

CAMPUS PROFILES

Movies and television help Korean student learn English

By **RON WOLF**
Staff Writer

A 25-year-old Korean student is attending Niagara College to see how Canadians live.

Hyojeong Kim is a first-year Journalism-Print program student.

Her Christian name is Stella, which her friends call her.

She was born in the southern province of Masan and came to Welland last June.

"I wanted to see the people who speak English and get to know the (Canadian) culture," she said, adding she wanted first-hand experience in speaking English since no one in Korea could tell her if her English was good or bad.

"I wanted a place (to live) where not many Koreans lived, but not a big city and not that cold," said Stella.

Winters are mild in Korea with little snow, she said.

Stella said her sister, Soojeong Kim, 27, is married and has kept her maiden name because of Korean tradition.

She said her childhood was not a traditional Korean one.

"My family is on the way to the Western ways because we have extended and nuclear families."

Kim said nuclear families consist of parents and children where as extended families consist of grandparents.

"It's on the way to nuclear families," she said.

Kim said her childhood memories were bad because when she was seven, her parents were divorced for two years, but later remarried each other.

"My mother owns her own business and my father quit his job to help her out because her business is getting bigger."

Kim said her mother makes clothes for the dead to wear.

"It's traditional clothes. All white for funerals."

Kim said her mother makes enough money to support the family.

"My mom is the boss."

Kim said she studied French in university while in Korea.

"I worked for a private language institute for 14 months where I taught basic English to Korean students."

"I learned my English by imitating the movies and educational programs on television. I practiced by myself in front of the mirror."

"I feel I'm learning a lot about Canadian culture and the English language."

Kim said she has met new friends from Mexico, Japan, Taiwan, Thailand, Libya and Canada since her arrival on June 2, 1995.

Kim said her parents were in favor of her coming to Canada.

"I don't know why because when I was at university I tried to go to France to practice my French, but they didn't allow me to go."

"They thought I was too young to go there by myself. I don't know why. They just said yes to Canada."

"I miss my family a lot, especially my two nieces. The little one is only three-weeks-old."

Kim said it costs her about \$1,300 for return airfare to Korea to visit her parents. A 10-minute telephone call costs \$20.

Kim has been to Korean restaurants in Niagara Falls, Ont. and Toronto.

"It (the food) is not that tasty and it's expensive."

"The vegetables here are really different than in Korea. They're smaller."

Kim said she has no favorite Korean foods, but does have some favorite Canadian dishes.

"I like chocolate, celery with Caesar dressing, spaghetti with big meatballs."

She said her favorite literature consists of true stories, French poetry, and self-help books.

"I'm reading a Canadian book about aboriginal life. It's good."

Kim said she studied the theory and history of film at university in Korea.

Meg Ryan, Robert DeNiro, Jody Foster are big actors in Korea who happen to be her favorite movie actors, she said.

Kim said Koreans like Canadians more than Americans because of what Americans did to Koreans.

"They (American soldiers) have been making a lot of problems (for Koreans)."

Kim said in the Korean War, American soldiers raped and sometimes killed Koreans "and at times it still occurs."

"Koreans don't know much about Canadians, but we do know Canada is clean and a neat place."

"They imagine Canada has a lot of beautiful scenery and they recycle everything and Canadians are really nice people."



Hyojeong Stella Kim, a Journalism-Print program student from Korea, is one of many first-year students at Niagara College.

Photo by Ron Wolf