

# Delve Deeper into *In the Matter of Cha Jung Hee*

A film by Deann Borshay Liem

This multi-media resource list, compiled by Susan Conlon and Martha Perry of Princeton Public Library, provides a range of perspectives on the issues raised by the upcoming POV documentary *In the Matter of Cha Jung Hee*.

*Her passport said she was Cha Jung Hee. She knew she was not. So began a 40-year deception for a Korean adoptee who came to the United States in 1966. Told to keep her true identity secret from her new American family, the 8-year-old girl quickly forgot she had ever been anyone else. But why had her identity been switched? And who was the real Cha Jung Hee? In the Matter of Cha Jung Hee is the search to find the answers, as acclaimed filmmaker Deann Borshay Liem returns to her native Korea to find her "double," the mysterious girl whose place she took in America.*

## ADULT NONFICTION

### Korean Adoptees

Lee, Ellen, et al. *Once They Hear My Name: Korean Adoptees and Their Journeys Toward Identity*. Tamarisk Books, 2008. A testament to the more than 100,000 Korean adoptees who have come to the United States since the 1950s, this collection of oral histories features the stories of nine Korean Americans who were adopted as children and the struggles they've shared as foreigners in their native lands. From their early confrontations with racism and xenophobia to their later-in-life trips back to Korea to find their roots (with mixed results), these narratives illustrate the wide variety of ways in which all adoptive parents and adoptees—not just those from Korea—must struggle with issues of identity, alienation, and family.

Robinson, Katy. *A Single Square Picture: A Korean Adoptee's Search for Her Roots*. New York: Berkley Books, 2002. One day she was Kim Ji-yun, growing up in Seoul, Korea. The next day she was Catherine Jeanne Robinson, living with her new American family in Salt Lake City, Utah. Twenty years later, Katy Robinson returned to Seoul in search of her birth mother—and found herself an

American outsider in her native land. What transpired in this world-at once familiar and strange, comforting and sad-left Katy conflicted, shattered, exhilarated, and moved in ways she never imagined.

Trenka, Jane Jeong. *Fugitive Visions: An Adoptee's Return to Korea*. St. Paul, MN: Graywolf Press, 2009. In her second memoir, Trenka, a Korean adoptee raised in America, explores the trials of moving back to live in Korea: the struggle for acceptance, learning the language, and understanding the culture.

Trenka, Jane Jeong. *The Language of Blood: A Memoir*. St. Paul, MN: Borealis Books, 2003. An adoptee's search for identity takes her on a journey from Minnesota to Korea and back as she seeks to resolve the dualities that have long-defined her life: Korean-born, American-raised, never fully belonging to either.

Wilkinson, Sook and Nancy Fox (eds.) *After the Morning Calm: Reflections of Korean Adoptees*. Sunrise Ventures, 2002. Through memories, reflections, and poetry, Korean adult adoptees speak to the range of issues that accompany adoption: feelings of belonging and difference, self and other, culture and accommodation, love and loss.

### Korean War

*Encyclopedia of the Korean War: A Political, Social, and Military History*. Spencer C. Tucker, editor; Jinwung Kim, et al. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2000. This three-volume set explores the Korean War, a conflict significant for its impact on American foreign policy, military controversies, and colorful political and military characters. Arranged alphabetically, the entries cover battles, military and political leaders, events and operations, military organizations and operations, historical and geographical facts, United Nations commands and committees, U.S. military organizations and policy, and other relevant topics.

## ADULT FICTION

Lee, Chang-rae. *The Surrendered*. New York: Riverhead Books, 2010. Thirty years after vying for the attentions of a beautiful but damaged missionary wife at an orphanage, Korean orphan June Han and former GI Hector Brennan are reunited by a plot that forces them to come to terms with mysterious secrets from their past.

Lee, Marie Myung-Ok. *Somebody's Daughter*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2005. *Somebody's Daughter* is the story of nineteen-year-old Sarah Thorson, who was adopted as a baby by a Lutheran couple in the Midwest. After dropping out of college, she decides to study in Korea and becomes more and more intrigued by her Korean heritage, eventually embarking on a crusade to find her birth mother.

Min, Katherine. *Secondhand World*. New York: Knopf, 2006. Depicting a tragedy-beset Korean-American family living in upstate New York, protagonist, Isa, is caught between two cultures. Her Korean-born parents, who have achieved a measure of success in the United States, disagree on what to call her when she is born. She embraces American life, but resists her mother's urgings to get an eyelid operation popular with Asian women. When her younger brother is killed in a freak accident, she struggles with the sense that her traditional parents value their dead son more than their living daughter.

Scott, Joanna C. *The Lucky Gourd Shop*. Denver, CO: MacMurray & Beck, 2000. This moving story about three adopted Korean children's origins is hauntingly powerful, revealing with honesty and empathy the sharpest edges that an unsympathetic world uses to carve our choices.

## NON-FICTION FOR YOUNG READERS

Boyd, Brian. *When You Were Born in Korea: A Memory Book for Children Adopted from Korea*. St. Paul, MN: Yeong &



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**Yeong Book Co., 1993.** K-grade 5. This book is a thoughtful description of the lives of children in Korea before they are adopted.

**Cheung, Hyechong. *K is for Korea*. London: Frances Lincoln Children's, 2008.** K-grade 3. With each letter of the alphabet featuring a city or aspect of country life, the ancient and modern world of Korea, its people, culture, and traditions are presented in a richly illustrated addition to the World Alphabet series with color photos throughout.

**Kremetz, Jill. *How it Feels to Be Adopted*. New York: Knopf, 1988.** Ages 9-12. 19 boys and girls, from age 8-16 and from every social background confide their feelings about their adoption.

**McGowen, Tom. *The Korean War*. New York: Franklin Watts, 1992.** Grades 6-9. An overview of the three-year war that took over two million lives and resolved none of the conflicts that split Korea into two irreconcilable nations.

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## FICTION FOR YOUNG READERS

**Carlson, Lori M. *American Eyes: New Asian-American Short Stories for Young Adults*. New York: Fawcett Juniper, 1994.** Grade 7 and up. These ten stories reflect the conflict Asian-Americans face in balancing an ancient heritage and an unknown future.

**Girard, Linda Walvoord. *We Adopted You, Benjamin Koo*. Niles, IL: A. Whitman, 1989.** Ages 7-11. A story about interracial adoption, nine-year old Ben was adopted from Korea, and has questions about his adoption. Benjamin Koo narrates his own story: his birth mother left him at an orphanage in Korea when he was only a few days old; and in America, his adoptive parents were longing to have a child and were just waiting for one to become available.

**Kent, Rose. *Kimchi and Calamari*. New York: HarperCollins, 2007.** Grades 4-7. Joseph Calderaro, a fourteen-year-old Korean adoptee, is challenged by a school assignment requiring him to trace his

ancestry. He sets out on a course to explore his Korean roots and ask questions that his adoptive parents may not be able to answer.

**Pellegrini, Nina. *Families Are Different*. New York: Holiday House, 1991.** Kindergarten to grade 1. Created by a woman with an adopted Korean daughter, this book tells the story of a family composed of Caucasian parents, their two adopted Korean daughters and their dog. Told in the voice of the younger daughter Nico, the familiar concerns of adopted children and their parents are expressed.

through which they attempt to stay connected to their Korean roots. The film also discusses why so many Korean orphans are being adopted outside of the country and documents the effort to increase domestic adoption in Korea.

**South Korea, a television broadcast by Ian Wright. Pilot Productions, 2008. (60 min).** Ian Wright travels throughout South Korea, including stops in Seoul, Jinbu, Hahoe, Pusan and to Cheju Island. Originally broadcast as an episode of the television series *Globe trekker*.

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## FILMS/ DOCUMENTARIES

**First Person Plural, a film by Deanne Borshay Liem. Independent Television Service (ITVS) and the National Asian American Telecommunications Association (NAATA), 2000 (56 min.).** Chronicles Deanne Borshay Liem's experiences as a South Korean child adopted by a white American family. A first-time journey to Korea with her adoptive American mother and father reveals a deeply personal story about mistaken identity, and uncovers broader issues about the loss of culture resulting from assimilation and American attitudes toward immigrants and minorities. *POV broadcast, 2000 season.*

**Going Home, a film by Jason Hoffman. ThirdCat Productions, 2009 (73 min.).** Born in Korea and raised in by Jewish parents in New York City, 21-year-old Jason Hoffman finally summons the courage to return to Korea and contact his birth mother. Jason's search raises questions of what his life could have been had he not been adopted and challenges the preconceptions of his own identity.

**Journey of Hope, a film by Karen Hae Soon Eckert. HOPE Productions, 2000 (57 min).** Through the personal stories of adult adoptees, the film looks at the issues surrounding the adoption of Korean children by families in the United States. The adoptees featured in the film describe their experiences and struggles with their personal and cultural identity and the process

