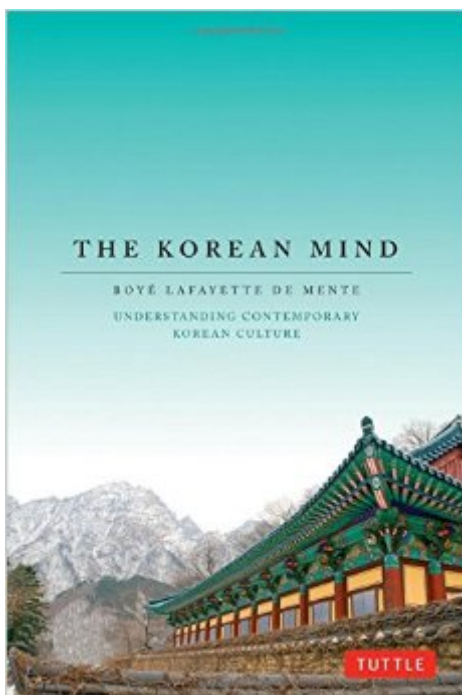


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# The Korean Mind: Understanding Contemporary Korean Culture



## Synopsis

The Koreans: understanding a people and their culture through key words and language. Koreans have a unique character and personality that sets them apart from all other Asians. And although Korean attitudes and behavior may be influenced by the modern world, the Korean mindset is still very much shaped by ancient culture and traditions. As is the case with all ancient cultures created within highly refined and meticulously structured social systems over thousands of years, one of the keys to understanding traditional Korean attitudes and behavior is the language of the people—or more precisely, key words in the language. These key words provide access to the Korean mind—to core concepts and emotions, the attitudes and feelings that make up the Korean psyche. These key terms reveal both the heart and soul of Koreans and provide bridges for communicating and interacting with Koreans on the most fundamental level. In *The Korean Mind*, Boye Lafayette De Mente explores the meanings and cultural context of the most important "code words" of the Korean language, terms whose significance goes well beyond their literal definitions, providing an insight into Korean culture and the personality of the Korean people. Keywords include: Aboji, Ah-boh-jee — The "Father Culture" Anae, Ah-negh — Wives: The Inside People Han Yak, Hahn Yahk — The Herbal Way to Health Innae, Een-nay — A Culture of Enduring Katun Sosuy Pap, Kaht-unn Soh-suut Pahp — Eating from the Same Rice Bowl And over 200 more |

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

There are a number of reasons why I didn't enjoy reading this book. First, many many many Korean words are spelled incorrectly, and it really does detract from the credibility of the author as an

authority in this area. At least get the spellings right. Supposedly, going by the book's acknowledgments section, a number of people have had a chance to review the book for editing, yet, many of the most simple words are spelled in shall we say an unorthodox way. Second, the topics could have been covered in a systematic way. Talk about all things legal in one part, all things family in another part, and so on. There is no rhythm or rhyme to how this book organizes the topics, which is annoying. Third, the book is overly general and therefore some of its statements about the "unique character and personality" of Koreans seem unfounded and, quite frankly, bigoted. It is over 450 pages but due to how the topics are organized, many of the written material is needlessly repetitive. Some interesting history is mentioned, but this book could have been much better on a number of fronts.

I found this book fairly informative, ideally to be read one entry at a time every once in a while perhaps. It is way too repetitive and unstructured overall to be consumed in one go. In order to get an idea about some key Korean cultural concepts this is better than reading many of the convoluted academic works. As someone with a Korean studies background, the wrong spelling of even the simplest Korean words and phrases frustrated and disappointed me a lot. As other reviewers have remarked, this clearly undermines the author's (and contributors') credibility unnecessarily. If you can't write simple Korean can you actually read/speak Korean? And if not, how do you expect to understand Korea - and particularly the Korean Mind?

The cultural information contained in the book is interesting, but the organization was unproductive and the mistakes in the Korean spellings were distracting. The book is organized by keywords of Korean culture. The keywords are arranged in alphabetical order according to the romanization of the Korean word. If you are approaching the book as a complete beginner to Korean and/or Korean culture this is unhelpful. It is impossible to know where to look. Although my Kindle version does have a section that assigns each entry into certain categories, it would be much easier if the book was just arranged into those categories to begin with. (I don't know if the print version has that section.) If you speak some Korean and have a specific keyword you would like to look up... well, you're still in trouble. The author never indicates which romanization system (of many varying systems) he is using (and I feel like it was inconsistent anyway), and many of the words were written incorrectly in Korean letters, so the romanization is similarly problematic. (Of course if you recognize this there are limited possible spellings so you would probably get where you wanted to eventually...) Ultimately, while I think he does make a lot of interesting observations, as with other

reviewers I am left wondering just how much I can trust the content given the blatancy of the mistakes. I also think it reads better as a reference book than as a cohesive narrative. (I also agree with one of the other reviewers that a book on the Korean Mind that doesn't address "jeong" is missing one of the more important cultural keywords... or maybe it was there and I just couldn't find it...)

I have been a dedicated fan of Boye Lafayette De Mente's books on the business practices, culture and languages of Korea, Japan and China since I read his first book on the Japanese way of doing business in the classic "Japanese Etiquette & Ethics in Business" in 1959. One of the key reasons for my loyalty is in knowing that the lack of cross-cultural understanding is one of the primary problems of humanity ... and knowing that the author's 70-plus books in this genre have helped millions of people around the world understand and relate to other cultures. Thus, my pleasure in commending the author for his latest contribution "The Korean Mind," which I found invaluable in understanding the cultural factors that drive Koreans. This is a hugely important work. His insights indicate that the mindset of Koreans is still led by ancient cultural traditions. This information holds a key to understanding North Koreans, as regional conflicts and differences between North and South Korea have been the norm for millennia. It is also vital in knowing how to deal with Koreans in business and political matters, and especially so since South Korea is one of the world's most important economic powers. Well done!~Fern Stewart Welch, author of "Tea with Elisabeth;" "The Heart Knows the Way," and "You Can Live A Balanced Life In An Unbalanced World."

I was checking table of contents and some samples of several chapters, and was appalled by the numerous mistakes in Korean spelling. Hard to trust the content if the author can't even spell correctly. It was actually more than spelling mistakes since some words were simply wrong. I doubt the author is an expert in Korea or Koreans. A 12 year old kid could have corrected all the mistakes found in this book. For that reason, I decided not to read the book.

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