

TRANSACTIONS



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Recollections of a Missionary Kid Returning to Korea, August 28, 1945

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Editor's note: Park Gerdine was born in Korea and attended Seoul Foreign School until his missionary parents retired in 1937. He finished high school in the U.S. and attended Emory University until the outbreak of World War II, during which he served in the Pacific with the 5th Army Air Corps. On August 28, 1945 he was among the first group of twenty-eight Americans to arrive in Korea to arrange the surrender of Japanese troops, and subsequently served on the staff of Lt. General John Hodge, commander of U.S. occupation forces in Korea. His experiences during this time form the basis of this article. Following his discharge from the army, Dr. Gerdine became a medical doctor specializing in general surgery and later, emergency medicine. He is currently retired and lives in Asheville, North Carolina.

"Tell me, Lieutenant, where in hell is Korea?" He was a burly fellow, the General, sitting at his desk in a large tent on Okinawa. Beads of sweat ran down his round face. Okinawa in August is hot and sultry.

General Hodge's aide-de-camp had just introduced us, a lieutenant general and a second lieutenant. Earlier that day a plane had flown me from the airstrip at the 5th Army Air Corps Headquarters near Ie Shima, where I was stationed, to Naha where U. S. Army XXIV Corps was headquartered. I had no idea what was expected of me, but it was evident that I was a VIP—so far as I know, the only second lieutenant VIP in the history of the U. S. Army. My status as a junior intelligence officer had changed overnight from insignificant to a ridiculous degree of importance.

When I recovered from the shock of the General's initial question, I

boxed in Korea for him—Manchuria on the north, the Yellow Sea to the west, the Sea of Japan on the east and the Korea Straits separating the peninsula from Japan.

“Well I’ll be damned,” he muttered. “I thought it was one of those islands we bypassed in the South Pacific.”

I wondered what I was into.

On August 6, 1945, less than three weeks earlier, an atomic bomb had been dropped on Hiroshima. Three days later, when another was dropped on Nagasaki, Japan capitulated, ending World War II but presenting the U. S. government with a new problem. There were no personnel trained for the needed military governments. A program had been established at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville to train military government personnel for the Far East. It had been in operation for only six weeks.

The Army Headquarters in Naha had sent out a request—sort of an all points bulletin—for someone who had knowledge of Korea to brief the Staff of the XXIV Corps. General Hodge, commanding general of that unit, was to be the military governor of the country. By some quirk of fate, apparently I was the only one in any of the armed services in the Western Pacific who had ever lived in Korea and spoke the language. I got the call and found myself on temporary duty with the XXIV Corps.

The morning after my arrival I briefed the general and his staff on Korea. Having left Korea eight years previously, when I was only fourteen, I had little to impart other than nonspecific and certainly non-military information. When I was introduced and stood to address the assembled officers, there in the second row—I counted them—were eleven general officers. For a moment I was speechless. What was I doing in front of all that brass? Then it dawned on me. I was at the podium and they were enduring those hard, metal chairs because I knew more about Korea than they. I relaxed and had a ball. Opportunities like that don’t come often, particularly in the military, and especially for a second lieutenant.

I was born in Kaesong, just north of the 38th parallel—there was no division of the country in those days—but the family moved to Seoul when I was four, so Seoul was my hometown. My parents were Methodist missionaries—Father a minister, Mother a teacher. I attended Seoul Foreign School through the 10th grade, leaving Korea in 1937

when my parents retired and the family went back to the United States.

I'll never forget my return to Korea—Tuesday, August 28, 1945. Jumbled emotions engulfed me as I boarded one of the three B-25 bombers for the flight from Naha, Okinawa to Kimpo Airport near Seoul. I was going home! What would I find? Would I be able to locate those who were such an important part of my early life? Soo Chun-ee, with the perpetual smile, and Aumana, my amah, who always seemed to know what I needed. Were they still alive?

Twenty-eight U. S. military personnel were packed into those three B-25s. We were the first Americans to arrive in Korea. Our mission: Arrange for the surrender of the Japanese troops in Korea south of the 38th parallel.

The flight was long, but I was lost in reverie. Time stood still: summers at Wonsan Beach, walking to school in the snow, spending the night with Aumana, hiking in the Diamond Mountains, ice skating on a frozen rice paddy at the Underwood's, track meets, my first kiss. All these muddled thoughts scrambling over one another in an effort to climb to consciousness.

Japanese army staff cars were awaiting our arrival. In each car there was a driver and an armed escort. I noticed that, although in Japanese army uniform, one of the drivers was Korean. I decided to ride in his car, which happened to be the last one in the convoy. Not revealing my Korean background might allow me to pick up some intelligence, I reasoned. But what little conversation there was between the driver and the escort was in Japanese and beyond my limited knowledge of that language.

At every crossroad there was a manned machine gun position. Japanese soldiers with bayonet-tipped rifles lined each side of the road, standing about twenty-five or thirty yards apart. They stood at Parade Rest with their backs to us. The two captains in the car with me thought it was a not-so-subtle form of insult and were uneasy about our safety. I tried to reassure them that we had no need to worry as the Emperor, who at that time was still a "god," had given orders to protect us.

My attempt to calm their concerns was successful until the convoy unexpectedly came to a halt along the bank of the Han River about halfway into the city. That's when I heard Korean spoken for the first

time as our driver ordered two young boys to bring water from the river. Because petroleum products were scarce, many cars and trucks had been converted to carbide, and water was needed to stoke the carbide burners. With that understanding of the unscheduled stop, we all relaxed and soon we were again headed toward Seoul.

After crossing the Han River the convoy turned north toward the center of the city. My heart raced as I strained to catch a glimpse of Namdaemun, the beautiful Great South Gate. For how many centuries had that magnificent edifice been there? Lost in reflection of the many times I had passed the impressive gate, I was suddenly jerked back to reality. Without the slightest warning our driver was turning into a cavernous building. With dismay, I watched the other cars in the convoy disappear down the street. A large overhead door clanged shut behind us.

"Why did you turn in here?" I blurted out, completely forgetting my resolve not to speak Korean. My fright was matched by the shock of the Korean driver. He looked at me incredulously. An American officer speaking Korean. With no accent! He stammered that he needed to stoke the carbide burner once again and he feared that if he stopped on the street the curious crowd might bother us. In short order, and greatly relieved, we were on our way to join the others at the Chosen Hotel, where we would be staying.

The first few days back in Korea were a blur. I was sought with one question or another, most of which I could not answer. I spent much of my time arranging for the Japanese troops to move south toward Pusan, from where they were to be shipped to Japan.

On our second day in Korea, a succession of people came by the hotel to pay their respects as they had learned that the son of Cheon Mok-sa (Reverend Gerdine, my father) was staying there. I was amazed that word of my arrival had spread so rapidly. Apparently, an efficient grapevine was in operation. Since I was seldom around, a guest log was set up. Before it was closed, more than two thousand had signed. What a tribute to Father, who apparently had never left the hearts of many whose lives he had touched during his thirty-five years in Korea.

My father had come to Korea in 1902. He spent his early life in West Point, Mississippi. When he decided to enter the ministry, Father closed his law practice and attended theology school at Emory University in

Atlanta. He went to Korea as a missionary of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

In 1906, the Mission Board asked Father to meet a ship in Chemulpo (Incheon), as two missionary ladies would be arriving to teach under the Woman's Division. One of them was Miss Eleanor Dye. My parents never revealed any details of the courtship that evidently took place between 1906 and 1909, when Miss Dye and the Reverend Gerdine were married. I teased Mother about marrying the first American man she saw when she landed in Korea.

My mother was born in Starkville, Mississippi, only 35 miles or so from my father's home town. She went to Korea after graduating from Scaritt Bible Institute in Kansas City, Missouri. She and my father shared a deep bond of affection, somewhat disguised by the formality of their day, which led them to address each other as "Mr." and "Mrs." most of the time, even at home.

Our house was in the Southern Methodist compound in Sa-jik Dong, on a ridge overlooking the city. We frequently made the easy climb up to "Pulpit Rock." From there we could see, to the southeast, the entire city of Seoul. To the west, we looked down on Peking Pass, through which a road wound its way to the north and Songdo, where I was born, and I assume on to China. Songdo is better known as Kaesong. In the distant past, Songdo was the capital and we, like most of the city's residents, still used the old name.

Eager to become reacquainted with the city, I'd explore it as often as my military duties would allow. Tracking down Soo Chun-ee and Aumana was my top priority, which led me back to my old neighborhood. Father taught me to navigate those streets as a child. Whenever he and I went somewhere on foot, he would point out the landmarks and turns, then had me guide us home. This approach to remembering routes has stood me in good stead these many years and is now automatic.

I attracted questioning interest as I wandered those familiar streets and alleys. I still chuckle as I recall the looks of astonishment when I asked, "Do you know where Kim Soo Chun lives?" speaking like a native.

Soo Chun-ee had always been like one of our family as far as I was concerned. My parents raised him from the age of twelve, before I was born. Appearing at our front door one morning, he asked Father if he

could live there, because he wanted an education and knew that the missionaries had established schools. Father was surprised, as the boy was dressed in the robes of a Buddhist novice. When asked, Soo Chun-ee insisted that he was not running away, but had received permission from the priest to go to an American missionary's house. Father asked the boy to take him to the temple to confirm the story.

It turned out that Soo Chun-ee was indeed telling the truth. Father had a talk with the senior priest and learned something of the boy's background. He was born to poor parents who could not provide adequately for all of their children. As was not uncommon in that culture, his mother "gave" him to the Buddhist Temple to be trained. The priest stated that Soo Chun-ee was bright, studious, honest and ambitious.

He arrived at his new home with only the robe on his back, a spoon, chopsticks and a rice bowl. I am sure there was never any legal document; he just moved in. He was a good student and finished college. Fluent in Japanese and Chinese as well as English and Korean, he served as Father's secretary and was in our home every day. He was like an older brother to me. I cannot recall seeing him without a smile on his broad face even when, through his tears, he informed us of the death of one of his children.

Finally I found someone who could direct me to Soo Chun-ee's house, actually not far down the hill from where we used to live. What a glorious reunion! After bowing like proper Koreans, we fell into a lingering American bear hug. Then we eagerly exchanged news. I learned that during the war, Soo Chun-ee had been treated harshly by the Japanese because of his previous association with Americans. He had sustained himself and his family by raising goats and selling goat's milk.

Korean custom demanded that I be served some refreshments. I'm sure the cup of warm, sweetened, boiled goat's milk he served represented a sacrifice. But let me offer a bit of advice: If you ever have an opportunity to taste this delicacy, avoid it! It was all I could do to keep from making a face as I slurped, smacked my lips and burped, all indicating, according to Korean custom, how much I enjoyed the treat. Apparently, I remembered my manners too well. He poured me a second cup.

The joy of finding Soo Chun-ee was tempered by my inability to uncover the slightest trace of Aumana. Each time I saw someone who

had known our family, I would inquire about her, but to no avail. She apparently had vanished during the war and no one had any idea where she might be or if she was even alive. Admitting to myself that I would probably never see her again was hard.

Aumana was my nurse from the time I was born. When Mother had to go to Shanghai for cancer surgery when I was only a few months old, Aumana was my mother. Even the nickname that we children used was a modification of the Korean word for mother, omoni. My bond with Aumana was keenly felt, but I have never been able to describe it adequately. Suffice it to say, I feel blessed to have had two mothers.

Aumana was very much on my mind when I finally had a chance to visit my former home. Starting up the hill, I was greeted by the long forgotten sound of magpies having a neighborly discussion—a marvelous cacophony I had not heard in eight years, as magpies don't inhabit the southern United States. The first thing I recognized was the three-car garage built into the granite hillside. It had been excavated when the houses of the "new" Southern Methodist Compound were built on the crest of the hill. Not long before he retired, Father was responsible for the construction of the three stone houses, and we moved into one of them. My most outstanding recollection of our new home was the septic system. Its construction fascinated me, and Father took the time to explain in detail how it would work.

Most of my memories, though, were of the old brick house on the adjacent property. Seeing the site where the garden used to be brought tears to my eyes as I remembered. I must have been four years old. I had hurt myself—a minor accident, but enough to make me cry. Mother asked, "What are those? Tears? That's not my big boy. Go see if you can find my boy." Feeling totally rejected, I fled the kitchen. Aumana was in the garden gathering strawberries, and I ran to her. I don't recall anything she said, but I have never forgotten the feeling of being enveloped in her loving arms.

I always associated Aumana with warmth and comfort. Especially in the cold of winter—and winters can be brutal in Korea—I would beg to spend the night with Aumana, whose house was nearby. A pallet on her warm floor surely beat my bed in the cold upstairs bedroom at our home. (Korean homes were heated by flues that ran under the floor before

reaching the smokestack.) The memories were palpable.

Meanwhile, Soo Chun-ee remained a source of both joy and information. A few days after our reunion, he mentioned that the Queen Dowager, though well up in years, was still alive and living in Seoul's East Gate Palace. Instantly, I saw a great public relations opportunity for the Americans and had a hard time controlling my excitement. Hurrying down to the Government General Building, breathlessly I told General Hodge the good news.

The old Queen was greatly revered by the Korean people. She was the mother of King Kojong, the last monarch of the Choson Dynasty that was established in 1392. On September 5, 1905 the United States brokered agreements at the Treaty of Portsmouth,¹ ending the Russo-Japanese War. This had been preceded by the Taft-Katsura Agreement,² which led, five years later, to the annexation of the country by the Japanese. When Kojong died under mysterious circumstances, the Koreans believed he had been murdered by the Japanese. The Queen Mother was a symbol of Korea's past independence.

Now that the Japanese were being expelled, the Koreans were extremely grateful for their liberation. However, the American occupation had gotten off to a rocky start. As Military Governor of Korea, General Hodge's first order had been that all traffic—cars, bicycles and oxcarts—would drive on the right side of the road rather than on the left, as they had done since time immemorial. This caused nothing but confusion. Particularly in the rural areas, the farmers with their oxcarts continued to travel as usual, even when they came into the city. The transition was not going smoothly.

I told the General that if he would request an audience with the Queen, I would notify the press, and that would obscure all other news for days.

"Lieutenant," he barked, "I'm the Military Governor of this country. If the Queen wants to see me, let her request an audience with me."

His response stunned me. I tried to explain the significance of this symbolic act. I stated that the Queen Mother was so frail that it was unlikely that she would be able to receive him. I pleaded. I said things that I doubt any lieutenant had ever said to a three-star general. But it was all wasted breath. This is the same general who had thought Korea was an island in the South Pacific. No audience was requested.

I was still seething when a call came from Hodge's aide-de-camp. Would I locate an interpreter for the General? Realizing by now that the head of the military government was arrogant and showed neither sensitivity to nor appreciation of Korean culture, I agonized over the request.

For advice I went to Bishop Yang, who in 1930 became the first bishop of the independent Korean Methodist Church. Bishop Yang suggested Dr. Lee who, before the war, had been president of Chosen Christian College. A brilliant man, Dr. Lee was educated in the United States, having earned his Ph.D. from Harvard, as I recall. He received me graciously and inquired about my family.

When I asked him to consider serving the General, he was not the least bit interested. Despite my pleading that he owed this service to his country, he would not relent. Finally I said, "Dr. Lee, let me introduce you to the General, let you talk with him, and then if you decline, I'll have no more to say about the matter."

He consented and I made the appointment. After the introductions I excused myself and waited in the anteroom. Thirty-five or forty minutes of anxiety passed before Dr. Lee emerged. From his expression, I could detect no hint of his thoughts. Only after we were in the staff car returning to his home did Dr. Lee turn to me and say, "I see what you mean. I'll serve."

The announcement of General Hodge's first press conference was greeted with great anticipation by the Seoul press corps, but with even greater trepidation by me as I imagined the damage the General could do just by being himself. As it turned out, I need not have worried. A reporter would ask a question, and Dr. Lee would quietly interpret for the General, whose answers often tended to be insensitive at best, and sometimes downright offensive. Fortunately, the press were far enough away that they could not hear what the General said, as I'm sure some knew at least a modicum of English. Dr. Lee, in his calm, deliberate manner, would simply rephrase the answer diplomatically. I felt I had made a valuable contribution both to the country of my birth and to the country whose uniform I proudly wore.

My first few weeks in Seoul were hectic, but I find it difficult to explain succinctly what kept me so busy. The military described it in its standard language, which I never completely understood. Here is the

official summary of my role:

Responsible for disseminating information to subordinate units. Received and maintained intelligence reports. Briefed and interrogated airplane crews. Served as interpreter, procurer of supplies and data, and investigator while stationed in Korea. Also lectured in Korea to new groups on matters relating to supply, transportation, geography and topography. Directed and supervised civilian employees in Korea.

I think my non-military term describes it better. I was the "On-Call Guy."

My principle responsibility the first couple of weeks was getting the Japanese troops to Pusan for transport back to Japan. Much of that was routine, but when problems arose, it was my job to deal with them. Once, we received a report that the Japanese troops were mistreating Koreans in Taegu. Soo Chun-ee and I headed south and caught up with the marching Japanese troops. A stern warning to the commanding officer was all that it took. There were no other reports of any misconduct by the Japanese.

On Thursday morning, August 30, I received an urgent call from the Catholic chaplain. Archbishop (later Cardinal) Spellman was coming to Seoul, and the chaplain wanted him to say Mass at the hour of the scheduled signing of the Japanese surrender on the deck of the USS *Missouri*. He felt it would be a fitting commemoration of a momentous event for the Koreans. I picked up the chaplain and we headed for Myongdong Catholic Cathedral in downtown Seoul. Mass was in progress when we arrived and the place was full. The chaplain, citing a tight schedule, said he needed to complete his business quickly and could not wait until Mass was finished. He led the way to the back of the cathedral, through a small door and down a short hall.

The next thing I knew, we were behind the altar. The chaplain pointed to one of the priests and said in a hushed voice, "He's not doing anything important. Ask him to step out here." With a sense of sacrilege, I walked out onto the chancel and tapped the priest on the shoulder, saying, "Please come with me." I heard the gasps of the congregation as we walked to where the chaplain was waiting. I wonder if anyone ever explained why an American army officer had removed a priest from the chancel during Mass. The necessary arrangements were made, and

Archbishop Spellman said Mass in Seoul as the Japanese surrendered on Sunday, September 2, 1945.

There were calls from Koreans as well—like the businessman who wanted to start an airline. He asked if I could arrange for him to meet with the American officer who would be responsible for issuing the permit. It took some digging, as the military government was not well organized, but I finally located the officer in charge of transportation. I relayed the request and told him that a Korean businessman would like to invite him to dinner at a local restaurant. He didn't understand what dining out had to do with issuing a permit, but I explained that this was how business was done in that culture. I also warned him that the early conversation would be about anything except airlines.

Fortunately for me they needed a translator, as we went to one of the best restaurants in Seoul. We were served a beautiful dinner along with entertainment by several kisaeng, who poured the drinks, served the meal and entertained with instruments, dance and song. (A kisaeng was a combination hostess and entertainer. They spent many years in training and were frequently chosen as second wives or concubines by wealthy men.) As the evening wore on the conversation finally turned to aviation, and the real purpose of the dinner was addressed. The next week, I accompanied this entrepreneur to the Transportation Office where the permit was issued. The holder of the new permit was so grateful that I did not draw another payment from the army until after I was back in the United States.

It wasn't all work. Because I had no specific duty assignment, I had more freedom than the other military personnel, and I took full advantage of my unique situation. I set myself up in circumstances that would make any young bachelor green with envy, though some of the events embarrass me now.

First, I found a place to live. I had quarters in a sort of BOQ (Bachelor Officers' Quarters), but I wanted a place of my own. Once again I turned to Soo Chun-ee. I stopped by his house and explained my desire. As we hopped into my jeep, Soo Chun-ee said, "No problem." Down we went to West Gate, past the former Russian Consulate and the radio station where I had performed with our school choir.

To my surprise, Soo Chun-ee directed me to turn up the drive of an

impressive private residence. I waited as he got out of the jeep and went to the door. In response to Soo Chun-ee's knock, a middle-aged Japanese man in a beautifully embroidered kimono opened the door. Soo Chun-ee straightened to his full height of five feet four inches. In a harsh and commanding voice I didn't know this gentle man had in him, he spoke sharply to the man. I didn't know what was said, but the man's response was obviously one of acquiescence.

As we left, Soo Chun-ee's smile broadened and he said, "You can move in this evening."

It turned out that the man at the door was the president of the Bank of Chosen. Soo Chun-ee had informed him that his house was required by the American military and that he should vacate the premises with all his belongings by five o'clock.

After the way Soo Chun-ee had been treated during the war, he seemed to take keen delight lording over the Japanese, and I suppose he was entitled. But as this octogenarian wanders down Memory Lane, he sees this as another of the unjustifiable acts that occur too often as a result of poor judgment and immaturity.

In any case, I moved in the next day. First, I hired a Korean woman who had cooked for a missionary family and could prepare Western food. Actually, I probably asked her to prepare more Korean dishes than Western. Then I located a houseboy who spoke English so that he could take messages when I was not around. My set-up was complete.

The city telephone was already connected in the house, but I needed a military line. A corporal in the Signal Corps was happy to install it in exchange for some beer, which I had laid up for just such purposes. Shortly after my arrival and before the main body of troops landed, I had commandeered a truck, driven to the brewery, and liberated enough beer to supply my needs with plenty left over for bartering. I stored it in the three-car garage at my former home. (I'm not sure that the Methodist hierarchy would approve of that use of the property.) As a consequence, the Signal Corps, the Transportation Corps, in fact all the men were eager to do favors for Lt. Gerdine as word got around that he was generous in return.

One afternoon when I had finished my "to do" list, I went to the White Russian compound. I knocked on the door where the Belogolovias

lived in 1937. To my delight, Mrs. Belogolovia answered my knock. After recovering from the shock of seeing me, she invited me in and we had a delightful reunion. Colonel Belogolovia had been in the Czarist army, stationed in Siberia in 1917 when the Russian revolution began. He made his escape through Manchuria and into Korea where he had gone into business. One of their daughters, Nina, was in my class in school and her younger sister, Tamara, was a year behind. Tamara, who we called Toma, reminded me of Heddy Lamar. She had the same broad, high cheekbones, seductively beautiful blue eyes—and what a smile!

Mrs. Belogolovia said that all during the war she had kept the girls in the house unless they were with one of their parents. But now that the country had been liberated from the Japanese, they could go out—but only if I accompanied them! At the first opportunity, I contacted the sergeant in charge of showing movies for the troops. In exchange for a generous supply of beer, he delivered a projector to my new quarters. When a film arrived from Tokyo, he let me borrow it for a viewing with Nina and Toma and a few other invited guests before returning it.

Meanwhile, the American military presence continued to grow. When the 408th Bomb Wing of the 5th Army Air Corps arrived in Korea, I had the job of finding quarters for that unit's commanding officer, Brigadier General Hutchison. He was pleased with my arrangements and never learned that his was the former residence of the vice-president of the Bank of Chosen, whereas my house had belonged to the president.

The arrival of a U. S. Army Air Corps bomb wing forced a change in my administrative status with the army. As a member of the Army Air Corps, I had been on temporary duty with the Army XXIV Corps because there was no Army Air Corps unit in Korea. Once such a unit arrived, regulations dictated that I become attached. But there was no slot for an intelligence officer in the Army Air Corps' table of organization for a bomb wing. In an arrangement that only the military could dream up, I was given the only open position in the table of organization: aide-de-camp to General Hutchison—although I continued to work with the XXIV Corps. In fact, the entire time that I was in Korea, I never had a meaningful duty assignment.

Other than finding quarters for the commanding general, the only service I provided for the Air Corps while in Korea was playing cribbage

with my commanding officer. That's not exactly correct. One day, General Hutchison asked if I played cribbage. I said that I had never played. "Do you want to learn how to play?" "Not particularly, Sir," I replied. "Well, I want you to learn." "Yes, General," was all I could say. I insisted I had no card sense and to prove the point, deliberately played poorly, even when I had good cards. After a few days of frustration, he never again asked me to play with him.

Several weeks after my arrival in Seoul I went down for breakfast and standing in the kitchen was—Aumana! There was a tearful embrace with the same loving arms that comforted me when I was four. I said I had been looking for her.

"Where have you been?" I asked.

"Hamhung," she replied, referring to a city about two hundred miles north of Seoul.

"What are you doing here?"

"I came to see you."

"How did you get here?"

"I walked."

She had walked those two hundred miles and crossed the supposedly closed 38th parallel. When I asked how she knew I was in Seoul, her only reply was "the grapevine," and I never learned any more. But my return "home" was complete. Granted, I did not find Aumana. But she found me!

About three months after my arrival in Korea, I had been overseas long enough to be eligible to return to the United States for my discharge from the army. Most servicemen in that circumstance couldn't wait to get home. But where was home? Just as I had two mothers, I realized that I had two homes, with friends and "family" in both.

Aumana was in the process of bringing her family to Seoul from Hamhung. Soo Chun-ee was well positioned as an interpreter for the army. Nina and Toma Belogolovia were still there. To sweeten the Korea option, I was invited to join the infant airline company that I helped with a permit.

For several days I was torn between my yearning to return to my family in America and the desire to stay and establish a business career. I felt, as I still do, a strong affinity for Korea and the Korean people.

Finally, I decided to return to my American home while leaving part of my heart in Korea. In late December 1945, I left for the U.S. and was discharged from the army in January 1946, looking ahead to the next phase of my life.

Through the years, from time to time, I have wondered how my life would have been different had I stayed. It might have been a very good life. It is my understanding that what started in 1945 as that modest airline serving only Seoul and Shanghai has grown into KAL, Korean Air.

But with life—unlike homes and mothers—you only get one, and I've had a good one.

NOTES

1. Article II of the treaty dealt with Korea: "The Imperial Russian Government, acknowledging that Japan possesses in Korea paramount political, military and economical interests engages neither to obstruct nor interfere with measures for guidance, protection and control which the Imperial Government of Japan may find necessary to take in Korea. It is understood that Russian subjects in Korea shall be treated in exactly the same manner as the subjects and citizens of other foreign Powers; that is to say, they shall be placed on the same footing as the subjects and citizens of the most favored nation. It is also agreed that, in order to avoid causes of misunderstanding, the two high contracting parties will abstain on the Russian-Korean frontier from taking any military measure which may menace the security of Russian or Korean territory."
2. Portions of a confidential conversation between Count Katsura and Secretary William Howard Taft on the morning of July 27, 1905 but dated 29 July 29, 1905:

"First, in speaking of some pro-Russians in America who would have the public believe that the victory of Japan would be a certain prelude to her aggression in the direction of the Philippine Islands, secretary Taft observed that Japan's only interest in the Philippines would be . . . to have these islands governed by a strong and friendly nation like the United States. Count Katsura confirmed in the strongest terms the correctness of his views on the point and positively stated that Japan does not harbor any aggressive designs whatever on the Philippines. . . .

"Third, in regard to the Korean question Count Katsura observed that Korea being the direct cause of our war with Russia, it is a matter of absolute importance to Japan that a complete solution of the peninsula question should be made as the logical consequence of the war. If left to herself after

the war, Korea will certainly draw back to her habit of improvidently entering into any agreements or treaties with other powers, thus resuscitating the same international complications as existed before the war. In view of the foregoing circumstances, Japan feels absolutely constrained to take some definite step with a view to precluding the possibility of Korea falling back into her former condition and of placing us again under the necessity of entering upon another foreign war. Secretary Taft fully . . . remarked to the effect that . . . the establishment by Japanese troops of a suzerainty over Korea to the extent of requiring that Korea enter into no foreign treaties without the consent of Japan was the logical result of the present war and would directly contribute to permanent peace in the East. His judgment was that President Roosevelt would concur in his views in this regard. . . .”

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