

Review: Mike Kim, *Escaping North Korea: Defiance and Hope in the World's Most Repressive Country*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, NY, 2008 (2010 edn.)

Pages: 237

Wide-Ranging Survey of Hell's Regime

The author covers all the evils of the regime; famine; Christian persecution; sex trafficking to China; political conniving of the Kim family; and the arduous escape route across Asia.

The only accurate description of life in the DPRK is a Communist-Materialist hell, with no freedoms, and where one's life always hangs in the balance.

Foreword / Preface / Introduction (pp. ix-5)

The most important factors against any uprising against a dictator are unwillingness of the army to obey orders, and use of force.

I) The North Korean Mind (pp. 6-26)

Ak: "evil".

Mee-guk saram: "American"

Il-Bun nom: "Japanese"

Children are taught Americans and Japanese are the worst people on earth. Kim Jong Il's (KJI) words must be broadcasted day and night.

"If the Communist party decides it, we will do it."

"Let's live our own way."

In an industrial accident, many saved portraits of Kim Il Sung (KIS) and KJI before their own children!

80% of DPRK military is severely weakened.

II) Inside the Hermit Kingdom (pp. 27-44)

84K South Koreans were kidnapped during the North's occupation.

KJI surrounds himself with 600 loyalist families.

“There's no work to do in North Korea. Even if you do work, they don't pay you. So why work?” [p33]

20% of the population are informants.

95% are unemployed but are forced to work free for the government.

Pastor Moon: “Good people can't survive in North Korea ... because ... You have to steal in order to survive ... stealing is no longer considered a crime ... It is understood that people ... must steal.” [p39]

Alcoholism is sponsored to “keep the people happy”.

Nearly all men over 17 use ice.

III) Famine (pp. 45-60)

Some eat rats and pets hardly exist.

The average Northern child is 20cm shorter and 10kg lighter than in the South.

Malnutrition can steal up to 15 IQ points.

KJI played the role of International Beggar.

IV) Road to Refuge (pp. 61-79)

Defections into China most often occur in winter since the Tumen river is frozen.

V) Sex Trafficking (pp. 80-101)

China's One Child Policy drove imports of North Korean women.

VI) Gulags (pp. 102-116)

There are ~200K political prisoners in the DPRK.

VII) Christianity and North Korea (pp. 117-134)

Christian prisoners develop severe hunchback since by decree they aren't allowed to look at the sky.

VIII) Freedom on the Fourth (pp. 135-151)

IX) Asian Underground Railroad (pp. 152-174)

Refugees must travel 6K mi through China, Cambodia, Vietnam, Myanmar, Laos, then the South Korean embassy in Thailand.

X) Heroes (pp. 175-185)

XI) Restoring Lives (pp. 186-196)

XII) The Future of North Korea (pp. 197-219)

"Mass defections strike at the heart of the Kim regime."

"If Kim Jong Il and Kim Il Sung are gods, why can't they feed us?"

North Korea never responds positively to favourable treatment.

Epilogue: There and Back Again / Notes (pp. 220-237)

As of July, 2007, DPRK border guards were charging \$270 to cross the Tumen River.