KOREAN CENTENNIAL 1903-2003

The Centennial of Korean Immigration

Banquet Program
Aloha!

It is time to celebrate 100 years of Korean immigration to the United States. What a landmark! Our forefathers came at a time when Korea was under great duress. They brought their pride, loyalty, determination, and ability to work hard. While quickly assimilating themselves, they continued to keep alive the spark for Korean independence and freedom.

Their children were raised to make positive contributions. Most Koreans achieved high levels of education and accomplishment. They made contributions in the arts, science, business and government. A Korean American was one of the most decorated U.S. soldiers in World War II. A Korean American was the first Asian to win a gold medal for the United States.

Our Centennial has three goals. First, we would like to honor the early immigrants. But their struggles are not unique. Waves of new immigrants who came after the Korean War and after a change in U.S. immigration policies in the 1970s form the bulk of Korean Americans today.

Secondly, we would like to broaden the appreciation of Korean culture and its contribution to the United States. To that end, many events have been planned. The more recent immigrants who are closer to Korean culture have played an instrumental role in this regard.

And finally, we would like to help perpetuate Korean American contribution to freedom and independence, two things cherished by all. To this end, we continue to work for the establishment of a Korean Centennial Foundation that will help carry on the mission of the Centennial.

I welcome you in celebrating the Korean Centennial.

Donald C. W. Kim
General Chairman
MESSAGE FROM GOVERNOR LINDA LINGLE
TO THE KOREAN CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

It is my great pleasure to congratulate the Korean Centennial Committee on this important milestone of Korean immigration to the State of Hawai'i.

I extend a heartfelt “aloha” to each of the committee members and countless volunteers who have worked hard to put together the activities and events during this celebration. This Centennial Week makes it possible for the local Korean community in Hawai'i, and their friends from overseas, to participate together in a full range of festivities designed to commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of the arrival of the first Korean immigrants.

Hawai'i is fortunate to have such a rich and multi-cultural population with strong ties to people from the Asia-Pacific. The first wave of Koreans came to our island shores over one hundred years ago in search of a place to make a better life for themselves and their families. Since that time, there have been countless numbers of inspirational success stories of famous Koreans in politics, business and education. There is also a long history of the contribution to community by the first immigrants and their successors.

As we look to the future, there are many more opportunities for all of us to work together and continue developing strong business and economic ties between Korea and the rest of the world.

I offer my best wishes to our Korean community. Congratulations to the Centennial Committee of Korean Immigration for organizing such a wide variety of exciting events to celebrate this historical time, and again I give you my support in paying tribute to the Korean-Americans who have made outstanding contributions to their communities.

With sincerest aloha,

Linda Lingle
Governor
Aloha. On behalf of the City and County of Honolulu, I am privileged to extend my warmest congratulations to the Centennial Committee of Korean Immigration to the United States in commemoration of 100 years of Korean immigration to our country.

One hundred years ago, on January 13, 1903, the first Korean immigrants landed on our shores in Hawai‘i. From the time of their arrival, the Korean community has contributed to the rich and diverse cultural climate that makes our islands unique. With hard work and a strong devotion to making a positive contribution to the modern development in our islands, the Korean population flourished into one of Hawai‘i’s most cohesive communities.

Today the Korean population in Hawai‘i has become one of the most productive and well-established groups in our state. The offspring of those pioneers who landed here in 1903 include doctors, lawyers, Supreme Court justices, university professors, and a wide variety of other occupations in which the first arrivals would no doubt be proud.

I extend my best wishes to the Centennial Committee and all those who have been a part of making the Korean experience in the United States a positive one. Good luck and best wishes for the future.

JEREMY HARRIS, Mayor
City and County of Honolulu
I would like to share with all the Korean-Americans the joy of celebrating the Centennial of Korean immigration to the United States. Since 102 men, women and children arrived in Honolulu in 1903, the Korean-American community has grown tremendously to become the fifth largest Asian community in the United States. Based on the sweat and tears of those pioneers, it has contributed significantly to its new homeland in a variety of ways. I am particularly gratified to note that the generation of today is very active in all walks of mainstream American society.

While we are proud of what we have achieved, we still have a long way to go. Now is the time to reflect on our past and work toward even better future. This makes the work of the 2003 Centennial Committee all the more meaningful.

I believe that a variety of commemoration programs ranging from academic conferences to cultural festivals will offer a unique opportunity to showcase what it means to be a Korean-American today. These programs will serve as the springboard for the next hundred years. I sincerely hope that Korean-Americans will actively participate in this momentous celebration.

Thank you.

Yang, Sung-Chul, Ph.D.
Ambassador of the Republic of Korea
Today we are commemorating a historic event. One hundred years ago, the first Korean immigrants set foot on American soil.

The Korean immigrant community, which was first formed in Hawaii, started with 102 people. The early immigrants, with an income of 70 cents a day from cutting sugarcane, built churches and raised funds in support of campaigns for Korean independence.

Many Korean Americans fought in the Korean War and helped to rehabilitate their motherland after the war. Those in Hawaii helped to found a modern university in Korea.

Now the Korean community in the United States has grown to two million. Its members have proven that the United States is truly a land of opportunity. They have been of enormous service to the prosperity of the United States. On behalf of all US citizens the US Congress demonstrated its appreciation in a resolution noting the remarkable achievements of the Korean Americans.

Today the friendship between Korea and the United States is becoming more solid than ever. It is not confined to a security alliance, but is being strengthened in the form of broad economic cooperation and extensive cultural exchanges. I would like to emphasize that behind these constructive developments lie the great efforts of the Korean Americans.

On behalf of all Korean participants in this commemorative event, I thank all of you for your cooperation. I hope that we may continue to bring our efforts together to further develop our cooperative efforts.

Thank you.

Jong Chan Lee
Chair, Korea Committee
Reception
Royal Hawaiian Glee Club
No-Host Cocktails
Hawaii Youth Symphony Quartet
Richard Lee – In Young Park – Ashley Furumoto – David Hafner

Masters of Ceremonies
Brook Lee - Miss Universe 1997
Young Ho Lee – Hawaii Bureau Chief
The Korea Times & Radio Seoul

Chin Do Drum Dance
Chum Sa Rang

Welcoming Address
Donald Kim - General Chairman
Centennial Committee of Korean Immigration to the United States of America

Congratulatory Remarks
His Excellency Kim Dae Jung
President - Republic of Korea

Invocation
The Reverend Emeritus T. Samuel Lee
Christ United Methodist Church

Dinner
Presentation
27 Eminent Koreans

Guest Speaker
The Honorable Paull Shin
Washington State Senator

P’ansori
In 1903, Pak Hungbo Went to Hawaii
by Chan E. Park
accompanied by Tihati Productions

Arrirang
Paull (Shin, Ho Bom) Dr. Paull Shin was born in Korea and orphaned at an early age. A street urchin, he was adopted during the Korean War by American Army officer and dentist, Dr. Ray Paull, arriving in the United States at age 18. Although Shin had no formal education, he had a passion for learning and began his quest by working toward his G.E.D. He eventually received not only a G.E.D. and then a college degree, but a Masters and a PhD from the University of Washington, as well. A college professor for more than 31 years, Dr. Shin has been active in the United Way, Boy Scouts of America, YMCA, and the World Association of Children and Parents, and is a co-founder of KIDS – the Korean Identity Development Society. He has served as a governor’s advisor on trade issues, and led several trade missions to Asia. In 1992, Paull Shin was elected to a seat in the Washington State Legislature, and in 1998, he became the first Korean-American to be elected a state senator. Paull Shin continues to serve as senator for the state of Washington.
What is p’ansori?

P’ansori is a solo-singer storiesinging accompanied on puk, barrel-shaped drum. It emerged in the 18th century among the male singers affiliated with the indigenous shaman ritual performance of the southwest, proliferated in the 19th century, and became preserved as a “national treasure” in the 20th century. Five narratives remaining in practice are said to uphold the Confucian Five Human Relations respectively: wifely fidelity in the Song of Ch’unhyang, filial piety in the Song of Shim Ch’ong, loyalty in the Song of the Underwater Palace, heroic chivalry in the Song of the Red Cliff, and sibling order in the Song of Hungbo, the point of departure for the play In 1903 Hungbo Went to Hawai’i.

About the play

Conceived as part of Hawaii’s Centennial Celebration of Korean Immigration to America, the performance of In 1903, Hungbo went to Hawai’i also celebrates the migration of Korean narrative and lyrical heritages. In this p’ansori-style narrative play, the protagonist from the familiar Tale of Hungbo joins the first Korean recruitment to work on the sugar plantation in Hawai’i. Familiar folk and labor tunes accompany the first Koreans, displacement, departure, journey, labor, leisure, harvest, pain, pleasure, sorrow, and the making of community in their home away from home. Hawai’i embraces them with her chants and dances.

Chan E. Park received her PhD from University of Hawaii, and is currently associate professor of Korean language, literature, and performance studies at The Ohio State University. Her specialization is research and performance of p’ansori, Korean story-singing, and related oral narrative/lyrical traditions. She has published extensively on the theory and practice of oral narratology and its interdisciplinary connection with arts and humanities as a whole, including her forthcoming monograph, Voices from the Straw Mat: Toward an Ethnography of Korean Storysinging. Park has given numerous lectures, seminars, workshops and performances of p’ansori locally, nationally, and internationally.
Criteria for selecting the candidates include but are not limited to the following:

- Was the individual a good model for people in the Hawaiian Islands?
- Was the individual a leader in Hawaii?
- Did the individual exhibit excellence in an area of endeavor?
- Did the individual perform deeds for the benefit/betterment of the community in Hawaii without thought of gain?
- Were this individual's accomplishments historically or culturally significant or did the accomplishment leave a lasting impact/legacy in the Hawaiian Islands?
- Can the accomplishments be identified and verified?
- The individual should be deceased.
- Past honors of the individual should not have an influence on the selection.

Selection Committee:
Kerry Ahn, Roberta Chang, Yong-ho Choe, Duk Hee Lee Murabayashi, Edward Shultz

**Ahn, Chung Song Lee (1895-1989)**

Born in Pyongyang, Ahn graduated from Ewha Hakdang in 1913. In 1918, immediately after graduating from the Japan Women's Seminary in Yokohama, she taught at Pyongyang Women's Seminary. She came to Honolulu in January 1919 and married Won Kiu Ahn. Beginning as a representative to the United Welfare Fund Drive in Honolulu, Mrs. Ahn was active in most Korean organizations. She was chairman of the Korean YWCA, president of the Korean Women's Relief Society, president of the Ewha Womans University Alumnae Association of Hawaii. Mrs. Ahn was also member of the Korean Chamber of Commerce, Women's Service Group of the Methodist Church, Hawaii Chapter of the Korean Independence Party of Patriotic Women's Society, Pan Pacific and Southeast Asian Women's Association, Post-war Women's Relief Organization. In addition, Mrs. Ahn was in charge of the Korean broadcasting program at KHON under the auspices of Kuk Min Hur and a reporter for the weekly news of the Kuk Min Hur.

**Ahn, Hyun-Kyung (1881-1957)**

An active leader of the Korean community in Hawaii, Ahn was the president of the Korean National Association in 1917 and 1918. In 1919, following the outbreak of the March First Movement, he was dispatched by the Korean National Association to Shanghai to coordinate nationalist activities with the Korean Provisional Government. As a loyal supporter of Dr. Syngman Rhee, Ahn was a charter member of the Dongji Hoi and led this organization for many years. He participated in the founding of the United Korean Committee in America as a Dongji Hoi representative in 1941. A leader in the Korean Christian Church throughout his life, he made significant contributions to the development of this church. He was awarded the National Foundation Medal by the Republic of Korea for his patriotic activities.

**Ahn, Won-Kiu (1877-1947)**

Having arrived in Honolulu in 1903, Ahn played a leading role in various community and nationalist organizations. Instrumental in founding the Korean National Association in 1909, he served as its president for several terms. He was an active supporter of the Korean National Independence Army (Tae Chosŏn Kungmin Kundan), which Pak Young-man organized in the Koolau region in 1914. When the United Korea Committee was organized in 1941 to bring various Korean organizations in Hawaii and the United States together for the cause of regaining Korean independence, he was elected as its chairman, thus playing a key role in uniting Korean organizations and in promoting Korea's nationalist cause. One of the most successful Korean businessmen, he made generous monetary contributions to philanthropic, educational, and nationalist causes. He was honored by the Republic of Korea with the award of the National Foundation Medal for the meritorious works he accomplished toward the cause of Korean independence.
Chang, Robert Won Bae (1923-1999)
Born in Honolulu, Chang graduated from Roosevelt High School in 1941 and joined the Hawaii National Guard, serving as a combat soldier in Europe from 1942 to 1945. In 1951, he graduated from University of Hawaii and went on to receive a law degree from Boston University in 1954, starting his law practice in Hawaii in 1956. In 1958, he was elected to the Territorial House of Representatives and continued to serve as a member of the House until 1968, during which time he chaired various committees, including the Judicial Committee. He was instrumental in enacting the Hawaii Anti-Trust Law and the Hawaii Administrative Procedure Act, among others. In 1968, he was appointed as a judge on the Hawaii District Court and in 1971 was named to the Circuit Court, where he served with distinction until his retirement in 1987. Known as a hard-nosed judge, he presided over his court with firmness, handling numerous high-profile cases, including Hawaii's first asbestos damages suit. His notable achievements while on bench include clearing up a backlog of more than 3,000 criminal cases, "a seemingly impossible case," according to a Star-Bulletin editorial. A distinguished legislator and jurist, he is a shining example of the successful second-generation Korean-Americans in Hawaii.

Cho, Pyung Yo (1882-1961)
Having arrived in Honolulu from Korea in 1904, Cho was a founding lay minister of St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Honolulu. He played a leadership role in reviving and reorganizing the Korean National Association in the 1930s and served as its president in 1936. A leader in the United Korean Committee, he was given charge of the finance department to raise funds for the cause of Korean independence. In 1942, he was dispatched to Washington, D.C. as a Hawaii representative of the United Korean Committee, where he facilitated Korean representation in the United States through reconciliation among divided Korean organizations. Active in both religion and politics, he was admired universally as an effective leader.

Cho, Walter (1911-1985)
After professional boxing was legalized in Hawaii in 1929, Walter Cho became one of Hawaii's first professional prizefighters. Walter Cho was born in Ewa in 1911 and he took up boxing in 1928. In 1934 he was rated as the best class 2 featherweight in Hawaii. After his retirement Cho coached amateur boxing at Palama Settlement and Aiea Plantation (1935-1938), and in 1938 he became a boxing referee. Thus he was picked to be the referee in Hawaii's first world championship bout in 1947, plus three other world championship fights in the 1950s. Cho was also a referee and judge at the US Golden Gloves tournament of champions held in Minneapolis in 1972. Finally, he was a member of the Hawaii State Boxing Commission (1977-1981). In addition, Cho was very active in the Korean community in Hawaii. During the 1930s, he served as trainer for a Korean basketball team that played in a YMCA league. He also played goalie for a Korean soccer team and served as assistant scoutmaster for Boy Scout Troop 19, in which most of the scouts were Korean.

Chung, Doo Ok (1889-1972)
From an early age Doo Ok Chung was a Korean freedom fighter in Hawaii. He came to Hawaii at age sixteen with his parents, a younger sister, and a younger brother. Life in Hawaii for the Chungs began on the Koloa plantation on Kauai. His father was unaccustomed to hard labor and decided to return to Korea, leaving Doo Ok in charge of the family. Chung was only twenty years old when his father returned to Korea. Through a correspondence course, Chung learned to sew and started a tailoring business by which he supported his mother and his young siblings. Even through this hardship, Chung kept on participating in Korean activities, especially espousing the liberation movement. He was among the first formal group that called themselves "freedom fighters." Later, he became a member of the Hapsong Hyophoi, a Territory-wide Korean organization that was the predecessor for the Korean National Association (Kook Min Hur). He supported the Korean military in Hawaii led by Young Man Pak. Of special interest to Chung was to support lobbyists in Washington, D.C., such as Kil Soo Han and Jacob Dunn. In 1946, the United Korean Committee elected Doo Ok Chung as one of fifteen to join the Korean Delegation of America to Korea under the auspices of the American government for the reconstruction of Korea. Upon his return, Chung remained highly active in the Korean community.
Dunn, Jacob Kyuang (Chôn Kyông-mu) (1897-1947)

Born at Chongju in North Korea, Dunn came to Hawaii at the age of seven with his family and attended a Korean school on a sugar plantation. Two years later, his family moved to Riverside, California. After graduating from the University of Michigan in about 1923, he went to Korea and taught at Ewha Womans University. Returning to the United States, he was active in the United Korean Committee in America; assuming the position of the secretary of public relations, he became one of the most influential leaders of the United Committee. When the Committee set up its Washington office to promote Korean independence, he was appointed to head the office. After his return to Korea in 1945 following the liberation, he was actively involved in the promotion of athletic movements as the vice-chairman of the Korean Olympic Preparation Committee. It was largely through his negotiations that Korea was admitted to the International Olympic Committee in 1947. He died in an airplane accident in 1947 on his way to attend an International Olympic Committee meeting. His life is a shining example of dedicated public service.

Huhm, Halla Pai (1922-1994)

Married to a Korean-American, Halla Pai Huhm came to Hawaii in 1949. Soon thereafter, she started to teach Korean dance at her studio and continued to teach until her death in 1994. In 1954, she performed the role of Lotus Blossom in the Honolulu Community Theater’s production of Teahouse of the August Moon, receiving rave reviews from local newspapers. Her studio, Halla Huhm Dance Studio, was the center for Korean performing arts in Hawaii, where hundreds of Korean-Americans and others learned Korean dance. Not satisfied with what she had learned before coming to Hawaii in 1949, she visited Korea frequently to keep up with changing trends in dance technique and artistry, which she imparted to her students in Hawaii. Disregarding her own financial hardships, she dedicated her energy and resources to sustaining Korean dance in Hawaii. On numerous public and private occasions, she and her students gave public performances to enhance Korean artistry. During most of her life in Hawaii, there was very little public interest in, let alone support for, Korean performing arts, and yet she single-handedly kept Korean dance alive in the Islands. Because of her dedication and selfless sacrifice, Korean dance has become an important part of Hawaii’s multicultural legacy.

Hyun, Soon (1889-1968)

Soon Hyun first came to Hawaii as a member of the second group of Koreans to come to Hawaii, arriving in Honolulu in March 1903. He was assigned to the Kahuku Sugar Plantation. In 1905, he became a ministerial assistant for the Methodist Mission in Hawaii. In 1907, he returned to Korea for evangelical and educational work and in 1909 published P’owa yuranji (Travel Log to Hawaii), which became the first Korean work written about Hawaii and Koreans in the Islands. Ordained as a minister in 1912, he served as the pastor of Sang-dong Methodist Church and Chông-dong Methodist Church in Seoul. In 1919, he participated in the clandestine preparation for the great March First Movement and was dispatched to Shanghai (China) with the task of publicizing the March First Movement to the world. In Shanghai, he played a key role in organizing the Korean Provisional Government. In 1920, he headed the Korean Commission in Washington, D.C., working to gain support for the Korean independence. After returning to Shanghai, he visited Moscow in 1921 to attend the Congress of the Toilers of the Far East. In 1923, he returned to Hawaii to serve as the minister of the First Korean Methodist Church (Fort Street) in Honolulu and Lihue Korean Methodist Church on Kauai. In Hawaii, he was active in the Korean community and nationalist activities, in addition to his church work. When the Korean National Revolutionary Party organized its Hawaii Branch in 1943, he became the executive secretary. For his long years of service for Korean independence, the Republic of Korea awarded him the National Foundation Medal.

Kim, Cha Soon Lim (1901-1997)

Born in a small village near Kyongju, Kim came to Hawaii as a picture bride in 1917 to marry Won Sur Moon and had two daughters. After Mr. Moon’s passing in 1924, she married Young Soo Kim. Mrs. Kim was active in Women Kuk Min Hur (Korean National Association) and Korean Ladies Relief Society. She was elected president of the Korean Ladies Relief Society in 1938. She was a representative in founding the United Korean Committee in America and was a delegate to the All-Korean Overseas Convention held in Honolulu in 1941. Mrs. Kim
was, together with her husband, an honorary life member of the Korean American Cultural Association, Inc., which established the Korean library at the University of Hawaii in 1943, a first in the nation.

Kim, Henry Cu (Kim Hyŏn-gu) (1889-1967)

Having graduated from Ohio State University, Kim became the editor of New Korea (Shinhan minbo) in San Francisco in 1919. In 1927, he moved to Washington, D.C., and worked for the Korean Commission, an agency Dr. Syngman Rhee founded to promote Korean independence, until 1929, when, at the invitation of Dr. Rhee, he came to Hawaii to work as the editor of Pacific Weekly (T’aep’yongyang chubo) and Korean National Herald (Kuk Min Bo). He also served as president, secretary, and treasurer of the Korean National Association. He took an active role in the formation of the United Korean Committee as a representative of the Korean National Association and was elected chairman of the National Defense Committee of the United Korean Committee. As a political leader as well as a newspaper editor, he made significant contributions to the well-being of the Koreans in Hawaii. He was awarded the National Foundation Medal by the Republic of Korea.

Kwon, Hee Kyung Lee (1894-1947)

Born in Taegu, Hee Kyung Lee immigrated to Hawaii in 1912 as an early picture bride to marry Kwon, Do-In. Baptized a Christian in Korea, she became involved in Korean Methodist Church activities in Honolulu soon after arrival. She helped form the Youngnam Puin Hoe (Methodist Ladies Aid Society), an organization that offered a network of social services to Korean families in need and also provided an avenue for women to support the Korean Independence movement. Acting as an emissary of the Society and accompanied by her young daughter, she went to Korea in 1918. Her mission was to deliver Society funds to support the patriots and to participate in the March 1, 1919, demonstration. She was imprisoned by the Japanese twice for her revolutionary activities — in Seoul and in Yokohama — but released in 1921 and permitted to return to Hawaii. Despite the many demands of family, church, and her husband’s business, Mrs. Kwon devoted the rest of her life to working passionately for the liberation of Korea. In recognition of her patriotism, she received the National Foundation Medal from the Republic of Korea in 2002.

Lee, Moses (1912-1997)

Son of a “Korean first family,” Moses Lee was born on the island of Maui, Hawaii. Although he was a Korean American, he identified with his Korean identity by going to China to fight the Japanese in the 1930s. He inspired many Korean Americans in Hawaii in his quest to preserve Korean integrity. At the age of 17, Moses earned pilot wings and joined the U.S. National Guard. Moses left for China in 1933 at age 21 to join Korean guerrilla troops under Koo Kim. Koo Kim placed Moses in the Chinese army, and General Chiang Kai Shek commissioned Moses as an officer, sending him deep into China, where he suffered from malaria. He was sent home to Hawaii in 1938. When he recovered, he promptly joined the U.S. Army. Because of poor eyesight, he was not permitted to become a pilot and instead became an intelligence officer and a paratrooper. When World War II began, he was immediately sent to Asia and was invaluable as a translator knowledgeable about the Asian terrain. At the end of World War II he came home briefly and returned to Korea to fight in the Korean War. He retired from active duty in 1967. He was honored as the “Korean American who served under three flags: the Chinese, Korean, and American flags.”

Lee, Susan Chun (1895-1969)

Born in Pyongyang, Susan Chun graduated from Ewha Hakhdang in 1912. She arrived in Honolulu in 1916 to reunite with her husband, Kingsley Kyung Sung Lyu who had come earlier. Later, Chun married Henry D. Lee and taught at the Korean Language School of St. Luke’s Episcopal Church. In addition to teaching Korean, Susan Lee perpetuated Korean culture by organizing Korean music and dance performances for the Honolulu Academy of Arts and other community organizations. She served as president of the Korean Ladies Relief Society and was the only female editor of the Taepyongyang Chubo (Korean Pacific Weekly). She continued to serve the Korean people during the Korean War by hosting Korean Navy officers and sailors whose ships stopped in Hawaii.
Lee, Tai Sung (1888-1942)

Tai Sung Lee was 20 years old when he arrived in Hawaii from Hamheung, Korea, on January 23, 1904. He came as a laborer for the sugar plantations and quickly moved up professionally, becoming a Korean translator at various official places such as the Hawaii Territorial Circuit Courts and immigration centers. He taught at Bible Sunday Schools. In 1918, he was appointed the executive secretary of the Korean YMCA International Branch. He organized youth programs and guided students to vocational choices. His duties included scouting for colleges and scholarships on the mainland for Korean youths. Lee took the responsibility of helping “refugee students” and freedom fighters coming through Hawaii on their way to the West Coast. He met ships to look for them, took care of them, and sent them off to the mainland. The Korean National Association supported his work with juveniles. Lee was the executive secretary of the Korean Student Christian Movement of Hawaii. He started the publication of the Korean Student Alliance in 1932 with students from various high schools participating in its preparation. The graduating students were brought together annually for a banquet, and other activities were planned in hopes that they would keep their Korean identity. Lee wrote many inspiring articles such as Korea-Land of Promise and the Story of Korean Immigration.

Lim, Choon Ho (1874-1974)

Born in Korea, the Rev. Choon Ho Lim was a student at Pai Chai School in Seoul. Lim arrived in Hawaii in 1904 with his wife, Mary Doh Lim, and a two-year-old daughter. He was assigned as a laborer on the Ewa Plantation and was promoted to become the translator for the Korean community. He was officially appointed lay preacher in 1905 for the Korean Methodist Episcopal Church. He taught other Koreans how to read, worked as an aid in the Ewa dispensary, and often traveled on foot to distant camps to give aid. His diligence won special attention for the Korean community for better treatment from plantation managers, such as Manager George Renton, who helped renovate the Korean church with a bell tower on behalf of the Rev. Lim. As Lim preached in homes, cane fields, and various camps, he always took the opportunity to remind Koreans of their country’s plight and to contribute to Korean liberation. He was a charter minister for the Wahiawa Methodist Episcopal Church, and a longtime church and community worker on Maui. He often sacrificed his personal needs to feed the hungry Koreans who came to his door. Thus, his contributions to the Korean community in Hawaii were in the form of quiet, steady and long dedication.

Min, Chan-Ho (1878-1954)

Having received missionary training in Korea, Min came to Hawaii in 1905 and served as the pastor of the First Korean Methodist Church until 1911, during which time he laid a firm foundation for further growth of the church. After receiving B.A. and M.A. degrees from the University of Southern California, he returned to Hawaii in 1919 to become the minister of the Korean Christian Church, which he ministered until his retirement in 1929. An educational leader, he served as the principal of the Korean Christian Institute. He was also active in the Korean community and served as president of the Korean National Association in 1922 (then called Kyomindan). When the Hawaii Branch of the Korean National Revolutionary Party was organized in 1943, he served as the chairman. He was one of the most important religious leaders in Hawaii, and his influence was felt throughout the Islands. He was also an influential leader of the Korean community.

Min, Mollie Hong (1887-1979)

Mollie Hong came to Hawaii in 1903 accompanying her parents and brother, the Rev. Chippum Hong. After marrying the Rev. Chan-Ho Min, Mollie Min studied theology and nursing on the mainland. After returning to Hawaii in 1919, she was active in church, community, YWCA, and Red Cross work, becoming one of the most distinguished leaders of women in Hawaii. In addition to being the wife of an influential Korean minister, she taught at the Korean Christian Institute and served on the board of the Honolulu YWCA for many years until 1963, when she became an honorary board member. She did countless hours of volunteer work for the Red Cross. Active in various Korean women’s organizations, she was a forerunner of the women’s movement in Hawaii.
Moon, Dora Kim  
(1877-1971)

Having accepted Christianity, Dora Kim was obliged to leave her husband's home and came to Hawaii in 1903 as a "Bible woman," bringing an eight-year-old daughter with her. Soon after her arrival in Honolulu, she joined a Korean prayer group and became a charter member of the First Korean Methodist Church, which today is the oldest Korean church organized outside Korea. While raising and supporting her new family (the Moons) in Hawaii, she helped found and foster the Korean Ladies Relief Society (Taehan Puin Kujehoe), which is believed to have raised more than $200,000 for Korean nationalistic and philanthropic causes. In 1931, she was one of two Korean women preachers appointed by the Methodist Mission in Hawaii, allowing her to preach and minister to Korean congregations. In 1932, she started the Korean Missionary Society to support church works and raised funds for purchasing Bibles and other texts as well as for ministerial assistance. Throughout her life, she worked selflessly for the church and the Korean community in Hawaii, exercising enormous influence among Korean women.

Park, Andrew An Duk  
(1906-1963)

At eighteen years of age, Andrew Park came to Honolulu in 1924 with the Seoul all-star baseball team. After the games, he remained to further his education. As he was already an accomplished violinist when he arrived, in 1928 Park joined the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra and was the first Korean to claim that honor. In addition to playing with the Symphony, he also taught the Korean language and music at the Korean Christian Institute. He promoted musical activities in the Korean community by establishing the Korean chamber orchestra holding concerts throughout Oahu. Park moved to Lanai and became a lay minister in charge of the Lanai Korean Methodist Church from 1944 until 1957. He formed a trio with two music teachers and provided classical music to residents of Lanai, where very little cultural events were available. Park was very active with the Lions Club and the high school PTA and served as president of both organizations.

Sohn, Nodie Kimhaekim  
(1898-1972)

Sohn came to Hawaii in 1905 with her parents. As she grew up in Hawaii, she came under the influence of Dr. Syngman Rhee and became a loyal supporter of his cause throughout her life. Having graduated from Oberlin College, Ohio, in 1918, she became the principal of the Korean Christian Institute, to which she devoted much of her energy and time until 1945. She was active in both church and community works, serving as the president of the Korean Ladies Relief Society, manager and liaison officer of the Dongji Hoi, trustee and treasurer of Korean Missions in Honolulu, trustee of the Korean Christian Church, and the director of the Korean Old Men's Home. In 1952, Sohn went to Korea to receive an appointment as the director of the Republic of Korea Office of Procurement and also became the vice-president of the Korean Red Cross. An influential educator, she was an important leader in church, women's, and community activities.

Shim, Young Shin  
(1882-1975)

A woman leader, Shim was active in various community, church, and women's organizations in Hawaii. In 1919, she was one of 41 delegates to a Korean women's congress that met in Honolulu to organize the Korean Ladies Relief Society (Taehan Puin Kujehoe), representing all Korean women in Hawaii. Subsequently, she became one of its most important leaders. This society raised a large amount of funds for the Korean independence movement in China and for the relief of those who were affected by various disasters in Korea, among others. In 1941, she was a representative in founding the United Korean Committee in America and served as a member of its legislative committee after the United Korean Committee in America was organized. Active in both community and church works, she was one of the most influential Korean women leaders.

Whang, Ha Soo  
(Hae-su)  
(1892-1984)

A graduate of Athens College, Whang came to Hawaii by way of San Francisco in 1919. In Honolulu, she became the Korean secretary of the International Institute of the YWCA and worked with dedication to improve the conditions of the Koreans in Hawaii. As the first Korean social worker in Hawaii, she initiated various programs for Korean immigrant women such as helping to set up new households in Hawaii,
teaching English, and promoting better relationships between Korean women and the local community. In 1927, she organized the Hyôngje Club (Sisters Club) for the second-generation Korean young women in Hawaii to foster exemplary Christian life and to promote Korean traditional art, including music and dance. Subsequently, members of this Club gave numerous public performances of Korean music and dance, dressed in colorful costumes, thereby sustaining Korea's artistic tradition in Hawaii. In 1940, she organized a Korean dance group in Hawaii consisting mostly of second-generation Korean women. This group studied and received training from Ch'ae Yong-ha in Hawaii, and gave many public performances. Whang Haa-Soo is more responsible than any other individual for sustaining and promoting Korean traditional music and dance in Hawaii before 1950.

Whang, Maria (1865-1937)

Maria Whang, born in Pyong An Do, Korea, had the courage to come to Hawaii in 1905 with a daughter and two sons, leaving her wealthy husband because he had so many concubines. Whang longed to be creative and free from gender discrimination, remembering that she could not even sit with her young sons in the temple. Maria, her son, and her daughter-in-law worked in the fields while her daughter cooked for the sugar laborers. Maria took on the responsibility of teaching the Korean language and the Bible to children in the plantation camps. She was one of the earliest educators among Koreans. She championed women's personal worth, forming the Taehan Puinhoe (Korean Women's Association) in 1913. It merged with the Korean Ladies Relief Society in 1919. The family left the plantation after five years. A role model—mother, she encouraged her two sons to gain a higher education and her daughter to work in community services.

Yang, You Chan (1897-1975)

Born in Pusan, Korea, Yang came to Hawaii in 1903 with his parents. A graduate of McKinley High School, he studied at the University of Hawaii before moving to Boston University, where he received his M.D. degree in 1922. Returning to Honolulu in 1923, he opened his private medical practice, which became greatly successful with a high reputation. He played a leading role in building the church building of the Korean Christian Church at Liliha Street in 1938. He led the Dongji Hoi when Dr. Syngman Rhee was away from Hawaii. He made numerous other contributions to the Korean community in Hawaii. When the Pearl Harbor attack came in 1941, he rendered hundreds of hours of volunteer work in medical service, saving many lives and treating those wounded in the attack. In 1951, following the outbreak of the Korean War, he was appointed by the Republic of Korea government as the ambassador to the United States. Forsaking his flourishing medical practice, he responded to President Rhee's call to assist Korea in crisis and worked selflessly in Washington, D.C., as a diplomat to win American aid for Korea during the Korean War. As the ambassador, he made significant contributions to furthering closer ties between the United States and Korea. In Hawaii, his influence reached far beyond the Korean community, for his reputation as a medical doctor and a community leader was well recognized.


Dr. You, past president of the Hawaiian Amateur Athletic Union (AAU 1959-1961), was born in Honolulu in 1916. A University of Hawaii graduate, You received his M.D. degree at Creighton Medical School in 1943. Dr. You, a physician and surgeon, was active in amateur sports in Hawaii and held international, national and local offices in Olympic and AAU committees. He served as physician on U.S. Olympic teams (1952 & 1956) and was physician and trainer of the U.S. Pan-American Games team (1965). He helped to develop many of Hawaii's national champions in swimming, boxing, and women's track. As vice chairman of the University of Hawaii Board of Regents (1961-1963), Dr. You helped to save football at the University. He was awarded the Hawaiian AAU Distinguished Service Award (1962), named Hawaii's Father of the Year In Sports (1960) and was Hawaii Sportsman of the Year (1951, 1955, & 1962). In addition, Dr. You played a leading role in various Korean organizations; president of the Korean University Club (1954); president of the Korean Chamber of Commerce (1959-1960); president of the Korean Community Council (1961-1963).
1882

May 22. Corea (The Great Chosun) and the United States signed a treaty of amity, commerce, and navigation. The treaty took effect on June 4, 1883.

1883

A Korean diplomatic mission led by Min Yong-ik arrived in San Francisco. Yu Kil-jun (1856–1914), a member of the mission, remained in the United States to study at the Governor Dummer Academy.

1901

January 9. Peter Ryu arrived in Honolulu, becoming the first Korean immigrant recorded at the Bureau of Immigration.

June 30. Five Korean laborers arrived in Honolulu. One of them, Chang Sung-pong, worked for the circuit court and police department in Honolulu as an interpreter until his death in 1949.

1903

January 13. Group immigration to Hawai‘i began when 102 laborers arrived in Honolulu on the S.S. Gaelic and went to the Waialua Sugar Plantation.

March. Methodist worship services began in Waialua-Kahuku.

April. Episcopal worship services, initiated by John Choi, began at St. Augustin Church in Kohala, Hawai‘i.

August. Shin Min Hoe was organized on Kaua‘i.

September. John Pahk began attending Iolani School. After eight years at Iolani, Pahk attended the Pacific Theological Seminary in San Francisco and later became minister at St. Luke Episcopal Church.

1904

February. Seung Ha Hong, a local preacher from Namyang, Korea, arrived to head the Honolulu Korean Methodist Mission.

March 23. Ahn Chang Ho arrived in Riverside, California, to assist his countrymen in finding employment.

March 27. Yun Baek Choe, using a mimeograph, began publication in Honolulu of Sinjo Sinmun, the first Korean newspaper outside Korea. It continued for 13 months.

May. The Honolulu Korean Methodist Mission was elevated to regular church status and became the (Honolulu) Korean Methodist Church (present-day Christ United Methodist Church).
September. The Hawai‘i Methodist Mission started a Korean night school on Fort Street.

November. The Hawaii Methodist Mission began publication of *Powa Hannin Kyobo* (Hawai‘i Korean Advocate). The title was changed to *Hanin Kyohoebo* in April 1914. The publication continued until January 1945.

February. The first Korean Episcopal worship service was held at the St. Andrew Church in Honolulu, coordinated by Chin Tai Choi, who became a Methodist minister in December 1905. This was the beginning of the present St. Luke Episcopal Church.

The Mutual Assistance Association (Kongnip Hyop Hoe) was established by Ahn Chang Ho in San Francisco.

April 30. The first Korean church building outside Korea was a dedication on Ewa plantation (Ewa Korean Methodist Church).

May 7. Hun Joo Song, Yoon Sup Park, and several others organized an Educational Society (Kyoyukhoe) and asked the Hawai‘i Methodist Mission to establish a school for Koreans in Honolulu.

October. Chagang Hoe (Self-strengthening society) was organized in Hanapepe, Kaua‘i, as a branch of Chagang Hoe of Korea. The organization started publishing a monthly newspaper, *Chasinbo* (Korean Clarion), in October 1907.

December 27–31. The Hawai‘i Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church held its first Session. Nine Korean ministers were appointed to Korean Methodist churches, leaving eight other plantation churches still without ministers.

1906

June. The Hawai‘i Methodist Mission purchased property at the corner of Punchbowl and Beretania Streets, and Honolulu Korean Methodist Church began worship service there.

The San Francisco School Board created an international incident by ordering children of Japanese and Korean residents to attend segregated Oriental public schools.

September. The Korean boarding School for Boys (Hanin Ryusuk Hakkyo) opened on the property at Punchbowl and Beretania. The property became known as the “Korean Compound.”

1907

April 5. Hilo Korean Language School, the first language school outside Korea, was started.

July 20. Silji Hoe (the Practical Society) was organized under the leadership of Pak Sung-nyol at Hilo, Hawai‘i. The organization encouraged Koreans to be practical in order to advance the struggle for independence.

September 2. Representatives of 24 Korean organizations met in Honolulu and resolved to form the Hapsong Hyophoe (United Federation), the first united organization of all Korean organizations in the Hawaiian Islands. Forty-seven branch offices were soon organized in various parts of the Islands and membership reached 1,051.


1908

The Hankuk Puinhoe was established in San Francisco as the first cultural and social organization of Korean women.
Sin Myoung Puinhoe was established in Honolulu.

October. Taehanin Kungminhoe (United Korean Association, usually referred to as Kook Min Hur in Hawai‘i) was established by merging the Hanin Hapsong Hyophoe of Hawai‘i and Kongnip Hyophoe (The Mutual Cooperation Federation of San Francisco). Kook Min Hur took over the publication of the Hapsong Sinbo and, at the same time, absorbed Chonhung Hyophoebo and published its weekly newspaper under the Korean name of Sin Hangukbo, but kept the English masthead, the United Korean News.

February 19. Koreans held a spontaneous general meeting (kongdonghoe) upon hearing a rumor that the Japanese would forcibly occupy Korea and collected $334.90 to oppose the emerging political peril. This is the first known fundraising activity for the independence movement.

April. Puin Kyoyukhoe (Women’s Educational Association) was organized at the Korean Free Church (nondenominational) in Honolulu with the purpose of pursuing further education of women.

1910

March. The U.S. census recorded 4,533 Koreans in Hawai‘i, representing 2.4 percent of the Islands’ population.

March. Koreans in Hawai‘i collected $2,916 to aid An Chung-keun, who assassinated Ito Hirobumi in Manchuria.

December 2. Sarah Choi became the first of the more than 500 picture brides to arrive in Hawai‘i between 1910 and 1924. Choi married Yi Nae-soo, president of Kook Min Hur.

1912

The Korean Youth Military Academy, established in Hastings, Nebraska, by Young Man Park, graduated its first class of thirteen students.

1913

Korean farm laborers were forcibly expelled from Hemet Valley, California.

April 19. Taehan Puinhoe (Korean Women’s Association) was established by unifying four Korean women’s organizations. The first president was Maria Whang.

August 13. Sin Hangukbo was changed to Kook Min Bo (Korean National Herald). This weekly paper continued until December 1968.

August. Dr. Syngman Rhee was appointed principal of the Korean Boarding School for Boys at the Korean Compound. Rhee changed the school’s name to Korean Central School.

September. Taepyongyang Chapji (Korean Pacific Magazine) was started by Syngman Rhee and continued until December 1930, when its masthead changed to Taepyongyang Chubo (Korean Pacific Weekly) and Dongji Hoe became the publisher.

1914

January. The Korean YMCA was established with nine board members.

March. Sang Ho Choi from the Tokyo Korean YMCA arrived to become secretary of the Korean YMCA.

1915

Summer. Dr. Syngman Rhee established the Korean Girls’ Seminary and in 1916 became principal.

1916

Summer. Tai Sung Lee succeeded Sang Ho Choi as secretary of the Korean YMCA. Lee served until 1931, and his departure ended the Korean YMCA.
September. Dr. Syngman Rhee established the Korean Christian Institute, a co-ed elementary school, on Waialae Avenue. In 1921, the school moved to Kalihi. The school operated until 1928 and then was used as a dormitory until it was sold in 1955. The proceeds from the sale were used to establish Inha Engineering College (present-day Inha University) at Inchon, Korea.

Syngman Rhee left the Methodist church and established the nondenominational Korean Christian Church.

March 15. Taehan Puin Kujehoe (Korean Ladies Relief Society) was organized by uniting Taehan Puinhoe branches and other women’s organizations. It lasted into the 1950s and during its lifetime raised funds to support worldwide public relations programs, the Provisional Korean Government, and relief packages for the Korean Independence Army in China. After World War II, its efforts shifted to social welfare programs for Koreans in Korea.

The First Korean Liberty Congress was held in Philadelphia in order to draw worldwide attention to the situation in Korea.

1920

May 10. The Korean Students Association was organized in Honolulu.

July 7. The Dongji-hoe (Comrade Society) was organized.

June 20. Students of the Korean Christian Institute (KCI), with Chan Ho Min, Nodie Kim, and Young Woo Kim as chaperons, traveled to Korea to raise money for the construction of a building at the KCI. They played exhibition baseball games and performed concerts in Korea and collected $25,770.13.

A 13-member all-star baseball team from Seoul played exhibition games in Hawai‘i. Andrew An Duk Park remained in Honolulu and became the first Korean to join the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra in 1928.

1921

1923

1924

1926

April 26. Dongji Investment Company was incorporated and purchased a tract of ohia forest in Olaa on the Island of Hawai‘i. Syngman Rhee named it Dongji Village.

July 1. Ha Soo Whang organized the Mookunghwa (Rose of Sharon) Club at the YWCA.

September 27. Women from the Youngnam region of Korea organized the Youngnam Puinhoe (Youngnam Women’s Association). The name was changed a short time later to Youngnam Women’s Business Association.

1927

1929

Walter Cho became one of Hawai‘i’s first professional prizefighters.
1930s

Joe Kim's Kimchee started selling bottled kimchee.

1932

January 1. Bong-chang Lee, a member of the “suicide squad” of the Korean Provisional Government army, threw a bomb into a Japanese procession and killed General Yoshinori Shirakawa, the Japanese commander in Shanghai. The bomb was made with funds given to Koo Kim, minister of home affairs and minister of war of the Korean Provisional Government, by the United Society of Kaua‘i.

1937

Bernice B. H. Kim, studying at the University of Hawai‘i, completed one of the first sociological studies on Koreans in Hawai‘i.

1938

April 24. A ceremony in Honolulu dedicated a new building for the Korean Christian Church, constructed at a cost of $40,821.

1940

November. The Korean Chamber of Commerce of Honolulu was established.

1943

May 4. The Korean Library was established, as the first in the nation, at the University of Hawai‘i. It was followed by libraries at the American University (Washington, D.C.) and the University of Chicago in 1944.

1948

Sammy Lee won a gold medal in men’s diving at the London Olympics. Lee won another gold medal at the 1952 games in Helsinki.

1950

Halla Pai Huhm opened her dance studio in Honolulu.

1951

You Chan Yang, a graduate of McKinley High School and a practicing physician in Honolulu, was appointed as the Korean ambassador to the United States.

1952

Dr. Richard W. You of Honolulu was selected by the U.S. Olympic Committee as one of two physicians to accompany the U.S. team. He was awarded the same honor again in 1956.

1954

Korean language class started at the University of Hawai‘i. Prof. Dong Jae Lee became the first full-time lecturer in 1968.

1955

Harry Holt of Cresswell, Oregon, brought eight Korean orphans, whom he adopted, to the United States. Later he established the Holt Adoption Agency, which has brought thousands of Korean orphans to the United States.

1958

Attorney Robert Won Bae Chang became the first Korean American elected to the Hawai‘i Territorial House of Representatives and continued to serve in the House until 1968.

1963

September. Prof. Hugh H. W. Kang began offering Korean history courses at the University of Hawai‘i.

Under the Immigration and Nationality Act, larger numbers of Asian immigrants began entering the United States.
Robert Won Bae Chang was appointed to be a judge on the Hawai'i District Court and in 1971 was named to the Circuit Court.

December 25. *Kook Min Bo* (the Korean National Herald), which started as *Sin Hangukbo* (The United Korean News) in 1909, ceased publication.

1969

Third World students at the University of California, Berkeley, went on strike to support formation of ethnic studies programs, resulting in the establishment of Asian-American studies.

February 6. *Taepyongyang Chubo* (Korean Pacific Weekly), started in December 1930, ceased publication.

1970

Herbert Y. C. Choy was appointed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, becoming the first Asian-American to be named to a federal court.

The Korean-American Scientists and Engineers Association was established to, among other things, help Korean-American scientists and engineers develop their full career potential.


The Center for Korean Studies was established at the University of Hawai’i, and Prof. Dae-Sook Suh became the first director.

The *Hankook Ilbo* (Korea Times) started to publish a Hawai’i edition.

1974

The *Joongang Ilbo* (Korea Central Daily) started to publish a Hawai’i edition.

1978


The newspaper agreed to use the term "hostess bar" instead.

1980

The Center for Korean Studies building opened at the University of Hawai’i.

1982

Elaine Kim published *Asian-American Literature: An Introduction to the Writings and Their Social Context,* the first scholarly study of Asian-American literature.

1983

The Korean-American Coalition, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization, was founded in Los Angeles to serve as an advocacy group for Korean-Americans.

1985

The Korean-American Historical Society was founded to collect, maintain, and transmit the heritage and achievements of Koreans living in the United States and abroad.

Connie Kang, one of the first Asian-American women to break into mainstream print media, co-founded the Korean-American Journalists Association.

1986

Hyung-Chan Kim’s *Dictionary of Asian-American History* was published, the first major reference book in the field of Asian-American Studies.

KBFD, the first Korean-owned TV station in the United States, started broadcasting in Honolulu.

1988

Zubin Mehta invited eight-year-old Sarah Chang to play with the New York Philharmonic, a performance that marked the beginning of a brilliant career.
November. The Hawaii Korean Chamber of Commerce (an English-speaking group) and the Hawaii Korean Chamber of Commerce and Industry (a Korean-speaking group) merged into the Hawaii Korean Chamber of Commerce.

1989

As third-base coach of the San Francisco Giants baseball team, Wendell Kim became the first Korean-American to work in the major leagues.

1992

April 29. In four days of rioting touched off by the Rodney King case, the Korean community in Los Angeles suffered devastating losses. Between 2,000 and 2,500 Korean businesses were damaged or destroyed. In the aftermath, Angela Eunjin Oh gained national recognition as a spokesperson for Korean-Americans and was appointed to co-chair a special committee on the Los Angeles crisis.

Jay Kim, a Korean-born businessman in California, was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, becoming the first Korean-American to serve in Congress.

1993

January 13. Their Footsteps: A Pictorial History of Koreans in Hawaii since 1903 was published.

Cathy Song became the youngest recipient of the Hawai‘i Award for literature. She also was selected by the Poetry Society of America for the Shelley Memorial Award.

March 31. Ronald T. Y. Moon was sworn in as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Hawai‘i.

1995

The Korean American Museum (Los Angeles), organized to promote Korean-American history and culture and recognize Korean contributions to America, opened its first exhibit, “Generations.”

2000

Harry Kim, believed to be the first elected mayor of Korean ancestry in the United States, was sworn in as the mayor of the County of Hawai‘i.

2001

Patricia Lee Hamamoto was appointed superintendent of Hawai‘i’s Department of Education.

2002

Linda Sue Park’s book, A Single Shard, won the Newberry Medal for children’s literature. She is the first Korean-American to win this prestigious award.
Cock-a-doodle-doo! A rooster crows in the distance. In the 1920s and 1930s I remember this sound awakened me every morning to another happy day at my home located in the midst of pineapple fields. Life on a plantation camp was great fun for me and for my four sisters, but for our parents, Anita (Chun) and Yong Sung Choi, it was hard work. The story of our family's American odyssey actually begins in 1904, the year my grandparents and parents immigrated to Hawaii.

On March 4, 1904 my grandparents, Sung Ok Choi, age 32, and Maria Cho Choi, age 27, stepped off the ship in Honolulu with their two children — my father Yong Sung, age three, and a newborn infant daughter named "Siberia" after the vessel that had brought her to America. My mother, Anita Chun also arrived in 1904 but on a different ship. She was a year old and accompanied her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Thun Suh Chun.

The Choi family was sent to Waialua Sugar Plantation on Oahu while the Chuns went to Puunene Sugar Plantation on Maui where the commercial growing of pineapple was just beginning. Grandpa Chun had a reputation of fighting stubbornly with the Portuguese lunas and quit his job frequently. My mother recalls traveling as a young child from "camp to camp" riding on a donkey and sometimes having to sleep in caves. Grandma Chun died on Maui after giving birth to a second daughter, Nina.

Sometime during 1913-1914 the two motherless sisters, Anita and Nina, were placed in Susannah Wesley Home in Honolulu by Dr. Syngman Rhee and the Reverend John W. Wadman of the Methodist Mission in Hawaii. Anita benefited from the move for she began a Christian-American education at Queen Kaahumanu Elementary School and later finished McKinley High School.

My father, Yong Sung Choi, was forced to begin work after completing the sixth grade at the boarding school for boys at the Korean Compound in the Punchbowl district of Honolulu. The school was started in 1906 by Reverend Wadman to educate the children of immigrants, many of whom had moved off the plantation. But at age twelve, my father had to help support schooling for his three brothers — Gilbert, Wilbert, and Clarence — and his sisters, Siberia and Dora. Yong Sung began working as a "train break" boy for the Oahu Railway Company in Waialua.

At age twenty, Yong Sung married my mother, Anita. In 1921 they moved to a pineapple camp in the hills of Malaekahana, Kahuku. The job paid my father $50 a month. The camp was owned by California Packing Company which had begun operation in 1917 as Del Monte Corporation in Hawaii. Unlike other plantation camps, the Malaekahana camp did not segregate workers by race, so Korean, Japanese, and Filipino families lived side by side. My father was a "camp luna" who rode a horse on his daily duties. The camp superintendent was Danish and allowed only my sisters and me to play with his children. Between 1922 and 1932, five daughters were born to my parents: Laura, MaryAnn, Evelyn, Barbara, and Eugenie. We were all born at home with the help of a midwife.

To support his growing family, my father needed extra income, so he set up several side businesses, including horseshoe repairing and fresh milk delivery. I remember sitting under a cow to squirt milk directly into my mouth. My parents also had a dry goods and canned-food store and a poolroom. My sisters and I took candy from store jugs and played hopscotch on top of the pool table. We had fun "riding down" the gushing waters of the irrigation ditches all the way to school in Kahuku town.

For family entertainment, we spent weekends at beaches in Hauula and Kawela Bay. In later years, we went to Mokuleia Beach with friends from the Dong Ahn Club.

Friends from Honolulu and Waialua visited our family often at Malaekahana. Many stayed over weekends to play Mah Jong. Each summer, my father arranged fieldwork and housing for young Korean boys so they could earn money for school expenses. He did this throughout his entire work life.

In 1933, Del Monte closed Malaekahana Camp and combined the Kahuku and Wahiawa regions. Families moved to other camps. My father was promoted to become a co-overseer. We lived in Camp #9, known as Pomoho Camp, about three miles away from Wahiawa towards Wailua. Pomoho Camp had about one-hundred families, mostly Japanese and Filipino. Ours was the only Korean family. There were also two other families, one Chinese and one Portuguese.

Korean families lived in two other camps near Wahiawa — Kunia and Kemoo. Originally, Kunia Camp was made up of small pineapple growers. Hawaii Preserving Company bought out these growers.
Eventually, Del Monte took over the operation. The pineapple camps were similar to the sugar camps but had improved sewer and sanitation as required by the Territorial Board of Health. Although our four-bedroom home had a bathroom, we still loved going to community baths to swim underwater between the men and women's redwood soaking tubs.

The plantation work whistle blew each workday morning at 5:00 a.m. By the time a second whistle sounded at 6:00 a.m., men and women were on the trucks ready for a ten-hour workday, six days a week. Saturday was payday. A paymaster gave each worker cash payment in a manila envelope upon presentation of the worker's "bango ID." By age fifteen, my younger sisters, Barbara and Eugenie, were already picking pineapples for wages of forty cents an hour. Older sisters Laura and MaryAnn worked at the Iwilei Cannery each summer. The best known foreladies at the Cannery were Koreans.

My grandmother and mother managed the camp kitchen for bachelors. Each workday, they labored hard to prepare 100 or more tin lunch pails filled with rice that had been cooked in huge cast iron cauldrons set over pits of burning wood. In between meals, they scrubbed and pounded tons of navy "hana-hana" pants and shirts that were soaked in barrels of boiling water.

For recreation, Del Monte provided free movies in the clubhouse and Filipino dance bands with "taxi dancers" — young women who danced with a partner for ten cents a dance. Every Sunday, Baptist missionaries rounded up children in the camp for Sunday school. Although our parents were members of the Korean Christian Church in Wahiawa, my sisters and I preferred to go elsewhere, either to the Korean Methodist Church or to a Baptist church. Most of the children in Camp #9 attended Helemano School. We "Choi girls" went to Wahiawa Elementary, Leilehua High School, and then on to the University of Hawaii or to other colleges.

On the day of the December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, bullets rained on our backyard. My father prepared a bomb shelter for us. School instruction ceased. Students were required to carry gas masks. My sisters and I all worked at Wheeler Air Force Base and Schofield Army Barracks loading machine gun bullets and making camouflage netting. We danced and skated with soldiers at USO canteens. Our parents opened the doors to our family home to provide home-cooked meals for the service boys. World War II was a most scary time but we managed to have fun!

By 1954, all five daughters of my parents were married: Laura to Park Guy Young; MaryAnn to David Choy; Evelyn to Isaiah Shon; Barbara to Eugene Takashige; and Eugenie to Henry Higuchi. My grandparents were very upset at first by the three interracial marriages. With the passage of time, however, all was smoothed over.

In 1954 my father and mother became American citizens and took their first trip to the mainland United States. A highlight of the trip was the purchase of a new Plymouth automobile for $1,000. A few years later, in 1959, my parents went to Korea with a group led by my uncle, Wilbert Choi. It was the first trip back for both after leaving Korea as young children. President Syngman Rhee arranged the "royal treatment" for the visitors. Upon his return, my father shipped 1,000 slips of pineapple plant cuttings to President Rhee for planting on Cheju Island.

In the late 1950s, my father became very stressed over attempts by the unions to organize the field workers. Because of his limited schooling, he found it difficult to write reports. My mother helped him. The unions were not successful.

My mother managed the family finances. Each month, she participated with Wahiawa Koreans in a kye, an informal loan program conducted on the honor system. Every month, she also set aside three dollars in an envelope earmarked as the family's donation to the Korean Liberation Fund. At that time, I believed that Korea should not be a part of our lives. I wanted only to be fully American in heart and action.

My first trip to Korea in 1971 was an awakening. As the plane landed in Seoul and the doors were flung open, I was assaulted by the smell of garlic and chives that permeated the air. As the day went on, I was in awe of the faces of millions of Koreans who looked just like my grandparents. I saw happy children with loving parents. I observed a beautiful culture over a thousand years old. For the first time in my life I felt proud to be of Korean ancestry. In 1972, I was honored with three others on a USA Friendship Mission to Korea. My uncle, Clarence Choi, Dr. Robert Kim, and Bomani Kim were a part of this group. Uncle Clarence and I went to Kangwha Island to visit relatives and to see my father's birthplace.

My father, Yong Sung Choi, died in 1982 and my mother, Anita, in 1998. My sisters and I shall always honor them for their love and their hard work to provide us privileges and the freedom to live in America. Above all, we are grateful to our grandparents, Sung Ok and Maria Choi, for their courage in making the long journey to a foreign land.

I feel truly fortunate to have had a wonderful family life here in Hawaii. I wish the same blessing for all our newcomer Koreans who have come to find freedom and opportunity in America.
WHO AM I?

By Margaret Chung

I was born in 1921 to Chang Kyoung Pak, age 42, and You Sun Duk, 21. At that time, my parents were living in Honokaa, Hawaii. My earliest recollection, however, is of Maliko, Maui, near Makawao, where I lived when I was about three or four years old. I remember my father as a tall, thin man who was a tailor by trade. For some reason I cannot recall my mother during this period. Nor do I remember the death of my father — only that when the family moved to Makawao, I had a new father, a stepfather, Yang Chai Koo. He was a plantation luna, who supervised workers while overseeing them on horseback. My mother was a seamstress who sewed suits and clothing for the haole or white plantation bosses and for bachelor Filipino workers who could afford the price.

Usually, the plantation segregated its workers according to race and their stature and position in the company. Because my father was a luna, he was considered "management" and entitled to large home with a comfortable yard. My mother had two long drafting tables in the living room and two sewing machines, one a "White" and the other a "Singer." Although I'm not certain, I believe she learned her skills from my father who had tailoring skills.

I started my education at Makawao School under the name Yeung Soon Yang. My birth name was Hak Sil Chang but apparently my stepfather objected to this name because he felt it was too bourgeois. He wanted me to be a "high class" lady, one who was gentle, kind, beautiful, and soft of voice and in language — the embodiment of a woman of class, according to the guidelines of Korean high society, and a personification of the name "Yeung Soon." My given name, Hak Sil, means "a noble person who has been honored in her long life, one who is productive and treats other people gracefully in her life." (Defined by Reverend John Chulho Awe, D.D.). I like to think that my life is more a reflection of the meaning of the name given at my birth, Hak Sil.

When I was about eight or nine years old, my mother fell seriously ill, and my father was forced to send my siblings to a Catholic orphanage in Wailuku, Maui. I was kept at home to take care of my mother.

 Shortly after the birth of a baby brother, my mother died leaving eight children motherless, four from my father and four from my stepfather. She was only twenty-eight years old. At the time of her death, two of the girls had already been adopted, each by a childless couple, a common practice during this period. Despite our early separation, however, all the siblings remain in contact today.

With six young children to care for, including an infant, my stepfather could not cope. We were placed in an orphanage for six months. It was a traumatic time for me. I had many nightmares about my mother's demise. In those days there were no mortuaries, so my mother's coffin was brought to our home for viewing purposes. At the close of the service, I was taken to the coffin for a final goodbye. As I stood viewing her body, one of her eyes opened and frightened me, especially since I had no knowledge of physiology with regard to a dead body. For years thereafter I would not attend a funeral service. Only much later, when I understood what had happened, did I feel comfortable doing so. I felt, too, that the Catholic nuns were uncaring people who did not understand my trauma; they whipped me for disturbing the quiet of the dormitory at night.

After my mother's death, my stepfather faced the responsibility of caring for six children. Five of us returned home from the orphanage but my baby brother remained with the nuns until he was about eight-years-old. At that age, he was sent to the Korean Christian Institute in Honolulu, a boarding school founded by Dr. Syngman Rhee. My stepfather was devastated by my mother's death but apparently had promised my mother that he would take care of all the children. He was a learned man, able to read and write Chinese characters. Long before acupuncture became known and accepted in America, he was a practitioner of this ancient medical art and of Oriental herbal medicine. This knowledge afforded him another source of income to help support his family and his political agenda. I recall that there were always people waiting to be treated by him, a scene much like a doctor's office. Many of the "patients" were heavy-set Portuguese women who lived in the neighborhood. Even though my father worked on the plantation, he considered himself a Korean "yangban" or man of higher-class standing. His job on the plantation was always
that of luna, and he never felt intimidated by his haole bosses.

Life on the plantation during the 1920s and 1930s could be viewed as a good time for workers and their families. Wages were meager, but hospital and medical care and the plantation store were available to workers. During the Christmas holiday season the plantation saw to it that all children received candies, apples, oranges, and other goodies. We children considered this largesse a bonanza. Families were also given extra beef and innards such as hearts, lungs — the parts that Koreans and other poor people ate at that time. It was during this period, despite my age, that I learned to cook whatever was available.

When I entered the fifth grade, the Halimeale and Makawao pineapple plantations were closed because of the Great Depression of 1929. My stepfather was left without a job. The plantation offered him employment on the island of Molokai, but he wisely decided to check it out before moving his family over. When he returned, he told us he could not take us to such a desolate place, where it was hot and dusty and where water was turned on for only two hours each day. He went immediately to see the “big boss,” Mr. Baldwin, who ran both the pineapple and sugar plantations. My father did not know Baldwin personally, but this did not deter him from going up the long concrete driveway lined with Royal palms to the huge pink mansion at the top. With determination, my father told Baldwin that he needed a job for the sake of his children. His efforts succeeded and he got a job as a Lana at the Maui Agricultural Company in Paia, a sugar plantation. An interesting sidelight to this job change relates to an automobile owned by my father, a Packard touring car that he sold for five dollars prior to going to Molokai. I remember the car so well and the many rides my stepfather took us on, with the open top. Later he purchased a “Star,” an automobile that only we “ancients” remember today.

Life in Paia was a time of maturation for me. I ran the household since my stepfather was at work all day. Our home had a yard with papaya trees and chickens. This was the time that I first became aware of political conditions in Korea. Many of our Japanese playmates would remind and tease us about Korea’s situation and call us disparaging names. And during this period, despite our poverty level, I was diligently sent to the post office every month to make out a money order for $20.00 to Dr. Syngman Rhee. This was big money for those who earned meager wages. Dr. Rhee would visit various Korean families to ask for their help in the independence cause.

My stepfather was an ardent supporter of Dr. Rhee, and I believe he left Korea not with the intention of working as a plantation laborer but to get away from the Japanese. He would not allow us to wear Japanese slippers or to date Japanese boys. From time to time Dr. Rhee would stay overnight and play “chang-gi.” It was my responsibility to make soup by slaughtering a chicken and collecting the blood separately. I was then about thirteen years old and, as gruesome as it sounds today, was already an expert at slaughtering chickens.

Like most plantation towns, Paia was segregated by ethnicity with the Koreans grouped with the Japanese. We tended to associate with other Korean families, especially since my stepfather did not like the Japanese. It did not matter. The plantation offered certain advantages such as jobs, housing, schools, a library, the plantation store where goods could be charged and payments taken from the worker’s wages. I hated payday because it meant another long session with my stepfather to justify why I had purchased so much food that month at the plantation store. Corned beef was fifteen cents a can and could be mixed with vegetables to feed the family adequately; a half slab of dried codfish was a dollar and I could prepare it a hundred different ways. Each month I received a scolding about my “big hand” in spending. Looking back, I realize that the plantation store also allowed me to purchase yardage so that I was able to learn to sew my own clothing throughout my high school years. I may have been blessed with my mother’s talent as a seamstress.

Being poor had some advantages. We lacked many material things but we had no basis for comparison since everyone around us was poor. We had the basic necessities of life — food, clothing, and housing. The plantation library was free and offered me the entertainment I craved. As a young country girl, my wish was to become a ballet dancer, a la “Pavlova,” whom I had read about in the library. I loved movies, too, but my stepfather considered them an extravagance when there were more important necessities to consider. In his view, going to church twice on Sunday, and on Wednesday and Saturday, was enough of a social life for us. He was a lay preacher and felt that our social life within the church and outside with Korean neighbors and friends was entertainment enough.

I believe my stepfather wanted the best for us, as far as he could deliver. But because I was the oldest, I was held responsible for the care of my siblings and also for their behavior according to his standards. I thought he was unreasonable; I hated his expectations of complete compliance to the rules he set forth. If my siblings disobeyed a rule, he not only physically punished them, he required me to stand before him to ask for forgiveness and to apologize for their misbehavior — not once, but a thousand times. I believe I am more
vocal in stating my beliefs today, because of the many confrontations I had with my stepfather.

In retrospect, I believe I have come to an understanding of the Korean psyche in terms of my experiences. I was the oldest child at home, the only one who could communicate in Korean. My stepfather spoke Korean to us and stressed that only Korean would be spoken in our home. My siblings ignored his rule and spoke English. He sent the younger children to Korean language school, but I did not have the luxury of this exposure since I was in charge of running the household. When my mother was alive, I conversed with her and my stepfather in Korean. After they passed away, I had no one with whom I could continue speaking the language. Later, as an adult, I studied Korean and today am able to read and write hangul. I have been blessed with all of the benefits of being an American, but I am equally proud of my Korean heritage. It is my belief that unless you know where you came from, you have no substance as an individual.

One of the pluses of growing up in a plantation town was that the school was within walking distance from home. I loved my teachers, especially my fifth-grade teacher, a beautiful Chinese lady who, I believe, gave me the name "Margaret" (now legalized) in place of Yeung Soon. From the sixth grade onward, students were enrolled in a program where girls were taught home economics and the boys, shop work. I learned to cook haole food, especially baked goods. For my siblings' birthdays I roasted a chicken and baked a cake. The birthday child had a day free from chores. My tasks were made easier at this time because our family acquired a four-burner "top of the line" kerosene stove with an attached oven from Sears Roebuck. It was considered quite an acquisition.

Attending school gave me time away from home. One important recollection relates to my sixth grade teacher. He introduced me to the love of the written word and to poetry.

To reach Maui High School in Hamakua Poko – the only high school, I had to travel by train and later by bus. It was an English Standard school, where all the teachers were Caucasian, many recruited from the mainland and living on campus. English Standard schools had originally been established for children of the white class. Non-white children were admitted if they passed an oral English test showing they spoke good English. I loved high school where I came in contact with schoolmates who lived outside the plantation and were of different ethnic backgrounds. I was invited to join a select girls service club where long-lasting friends were cultivated. My self-esteem grew from this experience. Through participation in the Future Homemakers of America I was selected as a delegate to the statewide conference in Honolulu – my first trip on an inter-Island ship to a large city. Passage cost five dollars, with no stateroom.

Upon my graduation from high school, my stepfather, in part because of his background in Oriental medicine, decided that I should become involved in haole medicine. He made arrangements for me to board with Korean friends-in Honolulu while I attended the University of Hawaii's College of Applied Sciences. I enrolled in the two-year nursing program, a requirement for admission to Queen's Hospital School of Nursing. These were happy years for me. The family with whom I boarded lived within walking distance of the University. For the first time, I was free of caring for my siblings and able to date without my stepfather's restrictions. I imbibed my first alcoholic cocktail (Tom Collins), which brings to mind my stepfather's brewing and distilling of okolehao, a homemade alcoholic drink. Using a simple procedure, he produced the best "blue flame" 100% okolehao. We only tasted this drink when we came down with a bad cold. My stepfather would make a home remedy of shredded turnips, honey and his home brew. After giving us a tablespoon or two, he put us to bed, covering us with a heavy ibul or Korean quilt to bring on a good sweat. We hated the concoction but we survived. My stepfather's homemade brew was another source of income for us. And he did this during the years of Prohibition. He was very resourceful in finding ways to supplement his meager plantation salary.

I enjoyed my roommate in the boarding house. She was far more naive than I was, but very funny. I reveled in my independence and the pleasures of meeting new people. In 1939 I was admitted to Queen's Hospital School of Nursing, having completed the required courses after just one year and a summer at the University of Hawaii. The demands of work and school were difficult. Student nurses had to do all the menial work that today is done by nurses' aides or general hospital help. Nurses training took three years and I was well into my second year when the attack on Pearl Harbor occurred on December 7, 1941.

What followed the attack is another story for another time!
Within two years he left the plantation and found his way to Honolulu. His first job was as a yard boy for H. Hackfeld, a wealthy German businessman who had a large home in Manoa Valley. Hackfeld and Sons was the company that later became American Factors, one of the Big 5 firms that controlled most of the commercial activities in Hawaii. With Hackfeld’s permission, Abuji grew vegetables on the side that he later peddled in Chinatown for extra cash. It was his first attempt in business.

A few years later, while attending a social gathering of Korean immigrant men, Abuji heard about a position opening up for an apprentice upholsterer in a furniture store. His fellow immigrants encouraged him to apply. He was elated when he was hired for the job. The apprenticeship became the launch for his career as a top-notch upholsterer. With job stability, he began thinking of marriage and family life.

Like many bachelor immigrants eager to find a bride, Abuji submitted his photograph to the family of an eligible young woman in Taegu. In return, he received her picture. After investigations by both families, in 1912 my mother, Hee Kyung Lee, arrived in Honolulu at age eighteen to marry a man whom she had never seen except in a photo. Until her arrival, my mother had never cooked a meal nor washed dishes nor run a household. She had lived a privileged life with servants to wait on her. She gave all that up to travel thousands of miles to marry a man she had never met and to take up life as a housewife under conditions we would describe today as barely above poverty level. Her motivation, like my father’s, was to acquire an American education.

Unlike the picture brides whose husbands still worked on a plantation, Mama and other urban immigrant wives had no access to free medical care. They had no privileges at a plantation company store where they could charge groceries and other supplies if they were short of money at the end of the month. Without the support of their church and fellow immigrants, many would have suffered immense hardship. But Mama was lucky in one respect: Abuji was only six years older than she was. Some of her friends had married men twenty years older or more. Their husbands had sent photographs of themselves as much younger men.

After leaving the plantation, these now elderly men had difficulty finding work. Some died soon afterwards and their wives were left with young children to care for. The small difference in their ages became an important plus factor for Mama and Abuji in later years as they worked together to build a business in America.

Abuji had already developed considerable skill as an upholsterer and mattress fabricator by the late 1920s. He was considered a top upholsterer working in the leading furniture shop in Honolulu. Not surprisingly, he was lured away to a higher paying position shortly before I was born. It was a bold decision to leave his old firm since the new
company was not yet well recognized. But with a growing family, Abuji decided to join the fledgling store. Unfortunately, the business failed soon afterwards, probably a reflection of worsening economic conditions in the United States. The Great Depression was only a year away. In any case, Abuji found himself unemployed and in debt. His pride undoubtedly kept him from returning to work for his former boss. My sister, Margaret, who was then a teenager remembers the anguish and despair experienced by both our parents during this period.

In 1928 Abuji was probably unaware that the United States economy was on the verge of collapse. Yet he must have had some inkling of the risks he posed for his family if he went ahead with his plan to become an independent businessman. I think Abuji was a risk taker at heart, as most immigrants are who leave the familiar surroundings of their homeland in search of a better life in a foreign land. Abuji had other qualities as well: he was curious; he had an inventive mind and was constantly imagining new ways of looking at ordinary things. Throughout his life he loved to tinker, to dream, and to think of ways “to build a better mousetrap.” By the late 1920s Abuji had acquired a reputation as an eccentric in the Korean community. He was often an embarrassment to my mother and sometimes to me and to my two brothers and sister. Every Sunday the family went to the Fort Street Korean Methodist Church for worship services but my father would invariably make an excuse to stay behind to tinker with an invention. On the few occasions that I remember seeing him in church, he stood behind the last pew and counted the number of people attending the service that week. His task was to take church attendance. His right index finger punctuated the air as it moved laterally across the rows, and his lips moved in concert as he counted out loud in Korean. The church was the center of social life for my mother and her friends but my father often looked bored. By the early 1930s, he rarely attended church services. He was too busy working on his inventions, a cook top for the stove and small parts for the sewing machine and typewriter. During his lifetime he obtained numerous U. S. Patents.

I can still picture Abuji in his factory, sitting deep in thought, his left hand holding one cheek and his right hand doodling on a piece of paper. He always sat with one leg crossed over the thigh of the other leg. Sometimes he would go over to the black, shiny, Singer power sewing machine in the corner of the shop and stitch pieces of fabric—damask, sateen, chintz or monk’s cloth. Often the frames of chairs or sofas were set high on a wooden table pockmarked by hammers, nails, and screws. Abuji would adjust and tighten the coils of springs for the furniture; his teeth sometimes clenched a piece of heavy twine as he pulled the coils to the right tension. Or he would go to the back of his factory and use a buzz saw to cut pieces of Philippine mahogany for his furniture. Abuji designed furniture of all kinds—sofas, hikie’e, chaise lounges, wing chairs, slipper chairs, dining tables and chairs, end tables, chests of drawers, and dressing tables. Some of these pieces survive today.

Abuji was really an inventor at heart. He invented the bamboo drapery, after figuring out one day that he could take a roll-up bamboo blind, take off the cords and pulleys, bind it on both edges, and then hang it with hooks on a traverse rod like a regular drape. It was his most successful invention. Bamboo draperies could be found in hundreds of homes in Hawaii after World War II. Abuji designed the fold-up shade and Venetian blind that could also come down from the top, giving ventilation while affording privacy at the bottom half—it is still manufactured today. During World War II, he invented a blackout curtain made of denim that enabled outside air to pass into the room through vents without allowing any light to escape. During this same period when the supply of bamboo from Japan was cut off, Abuji used his remaining bamboo stock to make handbags of all types. He also used narrow strips of hardwood to fashion handbags lined with Hawaiian prints. Many of his handbag workers were retired Korean immigrant men who later credited Abuji for giving them piecework that later qualified them for social security.

Abuji’s furniture clientele made up a list of Hawaii’s elite—names like, Cooke, Dillingham, Spalding, and Baldwin. The best interior decorators visited his furniture store. A memorable client was Doris Duke, the tobacco heiress whose Black Point home, Shangri-La, was recently turned into a museum affiliated with the Honolulu Academy of Arts. I remember when I was ten or eleven, I accompanied Abuji one afternoon to an appointment with Miss Duke. She was lying on a chaise lounge next to her famed fresh-water pool and held a cigarette holder in one hand. She didn’t rise to greet Abuji, who sauntered over to talk to her. He was there to give her an estimate on the cost of upholstering her furniture. Remembering that scene by the pool today, in which one of the wealthiest women in America talks with a pudgy, 5’3” Korean immigrant businessman of very modest means, I realize what a remarkable lesson Abuji gave me that day. Doris Duke was a multi-millionaire with an opulent residence but Abuji had confidence and a strong belief in his own creativity and ingenuity. On the sunlit terrace that afternoon, they were equals.

With his keen intellect, Abuji naturally had many ideas and strong opinions. When I was a junior at Roosevelt High School, he decided to attend his first ever PTA meeting with my mother. He sat with Mama in the back row of my Latin classroom and listened intently as my teacher, Miss May Neill, described the Latin course. Miss Neill was a very elegant woman who wore silver and turquoise earrings, bracelets, and necklaces.
She also taught English literature, everything from Chaucer to Tennyson. When she finished her talk to the parents, Abuji stood up and waved his hand trying to get Miss Neill's attention. She finally looked up and he said, "Madam, why do you waste your time teaching a dead language that nobody speaks it anymore? What use is it?" Abuji's English by 1945 was quite good. He spoke with a charming drawl, probably acquired from years of talking to his haole women customers who respectfully only called him "Kwon." But it was an embarrassing moment. Mama and I never again asked Abuji to attend a PTA meeting. And I could barely look at the elegant and erudite Miss Neill the following day.

In many ways Abuji was a loner. Since he seldom attended church and was considered somewhat antisocial by Mama's friends, he had few connections to the Korean community except for a few close male friends. Like Abuji, many of these friends had studied the Chinese classics before coming to America, and they enjoyed talking about philosophy, business, Korea, the independence movement, and opportunities in America. Throughout his life, Abuji wrote poetry using Chinese characters, often reading his words out loud in a singsong voice. Yet most of his world was made up of his shop, his customers, and his inventions.

It was Mama who kept the family close to other Korean families. She was an extraordinary example of a helpmate, working long hours alongside Abuji in the furniture store. She sewed the fabrics, supervised the employees, and kept the business in the black. Abuji was the dreamer but Mama was the practical one in the family. Despite many financial hardships, both parents instilled in all of us a respect for education and an appreciation of music and the arts. Mama loved Korea, especially the beauty found in nature. She never forgot her visit to Diamond Mountain as a young woman.

By example, Mama taught us the importance of community involvement. She worked tirelessly for Korean independence through her women's clubs, but she also worked in the larger community, raising money for the Red Cross and serving as a member of the Free Kindergarten Association in the 1940s. She also cared deeply about people. For many years, she invited a woman without family or money to live with us. I believe she influenced my sister Margaret, my brothers Young Man and Nelson, and me to be active in the community throughout our lives. Abuji may have resented all the time and energy Mama gave to her community work, but I marvel that he allowed her to spend so much time outside the home.

In 1947 Mama died tragically in a traffic accident in Chinatown on the eve of my older brother's wedding. She was 54 years old, at a time in her life when she and Abuji were just retired and ready to enjoy the fruits of their many years of hard work and sacrifice. Her death brought changes to our family. Like all mothers, Mama was the one who nurtured us and taught us Korean values. But her death brought me closer again to Abuji. As a child, I had been Abuji's willing and sometimes silent companion. We seemed to communicate without saying much. I went with him to the job sites and held one end of the tape while he measured windows in beautiful mansions by the ocean or in upper Nuuanu Valley. I remember going over the Pali and being commanded to hold on to the roof of our Model T, so it would stay on in the blustery wind. Abuji and I used to sit for hours at the pier next to Aloha Tower, watching the grey-green water lap gently against the wooden posts. He was always deep in thought.

After Mama's death, he began to tell me about his childhood in Korea, his home in Andong, about his life at Koloa Plantation and the many words and phrases he picked up from Chinese and Hawaiian workers. Perhaps, because it reminded him of the Japanese occupation of his homeland, he abhorred the mistreatment of workers by the lunas. I think his plantation experience left a powerful impression on his sense of justice and fair play. In his own business, he always treated his employees as family members. Despite strong anti-Japanese sentiment in the Korean community, he hired many employees of Japanese descent.

From Abuji I learned that a state of perfection is never achieved - there is always room for improvement, for new solutions, and new ideas. I always thought of Abuji as a kind of Renaissance man. He never acquired an American college degree, but he had an incredible knowledge about the world. He liked modern things. He appreciated American ingenuity. Perhaps that's why he changed his name from Kwon Do-in to Doin Kwon. Like all Korean immigrants, he and Mama believed that education was not only the key to success but also an important humanizing process to help us to become honorable and caring individuals. On the day I graduated from the University of Hawaii, Abuji wept openly because it marked the fulfillment of his and Mama's dream that all four of their children would receive a college degree.

Abuji and Mama were perfect candidates for immigration to America: they were rugged individualists with a huge wellspring of hope and a firm belief that anyone could succeed if he tried hard enough. It seems to me that immigrants who left Korea at the turn of the twentieth century never looked back once they started on their journey. Perhaps, it was because Korea as a nation was no more. As I remember my parents and their many friends, I marvel at their courage, confidence, and amazing spirit in the face of so many adversities. I believe they succeeded because they had the desire and the will to embrace American culture and the American Dream, even as they kept Korea in their hearts throughout their lives.
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