

Sneath's approach is an attempt to follow the old British functionalism; even Evans-Pritchard (1940) called the Nuer "acephalous." However, the imperial confederations of nomads in Inner Asia are not Nuer. Their internal organization differed from systems characteristic of both early nomads and pastoral societies of modern times and they brought considerable threat to great agrarian civilizations. Sneath's work illustrates that there have been significant achievements and progress in the investigation of nomadic peoples in Inner Asia. However, many difficult issues and unsolved problems remain.

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Korean Cuisine: An Illustrated History. Michael J. Pettid. London: Reaktion Books, 2008. 223 pp. + color photos, index, bibliography, references, recipes. UK £22.50. US \$39.95. ISBN 978-1-86189-348-2.

Reviewed by ELLEN F. STEINBERG, author of *Learning to Cook in 1898: A Chicago Culinary Memoir*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2007.

Compared to the vast number of books treating Chinese or Japanese foods and culinary histories, few have been written about Korea. This dearth became quite apparent recently during an admittedly non-scientific survey of two large urban bookstores, which produced not a single tome devoted to Korean food-

ways, and only a single recipe titled *Bool Kogi* (translated in-text as "Spicy Fire Meat") in a cookbook devoted to pan-Asian dishes. The author of *Korean Cuisine: An Illustrated History*, Michael J. Pettid, aims to remedy this deficiency with his slim volume exploring Korean food, its history, and connection

to the culture of that land. Profusely illustrated with more than one hundred mouth-watering photographs of traditional dishes, Korean utensils, implements, and kitchen spaces, and supplemented with a selection of recipes, the book goes far in dispelling what the author contends is a prevalent (Western?) perception that Korean cuisine consists only of *kimch'i* (fermented vegetables) and *pulgogi* (thinly-sliced marinated beef; the same dish romanized as *Bool Kogi* above).

In the Introduction, Pettid writes that the purpose of the book is to provide a window into Korean culture—one that extends back more than twelve hundred years—by examining its food. To start, he explores the melange of mythical, historical, and environmental influences that affected premodern Korean cuisine. Chapter One, “Daily Foods,” discusses both everyday and ideal meals consisting of rice, a soup or stew, accompanied by a variety of side dishes. The author explains the Korean notion of social status as expressed in three-, five-, seven-, nine-, and twelve-dish meals. He also emphasizes the harmony between flavors, textures, and temperatures for which a Korean cook strives even today. Chapter Two, “Ritual and Seasonal Foods,” expands on some of the foods and food types mentioned in the first chapter, but sets them in the context of celebrations and rituals, many of which are documented here.

Chapter Three, “Regional Specialties,” shows how geography historically influenced regional foodstuffs, flavorings, and seasonings throughout Korea. It is a chapter that one wishes were much longer. Chapter Four, “Drinks,” covers water(s), alcoholic beverages, and different types of tea, consumed by all social classes in Korea. All were important to social interaction because their consumption was governed by formality and etiquette rules detailed in this chapter. Chapter Five, “Foods of the Royal Palace,” reveals that Korean royal court cuisine was actually not one specific type, but was composed of regional specialties. By virtue of their sheer numbers and exquisite preparation, these dishes matched and enhanced the prestige and opulence found at court, particularly during the Chosun dynasty (1392–1910). This chapter traces the movement of dishes, beverages, and etiquette

from the provinces to the palace, from the court to the noble houses, and from there to the commoners' tables.

Chapter Six, “The Kitchen Space and Utensils,” discusses some particulars of food preparation, utensils, implements, and spatial organization in premodern Korean homes. As with Korean food and etiquette surrounding its consumption, all of these are uniquely Korean and serve as identity/ownership markers. Chapter Seven, “Food in Contemporary Korea,” traces change in modern Korean food culture that is, nonetheless, underlain by historical constancy in terms of philosophy, seasonings, and presentation. To support this argument, Pettid cites restaurants in South Korea whose menus are peppered with formerly “high-end” foods modified to meet contemporary taste, foreign foods and “fusion cuisine.” The “Recipes” section covers the gamut of Main Dishes, Side Dishes, and Drinks. The recipes are for typical Korean foods and beverages. The ingredients, except for dog meat and abalone (listed on the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources Red List of threatened species and protected under the U.S. Endangered Species Act), are readily available in most urban Western groceries or in Korean/Asian specialty shops; the preparation and cooking instructions are clear, and give lie to the notion that making this style food is extraordinarily difficult.

Prior to listing his references, helpfully divided by chapters, Pettid states that “Korean words are transliterated into English using the McCune-Reischauer and Chinese words by the Pinyin system” (200). These two systems attempt to match each word's spelling to how it would be written if it were an English word. The MR system, of necessity, adds apostrophes, breves, and diereses when printing romanized words. Because some, if not most, English speakers might not know how to interpret these marks, a short pronunciation guide would have been helpful. The “Bibliography” is extensive, divided into Primary and Secondary Sources. The primary sources are, as might be expected, in Korean. There are a few English secondary sources listed that make additional information accessible to non-Korean speakers.

In sum, the book's English text "reads" easily, although it would have benefited from tighter copyediting. For example, since it is aimed at English speakers wherever they reside, recipe ingredients should have been listed both in grams and ounces. Closer attention to the manuscript would have guaranteed that all items discussed were defined somewhere in the text body, e.g., jujubes and lees, obviating the need to consult a dictionary. What emerges best from this volume is that, indeed, as the author asserts, "Korean cuisine is diverse" (9). Readers will have no difficulty in verifying that statement for themselves. But can readers make the connections that the author claims are evident between what Koreans have historically eaten and their culture with only the material presented? And who are those readers? The general public? Academics? Students?

The general public, "foodies" included, would find this book to be a delicious introduction to, and overview of, Korean culture and history as expressed in its cuisine—subjects not particularly well known or appreciated in the West. Bluntly, there are simply not many books that cover this country's cuisine with any amount of specificity, or provide recipes for making traditional dishes. Even Laurel Kendall's classic, *Getting Married in Korea* (1996), does not go into great detail about the preparations of wedding feast foods, either in the past or currently. There are even fewer volumes in English linking the country's food and history, although one, *The His-*

tory and Culture of Korean Cuisine in the Kegan Paul Library of Culinary History and Cookery series (Gunning 2008), apparently covers much the same ground, albeit more expensively.

An academic audience, composed of culinary historians among others, might find the coverage of historical periods and religious influences on Korean cuisine a bit cursory. Yet, the "References" and "Bibliography" would be extremely helpful to specialists, even though most of the cited works are in Korean. Sociocultural anthropologists teaching comparative courses could assign this book as one of the Korean components with confidence. Indeed, *Korean Cuisine . . .* would be a solid supplemental text in any class focusing on Asian food and culture. For archaeologists working in Korea, the well-illustrated traditional cooking utensils and implements, along with the well-described spatial organization of houses and kitchens might prove useful for interpreting their finds.

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Prehistoric Societies on the Northern Frontiers of China: Archaeological Perspectives on Identity Formation and Economic Change during the First Millennium BCE. Gideon Shelach. London: Equinox Publishing Ltd., 2009. ix + 203 pp.

Reviewed by ROWAN FLAD, *Department of Anthropology, Harvard University*

This new book builds on more than 15 years of Gideon Shelach's archaeological field research in the Chifeng area of Eastern Inner Mongolia. He previously investigated social and political changes during the Late Prehistoric and early historic periods of this area

(Shelach 1999). Here, however, Shelach expands his geographical scope to cover the entire steppe region across China's northern frontier, the so-called "Northern Zone." He focuses on explaining the process by which an apparent dichotomy emerged from the