



This Buddha survived Tsunamis in 1334, 1369, and 1498.

## THE WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION — KOREA: GROUND HOG DAY OR REAL CHANGE

HEADLINES — THEN AND NOW

IN REAL LIFE THERE IS NO INTERMISSION — ELEVEN DIFFICULT QUESTIONS  
THAT NEED ANSWERS BEFORE PEACE CAN BE STABLE

NONE OF US IS ALONE — NATIONAL UNIFICATION AND DIVORCE: IRELAND,  
KURDISTAN, CYPRUS, KASHMIR AND MORE

DEEPER THAN POLITICS AND ELECTIONS — BOUNDARIES AND RITUAL

WOMEN'S WORK — HOW AND WHERE WOMEN GET TO JOIN THE  
PEACEMAKING PROJECT



NORTH KOREA'S OFFICIAL  
CHEERLEADERS CHALLENGING  
ASSUMPTIONS AT THE OLYMPICS

Even flags signifying peace can cause tensions. North Korea's "unified flag" is different from the internationally accredited one. It contains islands contested between Japan and Korea.

# INTRODUCTION

Is this Ground Hog Day – the movie – or is this real change?

In the May 2017 pamphlet I said I was remembering that Bill Murray had to relive his life 35 times before there was real change, and that we were only in the 23rd year of negotiations with North Korea. But I offered a list of possible paths to breakthrough: “an unexpected illness, a sports victory, an accident, an earthquake, spiritual leadership.” I also said that we needed to keep aware that “(1) the USA is interdependent with Korea – North as well as South. (2) Someday all of this will change radically. It is changing in small ways all the time.”

Is the situation changing again right now?

As of June 12th, the Trump and Kim meeting, I am ready to say YES. Which was the random event? From the list above I choose “sports” – the decision by the North and South Koreans to field a joint Women’s Ice Hockey team at the 2018 Pyongchang Winter Olympics. .

Is it still true, as I claimed in the title of my 2003 book that peacemaking is “Dangerous?” Oh yes. There is a long way to go between here and peace. For a basic list of steps that need to be taken – see “IN REAL LIFE THERE’S NO INTERMISSION.” What lies ahead will be difficult and liable to make numerous Koreans and perhaps the USA and China as well, feel everything from despairing to furious, at least some of the time.

Is the change we are seeing radical?

I don’t know that yet. Trump and Kim have different ways of being radical and are capable of being radical together. So far, apart from meeting face to face, they have not done anything completely new. In any agreement with the North Koreans one has to wait and see, as one does with President Trump. Central decisions ahead belong to the Koreans themselves. More in “IN REAL LIFE”.

Trump and Kim are not the only potential radicals:

In South Korea, President **Moon Jae-In** looked pretty radical as he held hands joyfully with Kim JongUn stepping back and forth between South and North Korea.

In Japan Prime Minister **Shinso Abe** has not looked radical at all. These days one might wish that Japan was in the midst of Prime Minister Koizumi’s second term, not Abe’s.

In China **Xi Jinping** is behaving as though these events are at best somewhat alarming.

These leaders are embedded in Confucian tradition, explored in DEEPER THAN POLITICS, with its views of hierarchy and status, of governance, of obligation and of boundaries – self and barbarian.

Also, Korea is not the only place where national unification is an issue today. Living in the US, probably for almost all of us regardless of political persuasion, it is much too easy to believe that what we’re involved in is the biggest issue around. As a counterweight to that, in NONE OF US IS ALONE, you get to engage briefly with Kurdistan and Kashmir, Ireland and Cyprus, Kosovo and Macedonia, Austria and Germany – some of the other places with unification on their minds.

You also get to think about the South Korean WOMEN forced off the hockey team to allow for North Korean players to join a unified squad, and about all the other women who are shaping this particular future.

# HEADLINES — THEN AND NOW

## MILITARY EXERCISES

Jan. 16 2016 (Reuters)

**N. KOREA SAYS PEACE  
TREATY, HALT TO  
EXERCISES, WOULD END  
NUCLEAR TESTS**

Mar. 19 2018 (Reuters)

**U.S.-SOUTH KOREA  
MILITARY EXERCISES TO  
RESUME NEXT MONTH**

June 12, 2018 (Reuters)

**TRUMP SURPRISES WITH  
PLEDGE TO END MILITARY  
EXERCISES IN S. KOREA**  
[https://in.reuters.com/article/  
northkorea-usa-military/trump-  
surprises-with-pledge-to-end-  
military-exercises-in-south-korea-  
idINKBN1J81IC](https://in.reuters.com/article/northkorea-usa-military/trump-surprises-with-pledge-to-end-military-exercises-in-south-korea-idINKBN1J81IC)

## NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Sept. 12, 2016 (AP)

**CHINA SAYS IT CAN'T END NORTH  
KOREA NUKE PROGRAM ON ITS  
OWN**

April 26, 2017 (Reuters)

**U.S. SAYS 'MAJOR CONFLICT'  
WITH NORTH KOREA POSSIBLE,  
CHINA WARNS OF ESCALATION**

April 27, 2018 (AP)

**KOREA LEADERS AVOID SPECIFIC  
MEASURES TO ADDRESS NUKE  
CRISIS**

May 25 2018 (CNN)

**CNN REPORTER'S SURREAL  
JOURNEY INSIDE N. KOREA:**  
CNN's Will Ripley documents his  
secret journey to witness the  
apparent destruction of tunnels at a  
North Korean nuclear test site.  
[https://www.cnn.com/videos/world/  
2018/05/25/north-korea-train-ride-nuclear-  
site-ripley-dnt.cnn/video/playlists/inside-  
north-korea/](https://www.cnn.com/videos/world/2018/05/25/north-korea-train-ride-nuclear-site-ripley-dnt.cnn/video/playlists/inside-north-korea/)

## PERSONALITIES

Sept. 23 2017 (AP)

**TRUMP: I'LL HANDLE  
'LITTLE ROCKET MAN'  
KIM JONG-UN**  
[https://www.theguardian.com/  
us-news/video/2017/sep/23/  
trump-little-rocket-man-kim-  
jong-un-video](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/video/2017/sep/23/trump-little-rocket-man-kim-jong-un-video)

May 24 2018 (Reuters)

**FROM 'ROCKET MAN' TO  
'HONORABLE':  
TRUMP ON KIM – VIDEO**  
[https://in.reuters.com/video/  
2018/05/24/from-rocket-man-to-  
honorable-trump-on-ki?  
videoid=429945427](https://in.reuters.com/video/2018/05/24/from-rocket-man-to-honorable-trump-on-ki?videoid=429945427)

June 14 2018 (The Guardian)

**MIKE POMPEO LOSES  
TEMPER WHEN ASKED  
ABOUT NORTH KOREAN  
DISARMAMENT**

## MEANWHILE IN CYPRUS

(More in NONE OF US IS ALONE)

June 9 2018

(National Herald — a pro-Greece US paper)

**BACKING GREECE, CYPRUS, US  
WARNS TURKEY OVER WARSHIPS,  
RUSSIAN MISSILES**

## IN THE REAL WORLD THERE IS NO INTERMISSION

This “intermission” heading appeared in my very first “issue,” inspired then by the musical *Hamilton* which I used to frame an analysis of the current swirl of political upheavals in the USA. The heading was a reminder of that wonderful musical which enabled its audience to jump over several fraught years of governing failure, under the Articles of Confederation, when “real life” showed its less heroic dimensions after The War. That span of real national life forced the heroes from Act 1 into the skillful machinations in Act 2 that enabled agreements to finalize our still-flawed Constitution.

An equivalent series of difficult issues lies ahead for the Koreans, North and South, if they are truly to make peace, let alone begin to work on whether and how to create a system of governance that would reunify the country.

My particular list of decisions was created this year and first “tested” in a lecture at South Korea’s Chongnam National University in May, under the sponsorship of the University’s Program on National Unification. It is a list derived from that 2003 *Dangerous Peacemaking* book. These kinds of issues could arise in any military combat situation, whether Mozambique or Ireland, Iraq or Rwanda, Kuwait or Kashmir. In Korea this last month it was clear that few in my lecture audience were at all ready to, or happy to realize the degree to which peacemaking might entail coming to grips with brand new and deeply serious challenges.

- (1) A practical question first: Who is going to “clean up” the DMZ — 150 miles long, about 3 miles wide — steeply mountainous, covered in dense forest and riddled with land mines and other munitions? And who ends up “owning” it? Since it has not been used by humans for 65 years it is widely believed to be the Korean Peninsula’s most pristine ecological zone.
- (2) How will the 1.6 million men (and some women) currently conscripted into the armies of North and South Korea find employment in the civilian sectors of the economy? Oh the recently demobilized will be employed, but these economies normally occupy significant percentages of their younger male populations in military and policing work and for future generations those jobs may not exist. An indicator of the scale of the challenge: The Koreas together, with a population of only 75 million people, have an army close to the same size as the Chinese army, population 1.5 billion. Civilians could suffer too. In South Korea, all those tiny shops and restaurants currently serving the hundreds of tiny, 100-man military bases, like the one in my local village alongside Wangsukcheong Creek, may not survive if the bases are not lived in.
- (3) Forget nuclear weapons, if you can. What happens to all the rest of the military equipment, the tanks and planes, the shoulder mounted missiles, the rifles, the ammunition, the landmines and chemical weapons, the radar stations, the . . .? In bringing peace to the North of Ireland, “decommissioning” was the single biggest issue — so hard to find any neutral way to take down the militarization. In the end the Canadians came in to help. In North Korea, where there’s plenty of hardship, leaving weapons in private hands could be truly dangerous. South Korea’s male status systems will also shift, once they lose the military service component of social harmony.
- (4) Is it important to conduct a “human rights investigation” of the harm and suffering perpetrated by both sides before and after the war years? Outsiders often apply the word Gulag to North Korea’s jails, probably now forgetting that South Korea too was governed by a dictatorship until 1988. There’s bad stuff in plenty on both sides, even if North Korea is certainly “worse.” But what is gained if it is all open to investigation right away? South Africans ran their TRC at once. The USA still hasn’t done such a thing for slavery, though the Lynching museum just opened in Birmingham Alabama is having a powerful cultural impact. The Lynching

## IN THE REAL WORLD THERE IS NO INTERMISSION

museum focuses on the direct suffering of “only” about 4000 people. In Korea, both North and South, one would be talking about hundreds of thousands.

- (5) Even now Civil Rights are limited, massively in the North and in small ways in the South. Because it is still technically war time, no Korean can freely enter the other country. South Koreans have only limited access to North Korean web sites and information. When and how are peace-time Civil Rights to be restored, and do both sides adopt the same standards for “freedom?”
- (6) Do the United States and Russia owe the Koreans any compensation for their part in starting the conflict in the first place? If there is one thing about the 1950-53 war that Koreans on both sides agree on it is that the USA “caused” the war. For the southern side, our sin was to withdraw all troops too quickly once elections had put in place a new S. Korean government, thereby leaving them vulnerable to a North/Russian attack. For the northern side, our sin was to invade the North. They see no war till McArthur crossed the 38th parallel. Koreans everywhere have chosen, really chosen, to dismiss earlier intra-community conflicts, evident during the Pacific War years, in which some linked with the USA, some with Russia and some with China. The big wartime Allies never agreed which faction should be designated the true Korean “Government in Exile.” Still, in this new millennium, all Koreans seem ready to assert that their divisions were externally imposed, not self-inflicted. So do we owe compensation? Does anyone?
- (7) How do the DPRK (North Korea) and the ROK (South Korea) relate as governments? Here buried at number 7 is the big, big, big question. (A) Both countries have their own long-standing national narrative built around “UNIFICATION.” They both have ministries devoted to the issue. School children by the thousand visit the “Unification Observatory” in South Korea “*established to console the feelings of dispersed families and provide an educational site for the unification education . . . The observatory is situated in the northernmost ceasefire line of the western front where Hangang River, Seoul’s lifeline, and Imjingang River meet. It offers a wide view of Songaksan Mountain in Gaeseong to the north.*” (From the Korean Tourist Office website) (B) Neither Kim JongUn nor Moon JaeIn will risk a peace that ends their term in office. Clearly unification is a decision that can be delayed for a while – it takes time to make and establish the peace. See items 1-6 and 8-11. But some day, Koreans are going to have to decide whether to opt for the German route. South Korean young people are hugely aware of the fiscal cost of that choice. AND YET . . . . . EVERYONE IN KOREA BELIEVES IN UNIFICATION.
- (8) Should that mysterious entity, commonly known as “The International Community” provide economic aid to either the South or the North to support the peace? If so, will it help make the peace? The research I did when writing *Dangerous Peacemaking* suggested that there is an inverse correlation between aid and the willingness to make peace. The more aid, the less peace. Compare Israel with South Africa, for example.
- (9) This next is also potentially hugely thorny. I say this from personal experience having heard that German locals genuinely feared being dispossessed of their land, when my mother and her sister, 50 years after becoming refugees, showed up unannounced in their childhood village in the former East Germany. Korea has thousands and thousands of people on both sides of the frontier who could conceivably have legitimate land claims on the other side. Gossip suggests that realtors in South Korea are already buying up land title documents preparing to make claims in the North. Imagine trying to sort out ownership issues where virtually nothing of what was there when the land was abandoned in the 1950s is still there, except the strong feeling of entitlement backed up by title documents. Who pays what to the people dispossessed and why?
- (10) What is China’s role in all of this dramatic change? If it is indeed a dramatic change. Pundits regularly say that China is profoundly interested in stability. I am no expert but see very little reason to doubt this. Even the recent imposition by the CCP of social and internet controls can be read in that light – an attempt to

## IN THE REAL WORLD THERE IS NO INTERMISSION

prevent the populace escaping Party power to demand power of their own. In relation to North Korea it's clear that China has not enjoyed observing the "nuclearization" process. And Chinese historians and archeologists have been using old maps and grave sites and the UNESCO World Heritage system to lay groundwork that China could use to claim North Korean land as traditionally part of ancient China. This in case the country collapsed, I have always assumed. A genuinely independent North Korea has never been so obviously part of a Chinese plan. Furthermore, inside China, a population of 2.9 million ethnic Koreans (according to Wikipedia) might well want to reintegrate with their minjuk (blood) brethren should the two sides further south unify. The Chinese government has summoned Kim to Beijing twice. It sent its own foreign minister to the North, the first time in 12 years. There is even talk of Xi Jinping traveling to Pyongyang himself. Kim flew to Singapore in a China Airways plane. Clearly the Chinese are part of this story, though in what way it's hard for me to say.

(11) Does anyone owe someone an apology? If so who and to whom? Much of my current work is about international apologies in major public crises. The work is not finished but it is already evident that trying use apologies to mitigate bad outcomes across significant cultural differences risks making the outcomes even worse. Apology is not an international currency easily fungible no matter where one is operating.

This list of questions is a long, long list. And it is by no means a comprehensive list.

Donald Trump has said many unwise things over the last 18 months but in announcing that the Kim/Trump meeting was on again he was explicit and also wise: This is a process. It makes no sense to hope for speedy outcomes. <https://www.nytimes.com/video/us/politics/100000005932606/trump-says-hell-meet-kim-jong-un-after-all.html>

It may have jumped out at you that none of the items on my list mention nuclear weapons. Well no. Kim has them. I cannot imagine him actually destroying every warhead. Furthermore, my strategic sense tells me that the military crises of last year and the year before had little to do with Bombs. They had to do with Missiles. As did the dramas over Iran as well. And once invented those cannot be uninvented. They don't even require huge testing sites to perfect. Kim has run his tests and demonstrated that he has the weapons so he can make more. Even in India and Pakistan which are actively at war, nuclear weapons have not mattered much. US fears about nuclear weapons ideally can inspire ordinary Americans to support Korea, if this turns out to be a genuine peace process.

And why might Kim want peace?

Well, he's young. Very young. He has completed his father's work. The arsenal is done. If he is hoping to govern "successfully" for the remainder of his days, he needs another project. Why not economic development? That's a big goal. It's not necessarily easily compatible with the kind of closed society his ancestors set up. But it might be interesting to both North and South Koreans to see if they can walk away from American style development and create a wealthier culture that is more authentically Korean. More authentically Confucian for sure. What might that be? The section "DEEPER THAN POLITICS AND ELECTIONS" has some thoughts on that.

## NONE OF US IS ALONE

A brief detour first, to sweep a good part of the rest of the world into this Korean saga. Nation making and breaking is widespread. That's what is behind my inserting a seemingly random Cyprus item on a HEADLINE page otherwise focused on Korean issues.

Global events, as I observe them from the West Coast of the United States, easily place Asian issues front and center. My own work has taken me to NE Asia, Japan and South Korea for the most part, for nearly 20 years. I have lived in the USA since the Vietnam War was at its height. At the same time I know enough about the formation and break up of nation states in the last 150 years to remember that Korea has not been the only country with this issue in my own relatively recent life time.

Germany. They unified in 1991, about two years after the Berlin Wall came down and the Cold War ended in a ceasefire. No-one crafted a formal peace treaty for that war, but explosive weapons were decommissioned, thousands of troops were deployed elsewhere and Russian - American armed conflict ended, at least for a while. These days conflict is weaponized again, explosive in Crimea and the Ukraine, digital elsewhere, but it is nothing like that old, nuclear tipped, Cold War.

Much of the current state of affairs shaping national unification concerns originated in the 15th -19th century Ottoman Empire. There was an Empire not made of nation states but of provinces. As it began to fragment, Europeans were at hand, waiting to "pick up" the pieces, out of which they made a number of new nations. Cyprus was taken by Britain. As was Palestine. That leaves us today with two sharply contested, divided nations, one of which has lapsed into what I can only call apartheid – elsewhere another legacy of British rule. Kurdistan was never offered a chance to be a single state – instead Kurds were split four ways and allocated to Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria. They are still trying to unify, much to the anxiety of their respective "handlers." Meanwhile the Ottoman provinces in the Balkans, which unified in 1918, then known as Yugoslavia, broke apart again in the mid 1990s in what we in the USA tend to call the Bosnian war, a war that actually involved Bosnia, Croatia, Serbia, Kosovo, Slovenia, Montenegro and even Macedonia. What ancient names those are.

Outside the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire, and resulting from World War II and prior colonization, there were divided or unhappily united nations elsewhere as well: Vietnam, of course. Austria – which reunified quietly in 1953 without any drama or global excitement, Kashmir still divided, Pakistan and Bangladesh which divorced at the very end of 1971 after a short and ferocious war, as well as Indonesia and East Timor. The Rhodesias were joined together in 1953, in an attempt by whites to prevent Africans taking power, but their Federation fell apart 10 years later after the British government supported the creation of an independent, African run Zambia. To this day there are plenty of people on both sides of the frontier in Ireland who regret the break up of island unity under Britain's Home Rule bill in 1920. And what of Tibet, forcibly "integrated" into China in 1959, and Taiwan, anxious that it might face Tibet's fate some unknown time in the future?

Not to mention the challenges of sovereignty and unity in countries like Canada, the USA, Australia and New Zealand, where the rights of Indigenous Nations are contested to this day.

Though I assume they consider themselves unique, Koreans have no monopoly on the challenges of national unification in the new millennium.



## DEEPER THAN POLITICS AND ELECTIONS

Whether nations unify or break apart is “normal activity” for us on this earth. Just as the earth’s crust can break open and pour hot lava out of Kilauea on Hawai’i, so the earth’s crust of state boundaries is fragile and sometimes dangerous. The Western Pacific is a geologic “ring of fire.” With luck Koreans are beginning to find a way to make their sector of the 38th parallel less likely to erupt.

Working day after day tending our garden, the plants and animals having basically been left to their own devices for five months in our absence, I am finding that horticultural metaphors have allowed me to ponder the nature of boundaries, thereby bringing some specifics of the Korean situation into sharper focus.

Boundaries to be stable need care and attention, on both sides. Some areas of our garden are intentionally “wild;” the rest is definitely “cultivated.” Ancient plum trees that have inhabit the “wild,” love to send root suckers under ground that then try to grow in the cultivated parts. “North Koreans and their tunnels under the DMZ?”

If these plums dare emerge in full view in the lawn they are cut down pretty fast by Rob and his trusty push mower. If they emerge on the boundaries of the wild they can imperceptibly shrink the lawn a few inches a year. Not necessarily bad, but if there’s balance in what we have already crafted, we need to be conscious that it is shifting. If they come up in the shrubbery, they can be hard to spot until they are very hard to root out. “Defectors/moles anyone?”

In over 40 years of gardening this way I have learned, with some regret, that the worst boundary management systems are the ones with really hard edges:

Plastic sheeting to keep ferocious Northwest Morning Glory under control – useless. The tree roots under the plastic tear it within a year or two and bingo, the Morning Glory takes off. Meanwhile the plastic is buried under an inch or so of fallen Douglas Fir debris, and getting torn by roots, itself becoming harder and harder to remove. “Land Mines in the DMZ?”

Hard edges we installed to keep weeds out of the vegetable garden? Equally annoying. Grass digs down under the six inch metal sheet alongside the path and comes up the other side. In addition the metal begins to tear as well, and handling it gets dangerous to the gardener’s fingers. The boundary becomes the attacker. “Soldiers facing off daily in Panmunjon?”

Working with my non-verbal neighbors, the plants, bugs, birds, raccoons and slugs, here on Pifer Road has persuaded me that

- (1) Boundaries that are permeable create least long term damage to the environment and to the gardener.
- (2) Boundaries that are permeable take work year after year, but with a little practice one can learn what kinds of work are needed, and when to do it.
- (3) Boundaries that are permeable are effective in the same way that our immune system is effective. By encountering “others” the immune system learns which strategies work best to maintain the health and sanity of “self.” Encounters with “others” are essential if we are to build appropriate anti-bodies.
- (4) Boundaries that are rigidly impermeable are likely expensive financially and aesthetically. I admit that the fence we built to keep deer out of the vegetable garden, while expensive financially is gorgeous to look at. Its Japanese style imitates Kyoto’s fine gateways and impermeable garden boundaries. “Japan’s closed centuries were perhaps how they mastered this definitively?”

## DEEPER THAN POLITICS AND ELECTIONS

(5) All of this thinking applies just as clearly to Trump and the Mexican Wall as it does to Korea, as it does to the Brits who voted for Brexit. I find it both heartbreaking and hardly surprising that the Brexit project is literally bedeviled by the challenge of trying to create the “right” kind of boundary in Ireland between British Ireland and European Ireland. Did they forget that they could only make peace in 1998 when they decided to live with a genuinely permeable boundary?

\* \* \*

Another link between metaphors drawn from gardening and the challenges presented by peace making in Asia: The word “cultivate” which is rich in resonances, particularly in the Confucian world.

Korean society remains actively Confucian to this day. In the 14th Century, a succession of Korean Kings took steps to marginalize an overweening and over-wealthy Buddhist priesthood, replacing them with what is now called Neo-Confucianism, an intensified and purified version of the work of the master who had lived nearly 2000 years before. At its core, Confucianism sees governance and humanity in patterns of relationships.

There’s a lot one could write about here but I want to draw attention to one particular part of Confucian ethics 礼 — Li — as it is written in Romanized writing, meaning ritual.

Specifically the ritual norms and behaviors that make it possible to behave appropriately in everyday life, and thus to be in harmony with the universe. In the garden, Li is a reminder that I should not have been absent for five months. Tending to the seasons of life as they come around is one of the critical Confucian norms. Ancestor veneration on an annual basis for example. In this hemisphere it is known as Halloween or Dia de los Muertos — the kinds of rituals that are appropriate vary, from culture to culture. Ours in the US are way more casual and secular than Korea’s national Choseok holiday. Koreans are yet more carefully trained in tending their sacred but private family grave sites.

A good deal of the distance between the USA and North Korea rests, I want to suggest, in this country’s distance from the very notion of appropriate every day ritual and behavior. Having grown up in the UK, one of the global epicenters of *ceremonial* ritual, I am aware that the US is even pretty low on ceremonial ritual passions in its public life. Oh there’s an Inauguration Day every four years, — truly a ritual in its deepest, most transformative sense: the President is not President till it is done — but we can so easily get distracted from its deeper meaning by photos of acres of empty white plastic sheeting, as we have been these last two years.

President Trump is a mystery in ritual terms. He appears to love ritual of the ceremonial kind and he has a particular way of staging it that seems coherent and quite reliable. Lots of gold. Fancy clothes for his wife. Sweeping staircases.

But he is also the opposite. He makes brash, off the cuff comments that disturb harmony in the most careless manner. He promises to end joint South Korean military exercises on the grounds that they cost too much money and are “provocative,” thereby adopting North Korea’s language without consulting anyone in South Korea, and reducing a complex annual ritual to a crass financial calculation.

A good deal of peacemaking depends on attending with skill to Li. Confucians are ready to remind us that the skill can and should be learned. I am sensing that the garden is a good place to study.

## WOMEN'S WORK

Several different women, different kinds of women, played key roles in these recent changes.

The South Korean Olympic Ice Hockey team took the first steps, as several of them actually stepped off their team to allow North Korean women to fill out the roster. It is quite hard to imagine the average male ice hockey player on this side of the Pacific being ready to abandon his Olympic dreams. There were audible complaints in Korea as well, but the fact is they did step aside.

Then there were those cheer-leaders from North Korea, dressed in matching outfits: stylish red outdoor coats one day, team sweaters and wool caps the next. Over 200 of them stepped off the plane. Whoever heard of a 200 woman cheerleading squad? But there they were, sharp as sharp.

In addition to cheering the team with striking uniformity in their movements, they served as escort to Kim JongUn's sister, Kim JoYoung. She was also in Pyongchang, an official diplomatic representative of her country. As a woman she will never present a succession threat to North Korea's leader, in contrast to the Confucian status challenges inherent in his older half-brother. The latter was assassinated in Malaysia in 2017, presumably on the orders of the Chairman.

We need also to remember and recognize South Korean President Park GeunHye and her Shaman/advisor Choi SoonSil. Research for *Dangerous Peacemaking* identified domestic leadership changes as critical opportunities for peace. Park's role is to have been removed from power, a consequence of a corruption scandal. That led to an unanticipated Presidential election. The power pendulum swung over to her opponents, as it does periodically in South Korea, when disenchantment with the status quo gets too strong. This time it swung to the progressives. The result: A pro-friendship Presidency and two prior leaders in jail. It will be interesting to see whether these women get a reprieve reasonably soon. Korean men jailed for corruption, as they often are, are usually free and back in power within a couple of years. For these women I am betting there will be no reprieve. They enabled a wider peace and freedom to become possibilities, at the price of losing their own.

South Korea's new Foreign Minister, Kang KyungWha, is also a women. As she says herself, in a fascinating interview on (US) ABC television, she would have loved to have been in the "Room Where it [the summit] Happened" (note my skillful *Hamilton* reference). She was not, of course. No-one was except the leaders and their translators.<sup>1</sup>

Her sang froid, her tranquil presence on every official occasion is striking, although it is not clear that it would have been a particularly effective presence in the kinds of negotiations that have been happening recently. Among recent Korean leaders, there has developed a tradition of bringing a pretty emotive and expressive posture to public events. Korean politicians regularly cry on television. They are still known for occasional fisticuffs in the National Assembly Chamber. A similar, highly reactive bearing is also visible in Korean telenovela dramas, one reason perhaps they are so popular in Japanese society, which insists on a more muted stance in 礼 — Li.

This heightened drama means that when our own President, Donald Trump, loses his temper because Chairman Kim JongUn is rude about Vice President Mike Pence, Koreans are quite likely not too disturbed. Just as they are not disturbed when a canceled meeting is reinstated. Korean politics is hot tempered, at the very same time as

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<sup>1</sup><https://abcnews.go.com/International/video/south-korean-foreign-minister-surprised-trump-55909354> . Do watch this video. She has talent and is a reminder of the reasons we might value diplomats in the future instead of just seeing them as relics of a prior time.

# WOMEN'S WORK

contemporary South Korean aesthetics — in art, in food, in building design, in clothing, though not in K-Pop — reaches for the epitome of cool and stylish.

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Let me bring this series of reflections on WOMEN'S WORK to a close. Examining the cases I covered in *Dangerous Peacemaking* I found one conclusion inescapable: Women are virtually never invited actually to be at the negotiating table when it's time to decide whether to make peace. The innermost core of the leadership gets into the room — friends and relatives as well as officials. In my seven studies there was only one woman. It is a time of very complex trust relationships and intimacy is a minimum requirement, the kind of intimacy Confucian (and perhaps Trump's) ethics requires of friends — unwavering loyalty.

Those cases revealed something else as well. Bridges are widely used as a standard metaphor in conflict resolution theory: the traditional image is of two sides meeting in the middle, but it is not true to life. In "REAL LIFE" peacemakers quickly find that they are on the same side of the bridge, on the war side, and the task ahead is to build and then walk over the bridge together to the peace side. Once over the bridge, they will have to work side by side if

there's to be a durable settlement.

Kim and hands, as North and their follow later.

When we that the begun.



Moon did just that, holding they walked in and out of South on April 27. Ideally fellow citizens will be able to them, sooner rather than

see that, then we will know serious peacemaking has

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## Bio

Helena Meyer-Knapp is a scholar/activist, an immigrant who came to the USA in 1969. Her work centers on peace-making.

She earned a BA in History at Oxford in the UK, and an MA in Communications and Ph.D. in Interdisciplinary Political Studies in the USA.

Her scholarly work includes Dangerous Peace-Making, a book published in 2003. It covers seven cases in different countries where serious attempts at peace-making were underway. The book ends with the challenge of post war justice and reconciliation. Dr. Meyer-Knapp also publishes essays on college teaching, on applied ethics, and on the links between national heritage-narratives and personal identity.

She worked steadily as a member of the faculty at the Evergreen State College, (international relations and political studies) from 1984 - 2017. Since 2001 her research projects have taken her regularly to NE Asia, most often to Japan but also to South Korea.

An activist in international affairs, in the 1980s she focused most of her efforts on local and national elections and referenda in support of the Campaign for a Nuclear Weapons Freeze. Her college teaching has also centered on public life, encouraging students to gather the materials, the skills and the momentum they need to participate in the community on their own behalf.



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**Pamphlet web-links can also be found at**  
**[Peacemakerpress.com](http://Peacemakerpress.com)**

# WOMEN AT WORK MAKING PEACE



Hockey Players North & South

Kim's sister  
Kim  
JoYoung



Cheer



Former President Park  
(above)  
Advisor Choi (right)



South Korean  
Foreign Minister  
Kang KyungWha

