

## IF YOU GO

**Getting there:** Numerous airlines make the flight to Incheon Airport near Seoul. If you have a hard time finding an affordable one, look for specials to Seoul from the West Coast and then buy a separate ticket to L.A. or San Francisco. Also try calling the airline directly; Asiana and Singapore regularly have specials. Peak travel to Asia, the highest-priced time of the year to fly, usually occurs at the end of the summer, the Chinese mid-autumn festival, Christmas and Lunar New Year (which falls in February in 2007).

**Tours:** The USO in Seoul and most major hotels run organized tours to the DMZ. You can make reservations via phone (822) 795-3063/3028 or e-mail (young.frie@korea.army.mil). The cost for civilians is \$42 (active military members only pay \$22) plus lunch (bring your own or buy it in the camp cafeteria for about \$10). You must pay a minimum of four days ahead of time or you will lose your seat. Make reservations early, as tours are usually full. There is also a strict dress code, so be sure to pack a clean-cut outfit for the trip, and you must bring your passport with you on the tour. More details can be found on the USO Web site: [www.uso.org/korea](http://www.uso.org/korea). Other tours, such as by Lotte Hotels, are more expensive but have varying itineraries. Be sure to check the itinerary because not all tours go to the JSA. Most require payment a few days in



AHN YOUNG-JOON/ASSOCIATED PRESS

A South Korean soldier aims his machine gun at the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) in Hwacheon, north of Seoul, South Korea.

advance. If you do not have an American passport, be sure to check the requirements for your country.

**Where to stay:** Hotels in Seoul are plentiful and include popular chains, such as the Hyatt, Intercontinental and the Hilton. Other top-end hotels include the Westin Chosun, the Shilla and the Lotte Hotel. Midrange hotels, such as the Hotel Crown, and budget hotels, such as the Myeong Dong guesthouse, often offer traditional Korean style rooms with a Korean mattress on a heated floor, as well as Western rooms. Other less expensive alternatives are a 'yeogwon,' a Korean motel that can vary considerably in quality and sometimes rents by the hour, or a 'minbak,' a Korean home stay, [www.homestaykorea.com](http://www.homestaykorea.com). Check the Korea National Tourism Corp. for lists of accommodations: <http://english.tour2korea.com/>.

# Korea on the screen and on the page

BY ROBIN EWING

SPECIAL TO THE EXPRESS-NEWS

The existence of two Koreas is both a complex political conundrum as well as an emotional tug-of-war for the Korean people. It is estimated that 10 million people were separated from their families when Korea was divided, first at the end of WWII and then again after the Korean War.

Many older Koreans have received no word from brothers, sisters, sons and daughters for more than 50 years. Younger Koreans have grown up with uncles, aunts, grandmothers and grandfathers they have never met, cousins that may or may not exist.

Others have been forced to acknowledge without really knowing the deaths of parents and other relatives who would be too old to still be alive.

Much like Americans who lived through the American Civil War, Koreans live in a world where their biggest enemy can be their most beloved, yet estranged, family member.

But surprisingly, South Korea's media coverage of North Korea can be fairly soft. I once saw an article refer to Kim Jong Il as a teletubby.

I asked a middle-aged Korean friend, a math teacher, why North Korea drew such little public reproach in the South. He said, "The issue between North Korea and South Korea is a family issue."

This paradox of sharing a small peninsula with both family and foe crops up everywhere, in politics, movies and books, adding a deeper dimension to all things Korean; a Hatfield and McCoy kind of situation if they had been related.

If you want to deepen your understanding of the situation, here's my list of recommend movies and books before traveling to the DMZ.

## South Korean movies

- "JSA"
- "Taeguki: The Brotherhood of War"
- "Silmido"

## Readings on Korea

■ "North Korea Under Communism: Report of an Envoy to Paradise," by Erik Cornell

■ "The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History," by Dan Oberdorfer

■ "The Aquariums of Pyongyang: Ten Years in the North Korean Gulag," by Kang Chol Hwan

■ "In North Korea: An American Travels Through an Im-

prisoned Nation," by Nanchu and Xing Hang

■ "Echoes of the White Giraffe," by Sook Nyul-Choi

■ "Remembering Korea 1950," by H.K. Shin

■ "Voices from the Korean War: Personal Stories of American, Korean and Chinese Soldiers," by Richard Peters and Xiaobing Li

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