

Chapter 11

Science Project, *Kim-Jang*: Building Relationship with Korean Tradition and the Nature

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Korean society has shifted from agriculture to industry in the past 40 years. This rapid change in the economy has affected the life style of Koreans. The majority of children living in Korean industrialized cities have limited access to the outdoor activity in natural settings, which negatively impacts the physical, emotional, and social development of Korean children. Scholars in childhood education identify significant changes in housing, foods and eating habits, and family structure, which dilute Korean culture and traditions and hinder the healthy development of children. Teachers in South Korea today design learning environments and implement instructional lesson plans to combat the effects of urbanization, industrialization, and globalization. One of the notable lesson units is Kim-jang, integral to the Korean culture, which engages children, families and the community in activities through gardening and a variety of other activities. The Kim-jang unit is designed

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to accommodate intrinsic learning modalities of young children for hands-on, active learning experiences; to integrate standards-based content areas to strengthen skills and build knowledge; to deepen interpersonal and intrapersonal insight; and to, first and foremost, enhance traditional cultural values and practices as they are lost through rapid industrialization.

IMPACT OF INDUSTRIALIZATION, MODERNIZATION, GLOBALIZATION AND URBANIZATION ON SOUTH KOREAN LIFESTYLE

The world is changing rapidly toward one complex society where each nation influences and is influenced by each other. South Korea, located between Japan and China, has been recognized as one of the fastest growing and developing countries in the Pacific Ocean region. Under the names of ‘modernization’ and ‘industrialization,’ Korean society has reshaped its economy from traditional agriculture society (KOSIS) to an industrial economy. The increase of manufacturing industries since the 1970s and the active investment in information technology (IT) business has led to a major change in the format of Korean industry. According to statistical data from Bank of Korea (2009), less than 4.5% of the workforce is engaged in agriculture, mining or fishing in the last decade.

This shift from agriculture to industry has affected the life style of Koreans. Cities providing relatively easy access to transportation hubs attract people for employment, education and readily available services, resulting in further urban expansion. New buildings that are designed and erected for businesses and high-rise apartment complexes are constructed for burgeoning cities’ populations. Many of the apartment buildings are twenty, thirty, forty and even fifty stories high. According to KOSIS, more than 48% of South Koreans live in the capital city, Seoul. Two South Korean cities are listed among the top fifty in the world for population density. Seoul is the sixth and Pusan is the fiftieth most densely populated city in the world.

The rapid economic growth, as well as high competition with neighboring countries such as Japan, India and China, has lead to children spending more time indoors preparing for academic competitions. Industrialization has resulted in complete obliteration of nature, replacing flora and fauna with bricks and mortar. Under the guise of ‘modernization,’ outdoor play spaces and outdoor play times have been minimized, and in some places they have been totally eliminated.

Air pollution resulting from rapid industrialization threatens the health of children with ‘*atopic dermatitis*,’ which is caused mainly from air pollution, colorings and preservatives in foods and jam-packed living conditions in Korean housing (Han, 2007; Kang, 2010). According to Korean Ministry of Health and Welfare (2007) statistics, 20.6% of Korean children from infancy to age 11 years are identified as

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