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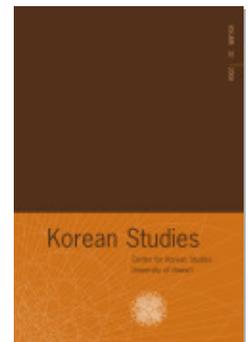
Between Defector and Migrant: Identities and Strategies of  
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# Between Defector and Migrant: Identities and Strategies of North Koreans in South Korea

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*Byung-Ho Chung*

This article examines the structural conditions and the individual strategies of North Koreans in South Korea. It provides a historical account on the changing social definitions of and policies toward North Korean border-crossers and how the changing conditions have affected their identities and lives. It also gives an ethnographic account of the difficulties and risks of individuals whose identities are caught between “defector” and “migrant.” The problems they face in capitalist South Korea are examined in the major areas of social transition—arrival, orientation, residence, consumption, work, education, and ideology—focusing on individual strategies that negotiate cultural differences between the two Koreas.

A boy from Wönsan, North Korea, died in Cheju Island, South Korea. His name was Chul and he was nineteen. It was at midnight on a quiet six-lane street. A broken mountain-bike–style motorcycle smashed against an electric pole revealed a terrible accident. He died exactly one and a half years after he arrived in South Korea.

“He died because of us. We killed him,” a South Korean teacher murmured while weeping at the funeral. The friends with whom he had roamed around North Korea and China gathered at the funeral and cried, shouting “You son of bitch, why did you die here? You should have drowned in the River Tuman when we waded across it. You should have died in the North Korean detention center when we couldn’t eat for days and we were almost beaten to death. Why now? Why here?”

At age fifteen, Chul left his home because of the famine and wandered around with his cousin. When he could, he would cross back over the Sino-Korean border with some food and money for his parents. He was arrested and escaped several times before he finally decided to go to South Korea. Leaving a secret shelter in Senyang in China, he returned to Wõnsan to see his parents one more time and give them some money. Afraid that revealing his intentions to go to the South would place his parents in danger, he left home without telling them that he would never see them again.

South Korean society gave Chul many things. A subsidized one-bedroom apartment, refrigerator, color television, video player, personal computer, bed, and the motorcycle that led him to his death. He owned all of these. While he amassed these material luxuries, he began to experience loneliness, alienation, competition, and discrimination in South Korean society as a newcomer.

South Korean society treated him well in its own way. It welcomed him as a defector from oppressive North Korea. It gave him tailored suits and ties and took him to theme parks and fancy department stores. It gave him the initial impression that he could live as a middle-class man in South Korea. But, soon, he realized that he was living on social welfare, and he feared that he would be looked down upon as one of the lowest members of society.

Christian churches called him, asking him to talk about his experiences. But, what they wanted to hear from him was how terrible life had been in North Korea, how hungry he was, how helpless he had been in China, and how the Christian missionaries had saved his body and soul. Each time he spoke, they gave him a couple hundred dollars, which he quickly spent on alcohol to escape his constant sense of humiliation and sadness.

Chul never received an education beyond the sixth grade. However, as a nineteen-year-old young man, he could never fit in an elementary school. He tried to prepare for the qualification examinations for high school, but he gave up within weeks because “the questions on the exam were too twisted to deal with.” He worked as a part-timer in gas stations and in delivery jobs at minimum wage. He would hang around with other South Korean school dropouts at work, sharing feelings of frustration and despair. Sometimes, he was involved in group fights with his friends from the North against the “arrogant” South Korean youths. He found his only solace while riding his motorcycle.

On one of those nights on the motorcycle, Chul died. It was considered a suicide. On the wall of Chul’s empty apartment hung a child-

ren's measuring stick, shaped like a giraffe, on which he measured his growth every day. At age nineteen, he stood less than five feet tall. Chul's funeral picture, a boyish-looking face in a blue suit and tie, was surrounded by flowers sent by many high-ranking officers of the South Korean government.<sup>1</sup>

Chul's death is a symbolic accident that reveals the multidimensional problems North Koreans confront in South Korea. First of all, South Korea's definitions of and policies toward the North Korean border-crossers have changed greatly over the years, confusing the newcomers as well as the hosts. There is also the problem of the fluctuating boundaries of ethnicity and nationality. The ambiguity and arbitrariness found in defining legal and cultural membership in South Korea not only penetrates the newcomers' sense of personal identity but also affects all other aspects of their daily struggle. Lastly, but not least, there are significant cultural differences between the two Koreas. Since division, both Koreas have gone through intensive modernization, in different directions. The difficulties experienced by the North Korean newcomers in South Korea reveal the characteristics of the cultural cleavage between the two Korean societies.

The North Korean refugee issues have been covered mostly by journalistic writings. The desperate human rights situations in China and in other countries have received most attention with the assumption that the refugees' arrival in South Korea is the ultimate solution.<sup>2</sup> The structural conditions and difficulties of their life in South Korea have not been properly examined in systematic academic studies.

The literature on North Koreans in South Korea in English, though scarce, can be categorized into four major areas of study depending on their perspective: (1) political defectors, (2) refugee migrants, (3) ethnic-Korean diaspora, and (4) cultural minorities. They all attend to both human rights issues and adaptation problems of North Koreans in South Korea in their own specific academic disciplines.

First, the political defector studies, which are conducted mostly by scholars in political science and international law, focus on the human rights conditions in North Korea and in China. They value defectors as witnesses of the atrocities of the North Korean regime and find their socialist cultural backgrounds as major reasons for the adaptation problems in South Korea. While emphasizing the political significance of defectors in the politics of division, the studies suggest the ways in which they should be received, trained, and utilized as personnel for post-unification.<sup>3</sup>

Second, the refugee migrant studies examine the difficulties of social adaptation and the tasks of cultural integration of the North Korean new-

comers into South Korean society. Scholars in anthropology, psychology, and psychiatry find the traumatic experiences of the famine in North Korea and the escape in China as immediate reasons for the maladjustment of the refugee migrants.<sup>4</sup> They also find cultural differences between North and South Korea to be the fundamental bases of the problem which, as a “litmus test,” reveals the difficulties of unification.<sup>5</sup> The programs and policies to support to this new socially disadvantaged group are considered as experiments and challenges for the social integration of the two Koreas.<sup>6</sup>

Third, the studies of Korean diaspora view the phenomena of North Korean migration to South Korea as part of the modern nation-building process. Comparing to the repatriations of ethnic Koreans of the colonial diaspora from various postsocialist countries to capitalist South Korea, they criticize the political defector studies for conspicuously ignoring the capitalist economic conditions in East Asia, which stimulate the mass movement of border-crossers, including North Koreans, responding to the supply and demand of the labor market across national boundaries.<sup>7</sup> They raise fundamental questions on the arbitrariness of the national boundary of South Korea which defines only North Koreans as legal citizens among ethnic Koreans from many different countries.<sup>8</sup>

Fourth, the cultural minority studies examine the cultural assumptions of legal and cultural memberships in contemporary South Korean society. They argue that South Korean society has already developed the notion of “ethnicized citizenship,” which differentiates the people from North Korea as cultural minorities with newly created ethnic markers.<sup>9</sup> Unlike the legal citizenship given to the North Korean newcomers at the time of arrival, “cultural citizenship”<sup>10</sup> has to be obtained through the cultural practices that define cultural belonging. They provide detailed ethnographic accounts of the dual process of citizen-making by the government and civil society and by individual practices and strategies responding to them.<sup>11</sup>

This article examines the structural conditions and the individual strategies of North Koreans in South Korea. It provides a historical account on the changing social definitions of and policies toward North Korean border-crossers, and how the changing conditions have affected their identities between “defector” and “migrant.” The problems and difficulties they face in capitalist South Korea are examined in the major areas of social transition: arrival, orientation, residence, consumption, work, education, and ideology, focusing on the individual strategies that negotiate cultural differences between the two Koreas. The article views

them not just as passive objects of the policies, but as subjects and active agents who induce changes in the politics of divided Korea.

## **Changing Social Definitions and Policies**

For the two competing Korean states, a person's migration from one state to the other is a symbolically significant act. It can be interpreted as evidence of the political legitimacy of one state over the other. The particular questions of who moves where and why become the topics of hegemonic discourse, and individual acts of migration are interpreted as deep evidence of the overall superiority of one system over the other. Even when only a handful of people migrates into one country, these migrants are a symbolically important social group in the politics of division.

The domestic political needs of the power groups in the different countries affected their policies toward border-crossers. For example, the military regimes in the South, which lacked political legitimacy, publicly displayed the border-crossers as proof of their success, while the conservative political groups in the United States and Japan used them as proof of their moral superiority to the communist regimes.

Even after the Cold War, the two Koreas have made significant political use of their border-crossers. For the South, the steady flow of North Korean refugees confirms the absolute triumph of capitalism over communism. For the North, a few cases of repatriation of prisoners of conscience from the South confirm the undying ideological power of socialism over its current economic troubles.

The following is an analytic summary of the historic changes in definitions of and policies toward North Korean border-crossers to the South. It aims to show the ways in which the symbolic significance of border-crossing has been defined and measured differently in the years since the division of Korea and how the South Korean government has responded to and contributed to these shifts with legal and social policies.

### ***The Division of Korea and "System Selective Migrants": 1945–1950***

After World War II, as two different political systems—socialism and capitalism—were established in North and South Korea, certain social groups who disagreed with the ruling politics were subjected to political oppression and social discrimination. This triggered a surge of migration across the North/South Korean border, in both directions. Immediately

after the liberation from Japanese occupation, landlords, capitalists, pro-Japanese collaborators, Christians, and some professionals fled from the socialist-ruled North to the capitalist South. Progressive intellectuals, organized revolutionaries, laborers, farmers, and activists who yearned for socialism fled from the South to the North to escape political oppression. From the viewpoint of the political systems, these migrants were “Illegal Border-Crossers,” but from the viewpoint of the nation as a whole, they were “System-Selective Migrants.”<sup>12</sup>

People who crossed the border due to political oppression lost everything and naturally became the most fervent critics of the governments they had left. The 740,000 people who migrated to the South between liberation and the Korean War formed the strongest anticommunist groups and communities.<sup>13</sup> They were called “Crossers to the South” (*wöllamin*), “Northerners,” and even the “Miserables of the 38th Parallel.” They established shanty towns like Liberation Village (Haebangch'on) in Seoul and formed political groups such as the Northwest Youth Corps (Söbuk Ch'ongnyöndan) to advance the anticommunist ideology, sometimes using physical terror. This group was parallel to the Southern Labor Party (Namnodang) members who crossed into the North and insisted on waging a war to free the South. The political powers in the North and South used these radical groups as they adopted increasingly antagonistic postures toward each other.

### **The Korean War and “War Refugees”: 1950–1953**

The long Korean War displaced millions of people, “War Refugees” (*p'inanmin*), as the frontline moved back and forth across the entire Korean peninsula. At the end of the war, approximately 650,000 “War Refugee Crossers to the South” (*wöllnam-p'inanmin*) had to begin new lives from the very bottom of the social ladder with their bare hands.<sup>14</sup> As “Former Residents of Enemy Territory,” they faced political suspicion and discrimination unless they made their anticommunist tendencies conspicuous. In this difficult environment, social bonding with anticommunist people of “northern origin” and emphasizing their Christian identities to access Christian social networks were essential strategies for survival. During this period, the term “War Refugee Crossers to the South” became synonymous with “Christians” and “anticommunists.”

The South Korean government labeled this group “Residents of Unrecovered Territory” and classified them as “Residents of the Five Northern Provinces” of North Korea. They gave honorary appointments to some as governors, mayors, and district directors of the Northern terri-

tories who would handle the administration when the Northern territories are eventually recovered by unification. This gave them an identity as the avant-garde of a South-dominated unification and the soon-to-be leaders of a new North Korean society.

As the destruction of the war slowly recovered and prospects for unification dimmed, people began to view the war refugees as “People Who Lost Their Hometown” (*sirhyangmin*) or “Separated Families” (*isan kajok*). This conceptualization placed more emphasis on their current residency in the South as well as their image as victims of the war and the division.

This group, “Crossers to the South,” “War Refugees,” or “People Who Lost Their Hometown,” might be expected to have a greater affinity for the recent “North Korean Escapees” than any other social group in the South. They may have come from the same province or hometown or even be relatives or families reunited. However, the encounters are not always comfortable. After an initial honeymoon period, they are often disappointed to find that their cultural and ideological differences are too great to overcome, leading to distancing, and sometimes conflicts.<sup>15</sup>

The war refugees who built successful lives for themselves out of the rubble of war tended to develop individualistic middle-class values. From their point of view, given the resettlement money and housing subsidies provided by the government, the difficulties the new settlers have in establishing themselves in South Korea come from a lack of individual capability or firm determination. On the other hand, the new settlers, who were born and reared in North Korea, may draw some comfort from remembering and identifying with the parts of the North Korean experience that they value. When the new settlers show even a small amount of approval for North Korea’s society or political system, the older war refugees become instantly suspicious. The possibility of pro-North Korean sentiments activates an “anticommunism circuit,”<sup>16</sup> a deeply internalized conditioned reflex, in the older refugees. Without conspicuous and uniformly anticommunist attitudes, the new settlers risk being branded as “Half-Reds” who still respect Kim Il Sung. The assumption that the war refugees who have lived in the South for decades will have a greater affinity with the new escapees is wrong more often than it is right.

### ***The Cold War and the “Heroes Who Returned to the State”: 1962–1993***

In 1962, the ruling military regime, raised by a coup, instituted a system to heavily reward North Korean defectors who brought military secrets across

the armistice line. The Ministry of Defense directly administered the system. Under the Special Relief Act for Patriots and Heroes Who Returned to the State (*kukka yugongja mit wöllnam kwisunja t'ŭkpyŏlwŏnhobŏp*), a small number of defectors were given special treatment and rewarded financially. The special treatment was in line with the patriots of independence movements. Based on the logic of the Cold War, the amount of this award, the *porogŭm*, varied based on the value of the weapons or information that they brought. For example, when a pilot defected in a MiG-19 fighter jet in 1983, he received 1.2 billion *wŏn* as *porogŭm*, about 480 times the average annual South Korean income at the time. In 1978, the revised Special Compensation Act for Heroes Who Returned to the State made it possible to grant *porogŭm* to civilian defectors who did not bring military secrets as a reward for “resisting the rebels and returning to the allegiance.” In the severe Cold War climate, crossing the border and openly rejecting the North was itself considered an act of distinguished service to the state.

Most of these defectors were former officers or diplomats. These political exiles offered not only valuable information, but also served as excellent propaganda tools to prove the superiority of the South Korean capitalist system. In addition to the *porogŭm*, these defectors were given resettlement money and housing and guaranteed an above middle-class lifestyle similar to or better than what they had in North Korea, based on their education, profession, and status. Before 1993, fewer than ten “Heroes” arrived in South Korea each year, causing no significant financial burden for the government. Though the number of incoming migrants has increased drastically (for example, 2,019 in 2006), the attitudes and systems formed during this period still have strong influence even today.

### ***The Post-Cold War Period and “North Korean Brethren Who Returned to the State”: 1993–1997***

The collapse of the socialist bloc had a grave impact on the North Korean economic and social systems, causing many people to leave the country in search of food or work. Some of these people found their way to South Korea, noticeably increasing the flow of North Koreans into the country. Between 1990 and 1993, a total of thirty-four North Koreans entered the South. In 1994 alone, fifty-four entered. The exponential growth in the number of incoming North Koreans along with their diminishing political usefulness led to drastic cuts in support for resettlement.

In 1993, the Kim Youngsam government enacted the Act to Protect

North Korean Brethren Who Returned to the State (*kwisun pukhan tongp'o pohoböp*) and shifted authority from the Ministry of Defense to the Ministry of Health and Welfare. The act retained the official term “returned to the state” (*kwisun*) from the earlier law, which implied political defection, but the law itself treated these people more as economic refugees or people under social welfare than as heroes. Each of the new Brethren received 7 million *wön* (about US\$7,000) in resettlement money and 8.4 million *wön* (about US\$8,400) for housing, a fraction of what they would have received as Heroes. Government support for housing and employment was similarly reduced. Housing support was in the form of mortgage loan facilitation, and job support was in the form of a request for employment by the government.

The Brethren who came to South Korea during this period had to resettle with significantly less economic support than both the Heroes before 1993 and the “Residents Who Escaped from North Korea” (*pukhan it'al chumin*) who came after 1997. According to a survey by the Ministry of Unification in 1998, only 46.9 percent of these Brethren were employed (compared to 82.4 percent for Heroes), and only 13.6 percent earned more than one million *wön* monthly (about US\$1,000 per month, compared to 47.1 percent for Heroes). The lowered support from the government, combined with the poverty and low social status found among the Brethren, caused them to self-identify as second-class citizens or strangers.<sup>17</sup> Their unemployment, poverty, and maladjustment led to a steep increase in accidents, which then became the impetus for the legislation of a new support law in 1997. During this time, the media began speaking of the migrants as “Escapees from the North” (*t'albukja*), a term that, until recently, was the most common way of referring to the North Korean migrants.

### **The North Korean Famine and the “Residents Who Escaped from North Korea”: 1997–2004**

The North Korean famine began in 1995, causing massive starvation and countless deaths and driving many North Koreans to cross the Sino-Korean border in search of food. In 1998, it was estimated that 140,000 to 200,000 North Korean refugees were in China.<sup>18</sup> Fear of forced repatriation by the Chinese government and severe punishment to follow on their return forced most of them into hiding. As impoverished illegal border-crossers, they were extremely vulnerable and were subjected to serious human rights abuses. Some of them tried to reach South Korea through the so-called Underground Railway to Seoul, a long journey that

passes through Mongolia or Thailand.<sup>19</sup> South Korean consulates, which in previous years would only give shelter to North Koreans with valuable information, began to quietly accept the refugees as long as they could avoid trouble with the host countries. In the year 2001, a small number of North Koreans began taking a perilous shortcut by rushing into the office of the United Nations high commissioner for refugees and foreign embassies in Beijing. While some succeeded in finding refuge, the media coverage of these events provoked a crackdown and more forceful repatriation to North Korea by the Chinese government.

The number of North Koreans arriving in Seoul increased dramatically during this time, almost doubling each year (71 in 1998, 148 in 1999, 312 in 2000, 583 in 2001, 1,141 in 2002, 1,281 in 2003, and 1,894 in 2004). The demographics of the migrants also changed significantly. Whereas in the past almost all were single adult males, women began outnumbering men in 2002 and have outnumbered them two to one since 2004. More than 60 percent arrived with some family, and approximately 20 percent were children or adolescents.<sup>20</sup>

Recognizing the failures of the 1993 support act, in 1997, the South Korean legislature passed the Act on the Protection and Resettlement Support for the Residents Who Escaped from North Korea (*pukhan it'al-jumin ūi poho mit chōngch'aek chiwōn e kwanhan pōmnyul*). This act provided 36,960,000 *wōn* (approximately US\$36,000) for each adult.<sup>21</sup> Though less than the money, *porogūm*, given to politically useful heroes, it provides resettlement support at levels unprecedented for any refugee groups in the world.

In addition to economic aid, the South Korean government improved its job-training efforts and began to address the cultural and psychological difficulties that the migrants have in integrating into South Korean life. The Hanawōn resettlement education center opened in 1998 to provide two to three months of socio-cultural and practical training to help them understand and prepare for the demands of life in capitalist South Korea. The Ministry of Unification described the significance of the project in 2002: "We provide protection and support for the resettlement of the 'Residents Who Escaped from North Korea' in the belief that they represent a test case for our will and ability to unify." Though there are still debates over the value and need for this type of support, Hanawōn is claimed to serve as a pilot experiment for the socio-cultural integration of North and South Korea.

In the meantime, under Kim Daejung's Sunshine Policy, North-South relations underwent considerable change. The government began focusing on reconciliation and engagement with the North, consciously

avoiding traditional anti-North propaganda. Various South Korean social and political groups clashed over the desirability of these changes and on the proper handling of Escapee issues. The contentious debate made it more difficult for the North Koreans to develop stable identities and adjust to life in the South.

Progressive nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) adopted a passive stance on Escapee issues. They supported the Escapees in their humanitarian needs but considered them a political burden, a problem to be hidden in the interests of broader North-South communication and reconciliation. Some pro-North Korean groups also distanced themselves from the Escapees with the cold rationale that “You cannot trust someone who has already betrayed once.” This additional rejection was quite painful for Escapees, who had already been cut off from their families by the North Korean regime for being traitors.

On the other hand, conservative groups criticized the Sunshine Policy as pro-North. They believed that the Escapees, and those who wished to become Escapees, were ignored and mistreated because of the Sunshine Policy that valued improved South-North communication and cooperation over the final defeat of North Korea. In their view, the Escapee phenomenon was a sign of the collapse of the North Korean system, which should be aggressively encouraged. Conservative media and political groups praised the Escapees for their brave act of defection. They argued that Escapees should be treated like Heroes Who Returned to the State. This value-laden discourse made it more difficult for the Escapees to understand where they stood and who they could be in the South and contributed to their sense of poverty, mistreatment, and despair. The conservative groups also launched an international campaign to counter what they saw as dangerously conciliatory actions by South Korea. The United States passed the North Korea Human Rights Act in 2004, and conservative groups in Japan worked to reinvigorate the issues about Japanese abductees.

Nevertheless, there is a different interpretation of the policy stating, “the conservatives criticize the government for not treating the escapees properly because of the Sunshine Policy toward North Korea. On the contrary, the government established an epoch-making support policy that provided for their needs far better than the previous conservative Kim Youngsam government, and did so even in the difficult economic conditions under the IMF [International Monetary Fund].”<sup>22</sup> The political stances and historical background of the various groups greatly influenced their beliefs on how these border-crossers should be recognized, defined, and treated.

## **The South-North Korean Communication and Cooperation Project and “New Settlers”: 2005–Present**

In 2005, the South Korean government aimed to open a new era of North-South communication and cooperation. As part of this push, they tried to move away from politically charged Cold War terminology like “Defectors” or “Escapees” and coined a new term, “New Settlers” (*saet’omin*), to emphasize the “migrant” characteristics of these people.

The term “Escapees from the North” (*t’albukcha*) is still used more widely than the legal term “Residents Who Escaped from North Korea” (*pukhan it’al chumin*),” but both of them have been heavily criticized. The word “escapee” carries negative connotations, like running away or escaping from prison. Additionally, the ending syllable *cha* carries a derogatory meaning as in Korean words for fugitive, betrayer, or homeless.<sup>23</sup> The Association of Escapees from the North proposed the term “Free Migrants” (*chayu ijumin*) to avoid the stigmatized words “escape” and “North.”<sup>24</sup>

The government-initiated alternative new term, New Settlers (*saet’omin*), has been accepted widely in social-service fields like schools, workplaces, and welfare institutions. However, some Escapees from the North have resisted the change. They argue that the name New settlers removes the political meaning from their identity and robs them of their status in South Korean society. They asked that the term New Settlers not be used. Instead, they demanded an official return to the term Escapees from the North.<sup>25</sup>

The resettlement money given to the North Korean escapees turned chain-migration into a large-scale phenomenon. The resettlement money was given largely as a lump sum shortly after arrival in South Korea. The North Koreans could use these funds to pay brokers who would help bring their family members in North Korea or China to join them in South Korea, by way of Mongolia or countries in Southeast Asia. As a result, the majority of incoming migrants became women, children, and families. A steady flow of migrants with access to resettlement money led to the expansion of brokers’ operations to the point that even the initial border-crossing out of North Korea itself was gradually becoming organized into a kind of systematic profession.<sup>26</sup>

At the same time, there had been many incidents where New Settlers, because of inexperience with the South Korean economic system, had lost much of their resettlement money shortly after arriving. The South Korean government responded by dividing payments of the resettlement money over a longer period of time. Viewing these migrants as New Settlers, this new policy was a reasonable arrangement to protect their long-

term well-being in the country and encourage healthy integration into the system. However, thinking of the migrants as Escapees or Defectors, this policy severely hampered their ability to pull their remaining family members out of jeopardy. In 2005, the number of entries into South Korea dropped for the first time, from 1,894 in 2004 to 1,383.

In spite of the shared language of South Korea and the unparalleled support systems offered to North Koreans, some conservative activists recommended that North Koreans exile themselves to a third country such as the United States since “South Korea is dangerous with many North Korean spies.”<sup>27</sup> Some Escapees in foreign countries and some of those already in South Korea actually moved to the United States and European countries based on these arguments. In April 2006, President Bush invited North Korean defectors to the White House.<sup>28</sup> At this point, they are not defined simply by which side of the Korean border they are on. They become the object of a heated debate in the dynamics of international politics.

## **Experiencing Cultural Differences: Identity, Competition, and Strategies**

“Welcome to Korea.” This is the first sign that North Korean refugees encounter when they arrive at Inch’ön International Airport in South Korea. Few of them can read its words written in English. Nonetheless, the sign conveys a message about the society they are entering. Though the two Koreas are geographically adjacent, culturally, they have become very distant. The Korea they arrive in is a heavily commercialized, highly industrial, urbanized, and international society. The Korea they must live in has evolved into a far more competitive, individualistic, diverse, materialistic, and capitalist country than the Korea they left.

### **Arrival**

A “Welcome Ceremony” with flowers, pictures, and waving hands is usually conducted for the arriving North Koreans at the exit gate of the airport. With this symbolic ritual that has been performed for the defecting heroes since the Cold War period, they are entering the chaotic world of postmodern South Korea. The continuing use of such rituals establishes high expectations among the newcomers that will not be met.

The most obvious difference between the two Koreas is the state of their respective economies. Nearly two decades since the collapse of the

international socialist economic system, North Korea has experienced extreme socio-economic deterioration caused by its devastated food supplies and limited access to energy resources. Over the same time, the South Korean economy has grown and flourished within the world capitalist system. The bipolarized economic conditions of the two Koreas have become similar to a contrast between the large-scale famine of a Third World and the affluence of a First World.

In 2006, the per capita North Korean Gross National Income was one seventeenth that of South Korea and the total GNI was one thirty-fifth that of South Korea.<sup>29</sup> Considering that the economic difference between East and West Germany was about 1:4 at the time of unification, this is one of the most extreme differences in economic conditions and living standards ever seen between two such closely linked countries. As a result, the social and cultural gaps between the two Koreas have grown even faster in recent years than in the earlier years of division.

The sight of Seoul's imposing skyline in itself can quickly impress upon the North Korean migrants the depth of this economic and social divide. During the Cold War, newly arrived defectors were rushed to the tops of Seoul's tallest skyscrapers along with photographers who would capture the surprised and overwhelmed faces of the North Korean defectors. These images were repeatedly shown to the South Korean public as evidence of the triumph of capitalism over communism and, therefore, the superiority of the South over the North. Even today, when staged propaganda photos are no longer as useful as in the old days, South Korean government officials still make the view from the skyscrapers a mandatory part of the arriving North Koreans' initiation into South Korean life.

Next, the newly arrived North Koreans are typically taken to engage in one of the most important rituals of life in a capitalist economy: shopping. Escorted by government officers to one of Seoul's fancy department stores, each newcomer receives a few hundred dollars and is encouraged to purchase an expensive business suit and shoes.<sup>30</sup> On Chul's first shopping trip, he bought a navy blue suit and tie and posed for a picture in them. That picture, displayed at his funeral, captured one of the few moments when he had a chance to wear it in South Korea.

North Koreans in South Korea are not a homogeneous group. They are men and women of all ages from diverse regional, occupational, and class backgrounds.<sup>31</sup> Accordingly, their motivations for leaving North Korea and their adaptation patterns to South Korea are also diverse. Once they arrive in South Korea, however, all of them are treated equally as "escapees" or "new settlers." They receive the same cultural orientation, same level of housing, and the same amount of settlement money.<sup>32</sup> As a

group, they all share similar fears and expectations about living in South Korea.

Entering into a new society creates a crisis of social status. One has little control over how his or her background, skills, abilities, and social and cultural capital will translate into his or her identity in the new society. By receiving a governmental welcome when they arrive, however, some North Koreans from lower-class backgrounds start to see this crisis as a chance to remake their social status.

During the initial period in South Korea, most North Koreans expect that they will become middle-class citizens. They share a “Korean Dream” similar to that of other migrants. However, middle-class aspirations are unusually strong and persistent among the newcomers from the North. When faced with the harsh realities of South Korean life, these aspirations prevent the North Koreans from being content with their limited social and fiscal means, creating a state of anxiety along with a sense of injustice. They are welcomed initially as heroic political defectors and then given lives as poor economic migrants.

Even though the meanings of the border-crossing changed and the benefits were reduced significantly in recent years, the political and legal frames of their being in South Korea have not fundamentally changed. They are still in the realm of the politics of division.

### **Orientation**

The North Korean newcomers’ orientation to South Korea begins with a month-long Cold War–style interrogation by military personnel to evaluate their backgrounds and security risks. After this, they are taken to a government facility, Hanawŏn, for a compulsory three-month (currently, two-month) orientation to South Korean culture. The facility and program are run by civilian bureaucrats from the Ministry of Unification.<sup>33</sup> In their first few months in South Korea, the North Koreans experience warm and cold, hard and soft, authoritarian- and democratic-style receptions, all at the same time.

Chul was assigned to Hanadul School during his stay at Hanawŏn. Hanadul School is a program that focuses on the needs of children and youths, run inside of the Hanawŏn facility. The name, Hanawŏn, means “One Center,” symbolizing one, unified nation. On the other hand, the name of Hanadul School, means “One-Two School,” which is meant to signify one ethnicity with two different cultures. The educational program of the school was initiated in 2001 and run until 2005 by a progressive NGO group.

While Hanawŏn emphasizes the flag, the oath, and the South Korean version of history and tries to prepare the migrants for faster and more complete assimilation into the nation's culture, Hanadul School encourages the youth and children to recall the songs, stories, and dances of North Korea from their earlier educational experience and fosters identities based on their individual experiences in both cultures.

In Hanadul School, Chul went on several field trips to learn about the cultural differences between the two Koreas. One of the most difficult problems that he faced was the language. South Korean society uses many English words in its business signs, billboards, and advertising that he could not read. Also many borrowed foreign words are used in everyday conversation. Furthermore, some basic Korean words, such as *pohŏm* (insurance), *pudongsan* (real estate), *chŭngkwŏn* (stocks), and even *ŭnhaeng* (bank), written on placards on the sides of buildings on almost every block did not convey much meaning to him.

The ostensibly same Korean language spoken in both countries has evolved so much in different directions that many newcomers from the North feel like functional illiterates, especially in the vocabularies of everyday social life. However, aside from the obvious problems with English and some foreign words, difficulty in comprehending Korean is the last handicap that most would want to recognize, as it runs counter to a fundamental belief in a homogeneous Korean language and culture—the myth of oneness—that forms the very foundation of their fragile claim to belonging in South Korea.

By law, North Korean migrants automatically become citizens of South Korea upon their arrival. However, legal citizenship does not itself confer full membership into South Korean society. To become a “cultural citizen,” they are asked to learn about the middle-class norms and values in South Korea as defined by governmental authorities and civilian volunteers.<sup>34</sup> Becoming a cultural citizen requires outsiders to not only understand a certain set of societal values, but also accept and adopt these values and cultural norms as their own. At Hanawŏn, governmental authorities and civilian volunteers try to help the newcomers adapt by teaching them South Korea's social norms and values. However, the cultural norm presented is that of a particularized view of middle-class society. Further, the Hanawŏn programs project an image of modern cultural citizenship that emphasizes gender stereotypes and the superiority of South Korea. For example, while all adult men are taught how to drive, all women should learn how to cook and sew in South Korean style with electronic machines. Contemporary South Korean cultural practices are

presented as the modern, advanced, and civilized norm while North Koreans' are objectified as the traditional, backward, and uncivilized.

The explicit and implicit message of this training is that the middle-class lifestyle is the only significant cultural norm in South Korean society. This message is so powerful that, during their time at Hanawon, most do not consider the existence of other lifestyles in South Korea. When the youths at Hanadul School were taken to one of Seoul's poor areas, Ch'angsin-dong, they were astonished to see the hardworking people in the many sweatshops. One of them said, "I can not believe this place is South Korea. They are like the people in China and Vietnam."

### **Residence**

When Chul was sent out into South Korean society, he was considered as an independent household and, therefore, received an entire apartment unit for himself. His apartment was on Cheju Island, where he was assigned through the allocation lottery in Hanawön. The allocation lottery was implemented to reduce the tensions of competition for living in Seoul, the capital. His cousin, with whom he spent years wandering, got an apartment in Pusan, two hundred miles away from Cheju Island. Even though Chul did not have full ownership of the apartment, his permanent entitlement to subsidized rent for the unit was a large portion of his resettlement benefits. Though the apartment gave him a place to call his own, it also tied him to a city in which he had no ties.

Unaccompanied minors under twenty years old were treated as independent households and assigned an entire apartment unit for each one. The concerned teachers of Hanadul school brought attention to the isolation and psychological problems that this arrangement could cause.<sup>35</sup> However, the problems of independent housing are not limited to younger people, as adults also suffer from the severe loneliness and isolation that comes from the compartmentalized apartment culture. In impoverished North Korea, few people had a bedroom for themselves, let alone an entire apartment. This was not due merely to housing shortages. The collectivist culture of North Korea, which encouraged communal living and discouraged individual privacy and exclusive ownership of space, made such individual living arrangements almost unthinkable.

These newcomers, socially isolated, like to visit each other and stay together for days and, sometimes, weeks at a time. While away, however, they still have to pay the rent and fees on their own apartments, since social welfare apartments cannot be subleased to others. For some, the

housing benefits become significant burdens that keep them socially apart. Nonetheless, it is difficult to give up their rental entitlement, as it is the most valuable physical asset that they have in South Korea. Though the apartments may be painfully isolated, most fear that if they were to give them up, it would take a lifetime of work to replace them. In addition to his separation from his cousin and old friends, Chul once said that, for him, the most difficult part of South Korean life was the loneliness he felt just sitting alone in his isolated apartment. Ironically, it was not the scarcity but the excess of private space that made him suffer the most.

### **Consumption**

The easiest aspect of middle-class lifestyles to identify and emulate is middle-class consumption patterns, as represented in television shows and advertising. Wearing clothes fashionable enough to pass as a middle-class “typical South Korean” is a difficult skill to master, and maintaining a wardrobe through the constantly shifting fads can be very expensive. Items like cars, motorcycles, and cell phones, while useful in themselves, also serve as a visible indication of a person’s taste and sophistication. The sense that desirable commodities directly confer cultural capital encourages competition to own the newest and best products.<sup>36</sup> Many youths hold onto their brand-new cell phones for only a few months before replacing them with a newer model, while some adults indulge in cars.

Not only the consumption of commodities, but also the mode of life becomes an item of competition. As the culture of “well-being,” a commercial fixation with food, drinks, and products that were better for one’s health, became popular in the early 2000s,<sup>37</sup> many North Korean “escapees,” including some independent youths, bought \$500 water purifiers, on installment plans. Some North Korean families with limited income have spent as much as \$1,000 for framed family portraits in order to display their affection for one another the same way that many South Korean middle-class families do in their homes.

Reflecting South Korea’s cultural obsession with appearance, many North Koreans become self-conscious about their height, which is, on the average, significantly shorter than that of South Koreans.<sup>38</sup> Many youths take medicines and exercise to try to restimulate their stunted growth. Chul bought an exercise machine and marked his height on the wall to see if it made him grow. Some young women go through plastic surgery to try to measure up to the image of the “sophisticated South Korean woman.”

Most North Koreans spend, or invest, a significant portion of their

initial resettlement money on purchasing the commercialized symbols of cultural capital they feel are necessary to survive in a discriminatory class society. After spending most of her settlement money within a year, one girl said, “The real life [in South Korea] starts only after you have spent up all the free money for tuition.”<sup>39</sup>

## **Work**

Many North Korean refugees, unlike other migrant groups of different ethnicities, are reluctant to take the lower-class positions usually prescribed for new migrants in South Korea. They expect and feel that they are entitled to more. The North Koreans arrive empty-handed, and yet they are officially welcomed and told that they are South Korean citizens, just like their brethren in their new nation. They receive settlement money that gives them a taste of middle-class life. Sooner or later, they spend it out. Then, the capitalist class system works against those without capital. Would they accept their position at the bottom of South Korean society? The answer is no. Many of them try to assume middle-class status by utilizing their symbolic capital, as politically significant beings. This leaves many North Koreans unwilling to accept the job that they feel will marginalize them into the lower class.

The average unemployment rate of the North Koreans in South Korea is estimated at about 30 percent. Among the employed, about 75 percent are part-time or irregularly employed.<sup>40</sup> People often attribute these dismal employment rates to the discrimination of North Koreans in the South Korean labor market. However, many social workers and government officials complain that some healthy adult males simply refuse to work in blue-collar factory jobs, saying “We did not come here, risking our lives, to do these kinds of menial jobs.” These claims are similar to cases of voluntary unemployment by other minority groups. In the case of the North Koreans, however, the cultural explanation is usually added to explain the avoidance of the working-class stigma.

Finding jobs for North Koreans with professional or managerial backgrounds is also difficult. The licensing systems for many professional jobs and, more importantly, the difference in skills and knowledge required to do these same jobs in an industrialized society, make it difficult for those who have an elite class background to maintain their middle-class status and identity. Some of them try to reeducate themselves; however, not many adults have the time or resources to pursue higher education in a different culture.

One way that some North Koreans establish middle-class lives is by

exploring business opportunities in other countries, mainly China, where their networks and life experiences can help to develop useful business contacts. Sometimes, their experience as illegal border-crossers can be assets for opening new jobs, such as traders or “brokers,” which usually deal with the business of border-crossing.

On the other hand, there are increasingly more North Koreans who are eager to take menial jobs as soon as they get to South Korea in order to send money to family members in China and even to those inside North Korea. These migrants are less concerned with their social status in South Korea. Rather, they see the relatively high value of their labor in South Korea as a valuable way to provide for their families back home. Unlike the “defectors” or “escapees” of earlier periods, these migrants see the nations’ borders not as political barriers, but as economic opportunities. It is difficult to predict what kind of changes the border crossings will take in the future, but it is important to note that these North Koreans could be the first in a long line of primarily economic migrants from the North to the South.

## **Education**

Education is one of the few ways for the newcomers to gain access to the middle-class status and networks in South Korea. Schooling in South Korea, however, is one of the most difficult challenges for North Korean children and young adults who grew up during the famine. This generation suffered not only from malnutrition and developmental problems, but also from poor education due to the breakdowns in the school system caused by the prolonged famine. Furthermore, many of them lost years of schooling during their time hiding and wandering through China and other countries. Finally, there are significant differences in goals, teaching methods, and educational materials between the two Koreas, making it very difficult for them to adapt to the notoriously competitive South Korean schools.

The dropout rate for North Korean children in elementary and junior high schools is about 14 percent. Youths over sixteen have even more difficulty. More than half do not begin high school, in part because of a significant age gap with their classmates, and more than half of those who enter high school drop out within a few years.<sup>41</sup>

In this seemingly hopeless situation, there is one remarkable opportunity open to them. It is the Special Admission System for Expatriates (*chaeye kungmin t’ungnye iphak*), which allows North Koreans with high-school diplomas to enter universities. Some top-ranking universities have

admitted “Defecting Heroes” since the Cold War and are still generous in admitting people from the North. Admission to a prestigious university, which has become a national obsession, has enormous symbolic value in contemporary South Korean society. It can establish an alumni connection (*hagyŏn*) and provides symbolic capital that can pave the way for the job opportunities and social networks that lead to a middle-class lifestyle.

The South Korean government provides full tuition for those enrolled in institutions of higher education until age thirty-five, provided they maintain a C average or above. For the less prepared students from the North, however, maintaining a passing average can be difficult, as most were generously admitted into the most famous, and most competitive, institutions. More than half of those who enter take a long leave of absence. They are students of highly prestigious universities, but they have slim prospects of ever graduating. During the prolonged years of leave of absence, they take part-time jobs as students rather than full-time jobs as blue-collar workers.

### **Ideology**

The majority (88 percent) of North Koreans arriving in South Korea are Christians.<sup>42</sup> As almost everybody in socialist North Korea is atheist, these numbers reveal extremely high conversion rates from intense proselytization while in hiding in China and other countries. The underground networks and support of Christian missionaries serve as lifelines for the desperate refugees in China and provide opportunities for them to reach South Korea.

For many North Korean refugees, it is through the Christian missionaries that they experience South Korean culture for the first time. Christianity and the Christian churches are often seen as the South’s ideological power structure, an analogue to *chuch’e* ideology (the state ideology of self-reliance) and the communist Labor Party in the North. It is interpreted as the path to social success in South Korea, the way that party loyalty was in North Korea. The missionaries, both consciously and unconsciously, project Christianity as the cultural identity of South Korea itself. The message is conveyed that to be a Christian is to be a cultural member of South Korea. Many North Koreans come to understand that to become a “Good Christian” is to become a central member of South Korea in the same way that the “zealous cadre” of the communist Labor Party were core members of North Korean society.

The problem emerges when the North Korean border-crossers realize that Christianity in the South is not an absolute ideology the way that

*chuch'e* is in the North. The cultural images of the existence of a central Christian ideology are challenged by the diversity of religions, by the hegemonic competitions between different Christian church denominations, and by the ideological conflicts between the progressive governments and the conservative churches.<sup>43</sup> This has often led the newcomers into confusion at a fundamental level that some of them describe as the “loss of the central principles of life.” Many of them still find Christian churches, as communities and networks, essential to functioning in South Korean life. Some of them leave the church, however, uncomfortable at being treated as a “special” member. Chul seldom went to church. However, the church did not let him go. His funeral was conducted by a Christian minister with prayers and hymns.

## Conclusion

It was a typical afternoon in the spring of 2005 in the courtyard of Hanawŏn, the governmental cultural orientation facility in Ansong, South Korea. A middle-aged man was making a phone call to his family in Musan, a North Korean mining town near the Sino-Korean border. He was checking to see whether the money he had sent in China had arrived safely at his family's home. Chinese cell phones smuggled into North Korean border towns make this kind of communication possible.

This seemingly casual phone call between family members across the border is a serious crime in South Korea according to the National Security Law (*kukka poanbŏp*). The law specifically bans any unapproved direct communications with anyone in North Korea. Delivering money can be an even more serious crime that can be interpreted as helping the enemy. However, not many in today's South Korea care to enforce this law seriously. Even the government officers in Hanawŏn, who know that illegal phone calls are being placed, literally, in their own backyard, view them not as national security threats but as strategies connecting some desperate families. After all, the callers are “escapees” from an oppressive government.

The North Korean government also bans unapproved communications with outsiders and, occasionally, tries to hunt down the smuggled Chinese cell phones. However, for many people along the border, including some party cadres and bribed security forces, these phones are lifelines that bring in resources from the outside. In other words, there are many people in both Koreas who need to maintain these slim lines of communication. They do not want to be bothered by the politics and posturing of either side.

For people who want to politicize border-crossing, more people leaving the North, by definition, means more defectors to the South. But, ironically, as the number of people entering South Korea has increased, they have become less like political defectors and more like nonpolitical migrants. Not only have the attitudes of the government and society become less politicized in order to accommodate the increasing numbers, but the newcomers are concerned more with maintaining economic ties with the families in the North.

The seemingly apolitical and nonideological identities of the “migrants” may have stronger political meaning than is often imagined by the conservatives. The way in which the migrants challenge and ignore the powers of both Koreas in favor of their more practical concerns has the potential to redefine the nature of division itself as something more economic than political.

Using their spontaneous wits and strategies that focus on the individual and family needs, the migrants find their way through and around the existing order of the Cold War confrontations. In other words, they are the agents who induce change and challenge the politics of division by disrupting it with unorganized acts of individual strategies for survival. They are the breakers of the still solid walls of political division, but, at the same time, they are the revealers of the deep cultural gap between the two Koreas.

## Notes

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1. I met Chul when I was the principal of Hanadul School at Hanawŏn, in August 2001. As part of the cultural orientation program, I took him on several fieldtrips and worked with him at the school. I maintained personal contact with him until the accident in Cheju on January 13, 2003. I use the pseudonym Chul out of respect for his concerns about the safety of his remaining family in North Korea. This ethnographic account was first published in Korean as “A Death on the Street in South Korea,” translated and quoted from Chung Byung-Ho, “T’albuk ijumin ūi hwansang kwa pujŏgŭng” [Illusion and Maladaptation of North Korean Migrants in South Korea], *Pigyo munhwa yŏn’gu* [Journal of Cross-Cultural Research], 10.1 (2004): 33–62.

2. As an exception, Paterniti reports a detailed account of the problems and difficulties of the North Korean youths in South Korea. See Michael Paterniti, “The Flight of the Fluttering Swallows,” *New York Times Magazine*, Apr. 27, 2003.

3. Lankov views the value of defectors as interpreters and guides to the outside world for North Korea and suggests that the South Korean government invest intensively

in their retraining and integration as an insurance policy for the reconstruction of North Korea after the unification. See Andrei Lankov, "Bitter Taste of Paradise: North Korean Refugees in South Korea," in *The North Korean Refugee Crisis: Human Rights and International Response*, ed. Stephan Haggard and Marcus Noland (Washington: U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2006), 53–72.

4. Chung Byung-Ho, Jeon Woo Taek, and Chung Jean-Kyung, ed., *Welk'om to K'oria: Pukchosŏn saramdŭl ūi namhan sari* [Welcome to Korea: The Life of North Koreans in South Korea] provides multidisciplinary comprehensive articles on this topic (in Korean).

5. Jeon Woo Taek, "Issues and Problems of Adaptation of North Korean Defectors to South Korean Society: An In-depth Interview Study with 32 Defectors," *Yonsei Medical Journal*, 41.3 (2000): 362–71. Roland Bleiker, "Identity, Difference, and the Dilemmas of Inter-Korean Relations: Insights from Northern Defectors and the German Precedent," *Asian Perspective*, 28.2 (2004): 35–63.

6. Yoon In-Jin, "North Korean Diaspora: North Korean Defectors Abroad and in South Korea," *Development and Society*, 30.1 (June 2001): 1–26.

7. Park Hyun Ok, "Democracy, History, and Migrant Labor in South Korea: Korean Chinese, North Koreans, and Guest Workers," Korean Studies Program, Shorenstein APARC, Stanford University (2005), 1–41.

8. Lee Jeanyoung, "Ethnic Korean Migration in Northeast Asia," 118–40. Kyunghee University. Retrieved on 2006-11-27.

9. Choo Hae Yeon, "Gendered Modernity and Ethnicized Citizenship: North Korean Settlers in Contemporary South Korea," *Gender & Society*, 20.5 (October 2006).

10. Ong emphasizes that "cultural citizenship is a dual process of self-making and being-made within webs of power linked to the nation state and civil society" (p. 738). See Aihwa Ong, "Cultural Citizenship as Subject-Making: Immigrants Negotiate Racial and Cultural Boundaries in the United States," *Current Anthropology*, 37.5 (December 1996): 737–62.

11. Choo, "Gendered Modernity and Ethnicized Citizenship," and Christina Hyun Im Kim, "The Conflicts between Legal Status and Cultural Membership of North Korean Migrants in South Korea." M.A. thesis, Hanyang Univ., 2008.

12. Lee Yong-Gi, "Isan kajok yŏn'gu ōdi kkaji wanna" [How Far the Research on Separated Families Has Come], *Yŏksa pip'yŏng* [Historical Critics] (Fall 1998): 252–70.

13. Kwon Tai-Whan, *Demography of Korea* (Seoul: Seoul National Univ. Press, 1977).

14. Lee, "Isan kajok yŏn'gu ōdi kkaji wanna."

15. Im Soon-Hi, "Nam-pukhan kan ūi inchŏk t'onghap munje: Nam-pukhan isan kajok sangbong chae kyŏrhapsi munjechŏm kwa taëng pangan" [Problems of Human Integration between North and South Korea: Responses to the Problems of Meeting and Reuniting Separated Families in North and South Korea], in *Han'guk t'ongil kwa haeoe*

*hanin* [Korean Unification and Overseas Koreans]. Proceedings of International Conference, Research Center for Social Science, Jonnam Univ., 1998, 109–131.

16. Kwon Hyuk-Bum, “Pan’gongjuüi hoerop’an ilki” [Reading Anti-Communism Circuit], in *T’al pundan sidae rül yölmyö* [Opening the Post-Division Period] (Seoul: Samin, 2000), 29–65.

17. Yoo Ji-wong, “T’albukchadül üi sahoejök chiwi pyönhwa wa chubyönhwa üi munje” [Changes of Social Status of the Escapees from the North and the Problems of Marginalization], *Kongan yön’gu* [Public Security Research], 61 (2000): 67–75.

18. Johun butdul [Good Friends], *Tuman’gang ül kônö on saramdül* [People Who Crossed the River Tuman] (Seoul: Chöngt’o Ch’ulp’an, 1999).

19. Chung Byung-Ho, “Living Dangerously in Two Worlds: The Risks and Tactics of the North Korean Refugee Children in China,” *Korea Journal*, 43.3 (2003): 191–211.

20. Ministry of Unification, *Saetömin chiwön öpmu hyönhwang* [Current Report on the Support Activities for New Settlers], September, 2005.

21. More specifically, it is the combination of 29,420,000 *wön* (about US\$29,000) in resettlement money and 7,450,000 *wön* (about US\$7,400) for a down-payment on a permanent rental apartment.

22. Park Hyun-Sun, “T’albukcha kungnae chöngch’ak chöngch’æk üi hyönhwang kwa palchön panghyang” [Current Conditions and Directions for the Development of Settlement Policy for the Escapees from the North], *Pukhan yön’gu hakhoebo* [Journal of the Association for North Korean Research], 6.1 (2002): 209–240.

23. Lee Seong-Hyun, “Pukhan it’al chumin: hyönhwang kwa taech’æk” [Residents of North Korean Escapees: Current Conditions and Methods for Respose], *Ippöp Chöngbo* [Legislatorial Information], 72 (2002): 1–20.

24. T’albugin Yönhaphoe [Association for the Escapees from the North], *Pukhan it’al chumin hoch’ing öttök’e hal köt in’ga* [How to Address the Name of North Korean Resident Escapees], Proceedings for Public Hearing, Feb. 27, 2002.

25. A request unanimously approved at the Inaugural Ceremony of the Commission on the Democratization of North Korea (Pukhan Minjuhwa Wiwönhoe) on Feb. 10, 2007.

26. Lee Keumsoon, *Pukhan chumin üi köju idong: silt’ae mit pyönhwa chönmang* [Residence and Movement of North Koreans: Current Conditions and Prospects for Change], T’ongil Yön’gu Ch’ongsö [Korea Institute for National Unification Research Series] 2007-19 (2007).

27. Norbert Vollertsen, “South Korea’s Spoilers,” *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 28, 2003.

28. White House, “President George W. Bush Meets with North Korean Defectors and Family Members of Japanese Abducted by North Korea,” Oval Office, Apr. 28, 2006.

29. The Bank of Korea analyzes the results of the year 2006 as widening the gap from one thirty-third (GDI) and one sixteenth (GDI per person) in the year 2005. On the other hand, the former minister of unification, Lee Jongsuk, reveals an even more

severe internal government estimate on the North Korean economy, estimating the gap to be around one one-hundredth (GDI) and one fiftieth (GDI per person) in the same year. <http://www.tongilnews.com/news/article>.

30. They were given about US\$400 and asked to purchase a complete formal suit within two hours in a department store in Seoul (personal interview, May 2005).

31. Among them, almost 70 percent are from North and South Hamgyōng provinces, which are close to the Sino-Korean border and were hit the most severely by the famine. The remaining 30 percent represent an even distribution of the other provinces, including the privileged capital, P'yōngyang. In terms of occupational backgrounds, almost 80 percent are farmers, miners, and laborers from the peripheral regions of North Korea since they are less supported by the state than the people at the center. Though their numbers are small, some are highly educated professionals and intellectuals, such as physicians, engineers, teachers, and writers, and a few are party cadres from high-ranking positions.

32. A few exceptions of reward money for the high-ranking political defectors and for some former South Korean military men who were kept as prisoners of war in North Korea.

33. The three-month program was shortened to two months in 2004 as the influx of North Korean migrants overwhelmed the capacity of Hanawōn's facilities.

34. Choo and Kim provide detailed ethnographic accounts on the cultural citizen-making process both in and out of Hanawōn. See Choo, "Gendered Modernity and Ethnicized Citizenship," and Kim, "The Conflicts between Legal Status and Cultural Membership."

35. At the end of 2002, the government stopped providing apartments for minors but did not develop any formal collective custodial arrangements for them until a government-sponsored boarding school for the arriving North Korean youths was built in 2007. Until then, unaccompanied minors were handled by a few voluntary NGOs.

36. For more comprehensive reports on the consumption patterns of North Korean youth in South Korea, see Paterniti, "The Flight of the Fluttering Swallows."

37. Hagen Koo provides an interesting analysis of the changing cultural patterns of the South Korean middle class in three major areas of social life: work, consumption, and education. See Hagen Koo, "The Changing Faces of Inequality in South Korea in the Age of Globalization," *Korean Studies*, 31 (2007): 1–18.

38. Pak Sun Young, "The Biological Standard of Living in the Two Koreas," *Economics and Human Biology*, 2.3 (2004): 511–18.

39. Personal interview with a Hanadul School graduate, May 2004.

40. Yoon Yeo-Sang, *Kungnae pukhan it'al chumindŭl ūi chōnggŭng mit chogi chōngch'ak pangan* [Adaptation and Early Settlement Plans for the North Korean Escapees in South Korea], Pukhan Inkwōn Chōngbo Sent'ō [North Korean Human Rights Information Center], 2007.

41. Chung Jean-Kyung, Chung Byung-Ho, and Yang Gye-Min, "T'albuk ch'ōng-

sonyŏn ūi namhan hakkyo chŏgŭng” [Adaptation of the North Korean Escapee Youths to the South Korean Schools], *T’ongil munje yŏn’gu* [Unification Studies], 16.2 (2004): 209–239.

42. Jeon Woo Taek, Yoon Duk-Yong, and Um Jin-Seop, “T’albukchadŭl ūi namhan sahoe chŏgŭng saenghwal silt’ae chosa” [Survey Research on the Conditions of the Adaptive Life of the Escapees from the North in South Korean Society], *T’ongil yŏn’gu* [Unification Research], 7.1 (2003): 168–208.

43. Especially during the Kim Daejung and Roh Moohyun presidencies from 1998 to February 2008, the ideological conflicts between the government and the churches were covered almost daily by major conservative news papers.