

1945 ~ 1960

1945

Right after the liberation of 1945, the Nationalist movement leaders took their step in rebuilding the country by organizing the Preparation Committee for the National Foundation. However, the Soviet forces marched to the north of the 38th parallel line while the U.S. military imposed authority upon the south of the Korean Peninsula.

1946

In 1946, in order to discuss establishing an independent government of Korea, the first meeting of the Joint Commission between the U.S. and USSR was held, but not much accomplishment was made. Yi Seung-man argued that South should build a separate government of its own. Seriously concerned about the prospect of division, Yeo Un-hyeong promoted the movement of a Joint Cooperation between the Left and the Right.

1947

Truman Doctrine was declared. Conflicts between the U.S. and USSR continued, and the second meeting of the joint commission between the two countries ended without achieving anything.

1948

On May 10, 1948, a separate election was held in the south of the 38th parallel line. In July, the constitution was legislated, and on August 15th, the government of the Republic of Korea was established. Meanwhile, in the north of the 38th parallel line, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was established in September 1948.

1949

In 1949, the Chinese Communist Party won the Chinese Civil War, and the People's Republic of China was founded.

1950~1953

The Korean War broke out with the North Koreans' attack, and continued for three years. The war left Koreans with irrevocable damages. Right after the war ended, the ROK-US Mutual Defense Agreement was made.

1954

In 1954, the Korean Constitution was revised for the second time to allow Yi Seung-man to make his ruling permanent. Jo Bong-am who was a candidate for presidency was executed after being framed as a spy.

1958

In 1958, a cooperative union system for farming and individual businesses was established in North Korea, and it meant the emergence of a Socialist economic system.



XII

The Establishment of a Democratic Republic and the Country's Division



On August 15th of 1945, Korea was liberated from the cruel occupation, and three years later it founded a democratic republic. However, no one expected that such independence would be followed by a division of the country. No one at the time could have imagined that the 38th parallel line would divide the Korean people into two different political systems. The two governments could not tolerate each other, so they fought a fierce war that lasted for three years. The separation of the peninsula became a reality, and a lasting division finally occurred after almost 1,300 years of unification.

Restoration of the Gyeongeiseon Railroad The division that accompanied Korea's liberation also led to a disconnection in railroad operations between the South and the North. This picture shows the railroad finally reconnected for test operations, and trains being readied for trial runs again, as South and North reconciliation has been proceeding.

Conflicts During the Cold War Period

After the end of World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union rose as two super powers of the globe. With their newly established presence, the world was divided into two realms, Capitalism and Communism, with the U.S. and USSR at their respective centers. These two powers collided with each other everywhere in the world.

The ensuing Cold War cut the world in half and divided Europe into East and West. Vietnam was divided at the northern 17th parallel, while Korea was divided at the 38th parallel.

With the Cold War, the inner dynamics of East Asia significantly shifted. A civil war between the Nationalist Party (Kuomintang) and the Communist Party broke out in China. As a result, the People's Republic of China was established in the mainland with a communist system, while the Nationalist Party withdrew to Taiwan. In the meantime, Japan came to play a pivotal role in the overall anti-communist efforts supported and controlled by the United States.

The Cold War also hugely affected the Koreans' destiny. It played a key role in creating "Two Koreas." The Korean Peninsula became a frontline of conflicts between Communists and Capitalists and one of the most sensitive areas in the world.



Cold War and Asia

The Cold War meant more than it was to the Asians, including the Koreans. Countries that had long maintained unity were divided, and countless people had to endure excruciating pain, or be killed during wars.

- USSR and its allies in 1958
- U.S. and its allies in 1958



Japanese Self-Defense Army

USSR

MONGOLIA

NORTH KOREA

SOUTH KOREA

JAPAN

1948 Foundation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea
1950 North Korea's invasion of South Korea

1945 Occupied by the United States
1951 Recovery of its sovereignty
1951 Signing of the U.S. and Japan Security Treaty
1954 Organization of a Self-Defense Force

1945 U.S. Military administration imposed
1948 Foundation of the Republic of Korea
1950~1953 Korean War



Foundation of the People's Republic of China

CHINA

1949 Foundation of People's Republic of China;
The Republic of China withdrew to Taiwan



Korean War

EAST PAKISTAN

MYANMAR

1953~1974 Civil War

LAOS

NORTH VIETNAM

THAI

CAMBODIA

SOUTH VIETNAM

1972~1974 Civil War between the Communist Khmer Rouge and non-Communists

MALAYSIA

1948~1960 Communist uprising,
led by the Muslims

PHILIPPINES

1951 Signing of a mutual defense treaty between the United States and Philippines
1968 Communist revolts
1972~1978 Civil War



Vietnam War

1

Upon Liberation, the Process for Building a Nation Accelerates

Preparations for founding a nation

On August 15, 1945, Japan surrendered unconditionally to the Allied Forces, and that finally brought an end to the war. Japan's defeat meant the independence of Korea, since in 1943 the leaders of America, Britain, and China held a conference at Cairo to discuss the situation of post-war Asia and promised the independence of Korea: "In due course, Korea shall be free and independent." (1943, Cairo Declaration)

Koreans welcomed the day of independence with delight and also tears. Korean flags, which had been hidden in people's houses, stormed the streets, and the shouting "Hurray for Korea's Independence!" trembled the earth and heavens.

Soon after being liberated, Koreans began to passionately prepare for the reconstruction of their own government. One of the first leaders who called for the creation of a new nation was Yeo Un-hyeong. He had been preparing to establish a new country by organizing the National Foundation Alliance, and he immediately launched the Preparation Committee for the National Foundation, and

The Korean people welcoming their liberation

On August 15th of 1945, the Japanese Imperialists declared "unconditional surrender," and on the next day 20,000 prisoners who had been locked in police stations and prisons throughout the country were released. A wave of joy for liberation completely engulfed the country.



was handed over the Governor-General office's jurisdictions. The Committee was joined by many national activists. There were 145 branches of the Committee established throughout the country.

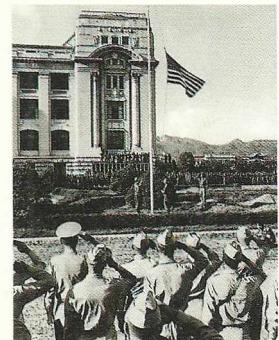
The Committee aspired to found an independent country and also a democratic government, and declared the foundation of the Joseon People's Republic on September 6, 1945. All the regional branches were transformed into 'People's Committees.' This was two days before the U.S. military forces established their presence in Korea.

The U.S. and USSR Forces occupied Korea and divided it into two

It was the Korean and Chinese Nationalist movements that mostly fought the Japanese prior to 1941. Then in 1941, the United States of America emerged as the new leading force of the Allied Forces, and in 1945 the Soviet Union finally joined the Allied Forces as well. And after the war ended, America, China, and Russia created a new world order.

The United States was the most influential one, and it attempted to place Korea under a trusteeship for a certain period of time, since they needed a pro-American government in Korea. The Soviet Union also marched into the Korean Peninsula to establish a pro-Russian government and was ready to accept the trusteeship as an alternative option. And in the meantime, Koreans' wishes to establish their own government were mostly ignored.

The United States and the Soviet Union respectively occupied the southern and northern areas of the 38th parallel, under the justification of dis-



The U.S. flag hung at the Joseon Governor-General office building
Instead of the Japanese flag, the American flag was posted at the building. According to the agreement with Soviet Union, the United States which occupied the south part of the 38 parallel line came with the authority to rule it until a new government was fully founded. The flag was an indicator to the reality of Korea, which was still not able to achieve full independence, within the Cold War atmosphere.



The 38th Parallel line that ran across roads and villages

The 38th parallel line resulted in random divisions in the Koreans' lives. It was a wall that divided the Korean Peninsula into two, as it literally cut through villages, roads, and fields.

arming the Japanese troops. As military governments were established in both regions, not only the People's Republic, but also the Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea which had fought the Japanese for decades, all turned out to be powerless organizations, unauthorized by the U.S. and USSR.

The military governments of the U.S. and USSR needed Korean supporters. Recognizing the domestic situation of political affairs as favorable to its interest, the Soviet Union decided to support the People's Committees that had been organized from below. On the contrary, the U.S. decided to employ many policemen and officials who had worked for the Japanese Governor-General or the Japanese Empire in general.

Confrontations between the Left and Right: hindrance to founding a single government

Following the liberation of Korea, many patriots returned home. Yi Seung-man and Kim Gu who led the independence movements in America and China respectively also came back to Seoul, Korea. In the meantime, Kim Il-seong and Kim Du-bong who used to work for independence in USSR and China made their political ground in Pyongyang of North Korea. In both north and south of the Korean Peninsula, numerous political parties and associations were organized.

However, the leaders were divided, between people who wanted a Democratic government and people who wanted a Socialist state. In the wake of



Aggravated confrontation between the Left and the Right
Facing the conclusions made at the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers, the Rightists opposed the trusteeship (left), while the Leftists argued that the establishment of a temporary government (right) was the top priority. Disagreement soon turned to aggravating conflicts, which ultimately inhibited genuine efforts to establish a unified government from going forward.



all those division even anarchism was recommended. In addition to that, the leaders did not have the experience of working together inside the same organization.

In December 1945, the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers from the three countries (U.S., U.K., USSR) was called to discuss the procedures for Korean independence. It was decided that the U.S. and USSR would form a joint committee and launch a Korean provisional government, and that total of four countries, U.S., U.K., USSR, China and the Korean Provisional government would discuss the issue of trusteeship.

Koreans were divided over the decision of the Moscow Conference, as people on the Right who called themselves as Nationalists opposed the trusteeship, while people on the Left which was composed of mostly Socialists believed that accepting the decision would be helpful in achieving an early independence. The Right criticised the Left for selling the country over to Russia, while the Left argued that dismantling the 38th parallel and establishing a political and economic unity between the North and South was more urgent.

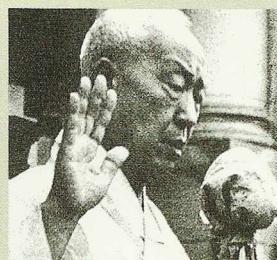
As Pro-Japanese conservative groups joined the anti-trusteeship movement, the Left called for the removal of pro-Japanese elements and the promotion of land reform. The conflicts between the Left and Right only became worse. The establishment of a unified republic in the Korean Peninsula was becoming increasingly difficult.



Kim Il-seong (1912~1994)



An Jae-hong (1891~1965)



Yi Seung-man (Syngman Rhee)
(1875~1965)



Park Heon-young (1900~1955)



Yeo Un-hyeong (1886~1947)



Kim Gu (1876~1949)

The confrontation between the Left and the Right concerning the issue of building a new nation

In the north side of the 38th parallel line the Soviet Union army marched, while in the south side the U.S. army supporting the Rightists was stationed. The Left and the Right disagreed with each other over the ways to construct a new nation. Kim Il-seong became the first Prime minister of the North while Yi Seung-man was elected as the first President in the South. An Jae-hong and Yeo Un-hyeong who were considered as neutral parties sought for ways that could unite the Left and the Right in cooperation, but even such efforts were not able to prevent the division of the country. Kim Gu refused to participate in the South Korean government as he was still arguing for a unified government. Park Heon-young who led the Socialist movement in the south later became the Vice premier of North Korea.

2

Establishment of the Republic of Korea

Beginning of the division

When the war ended, all Japanese troops withdrew from Korea. However, the Korean economy was still in trouble. Almost half of the remaining industries built by the Japanese and their technology shut down due to not only lack of engineers and material supplies but also disconnection of marketing routes. Also, the situation in which 79% of the heavy industry was located in the north, while 70% of the light industry located in the south, caused some serious problems for both parts of the Korean Peninsula.

Social stabilities could only be acquired with a swiftly founded government and a conclusive and extensive reform plans in place. But both the U.S. and USSR, which wanted a government helpful to their own agendas, were pretty much passive in helping out the Korean reforms, and their presence only drew Koreans further away from their fellow brethren.

The provisional government of the North, under the leadership of the People's Committee, carried out land reforms by liquidating pro-Japanese properties and nationalizing all industry. Also they pro-



The first meeting of the Joint Commission between the United States and the Soviet Union (left)

According to the decisions made at the Moscow Conference, the Joint Commission between the United States and the Soviet Union was held for the first time in Seoul. This meeting ended without results, due to a large gap in opinions regarding the organization of a provisional government. This is the picture taken on March 20th of 1946, at the Commission meeting which was held at the Deoksugung.

Committee of Cooperation between the Left and the Right (right)

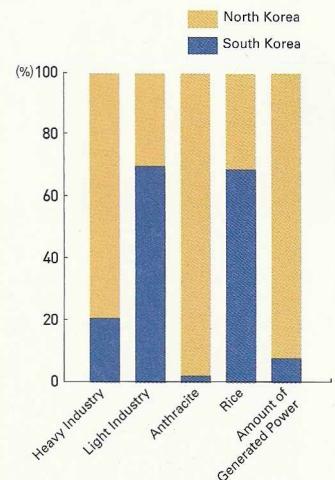
As the Joint Commission failed to reach a consensus in the first meeting in 1946 and Yi Seung-man argued the establishment of a separate government, Yeo Un-hyeong and Kim Gyu-shik organized the Committee of Cooperation between the Left and the Right to alleviate the tension between the South and North and thus find a way to build an independent, unified nation. This picture was taken at the second meeting of the Committee of Cooperation held after Yeo's death.

claimed laws ensuring the rights of laborers and the equality between men and women. As the North Korean government continued to stabilize itself, many 'Rightists' in the north who disagreed with all these policies fled to south across the 38th parallel.

The changes in the North put a lot of pressure upon the South. The Rightists in the South who were rather generous toward pro-Japanese figures and passive in punishing them, united themselves under the name of anti-Communism. Thus, they demanded that a government only for the South be founded to lead the struggle against Communism in the North.

In the fall of 1946, the struggles of impoverished farmers and laborers of the South intensified. Eventually, their struggles turned into a resistance against the U.S. military government, which in turn suppressed the protest and decided to oppress the activities of the Leftists.

In this chaotic situation of confrontation between the North and the South, the Leftists and Rightists who were concerned about the prospect of a permanently divided nation, like Yeo Un-hyeong of the Preparation Committee and Kim Gyu-shik who had worked for the Provisional Government, tried hard to establish a unified government inside Korea. However, their efforts of demanding cooperation between the Leftists and Rightists, and negotiations between the U.S. and USSR failed to accomplish a unification between the South and North.



Source : Survey Department of Joseon Bank
Annual Economic Report of Joseon, 1948

Comparison of the economic structures of the 38th parallel's South and North at the time of liberation

Intensification of the Cold War

Although the second meeting for the U.S. and USSR Joint Commission opened in 1947, it was difficult to anticipate fruitful results in the first place, as the confrontation between these two countries had been internationally intensifying. While more Socialist countries were emerging in Eastern Europe as the Soviet Union contributed to their liberation, and political parties leagued with Communism were showing rapid progress in Western Europe, the U.S. provided economic support to Western European nations with the Marshall Plan. In the same year, the establishment of separate governments in Germany was decided, as the country was already occupied in division.

AMERICA'S MARSHALL PLAN





Arrested people in the 4.3 Incident

As the general election in 1948 was approaching, the people of Jeju-do arose with weapons, opposing the idea of establishing a separate government only in South Korea. The police and soldiers counteracted such people's actions, and in the process about one ninth of the civilians living in Jeju-do were killed.

Proclamation Ceremony of the Republic of Korea

On May 10 of 1948, a general election was held in South Korea, and following the legislation of Constitutions on July 17th, the Republic of Korea was established on August 15th. In North Korea, the Supreme People's Committee held an election to adopt a Constitution, and accordingly the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was born on September 9th.

Establishing the Government of the Republic of Korea

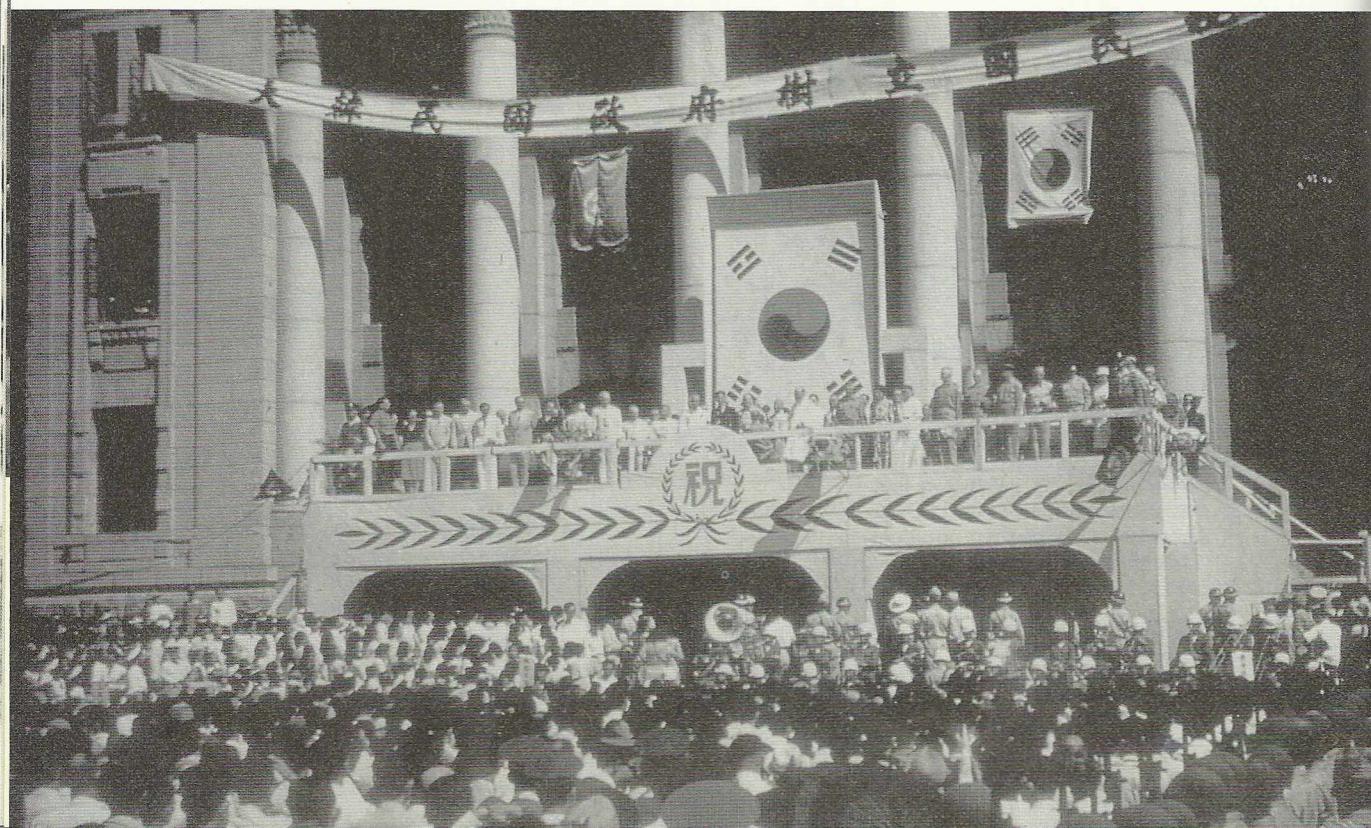
In 1947, as the Cold War intensified, the United States and the Soviet Union were confronting each other in numerous places in the world. And their conflicts greatly affected Korea's future destiny.

In the end of 1947, America brought the Korean issue to the United Nations. The UN General Assembly tallied votes and decided that nationwide elections under the supervision of the UN be held throughout the country. The Soviet Union refused to endorse the decision, arguing that the elections should be held after the withdrawal of foreign troops from Korea. Then, the UN decided an election to be held only in South Korea.

By that decision, the division of the country became a reality. Kim Gu and Kim Gyu-shik visited Pyeongyang and had a meeting with the North Korean leaders. In the meantime, residents of Jeju-do, vetoing the idea of a South Korea-only election, staged a fierce protest which led to the death of countless people. Yet, a general election was held in South Korea as planned on May 10, 1948, and 198 Assembly members were elected.

The legislative and judicial branches of government were formed and a Constitution was enacted. Finally on the 15th of August, the establishment of the Republic of Korea was proclaimed. And following it in the north, the establishment of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was proclaimed.

Yi Seung-man was elected as the President of the Republic of Korea to lead South Korea on the basis of a Capitalist economy, while North Korea





formed the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on the basis of the system of Socialism, under the leadership of Kim Il-seong.

A division after 1,300 years of unification

The Republic of Korea "is the fruit of our efforts to rebuild our independent nation, succeeding the great spirit of independence of the March 1st Movement..., will secure equal opportunities for everyone in all areas including politics, economy, society, and culture by establishing a democratic system..., will promote our people's equal improvement in life internally, and externally... will secure safety, freedom and happiness of us and our descendants..." (excerpts from the First Constitution). In this respect, the Republic of Korea was a successor of the Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea, and was the crowning achievement of movements that strived for the foundation of an independent nation.

However, the Republic of Korea was founded at the cost of the peninsula's own unity. The Korean Peninsula was finally divided, after having remained unified for 1,300 years. The 38th parallel was a tentative line that was drawn between the North and South to disarm the Japanese troops, yet it eventually became the dividing line of South and North Korea. Koreans did not have the power to oppose the decision of the U.S. and the Soviet Union as they were too powerful to confront, and now the 38th parallel line was about to cause a more tragic incident that changed the fate of the entire Korean race.

The First National Assembly (that created the Constitution)

In South Korea, on May 10th a general election was held to elect 198 lawmakers, and on May 31st the First Assembly was held. Since the objective of this meeting was to create a Constitution, this particular assembly is also called the "Constitution Assembly."

3

Outbreak of the Korean War

The anti-Communist system established by the Yi Seung-man administration

Farm lands are to be equally distributed to peasants (article 86) ... Industries such as transportation, communication, finance, insurance, electricity, irrigation, water and gas are to be operated by the government for the benefit of the public (article 87). Special Laws may be legislated to punish malicious anti-national activists (article 111)... – The First Constitution

In liberated Korea, all people expected reforms of this kind. Soon after the government was established, Koreans demanded their implementations. The National Assembly enacted the Land Reform Law and the Punishment Law on Anti-National Actions.

Yet, landlords and pro-Japanese Koreans resisted against these actions in various ways. Yi Seung-man, who seized power with the support of the Hanguk Minjudang (Korean Democratic Party) which represented the landlord class and pro-Japanese officials and policemen, fell into a dilemma.

In the end, Yi Seung-man decided to protect his supporters, and in order to do that, he found his political justification in anti-Communism. To eliminate all Communists he protected the pro-Japanese policemen, and finally he obstructed the National Assembly's efforts of accusing pro-Japanese activities.



Special Committee of Investigation and Punishment of those who acted against the Korean people

In 1948, the National Assembly made a law to punish those who acted against the Korean people. The Special Committee of Investigation and Punishment of those who acted against the Korean people, a Special Prosecutor Office and a Special Court were all organized to accuse pro-Japanese sympathizers. The picture shows the pro-Japanese Koreans entering the court.

Punishments of anti-national perpetrators were discontinued, and anyone who were labeled as a Communist or ‘bbalgaengi’ (a “commie” or “reds”) were not even granted with basic civil rights.

Since 1950, land reforms were conducted in the way of purchasing and distributing lands at a certain cost. Since the majority of the farmers in the South wished redistribution of the farm lands, the Yi government initiated the land reform to obtain popularity. However, the reform was done incompletely, and as a result, the living conditions of the farmers were not that much enhanced. However, the disappearance of the landlord system was indeed an accomplishment.

South and North plunged into a civil war

As much as the Yi Seung-man government wanted to be recognized as the sole government of the Korean Peninsula, it was still a government representing only a half of the peninsula. And North Korea was facing the same problem. So, before one of them was destroyed, they were to remain as mere half-governments. In that regard, one could say that they were destined to go to war.

The North Korean government established a strategy to accomplish unification through war, and since 1949 it prepared a war, considering the Communists’ triumphs in China and the United States’ withdrawal from the South to be advantageous to their plans.

The North Korean government’s officials visited Mao Zedong and Stalin to seek cooperation in the war and confirmed allied relationships with



Farming Lands Reform

With the Land Reform Order issued in 1950 in South Korea, about 550,000 Jeongbo (5,454,548,000m²) of lands were re-distributed to the poor farmers. Due to this order, the landlord class finally disappeared from South Korea.



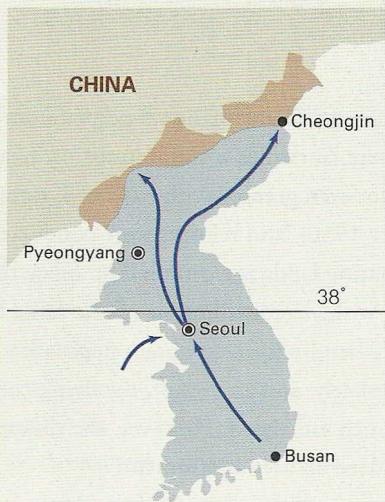
Kim Il-sung visited USSR

In April and May of 1950, Kim Il-sung visited USSR and China, where he received promises of support from Stalin and Mao, and their agreement on the Korean War as well.



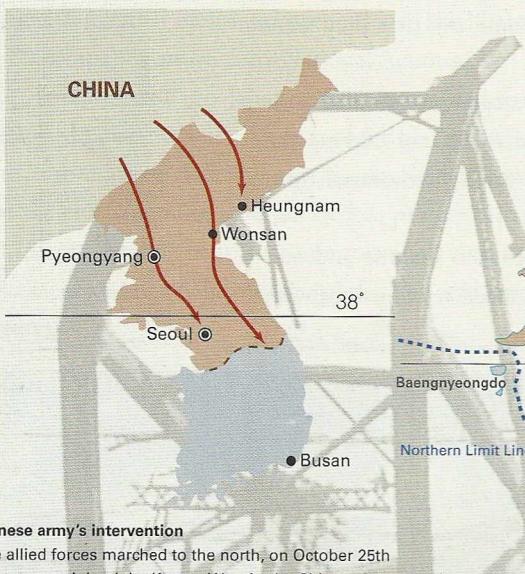
① North Korea's invasion of South Korea

On June 25th of 1950, the North Korean army invaded South Korea with an all-out attack. They occupied Seoul in three days. It only took three more months to push forward and take over most of the South Korean region, except for a few areas of the Gyeongsang-do province like Daegu and Busan.



② Participation of the United Nations army

The United States called for a UN Security Council meeting, which eventually made a decision for the UN army to join the Korean War. The UN army successfully carried out the Incheon Landing Operation on September 15th of 1950, and advanced to Seoul on the 28th of September. On October 13th they marched to Pyeongyang, across the 38th parallel line and advanced to the Amnokgang by the end of October.



③ Chinese army's intervention

As the allied forces marched to the north, on October 25th Chinese troops joined the Korean War. As the Chinese intervened in the war, the situation was reversed. The UN forces had to withdraw from Seoul, but it re-approached the areas near the 38th parallel line in early 1951.



④ The Military Line set up according to the Armistice Agreement

As the war ended, according to the Armistice Agreement made on July 27th of 1953, the war's frontline of the time became the military line of division between South and North. Each army withdrew 2km from the line and agreed to make the buffer zone de-militarized.

- ➡ Forwarding Routes of the North Korean Army and Chinese Army
- ➡ Forwarding Routes of the United Nations Army
- ➡ Occupied Area by the North Korean Army
- ➡ Occupied Area by the United Nations Army

Korean War and the Irrevocable Damage

The final division of the Korean Peninsula proceeded through total of three steps. First, in 1945 the 38th parallel line was drawn as the U.S. and USSR armies stationed themselves in south and north of the Korean Peninsula. Then in 1948 separate governments were established in north and south respectively. Finally, in 1950 with the Korean War, division was made complete, with international recognition. The Korean War lasted three years and tragically resulted in a harsh sense of rivalry against each other and anti-democratic political situations in both South and North Koreas.

them. North Korea also brought home the North Korean troops serving for the Chinese Communist Party to strengthen its own military.

In the spring of 1950, the hostility between the North and South escalated more than ever. While North Korea prepared for war under the slogan of "Complete Occupation of the Country Land," South Korea asserted "Unification by Pushing Forward to the North" and reinforced its anti-Communism policy. Antagonism between the two grew to the extent that they spread out propaganda fliers rebuking each other, and clashes near the 38th parallel line became far more frequent.

Outbreak of war

On June 25, 1950, North Korea started a war by pushing forward the 38th parallel. In mere three days, Seoul was seized. And in three months the North Korean army pushed forward to the southeast tip of the Korean Peninsula. Forceful unification by North Korea seemed almost complete at this point.

In response, the U.S. actively joined the fight for South Korea, from the very beginning of the war. America's justification for fighting in the Korean Peninsula was to protect a Democratic country from Communist invasion. Also the United Nations reprimanded the invasion and thus agreed to send the UN forces composed of 16 nationalities to Korea with the U.S. at the helm. The war between the North and South turned into an international war.

On September 15, 1950, the U.S. forces successfully completed the Inchon Landing Operation as a sudden attack. As the U.S. forces initiated their attacks, the tides of war indeed turned, and not much time was given for the North Korean army to retreat to the north. The allied forces of the Republic of Korea and the United Nations pushed the North Korean troops across the 38th parallel line, and by winter reached the Amnokgang. In two months, the allied forces occupied most of the northern region of the 38th parallel line. The North Korean government faced the risk of losing its regime.

However, when China entered the war, once again the situation was reversed. China not only considered North Korea as their comrade country to which they were allied in their fights against the Japanese, but was also worried that the collapse of North Korea would threaten their own security.

China joined the war by sending huge militia troops. Although the So-

viet Union did not officially participate in the war, it actively supported North Korea and China. Now the Korean War developed to become a war that represented the animosity of the international Cold War.

In early 1951, Seoul was once again seized by the allied forces of North Korea and China. Then the allied UN forces once again pushed them back above the 38th parallel line, yet this time they were unable to gain further ground to the north. In the beginning of the war, the South Korean army retreated all the way to the southern end of the peninsula, then pushed forward all the way up to the north. Yet in the end, they all found themselves back to where it first started.

As the war continued for three years, the two Koreas came to realize that it was no longer possible to unify the peninsula by force. In 1951, the Soviet Union proposed a cease-fire. Yet, with animosity running high, negotiations took much longer than anticipated. And in the meantime, many young people lost their lives in battles.

Damages by the war, and atrocities committed against civilians

The Korean War resulted in a considerable number of casualties and deaths in addition to destruction of many mountains, fields, and cities. Approximately 150,000 Korean soldiers, 35,000 UN soldiers, 520,000 North Korean militia and hundreds of thousands of Chinese soldiers were killed. The number of casualties and people who were lost was too large to be counted.

During the war many civilians were terribly victimized. The number of civilians' death amounted to almost one million people. A large number of people were victimized due to repetitive bombings. Moreover, both Koreas killed a huge number of civilians. In the beginning of the war, the South Korean army, while retreating, massacred civilians who were in favor of the Communists. And later, when the North Korean army occupied such towns they also executed many people who were not supportive of Communism. And when the front line of the war moved toward the north, once again many people who were believed to be in favor of Communism were killed.

Even civilians themselves killed each other. While front lines were moving between south and north, and the Leftists and the Rightists took turns to occupy towns and villages day and night, people killed each other believ-

ing the victims were their enemies. The financial loss was incredible. 50.5% of the factory facilities were destroyed. 1.7 times the GNP of that time, the amount of 412.3 billion won, was lost due to the war. The whole peninsula turned into a total ruin.

The fire ceased, however...

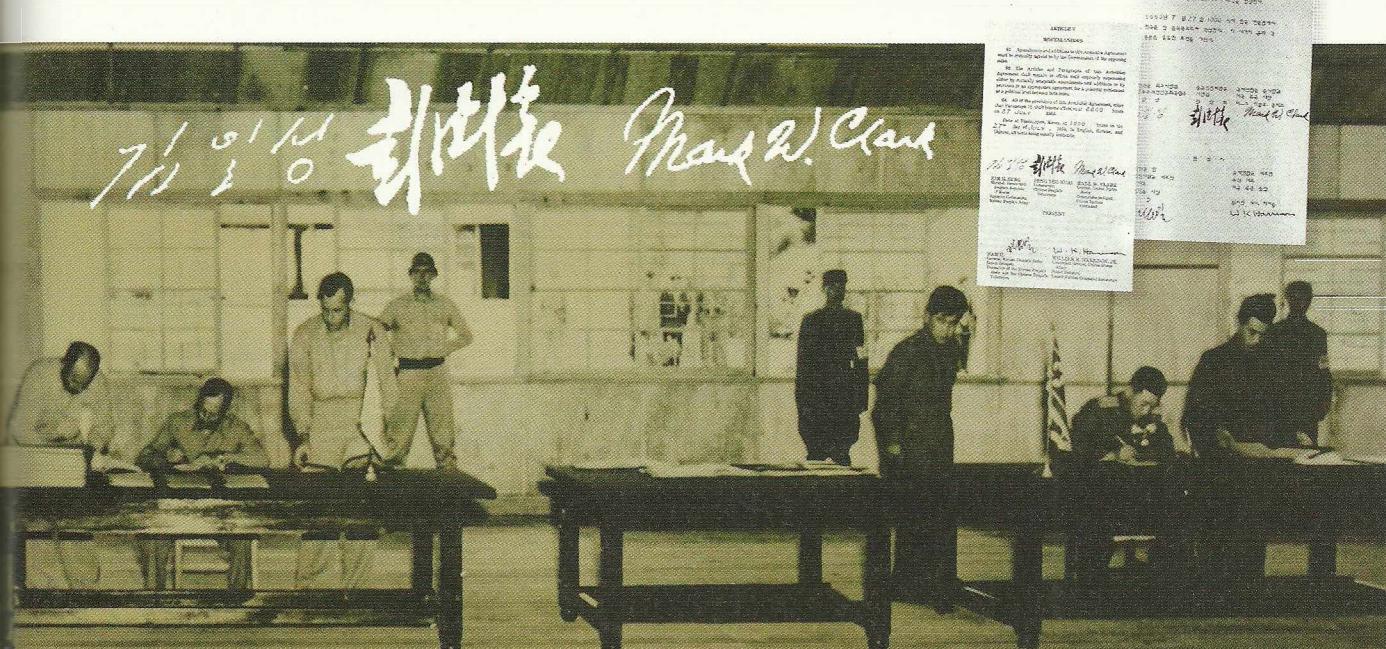
On July 27, 1953, the U.S., North Korea, and China signed the cease-fire treaty. Although shooting was stopped, it was not yet the complete end of war, as the cease-fire negotiations failed to lead to a peace treaty.

A meeting between political leaders, which was planned to be held in 3 months, was never opened. In 1954, the Geneva Meeting also failed to suggest a peaceful resolution; the South asserted that under the supervision of the United Nations the South and North should vote together for a unified government. Yet, the North claimed that a general election should be held after the United Nations army completely withdrew.

After 1954, there was no further discussion on unification. Since then until now, the Republic of Korea's Army and the U.S. armed forces have been facing the North Korean army. The 'truce line' that replaced the 38th parallel still remains in tension.



The above picture shows Seoul demolished after the war, and the bottom picture shows the condition of Pyeongyang.



Armistice Agreement

In June 23 of 1951 the Soviet Union suggested having a cease-fire meeting, and as a result, on July 10 at Gaeseong a meeting was held. Due to disagreements on the establishment of military demarcation line, the monitoring organization, as well as exchanges of prisoners of war, reaching a conclusion was delayed. It was July 27 of 1953 when representatives of North Korea, China, and the United Nations army all signed the agreement. South Korea did not sign the agreement as it opposed the cease-fire.

DMZ; from the Days of the 38th Parallel to the Restoration of the Gyeongeuijeon Railroad

The Demilitarized Zone divides the Korean Peninsula in half. In the zone, there is an area created by the Military Demarcation Lines (MDL), established 2km to the north and the south respectively. This is the place where South Korea and North Korea continue to confront each other, in quite a different situation as implied from the word "Demilitarized Zone."

As Japan surrendered in 1945, the U.S. and USSR stationed troops in the south and north of the 38th parallel line respectively. The 38th parallel line was replaced by the Demilitarized Zone according to the agreement of the cease-fire meeting in 1953. This 248km DMZ line which begins at the Yeseonggang (R.) and the mouth of the Hangang in the west, travels through Panmunjom to the south of Gaeseong. It passes Cheorwon and Geumhwa and reaches Goseong on the East coast, completely dividing the Korean Peninsula.

Joint Security Area

The Joint Security Area is a designated place where both South and North Koreas manage in cooperation to take care of works that should be done. Armistice meetings and South-North meetings are held here. The fact that Korea is the only divided nation on Earth can be obviously seen here.



In the DMZ area there are only two residential areas such as the Daeseongdong Freedom Village in the South and Pyeonghwachon in the North. Since no one can enter the DMZ, it has become home to many rare animals and plants. Also there are check points and observation stations manned by the South and North Korean troops.

To the Koreans, the DMZ is a line of division that exists between brothers and sisters as well as husbands and wives. Yet, since the 1990s, as the Korean people's inclination for unification increased, the line of division continued to gradually fade out.

A road was opened and led to the initiation of Geumgangsan tours, and the Gyeongeuijeon railroad was restored after all those years of separation. Koreans are all waiting for the day when the DMZ line would collapse and they would finally be awarded with the unification they deserve.

❶ College students' movement for Unification

In 1989, Yim Su-gyeong participated in the 13th World Young Students' Festival held at Pyongyang as the representative of South Korea's National Association of University Student Representatives. She returned to the South through Panmunjeom with Mun Gyu-hyeon, a member of Catholic Priests Association for Realization of Justice.

❷ Corporate chief executive officer's visiting North with a herd of cattle

In 1998, Jeong Ju-yeong, one of the most representative chief executive officers of South Korean corporates, visited his home town in North Korea with trucks full of cattle.

❸ South-North experimental operation of the railroad

On May 17 of 2007, the Gyeongeuijeon line and the Donghae line were restored, and a train finally crossed the cease-fire line in an experimental operation which was not possible for the past half century.

❹ The president walking over the 38th parallel line

Around 9 a.m. on October 2 of 2007 the South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun walked across the 38th parallel line to participate in the South-North Summit in Pyongyang.



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