

# 19

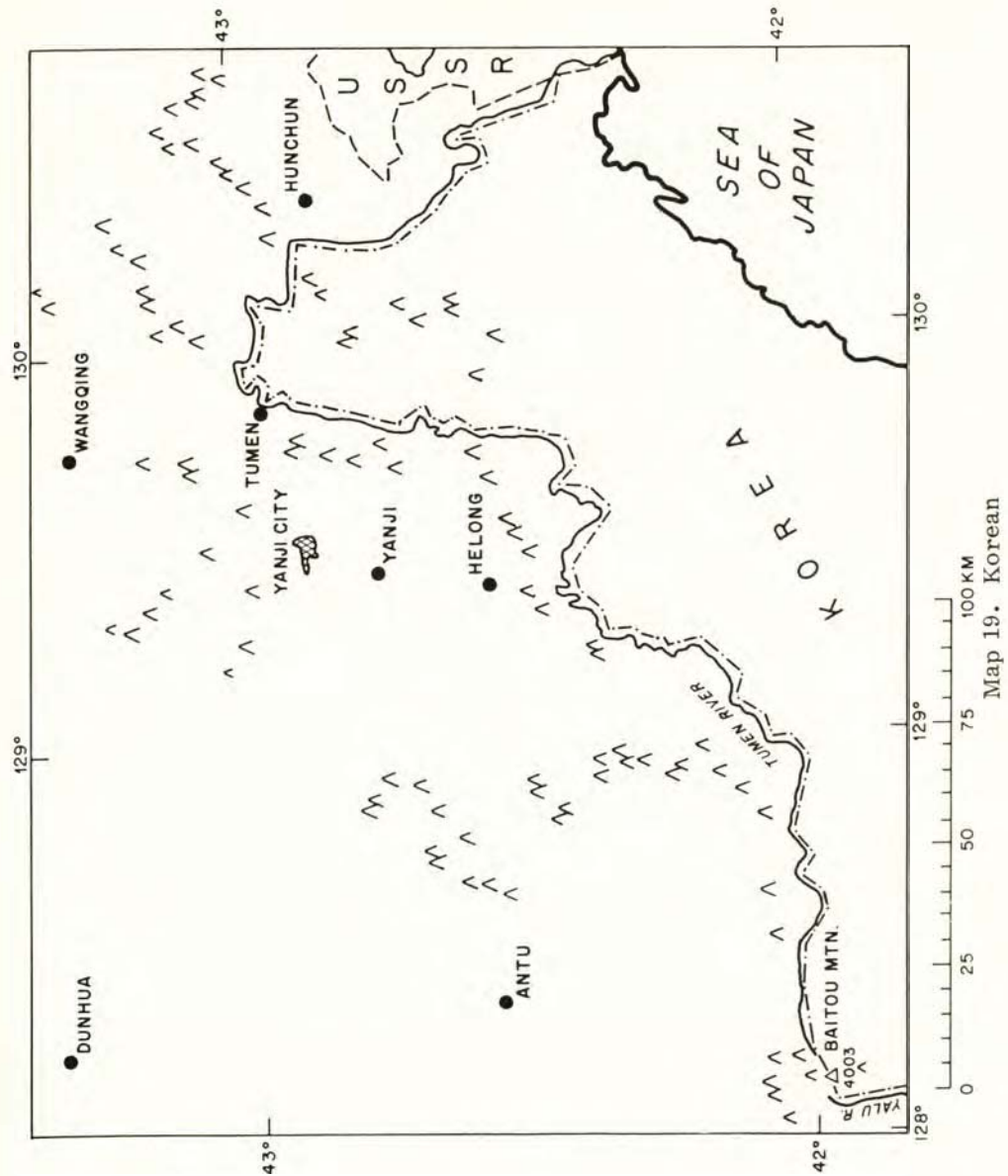
## Korean

### Size and Location

China's Korean 朝鲜 nationality is concentrated in the Northeast. Of its total population of 1,763,870 in 1982, sixty-three percent lived in Jilin, twenty-seven percent in Heilongjiang, and ten percent in Liaoning provinces.<sup>1</sup> The greatest concentration of Koreans is found in Yanbian 延边 Korean autonomous prefecture where about 750,000 or 42.5 percent Koreans live. The prefecture, established on September 3, 1952, has two cities, Yanji 延吉 and Tumen 图门, and the six counties of Yanji, Helong 和龙, Antu 安图, Hunchun 珲春, Wangqing 汪清, and Dunhua 敦化 (see Map 19). It covers an area of 41,500 square kilometers. The Changbai 长白 Korean autonomous county, on the southeastern border of Jilin opposite the Korean city of Hyesan, was established on September 15, 1958.<sup>2</sup> In addition, there are forty-two Korean nationality townships in various parts of China's Northeast.<sup>3</sup>

### History

The Koreans are relative latecomers to Northeastern China. The first migrants arrived toward the end of the seventeenth century, but sizeable numbers of Koreans did not come until the middle of the nineteenth century, especially after 1869 when a major famine occurred in northern Korea. Still later other Koreans crossed the border when the Japanese began to consolidate their grip on Korea in the early years of this century.<sup>4</sup>



Map 19. Korean

## *Korean*

The brief history of the Koreans in China is inextricably linked to the development of rice cultivation in the swampy environment of the Yalu and Tumen plains of Jilin province. Typically, the Koreans first converted wasteland into paddy rice fields. Later, as areas suitable for paddy cultivation became scarce, the Koreans switched to dry rice fields.<sup>5</sup> There are only 110 to 160 frost-free days in a year in eastern Jilin, but the Koreans gradually managed to develop a major commitment to paddy rice cultivation. They began to grow paddy rice in Dalizi, now part of Tonghua city, and then extended it to Linjiang, Xingjing, Huaian, Liuhe, and Hailong. In 1877 they began rice cultivation in Yanbian. The key to greatly expanded rice growing was the building of many irrigation canals, the first of which was a 1.3 kilometer long canal, opened in 1906 in Helong county.<sup>6</sup>

When Koreans first arrived in the Northeast, they worked for Chinese landlords who furnished them with seeds and all supplies. As this tended to throw the Koreans into debt, many of them frequently moved. A survey in 1931 found that eighty percent of the families interviewed had moved from three to seven times since their arrival.<sup>7</sup>

### Language and Literature

The Koreans have their own language and script. Most linguists now consider Korean an Altaic language, but its relationship to other Altaic languages is rather weak. There are some six dialects which, however, do not differ greatly from one another.

There are ten vowels, as follows:<sup>8</sup>

<u>a</u> as in <u>atw</u> r 'son	<u>i</u> as in <u>i</u> 'tooth'
<u>ə</u> as in <u>ə</u> ti 'there'	<u>æ</u> as in <u>kæ</u> 'dog'
<u>o</u> as in <u>ori</u> 'duck'	<u>e</u> as in <u>pe</u> 'burlap'
<u>u</u> as in <u>um</u> 'cellar'	<u>o</u> as in <u>só</u> 'iron'
<u>u</u> as in <u>k'wta</u> 'big'	<u>y</u> as in <u>ky</u> 'ear'

The last four vowels are written ai, ei, oi, and ui.

The eleven diphthongs are:

<u>ja</u> as in <u>ppjam</u> 'cheek'	<u>wa</u> as in <u>kiwa</u> 'tile'
<u>je</u> as in <u>kje</u> 'sugar'	<u>wə</u> as in <u>kkwəŋ</u> 'pheasant'
<u>jo</u> as in <u>kjosir</u> 'classroom'	<u>wə</u> as in <u>tʰwət/i</u> 'pig'
<u>ju</u> as in <u>sunŋjun</u> 'rice crust soup'	<u>wə</u> as in <u>kwe</u> 'cupboard'
<u>jæ</u> as in <u>jæki</u> 'story'	<u>wi</u> as in <u>munwi</u> 'figure'
<u>je</u> as in <u>kjesita</u> 'at'	



Nineteen consonants are as follows:

<u>p</u> as in <u>pori</u> 'barley'	<u>t</u> as in <u>t/ae</u> 'ashes'
<u>pp</u> as in <u>oppa</u> 'elder brother'	<u>tʃ</u> as in <u>tʃokok</u> 'piece, slice'
<u>p'</u> as in <u>p'ur</u> 'grass'	<u>tʃ</u> as in <u>tʃima</u> 'skirt'
<u>m</u> as in <u>mir</u> 'wheat'	<u>n</u> as in <u>nar</u> 'day'
<u>t</u> as in <u>pata</u> 'sea'	<u>r</u> as in <u>nara</u> 'nation'
<u>tt</u> as in <u>ttar</u> 'girl'	<u>k</u> as in <u>kam</u> 'persimmon'
<u>t'</u> as in <u>t'op</u> 'saw'	<u>kk</u> as in <u>kkur</u> 'honey'
<u>s</u> as in <u>so</u> 'ox'	<u>k'</u> as in <u>k'o</u> 'nose'
<u>ss</u> as in <u>ssar</u> 'rice'	<u>n</u> as in <u>kannæni</u> 'corn'
	<u>h</u> as in <u>him</u> 'strength'

Korean does not have tones like Chinese, but certain words have different meanings depending on whether they are pronounced high and short or low and long.<sup>9</sup> Examples are: mar ↘ 'horse' but mar ↗ 'speech'; nun ↘ 'eye' but nun ↗ 'snow'; par ↘ 'foot' but par ↗ 'curtain'; pam ↘ 'night' but pam ↗ 'chestnut'. Vowel harmony has become very weak but traces can still be found in some dialects.

The Korean vocabulary consists of three groups of words: native, Chinese, and loan words. Examples of native words are saram, 'person', son, 'hand', and pur, 'fire'. Words of Chinese origin include kan (< Ch. jiang) 'river', and san (< Ch. shan) 'mountain'. Loan words have been derived from several languages, such as English (njusw, 'news' and ppesw, 'bus'), Japanese (kuruma, 'car' and kutu 'leather shoes'), Russian (ttwrakttorw, 'tractor'), and French (parre, 'ballet'). Many concepts and objects can be expressed by native and Chinese-derived words, e.g. 'nine' as ahop (native) or ku (Chinese) and 'nation' as nara (native) or kukka (Chinese). There is a complete dual system for numbers; for example, the first five cardinals are:

	Native	Chinese			
one	<u>hana</u>	<u>ir</u>	three	<u>ses</u>	<u>sam</u>
two	<u>tur</u>	<u>i</u>	four	<u>nes</u>	<u>sa</u>
			five	<u>tasēs</u>	<u>o</u>

The Koreans have their own script, called hangŭl, which was promulgated in 1446 by King Sejong of the Yi dynasty (Table 12). It is widely regarded as the world's most scientific alphabet. Nevertheless, until the present century the literate elite of Korea eschewed this script in favor of Chinese, which enjoyed tremendous prestige.

Table 12

KOREAN SCRIPT<sup>10</sup>

	A	B	C		A	B	C		A	B	C
1	ㄱ	기웁	k	15	ㅍ	핀 기웁	k'	29	ㅣ	이	i
2	ㄴ	니온	n	16	ㅊ	핀 디웁	t'	30	ㅅ	애	æ
3	ㄷ	디웁	t	17	ㅊ	핀 비웁	p'	31	ㅅ	애	iaæ
4	ㄹ	리웁	l	18	ㅅ	핀 시웁	s'	32	ㅅ	에	e
5	ㅁ	미웁	m	19	ㅅ	핀 지웁	ts'	33	ㅅ	에	ie
6	ㅂ	비웁	p	20	ㅅ	아	a	34	ㅅ	외	ø
7	ㅅ	시웁	s	21	ㅅ	야	ia	35	ㅅ	위	y
8	ㅇ	이웁	ŋ	22	ㅅ	어	a	36	ㅅ	의	wi
9	ㅈ	지웁	ts	23	ㅅ	여	ia	37	ㅅ	와	wa
10	ㅊ	치웁	ts'	24	ㅅ	오	o	38	ㅅ	위	ua
11	ㅋ	키웁	k'	25	ㅅ	요	io	39	ㅅ	왜	waæ
12	ㄷ	티웁	t'	26	ㅅ	우	u	40	ㅅ	웨	ue
13	ㅍ	피웁	p'	27	ㅅ	유	iu				
14	ㅎ	히웁	h	28	ㅅ	으	u				

A = letter

B = name

C = IPA transcription

Hangŭl finally came into its own by the 1920s as a reaction against the Japanese occupation, and the Korean minority in China also began to use it at that time. Today much literature is written in hangŭl. In addition, many Korean writers in Yanbian and other Korean minority areas in China's Northeast write originally in Chinese or translate themselves their work into Chinese.

The principal literary figure among the Koreans in China is the poet Kim Ch'ŏl (Jin Zhe).<sup>11</sup> Other poets of note are Kim Song-hwi (Jin Chenghui), who is an editor in the Yanbian publishing house, Yi In-ok (Li Renyu), and Pak Kang-p'yŏng (Piao Kangping).<sup>12</sup> In the field of prose Kim Sun-ki (Jin Chunji), born in 1925, has written several major works, like the novel The Waters of the Liao River, short stories, and stage plays. He presently serves as the deputy director of the Yanbian publishing house. Younger writers include the middle school teacher Han Won-kuk (Han Yuanguo), Chŏng Se-bong (Zheng Shifeng), Nam Yong-jŏn (Nan Yongqian), and Lim Won-ch'un (Lin Yuanchun).



Society<sup>13</sup>

Korean marriage is monogamous. In traditional times marriages were arranged by the parents. Early marriages were quite common, as were the taking on of sons-in-law by families who did not have sons of their own. The man in such cases adopted his wife's family name. Poor families gave away child brides in hopes that their children would be adequately fed by their new families. Women could neither divorce their husbands nor return home. Families had between three and a dozen members. Men did most of the heavy farm work, while women worked in the homes. According to the rules of primogeniture, the eldest son inherited his father's estate, while younger sons moved out when they married. Girls had no inheritance rights.

In the Yanbian prefecture and neighboring minority areas Korean villages are usually situated at the foot of a hill, with houses lining a single street. Stretched out over a distance of about one and one-half kilometers, these villages house thirty to forty families on the average. Houses are single-storey, with tiled or thatched roofs consisting of four inclined planes. There is no courtyard, and the door usually faces south, occasionally southeast or southwest. The center of activity inside the home is the Chinese-style kang, a raised platform built of adobe bricks and heated by flues. As in Japan, it is the custom to remove one's shoes when entering a home.

The principal festivals are New Year's, All Souls Day, and the Mid-Autumn festival. In addition, important family occasions are a baby's first birthday, as well as a member's sixtieth birthday and sixtieth wedding anniversary.

The traditional wear for women is the chŏgori, an upper garment, buttonless and tied above the waist, and the chima, a long skirt reaching down to the ankles (Illustration 38). In the past old men used to wear a kat which is a tall hat made of horse hair.

The typical meal of a Korean family consists of rice, admixed with fish or chicken and kimchi. The latter is made of spicy pickled cabbage which is prepared in the fall and placed in large earthenware jars which are then buried in the ground to ferment.

Perhaps the best known game is the jumping seesaw. Played by girls and young women, it uses a narrow board centered on a pile of rice straw. The two participants alternately jump up into the air. Another game played by girls is swinging. Kite flying is also quite popular among the Koreans of China's Northeast.

Korean dances are extraordinarily colorful. The farm dance, performed especially at harvest time, is performed by men who swirl about while holding small drums in their hands and accompanied on the sidelines by larger drums and various brass instruments. A very colorful feature of this dance is the long

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illus. 38a and b. Korean Costumes



arching movements of tapes attached to the top of the men's hats as they swing their necks during the dance. Another dance is the sword dance. Originally performed by men, it is now exclusively the domain of women. The most acrobatic dance is the drum dance which features the hour-glass shaped changgo (Illus. 39).

#### Religion<sup>14</sup>

In the past Koreans in Northeastern China believed in shamanism and Christianity. About one in every five Koreans was at least a nominal Christian, but the great majority, even some of the Christians, believed in shamanism. When an elder member of the family died his relatives were not allowed to wash, comb their hair, nor cook rice for three days. They also had to wear mourning clothes. They dressed the deceased in new clothes and burned his old ones. On the third day the burial took place. The village shaman selected an auspicious site, usually on the eastern slope of a hill. After the funeral members of the deceased's family conducted memorial rites for three days and thereafter also on each anniversary of his birth and death as well as on Memorial Day, the Dragon Boat festival, and the Mid-Autumn Festival.

#### Recent Developments<sup>15</sup>

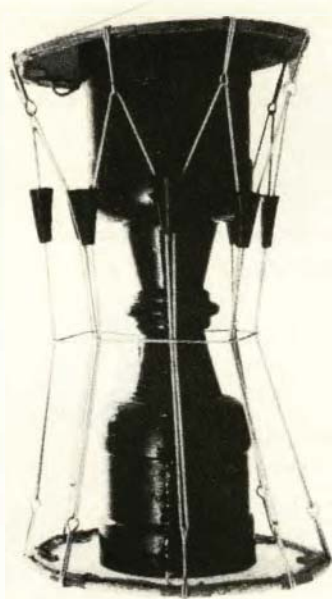
The Yanbian autonomous prefecture and surrounding areas are rich in mineral resources, especially coal and gold. Appreciable amounts of copper, lead, and zinc are also present. These materials are extracted on a large scale, and some of them are processed locally. The forest industry has also been greatly expanded. Changbai autonomous county alone delivers 60,000 cubic meters of red pine annually. All counties in the Yanbian prefecture except Hunchun are presently served by railroads. Narrow-gauge forest railroad lines total 1,100 kilometers. Yanbian prefecture also has nineteen highways and fifty-one secondary roads.

Yanbian is noted for its so-called apple pears which are exported. Another important agricultural product, aside from rice, is tobacco which yields an annual crop of more than fifteen million kilograms.

In the fields of culture and education, the Yanbian prefecture has several Korean-language newspapers and magazines as well as two publishing houses. Great strides have been made in universal education. Elementary education was made universal by 1952 as was junior middle school by 1958, and now every child goes through the full ten years of education which is the national norm in China. At the higher levels of education, there are an agricultural college, a teachers' college, one school each for medicine, trade, art, and hygiene, as well as four technical schools. Yanbian University, established in 1949, was the first of its kind in any minority area of China.



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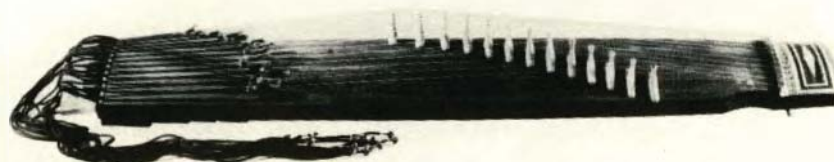
Changgo



Drum



Tangjo



Kayakum

Illus. 39. Korean Musical Instruments

Notes

<sup>1</sup>Minzu yanjiu 23 (1983), 80. In 1959 there were 1,218,000 Koreans in China. See Jiankuang, v. 2, 17.

<sup>2</sup>Zhongguo, 43-44.

<sup>3</sup>Op. cit., 51.

<sup>4</sup>According to a survey in 1931, all but seven out of 201 Korean families cited economic reasons for their move into the Northeast. Lee, 202-203.

<sup>5</sup>Lee, 202.

<sup>6</sup>Jiankuang, v. 2, 19.

<sup>7</sup>Lee, 203.

<sup>8</sup>Zhao, 63-64.

<sup>9</sup>Most linguistic information is based on Zhao, 65-71.

<sup>10</sup>Table 12 is reprinted from Minzu yuwen 3 (1979), 237.

<sup>11</sup>See the biographical sketch by Kal Nak (Ge Luo).

<sup>12</sup>See also entries for Cai Chunhua (Ch'ae Ch'un-hwa), Cui Yongtie (Ch'oe Yong-chol), Jin Taijia (Kim T'ae-kap), Li Chehua (Yu O-hwa), and Wen Changnan (Mun Ch'ang-nam) in the bibliography.

<sup>13</sup>Additional information on Korean society in China can be found in Zhongguo, 47-49.

<sup>14</sup>Zhongguo, 49.

<sup>15</sup>Additional information on the economy and education is available in Zhongguo, 44, 53-54. See also Jiankuang, v. 2, 18.