Korean Poetry and Fiction in English Translation: A Personal Survey
Brother Anthony
James Scarth Gale  
(February 19, 1863 – January 31, 1937)  
Missionary, Scholar, Translator
Kim Tong-ni  
Hwang Sun-won  
Kim Su-yeong  
Kim Chun-su  
Byeon Yeong-tae

**SONGS FROM KOREA**

by

Y. T. Eng

Author of

"Tales from Korea"

and

"My Attitude Toward Ancestor-worship"
Zŏng In-Sŏb  Jo Pyeong-hwa  Kim Dong-seong  Peter Hyun  Chu Yo-seop
Certainly, there is a deep national trauma due to the oppressive Japanese regime, then the division of the Peninsula by outside forces and the ensuing ideological conflict and war. The Korean War was followed by a series of less-than-democratic regimes with a continuing policy of enforced industrialization and urbanization. Criticism and protest were not tolerated. The main concerns of writers were assumed to be (1) national identity (2) individual human dignity. Then after 1960, Shin Dong-yeop, Kim Su-yeong and Shin Kyeong-nim gave a new impulse to socially resistant poetry, inspired by the sufferings of the poor, though not explicitly “socialist.”

In school textbooks, short, accessible poems from the Japanese period were given pride of place as tokens of Korean national resistance, especially if the poet had been killed by the Japanese.
Kawabata Yasunari  
Snow Country 1956  

Peace Corps Korea  
(With Ned Shultz above  
Kathleen Stephens right)
Between 1970 and 2000, some 130 English translations of Korean poetry, fiction and (occasionally) drama were published. Of these, 95 were translated by Koreans, and over 40 were published in Korea. 53 of the total were poetry. 44 were anthologies with works by multiple authors. 63 were fiction (short stories or full-length novels).

It was not until 1979 that a full-length Korean novel was published, *Ulhwa the Shaman* by Kim Dong-ni, translated by Ahn Junghyo.

Before 2000, 36 full-length novels had been published, 20 of them by Korean publishers.
In the first 12 years of the 21st century, 2000 – 2012, another 130 volumes were published. 60 of these were poetry. Nearly 100 of the books had at least one Korean named as translator/co-translator. Very few were published in Korea but only a very few were published by a major international commercial or university press. 18 were anthologies. 38 full-length novels were published.

In the 10 years 2012 - 2021, 73 more volumes of poetry and 130 more volumes of fiction have been published, most of the fiction being full-length novels published overseas, many by mainstream commercial presses.
Barbara Zitwer
The Picture Bride
A Tall, Blue Ladder
The Open Sea
Blade and Tongue
Broken Summer
Antarctic Mutiny
The Consultant