, but telephone contacts with both patrilateral and matrilateral are fairly equal in occurrence. If a wife's siblings also live in Queens, either weekly or monthly visits will usually be made.

Contact with Kin Beyond the United States

Kinship contact with relatives still in Korea depends more strictly upon genealogical distance and patrilateral norms. Closest contact, of course, is maintained with a man's wife and children still at home. Close contact is also maintained with a man's parents, and then with the wife's parents. In fact, closer contact with the wife's parents is sometimes the case. For young adults, telephone calls to parents are made as often as every third day, or at least weekly. For middle-aged immigrants whose parents or parents-in-law are old, contact may be only seasonal, or twice a year. With siblings in Korea, contact is less frequent than with one's parents or parents-in-law, often just a few times a year or only annually. Of course, when children remain with these relatives in Korea, or plans concerning immigration or business are being arranged, contacts are more frequent.

Families in which a wife or children remain in Korea are called isan kajok (divided family), the same term used for families separated during the Korean War. In such cases, one is in close contact with them by telephone, as

often as daily or weekly. In such cases, the immigrant male sends money, as much as \$10,000 per year, which is frequently the total income that they enjoy. If Korean immigrants have parents or parents-in-law still in the homeland, gifts of money as well as monthly telephone calls and letters, will be sent. My Queens informants, at different stages of establishment, send their parents and parents-in-law various amounts: from \$150 to \$600 per month. Remittances to siblings in Korea varied from \$500 to \$10,000 per year.

The greatest obligation to send money home falls upon immigrant men who are eldest sons. In Korean society, they have the principal rights of family inheritance, yet at the same time the heaviest obligation toward other siblings in terms of support for education and living expenses. I even noted a case in which one eldest son in America supports an unmarried sister in Korea, and expects to do so throughout her life.

Letters are written to children or parents in Korea, either weekly or monthly. It is often a married woman's duty to write letters to her in-laws.

The appropriate and common occasions on which Korean immigrants tend to send monetary gifts to Korea are New Year Day, kujong (Lunar New Year Day), ch'usok (the Mid-autumn Festival), and oboi nal (parents' day). In particular, lunar New Year Day and Mid-Autumn Festival are

near the beginning of the school year, and graduation time, in Korea, and people choose these dates to send money to kin. People also send money to kin in Korea in celebration of their birthdays, paegil (a baby's first hundred days), tol (a baby's one-year birthday), hoegap (a 60th birthday), ch'ilsun (a 70th birthday), an engagement, a wedding, and kiil (in memory of a relative on the anniversary of the day of their death). In addition, when a kinsperson is ill, one also sends some money.

In these monetary gifts, Korean immigrants do not give priority to the wife's kin, and this differs from the way kin relations are being reorganized in the United States. However, they do give more importance to the wife's kin than they would if they had never left Korea. Nonetheless, Korean immigrants do try to fulfill the patrilineal kinship norms (tangnae) that mark Korean social organization--for instance, sending money to one's father's brother, (samchon).

Yet, perhaps, those kin ties activated in the process of immigration often become the most significant. If one receives substantial help from one kinsperson, the relationship with them will be strengthened. For example, in the case of Mrs. Chung, her own parents and siblings live in Chicago, but she and her husband have far more contact with his family in Korea. This is because they have received financial support from her husband's family

for his education. They call her husband's parents in Korea two or three times a week, but they visit with her parents in Chicago or New York only two or three times a year.

The Clash Between Generations

As Reverend Han pointed out, the situation for Korean elderly immigrants is different from that for younger people. "It is worthwhile to live in America. You can enjoy as much freedom as possible, and you will be rewarded for what you do. If you are young, there are many opportunities. For example, if you want to study, you can study. However, this doesn't work for the elderly."

It is usually necessary to receive help from kin if a Korean immigrant wishes to realize the American dream of establishing their own small business. This sometimes leads to friction among kin, particularly among those of different generations. In extreme cases, the older generation might leave for Korea, and the younger generation stay, causing family division.

In Korea, Reverend Won's father was in charge of medical supplies in the Air Force, and retired as a Liet (Lieutenant-colonel). In the United States he hoped to become a pharmacist, but failed to complete his internship. He then started to run a dry cleaning store. His mother, a doctor, could not work at her

profession either. They returned to Korea. Now Reverend Won feels that his parents were too old to adapt to America, because of the language barrier and other differences. At the time they left, he and his sister were still in school, and his sister married an American. The Won children both decided to remain in America.

Mr. Ha is 20 years-old, and works in a wholesale store. His views are very different from his father's. His father thinks that one should start at the top, while Mr. Ha is ready to start at the bottom. He is willing to begin as a dragon-tail, rather than be a chicken-head, to use the Korean proverb.

Women in the age category of grandmother are confronted with a different situation than men of that age. While elderly men are of limited usefulness in any productive or business activities, elderly women are in high demand. These women are first needed when a young couple has a baby, and require a baby-sitter. Some elderly women also find ready work in garment factories. Others, who do not have to take care of their own grandchildren, can make a living as paid baby-sitters. In some instances, because elderly men are economically powerless, the problems between a grandfather and a grandmother are even more serious than those between a younger couple.

The grandparent generation also have problems with

their adult children, the parental generation. One such example can be found in the Korean family's traditionally volatile mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationship. On the one hand, daughters-in-law still suffer from tyranny of their co-resident mothers-in-law. On the other hand, as also reported in Korea (Lee 1981), increasing number of older women complain about hardships here caused by rebellious daughters-in-law. Of course, if a woman's parents-in-law are still in Korea, there is much less of a problem. This, in fact, is often a major reason for Korean women not wanting to return to Korea.

Jenny compared her life with that of a friend. Both of them see themselves as "knee-high" generation members, having immigrated as children. Jenny's parents-in-law live in California, which makes it easier for her to deal with them. Her friend has a very difficult time with her mother-in-law who also lives in Queens. Her friend recently came to visit Jenny and cried for a whole evening. Jenny said.

My mother-in-law was well-educated, but she was forced to stay home to help in farm work in those days. My father-in-law is a respected church minister, but very patriarchal. When I saw her offer him fruit, after peeling it--very politely, like a slave serving the master--I was surprised, and disapproved of the whole scene. At home, I have never seen anything like

this. We daughters did the work, not my mother.

Alice divorced her husband, partly because she did not get along with her mother-in-law, a second-generation Korean American. In this situation, her husband chose her over his mother. She recollected, "When I lived with my husband and my mother-in-law for a year, we fought each other all the time. For example, she did not like the way I cooked. I also answered back to her. I could not understand why she did not like the way that I was brought up by my family. Finally, my husband could not bear our conflict at home any more.

Mrs. Lee lives with her son's family, and takes care of the housework and her grandson. Her son is a financial analyst, and her daughter-in-law is an attorney. Mrs. Lee said, "These days, a mother-in-law lives under a daughter-in-law's oppression. In fact, young people have become kings. I have problems with my daughter-in-law over our different ways of raising children--she argues for a more scientific way."

Although children invite their parents in order to live together, and to take care of them in their old age, both generations find it difficult to live under the same roof. Many elderly Koreans are now reluctant to immigrate to this country, because of language and other adjustment problems.

Mrs. Chung, in her 60s, lives with her daughter's

family. Overall, she thinks she made a good decision to come here because a wide variety of consumer goods are readily available. Of course, there are bad aspects as well, she added. As an example, she used the relationship between parents and children. "After they are grown up, they treat their parents with indifference." She also said, "Other elderly Korean women have told me that they do not want to come to America because they cannot go freely where they like, and they have to cook for their working son and daughter or daughter-in-law."

Characteristics of the New Kinship System

K. Lee points out that the rules of descent in Korea are characterized by the priority of the direct lineal descendant, and symbolized in the transmission of ancestor worship responsibilities from father to eldest son. The custody of family property, and succession to family headship, follow this same basic element descent rule (K. Lee 1975:400).

In the transition from Korea to the United States, traditional concepts of kinship ties have become diffuse, sometimes even overturning genealogical distance. In Korea, people have definite ideas about who they consider as close kin, those within tangnae, meaning all those with whom one can trace patrilineal ties back four generations. It is this category of kin for whom one wears traditional

mourning clothes following their deaths.

With the emergence in America of ch'ogajok (women-linked immigration), a person who is related to either the wife or husband is considered a kinsperson, because he or she can potentially work for their small business. What is more, relationships that traditionally were avoided--those between mother and son-in-law, or brother-in-law and sister-in-law--may now be close.

"Blood is thicker than water" it is said; remote kin may be more reliable than a total stranger. It is common for an established immigrant to provide newcomer kin (and even sometimes non-kin from the same locality or those related through a school friendship or tie, with free room and board for several months, up to a year. Without such assistance, it is difficult for Korean immigrants to succeed in saving money and establish their own businesses.

Rise of Women-centered and Diffused Kinship

Effective kinship ties in the United States tend to be bilateral. Kinspersons on both sides of a married couple's family become important. In contrast, in Korea kin norms are weighted to the husband's side--on the mother's side only those up to four ch'on (the basic unit of genealogical distance) are technically counted as immediate kin; on the father's side, those up to eight ch'on are so recognized. (However, it is not well documented how Koreans in fact

accord recognition of their relatives.)

In America, kinship is also more horizontal than in Korea, with more emphasis on sibling ties. In Korea, vertical ties between father and son play a more important role, than they do here, due to inheritance and ancestor worship.

In America, immigration and productive activities are usually organized around these horizontal sibling ties. The sister (nui) in a sibling group plays a much more central role for all siblings than in Korea. She sponsors her other family members, and directs the beginning of their pathways to establishment.

Mr. Yi drew a typical picture in which women not only initiated immigration but also directed and supervised what the rest of family members could do. Mr. Yi and his wife came to the United States in 1980 and lived with their daughters in Manhattan for two years. After that, they moved to Elmhurst. Since then, their third and fourth sons have joined them.

They now live in a house in Woodside, registered under the names of Mrs. Yi and their second and third son.

Mr. Yi explained, "That is because my daughter advised us to do so." It is remarkable to a Korean to see these immigrants acknowledge the advice and contributions made by daughters. As Mr. Yi put it, "She is really clever to know everything in the United States. She is ttosuni (meaning

very tough and bright)."

At first Mr. Yi opposed the immigration offer from his daughter in America. He could not think of leaving his motherland. But his wife liked it, because she is younger than he, he figured. The children still at home said that in order to join their family members, they were ready to immigrate to America. Yet he still was not sure. His daughter then suggested that she would help him to establish his own business. He finally decided to come.

As his daughter promised, the Yi's were presented with a green grocery in Manhattan, owned by the daughter. It was a good business, and interesting to run, he recollected. His daughter worked in the store as cashier, and later bought a house after selling the store. Mr. Yi was paid weekly, and given extra pocket money when required.

It is evident that this ttosuni played a significant role in her family's life. She persuaded the rest of the family to immigrate, helped her parents establish their own business, and continue to guide the family in their adjustment to American life.

Mr. Choo's case is similar. In Korea his eldest daughter, a typist, married an American, and moved to the United States. His eldest son then came to America, to Arizona in 1978 invited by the eldest daughter. Within a year, the whole family was in America. After two years in

Los Angeles, they came to New York. Now he and his wife live with his eldest son, his third and youngest daughters, and their youngest son. The eldest son runs a Chinese fast-food restaurant in lower Manhattan with the third and fourth daughters. Mrs. Choo does the family's housework.

Mr. Chung runs a fish market. He migrated to America at the invitation of his wife's sister, who also married an American. It has been only his wife's kin who have ever stayed in his household; his own family members have not migrated. Mr. Chung's mother-in-law, his brothers-in-law, and the cousin of his wife all live near his home, and they often visit with each other. All of them have also been sponsored by his wife's sister, who now lives in Albany. The Queens relatives visit her twice a year, and telephone her as frequently as needed.

We often encounter in Queens what is for Koreans an asymmetrical situation in which the wife's kin live in America, while the husband's kin are mostly in Korea, slowly trying to immigrate one by one. The women-centered, sister-initiating kinship values are also evident in co-residence, in terms of which kin tend to be given household accommodation. In Mr. Park's case, his in-laws stayed with him for more than a year. It is usually the wife's kin who stay more frequently, and longer; a daughter's children who became more integrated into their mother's parents' household. (In Korea, the increasing

importance of the wife's family also has been documented (see Cho & Koo 1983; Kendall 1985; Yoon 1989.) For Koreans, it cannot be stressed too much that such arrangements overturn the traditional mode of living with the eldest son's family. Mrs. Park runs a handicraft store. Her family immigrated under her daughter's sponsorship. Now, she and her husband, son, daughter, and her father-in-law, all co-reside with her grandson, the son of her daughter who invited her. In accommodating a daughter's child, this household deviates from traditional Korean residence norms. Elderly Mr. Zion's case is also un-traditional in that he lives with his daughter's family, and takes care of her children, but he works with his son.

Mr. Park, a worker at a green grocery, resides as a son-in-law in his wife's parents' household, with his wife and six-month-old son, a very un-Korean uxori-local residence pattern. His wife came to America earlier than he, and when he married, he moved in with her family. As a result, his life is centered around his wife's relatives. They frequently call his wife's father's sister (komo) in Washington, or his wife's mother's brother (oesamch'on). Even the neighbors they see are mostly his wife's friends, most of whom are Korean (five are Latin American). The Parks' friends include his wife's high schoolmates, whom his wife sees once a week. Moreover, his wife belongs to a rotating credit club (kye) for \$30,000, with ten members;

they meet either in a restaurant or at his home. Every Saturday, his parents-in-law host a meeting of their friends at the household. Mr. Park's kin are all in Korea. He calls his parents twice a month. In the future, once he is established in his own store, he intends to send money to them.

We also observe women-centered, sister-initiating kinship networks in the frequent contact among people living nearby, or even upstairs or downstairs in the same building. For example, Mrs. Shim's brother lives upstairs, with his family. Reverend Won's wife's mother and his brothers-in-law also live upstairs in the same apartment--in that way his mother-in-law is able to take care of her grandchild. This situation is also occurring in urban Korea, where a newly-married couple tend to look for a house near the wife's parents, in the same neighborhood. In America, however, this trend appears to be even more developed, with the wife's family or kin trying to find a newly married couple a house nearby their own, or even offering them space in the same house.

Lowered Status of the Eldest Son

Another noticeable change in Korean kinship here is the decreasing importance of the eldest son. As the eldest son is often the last to migrate, owing to his duty to continue ancestor worship in Korea, the hierarchical order

among siblings is shifted as sisters and younger brothers adjust first to immigrant life in the United States.

In Korea, it is imperative that the eldest son take care of the parents, most usually living together with them. Because of primogeniture or partially primogeniture inheritance, siblings have different amounts of power in the family, depending on birth order, marital status, and gender. The current Korean law stipulates that the eldest son can claim one and a half shares in family property; the other sons one share each; unmarried daughters, a half share; and married daughters, a quarter share. In America, this customary reading of sibling status changes. A woman, alone or as wife, usually arrives first. Unmarried, and younger brothers and sisters are invited next, earlier than the married siblings. Immigration regulations also make it easier for unmarried persons to migrate than those already married. It is often the eldest male siblings who comes to America last.

At the same time, in America, in many cases, parents tend to live first with the more established children, and then take turns living with those who arrive later. As a result, a lower status than in Korea is given to the later-arriving eldest son.

Mr. Nam's family is representative of this new Korean family situation. His sister initiated the family migration after marrying an American army man, and now

lives in New Jersey. She invited first her second oldest brother and his family, and he is currently Mr. Nam's employer. Next his youngest brother and his family were invited, and now the Nam children's mother lives with this brother in Queens. Mr. Nam is the eldest son, but was the last sibling to immigrate to America.

In Mr. Yi's family, his second son initiated the family migration by inviting all of his three brothers and four sisters, except the eldest daughter who was already married. Mr. Yi and his wife have lived here in their children's households in rotation. While living with the second son, the eldest son established his own business, and then moved out, leaving the parents there.

Of course, there are exceptions. If the eldest son himself came first to America, as a student or professional, he often initiated the family immigration. Or, if a set of related families all migrated to South America, and later remigrated to the United States, the eldest son's family might be included in this group. In some cases, only by passing on inheritance rights and the obligations of ancestor worship to another brother, could the eldest son migrate.

As a result of the immigration process, we often see a new sibling hierarchy in terms of gender and birth order--the old hierarchy now upside down. The eldest son who has most power in Korean culture is likely to have the

least in America. Among the sons, their status and position often depends upon who came first, and who became established here earlier. What is more, it is often a sister who is at the peak of the sibling hierarchical order in America.

Importance of Locality

Another change in the nature of kin relations is the increasing importance of locality. Regardless of genealogical distance, people form closer ties with those kin who live nearby than those who live far away. Locality contributes to a genealogically diffuse set of effective kin ties. Most immigrants tend to settle in the core settlement neighborhoods, such as Elmhurst and Flushing, and then later, as they become established, move to other parts of Queens or to the suburbs. Also, kin of the wife often tend to live in the same apartment building, or in the same immediate neighborhood. After moving out, some commute by cars to stores or to church or community events in the core areas, and maintain kin contacts much as before. Others, however, especially professionals, move out to suburban areas, and the frequency of communication and contact dwindles.

The effective kinship networks thus may become less genealogically complete or homogeneous over time. Newly arriving wife's kin may replace closer patrilineal

husband's kin. If they live far away, they are as remote as before they immigrated.

In the immigrant situation, then, Koreans in Queens form close relations with those kin, regardless of genealogical distance, who live nearby. Even remote kin ties may be activated.

Mr. Kang, a grocery worker, sees his mother's brother's family every week. They live in the same immediate neighborhood in Elmhurst. He feels very close to his mother's first and second brothers (oesamch'on). He has received many gifts of clothes from them. His maternal grandfather, who lives with his mother's first brother, is also someone to whom he feels very close.

Ms. Choi has a cousin here whose degree of kinship is beyond third cousin. Although she lives in Queens and he lives in Westchester, they call each other almost once a week, and they both participate in activities at the same church.

Evaluations of Kinship Relations

The longer they live in America, the more Korean immigrants perceive change in their kinship relations. First, many experience a more or less positive feelings on arrival, mixed with a sense of distance from kin still in Korea.

Mr. Chun recalled his wedding here, about which he

feels horrible because so many of his kin were not present. He married for love. When he and his wife married in church, they had no kin to celebrate their wedding ceremony with them.

Over time, there are two different routes pursued by Korean immigrants in reorganizing their family and kin relations in the American context. The first is to somehow continue to maintain their Korean kinship networks, now at distance. Such persons rely heavily on family and kin, both materially and emotionally. Like Mr. Chung's family, they spend considerable amount of money to telephone their family and kin in Korea. They often feel lonely without their kin network around them in American society, as Mr. Chun felt at his wedding.

Others build on the importance of family and kin ties here, especially in relation to the establishment of their businesses. As a result, many at first reify the importance of family and kin ties as the keys to success in Korean immigrant life. "Emotions are socially constituted and are not only the expression of experience but also the determinants of experience and practice" (Medick & Sabean 1984:3). However, once the beginning stage of establishment is reached, the honeymoon period will be over. As their business prospers, family or kin ties play a less important role in these proprietors' lives. In the Korean American community, people perceive such family and

kin relations as becoming cold, rational, calculative, even inhumane, and alien to the traditional Korean notion of domestic life. The turning point comes in their realization that their children need something more than a pool of family and kin ties in order to succeed in America.

Mr. Ha used to call his family in Astoria twice or three times per week but not any longer. His brothers have come now from Korea, but so far he has seen his eldest brother only four times. He said, "At first we were glad to see each other, but not any more."

Mr. Yi's case reveals conflict between father and adult son, which is considered the strongest tie in the Korean kinship system. In running his business in America, Mr. Yi's son does not find it useful to listen to his father's advice.

Mr. Yi complained that his son didn't listen to him, but to a friend, and that he failed in business. His son bought a store in Elmhurst on the friend's recommendation. Without any experience, he relied on what the friend told him. Half the capital was provided by money that Mr. Yi and his son brought from Korea. Now the son runs fish frying store in Manhattan.

Mrs. Bai told me.

Well, my son was a filial son in Korea. While I was still in Korea, I was dying to see him. I worried

badly about my son. However, since I have come to America I have seen my son once a week only. How happy do you think I am? I don't have to worry about my survival, though. I will work hard like this, baby-sitting, and I can make a living.

Mr. Choo said.

As I have an American son-in-law, I have come to know a lot about America. In America, brother and sister borrow or lend each other money. They do not just freely give and take. This is very good. Children don't rely only on parents. I plan to leave two-thirds of my property to my children, in Korean style, and donate one-third to charities, American style. I am going to pass my property in equal shares to my children, unlike the traditional Korean way. Here Koreans try to adopt the American way, for example smoking in front of their seniors, and making no concession to their parents. They do not take care of, or serve their parents politely, which has been the way in Korea for a long time. However, most Korean immigrants have to work hard to survive. Otherwise they starve.

He also noted that Korean elderly women invited by their daughters take care of young children so that a husband and wife can work together, without worrying about their children. Nowadays, if they do baby-sitting for

others, they can earn \$600 per month. In caring for their own grandchildren, they were never paid. But now, even grandmothers are given some money for their taking care of their grandchildren, even if they have little to spend the money on. "Eventually, many of them would like to return to their own country, to Korea."

Conclusion

In the United States, Korean kinship undergoes considerable change. Old norms are less and less honored; but new patterns of kinship behavior can nonetheless be identified. In sum, it is the changing productive activities in immigrant small businesses, and not factors of relocation or acculturation, that account for these changes.

For many, especially at first, family and kin play a key role in their total evaluation of life in America. Korean Americans see kinship as a necessary ingredient without which they can hardly achieve their dream of establishing their own business. Here, we see a reification of kinship: kin relations become fetishized, being seen almost as a factor of production like capital or labor. But once one establishes one's business, it becomes less important to mobilize family labor. Kinship relations may then cool.

Finally class factors also intervene, people become

increasingly aware of class distinctions among kin and family members. The rational, calculative Korean American view of kinship conflicts more and more with the kinship norms of Korean ideology [1].

Notes

- [1] It is apparent that some elements of this change can be found in urban Korea too, in that many newly married couples tend to live nearby the wife's family and that increasing importance is given to the wife's kin as well as husbands' kin. However, few of my informants take into consideration such change in contemporary Korea. Korean American kinship shows its own development of new forms and patterns compared with urban kinship in Korea. With women-centered and sister-initiating kinship, we see Korean kinship greatly modified under the specific conditions of immigrant life in the United States.

Chapter 8

Conceptions of Ethnicity:

Workplace Encounters

As Koreans arrive at J.F.K. International Airport, they are impressed with the diversity of peoples. When they settle in the multi-ethnic communities of Queens, questions arise: Who are these others? Who are we?

In this chapter I would like to explore the answers that are generated as Koreans meet and experience people of other ethnic backgrounds. Again, it is their roles and experience in Korean small business enterprises that appear to structure emergent ideologies of ethnicity. While some develop very elaborate conceptualizations of this multi-ethnic society, others hold much simpler notions. All Koreans observe however that in America, the lighter one's skin color, the better one is treated.

Living in New York City, they begin to refine their previous understandings of people in America. It is notable to them that there are white and black Latin Americans. Even for the so-called whites, they learn to their surprise that the typical description of blond hair and blue eyes does not seem to apply to very many whites in New York. Overall, the numerous nationalities and languages, and heterogeneous physical appearances, are

responsible for shifting Koreans' perceptions from a narrow racial analysis to a more complex ethnic analysis. Although they use the Korean term injong for "race," there is no Korean term for "ethnicity". Koreans use the same term, minjok for "ethnicity" that they use for "nation."

Barth provided a classic formulation for the study of ethnicity. "The critical focus of investigation... becomes the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses" (1969:15). Along these lines, an ethnic population often is better understood as a category than as a group, with reciprocal relations (Vincent, 1971) occurring between individuals of different ethnic categories, and not between whole ethnic groups. In studies of ethnicity, the focus shifted from claims of ethnic commonality based upon the potency of subjective primordial attachments (Geertz 1963; Isaacs 1975) to the instrumental manipulation of ethnic culture in the service of collective political and economic interests (Wallerstein 1960; Despres 1967; Cohen 1969). This primordialist-instrumentalist dichotomy continues to divide studies of ethnicity, despite a growing sense that it obscures important aspects of the phenomena under study (Bentley 1987:25).

While both models possess an appealing simplicity, they also share a critical gap in their explanatory logic. Neither addresses the question of how actual persons

recognize the commonalities (of sentiment or interest) underlying claims to common ethnic identity. My discussion will address this issue at the level of individual experience. At its base, ethnicity involves a claim to be a particular kind of person belonging to a particular social group. Bentley maintains that the impetus to such a claim may lie in ecological adaptation, emotional sustenance, an innate tendency to favor kin (and fictive kin), or shared positions in structures of production and distribution. All of these claims to ethnic identity involve symbolic construal of sensations of likeness and difference, and these sensations must be accounted for somehow (1987:27).

Bentley also proposes that the "theory of practice" as formulated by Bourdieu (1977) provides a way to address this problem. Bourdieu argues that objective conditions of existence, mediated by systems of symbolic representations, generate in different persons dispositions to act in different ways. Extrapolating from Bourdieu's analysis, we may hypothesize that consciousness of affinities of interest and experience embodies subliminal awareness of objective commonalities in practice.

My study of Korean awareness of ethnicity in New York City finds this reasoning useful, particularly in how one comes to conceive of other ethnicities in everyday work situations. My discussion will examine how individual

members of ethnic categories identify themselves with an ethnic commonality as a consequence of their particular patterns of familiarization with the markers of other ethnic groups. My working definition of ethnicity is "cultural beliefs about affinities of common origin." In looking at the contexts of ethnic experience, I focus on workplaces, where most Korean immigrants encounter persons of other ethnic categories on a daily basis.

Work as the Context of Ethnic Encounter

In analyzing the ethnic encounters of Koreans and others at the workplaces, I found that class differences produce different ethnic experiences and conceptions. The class categories of Korean Americans--worker, businessmen, and professional--can each be associated with ideologies of race and ethnicity, derived from differences in their workplace spheres of interaction. Newspaper coverage of African American allegations of Korean racism towards them deal mostly with small businessmen. Korean American professionals and workers are almost never mentioned. I will show that their ethnic attitudes are in fact in great contrast with those of small businessmen.

For Koreans in small businesses, ethnic encounters arise in their day-to-day operations. For the most part, these businesses provide a setting in which Koreans serve non-Korean customers. Both businessmen and workers are

aware of their subordinate position to white Americans in the United States system of ethnic stratification. They understand their role in replacing white American small business proprietors via "ethnic succession," and also understand that whites are aware of this as well.

After the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, Korean businessmen began to hire non-Koreans, who now compose one-third of their workforce. These circumstances made Koreans more aware of which ethnicities they could consider subordinate to them.

Small Businessmen

Korean small businessmen encounter various ethnic groups at their workplaces, either as suppliers or customers. They consider Latin Americans the best customers. White Americans are problematic, being difficult to please, and even threatening at times to initiate law suits. Korean shopkeepers often suspect that African Americans are potential shoplifters, due to rumor, or for some, previous experience. This can create situations of conflict [1].

Latin Americans as the Best Customer. Many Korean small businessmen say that Latin Americans are the best customer. Some express it even more precisely: the best business area is a half Latin American and half African American neighborhood. It is unclear fully why they prefer these minority neighborhoods. They admit that one can make

more money in a white neighborhood, but they also say that they prefer the friendliness of Latin Americans and African Americans. They do not feel the same warmth from white customers. Another rationale I heard is that Latin Americans and African Americans are easier to deal with as customers. They do not take as much time to buy goods, are not difficult to please, and make fewer complaints than do white customers.

In Elmhurst, where most white customers are older persons, and in many cases less prosperous than new immigrants, Korean businessmen do not extend them credit. In the following examples, all three Elmhurst Korean business operators consider Latin Americans to be the best customers, and whites, the most difficult. However, they each have different explanations.

Mrs. Choi runs a American grocery. Among her customers, she said, "Latin Americans are the best. They are easier to deal with, without complaints. I have customers such as Colombian, Puerto Rican, German, Italian, and Jewish. Colombians just buy what they want, whereas Germans are very particular, and bargain over even one penny."

Mrs. Lee runs a dry cleaning store. According to her, 70 percent of my customers are Latin Americans and the rest are Asians. Spanish people are good customers: they behave as gentleman, and are kind and friendly.

They are people with whom I feel intimacy. Among Asians, Indians are difficult: they bring filthy clothes; they bargain over prices. Filipinos are clean. There are also some Chinese and Japanese. Among the Latin Americans, Colombians are a majority. But, those elderly whites who could not leave this neighborhood--they are very difficult to please. They are stingy. At first they ignore you. Later, if you perform well, they accept it, and even give advice to me. In the past I was made to feel inferior to them, because of their racism. Now I do not care any more. Mr. Chung runs a fish market in Washington Heights, Manhattan, and lives in Sunnyside.

Now I have hired two Black workers. Both of them are very good. Because my store is in Washington Heights, 60 percent of my customers are Dominican, 25 percent are Puerto Rican, 10 percent are Black, and the rest include Chinese, Japanese, or Korean. From my observation, Dominicans are a little richer than Puerto Ricans. Dominicans are moody people. There are a few Greek and Jewish customers, but I do not like to deal with them because they are very particular.

Mr. Kim, who has operated businesses in different neighborhoods on his trajectory to establishment, mentioned his wariness in dealing with both white and African

American customers.

I used to run a shoe repair shop in the Bronx. I could make \$500 or \$600 per week. However, as it was in a Jewish neighborhood, people were very stingy. Even now, I do not want to run any business in such a neighborhood. After that, I ran a general merchandise store in an African American area in Brooklyn for one year. Although it was a good business area, I was always worried that they would quarrel with me, and that someone would attack me. Now I operate an automobile bodyshop in Corona.

Differences in Business Practice. In many cases, Korean businessmen arrive at their evaluations of different ethnicities, including Koreans, through their experiences with customer business practice. For instance, Koreans do not ask for discounts at beauty salons, but they do at drug stores. Accordingly, Koreans are considered the best customers by Korean hair stylists, but are considered the worst by pharmacists. In general, Korean merchants have a positive view of those customers who are big spenders. There is no doubt that Koreans buy much more than any other customers at Korean groceries, and in those stores they are the preferred ethnic category of customer.

Mrs. Nam is a hair dresser, and owns a beauty salon.

70 percent of my customers are Korean, and the rest

are Hispanic, Jewish, Chinese, and Indian. Among them, the Jews are usually elderly, and Hispanics are both young and old. [When I asked, she clarified that most Hispanics are Colombians.] Koreans are the best customers because they are very generous, and they are not difficult to please. Hispanics are fine, too. Jewish people often bargain over the price. Those who bargain over the price also tend to complain a lot about other things.

Mr. Kim runs a drug store.

80 percent of my customers are Korean, and the rest are Hispanic and White. In my opinion, there is little difference between any of them. However, Koreans are used to bargaining over price, and want to buy things on credit. If it is too high, Koreans simply do not buy it. Other ethnic groups accept my price. Besides, Koreans ask for medicine without a doctor's prescription. They do not know that in America there is a strict division of labor between doctors and pharmacists. My suppliers from pharmaceutical companies and medicine wholesalers are Jewish or Italian.

Mr. Rim runs a Korean supermarket. He said

85 percent of my customers are Korean, and the rest are Japanese, Chinese, Indian, and Hispanics.

Non-Korean customers do not tend to buy a lot, unlike

Korean customers. But, they do not complain, and greet me in a friendly way.

The next situation I discuss is more complicated. Korean sewing factory owners ask: why do Latin Americans not work as hard as Koreans do? Asian workers, they say, are better educated than non-Asians. More important, it seems, is that Koreans receive internal pressure from members of their ethnic group. Mr. and Mrs. Won run a garment factory; Mr. Won said.

At the present time, there are 45 workers including those who do homework only, who are around ten. Among them, thirty are Korean, eight Chinese, five Hispanics, two Indian. Usually those who want work come directly to us, and then we screen them. I hire workers of different ethnic groups. Chinese are very diligent, working patiently. Spanish do not seem to accept big pressures in work, working exactly eight hours a day, and five days a week. They do not seem to be quick in understanding the work either. On the contrary, in my experience, Koreans are very quick to learn the work, making fast progress. But they are not faithful: if it is no longer to their interest, they leave work immediately. However, as members of the same ethnic group, they are sympathetic to their employer, working more than they are required. Mr. Pai, on the other hand, saw economic interest as

more important than primordial attachments in his relations with other Koreans. What matters is capital, not nationality.

I distribute beer and other drinks to 150 or 200 retailers. Half are American stores, and the other half are Korean ones. If I make a comparison, although there seems to be a little difference, more Korean stores tend to write bad checks, buy on credit, or get nervous about prices. This is because of their lack of capital.

Workers

Workers have markedly different ideologies of ethnicity than employers. First, they emphasize the differences between Korean and American workplaces. They often perceive that Korean employers exploit their workers more than Americans do. On the other hand, they find that American employers do not trust Korean workers. In some cases, they also develop friendships with fellow workers who are not Korean.

In American Workplaces. Although most Korean immigrants work in Korean business establishments, an increasing number work in American workplaces. There, Korean workers often feel that they are not trusted by their white employers. Mr. Chun worked at an automobile body shop.

I was skilled, and worked hard, so they treated me well because they needed me. I had both white and black American colleagues. The whites were very cool and suspicious of me, as an tongyanggye (people from the Asian Continent). The blacks were very friendly, and got along well with me. In my analysis, white Americans only know themselves and their own kind, and they are ethnocentric and arrogant.

Mr. Chung, now a fish market owner, told me, When I was working at an American business, the boss lost something. From then on I was treated peculiarly. I was investigated three times. That did not happen to the other workers. I felt dishonored. And I was very upset. Finally, I called the police, and asked them to investigate me and my residence. How else could I clear myself from dishonor? Eventually I quit the job.

Mr. Park worked at an American gas station. While my former Korean employers trusted me fully, this American employer watched me carefully, and did not trust me. Well, I admit that we had difficulty with communication. At other jobs when a Korean employer had to leave, he left me to watch the counter, without any reservation. But the Americans would not. To make matters worse, a Spanish worker lorded it over me, a newcomer, in the absence of the

boss. He used to order me a lot, to do this and that. After taking this treatment for three months, I decided to end this exploitation. So I left.

Although some, like Mr. Park, reported a hard time with other minority workers, many Korean workers felt friendly or at least open towards other minority workers. Mr. Nam is an example.

Ordinary Americans seem to be backward. They have too many payments to make, and concentrate on trying to enjoy their weekends. On the contrary, Koreans toil 16 or 18 hours per day in order to build up savings. For this, Americans make fun of us. At the bakery, I saw a second generation Puerto Rican who had both a strange inferiority feeling, and the American pride. When I used to work hard, including overtime, he used to say, 'Dam Chinese, you never know how to rest.' But on the weekends he would spend all his money. Then he would ask me to lend him \$10 or \$20. I did, but I used to say, 'You see, I am not a slave to money. I make an effort to work hard in order to save for the future. Don't you understand?'

In Korean Workplaces. In many Korean workplaces, employers hire non-Koreans, usually for specific jobs. There is however a difference by different ethnicity, as by gender, in wages paid. Not surprisingly, Korean workers frequently

become sympathetic to their non-Korean co-workers through talking about problems of immigrant life, and in sharing work, Korean meals, and leisure time. One Korean worker expressed relief that he was not born a Mexican, and therefore paid less and exploited more. At the Korean green grocery where he worked, he and his Mexican fellow worker shared the 8 P.M.8 A.M. night shift, six days a week. While he was paid \$350 a week as cashier, the Mexican worker was paid \$200.

Mr. Ha told me that there were different job descriptions and wages by gender and ethnic group at the Korean wholesale store where he worked.

Besides the employer and his wife, there are twelve workers: three are Spanish and two are female accountants. [All these were paid less than Korean male workers.] Whereas Spanish workers only do sales for Spanish-speaking customers, Korean workers do many tasks. I am supposed to do various jobs, such as sales, shipping, and arranging stock.

Mr. Kim explained that different pay systems for Koreans and non-Koreans obtained at a Korean garment factory where he worked after leaving an American firm.

Americans are fair about working hours and payment. But in my opinion, Koreans just try to exploit other Koreans, taking advantage of them. As soon as I started to work, I was immediately covered with cloth

dust. Koreans are too cold toward each other, compared with the Chinese and Japanese I see on the subway. As I see it, Korean women seem to remain at garment factories almost forever. I see that Spanish workers work only for an hourly rate, not piece work. Although they are less enterprising, they are kinder than Koreans. As I command English better, they became friendly to me.

In addition to interethnic co-worker relationships, Korean workers also are directed by their Korean employers to deal with potential shoplifters. Ironically, it is often these workers who are thus perceived as having negative attitudes toward customers. In fact, it is store owners who are the most concerned about shoplifting, and Korean employees often complain that their employers force them to watch the customers more than is really necessary.

Some workers do not see any ethnic or racial differences in the behavior of customers. Mr. Lee's first job was at a green grocery in Brooklyn, where most customers were African Americans. After that job, he worked for his uncle in an American grocery, doing odd-jobs. At this store, most customers were Italian. When I asked him to compare these customers with the African Americans at the former green grocery, he said there was little difference. He complained only that he had to work harder for his uncle than he did at the former

store.

Professionals

Interestingly enough, two doctors I interviewed, a pediatrician and a physician, each arrived at different evaluations of patients of Korean and other ethnicities. This may be related to differences among their patients. While the pediatrician deals primarily with young mothers of babies and young children, the physician deals with adults of both sexes.

In the case of the pediatrician, Dr. Choi, 80 percent of her patients are Korean and 20 percent are "American," which she said included white, Indian, Latin American, and others. As she compared them, "American" patients tended to ask why they must take a prescribed drug, but Korean patients do not. Korean patients do not directly question their doctors, even if they do have questions. In her analysis, Koreans are deferent to authority, unlike her other patients.

Some 75 percent of Dr. Park's patients are African American, 10 percent are white, and the rest are Korean and Latin American. Comparing his non-Korean patients with Koreans, he said, "They do not call the doctor for matters other than treatment, whereas Koreans call me for personal advice." Thus he has to spend more time than is medically necessary with Korean patients. However, due to the

language barrier, he also needs more time for treating non-Korean patients. For a thorough examination, he will have to ask more questions and to examine them more carefully. As he is dealing with specific medical terms, sometimes it is hard to clarify elaborate expressions or nuances about conditions of a disease. Ironically, his American patients like this treatment. They feel they get a very careful examination.

Dr. Lee, a Korean herb doctor and acupuncturist, finds Korean patients to be more argumentative than his American clients. This situation reflects doctor-client interaction in the Korean system of medicine where patients are expected to have more dialogue with their doctor. His American patients, who usually present neck and back problems respond to his expectations quite well, and keep returning for continuing treatment. His Korean immigrant patients, however, do not pay enough attention to what he says. They also stop treatment suddenly, or arrive at his office without any appointment. Like Korean lawyers and insurance brokers, who also complain that Korean customers are more argumentative, he now prefers American clients.

James, a Certified Public Accountant commented that Korean clients expect more than merely his professional services. And for the extra service that Koreans demand, James accordingly charged Koreans higher fees. Most of his clients are Koreans, and only a few are American. He

estimates that more than half the work he does for his Korean customers is beyond a Certified Public Accountant's normal services, for example, helping them open a bank account.

On the other hand, Korean professionals who work in American organizations, unlike those in the individual medical and accountant practices just discussed, often encounter ethnic discrimination from Americans. Mr. Suh, a medical technician, explained.

Although there is racism, things remain calm on the surface. Employers prefer Americans educated in the United States when they are considering promotion. Korean professionals tend to advance quickly, which makes people of other ethnicities jealous. However, other Asians who face less language difficulty, like Filipinos or Indians, get better treatment than Korean and Chinese professionals.

The Importance of Practice in Constructions of Ethnicity

With experience, Koreans in America modify their ethnic conceptions. Unfortunately, some incorporate their own negative treatment by the white majority in their conceptions and apply them to other minorities.

Mr. Park did not understand the behavior of the Latin American immigrants he encountered. He met later immigrants of a higher social class, and modified his

views. Mr. Park worked as a watchman at a general merchandise store in Brooklyn. Because he had to stand for 10 hours at a time, he was often fatigued. He even ate his pizza lunch while standing. There, 80 percent of the customers were Latin American, especially Puerto Ricans and Dominicans. As he observed them, from early in the morning many were drinking, or using drugs. "At that time I had to work hard, clenching my teeth. So, it was very difficult for me to understand them. They looked lazy and disgusting to me." Later he was hired as a manager at a general merchandise store in Yonkers. There he encountered Jamaican, Indonesian, and Filipino customers. In his view, these immigrants were different from those in Brooklyn. They were able to live better, and when they made a purchase, it was after a careful examination of the goods. [In fact, Mr. Park, like some other Koreans, used the English word, "Spanish" to include Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, and Jamaicans.]

Mr. Suh, as a sewing machine store worker, had a negative opinion of Latin American customers, who he was told were potential thieves. Later, when operating his own store, he was helped a great deal by the Chilean former owner, and also patronized by Latin American customers, whom he now appreciates. "The local Latin Americans here do not speak English well either. I have few problems dealing with them. Furthermore, I feel that Colombians are

better customers than Koreans, who often bargain over price."

Some Koreans who have experienced racial discrimination from white Americans apparently transfer this racism to African Americans. Mr. Kim, a pharmacist, said.

From my own experience, I feel a kind of discrimination as a minority, visibly or invisibly. When I lived in Yonkers, a white store owner assumed that kind of attitude, seeing me only as a tongyanggye. Now I feel that sometimes I, myself, imitate that kind of attitude toward black customers, suspecting them all of shoplifting, which is a shame. When I worked as a pharmacist at the hospital, I was treated as a professional, but only in the workplace. Beyond that, they knew nothing about me. They even think that Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans speak the same language.

Conclusion

Koreans not only discover new categories of people in New York, they also experience and conceptualize other ethnicities with new value judgements. For Korean Americans, their most important ethnic encounters take place at work. For Koreans, ethnic solidarity, even in their neighborhood of residence, builds on their

inter-ethnic confrontations at the workplace.

Through the processes of learning to identify and interact with other ethnic groups in New York, Koreans create their own new identity as an ethnic category. Construction of one's own ethnic identity arises from experience of other ethnicities. This process occurs in the everyday work situations of individuals, with variation according to occupation, work settings, class, and ethnic groups encountered.

These new ethnic encounters and ethnic constructions depend on their class affiliation within the Korean American community. Professionals are more involved in the American mainstream, and are more likely to experience direct racial discrimination by white American. But even more than professionals, Korean workers in American businesses experience distrust and discrimination at the workplace.

Korean small businessmen and their Korean employees have more direct contact with other minorities. But, whereas workers in stores both encounter complaints from customers, and may be directed by employers to confront shoplifters, they actually have more empathy and understanding for other minorities than do established Korean proprietors. In the United States, many Koreans, for the first time, experience discrimination as an ethnic minority, and some unfortunately reapply the treatment

they receive to other minorities.

Notes

[1] The 1990 African American boycott of Korean grocers in Brooklyn is the most widely publicized example.

"Since January, 1990, Brooklyn's Flatbush section had been broiled by a black boycott of two Korean grocers that began after a Haitian woman accused the Koreans of assaulting her in an argument over a dollar worth of fruit" (Time 5/28/1990).

Chapter 9

Political Processes

In this chapter, I discuss the political processes through which Koreans organize themselves, and gradually come to take part in American politics. I will focus first on how the Korean community is organized; next, on its historical development; and then, on the Korean Produce Association, and the Mid-Autumn festival (organized by the Korean Produce Association), because it provides the small-business foundation of Korean communal organizational activity in New York City. In the final section, I focus on Flushing and Elmhurst, areas of Korean residential (as well as commercial) concentration, and analyze how Koreans there have become linked to the local civic and political structure. In this final section, I trace key events in which the Korean population has been politicized.

Organization of the Korean Immigrant Community

There are three major categories of formal organizations in the Korean community in New York City: occupational, locality, and religious. Korean religious organization in Protestant churches is discussed in Chapter 10. There is also one umbrella organization tied to the South Korean consulate--the Korean Association of Greater New York--and

many high school and college alumni groups, veteran's associations, and sports and cultural clubs. There are in addition several organizations of young activist Koreans, many of the knee-high generation, concerned with political activities both in Korea and in New York City.

These occupational organizations are formed for the economic interests of their members. Alumni organizations based on common school ties in Korea basically work to promote friendship. In a few cases, however, school ties are mobilized to secure jobs, housing, or business information, but most often between individuals, not by the organization itself. Unlike the business organizations, cultural or sports organizations are very informal, lacking the formal structure of bylaws, staff, or office space. In addition, there are many small gatherings, for friendship, such as kye and neighborhood clubs, which offer ch'inmokhoe (a social gathering).

Table 5 lists the principal business and occupational organizations among Koreans in New York City.

While most of these organizations serve either business owners or professionals, the organizations of construction workers, of asbestos handlers and supervisors, and of postal workers are workers' organizations. The Yellow Taxi Drivers' Association is made up of those whose status is seen as somewhere between self-employed and employee. The Postal Service Organization is the only

organization of Koreans in any civil service employment.

The most politically significant form of organizational activity in the Korean community is by occupation or type of business. (For parallels in the 1930 Japanese immigrant community see, Miyamoto [1984].) During the 1980s it has been specifically small businessmen who show the greatest level of activism in the Korean community. Professionals or workers are much less active, in any organizations. Professionals, especially those employed in American workplaces, show much less interest in Korean community affairs than business owners. Workers, busy with their survival in a foreign country, have little time for any organizational activities.

In many Korean immigrant organizations leading members have long concerned themselves with status competition, with emphasis on who gets which post. Critics in the Korean community argue this leads to a neglect of the organization's programs and activities, or the issues that they should deal with. In other words, they are seen as more interested in chaetpap (enjoying boiled rice offerings to Buddha) than in yombul (chanting Buddhist prayers). Yet, by the mid-1980s, there seems to have been a change in the orientation of many these organizations toward more issue-oriented activities.

History of Korean Community Organization

Until the 1960s, there were only a few Korean churches, and the umbrella organization Haninhoe--the Korean Association of Greater New York--whose precursor organization was founded in 1921 (see the Korean Association of New York 1985). The first Korean church in New York, now the Korean Church and Institute, was also founded in 1921, and located near Columbia University; in the 1930s there were some 80 Korean congregation.

In the late 1960s, as the number of Koreans arriving by occupational preference grew, the first business activity also became visible--a short-lived boom in the wig business for Korean peddlers in New York City (see I. Kim [1981:Ch. 4]). Koreans also started to form residential communities in Flushing, Elmhurst, and Bayside in Queens.

In 1967, when the first Korean newspaper was started, there were about 3,000 Koreans in New York, and only 125 Koreans subscribed to it. At that time Haninhoe celebrated the March 1st Independence Movement Day and August 15 Independence Day, and published its own newspaper, Hanin tongsin ("Korean Communication"). Koreans met together principally in several churches, including the Korean Church and Institute in Manhattan, the Brooklyn Korean Church, the Korean Church of Queens, and others. At that time they paid more attention to the situation in their home country than to affairs here. In June 1968, Haninhoe held a benefit concert for a Korean American scholarship

for students from Korea. Haninhoe also collected money for 30 Korean sailors who were stranded here when their employer went bankrupt, and they needed funds to return to Korea.

In the 1970s, with the great influx of Koreans to New York City, an increasing number became involved in such retail businesses as green groceries, fish markets, and dry cleaning stores. Occupational organizations soon came into being: the Korean Produce Retailers Association in 1975, the Korean Seafood Association and the Korean Chamber of Commerce in 1977, and the Korean Dry-Cleaners' Association and the Korean Businessmen's Association in 1978. In general, these were organized to further members interests as well as to increase friendship among them. More specialized occupational organizations also were established: the Council of Korean Churches for ministers (1975), the Korean Restaurant Owners' Association (1978), the Organization of Korean Professionals in Computer Science (1978), and the Association of Taekwondo Teachers (1978). In addition to occupational organizations, other organizations arose to deal with problems in the Korean community. These included the Women's Organization (^{cl}Yosonghoe) in 1975, to deal with women's problems, Korean Community Service of Greater New York in 1975, to deal with juvenile delinquency and other social problems, and the Korean Senior Citizens Society (Sangnokhoe) in 1976.

In 1978 there were only 250 Korean green grocers and 100 dry cleaners, in contrast to the 1,200 green grocers and 1,500 dry cleaners by the late 1980s. These and other categories of Korean business proprietors in the same local areas of New York City often interacted with each other, and became aware of their common local problems. From this, the particular double structure of organization among Korean businessmen arose--city-wide organization by type of trade, and local organization across trade lines. From 1980 onwards, several locality organizations in various city neighborhoods came into being. These now include the Korean American Community of Sunnyside (actually first formed in 1970 but long inactive), Korean Merchants Association of Flushing (1980), Korean Merchants Association of Jamaica (1981), Korean Merchants Association of Church Avenue in Brooklyn (1981), Korean Merchants Association of Lower Eastside (1982), Korean Merchants Association in the Bronx (1983), Washington Heights Korean Merchants Association (1983), Korean Merchants Association of Newark (1983), Korean American Association of Middle Queens (1985), Korean Association of West Brooklyn (1985), and Korean Merchants Association of Yonkers (1985).

At first, the major goals of the merchant associations were to prevent crime against Korean merchants, to deal with the problem of overcompetition, and to exchange business information. There has been some interesting

evolution, however, in the nature of several of these locality organization. In Flushing and Middle Queens, these groups now serve Koreans in general, almost like a local government. "The Korean Merchants Association of Flushing" transformed itself into the "Korean American Association of Flushing," seeking to represent all Korean residents, and the former "Korean Merchants Association of Elmhurst" became the "Korean American Association of Middle Queens," similarly serving a much broader geographic area than its original one. In both cases, as we shall see, what started as merchant associations have become civic associations in their multi-ethnic local communities. In Manhattan, the Korean Merchant Association on Broadway retained its business focus as the Korean Businessmen's Organization, due to the specific local situation in which there are no Korean residents living in this commercial area.

Home Country Politics and Political Processes in the Korean Immigrant Community

Before the Kwangju Uprising in 1980 [1], the Korean community in New York focused its political relationship to Korea through Haninhoe, the Korean Association of Greater New York. As in Los Angeles (see Chang [1988]), the South Korean Consulate in New York asserted government interests through the consulate office, the KCIA (Korean Central

Intelligence Agency), the Korean press, and Haninhoe.

In New York, this changed with the rise of local insurgent political organization. Since its foundings, the established leadership of the Korean Association of Greater New York was held by Korean immigrants whose primary concern and connection was with the homeland. In 1978, however, the presidential election of the association was contested by a new political force, the green grocers. Their candidate, supported by the Korean Produce Retailers Association, was elected president of Haninhoe (Kim 1981:255).

This has since brought local interests of Koreans in New York City to the fore in community politics, and loosened the hold of the South Korean government over local political expression. Progressive elements among overseas Koreans--in America mostly college professors, ministers, and medical doctors--held their first North-South unification talks with their North Korean counterparts during November 4-6, 1981, in Vienna, Austria. The following year, more talks took place in Helsinki, Finland, during December 3-5. If neither meeting produced concrete ideas on unification, "the attempts were historic and emotional moments that broke long standing ideological barriers which had separated the nation for thirty-six years" (Chang 1988:60). Still, some other progressive groups in America were critical of this group as being

elitist, and pointed to their lack of mass support.

A survey by the Korean Street Journal in Los Angeles, which was later replicated in New York, showed a remarkable shift in attitudes toward the North Korean state. The survey asked respondents to identify the teams they would support if both the North and South Korea participated in the 1984 Olympic games in Los Angeles. Sixty-four percent of Korean Americans answered that they would support both the South and North Korean teams.

I now turn to a New York group of political progressivist that I studied. Its founder was Yoon Hahn Bong, a participant in the Kwangju Uprising in Korea. He came to the United States in 1981 as a stowaway aboard a merchant ship. At that time he was the subject of a nationwide search by the South Korean government, who charged he was one of the instigators of the Kwangju Uprising. Yoon continued his political activity in the United States, and was instrumental along with other activists from Korea in the formation here of Young Koreans United (YKU), a national organization engaged in solidarity work with the South Korean people's movement, minjung undong.

Through Yoon's efforts, YKU groups formed in San Francisco in 1983, and in New York in 1984. By 1989, there were branches in eight cities, including Philadelphia, Chicago, Denver, Dallas, Seattle, and Los Angeles, with a

total of 150 active members. YKU also established collateral organizations for community service and education. These included the Young Korean American Service and Education Center (YKASEC) in 1984 in Queens, the Korean Resource Center in San Francisco, and the Korean Education and Culture Center in Chicago.

The national Korea Information and Resource Center was founded in 1986, to promote understanding and support for the Korean people's movement. It has published Korea Report bimonthly since 1987. The Eastern U.S. headquarters of the National Coalition of Democratic Constitution in South Korea was established in New York City by YKU under their Korea Support Fund in 1987, aiming to provide financial support for the South Korean people's movement. The Han Gyuh Reh [One People] Movement United of the USA, for Koreans over 40 years of age, was also established to support the Korean people's movement in 1987.

In New York, YKU in 1984 (and later YKASEC) were established by eight young activists, most of whom were Christians, all former members of a study club. Six out of the eight were from the same church. By 1989, their two organizations had a 40-member staff. In addition to cooperation with sibling organizations nationwide, YKU in New York has developed close working relationships with other Korean progressive organizations, such as the New

York Thursday Prayer Meeting, the North American Coalition of Korean Christian Scholars, the Korean American Buddhist Coalition, the Korean-American Christian Youth Council of New York, the Korean Students' Club at Union Theological Seminary, Korean Americans for Social Concern, Korean Americans for Peace and Justice, Korean American Women for Action, and others.

Following YKU's establishment, their knee-high generation and young adult immigrant membership was harshly treated by many older first-generation Korean immigrants who held strong anti-communist beliefs. They protested, for example, when YKU arranged a showing of a movie made by a famous Korean director and actress who were said to have been kidnapped and influenced by North Koreans. There was even a rumor that YKU received money from the North Korean government. Leaders of Haninhoe actively tried to prevent Koreans from seeing the movie in 1984 by demonstrating in front of the school in Manhattan where it was shown.

Though Korean immigrants in New York City took part in their community organization internal affairs, it was not until 1984 that they actively involved themselves in political issues, either those in Korea or here in New York City. In the meanwhile, an increasing number of service organizations, or social clubs that turned into service organizations, were formed. These included the Korean-American Senior Program in Woodside, the Family

Counsel and Research Center, the YWCA, the Korean American Small Business Service Center, and other service organizations. In fact, this evolutionary process was accelerated by the impact of the Kwangju Uprising, and by the increasing numbers of United States-educated knee-high generation Koreans graduating in the early 1980s.

In 1985 and 1986, these young activists organized a Korean Pavilion at the massive Queens Festival, sponsored by American civic and business groups and the Queens Borough President. They presented politically-oriented peoples' cultural exhibits, along with their own cultural troupe Binari. This activity, in addition to their service and education programs at YKASEC in Jackson Heights, helped win them the approval of many older immigrant Koreans in New York City. They even succeeded in transforming some more conservative community organizations which participated with them in the 1986 Queens Festival. Later, in 1987, even locality associations, Haninhoe, and Korean business associations participated in a rally for democracy in Korea organized by YKU. In 1989, YKU also played a critical role in electing the only Korean member of any New York City school board, in Community School District 25 in Queens.

A few days after the inauguration of President Ronald Reagan in January 1981, South Korea's President Chun Du Hwan was invited to the United States. The Korean American

reception of Chun's visit was cool, indicating their criticism of the American government's direct and symbolic support of a regime which had massacred innocent civilians a few months earlier. Pickets appeared at all of Chun's official functions. In 1982, YKU started to raise funds for victims of the Kwangju Massacre. Later, in 1985-1986, they raised \$30,000 to help Koreans build a monument in honor of the Kwangju Uprising. In 1986, when President Chun again visited President Reagan, he got a similar response from Koreans in New York City. In addition, YKU initiated silent public demonstrations.

If 1986 was the year of the Philippine and Corazon Aquino's "people's power", 1987 was the year of Korea. For the first time in sixteen years, and seven years after the Kwangju Uprising, Korean citizens voted for a president on 16 December 1987. Roh Tae Woo, one of the generals who was involved in the Kwangju massacre, was elected, but with only 36 percent of the popular vote. The June 1987 people's movement which led to the June 29th political reform was a remarkable achievement. What is unique about this movement was the mass participation of ordinary citizens. The South Korea middle class, longtime bystanders of Korean politics, finally expressed their anger at the dictatorial Chun government which took power through the Kwangju massacre. The rise of anti-American sentiment also played a key role, which alarmed American officials who got

involved, and pressed for reform.

Many in the Korean community predicted that with political liberalization in Korea, for Koreans in New York would quiet their concern about political change in the Korean peninsula. A few opposition politicians actually returned to Korea, after June 1987.

Koreans in New York including even the locality organizations, however, organized demonstrations in 1987 in front of the Korean Consulate, asking for a full investigation of the Kwangju incident and the Park Jong Chul torture-death case. Feeling betrayed by "the two Kims" two candidates in the December 1987 presidential election, YKU supported little-publicized candidate Baek Ki Wan. He put forward a radical agenda, but withdrew from the race after failing to persuade Kim Dae Chung and Kim Young Sam to unite behind a single opposition candidate.

Again, in April 1988, many organizations led by YKU protested against President Chun's visit at the United Nations in New York City. In October 1988, activist organizations organized another protest in front of the United Nations against President Roh Tae Woo's visit. Five protesters were injured, and their cars damaged by President Roh's guards and this brought yet another protest rally.

In February 1989, as the importance of overseas support was now fully recognized, the National Democratic Alliance

of Korea (NDAK) opened an international cooperation branch in New York City, working closely with YKU.

In April 1989 the two organizations initiated a rally to protest Reverend Moon Ik Hwan's arrest on the charge of visiting North Korea without informing the South Korean government. In May 1989, YKU five members went on a hunger-strike, demanding "down with Roh," in front of the Korean Consulate.

In April 1989 Koreans in New York warmly greeted representatives from the North Korean Christian Alliance, and the Council of Korean Churches of Greater New York held a welcoming service for them. Some conservative clergy now felt it important to visit North Korea, for evangelization, and they formed their own organization. Many other Korean Americans were eager to visit North Korea either meet their relatives, or for economic reasons. The number of Korean American visitors to North Korea had in fact increased steadily during the decade of the 1980s. In July 1989, two members of the Korean-American Christian Youth Council of New York attended the 13th Youth Festival in Pyongyang North Korea, and later showed slides and video tapes of their visit to Korean audiences in New York.

In July 1989, Korean National Security declared that YKU was the leading organization helping the enemy, North Korea, and arrested one member, on his return to Korea. Despite these difficulties, in October 1989 YKU began

another hunger strike in front of United Nations, demonstrating against the two Koreas' separate Seats at the United Nations, and for Peace Treaty between the two nations. For three weeks, six members lived on only water and salt, and seven others went on partial a hunger-strike.

As a result of all these developments, the local south Korean Consulate influence in New York City has weakened considerably, and the Consulate has lost its control over the agenda of community politics. Most of the members of YKU are United States-educated Korean Americans who integrate partial concerns about their new land with those about the homeland. They express strong feelings about the political situation in the Korea, and also participate in political activity to enhance the Korean community's position here.

In retrospect, the Kwangju Uprising was a turning point in Korean immigrant political activity in the United States. The YKU catalyst role in this turn has several different foci. It helped the National Democratic Movement in Korea, with material support and protests at the Korean Consulate, the United Nations, and the White House. Its programs also presented Korean culture to the American public, and provided music and dance instruction to Korean immigrant children. Its service and education programs--tutoring, summer camps, immigration counseling, a senior citizen program, group study of Korean and American

history, and Korean and English language instruction--are appreciated in the Korean immigrant community. Members of YKU also participate in solidarity, with other Third World people, and with non-Korean progressive groups and minorities in America.

The political catalyst these young activists provide has had an important effect on the entire New York City Korean community. After we review the parallel political evolution in the 1980s of the business and locality organizations, we will see how all these elements have come together in the emergence of Koreans as a presence in New York City and Queens civic politics.

The Korean Produce Retailers' Association and the Mid-Autumn Festival

Since the 1970s the Korean Produce Retailers Association has been one of the most powerful organizations in the Korean community of New York City. The KPA was organized as a fraternal organization by thirty members in 1967, when the Hunts Point market was opened. Since 1974, it has become more active, adding economic interests to friendship. The organizational tie is consolidated in its members' everyday encounters with one another at the produce market in the Bronx. The leadership comes from men who combine seniority, and experience in that market, with prior experience in organizational activities.

The KPA has offices at both the Hunts Point Market in the Bronx, and in Brooklyn, with several paid staff. There are 30 people on its board of directors. Newsletters are sent to its member, who have their own group health insurance plan. Inside the KPA, there are many clubs among the membership, including a golf club, a gun club, and a Christians' club. Among the earliest members of this organization were some of North Korean origin. This organization is outstanding in that it is well organized from the grassroots level. It has gradually transformed itself into a political pressure group. In 1978 the Korean Association of Greater New York was taken over by the KPA greengrocers (see I. Kim 1981).

In the beginning of the 1970s, there were only 30 to 40 Korean green grocers and nobody owned more than one business. In 1975, the number had grown to 200 or 250; to 400 to 500 in the late 1970s; and to between 850 and 900 greengrocers between 1980 and 1984. By the 1980s, some also owned several stores.

According to 1984 estimates made by the KPA, there were 900 grocery stores with about five workers each, so that at least 5,000 Koreans were employed at greengroceries. If these 5,000 people were members of households with at least five members, then a total of 25,000 Koreans depended on the green grocery business.

At the KPA offices, in addition to providing business

information to members, many problems are resolved. One of the biggest problems is competition and subsequent disputes between two KPA members. In such cases, the KPA tries to mediate, an effort which does not always work. To succeed in conditions of keen competition, some shipowner try to keep stores open 24 hours, or to sell at reduced prices. Others make room for delicatessen items, health foods, flowers, or a salad bar.

The organization also helps its members in dealing with the American government. If a member is unfairly fined, they investigate. If the fine does not seem justified, KPA staff members contact city government agencies directly to get it reduced or cancelled.

An example of KPA activities can be found in their lobbying for a change in the "stoop-line" regulation prohibiting display of store merchandise, such as vegetables and fruits, beyond a four-foot distance from the building line. According to a KPA staff member,

The old law, which was made in the 1930s, is outdated. Because of the old law, Korean green grocers have had a hard time. City government inspectors have confiscated fruit and vegetables within the limit as well as beyond the limit, and charged many green grocers thousands of dollars in fines. Korean green grocers were exploited because their goods were confiscated without warning, and

because the way in which the produce was confiscated was arbitrary. For instance, those who violated the limit by only a half-foot might be subjected to confiscation, while others who violated it by a lot more were not. To make matters worse, landlords were not cooperative and didn't permit green grocers to [remodel storefront areas.] The KPA took these incidents seriously, and investigated each case. They even found that in Chinatown, where the limit had long been seriously violated, there were no confiscations, thanks to the political power of the businesses there. It is generally agreed that this stoop-line situation matters greatly to the amount of sales, the logic being that the more pedestrians can see fresh fruit and vegetables, the more they tend to buy.

When the KPA first tackled this issue, its efforts were not welcomed by all victimized green grocers. Because of their Korean culture, they preferred to remain passive to exploitation by city government, and simply try to forget that they were being ill-treated. After gathering enough data, the KPA was convinced of the necessity of lobbying for reform of the stoop-line regulation by city government. After some resistance, the city accepted the KPA's proposal, but asked for further data. In order to justify an expected drop in revenue generation from the fines for stoop-line violations, the city Comptroller,

Harrison Goldin, asked for data to prove that extension of the stoop-line did no harm to pedestrian traffic.

Similar stories of problems and negotiations occurred with the Departments of Consumer Affairs, and Sanitation. In addition, the KPA succeeded in locating a small claims court within the Hunts Point Terminal Market. This is important in that as much as one million dollars a year in fines are charged to Korean green grocers. Since previously they could not afford to spend a day in court, these fines went uncontested.

Korean Harvest and Folklore Festival

In addition to offering ten KPA scholarships, a summer picnic, its end-of-year party, and co-sponsoring and endorsing many other events, the KPA produces the annual Korean Harvest and Folklore Festival, ch'usok. Held in Flushing Meadow-Corona Park in Queens, this is the biggest holiday for New York City Koreans. In Korea it is held on the 15th of the eighth lunar month, but for convenience, the KPA celebrates it here on a Sunday. In 1984, this festival was also supported by the Korean Association of Greater New York, the Korean Consulate, the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, seven Korean newspapers, two Korean broadcasting companies, and 32 other Korean organizations. To me, it seemed bigger than the mid-autumn festival in Korea, where it is primarily an

occasion for family and kin gatherings, and not a public ritual.

In his opening remarks during the third ch'usok Festival in 1984, the KPA's president described it as a day for celebrating the rich harvest of the year, for offering fresh crops and fruits to the spirit of one's ancestors, and a day for families, relatives and friends to get together to share food, fun, and games. Although he emphasized the function of ch'usok in keeping Korean culture alive, he also made it clear that its celebration here should also fit Koreans into the culturally plural society of New York City. In his remarks the KPA president emphasized.

The event, which we expect will be observed by over 20,000 attendants, not only gives honor directly or indirectly to the 150,000 Korean Americans of the metropolitan area, but it also provides a moment to enrich comparative understanding of Korean culture among various ethnic groups living in New York.

Among the events at the festival were an ancestor worship ceremony, the first anniversary memorial service for the 269 victims of the Korean Air Lines plane shot down by the Soviet union. Korean folk dances: (farmers', fan, drum, Buddhist, and Shaman dances), games; (Korean see-saw, Korean shuttlecock game, rug game, Korean Wrestling, and tug-of-war); contests (for pine-cake making, Korean

costumes, and folk song singing) and food and craft booths.

At the festival there were long lines of people at the several food and craft booths. Ten Korean restaurants built open air cafeterias, mostly selling barbecue beef (pulgogi and kalbi), kimch'i, and rice. All the restaurants were from Queens, whereas in 1983, they were all from Manhattan. By 4 P.M. most of the restaurants had run out of food. In 1985, at the annual fourth festival, more than 30,000 Koreans attended from as far as Massachusetts, Washington D.C., Philadelphia, Connecticut, and New Jersey. In addition to Koreans, I saw perhaps 100 non-Koreans, some by themselves, and others with Korean friends. They were of diverse racial or ethnic backgrounds: elderly whites, young Latin Americans, and a few African Americans. Eleven American public officials were introduced, and eight more sent telegrams that were read, including one from Geraldine Ferraro, a former Queens member of the House of Representatives, who ran for Vice President in 1984. Those present delivered short speeches. Among them New York City Comptroller Harrison Goldin was applauded by the audience. He was well-known to Korean green grocers because of his efforts to solve the stoop-line problem.

For the Korean audience, the changsu mudae folksong contest was the highlight of the day. The elderly Koreans seemed especially excited, and many were ready to take part

in singing and dancing on stage. Several youths told me that they were impressed with the performances of the elders. Some elderly Americans even joined in singing old popular songs to which one old woman danced wonderfully.

In the late afternoon, the entertainment turned to professional popular entertainers, some of them invited from Korea. Professional cultural performers--singers, dancers, and comedians--were also introduced to entertain the audience. The final event was a raffle drawing. In 1984 the prizes were 100 color television sets. (In 1989, the prizes were Hyundai, Excel, and Sonata automobiles, round-trip tickets to Korea, and other expensive items.) At the end of the festival, people seemed reluctant to leave the park.

Several times during the festivities there was an announcement about a voter registration drive. During the day I served as a voter registration volunteer with members of Korean American Women for Action. We registered more than 150 Korean American citizens and also 10 non-Koreans, which was more than we had expected.

The Political Process in the Korean Communities of Queens: Flushing

The first Korean residents settled in Flushing as early as 1962. Then, according to Chang Yul, a banker, after attending the 1964 World Fair at Flushing Meadow Park, a

group of about twenty businessmen opened stores, and began to sponsor their relatives. After the 1965 immigration law, there was a great influx of Korean immigrants to Flushing, and elsewhere in Queens. By 1990 there were several established organizations in Flushing, including the Korean American Association of Flushing, National Korean-American Parents Council, Korean American Senior Citizen Society (sangnokhoe), the Korean YWCA and YMCA, the Korean American Small Business Service Center of New York, the Sunflower Nursery for children, the Council of Korean Churches, the Korean Family Counseling and Research Center, the Young Korean Christian Council, and the Korean American Women's Association. Here I focus on the political evolution of the Korean American Association of Flushing.

According to Mr. Lee Chong Dae, the organization's eighth president, the Korean American Association of Flushing was organized by store owners in 1980 as the Korean Merchants Association of Flushing. It did not work well at first with perfect unity. Also, it had financial problems, which the first president had to solve by personally providing needed funds. However, it was active to the extent that Lee's dance team and a karate team took part in the 1983 Flushing town festival, representing Koreans among other Flushing ethnic groups. At its regular monthly meetings, some 30 to 50 attended, and its first president was a gift shop owner, Mr. Kim Hyung Lak, who

served for one year in this office. The second president was Mr. Lee Woo Sung, who owned a meat market.

As president during its third and fourth years, Mr. Hong Chong Hak, made great contributions to the organization. While continuing to run his real estate agency, Mr. Hong actively tried to resolve conflict among Korean merchants by taking on the role of mediator. He also started to bring Koreans into association with other ethnic groups, including the Flushing Chinese Business Association, and the Flushing Business Association, a mainly white American group. He worked closely as well with the New York State Assemblywoman for Flushing, Julia Harrison.

In 1984, when Mr. Lee Chong Dae became president, the general assembly voted that the name would be changed to the Korean American Association in order to represent a wider cross-section of Koreans than merchants alone.

The organization was formed to establish mutual friendship among business owners, but the focus inevitably shifted to participation in Flushing community affairs. At its monthly meetings, there are with lectures on credit unions, income tax, and real estate, and an exchange of news about goings-on in the local community. Guests from Flushing's African American community have been invited to exchange views, as have representatives of such local organizations as the Boys' Club, the Flushing Council on

Culture and the Arts, and the local Democratic Party club. The association makes campaign contributions to local elected officials and donations for auxiliary patrol cars to the 109th police precinct in Flushing. In recent years, this organization has participated in Flushing local political meetings and social events, to represent Koreans, and conducted voter-registration drives, provided an employment service to job seekers, offered information and referrals to appropriate agencies for Korean mentally retarded persons, and participated in cultural and multi-ethnic community festivals.

In 1989, the association played a central lobbying role in a Korean community protest against the reassignment to the borough of Staten Island of Dr. Roh Young Myun, Deputy Chief Medical Examiner for Queens and a Korean. The association stressed the importance of Dr. Roh's continued work in the heavily Korean-populated borough of Queens. The association pressed elected officials and local community leaders to also write letters, which resulted in a victory when Dr. Roh's transfer was rescinded.

One important concern of the association is security for business. As Mr. Lee, the fifth president, told me, As an ethnic minority, we have not got proper treatment, and we were looked down upon. So, we must protect our rights. We organized a network for crime prevention, calling it pansanghoe, or cho (sets).

Incidents happen once or twice a month. To provide security for businesses, five stores constitute one set, with the leader of each set being a member of the Board of Directors of our association. So far, 29 sets have been organized. Recently even tenants in apartments are being organized. Suppose that something happens to a store. It is immediately brought to the attention of the leader of that set. If the solution is beyond his or her control, it is reported to the headquarters of this association, which is in direct contact with the 109th police precinct. There is now a Korean policeman at that station.

In 1984, there was a tenant-landlord dispute in a rental apartment building in Flushing where most tenants were Koreans, around 40 households. These tenants were opposed to conversion to a cooperative, and the landlord would not compromise. Some of the Korean tenants asked Mr. Lee, president of the association, to help, but since they were not members of the association, he did not. Soon, however, the landlord also asked him to help, so Mr. Lee and some other association members successfully mediated the dispute. They then decided to organize the residents in sets similar to those among merchants.

The August 1984 monthly meeting of the association was held in the office of the president, Mr. Lee, in his

Taekwondo studio in Flushing. Mr. Lee reported on events in the Flushing Korean community. He lamented that only 58 Korean Americans were registered to vote, compared with several hundred among Flushing Chinese. Then he discussed a recent case of conflict between a Korean merchant and a Chinese merchant, and its resolution through the mediation of the association. Dr. O Su Il, a guest, explained the details of the Korean-American Chamber of Commerce Federal Credit Union. Members were considering beginning such a union in their association.

Ms. Chun Myung Suk of the culture committee talked about preparations for the upcoming Asian Festival in Flushing. (in 1985, this was incorporated into the Queens Festival). The plans included a sword dance and other traditional dances, with performers recruited by association members. One member suggested that in the Asian Festival it might be a good idea to honor Americans who have worked to help Korean Americans. Ms. You talked about the plans of the youth committee to work with a youth group in the Chinese community, possibly planning a joint tennis tournament. For the voting committee, Mr. Cho Do Hyun, (who became later the eighth president of the association) said that members should each get five Koreans to register to vote, using their "set" organization model.

The invited guest, Mr. Kim Tal Su, spoke about the

Korean American Senior Citizens Society, (sangnokhoe) in Flushing. He also talked about building pan-Asian identity in Flushing.

It is not sufficient just to organize Koreans to pressure the Americans. Only if we cooperate with the other Asians, first with the Chinese, can we achieve our goals. In America, as in Korea, you must qualify yourself as a voter by placing your name on the register. Otherwise, it is hard for us to stand firmly for our own rights. The more among the 40,000 Koreans in Flushing we register to vote, the faster will we be counted by American politicians. Our center sent out 1,000 letters to educate Koreans about voting, enclosing voter registration forms.

Finally the association members discussed how they could participate in a fund raising dinner party for the Queens Council on the Arts. It was mentioned that the main office of this Queens cultural organization would move from Jamaica to Flushing, and that they have an interest in supporting ethnic cultural performances. The meeting was not over until 11 p.m.

Mr. Hong Chong Hak, the third and fourth association president, told me that through efforts to form ties with non-Korean organizations, Koreans have been well-known to local American politicians and police officers. His own interest in greater participation in American civic

affairs, he said, comes from his experience as a realtor. When he took non-Korean potential buyers or tenants to see houses, these customers often commented that Koreans were too focused on making money, and did not communicate enough with other groups, or participate in community affairs. He felt the same way himself. He feels that if one wants to live here, one should participate in American society, and listen to what Americans have to say. In addition to the association, he has involved himself in the Korean Association of Greater New York, and in the Korean Chamber of Commerce. He also founded the Queens Korean Culture Society in 1988 to participate in the annual Queens Festival.

Mr. Hong was actively involved in Korean Americans for David Dinkins during the 1989 mayoral election. He maintained.

In the future, after making coalitions with other Asian groups, as a second step, we should think of aligning ourselves with Hispanics. As far as American politics is concerned, we ought to give first, and then think of asking for something, not the other way around. We cannot only demand what we want without making a contribution to the welfare of the local community.

In Flushing, the Korean community cooperates closely with the Chinese community. For instance, when Theresa

Kim, a Korean, was murdered in 1984, the Flushing Chinese Business Association assisted the Korean Association to deal with the situation. In 1985, the two organizations officially became "sister organizations" to work together for their common interests, and to cooperate in political, economic, and social activities. As their first joint program, they organized a clean-up campaign on Main Street and Roosevelt Avenue in downtown Flushing in 1985.

In 1989, after stalemate and turmoil in association presidential elections over the past few years, Mr. Pyun Chun Soo, who runs an educational center, was elected the tenth president. The association has since provided some hundred job referrals to both Korean and American companies, organized the first Annual International Health Day in 1989, serving 600 people in need of medical and physical checkups in collaboration with Flushing Hospital and Medical Center, and held seminars for Korean undocumented aliens. The association donated two scholarships to Queens College in Flushing in 1990. Mr. Pyun also led a drive to change the Flushing Christmas Tree Lighting Committee into the Holiday Decoration Committee to also celebrate the lunar New Year observed by Korean and Chinese residents. The association now works with the Flushing Chinese Business Association, the Flushing Business Association, the Flushing Chamber of Commerce, and Community Board 7. Members participated actively in the

1989 American political campaign year by sponsoring fund-raising parties for mayoral candidate David Dinkins, City Councilwoman Julia Harrison, State Assemblyman Morton Hillman, and State Senator Leonard Stavisky.

Even more significant, with the association's active support, the Chinese Parents Association and the Korean Parents Association, who formed an Asian Parents Council in 1987, in 1989 succeeded in electing Chinese and Korean candidates to the Board of Community School District 25.

The Political Process in the Korean Community of Queens:
Elmhurst

Mr. Chun Sung Jin is the founder of the Elmhurst-centered Korean American Association of Mid-Queens. He arrived in America with his family at Christmas in 1970, and lived in Elmhurst where his business is still located for six years before moving to Bayside in 1976. He is regarded as one of the old-timers in the Elmhurst Korean community. His wife, a nurse has worked in Elmhurst City Hospital. Few of the Korean old-timers bought homes in Elmhurst, and most who became established, like Mr. Chun, moved to the better school districts in Bayside or Little Neck in Queens, or to Long Island.

As a real estate and insurance broker in Elmhurst, Mr. Chun's analysis of change in the Elmhurst Korean community over two decades is particularly interesting. As he sees

it, Elmhurst is well-supplied with Korean churches. While many of the church officers and ministers now live in other neighborhoods, Elmhurst as an area of first settlement remains a good location to attract new immigrant church members. According to him, food businesses in Elmhurst are more successful than in other neighborhoods. The ratio of food businesses (of all types) to other businesses is 20 percent greater in Elmhurst than elsewhere. Many non-food businesses over time move out to Manhattan. As Mr. Chun says of Elmhurst's location, "In terms of transportation, it is very convenient. That's why it constantly attracts many newcomers." As he remembers, immigrants to Elmhurst came in the following order: first Cubans, second Colombians, third Chinese, and then Koreans, as early as 1969. Some Japanese also settled first in Flushing in 1970, but later moved out to Fort Lee, New Jersey.

In the early 1970s, many Korean nurses arrived to work at Elmhurst City Hospital, and moved into apartment buildings nearby. At that time Korean nurses were welcomed warmly. Before 1972, Koreans in Queens were less than 20,000. In 1976, when Mr. Chun became a naturalized United States citizen, there were between 30,000 and 40,000 Koreans in New York City, he estimated. By 1985 there were near to 25,000 Koreans in Elmhurst and Jackson Heights, 40,000 in Flushing and Bayside, and 150,000 in New York City.

I asked Mr. Chun how the Korean American Association of Mid-Queens came into being. He said,

I would like to prove that Koreans can be united, that Koreans can make it. People seem to believe that Koreans cannot be united. I was willing to throw myself into it, even sacrificing my business for one year. However, I was very clear that it would be a different organization from the established organizations, such as the Korean Association of Greater New York. They were very political, and tried to win the favor of the Korean government. What is more important, I think, is that Koreans in Elmhurst and Jackson Heights needed a channel through which they can communicate directly with the various levels of city government, like police officers, and through which city government can talk to Koreans about its concerns. So, the main purpose of the organization is to champion the rights of Koreans in this neighborhood. Since we live in a foreign country as a minority with language and cultural barriers, we need to talk to the majority population and to city government. I am determined. I work as hard as if I carried the Cross on my back by myself. However, to be honest with you, it is sometimes difficult to work with Koreans, because they are not always logical. As a result of incidents of crime victimization,

difficulties with city inspectors, and with local police (see below), many Koreans talked about the necessity of organizing the Koreans in Elmhurst and Jackson Heights. The existing organization, Korean Merchants of Elmhurst, was dormant, not playing any active role in the community. Mr. Chun continued,

In particular, we needed to speak up--to police officers or American public officials--for any Korean, or for Koreans in general. Now, we had an incident [of police brutality] which happened to a yellow cab driver, Mr. Pyo. In my opinion, prevention is more important than cure. People often asked for help--"Please find a good store for me," "I was severely beaten by the police," "I am being evicted by a bad landlord."

Mr. Chun's civic activities quickly expanded. He met with the City Neighborhood Stabilization Program in Woodside, introduced by the executive director of the Korean Produce Association, about a particular housing problem facing Koreans. There was one local Indian landlord who hunted for Korean tenants, because they were said to pay rent faithfully and not to complain about bad service. Once they moved in, this landlord rapidly raised their rent. Also, whenever his services were needed, the apartment superintendent asked Korean tenants for tips, in addition to a commission for providing information about vacant

apartments. When tenants were not able to afford living there anymore, the landlord refused to return their security deposits. So, from moving in to moving out, tenants were made to pay a lot, a situation which Mr. Chun now brought to the attention of this city unit.

Next Mr. Chun and a few like-minded businessmen conducted a survey of 250 Korean businesses in Woodside, Jackson Heights, and Elmhurst. They found many of these store owners wanted an organization to increase friendship and mediate conflicts among Korean proprietors, and to open channels to other ethnic groups and to the American civic structure. One particular problem was that many Koreans in closely-spaced businesses such as groceries, dry cleaners, and green groceries, waged price wars with each other. Another concern was that members wanted the association to resolve problems they had in their frequent contact with the police and sanitation departments. The survey revealed the need for a locality association to mediate for and represent local Korean interests, and also to provide guidance for Korean youth.

In May 1985, the 110th police precinct in Elmhurst invited the vice president of Haninhoe, and Mr. Chun, the president of the new local association, to meet with their night detail about police problems in relation to the Korean community. As has now often been the case with Korean locality associations in the other areas of New York

City, some 42 police officers of the 110th precinct listened to the spokesmen for Haninhoe and the Korean American Association of Mid-Queens speak about Korean culture, ways of thinking, and attitudes toward the police. they told them of the Korean community's shock when an elderly small businessman was beaten to death with a baseball bat by a robber who was stealing ten shirts from a fashion store in Rego Park. Forty Americans were present, but no one did anything to interfere. The association later held a summer picnic at Alley Pond Park in Queens, and invited officers of the 110th precinct. The association also gave awards to the police officers who arrested two robbers at a Korean jewelry store in Jackson Heights.

Over time, by regular participation in meetings of Community Board 4, the 110th Police Precinct Community Council, Your Block Association, the Elmhurst Lions Club, the Elmhurst Rotary Club, and the Elmhurst Chamber of Commerce, the Korean American Association of Middle Queens leadership succeeded in establishing face-to-face relationships with city government officials and civic leaders.

I attended a 110th Police Precinct Community Council meeting in 1985. First, all pledged allegiance to the American flag. After announcements by the council president, there was a report on donations to assist police

activities. Six council officers were on stage. They were all white and elderly, as is usual in Elmhurst civic organizations. It was reported that 600 Council newsletters were distributed. At the start of the meeting there were 37 people attending but four or five more came later. Among those present were three Koreans: Mr. Chun, Mr. Hong Seong Ha, vice-president of the association, and Mr. Andy Nam, auditor of the organization. I expected that the Koreans would be given a chance to talk about recent incidents of police brutality, but the chairman quickly reported that Koreans in the community nowadays have been trying to improve relations with the 110th precinct. That was all. It was a great disappointment to the Koreans. This was evident in side comments as he continued with the program. Three police officers were invited to talk about the new community patrol system, and about drug sales on 57th Avenue.

I also attended a meeting of Your Block Association (YBA), a civic association, at Elmhurst City Hospital. YBA's president, Art Stevens, who was crucial in introducing the Korean association leaders to the American community in Elmhurst, was the chairman. Around fifty people attended. The majority were white and elderly, but there were also two Indian men. Seven Korean men and one Korean woman were also present to represent the new Korean American Association of Mid-Queens. Among them were Mr.

Chun, Mr. and Mrs. Yang, a couple who are both real estate brokers, Mr. Kwon, who ran a hardware store, and vice-president Hong who owns a bakery. First, State Assemblymen Ralph Goldstein talked about the budget negotiations in Albany. As he was originally supposed to talk about housing, he got many questions on this subject, particularly on co-op conversion. Then, City Councilman Joseph Lisa discussed the effects on city government finances of spending millions of dollars to build the MX missile. Next, we saw a film about the Ethiopian famine presented by Congressman Gary Ackerman. Captain Connelly and two sergeants of the 110th precinct reported on community crime problems, shocking those in attendance with their presentation on the profits in the business, and on local drug dealing.

As a result of the association's active participation in local community affairs, a member, Mrs. Daok Lee Pak, was appointed a member of Community Board 4 on January 1986. Later, two more Korean members were added to the board. The board and the association jointly organized a seminar about city government operations for the Korean community in Elmhurst in March 1986. Members of Community Board 4, and representatives from the Sanitation, Consumer Affairs, and Police Departments attended the meeting, which was chaired by Mrs. Pak and Mr. Kim, Sung So, president of the Korean Small Business Service Center of New York.

About 40 people attended, including 25 Koreans, and a few Chinese.

Community Board 4 Chairperson Rose Rothchild said, "This is the first time in which any immigrant community asked for communication with governmental agencies. I am very pleased with this request." Mr. Chun said in both Korean and English that it was the Korean community's desire to be in closer contact with government agencies. He stressed that this was the only way to reduce tension and avoid mistakes. John Rowan, the Community Board 4 District Manager, said, "We have difficulty with contacting these new immigrants. Now you are part of this community. We would like to hear from the Chinese community, too." Officers of the Department of Sanitation explained their jobs, and the rules and regulations that they enforce on local commercial strips. One of them explained,

Please do not throw vegetables into the street. Do not leave crates on the street--break and tie them. Leave a key for the private carter. Seafood stores often leave out ice, and this produces noxious liquids. Sweep your sidewalk thoroughly one hour after opening and before closing store. Observe the stoop-line regulations. If you violate the limit of 4 feet from the building line, you will have to pay a big fine, or your licenses will be revoked.

This was followed by questions and explanations from Mr.

Kim, and questions from the Korean merchants. A Chinese man complained that a system of warnings with explanations was needed. He said that educational seminars do not help enough.

A man who runs a stationary in Elmhurst said, "I have a problem with Sanitation. While the Sanitation Department does not fine the white store owner next to me, despite the fact that they have more garbage than me, they charge me with a fine, which I don't understand. I do not have time to go to court, or money to hire lawyer. Therefore, I keep paying fine." When dealing with city governmental officials, Korean small businessmen, cab drivers, or ordinary citizens, often confront what they, if not others, see us ethnic discrimination.

Ethnic Violence and the Political Process in Queens

According to the account in the Korean press (Korea Times 10/23/1984), in October 1984, the Korean owner of an Elmhurst boutique shop was verbally abused and harassed, and seriously beaten by the police. The details reported were that a Latin American customer bought a pair of shoes but returned them the next day, and asked for a refund. The owner, Mr. Cha, wrote him a credit slip because of his lack of cash. The customer demanded cash, and after a quarrel, the customer called the police. The police accepted the customer's report of what happened. Then, Mr.

Cha refunded it in cash. As Mr. Cha started to respond to the allegations to the police, he asked them their names. The police then arrested him for being uncooperative. While the police were taking him to the 110th precinct house, they beat him. One said to him, "I really hate you Koreans. You'd better go back to your own country" [my translation from Korea Times 10/23/1984]. Mr. Cha was seriously injured. Even while escorting him to the hospital, they continued beating him.

This incident was widely publicized in the New York Korean community. Many came to Mr. Cha's support. The following handbill urged Koreans to "come and show your concern against discrimination," and encouraged them to rally at Queens County Criminal Court.

Mr. Cha Eui Tai, a Boutique Shop Owner in Jackson Heights, Queens, was subjected to gang-like beating at the hands of the police of 110th precinct on October 18th, '84. Later, he was charged with a misdemeanor for 'Resisting arrest.' The Korean community of New York was seethed in anger over the unwarranted brutality, and discrimination against citizens of Asian heritage by the officers involved in the case. Various youth and community organizations have come together to form the Cha Eui Tai Support Committee. On Dec. 5th, Mr. Cha will stand in trial for the charge issued to him. The Committee requests people

of conscience and all races to fill the courtroom to support human rights and that also to see that Korean Americans get just treatment in society.

With the Cha incident, many became aware of the absence of an organized Korean voice in Elmhurst. The 110th police precinct could only talk to the umbrella organization and to the Korean American Association of Flushing. This incident therefore helped lead to the birth of Korean American Association of Middle Queens in February 1985.

Even before the Cha incident was forgotten, however, a second incident took place in March 1985. A cab driver, Mr. Pyo, was also seriously beaten by police officers of the same Elmhurst police precinct (Korea Times 3/27/1985). According to the Korean press report, Mr. Pyo came out of a bar after drinking one bottle of beer, drove over the speed limit, and was chased by police. The police stopped him, and he pointed to his taxi medallion. The police then started to beat him, accusing him of being uncooperative. He was beaten to unconsciousness. Before being sent to the hospital, he was beaten again by police at the 110th police station. Later he was sent to a Korean surgeon, and required eight stitches. He had to stay in the hospital for one-and-a half months to recover. He was charged with drunk driving.

Haninhoe and the new Korean American Association of

Middle Queens made a complaint about the person in charge of community affairs to the Captain of the 110th Police Precinct. The Captain told them, "In reality, the police officers wanted to arrest him for drunken driving. But, as Mr. Pyo resisted, it was inevitable for police officers to restrain him. I myself regret it." (my translation, Korea Times 4/1/1985)

Two groups of young Korean activists, Korean-Americans for Social Concern, and the YKU-Young Korean American Service and Education Center, took up both cases. They asked for the cooperation of African American as well as Korean religious leaders. At an April 1985 demonstration in front of the 110th police precinct house some 300 gathered, for more than one and a half hours. (I was present at the demonstration.) Not only young activists, but also many adult church members who were encouraged to come by religious leaders attended. These leaders, including Buddhist priests, spoke in public for the first time, furious about such police violence and racism here in America. Three demands were made at the demonstration: indictments of those involved in beating Mr. Cha and Mr. Pyo; dropping the charges against Mr. Pyo; and a formal apology from the captain of the 110th precinct.

This was the first time in the New York Korean community that church leaders showed an interest in local community issues. Following the demonstration, a different

strategy was pursued by the Elmhurst Korean association leaders than the confrontational tactics of the activist groups. These leaders were nervous about the consequences of demonstrating, thinking it might fan anti-Korean feelings in New York City. Instead, the umbrella organization and the new Korean American Association of Middle Queens opened a campaign to communicate directly with the New York Police Department and, in particular, the 110th precinct.

These events were well publicized, because there were also several other incidents of police brutality in Queens around the same time. One involved the use of electric shocks by police in another precinct while questioning an African American man accused of possessing a small amount of marijuana (Korea Times 4/22/1985).

The reaction of those who demonstrated in front of the Elmhurst police station was not typical of all Koreans in Queens. My informants showed three different ways of viewing these incidents. One was the passive position, arguing that it was the fault of the Korean victim who either was impolite to the police, or did not communicate well, due to limited English. This led to actually criticizing the Korean victim. Mrs. Kwon, a Korean dress designer, stated.

I would examine myself to see whether I behave properly before I criticize Americans. I have lived

here without knowing English or American law. Let's try to understand the American law, first of all, and adopt the American way of life, such as observing the traffic laws and other proper behavior. America, I think, is a blessed country. Because their ancestors have worked so hard, they are able to live well.

Mr. Park, a pharmacist, stated,

Look at the Cha incident. If he were white, he would not be treated that way. It is very important to command English. There is a great difference if one speaks politely or not. Perhaps he hurt the feelings of the police by talking to them impolitely, or not fluently, although he might not have been conscious of this.

The second reaction was to see these incidents in a broader social perspective. Those who saw it this way, said that similar things happen to all Koreans, and identified with the victims on the basis of their own personal experience. Such persons were ready to argue that Korean Americans should not tolerate such treatment any longer. Mr. Chung, a fish market owner, who was well-informed about the Cha and Pyo incidents, said, "All Koreans should express their indignation at it." Mr. Kim, a garment factory worker, said that it was not only Mr. Pyo but all Korean immigrants who receive bad treatment once they are brought to a police station.

From the third perspective, people raised a call for a more developed political response among Koreans. Mr. Kim, a Korean restaurant owner in Jackson Heights, said,

We Koreans should protest against any police brutality related to racism. More Koreans should attend when demonstrations are held. I do not understand what all these Korean ministers are doing. They could bring in their church members as demonstrators.

He told me about a similar incident ten years ago in Chinatown when all Chinese merchants closed their stores to protesting a case of police brutality. Eventually the police department had to apologize publicly, and the officer responsible for unprovoked violence was suspended.

Mr. Un's reaction was that the American government should consider expanded bilingual programs and other special policies for ethnic minorities. In his view, "While they take Hispanics into great consideration, Asians seem to be ignored."

Doctor Park told me,

In America, we should be united and fight together against racism. Even though I am a professional, a medical doctor, I experience racism as well. They seem to ignore us, give us undesirable jobs, make us work more than they do, and finally, do not want to promote us. Isn't this a kind of discrimination?

Electoral Politics and Korean Interests

Korean interest in local elections began to accelerate after the national presidential election in 1984. As the mayoral campaign in New York City began in 1985, several candidates invited leaders of the Korean community to meetings and events, seeking their support. Mayor Edward Koch, for example, invited fifty individuals from the Korean community to his official residence, Gracie Mansion, a demonstration of interest in this immigrant population that was not evident four years earlier.

As the mayoral campaign developed, the Korean community was divided, one section supporting the incumbent, Mayor Koch, and the other supporting his Democratic Party primary opponent, Carol Bellamy. Koch was endorsed by the umbrella organization and the leading newspaper, the Korea Times. They argued that Koch had helped many Korean Americans, and that "there is a good chance for him to be reelected, so we'd better support him. Otherwise he is going to do harm to us." (Korea Times). Supporters of Bellamy stressed her support for commercial rent control, an issue of crucial importance to Korean small business proprietors, and opposed by Koch.

A Koch Ethnic Rally. When I arrived at City Hall, there were already many people there, either to participate in the Koch election rally, or as spectators. Signs were

written in English and in many other languages. Those in English read: "Norwegians love Koch," "Lithuanians for Koch," "Pakistan and American Friendship," "Armenians for E. Koch," "Finns for Koch," "Greek Americans," "Chinese, we support Mayor Koch," "German Americans for Koch," "Filipinos for Koch," "Indians for Koch, Indian Community of NY," "Hungarians for E. Koch."

The program started with the introduction of Koch's staff and election campaign aides. Their message could be summarized thus: Without Koch, the city would be broke; we'd better thank him for this by reelecting him. Koch himself then spoke, and said, "In New York City 25 percent are people born in a foreign country. I myself am a Polish Jew." He looked tired from the toll of his heavy campaign schedule.

During the intervals between speakers, there were several ethnic dances performed. All of a sudden, some Armenians standing among the spectators shouted: "There are 60,000 Armenians--all of us are for you, Mayor Koch!" Next, a former Indian Ambassador was introduced. Then a Chinese dragon dance was performed.

Mr. Kang Ik Cho, president of Haninhoe said to me, "We attend this rally in consideration of the rights and interests of Koreans in New York, but we should participate in it more actively." Although each ethnic group was supposed to bring at least 30 attendees, only ten people

from the Korean community came. However, their sign was noticeable and in big letters. All of the Korean attendees were from Haninhoe (the Korean Association of Greater New York). Mr. Kang told me, "We should have also brought a Korean dance group." But another Korean commented, "If we want to do that, we need money for it. The dancing groups, such as those of the Indians, Chinese, and others, do not come here for nothing. They are paid. The same is also true of the Indian attendees."

The Coalition for Commercial Rent Control. Commercial rent control to protect small businessmen from arbitrary landlord rent increases became the most important issue for the Korean community in the September 1985 primary election. Carol Bellamy was endorsed by the Korean American Small Business Task Force for Commercial Rent Control which included 21 Korean occupational and locality associations. They had asked: What has Koch done for us? Their answer was: nothing. He is only defending the developers' and landlords' interests. We, as small businessmen, suffer from uncontrolled commercial rent increases. Let's vote for Bellamy.

The Korean American Small Business Task Force for Commercial Rent Control, along with a Coalition for Small Business Preservation, holding several hearings during the campaign to show the candidates for mayor, borough

president, and city council, the Korean community's political interest in this issue. Their aim was to save Korean small business from refusals to renew leases by landlords who raised rents by 100 percent or more. These efforts also made it even more obvious that the small businessman were now the major political force in the Korean community.

By 1985, half of the 35 City Council members supported the rent control bill, Intro 914, as support for it had increased from 14 to 19 during the campaign. Early that year, Mayor Koch changed his until-then negative attitude, and appointed a committee to study and evaluate the commercial rent control bill of City Councilwoman, Ruth Messinger. In June, 1985, some 1,000 Korean businessmen demonstrated for Intro 914 at City Hall.

The Korean Coalition's strategy was that they would lobby members of the City Council to support the bill until the primary election in September. After the primary, and until inauguration of the new mayor in January, they planned a petition campaign to collect signatures in favor of commercial rent control from small businessmen and other citizens. After January 1986, they planned to make support for the bill an issue in the elections for New York State Senators and Assembly members in order to bring greater pressure on the New York City Council and Mayor to pass Intro 914.

Korean newspapers closely reported the debate on rent control. Carol Bellamy and the City Council candidate for Flushing, Julia Harrison, were invited to speak at an August 1985 forum on commercial rent control in Flushing, where their support received enthusiastic response from the Korean community. Bellamy reaffirmed her position, and accused Koch of offering tax exemptions to big developers and ignoring small business. Harrison expressed a similar view, saying that commercial rent hikes harmed the general citizenry as well as small businessmen. Some 120 Koreans, Chinese, and white Americans from Queens attended this Flushing forum. According to Mr. Kim Sung Soo, the organizer of the Korean American Small Business Task Force for Commercial Rent Control,

This problem with commercial rent control can be compared to the fight between David and Goliath. It is necessary to hold the upper limit on rent increases to 10 or to 15 percent. Also, if this new bill doesn't pass, in five or ten years most of the self-employed small business men will be taken over by large chain stores. That's why more than 99% of Korean produce retailers support this bill (Daily News 9/3/1985).

The Koreans' political activism on this issue was impressive both to Koreans and non-Koreans. Yet their support did little for Bellamy, who lost the September

primary to Koch. The Korean community then was divided. the coalition leaders continued to press political officials to support commercial rent control. On the other hand, the umbrella organization and other Korean leaders aligned with Koch. A fund-raising party for Koch was organized after the primary, and more than \$25,000 was raised from among Koreans.

In both local community and electoral politics, the Korean community has developed two modes of political activism. In the Koch/Bellamy election campaign, and in voter registration drives, Koreans concentrate on political participation through voting and seeking to influence elected officials. Through the demonstrations against police brutality in Elmhurst and for commercial rent control at city hall, they showed militancy and concerted action in defence of Korean rights and interests. By the mid-1980s, Koreans were no longer outside the politics of New York City. They had come to learn how to bargain for their interests with local and city-wide American politicians and officials.

Notes

- [1] Lewis (1988) reports that in May, 1980 Kwangju - and the surrounding countryside - was the scene of a major civil uprising. It was a time of transition in South Korean political history, a period of both optimism and confusion that occurred between the assassination of one military strong man in October, 1979 and the seizure of political power by then General Chun the following summer. In the early months of 1980 popular hopes for democratic reforms and free presidential elections dimmed as the army signalled its intention to remain in control of the government. There were large scale protests and demonstrations throughout the country, but on May 18 in Kwangju the protests turned bloody, as rock-throwing students were met by elite paratroopers bent on restoring order at any cost. The army's brutality was countered by violence and resistance. Rebels broke into arsenals to get weapons, and citizens fought government troops in the city's streets. It took the government nine days to regain control of Kwangju, at a human cost that remains in dispute. An official government report in 1985 gives a death toll of 191; other estimates claim as high as 10 times that number. Chun went on to become President in the summer of 1980, a position he

held until he stepped down in January of this year
(Lewis 1988:3).

Chapter 10

"Born Again"

If one is Korean in America, then one probably goes to church. Koreans often say: "If three Chinese get together they will open a restaurant; if three Japanese, they will establish a company. If three Koreans get together, they will start a church."

In the New York metropolitan area where some 200,000 Koreans reside there are 350 Korean Protestant churches. They make up almost one-sixth of the total of more than 1,800 Protestant churches in New York City. From 1984 to 1986 a new Korean church was founded every six days.[1] Although in Korea itself Buddhists substantially outnumber Christians, Koreans in the United States are overwhelmingly Christian. In 1982 Christians in South Korea constituted 25 percent of the population of 39 million; in America Korean Christians, mostly Protestant, accounted for 65 percent of the Korean population (Tonga Ilbo 2/10/83).

Christianity plays a large role in the life of the Korean American community. At church, the Korean devotion to small business success is ideologically intensified. Korean small business owner church goers meet and discuss capital formation, labor issues, and business information. When a Korean first establishes his own business, and even

later when he's well established, ministers occasionally visit church members at work, and pray together, even in some cases, with street peddlers. In some cases, ministers and or their wives actively search for good businesses and new business locations for their church members.

Some Korean Christian landlords or apartment-sharers discount the amount of rent, or even restrict rentals, to fellow Christians. People who have been refused job interviews sometimes complain about employers' preferential treatment towards Christians. Some Korean Buddhists have been converted to Christianity, as their family member's marriage proposal was refused for not being Christian.

Religion pervades Korean immigrant life. One weekend in the park I saw a young Korean man with a Sony Walkman. I thought he was listening to Korean music. He was actually listening to a sermon. In 1988 at the Korean Mid-Autumn Festival at Flushing Meadows-Corona Park many religious Koreans were engaged in mission work. Interestingly enough, as a middle-aged Korean lady tried to distribute a flier about a revival meeting at her church to a group of young white American boys, they in turn were trying to distribute fliers about their own Buddhist sect, Nichiren Shoshu, which was founded in Japan. A Hindu colleague of mine was even approached by a Korean neighbor who tried to evangelize her in the laundry room of her apartment building.

Background

After the initial period of Christian proselytizing, Protestant Christianity in Korea came almost completely under Korean control. The early missionaries were from diverse backgrounds--American Presbyterians of several mission bodies, Canadian and Australian Presbyterians, Methodists, and others (Clark 1986: 2-14). Korean Protestant churches today reflect these roots. The largest number of Korean Protestants are Presbyterians, followed by Methodists and Baptists, but there are several separate churches in each denomination.

In Korea there are two major Presbyterian bodies--the "Presbyterian Church in Korea" [Han'guk yesu changno hoe], or Yejang, holding a more conservative theology; and the "Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea" [Han'guk kidokkyo changno hoe], or Kijang, with a more progressive theology. These distinctions are of small importance for ordinary believers in Korea, and are irrelevant in the Korean American community. In fact, even the distinction between Presbyterian [changnogyo] and Methodist [kamnigyo] may be blurred.

In New York, most Korean Protestant congregations are Presbyterian; many others are Methodist, Evangelical, or Pentecostal, and evince a relatively conservative theology. A few churches have appeared which espouse

newer, progressive forms of doctrine influenced by Korea's Minjung or People's Theology, by Feminist Theology, or by Immigration Theology.[2]

As students of Korean immigration point out, Korean Americans all over the United States tend to be quite religious, and Christian churches serve important social functions in the immigrant communities (see Dearman 1982; H. Kim 1977; I. Kim 1985; Hurh & Kim 1980). Among the services that Korean churches in Los Angeles provide their members, for example, are:

Korean and English language classes, information and training in ways to cope with American society, and a milieu in which to interact with other Koreans.

Counseling, fellowship, mutual aid, economic, and countless minor services are also supplied by the churches... Korean churches are centers where the attempt to preserve language, social bonds, and customs central to Korean identity is very visible (Dearman 1982:180).

The situation is similar in New York City. However, when a friend of mine showed me a bruise produced by her minister's "sacred blow" (anch'al), or when I was confronted with parents who were too happy in their Christianity to cry over their daughter's murder by a youth gang, I encountered a puzzle. It could not be solved simply by reference to the sociological functions of

Christianity in the Korean immigrant community. I needed to understand how such acts are attributed by Koreans to God's will.

In this chapter, based on participant observation at the Central Presbyterian Church of Queens from 1985 to 1987, I will examine what it means to be a Korean American Christian at this Elmhurst church. I will explore the meaning to the members of this immigrant congregation of being "born again" (^ekodup nam). For Korean Americans, being born again means that people are liberated from secular concerns with prestige, wealth, status, scholarship, beauty, appearance, honor or saving face. With recognition that they are now truly Christian, born-again Koreans see the horizons of life greatly expanded. This meaning of "born again"--with the religious behavioral forms that accompany it--is characteristic of Korean immigrants in America, and differs from what it means to most Americans (see Harding 1987).

Social Aspects of Church Membership

Reverend Chang Eui Ahn's Central Presbyterian Church is typical of Korean immigrant churches in New York City. Nine years ago he began services in Kew Gardens, Queens, in space rented from an American church. Things went well, but beyond holding services the congregation could not plan any other activities due to limited space. In addition,

over the course of five years the rent was continuously raised; in the sixth year it was increased by 100 percent. The congregation then decided they needed to have their own church building. In 1985 they converted a former funeral home into their own church.

In an interview Reverend Ahn identified the following characteristics of his congregation:

There are 180 persons (approximately seventy-three families) in our congregation--one hundred adults, forty students, and forty children. One hundred and thirty members of our church are baptized and fifty are not. More than half of our congregation lives in Elmhurst, Woodside, and Jackson Heights. If you include the rest of the borough, three-fourths to four-fifths of our members reside in Queens. Others are former residents of this neighborhood, and are now living in Manhattan, Brooklyn, New Jersey, and Staten Island. Looking into their occupations, more than a quarter of our members are owners of groceries, vegetable stands, fish markets, general merchandise stores, and clothing shops. Less than a quarter of our members are professionals such as medical doctors, professors, and nurses. Another quarter work doing homework or in factories in the garment industry. Other members are employed in various other jobs such as real estate. The majority of our members

are from 35 to 45 years old. Recently there have been thirty senior citizens older than fifty-five; twenty of them are female.

Practical activities occupy much of the life of the Korean immigrant church. Reverend Han, minister at another Queens Korean Presbyterian church, is proud that he can serve his members on a practical level. He explained,

When a Korean taxi driver got into an accident, I went to his union to help him out. I have met teachers on behalf of our children's parents. I have helped our members with house events such as moving. I have encouraged them in their businesses. I have acted as matchmaker. When any of our members was ill in bed, I have comforted them, and I have shared both happy and sad events, such as birthdays, weddings, and funerals.

Yet he added, "It is not easy to take care of my church members as a preacher because an immigrant's life is so exhausting."

The social role Christianity plays in the larger American community partially explains why Christianity, rather than Buddhism, attracts more adherents in the Korean American community. Christian churches play a double role of both promoting the American dream and preserving Korean identity. Buddhist churches emphasize only the preservation of traditional Korean culture.[3]

The explosive growth of Korean Christianity in New

York City, however, cannot be attributed to conversion from Buddhism to Christianity. More frequently, converting immigrants discover a new religious community, and move from being non-religious to becoming active believers. Three examples of church recruitment illustrate this process. In each of these cases, considerations of social integration and personal recognition seem to have been paramount.

In Korea, Mr. Hong practiced Buddhism, but lapsed when he came to the United States. After his eldest daughter married and moved out, he was lonely. When he later moved to new housing, a minister appeared and welcomed him to his church, which Mr. Hong then joined. Mr. Choi, a dental technician, began to attend church with his roommates, one of whose brother-in-law was the minister. Mrs. Pai, who is very poor, visited a church where certain members noticed her poverty. They have since provided her with rides to services, and even money for the church offering.

Social interaction among members of Korean churches is very intense. It is typical for church members to go to church early Sunday morning and come home after spending the entire day there. During the course of the day they participate in a coffee hour, free lunch, a service for youth organizations, staff and committee meetings, evening worship, and other events, all in addition to the regular morning service. Businessmen church members may play golf

in a group before the Sunday service. In many churches a Saturday service, and Bible study on either Thursday or Friday, are offered as well. Some members attend daily morning worship prior to work.[4]

In Korean churches, members are often heavily involved with each other in organizing the traditional rotating credit clubs known as kye. These clubs involve regular meetings at which each member pays sometimes fixed or sometimes various amount of dues. For example, Mr. Choi has joined ponho-kye at a garment factory where he works. There, the wife of the owner of a garment factory organized one rotating credit club with various amounts of monthly dues, \$755 for Mr. Choi, and a pot of \$20,000. She recruits members through the church where she is a Deaconess, as well as among her husband's employees.

In addition to its community-like qualities, the Korean church provides a hierarchical structure which can serve as a ladder of achievement for church members. Mrs. Kim is an Exhorter (Kwonsa) in the Central Presbyterian Church, and her husband is a Deacon. She noted that:

While men can move upward from Deacon (Chipsa) to Hand-laying Deacon (Ansu Chipsa) to Elder (Changno), women can move only from Deaconess to Exhorter. This is because, unlike the Methodist church, they do not offer the position of Elder to women here. The officers are chosen for religious office by voting.

Among Exhorters there are two different levels--Cooperative and Executive.

While it is true that some attend church primarily for these social reasons, without seriously considering their faith, others are deeply religious. Mr. Choi, who cannot face daily life without enlisting God's grace, constantly reads the Bible at the Elmhurst Korean Senior Center. Others who are very devout--including some of the "knee-high generation" who migrated to America as teenagers, and even some second-generation children--may go to theological seminary and enter the ministry. Mr. Pyo is a medical technician who has lived in the United States for more than eighteen years. Five years ago he studied at a Bible College, paying tuition for two years in order to be a Sunday school teacher. Mr. Lee owns a garment factory and takes courses to complete a three-year program at a theological seminary.

The Korean American Christian churches however, are loose and inclusive. Some Koreans who go to church regularly do not admit to actually being Christians. Others change the level of their practice according to their religious development--from active to less active, or vice versa.

James is a certified public accountant well-known in the Korean American community. Because his wife had attended church for many years, he once made an effort to

attend himself. He was asked immediately to give a seminar on income tax, financial management, and other subjects. He gladly consented. Then, a few days later, he was given the title of Deacon. This made him disgusted with the church, and he soon discontinued attendance.

The Korean Christian church has always encouraged its members to marry other Christians. This consideration continues for the "knee-high generation" who mingle with each other at their churches. Mr. Park, for example, says he plans to study theology and hopes to marry a woman who will understand his plans. Ms. Choi noticed an unhappy couple at church, a young Korean man and his American wife. The husband missed Korean culture very much and usually came to church by himself. Ms. Choi could not imagine that the in-laws of the couple could be close to each other. She would prefer to marry a Korean and if possible, a fellow church member. As is true for many of the "knee-high generation," most of her friends are people she met through church.

To summarize, in addition to religious faith, Korean Americans become active Christians for the help in adapting to American life that churches and their pastors provide; for the companionship of fellow Koreans and contacts established in the church congregation; and for positions of prestige in the church hierarchy. Koreans are well aware of all these motivations and include them in their

own reasons for strong church attendance among Korean immigrants. Mr. Lee, a shrimp wholesaler, is quite explicit about why his fellow Koreans go to church, "They go to church for friendship, and secondly, for self-promotion. Otherwise why would people contribute so much, even borrowing up to \$100,000 from others? They want to be known as Deacon Kim."

Beyond any sociological explanation of why people go to church, the meanings Christian life can give to people are also an important motivation. These meanings tie the immigrant Christian experience to Korean religious behavior in general. This can be seen in the importance of the "born again" experience for Korean Christians, and the structural and functional similarity of this to the communitas experienced in the traditional Korean possession experience.

What Korean Americans Mean by "Born Again"

For those in the Korean American community, there are three different ways of being born again as a Christian: being born again with no witnessing experience; being born again by seeing, hearing, or silently communicating with God in solitude; and being born again through an ecstatic experience such as falling down, speaking in tongues (pangon), or being able to translate when others speak in tongues.[5] In the first case an individual comes to terms

with God as a member of a spiritual community. In the second, a two-way relationship between God and oneself is established. In the third case, a personal communication with the divine is experienced communally. This last category, the experience of communitas, is regarded as the most desirable; in it one witnesses God directly while also participating in the experience with others.[6]

I was astounded at what happened during one Central Presbyterian Church revival meeting I attended. While singing together, suddenly everybody raised their hands as if they were going to receive a divine inspiration, called songyong (the Holy Ghost). Then the presiding minister placed his hands on one man's head, an act called ansu, and offered a prayer. The man fell down as if his feet had been pulled out from under him.

At this revival the guest minister, Reverend Kim preached:

Let's take a spiritual cruise, crossing the River Jordan, which meets the Red Sea. Let me tell you that once you receive the Holy Ghost, you become Christian, which means you are Christian physically. Then you try to be Christian spiritually by your own efforts. I tell you not to look unconsciously for worldly goods in the name of God. Similarly you will have to distinguish peace of mind from the achievement of your goals. For instance, when we are young we are crazy

about falling in love, which we often think is the most important thing in the world. I had a similar experience. I was languishing because of love, but in three months I was okay.

At another revival meeting, after acknowledging the grace received from God throughout the year and its revitalizing power, there was tongsong kido, or prayer in unison. After vigorous "Amens," the entire congregation shouted. Some even cried. A person near me kept praying, "Oh, Jesus. Please hold me tightly. Please guide me to the right way to live, I beg you."

One individual whom I met at this revival, Mr. Ha, told me that he spoke in tongues. He said that he had slowly undergone a transformation. After much prayer, he said, hopes which had seemed impossible were realized. He told me

When I came to America, my girlfriend was still in Korea. I just prayed for her. In fifteen days, she said that she had received divine inspiration which told her that she had to follow her boyfriend, without any conditions. What is more, she sent me almost the same Bible phrases in a very similar sequence which were recommended to me by Reverend Ahn every week.

Another congregator, Mr. Nam, told me how it happened that he could speak in tongues:

As I prayed and prayed, I had a cramp in my tongue.

Surprisingly enough, as I kept on saying "Thank you, God," strange talk came out from my mouth, automatically. My tongue became rigid and I became too feverish to be normal. Then my pastor told me to speak freely. My wife followed me, talking irrepressibly. My pangon lasted around fifty minutes. According to him, those who go spiritually deeper than merely speaking in tongues can translate when someone speaks uncontrollably. Italian, Greek, Spanish, and some unknown languages emerge in the pangon experience among Korean American Christians.

Such Koreans attend church for reasons beyond friendship, status display, and fellowship. To be "born again" is to be reborn in the world, with pure intentions. They feel freed from trivial considerations and secular desires. They are able to generate a great deal of strength and will. These gains are directed to living a decent life as Christians. As one congregator, Mr. Park explained,

I was very negative about immigrant life. As I started to lead a religious life, however, I could overcome many problems with finance, human relations, and a future career. I was guided directly by God. I owe this to my brother's friend. We used to be a Buddhist family. I have now persuaded even my parents to go to church. How nice it is!

Although Mr. Ha had not looked for pangon, it emerged after one month of all-night prayer. He interprets his experience by saying that when one is born again, one's horizons of life are expanded.

If you see pangon without a religious perspective it is like dumb-talking, or like playing. But it is clear that with pangon nothing remains impossible. One opens oneself and gives oneself to Jesus Christ. Similarly, pangon is the way God confirms what he has said through the voices of human beings. Sometimes we get a response from God through the one who offers prayer, and sometimes through somebody else.

Such individuals reinterpret their decision to migrate to America, the land of Christianity. They see it as enabling them to meet the Messiah, as Mrs. Lee told me. This interpretation both glorifies her immigration and rationalizes downward mobility from her former occupation of teacher in Korea to garment factory worker in Queens. Mr. Pyo, a medical technician, is the founder of his church. He feels that Christian belief provides for more than liberation of the individual. His concern is the spiritual liberation of an ethnic minority, the Koreans in America.

Ms. Choi explained in a concrete way why women and people in need in the Korean American community find it both useful and meaningful to have a firm belief in God:

Christianity gives women freedom and a chance to participate in social activities. They can get recognition by actively participating in church. Besides, living a church life, many husbands tend to treat their wives better, and even quit smoking, so many women try to persuade their husbands to go to church.[7]

Many of them actually succeed in it. Here church is very important at the beginning of immigrants' lives. When they have no relatives, they can get help through the church. People in need cannot live much of a life without relying on the church.

Reverend Ahn's sermon on Thanksgiving sketched a parallel between Korean immigrants' espousal of Christianity and earlier episodes in American history.

American prosperity is only possible because of the Americans' deep belief in God, as we see in the observance of Thanksgiving. Although Americans have a short history compared to the five thousand years of Korean history, they first came to Jamestown in Virginia. Around 1620 many took the Mayflower and came to Plymouth like the recent Korean immigrants. As most of them were Calvinist, these Protestants were looking for religious freedom beyond the reach of Episcopalianism and Catholicism. Those Protestants led a very religious life based on the Bible. Even on

a dollar we can read "In God We Trust." In a totally foreign land they kept their composure, thanks only to their strong belief in God. It is neither white American Protestants nor American Indians who own this land. It belongs only to God. So let's adopt the way Protestants adapted themselves to this new land--with a strong belief in God.

It is not easy for a Korean immigrant to become "established," to fulfill the American dream of success. Sinsuk described to me how difficult it was to deal with immigration problems, particularly with an undocumented status. Yet thanks to being born again her eyes gleamed with hope. Before having pangon she suffered because her mother could not come to the United States. She used to cry a lot. Her father stayed illegally in America, and eventually divorced his wife to remarry, in order to obtain a green card. With his green card he could invite his children in Korea to come to America, but not his ex-wife.

At the beginning of a revival meeting Mr. Ha, who has spoken in tongues, told Sinsuk how to prepare for pangon. "Step one, atone for sins; step two, admit that you have received Jesus Christ; step three, make clear that you will follow him; step four, look for grace." After twenty minutes of her repeating the words "Please pardon me," he let her change to a prayer for grace. "If one is sure that one has received grace, then one looks for the Holy Ghost,

and then one also can believe that one has received divine inspiration." Sinsuk followed his direction. In just two or three minutes pangon^c came upon her, even before Reverend Ahn laid his hands on her head.

The born again phenomenon among Koreans exhibits parallels with the early Protestant experience analyzed by the sociologist Max Weber in The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. The revival sermon of Reverend Kim, quoted earlier, recalls the words of the English Presbyterian Richard Baxter: "you may labour to be rich for God, though not the flesh and sin" (Weber 1930:162). In this attitude of what Weber called "worldly asceticism" an empty search for worldly pleasure is rejected [8], and the direct experience of God's grace provides guidance for concrete action in the mundane world.

Worldly-ascetic, born-again Korean Christians feel lifted from the social considerations of family background, educational level, appearance, wealth, and status. At the same time as they become Protestant, the Korean American small business owners find "their hard work and sincere efforts in making money are justified in religious terms" (Weber 1930:171).

In Mr. Nam's testimony, it is evident that he is liberated from the habit of evaluating people according to their educational level, a habit which derives from a Confucian emphasis on scholarship. He feels free to engage

in hard work in the context of a religious commitment (Weber 1930:151).

All problems are coming from people's arrogance or pride, which are again coming from being a Ph.D. or somebody. If one denies oneself completely, and thereby suppresses one's pride or arrogance or any secular desire, and as one has more self control, I think one is near to deep belief. I used to be hot tempered, and to look down upon those without knowledge. Since I became "born again," I could get rid of those bad habits. Following what is written in the Bible, I decided to work hard, live a fair and just life, and always be thankful to others for what I am and what I have.

Other aspects of the Korean American born-again experience, however, point to concerns not analyzed by Weber. Mr. Nam could not be cured of the sickness brought about by guilt over his brother's death until he was born again.

When my loving youngest brother died from a traffic accident just before his wedding ceremony, I was terrified and felt guilty about it, as if I killed him. I was blaming God--"Why didn't you take me away instead of my youngest brother who was brighter and had a longer future." At that time I had purchased a poisonous drug in order to kill myself. I became

mentally ill, and later on, physically sick, having difficulty breathing.

I went to see a doctor, complaining about my insomnia and fever, but he couldn't find any problem with my health. I felt awful. Only after I started to go to a Baptist church in Elmhurst was I cured, having peace of mind.

In another case, it was not until Ms. Lee was born again that she came to believe that it is trivial to win or lose a lover's heart.

As my lover who was with me for seven years left me and married someone else, I felt continuous pain. After several months' prayer without doing anything else, I came to realize that for two thousand years Jesus Christ has been waiting for me. I came to admit the existence of Hell. It is in Hell that one suffers forever. After that, I could not commit suicide, because of my fear of Hell.

Although it is apparent that Koreans adopt a Weberian Protestant ethic by being born again, their Christian belief system is also in accord with aspects of traditional Korean religious orientation, particularly a concern with ill health caused by spiritual affliction. The Korean anthropologist Youngsook Kim Harvey has argued that the traditional Korean religious focus on shamans' possession experiences had characteristics that proved advantageous to

Christian missionaries. "Stylistically, it predisposed the Koreans to Pentecostal, fundamentalist Protestant Christianity, and the Christian concept of the Holy Ghost was compatible with the shamanistic concept of spirit possession." Harvey sees the Deaconesses in Korean Christian churches as the functional equivalent of shamans (1979: 205-34; 1987: 149-70).

Where elements of these traditions match Christian scripture or precepts, they serve as cultural anchors for Koreans. Perhaps emphasizing these aspects of Christianity provides cultural comfort, and Koreans are less tempted to abandon the memories of a stable past, even if it is no longer operative in a new land. In this way certain Korean beliefs and religious practices are transmuted into a Christianity that serves the needs of the Korean immigrant, now a member of an ethnic minority. They verify selected elements of Korean culture in the form of Christianity.

The attitude of Protestant worldly asceticism is also similar to the non-attachment to secular concerns advocated in Buddhism, although the devaluation of accumulation per se is more characteristic of Buddhism than Protestantism. Mr. Lee testified, "At first, I had difficulty with adapting myself to this new setting. Then I realized that it was due to my greed, which I hadn't yet exchanged for a Christian life. At one point I was about to die. I was fortunate to be born again, and of course, I was cured

completely."

Ms. Chai witnessed,

It is a true belief that one denies oneself and bears one's cross, following Jesus Christ. It can be shown by loving one's neighbors and by preaching the Gospel to the heathen. In some cases, it is extremely difficult for human beings to love others, except oneself. For instance, when one has ten or even two loaves of bread, one can give one loaf to others in need. But if one has only one loaf of bread it is difficult for one to give away his own share, without God's grace. Now I am totally rid of any material desire. If I die even with one dollar in my pocket, I will not be ashamed about it.

Not all born-again Korean American Christians feel sanguine about their religious experience. Some feel ambivalent about where the Korean churches are headed. They feel manipulated and swindled, particularly such alienated segments of the Korean American population as women, the working class, undocumented workers, and the elderly. The following story told by Reverend Kim at another revival meeting adumbrates trends developing inside the Korean American church.

It is our goal to rescue many human beings from sin, like those of our countrymen who are just crazy about running their green grocery or seafood stores. They

are interested in making the church bigger and more prosperous without paying attention to Christianity at all. Yet I see everyone, including religious priests and those with religious posts, fighting over who is getting power. How bad it is! Don't worry about how much you can contribute to church, but think of how much you leave for your own share after donating to church.

Mr. Hong is born-again, but is an active participant in the Korean American community as a founder and board director of the Korean-American Association of Mid-Queens. He expressed similar discontent.

At the Korean church some brothers and sisters tend to form their own factions, which makes me uncomfortable. For example, when I attended to the Baptist church, because of a quarrel between the pastor and the staff at the church, Reverend Kim had to leave the church. One group of church members wanted to serve Reverend Kim, and the second group of church members wanted to bring in Reverend Chung.

Some question whether the Korean Christian church shows the best way to participate in American politics, economy, society, and culture. It leads Koreans to place faith in God, and to accept whatever is given to them passively. For example Mr. and Mrs. Lee, who run a dry cleaning store, were cheated by a Korean-owned insurance

company which had previously exploited other Koreans. Mrs. Lee, a Korean Christian, decided not to sue the insurance company, saying, "I believe in God and I didn't want to hurt any fellow Koreans."

In the end, people must struggle to understand God's intention in situations of misfortune, conflict or disagreement. Two Korean Christians may formulate totally different interpretations, and these affect, and are affected by, their political and economic interests, and their conditions of survival. When Mrs. Yoon's mother-in-law argued that it was God's will that Mrs. Yoon be evicted from the household, Mrs. Yoon succeeded in disarming the argument by her own faith in God. But since then she has been involved in the women's movement in the New York Korean community. Mrs. Yoon told me,

Over the past three years, God showed himself almost twenty times in my dreams. In my occupation as pediatrician I had many chances to see battered women. They were struck hard by their mothers-in-law, husbands, or sisters-in-law. They would quote the Bible in a very strange way by saying that it is imperative for one to care for one's in-laws. Yet they don't expect reciprocal care. Many times I cried and prayed to God. I could succeed in this only after being born again and gaining stronger belief. During this difficult and stormy period I have realized that

I am not the sort of woman who listens dependently only to my husband. I don't belong to anybody but God.

Mr. Ha, another born-again Christian, is active in Korean Americans for Peace and Justice while he continues to attend church. "Now I try not to do pangon as I am not sure whether I know what God intends. I want to have several different kinds of grace, such as grace for mutual cooperation as can be seen in the Bible, grace for gentleness--lacking in myself--and grace for patience."

Conclusion

Christianity is important within the Korean immigrant community for many reasons--to provide community services, to create an ethnic forum for socializing and status seeking, to enhance the Americanization process. By focusing on these factors, however, we underplay the ways in which Korean American Christianity, in spite of its Biblical imagery, remains deep Korean. What is perhaps surprising is the emergence of themes common to all forms of Korean religiosity among Koreans in the alien environment of New York City, and within the Western context of the Christian religion.

We have already mentioned Harvey's observation that there are significant similarities between the Christian concept of the Holy Ghost, so prominent among Korean

Christians, and the shamanistic spirit possession basic to traditional Korean folk religion (for further discussion see Moon 1985; Palmer 1967.) It may be possible to go further in this direction. Ch'oe kil-song, for example, has proposed that Korean ritual in general is characterized by a processual structure explicitly designed to lead to a highly-valued ecstatic experience--an experience of communitas. This analysis certainly fits the personal and communal communication with the divine that is regarded as the most desirable form of born-again experience. This structural congruence in Korean Protestantism and traditional shamanism has been pointed out by Ch'oe (1989) [9].

There are continuities with Buddhism as well. People's Theology (Minjung) Protestant theologians have focused on the Korean folk religious concept of han, or worldly desire, in Korean Christianity (see Commission on Theological Concerns of the Christian Conference of Asia 1983; Harvey 1987). The Buddhist roots of the concept of han are patent [10]. Being born again as a Christian among Korean Americans is often seen to lead to a purging of worldly desires such as greed, and to a emptying of the self in a way startlingly reminiscent of Buddhist theology.

In the final analysis, the born-again Korean Christian's belief in personal communication with God challenges the hierarchical, Confucian-influenced,

structure of constituted church authority. Yet, it remains to be seen if this individual empowerment can be extended into the secular world. If it is, it will be related to ongoing trends within the Korean American community.

Many Korean immigrants have learned that the church is unable to provide needed services for the most alienated segments of the Korean American population, and they have created organizations to work for social change on their behalf. The church has now taken notice of this activity and is reestablishing contact with these groups. For example, the church was slow to respond to demonstrations protesting police brutality against Koreans in New York City, but churches later provided an organizational structure so that protest grew into a movement. As more Koreans are not able to realize the Korean American dream, increasing numbers of church members are drawn from such segments of the population. The Korean church will have to address their concerns. Thus, we see change in the relationship between the church and ongoing change in the Korean community. The church itself is being born again.

Notes

- [1] Between 1981 and 1984 eighty churches were founded, but from 1984 to 1986 some 129 churches were founded, or sixty churches a year (Korea Times, January 1987).
- [2] On People's Theology, see Commission on Theological Concerns of the Christian Conference of Asia (1983), and Mun (1985); on Feminist Theology, see Ruether (1983). Immigrant theology, still in embryonic form, is espoused by the theologian S. Lee. According to Lee, immigrants are pilgrims sent by God.
- [3] On May 28, 1985, for example, many Buddhist temples in New York celebrated the 2529th birthday of Buddha. At the Won'gak Sa, a Korean Buddhist temple, a lantern parade and chanting of Buddhist liturgy was followed by the following performances: a Kayaqum (Korean zither-like instrument) concert, a court dance, a Buddhist dance, a Sal'puri (a dance of exorcism now considered a Korean classical dance), a P'ansori concert (folktales sung to drum accompaniment), a folksong concert, and other art forms cultivated by folklorists as examples of Korea's indigenous culture. Such performances are discussed by Howard (1989). Performances of this type are rare in Korean Christian church functions.
- [4] Daily morning worship is common in Christian churches

in Korea.

- [5] In Korea this "born again" phenomenon can easily be observed at evangelical or fundamentalist churches, but one rarely comes across it in Presbyterian or Methodist churches. In the United States, it can be found at most Korean churches, except for Methodist ones. I witnessed "born again" phenomena at a Presbyterian church, though it is not formally acknowledged there.
- [6] On communitas, see Turner (1969).
- [7] Most Protestants in Korea, and many among Koreans in America, endeavor to neither smoke nor drink.
- [8] Regarding this issue in Korean Won Buddhism, see Cozin (1987).
- [9] Some even believe that Korean Protestantism has become nothing more than a Christianized shamanism; see Commission on Theological Concerns of the Christian Conference of Asia (1983).
- [10] The most fundamental doctrine of Buddhism is the Four Noble Truths (saje): (1) all life is suffering (koje); (2) the ignorance and attachments which create suffering accumulate as karma (chipche); (3) suffering can be ended through the extinction of desire (myolje); (4) the way to salvation is the Eightfold Path (toje) of Buddhism.

Part III:

Conclusion

Chapter 11

Reassessing the Korean American Dream

Ethnic and Racial Discrimination

The formation of Korean immigrant ideologies is affected by the factors of ethnicity and race. Most of my informants assign Asians a status either higher than Latin Americans and African Americans, or lower than white Americans and Latin American. Others pointed out that in terms of individual or household income, Asians might rank higher than African Americans, but that in terms of language fluency or familiarity with American culture, African Americans do better than Asians. There are thus different cultural models held by Korean Americans of the status of Asians (and Koreans) in the multi-ethnic community of New York.

status	model 1	model 2	model 3	model 4
high	white Am.	white Am.	white Am.	white Am.
	Asian Am.	Latin Am.	Latin Am.	African Am.
	Latin Am.	Asian Am.	African Am.	Latin Am.
low	African Am.	African Am.	Asian Am.	Asian Am.

Yet, in all these models, Asians rank beneath the dominant white American category. If Koreans continue to believe that they will realize their American dream, they do not forget that even the most successful Korean

immigrant belongs to an ethnic minority in American society. Nonetheless, they can aspire to middle or upper rank inside the Korean community, and the drive to establishment in these terms continues. But, their reassessment of the American dream does start with the question of how they are treated by non-Koreans in America. Ethnic and racial discrimination toward Koreans occurs in various contexts. And some are aware that because of language and cultural barriers, sometimes even the victim is not conscious of how he or she is being mistreated.

Discrimination towards Koreans is now widely discussed in the Korean American community. In addition to cases of police brutality, many Korean merchants complain about harassment and exploitation by city law enforcement officers. Sometimes when they have violated no law or regulation, Koreans find themselves fined while a neighbor white store-owner is not. A beer distributor talked about his difficulties.

I feel that we tongyanggye (people from the Asian continent) are subjected to cold treatment. For instance, when there is a quarrel, the police, who are supposed to be evenhanded, support and argue only for whites. If an inspector from the City Department of Sanitation notices garbage improperly placed in front of my store, which is in fact the overflow from the white store-owner next door, still they ask me to pay

a fine.

Korean retailers or garment industry subcontractors also feel the bite of discrimination. Many Korean green grocers and fish market owners protest bad treatment and racial slurs from their white wholesalers if they question price, quality, quantity, or contract terms. Mr. Won, the owner of a garment factory in Elmhurst, said:

When I had not yet lived in New York for a long time, a man whom I was asking for trucking information told his colleagues that I was hopeless because I am a colored person. This humiliated me. Due to my poor English, I suppose, they laughed at me. I felt so bad.

Korean businessmen are often falsely accused by customers. This is sometimes an issue of resentful customers who cause damage on purpose, bring false charges, or provoke a shopkeeper by verbal or physical attack. Mr. Kim, an automobile bodyshop owner, told me:

Well, when I could not communicate with customers, often I was falsely charged. For example, when customers argued and complained to the police that we had not done the job properly, there was nothing we could do. I think this is a kind of racism. Even a small kid came to me and told me to go back to my country. I lose my say here. If I command English better, I know they will ignore us less.

Korean consumers themselves often encounter difficulty

while shopping. Although it may appear minor, this is one of the most common complaints. In these cases, non-Korean salespeople or merchants give Korean customers a hard time, and show that they are not pleased to wait on them. Mr. Su, owner of a sewing machine store, felt the sting of racism when he went to purchase chicken in a fast-food restaurant.

Maybe I am self-conscious, but I feel that they are not kind to me, and sometimes can be very cold. In addition, I hope that some organization like the Korean Association of Greater New York would provide us with an information pamphlet with necessary knowledge about American law.

Mrs. Choi, a grocery owner, said

When I go shopping, they look down upon us, and they do not greet us. They never do this to others, especially to whites. Whenever I call a repairman for my refrigerator, they usually do not come quickly. If I call a Korean repairman, they come immediately.

Ms. Choi feels there is much racism in America. At first she did not realize it, but now she experiences it everywhere. For instance, when she goes shopping or to a restaurant, she feels that she is not served properly. One day she went to a cafe in Greenwich Village. She was not permitted to sit outside, and saw all the Asian customers were inside. She said that other Koreans have told her similar stories of racist attitudes from restaurant

workers.

Most Korean professionals, and the Korean population in general, find that there is built-in racism or ethnic discrimination at most American workplaces. Many Koreans become reluctant to try anything else than small business because they feel that this discrimination is so widespread, and extends to all Asians.

Some even experience racist name-calling in the street. Mr. Lee, who runs a Korean restaurant in Elmhurst, said

I think that I have lived my life in vain. In America I am not treated well. People laugh at me, calling me "Chino" [Spanish for "Chinese"]. Therefore, we Koreans should stick together. I think that Koreans are at the bottom of the American social structure.

Hispanics are poorer than us, but have more power. It is often difficult for Westerners to understand Eastern culture, and vice versa. This causes misunderstanding and hostility. One white American woman said that she cannot understand the Easterner's smile.

I do not get it. They smile all the time even when they seem to hate somebody. We Westerners smile only when we like something; when we don't like it, we are frank enough to say so. I really don't know why Easterners smile, but it makes me think that they are cunning, or manipulating somebody whom they are dealing with.

And, on the contrary, some American customers complain about Korean store owners for precisely the opposite reason.

They are unkind and have an angry look. They have got to learn how to smile. If they are not happy about their life here, they had better go back to their own countries.

Individually, such ethnic conflict or antagonism is experienced by Koreans in a broad span of daily life, in shopping, dating, educational experience, and in court. Mr. Kang, a real estate broker, told me that at school he was always rejected by white girls when he asked for a date. Once he asked out a German girl who was willing to pursue an Afghan man, but Mr. Kang was turned down by her. He got mad, and attributed the incident to racism. According to him, racism and discrimination also is found in the American court system. Since 1976, as a landlord, he has gone through many legal proceedings. He said:

Even if you are bitten by a white's dog, still you will lose. Ethnic discrimination is widespread. For example, in 1983 I was sued for lack of heating. In that case, if you are white, you will be fined only \$25 or \$100, but \$2,000 or \$3,000 if Chinese, and if Korean, you will be fined \$4,000. This reflects community power in the justice system. There are already many Chinese judges. So we badly need second-generation Korean American judges, a district

attorney, and lawyers in the future.

Even before coming to America, Koreans were informed of racist ideas and practices through American mass media. However, in America, many experience it personally. With these experiences of discrimination, they begin to reassess the Korean American dream.

Ann, a nurse, feels that as an ethnic minority, the Korean second or third generation will experience greater conflict with the white majority in the future. "In Europe, it is even worse in such countries as Germany or France. In France, it is hard to even rent a room as a minority person. In Japan, they are ethnocentric, and oppress minorities."

Re-Assessments of life in New York

Korean immigrants constantly assess and reassess their lives. In many of their statements, they make it evident that Korean small businesses encourages retention of some negative aspects of Korean culture, such as sexism, a male high consumption of alcohol, and factionalism. But, as one medical doctor sees Koreans in America, overall people have adapted well.

They learn many good aspects of the American life: there is less bothering of each other, and more respect for each other's privacy. They work hard so that they can make money. Their lives seem to be healthier. Many men come home early, without drinking

a great deal, unlike in Korea. Some men even do the dishes. However, they still form factions readily, and men take precedence over women. Maybe they have not changed basically.

Ms. Choi thinks that once Koreans make some money, they indulge in luxuries which they cannot really afford. Her former Japanese roommate, she said, was rich, but nevertheless, also concentrated on spiritual enrichment. Her Chinese colleagues are very diligent and frugal, saving as much money as possible, which greatly impressed her. She quoted her cousin: "I lived in Japan for more than sixteen years, but I never saw wives of even government ministers wear a mink coat or diamond ring, except when meeting foreign diplomats. This is quite different from Koreans in New York."

Others, however, notice Korean immigrants becoming less focused on money with their longer residence in America. James, a Certified Public Accountant, observed Koreans seem to be obsessed with the idea that they should not pay tax in America. They thought of America as a free country in Korea, and if at all possible, they want to avoid paying tax. However, as children grow up and parents begin to educate their children, they realize their mistake, and are ready to pay taxes fully. Korean immigrants, in general, get more settled, as they live here longer, and, for example, buy homes. But in terms of other cultural

values, they do not seem to change, drinking and fighting, for example, at Korean restaurants, keeping their old bad habits. Because of the language barrier, they do not seem to penetrate into the mainstream of American society, and therefore they can't educate their children about life very much. It is important to make money, but we will have to understand American society better in the long run.

Some definitely feel that Korean immigrants should be more interested in political and cultural life beyond their economic concerns. Mr. Pyo, a medical technician, worries that he sees barely any unity in the Korean community, especially compared to Chinatown, or to the Jewish and Italian communities. But he notes some progress in Haninhoe.

Once one makes some money, one quickly becomes individualistic. At first, when there were only a few Koreans, we used to greet each other very warmly, but not any more. The Korean Association of Greater New York, we knew at first only for its name. After going through a period of transition, now it is getting in better shape, working on juvenile delinquency, senior citizen problems, and for contact with other ethnic groups.

It remains a major concern for many Koreans to retain Korean cultural tradition, including language and proper behavior between generations. They worry about this, in

particular in relation to the future of Korean American children and of older people. Mr. Kwon, who arrived in America ten years ago, said,

If we consider the future of our children, I think I made a good decision to come here. But, for the first generation like us, the language barrier makes it difficult to live a happy life. In terms of brains, Koreans are better than Americans. Therefore, if we support our children properly, they will achieve more than in Korea. Even so, the quality of education itself, I think, is better here. In Korea, emphasis is given to cramming; in America, although students don't listen to their teachers, there is more emphasis on creativity, using a different method of teaching.

When Mrs. Kwon sees Koreans, in particular the young people, she feels bad.

Young ladies smoke and young guys have long hair and assume loose attitudes, adopting the American way. I wish that these were not identified as Koreans by other ethnic groups. I want Koreans to keep their own culture. I also am concerned about the young people at the Korean pharmacy which is next to my studio. They work seven days a week, and often have health problems.

For Miss Choi, Koreans in the United States seem to be proud.

They have a feeling of independence. While Japanese

and Chinese identify with their own home society, Koreans usually put themselves before the nation of Korea, and are egotistical, trying to show off. This is true, in particular, of the new Korean immigrants, and less true of second-generation Koreans. But, I am worried about the second generation as well. I hear that they do not think they have to learn Korean since they are American. I figure that is a reaction to their parents, who have difficulty with English.

Mr. Park, a worker at a green grocery, stated.

I am very disappointed in Koreans' human relationship here, especially because the long-established immigrants or the second-generation Koreans seem to look down upon us for our poor English. I agree that I don't know enough about America. However, we Koreans should be hongik ingan (people who love other human beings). But Koreans seem to be very individualistic. I imagined that in America Koreans would be very united, and live with pride.

Observations on American Family Life

Koreans are deeply struck by the personal independence displayed in American kinship and family relations.

Ms. Choi was alarmed by these aspects of American life. "They are very individualistic. For example, in their marriages, while we respect our parents' opinions, they seem to ignore their parents' opinions, due to their

economic independence."

It is inevitable that Koreans note strong contrasts between the way Americans and Koreans treat the elderly, and in other aspects of family life. Mr. Kim told me.

Although I heard that American elderly are turned away by their children, I cannot tell you whether it is true, because I have no chance yet to observe it. I think that in recent years even Koreans gradually seem to be treating their elderly like that, though. In addition, compared with the Korean family, the American family seems to focus a great deal more on conjugal life between the husband and wife.

Like many others, Ms. Choi agrees. She is even more critical of Americans' treatment of the elderly.

We Koreans respect them, and feel responsible for their well-being, valuing their life experience.

Maybe here because the elderly are supported by the government, the young people do not feel it necessary to care about them.

To Mr. Ha, after work, on weekdays, Americans usually watch TV and sleep; on weekends they rest. Family life is peaceful and predictable, unlike that of immigrants.

At the beginning of my immigrant life, it was hard for me to understand them. Now I understand that this is the desirable life in America. Among Americans at least 85 percent follow that schedule, except for the few who are fond of the wild life. On the contrary,

Koreans' life is not yet organized like that.

To Mr. Nam, American family life is epitomized by its high divorce rate. Yet, depending on their income, many American husbands and wives seem to enjoy life together a great deal. There is certainly less discrimination between the sexes. "American women seem to make many important decisions--at least 60 percent of family decisions." Still, Americans are individualistic, and pay less respect to the elderly than do Asians.

For instance, once I saw an American young man wave his finger to an elderly man and called, "Hey, Joe! Come here," as if he was calling a servant. This made me disappointed in American society. If they were in Korea, no matter how bad the elderly person is, people would be very polite. It is true that many well-educated Americans also are polite. An American elderly man told me that when he was a child, people also used to have respect for the aged. At the bakery where I worked I learned much by respecting the knowledge of my elders.

Becoming American

For Koreans, becoming American has a special meaning, more than just becoming American in the legal sense. Many phrase their Korean American dream of material success in the idiom of Americanization. They see this as a synthetic process: articulating the best part of Korean culture with

the best part of American culture, while shedding bad aspects of Korean culture. For them, when Koreans are said to become American, it means more than holding American citizenship. The "truly Americanized" Korean has passed beyond the individualistic, selfish, and inhumane values that they see around them in the Korean immigrant community.

The internal criticism of Korean behavior, and the contradictory views of "American" behavior as negative for Americans but positive for the "Americanized" Koreans, leads to an interesting social commentary.

As Mr. Park told me,

Koreans seem to be too liberal, and do not keep the Korean traditional customs. Although they are Korean people, they behave as if they are American, which is ridiculous to me. In my observation, men do not change from the way they behave in Korea greatly, whereas women do change a lot in America.

Mrs. Chung said, "Koreans are very diligent, but once they come to America, they do not care about honorifics much, in order to adopt the ways Americans do things, which is bad, I think. It is not only bad for adults, but also bad for educating children."

Mr. Chun, a fish market owner explained,

Without considering any obligations to other Koreans, once they make some money, they try to isolate themselves by living in the suburbs. They do not

think of the well-being of the second- or third-generation Koreans. Some Koreans tend to be Americanized too soon. They pretend to be American as soon as they arrive in America, adopting an arrogant attitude. In my case, despite my ten-year residence in America, I still do not feel that I am Americanized.

Others point out that as Koreans become Americanized, they become too oriented to consumption and leisure. To Mr. Kim, this is the biggest difference between Americans and Koreans. "Americans seem to have little to worry about compared with Koreans. While Koreans are still anxious about making money, they eat when they can afford to eat, and starve when they have nothing to eat. They accept these ups and downs." Mr. Pai is a yellow cab driver. In his opinion,

The longer Koreans live in America, the more they tend to adopt individualism. They gradually trust others less and less. What is negative about American society is the dependence on government. Whereas Americans seem to be content with their lives, Koreans always try to have a better life, making savings. In that sense, I want to keep working hard. I plan to run a grocery in two or three years.

In its positive sense, "American" can also stand for rational and liberal values. Mr. Park stated that he is going to lead a more American life in the future.

I want to adopt the way of life Americans live, but more so internally than externally. I came here with an understanding of Korean culture, having been educated in Korea. This would be a chance for me to correct the bad aspects of Korean culture, such as excessive formalism and Korean time [failure to be punctual]. For instance, in the past, if my nephew here ate food alone, I felt unsettled, because in Korea food should be shared, never eaten alone. But now I understand it well. Also, I now object if someone is not punctual. As Koreans live longer in America, they also become individualistic. If someone is robbed, now Korean onlookers, like Americans, neither call the police nor help the person. While I was shopping yesterday, I thought about the serious overcompetition among Koreans. This is sad; there were too many green groceries all on the same block. In my analysis, Koreans seem to become inhumane. As they live in a difficult situation, they learn to satisfy their accumulated wants.

It is apparent that Korean immigrants often focus upon negative aspects in speaking of Koreans becoming Americanized. On the contrary, however, when they call someone a "true Korean," they refer only to the positive aspects of Korean culture, and not to those negative aspects their statements here reveal as well.

What Korean Americans Mean by "True Americanization"

To many Korean Americans true Americanization is a multifaceted concept. In brief, they mean, that state, following a dialectical cultural struggle, in which one holds on to the positive aspects of Korean culture and, at the same time, incorporates the best aspects of American culture. As a goal, true Americanization for Koreans most often must come after realization of the economic dream of establishment. The quest for the Korean American dream itself brings out both negative aspects of Korean culture, and adoption of undesirable American values, especially a self-focused individualism. Only if one adopts American values selectively and critically, can one be said to be truly Americanized. This is a continuing process, covering a wide range of daily life.

Mr. Ha brings one perspective to this. It was just one year ago that he came to America. "If one is now comfortable enough to say 'God bless you' in English when a person sneezes," he says, "one is on the way to being Americanized." As a young male, he projects his hopes onto his notion of Americanization. He does not want Korean American women to be loose, and to have Korean American elders scold young lovers' for kissing in public.

At first, I could not understand washing clothes by machine, and spending so much money, when I could do it by hand. But I get paid by the hour, so I can now understand the logic of using a laundromat. To me, as

Koreans live here longer, they seem to miss Korea more, but they do not think that they can live again in Korea. A Korean American woman told me that she could not walk around in short pants in Korea, and she cannot now go through the summer without wearing short pants. I see the so-called Korean Americans critically. What does it matter if people wear short pants or not? Americanization clearly means more than obtaining a legal status. In my apartment, I still smell toenchang tchige [a quintessential Korean stew of miso sauce, meat, and vegetable]. I also smell curry from the Indian families. I do not think that we Koreans are ready yet to live in this high-class apartment. Those who practice better etiquette, and display a higher status, tend to succeed in American life faster than others.

It does not occur to Mr. Ha that Koreans can be Americanized and still enjoy both traditional and American food.

To Ms. Choi, while Koreans want to save all the money they make, Americans seem to spend all the money they earn, without worrying about future rainy days. Perhaps this is due to government welfare provision, she says. Yet, they seem to work hard only when they need money. She thinks Koreans work more responsibly, and with more diligence. To her, Americanization is just a term, not a realistic goal.

No matter how long one has been in America, there

seems to be a barrier in terms of race and culture.

If a Korean behaves himself or herself as if to go beyond this barrier, it is simply wrong. For instance, if one ignores our customs--if one kisses a lover or whoever in public, or if one eats in public without sharing it--one usually gets criticism.

Although when Americans eat in public, and they often offer you some of their food, I am sure that they have a clear notion of 'my food' and 'your food,' which we do not have.

To Ms. Choi, Koreans neither can nor shall be fully Americanized. They retain their Korean cultural baggage. Even if they try, they will not be accepted easily by Americans. "If Americans treat them as a new sort of American, it is only when it is in their interest, and no more. Many second-generation Korean Americans have problems when they enter college--if they do not speak Korean, they are not regarded as American, and they are not accepted by Koreans either."

Americanization, to Mr. Kim, implies that Koreans at first exhibit a new personal arrogance. They forget their own country. Yet, he thinks, that when Koreans are successfully established, they should remember their roots and their home country. He observes that Korean Americans of both sexes and all ages are too focused on making money. When Koreans are truly Americanized, in his opinion, they hold more than a green card or citizenship.

"However, if one wants to succeed in America, one must assimilate; if you lead a life in the Asian or Korean way, you will not be understood by Americans. First of all one should learn the language, which is necessary to understand American custom and culture. Then, gradually, it is best to give up the negative aspects of Korean culture."

Mr. Hong holds perhaps the most widespread view among the established Korean immigrants. What Americanization means to him is a blend of the best values of each culture.

In addition to understanding the laws here, we have to try to learn the language and the culture. For instance, if we do not do so, our children will not listen to what their parents' say, and will become too individualistic. But we must not forget our own cultural tradition. We should not do any shameful things, and not forget Asian pride and virtues.

However, as long as we live in America, we must also try to adapt ourselves to this new environment.

As Korean immigrants live in America, they reassess the Korean American dream. By and large, they came to see small business as a route to establishment, and to reflect upon the consequences of this in various aspects of their lives. At some point, most find themselves "becoming American" in some way, for many reasons beyond obtaining American citizenship. After either embracing or rejecting the superficial aspects of American culture, they learn there is more to their own lives here than becoming

American, or resisting it, in a simple way. Eventually many people want to achieve "true Americanization." For such Korean Americans, this means selectively keeping the good aspects, and removing the bad aspects, from both the Korean and American sides of their divided and united lives.

Table 1

Korean Immigration to the US, 1903-1985

year admitted	number of immigrants	category
1903-1905	7,226	labor migration to Hawaii
1910-1924	1,100	picture brides
.....		
1951-1964	14,027	Post-Korean War Immigration:
.....		
1965	2,139	early wave of
1966	2,492	new immigrants
1967	3,956	
1968	3,811	
1969	6,045	
1970	9,314	
1971	14,297	
1972	18,876	
1973	22,930	

(Table 1 continued)

1974 28,028

1975 28,362

.....

1976 30,803

later wave of

1977 30,917

new immigrants

1977 30,917

1978 29,288

1979 29,248

1980 32,320

1981 32,633

1982 31,724

1983 33,339

1984 33,042

1985 35,000

source: United States Immigration and Naturalization
Service (1985)

Table 2

Informants: Age Distribution and Sex

<u>age</u>	<u>male</u>	<u>female</u>	<u>total</u>
up to 20	0	1	1
21 to 25	5	0	5
26 to 30	15	4	19
31 to 35	8	3	11
36 to 40	10	7	17
41 to 45	6	0	6
46 to 50	4	3	7
51 to 55	7	2	9
56 to 60	0	3	3
61 to 65	2	1	3
66 to 70	2	3	5
(with only general age)	5		5
total	64	27	91

Table 3Primary Reasons for Migration (N=91)

political:	2.7 percent
economic: economic well-being;	47.8 percent
children's education;	
to learn more;	
failure in business or	
unemployment,	
or tired of job in Korea;	
family or	
kin matters: family reunion;	38.5 percent
family feud;	
kin work;	
socio-cultural reason:	11.0 percent
to try a new world;	
for study;	
American fever;	

Table 4

Different Ways to Set Up Business (N= 39)

savings plus loan	: 39 percent
savings and or <u>kye</u>	: 31 percent
capital brought from Korea	: 16 percent
loan and gifts from kin or friend	: 13 percent
bank loan	: 2 percent

Table 5

Number and Type of Organizations

occupational organizations	: 37
professional organizations	: 8
locality organizations	: 11
alumni	: 65
social & cultural clubs	: 23

Major Occupational Organizations and their Memberships

Korean Dry Cleaners Association of New York	: 1,200
Korean Produce Retailers Association	: 950
[green grocers]	
Korean American Chamber of Commerce	: 600
New York Korean Garment Contractors Association	: 500
Korean Seafood Association	: 450
Korean Businessmen Association	: 380
Korean Grocery Association of Greater New York	: 400
Korean American Restaurant Association of New York	: 87

Other Occupational Association

Korean Traders Association
 Women's Apparel Wholesaler Association of New York
 Korean Toy Dealers Association of New York
 Korean Traders Representative Club of New York
 Korean Garment Association of Greater New York

 Korean Entertainment Association of New York
 Taekwondo Association of New York
 Korean Musicians Association
 Professional Photographer Association
 Korean Postal Service Association
 Korean Yellow Taxi Drivers' Association
 Korean Association of Asbestos Handlers and Supervisors
 Korean American Electronics Association
 Korean Scientists & Engineers Association of New York
 Eastern Korean Nurses Association
 Korean Dental Association of Eastern United States of
 America
 Korean Medical Doctors Association

source: Korean Business Directory (1990);
 The Korean Directory of Greater New York (1990)

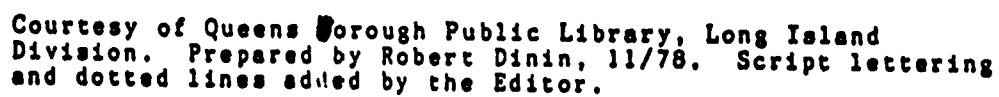
APPENDIX A

Immigration Act of 1965

Exempt from preference requirements and numerical quotas:
Spouses, unmarried minor children and parents, and parents
of U.S. citizens.

1. First preference: Unmarried adult children of U.S. citizens.
2. Second preference: Spouses and unmarried adult children of permanent resident aliens.
20 percent (26 percent after 1980).
3. Third preference: Members of the professions and scientists and artists of exceptional ability.
10 percent. Requires labor certification.
4. Fourth preference: Married children of U.S. citizens.
10 percent.
5. Fifth preference: Brothers and sisters of U.S. citizens over age 21.
24 percent.
6. Sixth preference: Skilled and unskilled workers in occupations for which labor is in short supply in the United States.
10 percent. Requires labor certification.
7. Seventh preference: Refugees from communist countries or communist-dominated countries or the general area of the Middle East.
6 percent. Removed when 1980 Refugees Act enacted, with 6 percent going to second preference.
8. Nonpreference: applicants not entitled for preference applicants. not currently being used because preference applicants take up all available places.

Note: the spouse and unmarried children of a visa recipient generally receive visas in the same preference category.



APPENDIX C

number of household member (N=90)

1 : 2 (2 percent)
 2 : 13 (14 percent)
 3 : 12 (13 percent)
 4 : 21 (23 percent)
 5 : 29 (32 percent)
 6 : 8 (9 percent)
 7 : 5 (6 percent)

number of family member (N=91)

2: 12 (13 percent)
 3: 10 (11 percent)
 4: 21 (23 percent)
 5: 21 (23 percent)
 6: 9 (10 percent)
 7: 3 (3 percent)
 1: 15 (17 percent)

number of generations (N=91)

1 : 26 (29 percent)
 2 : 45 (50 percent)
 3 : 20 (22 percent)

number of children (N=72)

1 : 10 (11 percent)
 2 : 19 (21 percent)
 3 : 16 (18 percent)
 4 : 8 (9 percent)
 5 : 7 (8 percent)
 6 : 4 (4 percent)
 7 : 7 (8 percent)
 8 : 1 (1 percent)

Household Form (N=91)

single family(or with roommates): 17 (19 percent)
 husband and wife: 13 (13 percent)
 husband, wife, and children: 36 (38 percent)
 families of brother and/or sister: 8 (9 percent)
 parents and son or daughter's family: 7 & 10
 (together, 14 (15 percent)
 parents and several children: 1 (1 percent)
 family and kin-roommate: 1 (1 percent)
 family and non-kin roommate: 1 (1 percent)

projecting future household members (N=21)

wife or children: 8

parents: 3

parents-in-law: 1

brother, sister, or their family: 7

children's wives or grandchildren: 2

wife or mother's / husband or father's / shared (N=25)
side side

6

/ 17

/2

female(& children)/ male(&children)/ together (N=25)
15 /7 /3

Eating groups (N=91)

two or three meals with household member: 47

one meal with colleagues: 18

two meals with colleagues: 13

three meals with colleagues: 6

two or three meals, just outside of home: 3

at Senior Center: 4

persons, taking more than one meal at work, and
occupational categories (N=37)

workers: 24

businessmen: 12

professionals: 0

others: 1

Who Cooks (N=90)

mother: 33.5 (37 percent)

grandmother: 12 (13 percent)

(women): 14 (16 percent)

daughter: 2 (2 percent)

mother's or father's sister: 2 (2 percent)

mother's or father's brother: 3 (3 percent)

father: 3.5 (4 percent)

sons: 0

grandfather: 0

by turns: 17 (19 percent)

roommates or me: 3 (3 percent)

	DW	CK	CB	POG	I
mother	24	32.5	29.5	19.5	14
grandmo.	10	9	7	3	3
(women)	9	14	12	1	3
daughter	5	4	2	0.5	1.5
mo-si/fa-si	1	2	1	2	0
mo-br/fa-br	2	2	2	1	0
father	6.5	4.5	3.5	16.5	4
(men)	0	0	1	3	0
son	1.5	0	0	5	0
grandfa	0	0	31	1	0
by turns	32	23	31	37.5	9
cleaner	0	0	1	0	0

DW: dishwashing, CK: cleaning kitchen, CB: cleaning bathroom, POG: putting-out garbage, I: ironing

Vacuuming (N=90)

mother: 12.5
 grandmother: 4.5
 (women): 5
 daughter: 4
 fa-si/mo-si: 3
 fa-bo/mo-br: 0
 father: 15.5
 (men): 2
 son: 5.5
 (children): 3
 grandfa: 0
 by turns: 11
 cleaner: 0

Who makes the bed;

mother: 24
 grandmo: 6
 (women): 5
 da: 1
 fa-si/mo-si: 1
 fa-br/mo-bo: 0
 father: 5
 (men): 0
 son: 0
 (children): 0
 grandfa: 0
 by turns: 49
 cleaner: 0

Who does the laundry

21.5
 9.5
 11
 4.5
 1
 1
 5
 0
 2
 2.5
 0
 32
 1

Roles of children outside household

full-time work:	19 (31.1 percent)
helping family business:	7 (11.5 percent)
part-time work:	2 (3.3 percent)
summer work:	2 (3.3 percent)
no work:	11 (18.0 percent)
too young to work:	20 (32.8 percent)

families with children: 61 (67.0 percent)

Cochlear Arrangement

	DFB	SD	WH	GA
by themselves:	17	5	7	
mother:	7.5	7	6	14
father:		2	1	3
mo & fa:	1	4	2	6
other kin:	4.5	5	1	0
non-resident kin:	0	0	1	0
others:	:0			
total:	30	23	18	23

DFB: dress, feed, bathe, and put to bed; SD: supervise/discipline; WH: watch homework; GA: give allowance including spending money

Grandparents' Relationship to Children

no relationship:	4
just caring about:	2
baby-sitting:	12
others:	

Decry

by mother:	13
by sibling:	1.5
by kin baby-sitter:	15.5
non-kin baby-sitter:	1
day care center:	?

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