



The anchor *monthly*



WHEEL & ANCHOR

We bring travellers together

South Korea & Japan

contents

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The South Korea & Japan edition



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On the Cover: Women in traditional dress walking in Gyeongbokgung Palace, Seoul, South Korea.

Questions or comments? We'd love to hear from you! Call us at
1-(888) 531-5101
or email us at
info@wheelandanchor.ca

A traditional Korean bride.

Graphic design: anythink.ca

The anchor monthly

from gordon's perspective

For many Canadians Asia is so far, so vast, and so populous that we lump the countries and cultures together as 'Asia' as a mental shortcut for our brains, blurring the lines regarding what makes these countries and peoples unique.

Yet the truth of course is far more nuanced, and each deserves its own careful exploration as the cultures and histories are rich and eminently interesting. This was the sort of exploration a crew of travellers and myself went for this past May to Japan and South Korea, and we most certainly were not disappointed.

South Korea and Japan are of course two of the most technologically advanced nations in the world, and I would bet there is not a member among us who has not interacted with at least one device, appliance or car produced from either.

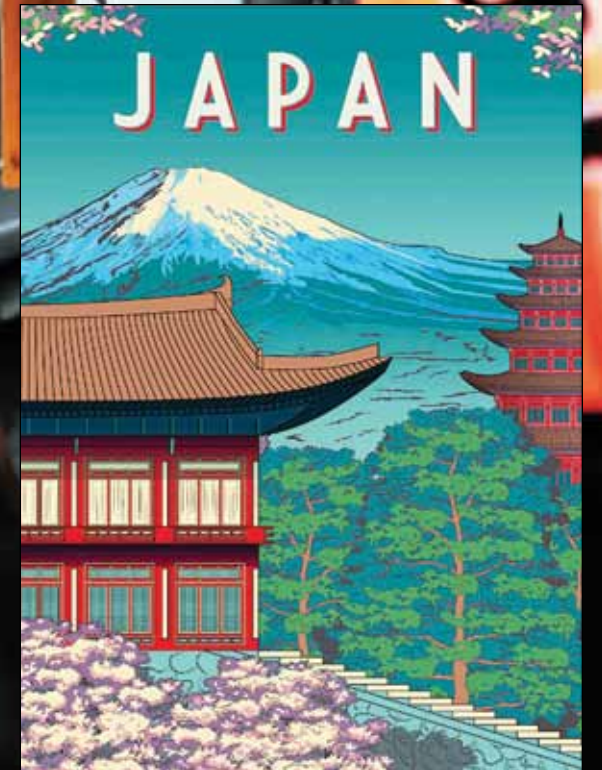
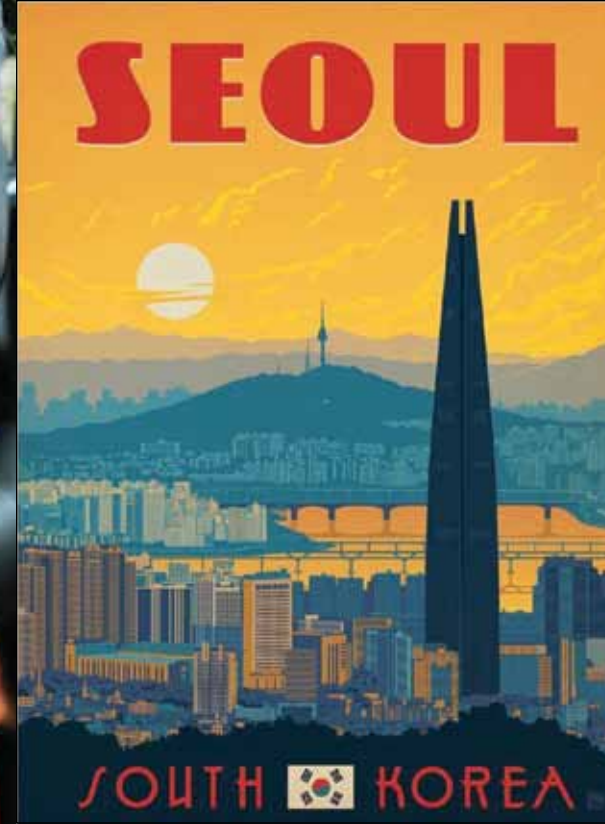
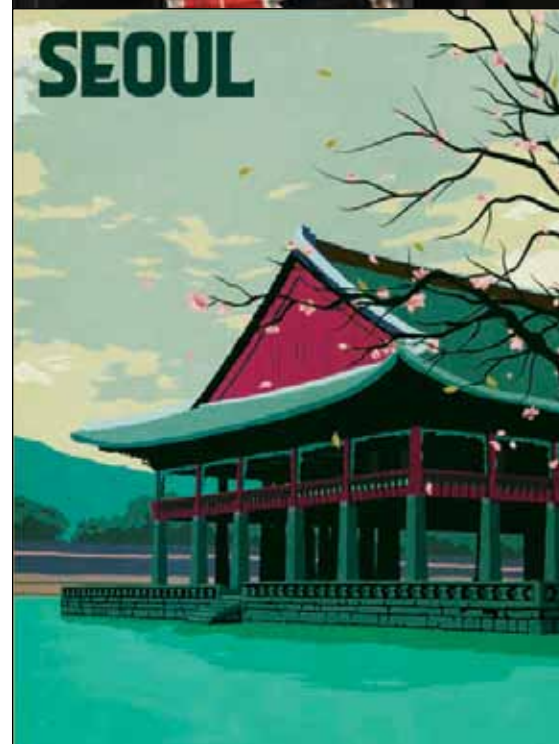
But the technology association we have with these countries is to me just the very surface layer of what makes them interesting. What is it about their people and culture that enables them to produce such modern marvels? And how do we reconcile this with the long histories of both peoples, of which they are fiercely proud?

Riding the bullet train in Japan or the KTX in Korea at speeds unavailable in North America, one passes unending cities but also a great deal more nature than you might expect. At the same time you also see local passengers on the train, their calm yet focused demeanour a small hint of the underlying devotion and drive that is behind the incredible progress their societies have made.

It was neat to see the juxtaposition of ancient and modern in both South Korea and Japan, and not just in the buildings and technology, but in the people themselves. Travelling through these countries undoubtedly left us all with greater context of who we are in relation to our Asian neighbours. ☸



Gordon Dreger, Founder



South Korea *in profile*



Stats:

- 51,239,607 - population of South Korea
- 1,284,989 - number of passengers per month flying from Seoul to Jeju, the world's busiest air route
- #12 - ranking in world's largest economies
- 14 - number of UNESCO sites in South Korea
- #1 - rank of South Korea in rankings of mobile download speed (2019)

Bongeunsa Temple, South Korea

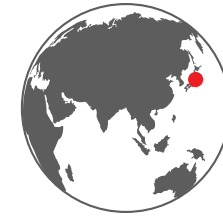


4



KOREA
TOURISM
ORGANIZATION
www.visitkorea.or.kr

Japan *in profile*



Stats:

- 126,771,832 - population of Japan
- 6,852 - number of islands in Japanese archipelago
- 320 - speed in km/h regularly reached by the Shinkansen (Japanese bullet trains)
- 23 - number of UNESCO sites in Japan
- #5 - ranking of world's largest economies



Matsumoto Castle, Matsumoto, Japan

5



future tour ideas

Feedback from members via the questionnaire, our events, calls with Gordon or even just in an email is what spawns the ideas for our future tours. While not all of these programs will necessarily be offered, we appreciate your opinion on these places and the more positive response, the more likely we will expedite development of these programs.



FOLLOW THE INCAS: PERU

Those who have been to Peru rave about it; those who haven't, ask us about it! Lima holds the stories of Peru's pre-Colombian history in her museums as well as the colonial remnants in her fabulous architecture, and is also one of South America's new gastronomic capitals. And of course we'll make the trip to Machu Picchu, one of the Seven Wonders of the World, built by the Incas over 2,400m up in the Peruvian Andes. Rumour has it that they may soon drastically reduce the number of visitors, so we will head there sooner than later.

TUSCAN VILLA RETREAT

A significant percentage of our members have been to Italy, but it's one of those places where all you really need is a good excuse to visit again, particularly for something different. The idea behind this program is to rent some beautiful villas close to one another in Tuscany, day-tripping around to local towns and villages to experience the flavours and culture of the region. Less bouncing around and fewer tourists, and more time to soak in all the amazing sites and tastes this renowned region has to offer.

THE CAMINO

Many of our members have expressed interest in walking the fabled Camino de Santiago, arguably the most famous pilgrimage in the western world. Over 300,000 people from over 200 countries walked the Camino in 2018. Whether you're interested in it as a pilgrimage, a new challenge, or just a different kind of travel experience, I have little doubt this walk through northern Spain will imprint itself as a highlight in your story as a traveller.

These and other truly unique programs are all on the drawing board and due for release over the coming weeks and months. Follow our weekly e-newsletter for the latest updates and to be among the first to secure your spots as group sizes will be limited.

Stay tuned to our newsletter for updates on these and more great programs!

A Traveller's Dictionary

South Korea

Korean phrase: 발이 넓다

pal-i neolb-da.

Direct English translation:

"have wide feet."

What it means:

To have a wide social network.

Korean phrase: 야! 신난다!

ya-sin-nan-da.

Direct English translation:

"Yeah, this is fun!"

What it means: You're having a good time!

Korean phrase: 남의 떡이 커 보인다

nam-ui ddeok-i keo bo-in-da.

Direct English translation:

"Someone else's rice cake looks bigger."

What it means: The grass is always greener on the other side.

Japan

Japanese phrase: 月とスッポン

tsuki to suppon.

Direct English translation:

comparing "the moon and a soft-shell turtle."

What it means: To say that two things are completely different in quality; there's no comparison.

Japanese phrase: 爪の垢を煎じて飲む

tsume no aka wo senjite nomu.

Direct English translation:

"brew and drink the dirt from under that person's fingernails."

What it means: To follow the example of someone capable and worthy of respect.

Japanese phrase: 尻切れとんぼ

shiri-kire tonbo.

Direct English translation:

"a dragonfly with its tail cut off."

What it means: A story without a proper ending.

NEED A TRAVEL PARTNER? CHECK OUT OUR "COMPANIONS FOR THE ROAD" PROGRAM.

Are you looking for someone to travel with? We've launched a program to connect solo travellers looking for a companion to share a room with while travelling and avoid those evil single supplements!

To participate, simply send an email to companions@wheelandanchor.ca, and you'll be sent a copy of the application form that asks a number of questions about your habits and preferences while travelling, as well as destinations you'd like to find visit with a travel partner. From this we'll create a profile that we'll use to match you with other travellers. If there's a match, our team will reach out to you and any potential matches, confirm that you're both interested in having a phone call, and facilitate the conversation from there.

It's all part of our mission to bring travellers together around a shared passion for travel and making new friends along the way. So if you're looking for a companion or know someone who is, let them know about the program and we'll do our best to connect you with others looking for the same!

If you're interested in helping out, please send me an email personally: gordon@wheelandanchor.ca

Japan



Kinkaku-ji or the Golden Pavilion, is a Zen Buddhist temple in Kyoto, Japan.

Japan

May 9-22, 2020



Historic buildings in Kyoto's Gion district, where the traditional charms and mysterious allure of Imperial Japan still remain



The Ginza, Tokyo's most famous shopping district

From the spectacular modern sculptures at Hakone Sculpture Park in Nagano to the subtle beauty of applying the finest gold leaf to chopsticks in Kanazawa, throughout the trip we were amazed by the artistry that is essential to Japanese culture.

The old imperial capital of Kyoto was of course a highlight, making real the Japan of my imagination with the old architecture of the temples and tea houses and the symbolic red Torii gates at Fushimi Inari.

As travellers we often experience the clash between ancient and modern life, but in Japan it seems less a clash than a continuum of principles expressed in different eras. Somehow the contrast between the dense urban forest of Tokyo's skyscrapers and the pine tree forests of Nagano felt less in opposition to one another as they do in other parts of the world.

For our program in 2020 led by Amber I have changed very little as our experience this past May was truly excellent, and there were quite a number of our members who expressed a desire to see many of the places we visited on our trip.

The Japanese are the most gracious of hosts, and the etiquette and honour that we always hear about was indeed on display around us as a part of daily life there.

In spite of all that we experienced while there, I can't help but reflect on the fact that we only scratched the surface of this fascinating country. I'm keen to put together future trips to explore the northern island of Hokkaido, as well as more remote Okinawa in the very south. Hearing from members who have explored more of Japan is always welcome as we look to transform these ideas into unique experiences.

Itinerary, May 9-22, 2020:
Day 0/1 - Depart Canada
Day 2 - Arrive in Tokyo
Day 3 - Tokyo
Day 4 - Kamakura
Day 5 - Mt. Fuji / Hakone / Suwa
Day 6 - Matsumoto / Takayama
Day 7 - Takayama
Day 8 - Takayama
Day 9 - Kanazawa
Day 10 - Kanazawa / Kyoto
Day 11 - Kyoto / Nara
Day 12 - Hiroshima
Day 13 - Kyoto
Day 14 - Kyoto – Tokyo – Canada, or South Korea



Itsukushima Shrine in Hiroshima



A view of Mount Fuji from Kamakura



Locals eating at a ramen restaurant



Historic buildings in Takayama

FROM THE JET AGE TO THE BULLET AGE

-Bert Archer



YOU’VE HEARD OF the jet age, right? It calls to mind glamorous jet-setting people boarding spacious cabins with big cushy seats, and sometimes even sofas, to be whisked off anywhere in the world they wanted to go for the price of the average worker’s annual income.

We’re arguably still living in the jet age, though a few things have changed. But since visiting Japan for the first time, just after the tsunami, I’ve been wondering why no one seems to have noticed that, as the jet age lost some of its lustre, it was succeeded by the bullet age, which has lost none. Since it happened all the way over in Japan, we can forget – or perhaps we never knew – that the bullet age started only about a decade after the de Havilland Comet and the Tupolev TU-104 inaugurated the jet age in the 1950s. In fact, just as the first Boeing 707 was taking off in 1958, the Japanese government gave approval for

the construction of the first bullet train, known then (as now) as the shinkansen. And just as jets were becoming the norm, with the DC-8 and the French Sud Aviation Caravelle making jets de rigueur across the airline industry, the first bullet train left Tokyo for Osaka on October 1, 1964 accelerating to 210km/h, just in time for the first Tokyo Olympics.

That 210 soon became 220 and this first series of bullet trains, series 0, was so well built, the last one was only required in 2008, outlasting all those first-generation passenger jets (though the 707s and DC-8s and Comets and TU-104s were already long gone, the last Caravelle to take passengers was actually 2005).

And whereas jets have gotten less and less comfy and glam since those early years, bullet trains have gotten more so. (Take a look at the new Gran class.) They’ve gotten faster, too. The current E5 series reaches speeds

of 320km/h.

But it’s not just the trains themselves that have made this the unheralded bullet age. It’s the effect. Right from that first ride in 1964, Tokyo and Osaka, Japan’s two post populous cities, became mutually day-trippable. There was an instant effect on business, as people were able to conduct business in person and still get back home for supper without having to commute out to airports and back.

But it’s arguable the even greater and more profound effect has come from all the other travellers, the ones who started to be able to see family members more easily and therefore, if they liked, more often. And people who could finally take those trips to parts of their own country they’d always meant to, but it has been too much hassle.

High-speed trains knit the countries and continents where they’ve been introduced in a way air travel

– with those awkwardly situated airports and security and taxiing and weather delays – never have. Rail can be worked easily into the infrastructure of cities as they’ve existed for centuries, going from city centre to city centre (unless you’re Ottawa or Edmonton, for some reason).

By 1967, within three years of its inauguration, the shinkansen had carried 100 million passengers. By 1976, it was a billion.

We may marvel more at the very idea of flight, after having spent so many thousands of years as a species dreaming of it, but until we figure out a way to fly from city to city and not suburb to suburb, rail is, at least domestically speaking, the more revolutionary transport.

But of course, rail is not only for locals. I still remember the first time I took the TGV, France’s later version of high speed rail. I was on a Eurail Pass, wandered into the Gare de l’Est, and

saw there was a fast train to Lyon. And being able to get myself to such a relatively distant part of France, so relatively quickly, through horizon-filling fields of sunflowers amid the rest of the central French countryside, was a revelation, and it expanded my notion of how I could travel.

It may seem of that a country as small as Japan was the one to come up with the idea of superfast trains. But what it means for tourists is that the entire country, barring an island or two, is accessible from Tokyo in a few hours. So, unlike tourists from the pre-bullet age, you can reasonably plan to see most of Japan in a single trip of a week or more. Getting to know it, or understand it, will still take years. But one step at a time.

High-speed rail has spread around the world – or at least to Europe, Turkey, Russia, South Korea, Taiwan, and China – bringing with it the option for tourists to see much more, much

more quickly, than ever before.

And it looks like Japan is at the forefront of the next big potential evolution of high-speed rail, maglev.

Though the fastest train in operation now is the Shanghai airport shuttle, which reaches speeds of 430km/h, taking passengers the 30km between the airport and the city’s Pudong neighbourhood in 8 minutes, it was in Japan, in 2015, that the world rail speed record was set, at 603km/h for their maglev system, *chuo shinkansen*, currently being built to connect Tokyo with Nagoya and eventually Osaka. Once operational, top operating speeds are projected to be about 500km/h. To put that in perspective, if we were to build one in Canada, it would get people from Toronto to Montreal in 64 minutes, and turn Winnipeg into a potential day trip from either city.

So welcome to the bullet age. Take a seat. It’s going to be good. ☸

memories of *South Korea & Japan*



Some photos from two of our trips in 2019.

Clockwise from the top: Colourful lanterns at Yonggungsa Temple in Busan; Exploring the Jagalchi fish market in Busan; Our guide explaining the lantern festival in Seoul to us; Testing our chopstick skills; The beautiful Yonggungsa Temple in Busan, South Korea.



Clockwise from the top: The giant Buddha statue in Kamakura, Japan; Trying kimonos on for size in Kamakura; Dressed for dinner at a traditional Ryokan, Suwa; Sushi making in Kyoto; The art of the Japanese Tea Ceremony, Tokyo; Matsumoto Castle.





South Korea

May 22-31, 2020

Arriving in South Korea after two amazing weeks in Japan, it was striking how similar the cityscape first seemed. At the same time it was apparent that while similar, things were undoubtedly different.

Don't tell our friends in Japan, but many of our members preferred Seoul to Tokyo, mainly because it was palpably more relaxed. The street markets were a little messier, but somehow more lively; the overall hustle and bustle seemed a bit more chaotic and disorganized (yet in reality completely organized).

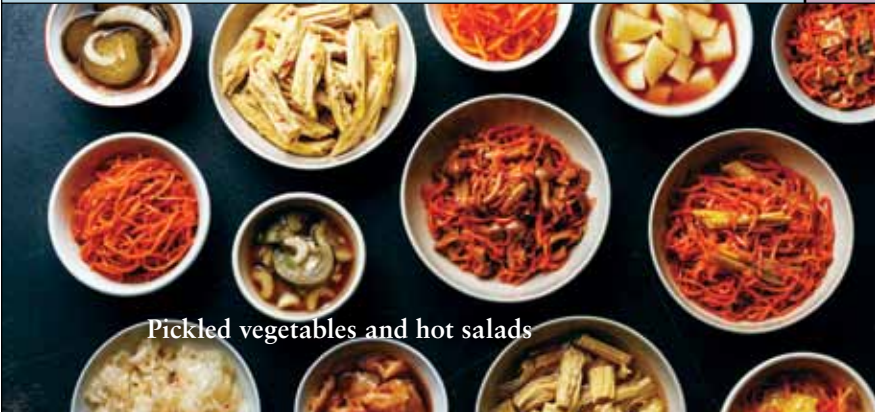
That South Korea is one of the world's most high-tech cities doesn't just mean that everyone has the latest smartphone or gadget. Rather, the city has made a concerted effort to utilize technology to improve the quality of life of its citizens in everything from service delivery to energy and traffic management, not to mention the dispensing of information in a meaningful way. It might not be obvious to the average tourist, but speak to a Seoulite and you'll understand how all this has influenced their way of life... mostly in a very positive way.

It must also be said that the work ethic of the Koreans is of legend, and has undoubtedly paved the way to the phenomenal rise in their standard of living and education levels over the past two decades. South Korea became one of the four "Tiger Economies" of the 1990s, along with Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong, and has earned its place in the G20.

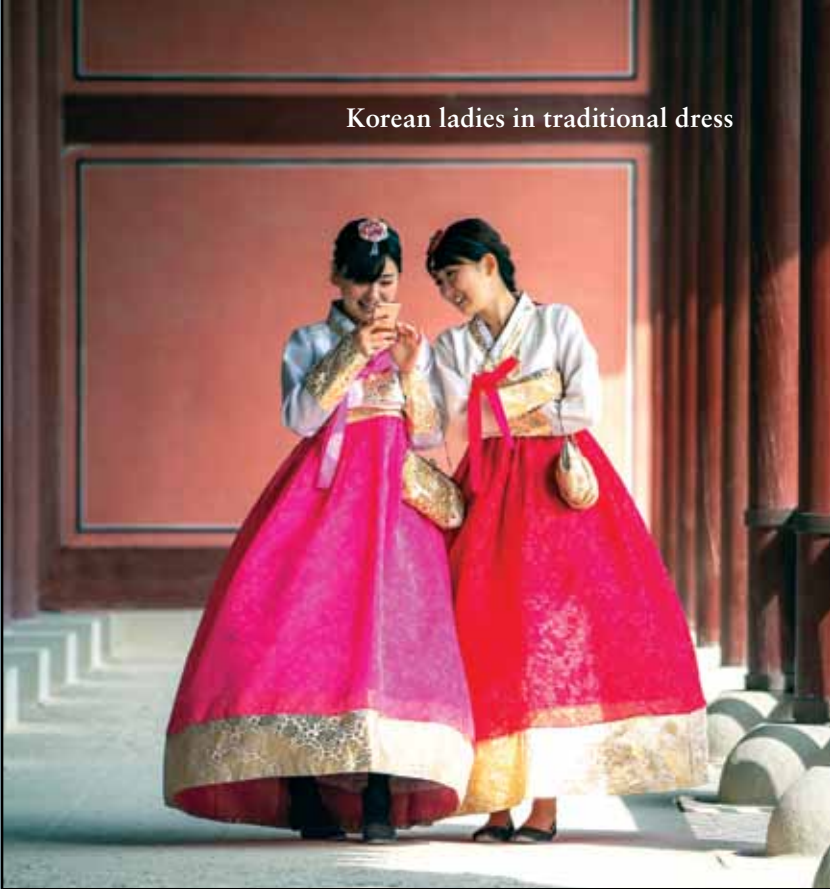
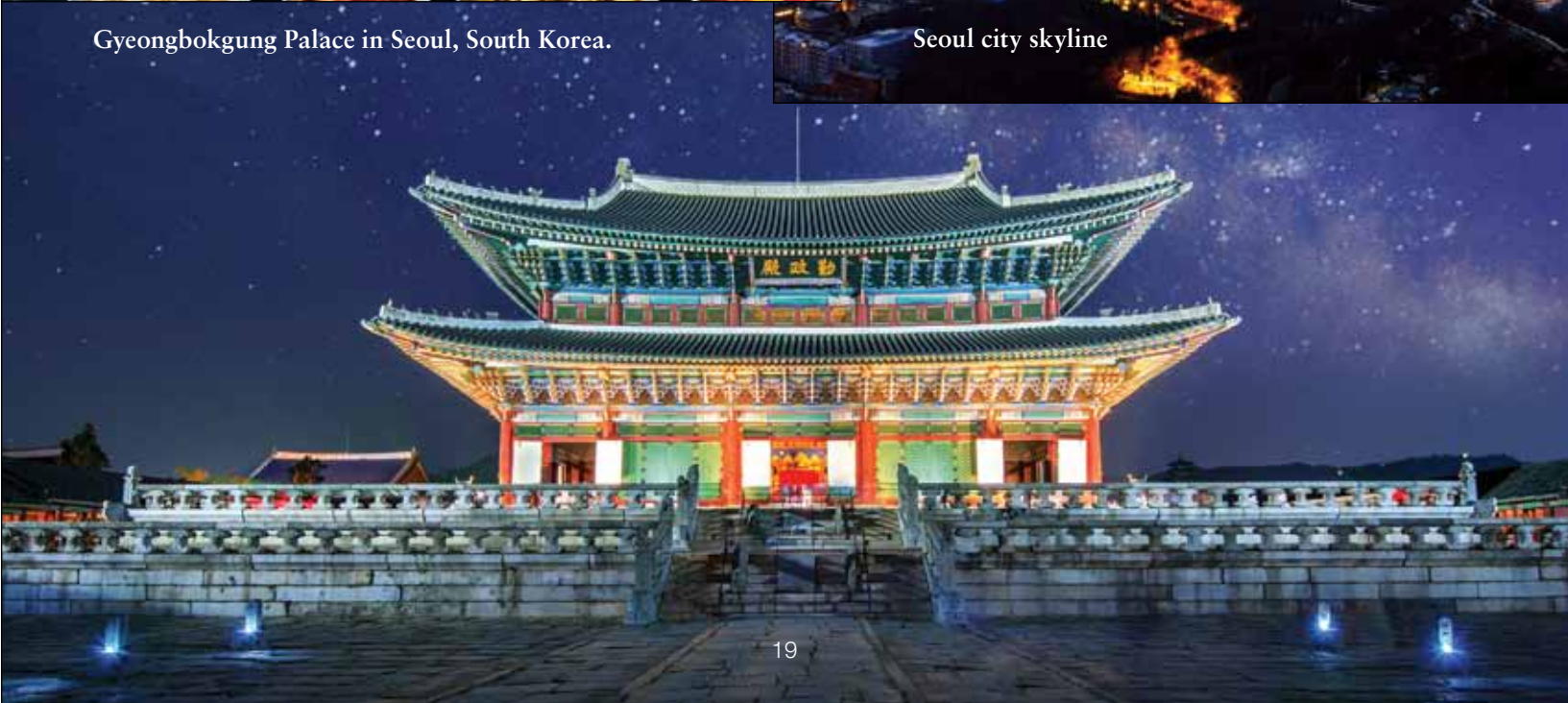
But despite all this, and beyond that hustle bustle, there is an underlying peace amongst Koreans. I uncovered the root of this in my conversation with one of the leaders of the Korean Buddhist Association here at home and excerpts of our conversation are covered in the latter pages of this newsletter.

I strongly urge you to consider exploring South Korea. While it doesn't often show up on peoples' bucket lists, like myself, anyone who has had the pleasure of visiting has appreciated the opportunity.

Itinerary May 22-31, 2020:
Day 14 / Arrival in Seoul
Day 15 / Seoul
Day 16 / Seoul
Day 17 / Seoul – Busan
Day 18 / Busan
Day 19 / Busan
Day 20 / Busan – Boseong – Gwangju
Day 21 / Gwangju
Day 22 / Gwangju – Damyang – Gwangju
Day 23 / Gwangju – Seoul – Canada



Gyeongbokgung Palace in Seoul, South Korea.



Korean ladies in traditional dress



Seoul city skyline



WHERE THERE'S A WILL, THERE'S A TREE:
SOUTH KOREA'S GREAT GREEN COMEBACK

-MIKE SOWDEN

Autumn Maples in Naejangsan National Park, South Korea

Nobody told you about the trees.

Really, you'd think they would have. Nearby Japan gets its fair share of international glory from its landscapes: the endless sacred forests punctured by mountains and occasionally, just occasionally, the odd city. Maybe you could have guessed that a short 2-hour flight westwards of just a few hundred miles, from Osaka to Seoul, wouldn't have changed the terrain that much. All things considered, it's not

that much of a leap of the imagination. Yet South Korea's current reputation is built on the astonishing strength of its modernity, particular its economy - so naturally, nobody told you about the trees.

About that economy. South Koreans are the worldwide leaders in credit card usage - making around 130 transactions per person per year (for comparison, it's around 78 per person in the United States). It's illegal for South Korean merchants to refuse plastic. And those who claim to be in the know say

that you've never been shopping until you've gone shopping in Seoul.

The tech side, too, is hugely impressive. It's no longer the world leader for internet penetration (right now the UAE and Iceland are duking it out for the top spot there) - but among 18 to 24 year olds, smartphone use in South Korea is north of 97%, and some of that demographic's biggest salaries are earned playing videogames at a professional level.

Plus, you may have heard of a little homegrown company

by the name of Samsung. It's doing OK, all things considered.

This may have lead you to expect South Korea to be a glittering landscape of skyscrapers, neon and urban sprawl - every sci-fi nerd's cyberpunk dream.

But that's not the view right now. The view is green because the view is trees, and those trees seem to go on forever.

The view isn't deceptive. More than 60% of South Korea is now forest (nearly half of it conifers). Proportionally, that's



A road in South Korea.

twice the world average. That’s more than Brazil, that super-famously forested nation that’s been in the news recently for many of the wrong reasons, environmentally speaking. That’s more than the Canadian timberland (42%), and a great deal more than the third of the U.S. covered in trees.

It wasn’t always this way, and you don’t have to go far back into South Korea’s history to find the dramatic events responsible. The Japanese occupation between 1912 and the end of the Second World War, and the Korean War of 1950-53, they left their terrible mark upon the countryside.

But more influential was the growing rural population’s need for fuel. For a time, logging and forest clearance (both illegal and legal) were stripping the country bare. Go back just fifty years, and half of these trees weren’t here.

Now, though, well over half of the country is forested. Even with nine cities containing over a million people, with Seoul containing almost 10 million souls, even with all that money and all that tech, the forests have become a priority again. In environmental restoration, this country is such a pioneer that one of its growth industries is exporting its expertise to help other places grow their own forests back in such a spectacularly successful way.

(Some in the forestry service hope that North Korea will soon become one such place: it’s currently undergoing a rate of deforestation that has been described as “cataclysmic”).

A little counterintuitively, the growth of cities has helped a lot. When people moved their lives to an urban setting, they stopped relying on wood for fuel and shifted to more modern sources of power.

But the other big factor is the South Korean government’s pressure on replanting, regreening, rejuvenating the land. The Korea Forestry Service was established in 1967, and after four phases of planning, its fifth phase of work started in 2008 aimed to create “healthy forest, rich mountains, and happy people.”

It’s worth considering what forests actually bring, other

than a delicious lifting of your spirits as you contemplate a landscape you thought you knew before you arrived but clearly didn’t. In a blunt, unromantic sense, woodland is money. For South Korea, forests generate income from jobs, from forest products (including medicines), and increasingly from tourism, bringing 16 million people annually to the country’s 160-odd recreational forests.

There’s also the unseen knock-on profits that come with any vegetation: the carbon sinks, the way roots protect soil against erosion, nutrient depletion, flooding, dust storms and landslides - and the incredible variety of natural life that a healthy, thriving treescape keeps alive within its branches.

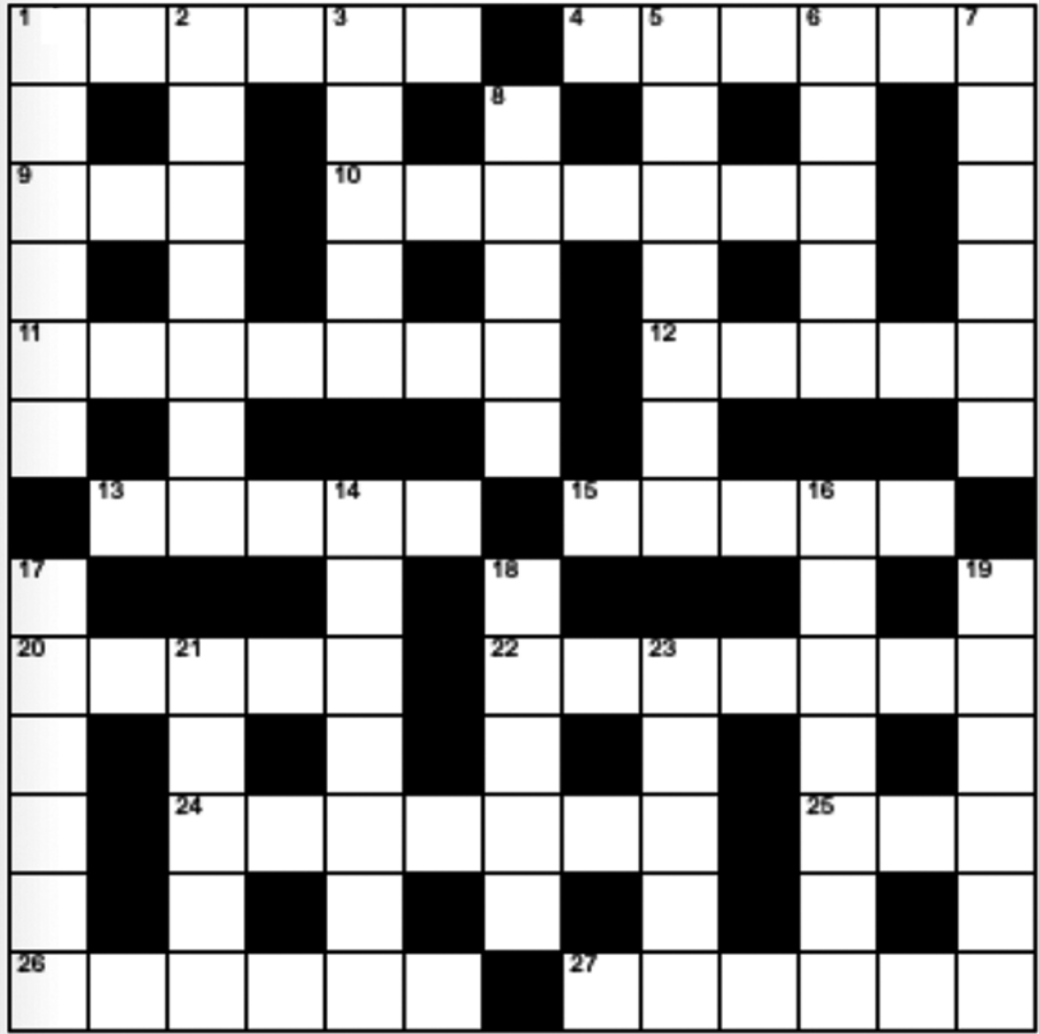
Take for example the DMZ - the 4km-wide strip of land separating South Korea from North. Thanks to an almost total lack of human interference over the last few decades and the spread of its unkempt treeline, it now contains an estimated 5,000 species of animals and plants, over a hundred of which now have protected or endangered status.

All this has helped create a boom in visitors, particularly amongst those interested in the eco-friendly side of things - and politically, it’s a chance to show the rest of the world that this country is taking its carbon-emission goals seriously.

Still, you didn’t hear about the trees before you came. Not a thing. All the articles you’ve read online were about how South Koreans overwork themselves like crazy, how they golf and business-booze themselves into a delightful frenzy every weekend, how they lead the world in utterly bizarre cosmetics and, of course, how they have the fastest internet anywhere on the planet. (That’s no longer true, by the way, but the myth seems impossible to dislodge.)

But now you have something else to tell the folks back home, something they won’t have heard anywhere else. South Korea is forests. Who would have thought?

Now you know — and maybe it’s about time everyone else did, too. ☸



crossword

Across

- 1. Champagne cocktail often served at brunch (6)
- 4. Japan has over 6,500 (6)
- 9. Little red ____; nickname for Singapore (3)
- 10. Oldest brand of Japanese beer and Japan’s 5th largest city (7)
- 11. Japanese delicacy consisting of fresh raw fish or meat sliced into thin pieces and often eaten with soy sauce (7)
- 12. Imperial capital of Japan (5)
- 13. South Korean capital (5)
- 15. _____trotter; one who travels often (5)
- 20. World’s most populous democracy (5)
- 22. You will see these statues all over South Korea and Japan (7)
- 24. A work of art of recognized and established value (7)
- 25. Fannie ____; mortgage loan company in the USA (3)
- 26. Middle Eastern country on the Mediterranean Sea(6)
- 27. A carbon ____ is a reduction in emissions of greenhouse gases made in order to compensate for emissions made elsewhere (6)

Down

- 1. Humble or unassuming (6)
- 2. Famous French painter Henri (7)
- 3. Famous kind of Japanese food (5)
- 5. A tube for a swimmer to breathe through while under water (7)
- 6. Popular dish from the Philippines (5)
- 7. Legendary creature you’ll see in both South Korea and Japan (6)
- 8. If you travel to South Korea in this month, you might see cherry blossoms (5)
- 14. Having no knowledge of a situation or fact (7)
- 16. Island nation with capital Nassau (7)
- 17. A staple of Korean cuisine (6)
- 18. “And if you gaze long into an ____, it also gazes into you.” - Nietzsche (5)
- 19. State a fact or belief confidently and forcefully (6)
- 21. The furnishing of a room (5)
- 23. Coffee beans that have had their caffeine removed (5)

Find the solution on page 29.

FULL LIST *of* TOURS

Here's the current list of all Wheel & Anchor tours in 2019 and 2020.
We're adding new tours all the time!

Wheel & Anchor Weekends: Havana
13th November - 18th November 2019

Egypt, Israel & Jordan: 4 Variations
14th January 2020 - 26th January 2020
[sold out]

Wheel & Anchor Weekends: Panama
4th March - 9th March 2020

Wheel & Anchor Weekends: The Azores
22nd March - 28th March 2020

Austria - The Heart of Hospitality
4th April 2020 - 17th April 2020

Austrian Spa & Wellness
16th April 2020 - 27th April 2020

The Majestic Fjords of Norway
30th April 2020 - 18th May 2020

Japan: Land of The Rising Sun
(+ South Korea)
10th May 2020 - 31st May 2020

Flowers et Fleurs: Chelsea Garden Show
& Jardins de France: May 2020

Scotland by Sea
19th May 2020 - 30th May 2020

Baltic Seafarer
29th June to 17th July 2020

The Elbe River: Berlin to Prague
7th - 21st September 2020

The Trans-Siberian Railway
10th September - 28th September 2020

Croatia & The Adriatic Coast
September 21, 2020 - October 6, 2020

Italy: North to South - October 2020

Tastes of Eastern France
30th September - 19th October 2020

Boating the Canal du Midi
20th October 2020 - 1st November 2020

Kangaroos & Kiwis -
Australia & New Zealand
October 27th - Nov 25th, 2020

South African Secrets
18th November - 3rd December, 2020

COMING IN 2021

Mekong River Adventure (February 2021)

Tango across the Andes: Argentina &
Chile (February 2021)

Southeast Asian Sojourn (March 2021)

Canal du Midi (April 2021)

Explore Caucasus: Georgia & Armenia
(May 2021)

Bali, Komodo & the Indonesian Islands
(May 2021)

Follow the Incas: Peru (October 2021)

Solo Travellers River Cruise - all single
cabins (Spring 2021 to be confirmed)

Stay tuned...more to come!

To get a printed version of any of these itineraries, call us at

1-(888) 531-5101

or visit wheelandanchor.ca/all-tours

Letters to the Editor

Dear Gordon,

Thank you for coordinating the Thailand event! I enjoyed the experience and was most appreciative of the coordination by Wheel & Anchor for all the activity and contacts who contributed to an amazing experience. Your reputation was impressive as everyone ensured that our journey was top notch."

Sorry we missed you at the airport. I hoped to have a chance to meet you also. There is more to look forward to as we explore and travel. I am very impressed with your company and invite you to quote me anytime as I like to acknowledge experiences that are unique and make me feel that I have received more than I anticipated. Our trip so far in Italy has been a pleasure. Amber is truly gracious and a very thoughtful ambassador for Wheel & Anchor. I respect the quality you deliver in your company's business. As a consumer this is a rare finding.

Thank you for raising the bar.
Cheers!
Carol Vail

* * *

Dear Gordon,

I have to thank you for your thoroughness, attention to detail, and ensuring everyone's needs are met. You are great the way you can make programs work for all people. For those that are active and explorers to those that have physical difficulties and find certain activities a little harder. You make sure everyone is included in everything and allow those that want to explore by themselves that time.

We first met you when you had a wonderful offer on tickets for a show in Toronto. It was with the drive to go. At "Meet and Greet" in our home city you care, explain everything for everyone to understand and on the recent trip to Japan and South Korea, we went on, you made sure everyone's health, diet, and activity needs were met.

You never stop working and caring and making sure we have the best under the situation and circumstances that are possible.

Thank you Gordon.

Bob W., Ottawa

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Chan Yong Jeong: Buddhism in Korea

I recently had the chance to speak with Chan Yong Jeong, who is the Vice President of the Canadian Korean Buddhist Association. It was obvious while visiting this past May that Buddhism still plays an important role in society in South Korea, and I wanted to know more about how Koreans relate to it in their daily lives.

GD: What role does Buddhism play in modern day life in South Korea ?

CYJ: A lot of individualism. A feature of Buddhism is that its followers have empathy for the less fortunate, so there is a strong character of helping the poor and the destitute. As well many people meditate regularly, volunteer in many places and do yoga, all of which is related to the importance of peace of mind that comes from our Buddhist background.

GD: How is evolving? Is it growing or shrinking?

CYJ: Nowadays, I would say people's connection to it seems to be shrinking a bit, perhaps as religious life is elsewhere in the world. That said, in South Korea the two major religions are Buddhism and Christianity, and the vast majority of people here would identify with one or the other.

Generally speaking, young people will typically follow their parents when it comes to their spiritual lives, but also recently it also seems that more young people are choosing atheism over one a religious denomination. Because it's so traditional, younger people can be turned off by it. At the same time, even though they don't actively go to temples, I think in their hearts they maintain Buddhist beliefs. I would say on the whole that many religions in South Korea are declining, as our world becomes more secular.

I know many people who don't identify as Buddhist, but they celebrate some of the traditions as they remain a part of our communities.

GD: In what ways is Buddhism reflected in the character of South Koreans?

CYJ: Within Buddhism across Asia there is a deeply ingrained respect for older people, and I think here in South Korea we have a particularly strong respect for our elders. We have a different way of speaking to elders, and even if a person is just a year older than you, this means they command a different level of respect, which is taught in Buddhism.

Another important aspect to Korean Buddhism is its emphasis on peace of mind - we believe it is very important to find peace within yourself, and to practice self-control. It's a little bit different from Chinese and

Japanese Buddhism where there is a lot of emphasis on peace of mind.

GD: Are there any particularly important stories that are unique to Buddhism in Korea, or that are known by all or most Koreans?

CYJ: There is a famous story called 오세암 (oh-seh-aam) - Am means temple. There were 2 young children, a blind older sister and younger brother whose mother passed away and they became orphans. They were hiking on a mountain in Korea in the spring when a Buddhist monk came across them while he was also hiking. He took them to a temple so they would have a place to stay. That winter the monk went down the hill with the sister to get food, but when he was ready to go back up it was snowing really heavily and he couldn't make it back. The younger boy was alone at the temple waiting for the monk, waiting and praying to Buddha the whole time. However, he died and his spirit became one with Buddha.

In the spring when the snow had melted, the monk and the sister went back up the hill and found the deceased young boy. The sister prayed to Buddha at the temple, at which point she saw that he had become the Buddha, and she got her sight back.

This temple still exists in Korea 서울 광화문 조계사 (seoul gwang-hwa-moon jo-gye-sah) and there is a famous Korean movie about it.

GD: In Thailand using the image of the Buddha is forbidden - is it similar in South Korea?

CYJ: It is generally frowned upon to use the image of the Buddha in a decorative way, but you can have stuff at home and it is not as strict as in Thailand. You can also still have it on a t-shirt and you won't be judged.

GD: What is life like for Buddhist monks in Korea ?

CYJ: Buddhist monks in Korea generally wake up around 3 am and do their early morning prayer. They then take care of their food which they grow, so if their vegetables need water, they give it to them, basically taking care of their vegetable garden. They also upkeep the temples by keeping the place clean, and also pray several times during the day.

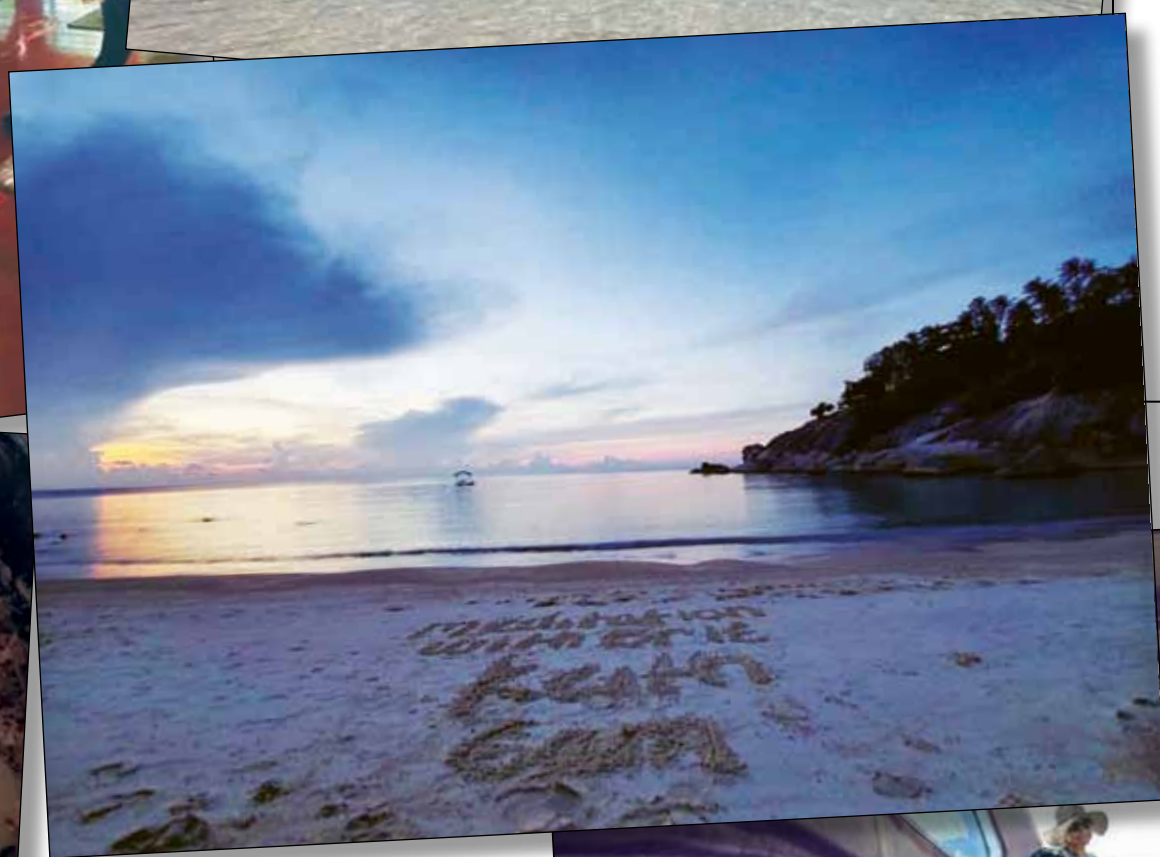
Their lives usually revolve around 5 rules:

- Don't kill anything/anyone
- Don't drink or smoke
- Don't be sexually active
- Don't eat meat
- Don't lie



memories of *Thailand*

We had a small group of travellers join our yogis Keith & Brianna for an 11-day yoga retreat to the beautiful island of Koh Phangan, Thailand. Clockwise from the top: Anthong Marine Park; One of many beautiful sunsets!; Coconuts at Anthong Marine Park; Healthy breakfasts every day; The group eating together at The Sanctuary; Enjoying the view at Ang Thong; Dining together for another fabulous meal; Yoga!



Crossword answers. *(No peeking!)*

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