• As pork and alcohol are prohibited to observing Muslims, do not give them as gifts to Malays. Other foods make good gifts, although meat products must be halal (the Muslim equivalent of kosher). The prohibition against pork and alcohol also precludes pigskin products and perfumes containing alcohol.

• Malays consider dogs unclean. Do not give toy dogs or gifts that picture dogs.

• Should you give money to an Indian, make sure it is an odd number (just the opposite of Chinese tradition). Usually this is done by adding a single dollar; for example, give $11 instead of $10.

• Observant Hindus do not eat beef or use cattle products. This eliminates most leather products as gifts.

Dress

• Singapore is only some 85 miles (136.8 km) north of the Equator. It is hot and humid all year long, with a temperature ranging between 75 and 88°F (24 to 31°C), and humidity above 90 percent.

• The rainy season is November through January, but sudden showers occur all year long. Some people carry an umbrella every day.

• As a foreigner, you should dress more conservatively until you know what degree of formality is expected. Men should be prepared to wear a suit jacket, but can remove it if it seems appropriate.

• Because of the heat and humidity, business dress in Singapore is often casual. Standard formal office wear for men is dark trousers, light-colored long-sleeved shirts, and ties, without jackets. Some businessmen wear a short-sleeved shirt with no tie.

• Businesswomen may wear business suits and/or pantsuits. Fashions for businesswomen tend to be more frilly and decorative than those worn by Western businesswomen.

• Some Singaporean men may wear an open-necked batik shirt to work. These are also popular for casual wear. Jeans are good for casual situations, but shorts should be avoided.

• In deference to Muslim and Hindu sensibilities, women should always wear blouses that cover at least their upper arms. Skirts should be knee length or longer.

South Korea

Republic of Korea
Local long form: Taehan-min’guk
Note: the South Koreans generally use the term Han’guk to refer to their country
Abbreviation: ROK

Cultural Note
While there are many religions in Korea, Confucianism exerts the strongest influence on society. It is not a religion centered around the worship of a supreme deity, but rather a rigid ethical and moral system that governs all relationships. It was established by Confucius, a Chinese scholar and statesman who lived during Chinese feudal times over 2,000 years ago.

WHAT’S YOUR CULTURAL IQ?

1. Which of the following games are the most popular in Korea?
   a. Chess
   b. Changgi (also called “Janggi”)
   c. Go (also called “Baduk”)

   ANSWER: c. Go is so popular, there are Korean television channels dedicated solely to its broadcast in South Korea. Koreans have won the $400,000 “Ing Cup” since its inception, and clearly believe in the Chinese proverb—chess is a battle, but go is war. (Janggi is a variant of chess.)

2. TRUE or FALSE? There are less than 300 family names in Korea.

   ANSWER: TRUE. Some of the most common are Kim (meaning gold) Lee (meaning plum) and Park (which means gourd).

3. Confucianism is a belief system, which contains five constant superior/subordinate relationships that must be maintained.

   TRUE or FALSE? They are: ruler and subject, parent and child,
elder and younger brother, husband and wife, elder friend and younger friend.

ANSWER: TRUE. Confucianism also mandates Jen (a sense of duty to humanity), Shu (reciprocity—"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," similar to the Gospel of Matthew 7:12), Chih (wisdom), Wen (representing all the arts), and respect for the Chun tzu (the civilized man who has developed all the virtues).

**TIPS ON DOING BUSINESS IN SOUTH KOREA**

- Koreans are more independent and individualistic than their Asian neighbors. They are the most straightforward of all Asians but can also be defensive, a trait stemming from a history of invasion by their neighbors.

- Seers are often consulted by Koreans in all walks of life. Even executives confer with them about business transactions. A negative report from a seer, or fortuneteller, could ruin an entire deal. A fortuneteller is called a mudang in Korean.

- Bad news is never given to a manager at the start of the day.

- Foreigners should attempt to show proper respect to Korean supervisors. This includes not putting anything on the manager’s desk (not even sales literature) during a presentation. Korean executives are very territorial about their desks.

- Koreans do not maintain as much eye contact as North Americans. As a general rule, Koreans of equal status will look at each other only half of the time during their conversation. When persons are of unequal status, the lower-ranking person will often avert his or her eyes during much of the conversation. Extended or intense eye contact can be associated with anger. North Americans who try to maintain continuous eye contact with a Korean may appear hostile or aggressive.

**COUNTRY BACKGROUND**

**Demographics**

South Korea’s population of 49 million (2006 estimate) is ethnically homogeneous (99.9 percent Korean with a small Chinese minority).

**History**

Korea’s original name, Choson, meant “land of the morning calm.” The country’s history has been shaped by frequent invasions from its neighbors. Korean history is divided into three main periods: the Silla (668–935), Koryo (935–1392), and Yi (1392–1910) dynasties. The name “Korea” is derived from the middle dynasty of Koryo.

Foreign influence—direct and indirect—occurred throughout these dynasties. All of Korea’s foreign overlords—Mongolian, Chinese, and Japanese—instigated a closed-door policy in order to solidify their rule. This isolation earned Korea the name of the Hermit Kingdom.

In 1910, Japan annexed Korea and enforced ruthless control, outlawing Korean culture and language. Despite resistance, several generations grew up more familiar with Japanese than with Korean customs. At the Yalta Conference at the end of World War II, the United States of America and the Soviet Union jointly established temporary administrative trusteeship over Korea until democratic elections could be held. Japanese forces south of the thirty-eighth parallel surrendered to the USA and forces in the north surrendered to the USSR. The Soviets blocked attempts to hold nationwide elections, and the two sides became deadlocked. When authorities in the north ignored a United Nations resolution for supervised elections in 1948, a pro-Western government was established in the south (the Republic of Korea). Later the Soviet Union established the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea in the north. In June 1949, U.S. troops withdrew.

One year later, North Korean forces invaded South Korea. A United Nations–backed coalition of sixteen member nations sent assistance to South Korea. The resulting war lasted three years and ended in a stalemate. On July 27, 1953, an armistice agreement was signed and a Military Armistice Commission with five members for each side was set up to supervise the implementation of the armistice. Neither the USA nor South Korea ever signed the agreement (although they respect the terms as members of the United Nations), so a state of war is formally still in effect.

The United States of America still maintains a military presence in South Korea, although feelings that this should end are growing.
The year 1980 marked the beginning of Korea's focused development of a high-tech industry. It was also the year of the Kwangju massacre, when government troops killed hundreds of demonstrators who were part of a prodemocracy movement. In 1988 Seoul hosted the Olympic games (when restaurants removed dog from their menus in deference to delicate Western sensibilities), and Korea held their first free parliamentary elections. South (and North) Korea joined the United Nations in 1991, and in 2000, former president Kim Dae Jung received the Nobel Peace Prize. In 2004, a site was chosen for the new capital city in the Yeongi-Kwangju area.

Cultural Note
Prior to the 1950s, North Korea was the industrial heartland of the peninsula. However, their industries have been dwarfed by South Korea's modernization. Nighttime satellite photos prove how different the economies of North and South Korea have become. At night, Seoul is a brilliantly lit site in the glowing, prosperous southern half of the peninsula. In contrast, North Korea's lights are sporadic and dim—mute evidence of the slower development of North Korea.

Type of Government
South Korea is a unitary multiparty republic, governed by a president, prime minister, deputy prime minister, and State Council (cabinet). There is also a unicameral National Assembly and a Supreme Court.

The prime minister is the head of the government. The chief of state is the president, who is elected to a five-year term. Members of the National Assembly serve a four-year term.

Current government data can be found at the Embassy of South Korea at www.koreaembassyusa.org.

Language
Korean is the official language of South Korea. English is widely taught in schools. Therefore, businesspeople are often familiar with English, especially in urban areas.

South Korea

Korean is a Ural-Altaic language, but, unlike Japanese and Chinese, Korean does not use tones. Approximately 1,300 Chinese characters are used in modern Korean. The literacy rate is 92 percent, and newspaper readership is very high in South Korea.

Cultural Note
Which of the following is the correct method of transliterating the twenty-four-letter Korean alphabet into the twenty-six-letter Roman alphabet?
- The McCune–Reischauer method
- The Korean government’s method
- Everyone else’s method
- All of the above

The correct answer is "all of the above." Because of the variety of transliterations, Korean words can be spelled multiple ways in English.

The South Korean View
Dominant religions include Confucianism, Christianity (26 percent of the population), Buddhism, Shamanism (spirit worship), and Chondogyo (religion of the heavenly way). South Korea is a society run along Confucian precepts. In fact, Confucianism may have had a more profound effect on Korea than it had even in China, where Confucianism originated. (Remember that Confucianism is not a religion in the classic sense of the word. Rather, it is a philosophy and guide for living.)

Confucius taught that the basic unit of society is the family. In order to preserve harmony in the home, certain reciprocal responsibilities must be preserved in relationships. These relationships are between ruler and subjects, between husband and wife, between father and son, between elder brother and younger brother, and between friends. Because all but the last are hierarchical, rank and age are very important in all interactions. While all actions of the individual reflect upon the family, filial piety is of utmost importance. Virtues of kindness, righteousness, propriety, intelligence, and faithfulness are also revered.
The only relationships of equality in Korea are between members of the same class. One's closest friends are drawn from this group.

Korea has no official religion. Buddhism has traditionally been the major Korean religion, but Buddhism has gone through periods where it has been repressed by Korea's Confucian rulers. Buddhism is Korea's most popular religion, although only about 26 percent of Koreans identify themselves as Buddhist. (About half of Koreans follow no formal religion at all.)

Koreans are proud that Christianity did not reach Korea through missionaries. Instead, a Korean scholar studying in Beijing was baptized a Catholic in 1777. It was this scholar, on his return, who introduced Catholicism to Korea. Protestantism gained a foothold in 1884, via a Protestant physician who became the royal physician.

Whatever their formal religion, most Koreans also follow traditional Shamanistic beliefs. These include a belief in spirits, the veneration of ancestors, and the usefulness of fortunetelling. If there is one classic Korean characteristic, it would be resiliency. Koreans seem to be able to survive almost any hardship. Sacrifice has been demanded of one generation after another of Koreans. The results of this sacrifice in South Korea are evident to any visitor: a poor, war-torn agricultural country with few resources has transformed itself into the twelfth largest economy in the world.

Know Before You Go
Korea suffers from occasional typhoons and low-level seismic activity. Air pollution is an issue in large cities, along with minor crimes like burglaries and pickpocketing.

Overall, Korea's crime rate is low; however, only use legitimate taxis or public transportation.

Avoid demonstrations; they can become confrontational and violent.

Cultural Note
South Korea is one of the most crowded nations on Earth—it is even more densely populated than India or Japan. In such a crowded country, personal space is limited. Koreans are accustomed to standing or sitting close together. On the street, they compete aggressively, bumping each other and treading on feet without apology. Since such contact is unintentional, Koreans do not feel the need to apologize for such behavior.

CULTURAL ORIENTATION

Cognitive Styles: How South Koreans Organize and Process Information
In South Korea, one finds a culture that is closed to many foreign influences. Its basic education teaches one to think associatively and subjectively. In all situations, personal involvement is stronger than the rules and laws one might use to control behavior.

Negotiation Strategies: What South Koreans Accept as Evidence
One's personal feelings about an issue have traditionally been perceived as the truth. The use of objective facts is becoming more common in negotiations. Faith in the ideologies of nationalism may have some influence on an individual's view.

Value Systems: The Basis for Behavior
Koreans are strong adherents of Confucianism. They strive to build a society in which individuals are aware of their relative position, fulfill their obligations to superiors with obedience and respect, and recognize their responsibility to treat inferiors with justice and benevolence. The following three sections identify the Value Systems in the predominant culture—their methods of dividing right from wrong, good from evil, and so forth.

Locus of Decision-Making
This is a collectivistic culture in which the individual may speak for the group, but decisions are made by a consensus of the group, with deference given to the one in the group who has the highest ethos—usually the oldest member. Loyalty to kin always supersedes loyalty to friends, neighbors, or the state. The self is downplayed, but Western-style individualism is felt. One must not cause another person to be embarrassed, so an outright “no” is rarely used.

Sources of Anxiety Reduction
The nuclear family is the basic unit of society, but the extended family gives stability and security to its members. There is a very
strong work ethic, but intragroup harmony must also be maintained. Giving gifts to acquire favors is a common practice in the workplace, and reciprocity is expected. Friends expect to rely on each other for everything. They spend a lot of time together, and friendships last a lifetime.

**Issues of Equality/Inequality**

In business, the emphasis is on entry-level skills and team play. There is an inherent trust in people because of the homogeneity of the populace and social pressure. This produces a strong feeling of interdependency among members of a group or business. Age is revered. Respect and deference are directed from the younger to the older, and authority and responsibility from the older to the younger. There are clearly differentiated sex roles in society, but Western-style equality is creeping in and there is a strong feminist movement. Men still generally dominate in public situations.

**Cultural Note**

**Faux Pas:** A foreign manufacturer of dog food experienced delay after delay in his efforts to put dog food commercials on South Korean television. Only after months of fruitless effort did the company discover the reason for the opposition: Too many South Koreans still remember hunger and poverty. When people do not have enough food, South Koreans consider it shameful to promote a special food for dogs. Although there has been no famine in South Korea in decades, the memory of it is still present—and famine is still endemic in North Korea.

## BUSINESS PRACTICES

### Punctuality, Appointments, and Local Time

- Business hours are generally 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., Monday through Friday, and often 9:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. on Saturday.
- Be punctual to meetings. This is expected from foreigners as a sign of good business practice. Do not get upset, however, if your counterpart is late.
- Punctuality is also expected at social events.

- Koreans often arrange one-on-one business meetings (as opposed to the Japanese, who prefer group meetings). Nevertheless, this one Korean businessperson will have to sell your proposal to his or her entire company. It is important that you establish a strong relationship with your contact person.
- Age and rank are very important in Korea. It is sometimes easier to establish a rapport with a businessperson your own age.
- When entering a group meeting, the senior member of your party should enter the conference room first, then the next-highest-ranking person, and so on. The Koreans will be lined up inside in order of importance.
- English is the most widely studied foreign language. Your business meetings can be conducted in English. Promotional materials and correspondence may be in English as well.
- The best times for business meetings are usually 10:00 to 11:00 A.M. and 2:00 to 3:00 P.M. Prior appointments are necessary. Business dinners are common.
- Korean businesspeople vacation from mid-July to mid-August; avoid trying to schedule appointments at this time of year. Other bad times include early October, a time of many holidays, and Christmastime.
- Many Asians write the day first, then the month, then the year (e.g., December 3, 2010, is written 3.12.10 or 3/12/10).
- For a list of the official holidays of South Korea, visit [www.kissboworshakelands.com](http://www.kissboworshakelands.com).
- Local time is nine hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (G.M.T. + 9), or fourteen hours ahead of U.S. Eastern Standard Time (E.S.T. + 14).

**Cultural Note**

The basis for a successful business relationship in South Korea is a respectful rapport between individuals. Personal relationships take precedence over business. Businesses are basically conservative and have a strong work ethic. Harmony and structure are emphasized over innovation and experimentation. Be sincere and honest in business dealings. Meet face-to-face and keep in touch after your trip by e-mail and telephone.
Negotiating

- At each meeting, take time to talk to your counterpart. The first meeting should be solely for that purpose; never jump right into business discussions. Expect tea to be served at the beginning of the meeting; it is good manners to accept this sign of hospitality. Retain your formality as long as your counterpart does; do not become “chummy.”

- Do not be fooled into thinking that Korea is completely westernized because of its façade of modernization. While the younger generation is open to globalization, traditional values run deep, especially with the older generation. You may find younger executives easier to negotiate with, as they will follow more westernized patterns.

- Business will tend to take place at a slower pace than in Europe or North America. Be patient with delays in decision-making. Often, this is a tactic to wear down the other side. Therefore, do not talk about your deadlines. Expect to make several trips to Korea before reaching an agreement.

- Do not be surprised if a Korean executive does not call you back immediately when you notify his or her office of a problem. Korean employees are very protective of their supervisors’ harmony, and traditionally will not upset their boss with a problem until the timing is just right. This is especially true at the start of the workday.

- Find out who will be included in the negotiating team for the other side and match the rank of the persons represented. Status is very important, and a mismatch may prove embarrassing to both sides. Generally, representatives should be older and hold senior positions in the company.

- Although this is changing, it is still not common to have women participate in business in Korea. This means that women will have the additional challenge of overcoming an initial hesitancy. It is best to consider this factor and mention to your Korean contact that a woman will be included in the team. This will allow them some time to adjust to the situation.

- Negotiations in Korea will be much more emotional than in Western countries that stress logic and the bottom-line cost. Mutual trust and compatibility will be the basis of a good business relationship. Also be prepared for the style to be aggressive at times. Koreans are much more direct and quicker to express anger or frustration. Remain calm yourself, and do not take everything said during these sessions seriously.

- Consider sending your proposals in advance of your visit for your host to preview. At a presentation, recap the major points at the beginning and the end. Break up the information into small segments with pauses and question-and-answer periods in between. Be patient with extensive questioning. Address the chief negotiator occasionally, even if he does not speak English. Do not use triangular shapes in your promotional material, because triangles have negative connotations.

- Look for cues that your counterpart did not understand you. Silence is one such sign.

- Do not ask or expect Koreans to tell you when this happens, as it will embarrass them. Instead, rephrase your statement or inquire if they would like more information.

- The use of a translator is recommended to avoid these kinds of miscommunications.

- Make a beginning bid that will leave you plenty of room to negotiate. Your counterparts will start off with an extreme position but will be prepared to meet you in the middle. This way both sides come away having gained a lot of ground.

- Brute honesty is not appreciated in Korea. While a direct “no” is more accepted in Korea than in other Asian countries, Koreans are not as direct as many Westerners. In order to avoid saying “no,” Koreans will often give the answer they think the other party wants to hear. It is more important to leave you with good feelings than to be accurate and cause you dismay. Therefore, learn to listen to subtleties by asking questions that do not require a yes or no answer. A “yes” or nod of the head may mean “maybe” or “I understand.” A “maybe” usually means “no.” A negative response is sometimes indicated by a squint of the eyes or by tipping the head back while drawing air in through the teeth and waiting for you to speak again.
• Be sensitive to the overall length of the meeting. If the Koreans appear curious, take this lead and pursue it. If they return to social chitchat, take this as a sign that they are finished discussing business for the day.

• Bow at the beginning and end of a meeting. An exit bow that is longer than the greeting bow is an indication that the meeting went well.

• Avoid being loud and boisterous around Koreans. Although they are more direct than most Asians, they dislike rowdy behavior.

• Treat the elderly with respect. Acknowledge them first in a group, and do not smoke or wear sunglasses when they are near. If you meet in a doorway, allow the older person to pass through first.

• Modesty is very important. Do not enter a home or office until you are invited, and do not seat yourself until you are asked to do so. Wait for the invitation to be extended several times before accepting. Be modest about your position and accomplishments in your company, and if you receive a compliment, politely refute it. Expect others to do the same. This should not stop you from complimenting another, however, as compliments are appreciated.

• Not losing “face”—the dignity of another person—is a very important and delicate matter. Therefore, never embarrass another person, especially in public. Never criticize your competition or admit that you do not know the answer to a question.

• Do not confuse Korean history and culture with those of any of its Asian neighbors. Korea has a distinctive language, history, and culture, and they are very proud of this. This pride and sense of history is quite strong and constitutes a large part of their self-image. Koreans are especially sensitive about Japan, so do not bring gifts from Japan or make reference to personal contacts there.

• If the Korean national anthem is played in a public place, stand at attention out of respect.

• Be careful not to overly admire an object belonging to another person; he or she may feel obliged to give it to you.

• Contacts are important in Korea. Koreans tend to be suspicious of people they do not know, or people with whom they do not have a mutual contact. Try to obtain a personal introduction.

• Be prepared to give out a lot of business cards. Have your name, company, and title printed in English on one side and in Korean on the reverse. Cards are very important, since they indicate your rank and are a key to the respect you deserve in their culture.

• Offer your card with your right hand. Never place a Korean’s card in your wallet if you intend to put your wallet in your back pocket. Never write on a business card.

• Do not sign a contract or write a person’s name in red ink. To many Buddhists, this indicates that the person is deceased.

• Do not be surprised if you are asked personal questions, such as how much you paid for something or your salary. These questions are not considered in bad taste in Korea and often reflect an attempt to determine your rank and status.

• Attempted by foreigners to adhere to Korean modes of etiquette will not go unnoticed and may be instrumental in your eventual business success.

**Cultural Note**

Faux Pas: In 1996, the Swedish automobile firm Volvo bought 85 percent of Samsung’s construction equipment business. Volvo’s corporate culture is very different from that of the average Korean firm. In particular, Volvo tried to institute its culture of transparency, sharing all its plans with its employees in the hope that they will offer useful suggestions. It was expected that Volvo’s Korean employees would keep the corporation’s plans secret. They did not. Male Korean executives, like Japanese executives, spend most nights drinking and singing karaoke with their friends. In Korea, these friends will be a group of people who graduated from the same college in the same year. Some of them may work for competing companies. Information that should be proprietary tends to leak during these drinking sessions. Volvo is not the only foreign firm to have had problems in this arena.

**Business Entertaining**

• The largest meal of the day is eaten in the evening, usually between 6:00 and 8:00 p.m.

• Entertaining is most often done in a restaurant or coffee shop; rarely is it done at home. If you are invited to a home, consider this an honor. Do not discuss business during a meal unless your
host brings it up first. Do not expect to be shown around the house, and do not wander about the home or look in such rooms as the kitchen.

- Remove your shoes when entering a Korean home, restaurant, or temple building. Leave them with the toes pointing away from the building. When putting your shoes back on, do not sit with your back toward the temple.

- Call ahead before visiting a home. When taking your leave, express your thanks and bow slightly. Send a thank-you note to your host after a meal. It is polite to reciprocate by inviting your host to a meal of equal value at a later date.

- It is common to be invited out after business hours to a bar or dinner where there will be a lot of alcohol. This is an important part of establishing an informal relationship and judging character. The alcohol is a stimulus to expression of more direct opinions; however, all comments and promises made during these times will be taken seriously afterward. Do not refuse these invitations, and do not bring your spouse. Try to reciprocate before you leave.

- The person who invites the other(s) is expected to pay for the meal. It is polite for the younger to pay for the older. In all cases, a good-natured argument over who will pay is expected.

- Koreans eat a lot of garlic in their food. The smell is emitted from the skin. In getting used to this, remember that Koreans may find the odors emitted from red meat eaters, or heavy caffeine drinkers, offensive. Remember that the sense of olfaction is a primitive part of the brain, and any strong reaction you may have to different scents should be guarded. Asian cultures that do not eat a large amount of dairy products may find the odor, consistency, and digestion of cheese difficult to handle.

- When sitting on the floor for a meal, men should cross their legs while sitting on the cushion. Women (and men) may sit with their legs to the side, but never straightened out under the table.

- Koreans use chopsticks for eating and a porcelain spoon for soup. Your attempts at using chopsticks will be appreciated. When you are finished, set your chopsticks on the chopstick rest. Placing them parallel on top of your bowl is considered a sign of bad luck, and leaving them sticking out of rice is in bad taste, because this is how offerings are made to ancestors.

- Pass food with your right hand, supported by your left. Do not be shocked to see unusual foods. (There are many delicacies in Korea which might surprise a Western palate). It is polite to refill your neighbor’s cup and soy sauce bowl when empty; expect the same. Drinking partners will often trade filled cups to drink. If you do not want a refill, do not finish your glass.

- Do not put food taken from a serving dish directly into your mouth. Transfer it to your plate or bowl first. Never pick up food with your fingers. Even fruit is eaten in slices with chopsticks.

- At a meal, do not finish everything on your plate. This indicates that you are still hungry and that the host did not provide enough for you. The host will offer more food several times. Even if you want more, refuse at least twice before accepting more. If you are hosting a party, offer food at least three times.

- At the end of a meal, there may be singing. It is impolite to refuse to sing if asked.

- Good topics of conversation include Korea’s cultural heritage (which is extensive), kites, sports (especially the Olympics), and the health of the other’s family (although family inquiries on topics other than health are considered an intrusion). Topics to avoid are local politics (discussions of which may be forbidden by the government for reasons of national security), socialism, Communism, Japan, and your host’s wife.

**Cultural Note**

“Without question, the trait that sets Koreans apart from the Chinese, Japanese, and other Asians is their emotionalism... They are quick to anger and just as quick to reconciliation. They are the only Asians among whom you will commonly see public tears or public displays of affection . . .”

“Korean men are very emotional even when making business decisions. If you strike the right emotional cord, the Korean decision-maker will often respond favorably simply on impulse. On the other hand, a Korean, unlike Japanese, will not be polite when you get on his wrong side. Korean tempers can get awfully hot...”

—From *The Asian Mind Game* by Chin-neng Chu
PROTOCOL

Greetings
- Korean men greet each other with a slight bow and sometimes an accompanying handshake while maintaining eye contact. Indicate added respect by supporting your right forearm with your left hand during the handshake.
- The junior person will initiate the greetings and be the first to bow. The senior person will be the first to offer his hand. A gentle handshake or nod of the head may be sufficient in business circles. Women rarely shake hands. Generally, men should not try to shake hands with Korean women; Western women will have to initiate a handshake with Korean men.
- Elderly people are very highly respected, so it is polite to greet them first—and spend a few minutes speaking with them.
- A compliment on an elder’s good health is always appreciated.
- Wait to be introduced to another at gatherings and parties. Avoid introducing yourself, and employ a third person if there is someone you wish to meet.

Titles/Forms of Address
- Traditionally, a Korean person had a family name, a generational or clan name, and a given—or first—name (in that order). For example, Kim Hyong-Sim has the family name of Kim, the generational name of Hyong, and a first name of Sim. While this is confusing to Westerners, our system is equally confusing to them, so they too may mix Western names around.
- Korean family names tend to be one-syllable, while generational names are more likely to be two-syllable.
- Note that family names can be transliterated into English in several ways; in English, the surname Lee might be Rhee, Yi, Li, or Lee.
- Address people by their title alone or by both their title and their family name. Kim Hyong-Sim would be referred to as Mr. Kim, Kim Sonsaengnim (meaning “Mr.” or “teacher”) or Kimssi, with the suffix -ssi added, which can mean “Mr.,” “Mrs.,” or “Miss.” Given names are not used unless permission is granted to do so.

South Korea

- Married women will keep their maiden names. If you do not know a woman’s maiden name, it is permissible to refer to her as “Madame” with her husband’s family name.
- Never write a Korean’s name in red ink. Korean Buddhists only write a dead person’s name in red ink (either at the time of their death or at the anniversary of a death).

Gestures
- Do not put your arm around another person’s shoulders. People of the same sex may hold hands. Physical contact is inappropriate with older people, with people of the opposite sex, or with people who are not good friends or family.
- Feet are considered dirty and should not touch other people or objects. Men should keep their feet flat on the floor during formal situations. At other times men should take care that the soles of their shoes are pointing down. Women are permitted to cross their legs.
- Show respect to older people by touching your left hand, palm up, lightly to your right elbow when shaking hands or passing objects such as food or documents.
- Get someone’s attention by extending your arm palm down and moving your fingers up and down. Beckoning a person by moving a single finger toward you is very rude.
- Cover your mouth when yawning or using a toothpick. It is not necessary to cover your mouth when laughing, as many Korean women do.
- Blowing your nose in public is considered gauche. If the highly spiced Korean food affects you, get up and move away from the table before blowing your nose.
- If embarrassed, a Korean may laugh excessively.
- Intermittent eye contact is important to convey sincerity and attentiveness to the speaker.

Gifts
- When visiting a family, it is appropriate to bring a gift of fruit, imported coffee, or quality tea such as ginseng, chocolates, or crafts from home. Liquor may be given to a man but never to a woman.
• Gift giving is often practiced within a business setting. Good gifts for a first trip include impersonal products with your company logo on them. (Be sure these gifts were not produced in Korea or Japan.)
• When giving or receiving a gift, use both hands. The gift is not opened in the presence of the giver. A gift of money should be put in an envelope. Expect initial resistance to receiving a gift. This is polite, so be persistent.

Cultural Note
It is customary to reciprocate a gift with one of similar value. Therefore, choose a gift that takes into account the receiver’s economic means. If you receive such an extravagant gift that you cannot reciprocate, consider sending it back, being very careful not to offend the sender. Indicate that the sender’s generosity is great and the gift is too much.

Dress
• Men should wear a conservative suit and tie and a white shirt for business.
• Fashions are changing for women; they may wear a conservative suit, pantsuit, skirt and blouse, or dress. Whatever you select, avoid tight skirts, because many people sit on the floor in homes and restaurants.
• Dress modestly for informal times. Revealing clothing for women will be a mark of poor character. Shorts are appropriate for young people. Avoid the colors yellow and pink.

Cultural Note
Nepotism is common in Korea: securing jobs for relatives was traditionally a goal of the successful executive. This, like many traditions, may be changing. In April of 1999, Kim Dae Jung of South Korea denounced nepotism in the management of Korean Air—an airline with one of the world’s worst safety records. “Korean Air is a typical case of management gone wrong with family members in its top managerial posts,” noted President Kim. Although Korean Air is a private airline, President Kim believes that the airline’s poor record reflects badly upon the Republic of Korea. At the time of this speech, Korean Air was the world’s thirteenth largest airline.

Sri Lanka

Democratic Socialist Republic
Former: Serendib, Ceylon

Cultural Note
The 2004 tsunami devastated this exquisite property was decimated, and the economy but the tragedy will have an effect for general

WHAT’S YOUR CULTURAL IQ?

1. A famous Buddhist temple in object. What is it?
   a. Buddha’s robes  
   b. Buddha’s dagger  
   c. Buddha’s tooth  
   ANSWER: c. The Buddha (who lived sometime in Sri Lanka three times, and his tooth is a prized dhist shrine in the country. This temple was d. Tamil Eelam) truck bomb.

2. TRUE or FALSE: The rupee is th ANSWER: TRUE. It is divided into 100 cents.