

1. Definition of culture

- Culture means everything in a certain society. It includes people, language, food, way of thinking, speech style and so on.

2. The characteristics of Korean people

- While Koreans often pride themselves on being very polite, they mainly socialize within their own select circles. It is very difficult to break into those circles.

- (2) Koreans hardly smile or say good morning to strangers who pass by. It's just the way Koreans react. Koreans don't feel comfortable when a total stranger smiles and says good morning to them.
- (3) When Koreans meet someone for the first time, usually they start the conversation by asking each other's age and hometown to determine hierarchy and strengthen ties.

- (4) When Koreans meet someone who has the same last name and place of origin, ties are built easily. Most of the time they try to find the connection with people they meet.
- (5) Koreans are not used to giving compliments or taking compliments. Koreans have difficulty finding what the response to the compliments should be.

3. Due to different cultural backgrounds we sometimes misunderstand people from different cultures.

This misunderstanding often leads to communication breakdown.

Sources of misunderstanding

- 1) Gibun
- 2) Personal Space
- 3) Differences in Communicating
- 4) Going Dutch
- 5) Home Invitations
- 6) Gift
- 7) Drinking Manners

1) Gibun

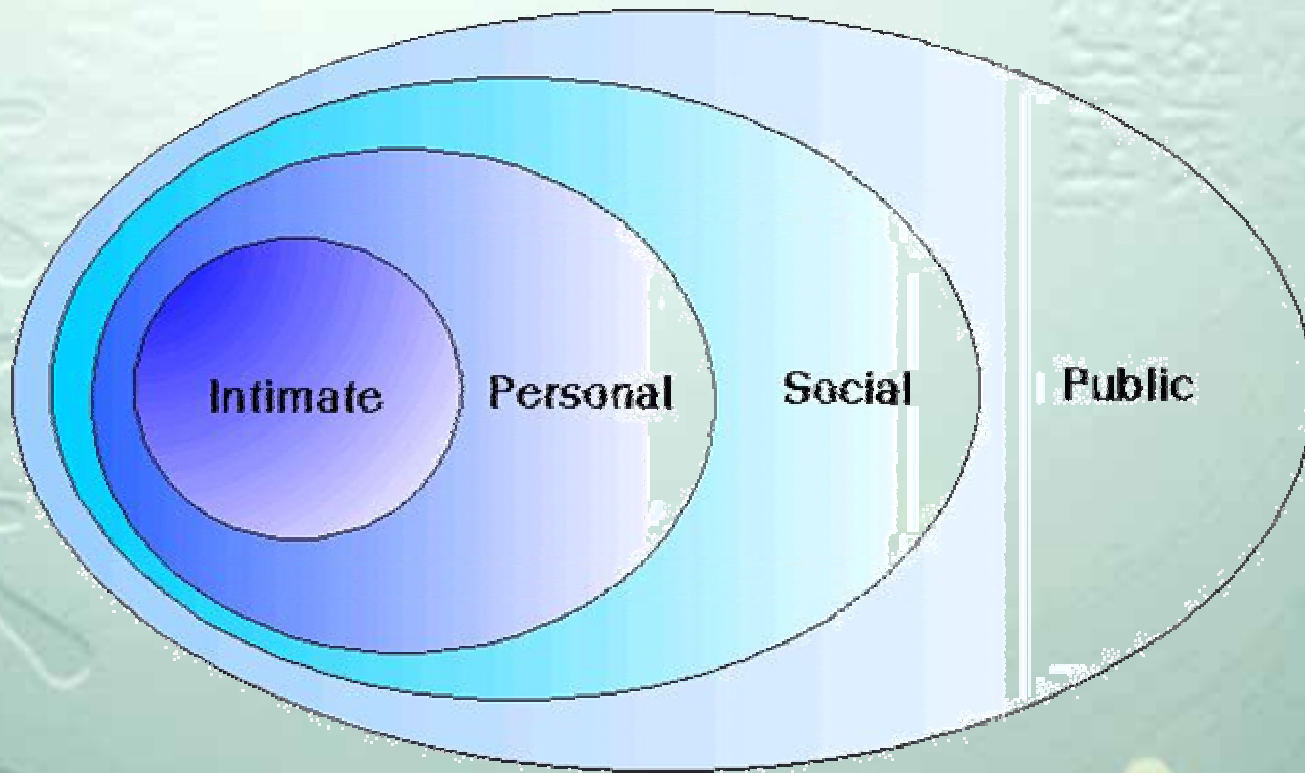
- Essence of the Korean spirit.
- Combination of self-esteem, mood, feeling and a person's inner spirit.
- To disturb someone's *gibun* in a negative way => Destruction of communication.

2) Personal Space

- Edward T. Hall

- Intimate zone: 0 – 2/1 feet
- Personal zone: 2/1 – 4 feet
- Social zone: 4 – 12 feet
- Public zone: over 12 feet

Personal Space



3) Differences in Communicating

- Americans speak directly and compliment often.
- Koreans speak indirectly and are not used to direct compliment. Koreans believe that modesty is the virtue.

David: Mina, your English is improving. You did very well this month.

Mina: No, my English is not very good.

David: Why don't you say that, Mina? You're doing very well in class.

Mina: No, I'm not a good student.

David: Mina, you're making progress in this class. I think you can move to D class next month.

Mina: No, it's not true. You're a good teacher, but I am not a good student.

David: ...

Mrs. Brown: How was your weekend, Minjae?

Minjae: I just stayed at home, watched TV, and played computer game.

Mrs. Brown: What did you watch on TV?

Minjae: I...watched a baseball game.

Mrs. Brown: Okay, and are you good at computer game?

Minjae: No, I'm not...

4) Going Dutch

- Koreans use the word Dutch pay, which has same meaning of Going dutch in English.
- In Korea, the one who first suggests to go out for dinner or drink pays for his own as well as his friend.
- It is natural for Koreans that elder people pay for younger people.

5) Home Invitations

- In Korean culture, invitation to a house means invitation to dinner.
- In Western culture, invitation to a house means “Let’s just have a small talk.”.
- At dinner table in Korea, hostess asks guests to have some more. However, to be polite, Koreans decline few times.

6) Gift

- Koreans refuse gift from a guest few times.
- Koreans don't open gifts in front of the people.
- Americans open as soon as they receive and show immediate appreciation.

7) Drinking Manners

- “One-shot” in Korean means “Bottoms-up” in English.
- Koreans never fill their own glass. They hold the glass with their right hand and support it with their left. It is not polite to refuse a glass offered by friends, especially the old.
- BOB

Gestures and Manners

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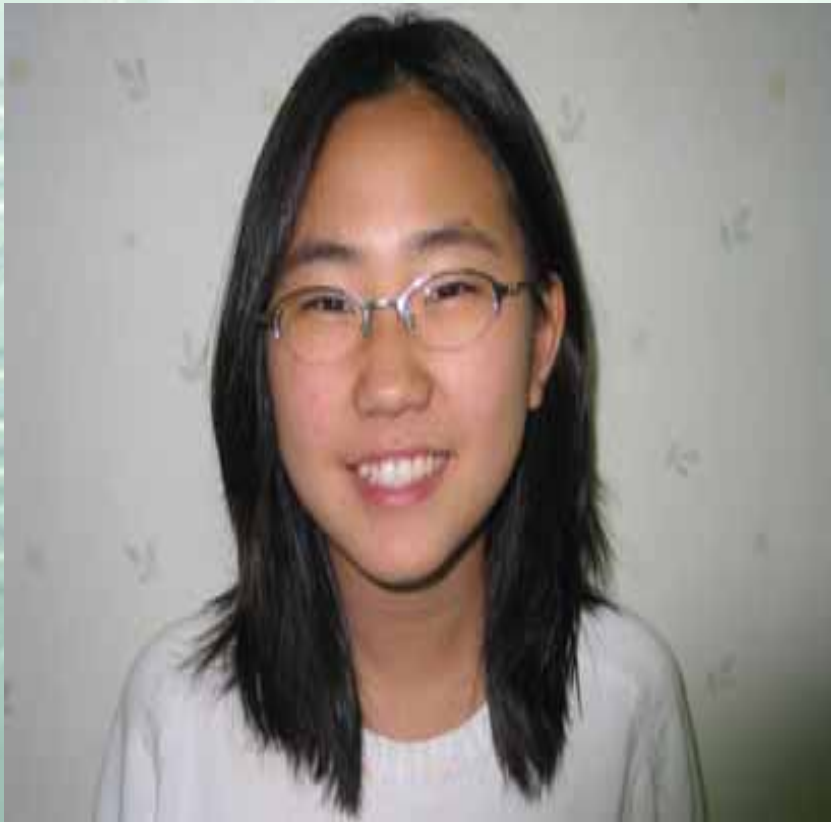


Gestures



- 1) Smiling
- 2) Eye Contact
- 3) Pointing
- 4) Greeting
- 5) Touching

Smiling



Koreans often smile when there is an embarrassing situation or when one makes mistake

Pointing

“MONEY”



Greeting -



w



Touching

Korean of the same sex, both male and females, holding hands or walking with their arms around another's shoulder.



Raising one finger to his mouth

“Shhh...”



“to persuade a
child to perform
before the
toilet”

Manners

- 1) Manners toward the Old
- 2) Table Manners
- 3) Ways to announce oneself
- 4) Address Terms

Table Manners

- *do not talk much while eating
- * Young people wait until elders sit down and start eating.
- * When drinking with an elder, a young man should be careful to hide his glass, and turn his body to drink.

Way to Announce oneself



“Coughing” is a very gentle way of announcing oneself.

Address Terms

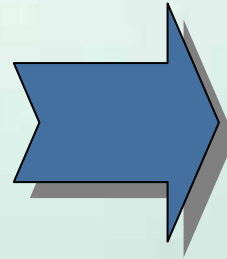
1) Name

Kim, Chang-Hee

2) Position names or titles are more common.

Ex> Prof. Kim

Dr. Park



3) When conversing with unfamiliar people

“Seon Saeng Nim”

“Agassi”

“Ajumoni”

“Hyung” elder brother to men

“Hyung **Nim**” is polite to elder brothers

“Oppa” elder brother to women

“Dongsaeng” younger brother to men or younger sister to women

“Unnie” elder sister to women

“Noona” elder sister to men