

KACA newsletter

KOREAN AMERICAN COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATION

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Invited Essay

ON FINDING A NICHE

Lately I have been finding myself asking such banal questions as what "IT" all means. Some of you may have already found an answer; others may be too young to bother asking the question. In my case, the meaning of IT-- particularly as IT relates to my academic life--is beginning to take a shape (quite nicely, thank you!). This shaping of IT involves finding a niche, an angle, a nest, or a place that provides one's work a distinctive quality and flavor.

My IT, or niche, can be roughly described as one that is communication-based, intercultural, and integrative. It manifests an understanding of the all-encompassing importance of communication activities in shaping human affairs. It reflects the experiences of having spent about half of my life in affairs. It reflects the experiences of having spent about half of my life in Korea and the other half in the United States. It expresses a perspective that allows me to see the complementary (rather than conflicting) nature of different cultural and academic traditions.

Having made this rather immodest proclamation, I must point out that this niche of mine

potentially belongs to all KACA members, particularly those who have been exposed to the American milieu for a prolonged period. The reality of our lives as Korean-American communication scholars presents us an angle that projects a unique intercultural vision. Whether we happen to "specialize" in media communication, interpersonal communication, or any other areas of communication studies, there is a special privilege to think beyond the parameters of any single culture. This privilege will be revealed to us if we look for it hard enough. With this privilege, we can situate ourselves in a place where things are seen with increased clarity and objectivity. From this angle, we can articulate the interrelatedness of seemingly "opposing" ideas that separate different cultural and academic traditions.

I do not really understand exactly how one forms and solidifies a niche. It may be that there is indeed a "grand hidden design" for our lives, and that, as we mature, we are better able to be "in tune with" it. Or, perhaps, all the circumstances and experiences that we encounter as we travel in time may cumulatively contribute to the gradual emergence of a unique vision. Or it may be that all of these and other forces collectively and interactively participate in the shaping of our

psyche, just as countless rain drops--when met with certain conditions of the ground surface, the direction of winds, and many other forces around it--make a river singular in color, depth, shape, smell, and width.

Our lives as Korean-Americans present a special challenge as we try to conciliate and reconcile critical differences between what we used to be and what we are supposed to be. Having been conditioned to one way of life and then having to integrate ourselves to another way inevitably produces conflict. At times, I have seen in myself a confused person with my "pieces" not quite "put together." I have seen in my Korean friends occasional signs of unassuredness and stress. Yet, in each of us resides enormous resilience to "live through" such unsettling moments and to nourish and strengthen our character. To uncover and utilize such inner resources requires, of course, a clear sense of purpose, an unyielding confidence in ourselves, and a continuous stream of bullish efforts. With these ingredients, we can transform our "uprootedness" into a special kind of "freedom."

In the end, we should be able to come out as "winners"--each of us in our own way--with broader visions, larger frames of mind, and deeper and more accute sensibilities for understanding human conditions. This, to me, is a niche that we can claim, cherish, and cultivate. As my thoughts become integrated from this grounding, answers to the IT question begin to reveal themselves. I am now ready to continue to refine this niche earnestly and enthusiastically.

HOW ABOUT YOU?

---Young Yun Kim
Governor's State University

[Editor's Note: The editor welcomes essays on any topic, both serious and mundane, from the members of KACA. Any helpful hints for career improvements, reflections on the ironies of bicultural identities, fresh ideas for the future directions of our organization, or anything else that will tease our brain and touch our hearts. Many thanks to Prof. Y. Kim for scratching our itchy spots--well, at least mine.]

Joint Conference in Seoul

The 5th Joint Conference of KACA and the Korean Society for Journalism and Communication Studies was held on August 6th and 7th at the Training Center of the Korea Broadcasting Advertising Corporation near Yang-Pyong, Kyong-Ki Do. Under the general conference theme of "New Communication Technologies and the Future Direction of Journalism," the event attracted around seventy scholars from both Korea and the States. Four KACA members, Profs. Hyun K. Kim of Wisconsin-Stevens Point and Jin K. Kim of SUNY-Plattsburgh, Mr. Byung Hyo Lee of the Univ. of Illinois-Urbana, and Ms. Lee of Wisconsin-Madison, participated as paper presenters and/or discussants in the various sessions. The conference included a timely and, thus, unusually lively debate on the role of journalism in the democratizing process of Korea. KACA expresses its deepest appreciation to KSJCS and its members for all the provisions and hospitality that made the KACA participants' stay pleasant and comfortable.

[Editor's Note: If you are interested in reading extended abstracts of the papers presented at the conference, contact the editor.]

87-88 Membership Dues

A membership remittance form is enclosed with this newsletter for the 1987-88 fiscal year. As you will find out in the financial report in the next newsletter, last year's response from the members was pretty dismal. Please respond before you forget as the editor will not remind you again about this. Also, in the remittance form, please provide your up-to-date biographical information as the editor is attempting to update our directory.

KAUPA Conference in Atlanta

The Korean American University Professors Association (KAUPA) is scheduled to hold its first conference from October 2nd through 4th in Atlanta. According to the organization's president, Prof. Seong H. Lee of Appalachian State University--that's right, former President and Secretary of KACA--, a good number of Korean American scholars from the various disciplines--sociology, political science, law, religion, communication studies, economics--will converge at the conference whose main theme is "Koreans in North America." If the conference is of your interest, please contact Prof. Seong H. Lee at (704) 262-2405.

Professional News

Jong Geun Kang, Ph. D. Candidate, U. of Massachusetts, was awarded the International Communication Association Action Grant for his research project, "Television Viewing, Perceived Reality, and Children's Social Behavior in Korea: The Cultural

Indicators." Kang's cultural analysis project involves an extensive content analysis of the television programs of KBS and MBC. [See below in the Professional Resources Channel for more information about this item.]

Kang also presented the following papers at the various conventions as indicated: "The 1984 Presidential and Vice-Presidential Debates: The Printed Press and 'Construction' by Metaphor," at the ICA Convention, Montreal, Canada (May, 1987); "Newspaper Front-page Coverage of 'The Korean Airliner Boeing 747 Massacre' in Six Newspapers," at the Eastern Speech Communication Assc. Conference, Syracuse, NY (May 1987); "An Update on Sino-U.S. Relations as Seen Through the Chinese Mass Media," at the Eastern Speech Communication Assc. Conference, Syracuse, NY (May 1987).

Won Ho Chang, Professor, Univ. of Missouri, received a Fulbright Scholar Award to conduct research in Korea for a full year beginning in August, '87. Affiliated with the Research Institute of Asian Affairs of Korea University as a distinguished visiting professor, he will be involved in a research project ("Korea in the Global Village: Media Effects on Her Pivotal Role in East-West Relations") as well as teach a graduate course in international communication.

Hye-Sook Kim, doctoral candidate, U. of Massachusetts, was awarded a \$1,000 scholarship by the Korean American Foundation.

Jin Keon Kim, Professor, SUNY-Plattsburgh, had a book review of Global Information and World Communication by Hamid Mowlana in the Spring '87 issue of International Journal of Intercultural Relations. Kim also

had an article ("Tree-Pruning and Ax-Wielding in the Korean Peninsula: An Analysis of the 1976 Panmunjom Incident in Watkins' Analytic Model of Conflict") accepted for publication in Asian Thought & Society.

Young Yun Kim, University Professor, Governor's State University, was the recipient of the Outstanding Book Award 1986 honored by Division of International and Intercultural Communication of SCA for her co-authored book, Communicating with Strangers (Random House 1984). Another book of hers, Theorizing Inteructural Communication, scheduled to be published by Sage in 1988, features major theoretical approaches to intercultural communication including cognitive, linguistic, behavioral, network, situational, and integrative approaches.

Kim also delivered keynote addresses at the Annual Third World Conference (Chicago, April 23) and at the "Whole World Festival" of Principia College (Elsah, Illinois, May 15).

Jae-won Lee, Professor, Cleveland State University, received a grant (\$3,000) from his university for a research project on U. S. media's foreign news selection processes. Lee attended a symposium on "Olympics and Mass Media" as a panelist held at Calgary, Canada, in February. He also attended a Christian Science Monitor-sponsored symposium on "Third World News and U. S. Media" in Boston in March.

Professional Resources Channel

Jong Geun Kang, Univ. of Massachusetts, is soliciting insightful suggestions, helpful comments, plain inquiries, or even unrefined remarks about his above-

mentioned research project on Korean television programs. Interested parties should contact him at: Dept. of Communication Studies, Machmer Hall, Univ. of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003. (413) 545-1311.

Hye-Sook Kim, Univ. of Massachusetts, who moved to Korea in June in order to concentrate on her dissertation on "Address Forms between Korean Husbandfs and Wives: Management of Self with Spouse in Relation to other Third Family Members," would appreciate any comments or materials that you know of. Please contact: Mrs. H. S. Kim, Hanyang Apt. (#7-1102), 695 Jayang 2-Dong, Sundong Goo, Seoul, Korea.

Personal News

Prof. Jae-won Lee, who was one of the 12 winners of the 1987 National Teaching Award for Excellence in the Teaching of Journalism Ethics supported by The Poynter Institute and sponsored by the education committees of the American Society of Newspaper editors, the Associated Press Managing Editors and the National Conference of Editorial Writers, was entertained(?) with an all-expense-paid trip to St. Petersburg, Florida, as part of the prize. Nobody would frown upon the fact that his body and soul were 'cleansed' when he dipped into the waters of the Gulf of Mexico. But what about the effect of enjoying such a freebie(?) on his future teaching of the course? Perhaps somebody should teach a course on teachers' ethics. [Just kidding.]

Prof. Young Yun Kim, as if two pets were not sufficient enough, reports on another adoption. This time it is a one-year old dog named

"Dawn." But, alas, she laments that a poor teacher's salary is not good enough to support her three dependents (two dogs and a cat) and she is seriously looking for sources of supplemental income. Take heart, Prof. Kim. Since you named the dog Dwan (the Korean phonetic equivalent of "money"), you will be blessed with an unexpected fortune soon. [My fortune-cookie prediction has a record of 99% accuracy!]

Seoul Joint Conference Programs

[The following are titles and authors of the papers presented at the 5th KACA-KSJCS Joint Conference as described earlier. The editor has copies of expanded abstracts of the Korean presenters' papers and full copies of the Korean-American presenters' papers. If interested in receiving copies, please contact the editor.]

"Information Society and Communication Policies" Yong-Sok Kim (Yonsei Univ.)

"Biases of New Communication Technologies and Future Journalism Education" Jin K. Kim (SUNY-Plattsburgh)

"A Debate on the Democratization of the Korean Press" Won-Soon Paeng (Hanyang Univ.)

"Patterns of Communication Freedoms and Controls in the Age of New Media" Jong-Tack Kim (Sungkyunkwan Univ.)

"Campus Computer Network: New Communication Technology and Applications" Hyun Kap Kim (Univ. of Wisconsin-Stevens Point)

"Information Gap between Rural and Urban Areas" Seung-Hyon Kim (Kyungbook Univ.)

Addenda

[The following items were left out from the Professional News section on page 3.]

Won Ho Chang, Univ. of Missouri, signed a book contract with the Iowa State University Press for The Press in China which is scheduled to come out this fall.

Seung-Hyon Kim (Ph. D., Missouri, '86) was recently appointed as an assistant professor of Kyungbook Univ.).

Jung-Ho Hahn (Ph. D., Missouri, '87) is working at KORAD, the advertising agency owned by the Hai-Tai group, as well as teaching courses as a lecturer at Yonsei Univ.

Suk Hong Yoon and Man Soo Chung, doctoral candidates at Univ. of Missouri, successfully passed comprehensive exams and are now working on theses. Two new doctoral students, Girl Jin Chung (Yonsei Univ. graduate) and Dae Chul Chung (Kyunghee Univ. graduate), began their fresh academic adventure at Missouri.

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