

Remembrance of Dr. Kim

Paul S. Kim, Professor and Chair of Political Science
Gannon University

d. Aug. 31, 2010; age 82

BA, The Ohio State University
MA, West Virginia University
Ph.D. New York University

I was born and raised in Avon Lake, a small farming town in Northern Ohio on the shores of Lake Erie. Like many small communities in the United States, the town had become somewhat industrialized beginning in the 1920's although it continued to remain small and rural.

My family had deep roots in the community and generations had been there since the 1840's. I lived in the same home that my great great grandfather had built. During my childhood, the town was 99.8% Caucasian. By circumstance I never knew anyone who was not white.

My parents were middleclass, blue collar, kind, and honest people. I had a childhood that stressed open-mindedness and tolerance. We traveled by car during summers and I saw a great deal of America. We usually stayed at the Holiday Inn or a Howard Johnson Hotel. Mom and Dad always wondered what it would be like to travel overseas to Europe or Asia and to see people from other countries.

The first person that I met from Asia was my undergraduate organic chemistry lab instructor. He was a tall man from Taiwan who spoke in short sentences and sometimes just a single word.

About five years later, the second Asian person that I met was Dr. Kim.

I was a part-time graduate student at Gannon University in the MPA program. At the same time, I was working for Welch's in Westfield, New York.

Everyone called him Dr. Kim. I learned much later that the proper title should have been Prof. Kim. In any case, my first class with Dr. Kim was Elements of Public Administration.

At the time enrollments were up and down. Only two people signed up for the class. The other person to register was a Catholic Priest from Nigeria named Father Bartholomew. He had a congregation numbering 50,000.

Rather than cancelling the class, Dr. Kim taught both of us from his office. It was an interesting experience indeed.

Dr. Kim's office was in the Walker building, which I believe was a converted hotel. His windowless room was filled with books neatly stacked from floor to ceiling on shelves. All the books were in alphabetical order. His desk had many folders that contained papers. The pile stood a foot above the desk.

We met every other week for three hours. With a class of two, there was the expectation for recitation and interaction.

Father Bartholomew was on leave from his congregation. He had traveled to the United States to receive further education in administration. I think he was training for a leadership position in the Nigerian Church. At least that was my impression. As I remember, whenever Dr. Kim asked him a question relating to the coursework, Father Bartholomew would answer with a parable based on scripture.

The class readings included Nicholas Henry's seminal book titled *Public Administration and Public Affairs* along with *Classics of Public Administration*, a collection of essays. Both books were extremely interesting. I learned a great deal about administrative theory and became focused on systems and management science.

Later, along with various, colleagues, I went on to publish many papers involving management science. Besides the quantitative aspects of Henry's book, the ideas of Max Weber, Herbert A. Simon, Peter Drucker, and Daniel Katz and Robert L. Kahn among others influenced me deeply. To this day, the book titled *The Social Psychology of Organizations* fascinates me. According to Google Scholar, the book has been cited 8,537 times since publication in 1978 by Wiley.

It was during this time that I began to get to know Dr. Kim on a less formal basis. At first impression, Dr. Kim was a direct and demanding person who sought to push intellectual development for all of his students. He had a no nonsense approach.

I think this was out of necessity. Course loads at Gannon University were high for professors. There were few teaching assistants. For a typical semester, Dr. Kim taught perhaps three undergraduate sections and one graduate course.

Nonetheless, Dr. Kim pursued a vigorous program of research in Asian studies, particularly involving Japan. It was a popular topic. He was well known for his work. This aspect of his professional career at Gannon University was quite

interesting to me. It separated him from the other professors. I have always been attracted to research pursuits.

Progressing through the MPA program, I took several more courses from Dr. Kim. These included Public Personnel Administration, Directed Readings for Comprehensive Examinations, Research in Public Administration, and Comparative Public Administration. The latter course included the book by Ferrel Heady titled *Public Administration: a Comparative Perspective*. Enormously interesting, the book is currently in its sixth edition. I still use information from this course today!

Eventually, Dr. Kim became my thesis advisor. I purchased my first computer, a laptop, and completed the thesis using an early word processing program. Prof. Wellington reviewed the quantitative aspects of the work and felt it met the university requirements. Later, I wrote several early journal publications on the same topic.

Dr. Kim did not talk much about his childhood in Korea. He never mentioned anything about how he managed to travel to the United States to enter The Ohio State University. However, as a child in Japanese occupied Korea, Dr. Kim had learned to speak and write Japanese. Later in life during his university career this ability proved to be an essential research asset as few American political scientists could read or write the language.

With regard to the Japanese and the occupation, I never heard a word of bitterness from Dr. Kim. I think this was a sign of his character. On trips to Japan for research, various government officials freely provided him with detailed information. Dr. Kim had many professional colleagues in Japan including at the Waseda political science department, a leading private university.

After graduation, Dr. Kim and I remained in contact. I visited him at Gannon University several times a year. He invited me to give a speech at the Albany Chapter of the American Society of Public Administration. After the speech he told me how impressed he was that unlike academics I was able to stop talking after 20 minutes.

We did several other projects together. I received a holiday card from him for many years. He had had beautiful script.

Among other things, Dr. Kim accurately predicted that Nissan would gain market share in the United States automobile market. However, I do not think he ever imagined that the political liberalizations begun in China during 1978 would propel the country into a manufacturing powerhouse and the second leading economy in the world. Or that Japan would stagnate for nearly 20 years under mountains of government debt, issues relating to corporate structure and finance, and low prospects for economic growth. In contrast, Dr. Kim's homeland of Korea has

followed the pattern of China on a much smaller scale and has emerged during the past 10 years as a high growth economy.

Although he had numerous publications, I know that Dr. Kim was quite proud of two in particular. Both dealt with Japanese public administration. I consider these as relevant today as when originally published. These are:

Kim, Paul S., 1983. Japan's bureaucratic decision-making on the textbook. *Public Administration*, 61:3, 283-294.

ABSTRACT

In social theory as well as common folklore, the childhood years have been recognized as critical for the development of the individual's personality, social attitudes, and cultural values. In most societies, the school stands with the family and peer groups as one of the most significant agents of political learning. In Japan, school influence is much greater than the other two actors because of the educational system. The myths and legends of the past, the policies and programs of the present, and the goals and aspirations of the future are taught selectively. Consciously or not, textbooks justify and rationalize the political practices.

Kim, Paul S., 1988. *Japan's Civil Service System: Its Structure, Personnel, and Politics*. Greenwood Publishing Company: Santa Barbara, CA.

ABSTRACT

Japan's Civil Service System is a comprehensive description of the organization, staffing, and actual daily workings of the postwar Japanese government bureaucracy. Written for the students of Japanese government, comparative government, and public policy, the book is based on research in both the U.S. and Japan and numerous interviews with Japanese government officials. At a time when the present system is the subject of fierce debate within Japan -- between critics who seek to remove Western influence and supporters who cite the system's productivity and efficiency -- the systematic study of its history, personnel, and policy-making process is especially valuable.

My interest in Japan and Asia has matured through the years because of my work in management at Welch's and of course my research at MIT. Whatever I have done finds its origins in the inspiration of Dr. Kim.

I have traveled to Asia six times, fulfilling the dreams of my parents to see the world beyond Ohio. It is the interest first introduced by Dr. Kim that has led me to make these trips and to enthusiastically embrace the complexities of cultures from all over the world.

I hold a great deal of respect for Dr. Kim. As an immigrant from Korea, it could not have been easy to adjust to American culture let alone enter the world of professorial academics. I am sure he overcame many obstacles during his career.

I recall that Dr. Kim once mentioned he was taking a course in carpentry at the local trade school in Erie. He wanted to do some remodeling in his house. Desiring little attention, Dr. Kim stressed to the instructor that he did not want anyone to know he was a college professor. He wanted to be just like anyone else. I think this shows a great deal about the type of person that Dr. Kim was in everyday life.

While at Gannon University, I felt privileged to study with Dr. Kim. He demonstrated to me the importance of critical thinking and analytical skills no matter the context, academic discipline, or business pursuit. I believe that this approach comes from an education underpinned by the rigorous study of liberal arts and sciences. Perhaps the greatest thing Dr. Kim stressed to me was effective writing to communicate complex ideas.

May Prof. Paul S. Kim rest in peace.

Edmund W. Schuster
MIT
Cambridge, MA