



Looking for a Mr. Kim in Seoul: A Guide to Korean Expressions

Sang-Hun Choe, Christopher Torchia

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“Looking for a Mr. Kim in Seoul” has the same meaning as ‘finding a needle in a haystack’ in English as Kim is one of the most popular family name in Korea. Expressions reflect the culture, and the history of its people. Even if you know the meaning of each word, you probably will not understand the entire expression without understanding the culture. Looking for a Mr. Kim in Seoul: A Guide to Korean Expressions makes enjoyable the discovery of the connection between its language and the Korean people and their history and culture. Many Korean expressions reflect the gritty side of Koreans, who have endured conflict and hardship throughout their history. There are also humorous expressions such as “I laughed so hard that I thought my belly button would pop out.” Some expressions are vaguely familiar: “The other man's rice cake always looks bigger,” and “Packed like bean sprouts.” Other expressions are very unique, after having a delicious meal, you may say, “You wouldn't notice even if your friend at the same table dies.” When you are in a heated discussion, you may yell “You Die! I Die!” “Looking for a Mr. Kim in Seoul” is arranged by themes in 14 chapters, including anatomical terms, grit and hardship, money, proverbs as propaganda (North Korea) and family relationships. Each of the sayings is given in English, Korean and English transliteration. An English translation is followed with an extended explanation of the meaning, origin, as well as additional information such as variants and additional explanation. The book contains pronunciation guide, map of Korea, indices in English, Korean and some Hanja, Chinese characters used in Korea.

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Suzanne Crider:

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