

The Korean Ethnic Group



The Korean people are good at singing and dancing. The happy dancing of peasants is one of the entertainment activities of the Korean people with ethnic feature. They often dance the elephant hat dance to the accompaniment of the long drum in their leisure time or in occasions for merriment and holidays. The long ribbon attached to their elephant hat resembles the profile of the Changbai Mountain, together with the long drum and the elephant hat form a symbolic design, representing the festival atmosphere and ethnic features.

The environment and population

At present, the Korean ethnic minority has a population of 1,923,842, 90% of the population is distributed in the three Manchurian provinces in China, namely Jilin, Heilongjiang and Liaoning, with 60% living in Jilin Province and about 43% in Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture. Since the reform and open door policy, the Korean people have been more and more on the move throughout the country. Today, only in the city of Beijing, for instance, in addition to up to 20,000 permanent Korean residents, there are also tens of thousands of migrant workers.



As the largest concentration area of Koreans, high mountains with abundant river resources surround all the three Manchurian provinces. The region has vast expanses of fertile land which produces in great number of maize, soybean and kaoliang, the biggest timberland nation wide and an abundance of coal and other mineral deposits, as well as animal, plant and water resources. The highest peak of the Changbai Mountain is 2,744 meters above sea level and it's an extinct volcano, from the crater lake of which spring the Yalu, Tumen and Songhua rivers. The ever flowing water of the rivers is moistening and nourishing the fertile land on the northeast plain. The Korean people are good at rice planting. It is they who introduced the technology of rice planting into the northeast region. They summed up a series of integrated technology for planting rice in cold and mountainous areas which contributed a lot for the agricultural development in the northeast region.

The ethnic origin

The Korean ethnic group originated in the Korean Peninsula. The ancestors of the Korean ethnic group migrated to China in large numbers in 1860s when there were severe natural calamities for years running. The victims then crossed the Yalu and Tumen rivers in succession and went to the northeast region of China. In 1885, the Qing government rescinded the sealing up of "the land of dragon" and allocated the area to the north of the Tumen River to the Korean people for reclamation only. As a result, large groups of Koreans migrated to Yanbian, Tonghua, Changbai, Ji'an and Dandong and settled down there. Another wave of migration took place when Japan annexed Korea and drove many landless peasants and the patriots to China. After the September 18 Incident of 1937, the Japanese Imperialists began to force the migration which drove some of the Korean people to the remote areas of the Manchurian provinces.

The language and the education

The Koreans have their own spoken and written language that is thought to belong to, though no final conclusion has been reached yet, the Altaic family. According to the Linguists, the Korean language has six dialects among which there is no significant difference with respect to phonetics.

Particular attention was paid to education. In 1949, the Yanbian University was founded. Primary school education was popularized in 1952, secondary school education in 1958 and high school education in cities in 1980s. Today, the educational level of the Korean population is higher than the national average.

The architecture characteristics—roof with four inclined planes and kang

The Koreans in northeast China tend to live in compact communities on the flat along the foot of the mountains, with villages set a few miles apart from each other and ranging in size from about a dozen households to several scores.

The houses are usually built of wood, which has a tile or thatched roof with four inclined planes. The walls were, in most of the cases, built of clay and washed with lime. These years, more and more walls are built of bricks. A house is divided into three rooms and each room has a sliding door on squares formed by thirds of the middle a heated kang (a



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running under a raised platform) and one third by a hearth. The room next to the middle room usually has a continuation of kang which covers the whole room. The kangs are covered by reeds or sheets made of the stalk of kaoliang. Since the kang is almost everywhere in the house, shoes are removed before entering the house. Food and personal adornment of the Korean people as well as their dances are all affected by the heated kang. Therefore, the Korean traditional culture is also called “culture of the heated kang:.

The characteristics of clothing and personal adornment—“people in white”

The Koreans like white dresses and are usually called “people in white”. Traditionally, the Korean people, both men and women, wear jackets which are fastened by ribbons on the right. Men wear short jackets, silk waistcoat and baggy trousers fastened at the ankles. Men usually put on a long gown fastened on the right and wear a hat when they go outside. Women wear skirts and a tight jacket which reaches just below the armpits with loose sleeves. There is a great variety of skirts that young women wear are usually very bright and blazing with colors. In recent years, more and more people tend to pursuit fashionable dresses. However, traditional clothing is still very popular on holidays.



The traditional food—kimchi, cold noodles, sticky rice cakes and barbecue.

The Koreans take rice as their main food and they are fond of beef, chicken, seafood and dog meat. They don't

like greasy food. Sauced soup, kimchi and various kinds of pickles are daily necessities of their diet. The Korean kimchi is well received throughout the country for its unique spicy, sweet and sour taste and has been widely enjoyed by all ethnic groups as the typical Korean local snack.



The Korean local delicacy is popular worldwide, which includes cold noodles, sticky rice cakes and barbecue, etc. The cold noodles are made of buckwheat flour or sweet potato flour. The cooking procedure is as follows: boil the noodles first, cool them in cold water and add flavorings like beef slices, egg. Spice, sesame, kimchi and apple slices. This delicacy tastes sweet, savory, spicy and cool.

Sticky rice cake is a necessary for holidays and other occasions for merriment. To make sticky rice cake, the sticky rice must first be washed and soaked thoroughly, and then put into a steamer to get cooked. Now put the cooked sticky rice on a flagstone and pound thoroughly with wooden hammers. People eat sticky rice cake dipping soybean flour and sugar and the taste is soft and comfortably sticky.

The Koreans like to treat their guests with barbecue. A charcoal brazier is put in the middle of the table with a grill made of thin iron strips and a soot remover placed above the brazier. People sit round the table grilling the sliced meat on the brazier and eat with spice.

The characteristics of songs and dances—long drum dance, dance with fans in hands and the song “Alilang”

The Korean people are good at singing and dancing. Korean Autonomous Prefecture has singing and dancing”. Some widely dance”, “long drum dance”, “dance carrying water on the head”, etc. and light, sometimes bold, full of songs are sweet, graceful, cheerful “Alilang” are most popular ones. The instrument is jiaze and long drum. instrument that can produce deep



singing and dancing and the Yanbian been given the good name of “home of known folk dances are “happy farmers with fans in hands” and “dance while Their dancing postures are sometimes soft strength and rich in variation. The Korean and forthright, among which “Daolaji” and most well known Korean musical The jiaze is a stringed musical and gentle sound.

The Korean love sports. Women are are good at wrestling and football. “home of football”.

fond of springboard and swing while men Yanbian has long enjoyed the name of

The festival customs—the New Year’s Day, Shangyuan Festival, Cold Food Festival, Dragon Boat Festival and Mid-Autumn Festival

The five main Korean festivals are celebrated on the same days as the Hans’ Spring Festival, Lantern Festival, Cold Food Festival, Dragon Boat Festival and Mid-Autumn but the way of celebration has their own characteristics. For example, on the New Year’s Day, the Koreans eat sticky rice cakes and drink “tusu wine”; on Shangyuan Festival, they drink “ear sharpening wine” and eat “herb meal” as well as “corn meal”, hold tug-of-war and oxcart fight (collision of oxcarts) content; on Dragon Boat Festival, women wash their face and

hair with calamus water and hold swing and ethnic dancing contest; on Mid-Autumn Festival, every household go to the graveyard and pay respect to their forefathers, and meantime folk activities such as toxophily contest are being held.



The religion and worship—multi-religion and tanjun worship

The Koreans do not have a unified religion. Some of their ancestors believed in Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. Starting from the end of the 18th century, there had been some people believing in Christianity and Catholicism. At the end of the 19th century, some anti-invasion ethnic religions came into existence, which includes Tiandao and Qinglin sects within the religion of Dongxue as well as Tanjun and Dazong sects within the religion of Tanjn, etc.

Tanjun worship can be traced back to the ancient Korean mythology of the totem origin. It is said that a bear girl married Huan Xiong and gave birth to a song who was named Wang Jian and was later know Tanjun. From the 1910s to the 1920s, the ethnic religion was once developed in the northeast region where the Koreans live in compact communities. During the time from the 1980s to 1990s, some Korean pele resumed to believe in Christianity and Catholicism.