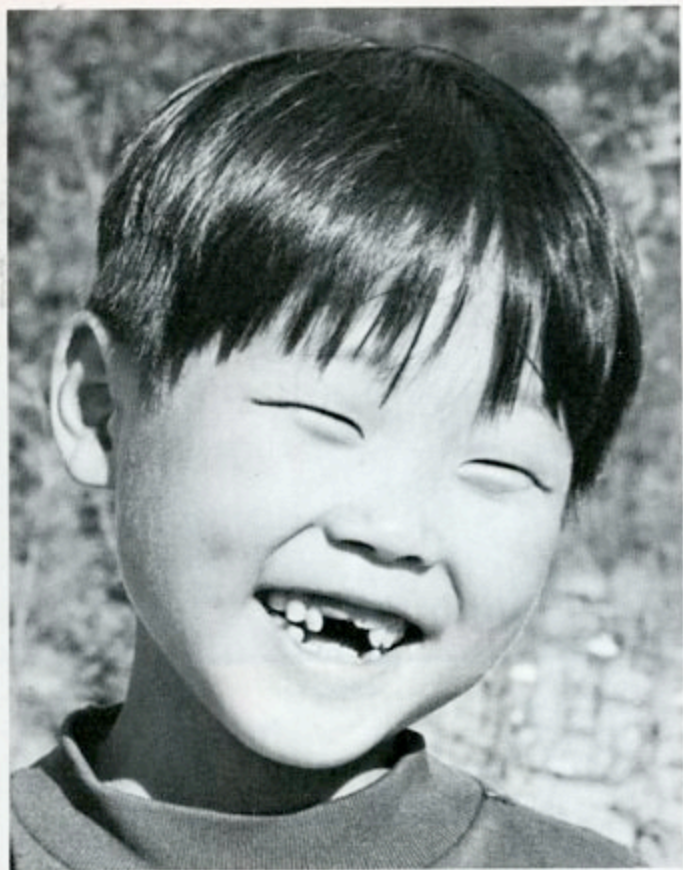
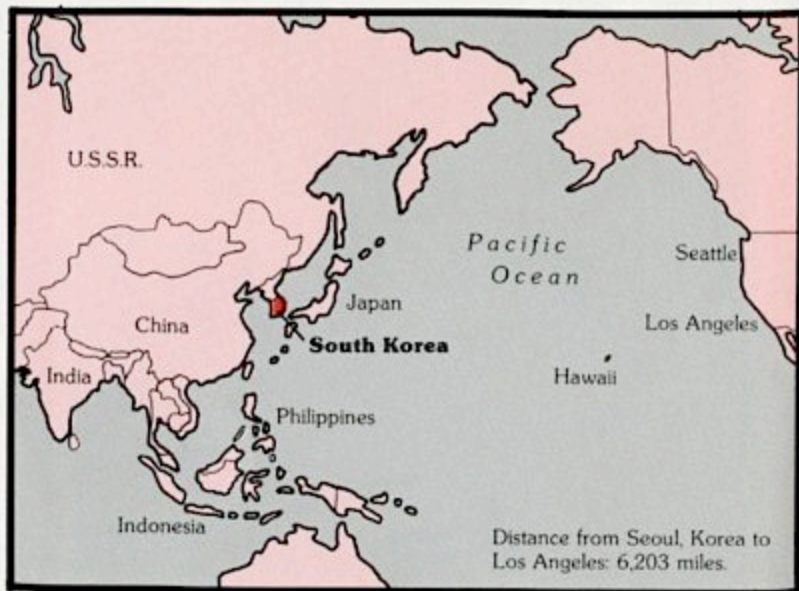


#10



SOUTH KOREA

**Information about the country where
your child lives.**



South Korea

Population: 35 million

Size: About the size of Indiana

Population density: 84 per square mile
(compares to 58 per square mile in U.S.)

Literacy: 90%

Life Expectancy: 61 years

Capital: Seoul (pop. 6.5 million)

Year Compassion began in Korea: 1952



Location where your child lives is marked in red.



South Korea . . . Land of the Morning Calm

Geography

South Korea is a mountainous peninsula located in northeast Asia between China and Japan. About the size of Indiana, Korea supports 5 times as many people — 35 million.

Majestic mountains grace the countryside covering most of the land. Rice paddies spread out across the valleys and step up hillsides in well-laid terraces.

Seoul, the capital city, is less than 30 miles from communist North Korea.

Korea's climate is hot and humid in summer, with temperatures reaching 95 deg. F. Winters are cold and dry with light snowfalls a few times each year.

A land of contrasts

Korea is clutching ancient customs in one hand while reaching and stretching to western culture with the other.

Mercury lighted, paved streets are lined with twenty-story buildings; yet, crowded, cold huts and ragged tents dot the barren hillsides and river banks. A Greyhound bus whisks passengers along a modern, divided freeway, while an ox cart bogs down in the rutty roads of the city.

Although economic progress has been made in recent years, there are still many thousands of families who urgently need our love and help.



Domestic Life

The family is the basic and most important unit in Korea. The father is the respected head of the house and makes all the decisions. When the first son marries, the bride is brought into the groom's house and is expected to help her mother-in-law, who supervises the household duties. As many as three or four generations may live under one roof, all obedient to the head of the house, the absolute power.

The village people live in small, one-storied huts of wood frames with stone and clay walls and thatched roofs of rice straw. The furnishings are limited; usually a few small tables, a chest for clothing and bedding which is spread on the floor at night. Heat circulates under the floor by a system of flues leading from a fire pit in the kitchen.

The city homes are built of block or brick with tile



roofs, are larger and may be two stories.

For centuries Korea has produced an abundance of rice which has served as the main food. The average meal consists of steaming rice, hot vegetable soup, bean paste and kimchi. On occasion boiled meat or fried fish with vegetables may be served. Squatting on the floor at low tables, Koreans eat their meals with chopsticks and flat spoons.

A Korean meal always includes "kimchi," a mixture of hot, fermented vegetables served the year round. Cabbage, salt, garlic, red pepper, green onion, turnip, ginger and salted fish are combined and preserved in huge earthenware vases. A westerner experiences great difficulty in eating "kimchi," as it is incredibly hot.

In addition to rice, the Koreans also raise barley, potatoes, fruits and vegetables. In spite of the fact that fish are caught in eighty different varieties along the rugged coastline, fish is expensive; therefore, it is



usually served in soup or fried in bite-size pieces. Since beef is also costly, it is used mainly to flavor soup or served only on special occasions. Koreans living near the seashore can be seen gathering seaweed and transporting it to market. Seaweed soup is considered a delicacy. It is also dried and wrapped around hot rice.

Education

The educational system of Korea has four levels: elementary, first grade through sixth grade; middle school, grades seven, eight, nine; high school, grades ten, eleven, twelve; and college. The first semester begins March 1 and closes July 31. The children enjoy a summer vacation during August. The second semester lasts from September 1 until February 28. Because of the cold winter and lack of heated buildings January is also a vacation month.

Roughly 95% of the school age children enroll in first grade. However, many children are unable to advance to middle school because their parents cannot afford to pay for tuition fees, books, supplies and uniforms.

The three years of high school are not required, but are highly sought after by most students in spite of difficulties. Children attend in shifts because of limited facilities. Because of unheated classrooms, children often wear mittens or blow warm breath on their numb fingers so they can write.

Religion

The traditional religions of Korea are Buddhism and Shamanism. Buddhism has declined in influence steadily, but it is still an active religious force. Its adherents are estimated at 16 percent of the population. Shamanism, the worship of good and evil spirits, though loosely organized, is widely practised. Confucianism is an important continuing cultural influence, but as a cult it is now weak with adherents generally only among the aged.

There are at least 2 million Christians—the largest proportion in any Far Eastern country except the Philippines.

History

Korean civilization dates back more than 4,000 years, and recorded history began more than 3,000 years ago.

First unified in the 7th century A.D., Korea was greatly influenced by China — both culturally and politically.

In 1910, Japan formally annexed Korea as a colony. The Koreans never accepted Japanese domination and in 1945, at the end of World War II, Korea was liberated from Japan. However, Russian troops entered the northern part of Korea and a month later American forces landed in the south.

Efforts for a unification failed and in 1948 two separate regimes of North and South Korea were established.

In 1950, North Korean forces invaded South Korea in an attempt to unify Korea under a communist government. With the assistance of 16 United Nations member countries, including the U.S., the North Koreans were repelled and an uneasy armistice was signed in 1953 to end hostilities. It was following this conflict that Compassion's involvement began . . . primarily as a ministry to the thousands of orphan children left homeless by the war.

Although the "war orphan" situation no longer exists in Korea, Compassion continues to help children who are desperately needy because of abandonment or poverty.