



The Koreans: Who They Are, What They Want, Where Their Future Lies

Michael Breen

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The rise of South Korea is one of the most unexpected and inspirational developments of the latter part of our century. A few decades ago, the Koreans were an impoverished, agricultural people. In one generation they came out of the fields and into Silicon Valley. In 1997, this powerhouse of a nation reeled and almost collapsed as a result of a weak financial system and heavily indebted conglomerates. The world is now watching to see whether the Koreans will be able to reform and continue their stunning growth.

Although Korea has only recently found itself a part of the global stage, it is a country with a rich and complex past. Early history shows that Koreans had a huge influence on ancient Japan, and their historic achievements include being the first culture to use metal movable type for printing books. However, much of their history is less positive; it is marred with political violence, poverty, and war--aspects that would sooner be forgotten by the Koreans, who are trying to focus on their promising future.

The fact that Korean history has eluded much of the world is unfortunate, but as Korea becomes more of a global player, understanding and appreciation for this unique nation has become indispensable.

In *The Koreans*, Michael Breen provides an in-depth portrait of the country and its people. An early overview of the nature and values of the Korean people provides the background for a more detailed examination of the complex history of the country, in particular its division into the Communist north and pro-Western south.

In this absorbing and enlightening account of the Koreans, Michael Breen provides compelling insight into the history and character of this fascinating nation.

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