

## Korea's dynamic progress

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As a foreigner who has taken up long-term residence in South Korea, two words have come to epitomize the country; dynamic progress. The dynamic aspect is best demonstrated by the Koreans successful adaptation of their centuries old culture with the fast-paced requirements of the modern age.



While Korean culture has a multitude of differences from the culture of the United States and Europe, the Koreans most notably share the dynamic work ethic that originally developed in protestant Europe. In Europe this work ethic enabled European countries to successfully engineer the industrial revolution and, thereby conquer the world in the 18th and 19th centuries. In the mid to late 20th century the United States came to lead the world both militarily and economically through reliance on the same work ethic.

However, in the late 20th century and into the 21st century the new captivating story is about South Korea. The work ethic once seen in Europe and the U.S. is now centered in South Korea and the Koreans have fully incorporated this ethos into a modern technological society.

This dynamic work ethic has enabled South Korea to move, in less than 50 years, from an economic position at the very bottom of the world to the very top. In 1960 Korea was ranked on a par with the countries of sub-Saharan Africa. In 2006 the International Monetary Fund ranked South Korea as number 12th in the world in Gross Domestic Product and the current President-elect, Lee Myung-bak, won an overwhelming victory primarily based on a platform promising to move South Korea to number 7th in the world during his five year term. This bold economic platform embodies the dynamic will of the South Korean people to lead the world.

The second word, progress, is quickly seen once one arrives in South Korea. Arrival at Incheon International Airport, which has been repeatedly rated as number one in the world, brings an immediate realization that this is not the Korea of Hawkeye Pierce. Traveling into Seoul on a four lane superhighway towards the 63 Building standing majestically in the distance hammers home the dramatic extent of the change. Once a foreigner leaves Seoul and travels into the countryside there comes a quick realization that South Korea is in the final stages of an infrastructure building boom last seen in America during the Eisenhower administration. South Korea's express highways, bypasses and rail systems have either recently been completed or are nearing completion at a rapid pace. When a traveler makes a repeat trip to almost anywhere in the country one is continually surprised by new highways, railway lines, tunnels and other major city improvements. One of the more recent and pleasing changes, for Koreans and foreigners alike, is the completion of the renovation of the Cheonggyecheon stream in Seoul. This stream was formerly a covered ditch that has been transformed into a centerpiece for culture and art.

Thus, for a company or individual contemplating investment or work in South Korea the dynamic efforts of one's Korean compatriots will greatly aid the success of any project. The Korean work ethic is a major boost for investors in South Korea. Koreans work long and hard hours without complaint. They seldom need sick leave and they neither ask for nor require extensive vacation time. Korea is very attractive for western companies seeking expertise and work ethic. Further, the infrastructure and beatification progress seen throughout the country continually shows how bright a future there is in South Korea. As a foreigner living in South Korea for the last few years I am continually pleased by the dynamism of the Korean people and continually excited by the progress I see on a daily basis. These two things together, dynamic progress, give me a great hope for the future of South Korea.

Source: [www.korea.net](http://www.korea.net)