

South Korea Through the Lens of a Miguk

By Gerry D'Onofrio

The fine art photographic images in this collection were taken in the 1990s when I had the great opportunity to live in Seoul. Those years made a permanent impression on me not only because I was exposed to a culture I knew little about and was so different from mine, but because the people were so willing to help me, the Miguk (the American), appreciate it.

As a photographer I was eager to capture what I knew was a fast changing Korea. Known as the "Hermit Kingdom," the Korean Peninsula was isolated from the world for centuries as a way of protection from outside threats. Today, South Korea—or the Republic of Korea—is a dynamic and prosperous country full of contrasts between the old and the new.

Although the hustle and bustle of the modern city of Seoul was my day-to-day setting, I sought out opportunities to visit the countryside, folk villages, temples, palaces, and cultural events, many of them depicted here. Oftentimes, I had the feeling that Korea was changing even more rapidly than many places in the West, and I was anxious to freeze this precious time through my lens.

This exhibit is a labor of love. Searching through thousands of film negatives and slides, scanning and processing them in the digital darkroom, and presenting them on canvas format, was an intensive endeavor that made me relive so many experiences in Korea and my special connection to this land and its people that I will cherish forever.

I truly hope that you enjoy viewing this collection and that you can appreciate the richness and beauty of the Korean culture.

Kamsahamnida! (Thank you!) Gerry D'Onofrio