

# S. Korea

World Premier Asset



# Journey to find my identity in Jeonju homeland Belgian-Korean Tintin

By Foucart KIM



Belgian photographer  
(From Korean birth name: Park Chul-Hee)

## THE “KOREA” MIRROR EFFECT

**I have rejected Korea all my life. Besides, strange thing, I didn't see myself in the mirror like a Korean.**

It was at 42 that I emerged from this “denial”. There, I discovered the culture, the cuisine, the history, the language of my native country. I was able to meet other Korean adoptees through an association and chat with people who understand the feelings we have about adoption.

First trip in 2018, I decided to go alone to explore this unknown country. What to say? It was magical. For the first time in my life I felt myself in line with my image. The way I looked at people gave me my own image, what I call the mirror effect. The return was painful and a lack settled in me. Lack that I have filled with films, K-Drama, K-Pop, Korean lessons, documentary and video by Youtuber like Laurent Caccia and Jake, Korean Dream.

Abandoned on the street the day after I was born and found by a certain Mr.Han on April 6, 1975, I recently realized that my Korean name Park Chol Hee (박철희) as indicated in my file, born in Jeonju on April 5, 1975 is unconsciously converted to the Belgian one Kim Foucart, age 44 today. From the Korean name: Park Chul-Hee changed to Belgian name: Kim Foucart Subsequently, I stayed at the Bisabel orphanage in Jeonju (which no longer exists), then headed for Holt in Seoul. There, I was placed with a host family to leave for Belgium, 5 months later. I had a very happy childhood in Binche and still live there to this day, surrounded by my wonderful Belgian adoptive parents.



# Korean adoptee uses DNA test and historic court case to demand to find birth family

**The first overseas adoptee from South Korea to file a paternity lawsuit in 2019. Kara Bos's lawsuit could help her find out why she was abandoned and who her mother was. It could also change how adoptees use the legal system.**

The Seoul Family Court concluded that a man, Bos believed could be her father, was indeed her biological father.

Bos, who traveled from her home in the Netherlands just to be in the courtroom in southern Seoul, quietly wept after the verdict was read out.

"I want to hear his voice and his story. That's what this journey for the search was about — getting him to talk to me," Bos told "And I want to ask him who my mother is."

Bos was found on Nov. 18, 1983 in a local market parking lot in Goesan, North Chungcheong Province. According to the adoption papers, her name was Kang Mee-sook and she was two years old when she was found. Ten months later, she was adopted by a family living in Michigan, U.S.

As she explained, her assimilation in the U.S. was successful. She grew up in a loving family, got married and moved to the Netherlands with her husband 10 years ago. They have two children. Bos said she had never felt the need to look for her birthmother until she had her first daughter.

"Two years of intensely taking care of my daughter, who was a very demanding baby in every sense of the word, brought me to the realization of what kind of bond is created during this time," she said.

In 2017, her family came to Korea and visited the agency which had arranged her adoption in an attempt to find more information about her biological mother. Separately, she took a DNA test and posted the result on MyHeritage, an online genealogy site, in 2016, with the hope that she could find a match. Nothing turned up and she forgot about it. In 2019, after learning the story of two Korean adoptee sisters finding each other through the platform, she went back to the site to check on her account.



Kara Bos with her family during their visit to Korea in 2017 Courtesy of Kara Bos For; Kara Bos, 38, a Korean adoptee who's been searching for her birthmother since 2016.

**“Korea previously saw many overseas adoptions — more than 167,000 babies were adopted by foreign families after the Korean War ended in 1953 — and many still occur today due to a reluctance among Koreans to adopt.**

This time, she found a match: a 22-year-old South Korean male student. As she communicated with him, it seemed to Bos to be most likely that he was her nephew, not her cousin, and that the young man's mother who was in her 50s could be her half-sister and the student's grandfather could be Bos' father. But then, her search had to stop

because her assumed nephew stopped talking to her — in fact it was his mother who didn't want her son to stay in contact with Bos.

On Nov. 18 last year, the same day she was abandoned 36 years earlier, Bos filed a paternity lawsuit against the assumed father, the first such case in Korea. "It wasn't intentional at all. It feels like fate," she recalled. Bos flew to Korea to visit her assumed half-sister to meet her father, but in vain.

In March this year, she flew back to Korea to have a DNA sample taken, part of the paternity lawsuit procedure, and saw the assumed father's address in the court documents, something she had wanted so badly to find but was unable to do until then.

"I went to visit him," she said. As the man was stepping out, she asked him, "My name is Kang Mee-sook. Do you recognize my face? He looked at me but didn't say anything, and that kind of ended everything."

She could communicate with her half-sisters only through a lawyer who said that their father would not show up for any of the legal proceedings. The father also took the DNA test and the result came in April, saying the chances that Bos and the man were daughter and father were 99.9981 percent. At the end of the emotionally intense legal battle, Bos is disappointed with a lack of support in Korea for adoptees.

"I didn't know how the law would be interpreted after my lawsuit. I started this journey wanting to only know one question, 'Who is my mother?' and I ended up having to spend countless amounts of money and time, and endure endless emotional trauma by even filing a lawsuit to have proof of a relationship to my father," she said.

She hopes things will change in Korea so that "it will become the country that's known to fight for all of adoptees that were sent away to give them their fundamental rights back. They can be the frontrunner in the world since they were the frontrunner in the export of babies that can instead turn that page to a new chapter and be the frontrunner of giving rights to them."

(article by Kim Se-jeong, Korea Times)



**Cuts are precise and the silhouettes are purposefully selected, combining sleek minimalism with playful exaggeration, or chopping proportions to unexpected effect. Slim-cut suits are worn with shirts that extend almost to mid-high, or shorts are worn under ankle length 'duvet' coats. Seoul street fashion is all about dressing up, and there is no better place to witness this than on the stylish avenues of Gangnam, Hongdae (university Hongik) and Myongdong .**

Gucci, Burberry and Saint Laurent made the most of their relationships with K-pop stars. Vogue declared EXO rapper Sehun as the best-dressed man at Louis Vuitton's resort 2019 show, while all seven members of BTS arrived at the 2018 Billboard Awards in bespoke Saint Laurent. Taeyoung from Big Bang collaborated with Fendi in 2017, G-Dragon is such a Chanel brand ambassador joining the ranks of Kristen Stewart, Cara Delevingne and Pharrell Williams. Dior Men creative director Kim Jones chose 'Loveself 2019' tour for BTS.

And the K-pop influence is not limited to fashion. In September 2018, BTS was invited to address the UN and gave a

speech in Korean encouraging youths to "speak yourself". It quickly went viral. Last year BTS made history as the first Korean band to top the US charts and are the first band since The Beatles to have three No 1 albums in a single year.

Following the establishment of their Love Myself anti-violence campaign in partnership with UNICEF, BTS addressed the United Nations 73rd General Assembly and became the youngest ever recipients of the Order of Cultural Merit from the President of South Korea due to their contributions in spreading Korean culture and language.

**Korean ban BTS. The K-POP superstars have 32 million YouTube subscribers and 26m followers on Instagram**



*Karl Lagerfeld*

**How the rise of South Korean music is shaping the way the world dresses.**

South Korean pop, K-pop, is a well-oiled music machine that plucks photogenic teenagers from obscurity and hot-houses them through years of intensive training and choreography. Sculpted into slick all-boy or all-girl bands, they are polished to an immaculate sheen and equipped with the latest duds and sharpest dance moves. K-pop has been around since the mid-1990s, however, in recent years it has gone global. With a huge following in Japan, China, Thailand, the Philippines, the Middle East, much of America and Australia, the bands once dismissed as plastic pop stars are now world-famous. With a fan base that borders on the obsessive, BTS is the most famous band on the planet today. As a collective, the seven members that make up the group, RM, Jimin, Jin, Suga, J-Hope, V and Jungkook, have 32 million YouTube subscribers, and 23 million and 26m followers on Twitter and Instagram respectively. They were the most tweeted-about celebrities of 2017, well ahead of Kim Kardashian and Taylor Swift, and have fans who refer to themselves as the BTS army.

But while teenagers may enjoy the upbeat tunes, there is more to K-pop than first meets the eye.

During the Japanese colonial occupation of Korea 1910-1945, much of the country's identity and culture was destroyed as part of so-called 'modernisation' programmes. In 1961, General Park Chunghee staged a military coup and seized power. Over the next two decades he ruled the country with an iron fist, placing tight controls on political oppositions, the press and universities. He established the much feared Korean Central Intelligence Agency to spy on dissenters and control the populace through fear tactics, and in 1972 declared martial law.

For a generation of young people living under this oppressive regime, wearing western-style hot pants, mini skirts, jewellery, or, for men, having long hair and donning make-up, became a symbol of political rebellion as well as a rejection of authoritarian rule. Clothing thus became enmeshed in protest, and even after the fall of the 1990s, Seo Taiji and Boys, merged American hip-hop with grunge in a style that would become known as 'resistance fashion'.

BTS (Korean: 방탄소년단 ; RR: Bangtan Sonyeondan), also known as the Bangtan Boys, is a seven-member South Korean boy band formed in Seoul in 2010

# After 'Parasite' s big Oscar win The global rise of South Korean film



The international success of Bong Joon Ho's 2019 thriller "Parasite" — which won last year's Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival, as well as four Academy Awards in March — was a reminder of the vast cinematic wealth of South Korea. Now, as most of us have cycled through our options with Netflix and other streaming services, the Korean Cultural Center of New York offered a selection of 10 recent titles available to stream on its website for free (with English subtitles) through the end of June. "Relentless Invention" at Film at Lincoln Center is filled with highlights from a relatively recent period in Korea's 100-year-old cinema tradition.

**The "Korean New Wave", the international fascination with Korean entertainment and film industry, began in the 1990s. This phenomenon, known as Hallyu, centres around the work of directors Park Chan-wook (Oldboy, Lady Vengeance, The Handmaiden), Bong Joon-ho (Memories of Murder, Host, Okja and Parasite) and Kim Jee-woon (A Tale of Two Sisters and I saw the Devil).**

## Distinctly Korean

Korean cinema is deeply embedded in the Korean experience, eschewing Hollywoodisation and producing an oeuvre that makes a Korean film distinctive to international audiences. Korean society has a reverence for tradition and at once extraordinarily modern, and its cinema embodies these qualities proudly.

Parasite has amassed a box office revenue of US\$137 million (£105 million) globally, and is set to rake in more with this slew of awards and nominations. Exceeding everybody's expectations, this subversive anti-capitalist film is winning over both critics and audiences. So much so, there is already a rumoured HBO series spin-off in the works.

Parasite's accomplishments come off the back of Joon-ho's previous critical success with the 2017 ecological fantasy Okja, Park Chan-wook's 2018 film Handmaiden (the first Korean film to be nominated for and win a Bafta) and Lee Chang-dong's 2018 film Burning (the first Korean film to make it to shortlist for best foreign film at the Oscars). If this momentum is anything to go by, the "Korean Wave" is only set to get bigger.



# Jim Rogers: Investment to Korea



February 12, 2020  
PYEONGCHANG, Gangwon Province

## South & North Korea Why investor Jim Rogers remains optimistic about inter-Korean business

If one word can describe the PyeongChang Peace Forum, a conference for peace creators and builders who want to maintain the legacy of the 2018 Winter Olympics, it would be optimism. During the three-day conference that ran from Sunday to Tuesday, many optimists offered their blueprints and hopes, including railroad projects linking the two Koreas with China and Europe and a ferry to carry tourists from Gangwon Province's Sokcho.

Among those optimists, the most vocal was probably Jim Rogers, the Rogers Holdings chairman who has been outspoken about opportunities concerning North Korea since leaders of South Korea, North Korea and the US met and shook hands in historic meetings two years ago. Although the dialogue has since stopped and North Korea has again carried out missile tests, his rosy view has not changed a bit, the 77-year old investor said in an interview.

*“The Korean Peninsula is going to be the single most exciting place in the world once the 38 parallel comes down*

“I'm extremely optimistic about the Korean Peninsula. Combining North Korea's natural resources (and) cheap disciplined labor with South Korea's money, ....”, he said, referring to the fortified border between the Koreas. He said tourism is the industry North Korea will most willingly want to open.

**“The Korean Peninsula has never been on the international tourism map ever. Now when it opens many people want to come here out of curiosity,”** he said. “Once opening up the borders, there would be no turning back.”

With that anticipation he joined Ananti, a Korean resort company, as an external board member in December 2018 and bought 40.2 million won (\$33,900) in shares. Ananti owns a resort that includes a golf course and hot spring at famous tour destination Kumgangsan

in the North. But only two months after its opening in 2008, the resort was shut down when a South Korean woman was shot by a North Korean soldier. There has been hope that Ananti will be able to open again, but North Korean leader Kim Jong-un last year threatened to tear down the “shabby South Korean-made building” at the Kumgangsan mountain resort.

“The properties have been sitting there empty since 2008. Of course, it looks ugly. I don't have any problem with tearing some of them down and building them (again),” Rogers said. “If they confiscate property, that's a disaster and that would be the end of investing in North Korea. I think Kim knows enough about investing,” he warned.

**“It doesn't have to be reunification. Please open up the border and build the railroad, (Gangwon Province) Gov. Choi (Moon-soon) and President Moon (Jae-in),” he urged.**

Another thing he is very optimistic about in Korea is graphene, a thin but strong material. Rogers joined Kospilisted Nanomedics' board of directors in August 2019. “Graphene will become more important than the internet,” he said. “South Korea may wind up being one of the world's leaders in graphene technology and we're told there are a lot of cheap graphite -- the mineral needed to make graphene -- in North Korea.”