

inner circles dealt with the uncertainty that life brings, especially life at the margins. By giving us a more comprehensive view of how Koreans thought in Chosŏn times, Jorgensen, with this study of prognostication and the *Chŏng Kam nok*, has made a substantial contribution to a more accurate understanding of Korean history and Korean culture.

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Elusive Belonging: Marriage Immigrants and “Multiculturalism” in Rural South Korea. By Minjeong Kim. Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2018. 216 pp. (ISBN-13: 9780824869816)

For a long time the Korean peninsula has been considered one of the most homogenous parts of the world. This image of Korea has above all been a deeply cherished self-image for both Koreas during the postcolonial period and even something of a state ideology in the form of the ethno-nationalistic, so-called *tanil minjok* or *minjok tongjilsŏng* cult. Even if the northern part of the peninsula might perhaps actually be one of the most homogenous nations in the world, South Korea is nowadays not homogenous at all.

Since the armistice of 1953, the Eighth US Army (EUSA) has had a continuous presence in the country and there has always been a small Chinese so-called *hwagyo* minority. While mass emigration of all sorts including labour emigration, marriage emigration and overseas adoption plagued the country from the end of the war and well into the 1990s, creating a huge worldwide Korean diaspora, ever since the millennium shift Korea has become more and more of an immigration country. This is due to contract workers and labour immigrants from East, South, Central, and Southeast Asian countries and not the least female marriage immigrants or *oegugin puin* (foreign wife) from mainly Southeast Asia.

Historically when it came to marriages between Koreans and non-Koreans, Korean women totally dominated the statistics between 1953–1994. Hundreds of thousands of women married US Army men, American civilians, Western European non-military men and even dominated Korean emigration to the US in the 1950s and the early 1960s. However, from 1995 and onward, the sex ratio has changed dramatically. And while the Korean women marrying Western men previously lost their Korean citizenship by law, today’s Asian women marrying Korean men are instead immigrating to Korea on a supposedly permanent basis. Both they and their mixed children are expected to integrate into Korean society and culture contrary to the Korean women marrying Western men who instead usually left the country.

Contemporary Korea is without doubt a multicultural society, and around 15% of all annual marriages are nowadays between Koreans and non-Koreans. The Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs has for example estimated that the number of mixed so-called multicultural families or *tamunhwa kajok* in Korea will amount to around 740,000 by 2020.

This dramatic diversification of Korea's demographic make-up which has taken place within barely one generation and during the last 25 years or so has even led to a phenomenon known as multicultural fatigue or *tamunbwa p'iro*. The Korean government's top-down and at many times shallow and rushed multicultural policy has had many ill effects. The explosion of anti-immigration and Islamophobic sentiments surrounding the so-called Yemeni Refugee Crisis on Cheju (Jeju) Island is just one recent example.

While the first marriage immigrants or *kyorbön iminja* were primarily ethnic Korean *Chosŏnjok* women from China, Filipinas became a prominent marriage immigrant group in the 2000s. In 2012 the Philippine-born Jasmine Lee became the first foreign-born elected member of the National Assembly, thereby giving the so-called *P'illip'in puin* a face for the general Korean public. Now Filipina marriage immigrants who marry rural bachelors or so-called *nongch'on ch'onggak* have gotten their own study and a full-length monograph in the form of the sociologist and women's studies scholar Minjeong Kim's book, *Elusive Belonging: Marriage Immigrants and Multiculturalism in Rural South Korea*.

Kim originally hails from Korea but is currently based in the US at San Diego State University. Her well-researched book *Elusive Belonging* consists of an extensive and long-term ethnographic study based on participant observations and individual interviews which took place during several fieldwork trips between 2005 and 2009. The Filipinas in Kim's study had met their Korean husbands by way of the Korean Unification Church. Today this church goes by the name of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification. This means that the informants of the study were not matched with their Korean husbands by way of commercial agencies and companies, but through a supposedly Christian organisation which has a long tradition of promoting and organising international and interracial marriages on a both global and mass scale. This practice is due to theological motives and conducted by way of its somewhat bizarre mass wedding ceremonies. In addition to the fieldwork trips, Kim has also collected and studied a wide range of empirical material concerning marriage immigration to Korea such as media articles, television programs, government material, policy documents, Korean language textbooks for immigrants and information material regarding, for example, cultural events related to Korean-Filipina (*Han-P'il*) families and material coming from organisations working to help marriage immigrants.

Not too long ago segments of the Korean population not considered to be fully Korean were heavily ostracized. People such as mixed race Koreans (*bonhyöl-in*) were, to a large extent, sent to be adopted by families in the US and other Western countries. Other minorities, like the Chinese minority, were expected to assimilate or at least keep a low profile. However, today's official policy and attitude towards non-Koreans emphasises multiculturalism. The national policy appears to be following Western standards and norms, when it comes to the human rights of immigrants and minorities. Under these conditions, Kim argues that the position of the Filipina marriage immigrants is characterised by what she calls a state of elusive belonging.

On the one hand, the Filipinas do belong to the local communities by way of their husbands, children, and Korean families. On the other hand, strong lingering ethno-

nationalistic and even racial ideas of what it means to be Korean create obstacles for them to belong fully to the Korean nation. Kim pays attention to the racialisation of Southeast Asians in contemporary Korea and the regional racial hierarchy within Pacific Asia. Her informants are subjected to racial othering and stereotyping. People condemn them because they are thought to be from poor backgrounds and from underdeveloped countries. They are described as lazy, unrefined, and uncivilized. Most prevalent of all, they are called “gold diggers” and “runaway brides.” Japanese women on the other hand are considered to be the most virtuous Asian women in Korea.

Kim’s book is neatly divided into five chapters which follow in total 36 Filipina informants. It views the women as wives of Korean husbands, as daughters-in-law to Korean mothers, and in terms of their relationships with members of their extended families. It uses key concepts such as heterosexual scripts and economic anxieties to help explain what Kim calls Korea’s makeshift multiculturalism. In addition to the 36 Filipinas, Kim has also interviewed and interacted with 25 Korean husbands. With the help of a research assistant, Kim also interviews about a dozen government, community and NGO, and Unification Church representatives.

Although Kim does write that the millenarian and sect-like Unification Church is a controversial organisation both inside and outside of Korea, it would have been of interest if the author had elaborated a bit more also on the right-wing extremist and far right political history of the organisation. Additionally, the disclosing of one of her informants as having been engaged in sex work might appear to be a bit unnecessary to mention. To sum up, Kim’s ambitious study offers a nuanced insight into a new multicultural Korea seen from the perspectives and experiences of Filipina marriage immigrants. Although it is a bit worrying that Korea’s *ppalli* mentality has resulted in a makeshift multiculturalism that does not really work in practice, Kim’s book is a valuable tool to help understand this phenomenon.

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