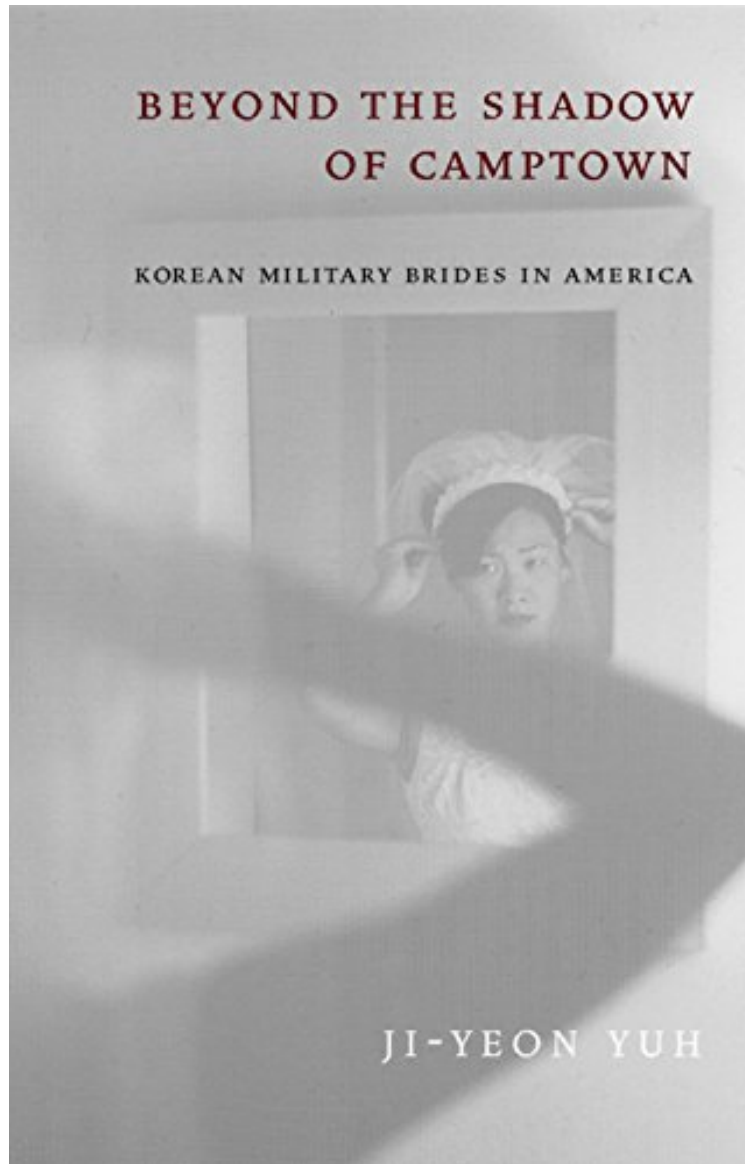


[Free pdf] Beyond the Shadow of Camptown: Korean Military Brides in America (Nation of Nations)

## **Beyond the Shadow of Camptown: Korean Military Brides in America (Nation of Nations)**

*Ji-Yeon Yuh*

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#1085495 in Books NYU Press 2004-04-01 2004-04-01 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.00 x .76 x 6.00l, .89 #File Name: 0814796990283 pages | File size: 32.Mb

**Ji-Yeon Yuh : Beyond the Shadow of Camptown: Korean Military Brides in America (Nation of Nations)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Beyond the Shadow of Camptown: Korean Military Brides in America (Nation of Nations):

5 of 8 people found the following review helpful. an interesting treatment of another aspect of conflictBy S.

Hall Beginning with the Japanese annexation of Korea in 1910, followed by its replacement by the United States in 1945, the military governments established a series of bases, and from around these bases grew camptowns, a section of businesses that offered everything from souvenirs to alcohol to prostitution. For her own extended metaphor, Yuh refers to the shadow, or influence, that is cast by these camptowns not only across the Korean landscape but also within the Korean people, most specifically the women who worked, often as indentured servants, within these camptowns and went on to marry soldiers. Yuh makes explicit her change in referring to these women as military brides over war brides. This does not obfuscate, however, the historical value of war brides as being equivalent to war booty and hence configured more as property, even as the remnants of this idea manifest in certain social attitudes (i.e., domestic subservience) that many of the American servicemen may have had toward their Korean wives. The use of personal case studies set against the backdrop of US military policy in Korea and social attitudes both in the United States as well as Korea shows that these women lived in a perpetual state of dual existence, in many ways no longer being recognized as completely Korean and unable to be regarded as completely American. This concept of identity is made more complex as Yuh traces out some elements of the Japanese occupation of the Korean peninsula, particularly those aspects of the occupation that forced Korean children to adopt Japanese names and learn Japanese language (spoken and written) and history, thus distancing them from their own Korean heritage, a displacement that would be further complicated by those who married American soldiers. Since the research on Korean military brides is finite, Yuh's study presents some intriguing insights on a segment of the population that is constantly negotiating the preservation of its ethnic heritage and identity while it adjusts its assimilation into American society. This is particularly important at a time when community and ethnic identity in America finds itself increasingly transformed by world events, such as recent developments with nuclear proliferation in North Korea.

18 of 23 people found the following review helpful. Powerful and Well Written  
By A Customer  
As the author points out, there is very little work on international military wives, and Korean military wives in particular. By such a logic, this book is a welcome project indeed. Essentially, Yuh Ji-Yeon sets out to make sense of why Korean women set out to marry American [military] men along with the consequences of such decisions. What becomes apparent throughout this book is the gendered set of relations in both US-Korean and soldier-wife relations. While many Korean women may seek American husbands (especially those tricked and coerced into camptown USA) in order to escape Korean societal restrictions and shape better lives for themselves, many American men seek Asian wives in order to fulfill the ultimate Orientalist fantasy of Asian women as meek, erotic, and subservient. Through numerous interviews, Yuh finds out that many of the hopes that Korean military wives bring with them to America become easily dashed as they experience racism and cultural colonization. These Korean wives (many of whom are societal outcasts) thus become marginalized, their identities stolen from them as they are neither accepted for their cultural value by either their own indigenous community and the new American community. While such wives try hard to acculturate themselves to the demands of American life, suffering and pain continues to follow them, and in some cases poverty despite the allure and so-called attainability of the great American dream. Perhaps even more important, Yuh makes clear that not all Korean wives are former camptown girls. Such simplistic stereotypes carried by the American public is damaging in creating pejorative connotations of the "Korean wife." Furthermore, even those wives who are former camptown girls should not be condescended. Being a prostitute is not exactly a free choice in Korea. Moreover, why should camptown girls be discriminated and labeled whore when the American soldiers who frequent red-light districts are sometimes actively encouraged by their commanders and more often than not treated with minor slaps on the hand for engaging in prostitution. Sadly, US military policy discriminates against the supply rather than dealing with the demand in prostitution. So much for the high morals of the US military. In this context, many Korean wives act out a latent form of resistance. Their husbands and in-laws may forbid them to speak Korean, to eat Korean food, to teach their children Korean culture, but in the privacy of their homes when husbands and children are out, these women cultivate friendships with other Korean wives, watch Korean movies, and make attempts to demand the respect that they undoubtedly deserve. In short, while Korean wives may be denied meaningful relationships with their husbands and children due to lack of support in learning the English language and subsequently sharing the Korean language, these women are basically trying to survive and separate themselves from their sad and sometimes lurid pasts.

"Beyond the Shadow of Camptown" is a book that anyone in the military, and especially any soldier thinking of taking an Asian wife or mail order bride should read. Conversely, this book should also be read by foreign women around US military bases worldwide, who are thinking that a green card is an entry into a better life. This book shows the complexities of immigration, and of negotiating two different contexts. Truly, this book is very powerful and more importantly supported by interviews and other forms of empirical evidence that even those in self-denial can't rebut. Last but not least, we must consider the stories of each Korean wife that has come to the US. Their stories deserve to be heard and remembered.

6 of 10 people found the following review helpful. A moving and eye-opening account  
By A Customer  
This book fills a need by covering Korean women who married American military men and their experiences in life, the prejudices they've encountered from other Koreans and white Americans, and how they stake out a place of meaning for themselves through church activities with other Korean military wives. The author describes the women's family and educational background as well as how they met their husbands. Although a few were sex workers in

Korea, the majority were not. It seems that it's not common for Korean military wives to have Korean girlfriends whose husbands are Korean as well. I found that surprising because I grew up in a Korean community of Jehovah's Witnesses where my mother, a Korean woman married to a Korean man, had (and still has) many girlfriends who were Korean military wives. I would have appreciated a religious history of these women, whether they were always Christian or became such after meeting their husbands.

Since the beginning of the Korean War in 1950, nearly 100,000 Korean women have immigrated to the United States as the wives of American soldiers. Based on extensive oral interviews and archival research, *Beyond the Shadow of the Camp Towns* tells the stories of these women, from their presumed association with U.S. military camp towns and prostitution to their struggles within the intercultural families they create in the United States. Historian Ji-Yeon Yuh argues that military brides are a unique prism through which to view cultural and social contact between Korea and the U.S. After placing these women within the context of Korean-U.S. relations and the legacies of both Japanese and U.S. colonialism vis vis military prostitution, Yuh goes on to explore their lives, their coping strategies with their new families, and their relationships with their Korean families and homeland. Topics range from the personal role of food in their lives to the communal efforts of military wives to form support groups that enable them to affirm Korean identity that both American and Koreans would deny them. Relayed with warmth and compassion, this is the first in-depth study of Korean military brides, and is a groundbreaking contribution to Asian American, women's, and "new" immigrant studies, while also providing a unique approach to military history.

Where do marriage, diaspora, racism, and the politics of global alliances converge? In the dreams and dailiness of the thousands of Korean women living in the United States today. Ji-Yeon Yuh's engaging and revealing book shows us that by listening attentively to the Korean women married to white and black American men, we can become a lot smarter about the realities of globalized living. -Cynthia Enloe, author of *Maneuvers: the International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives* "By studying the lives and history of Korean military brides, Ji-Yeon Yuh pays tribute to an important group that has not received the understanding, attention, and respect that it deserves. Full of compelling stories, *Beyond the Shadow of the Camp Towns* is sure to inspire new ways of thinking about U.S. and especially immigration history, as well as Asian American and Asian history." -Elaine Kim, University of California at Berkeley Sensitive and absorbing, *Beyond the Shadow of Camp Towns* probes a little-known but fascinating aspect of Asian-American history: the lives of nearly 100,000 Korean women who married American soldiers, and often live a silent, marginal existence in the United States. Professor Yuh gives eloquent voice to these women, linking their diaspora to a gripping and original account of the often appalling circumstances of American military occupation in Korea, while also locating many heartening stories of personal empowerment and triumph over the odds. -Bruce Cumings, author of *Korea's Place in the Sun* "Beyond the Shadow of Camp Towns: Korean Military Brides in America, immigration historian Ji-Yeon Yuh explores how Korean women relate to American men in these cross-cultural relationships, and how the military link between the dominant U.S. and subservient Korea tends to complicate their marriages, already challenging for many other reasons, with a dose of international politics as well." -Korean Quarterly "Yuh has composed a complex, provocative, and compassionate portrayal of the experiences of Korean military brides from the 1950s through the 1990s. . . . Delving into how these women face isolation and alienation from both Korean and US societies because of their transnational status, Yuh's masterful history demonstrates that these women have resisted perceptions of both societies and forged communities based on their claiming Korean and US identities as Korean military brides. A wonderful resource... Highly recommended." -Choice By studying the lives and history of Korean military brides, Ji-Yeon Yuh pays tribute to an important group that has not received the understanding, attention, and respect that it deserves. Full of compelling stories, *Beyond the Shadow of the Camp Towns* is sure to inspire new ways of thinking about U.S. and especially immigration history, as well as Asian American and Asian history. -Elaine Kim, University of California at Berkeley Ji-Yeon Yuh uses a wealth of sources, especially moving oral histories, to tell an important, at times heartbreaking, story of Korean military brides. She takes us beyond the stereotypes and reveals their roles within their families, communities, and Korean immigration to the U.S. Without ignoring their difficult lives, Yuh portrays these women's agency and dignity with skill and compassion. -K. Scott Wong, Williams College About the Author Ji-Yeon Yuh is Assistant Professor of History at Northwestern University. Her work has appeared in the Chicago Tribune, the Philadelphia Inquirer, the Miami Herald, and the Baltimore Sun, as well as in major newspapers in Japan and Korea.