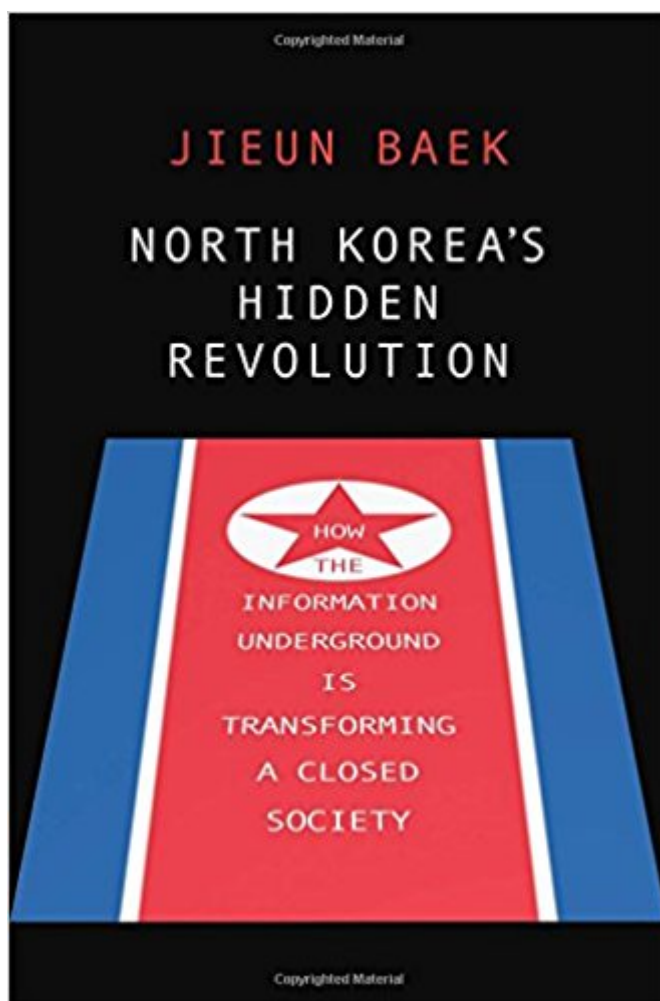


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# North Korea's Hidden Revolution: How The Information Underground Is Transforming A Closed Society



## Synopsis

The story of North Korea's information underground and how it inspires people to seek better lives beyond their country's borders. One of the least understood countries in the world, North Korea has long been known for its repressive regime. Yet it is far from being an impenetrable black box. Media flows covertly into the country, and fault lines are appearing in the government's sealed informational borders. Drawing on deeply personal interviews with North Korean defectors from all walks of life, ranging from propaganda artists to diplomats, Jieun Baek tells the story of North Korea's information underground—the network of citizens who take extraordinary risks by circulating illicit content such as foreign films, television shows, soap operas, books, and encyclopedias. By fostering an awareness of life outside North Korea and enhancing cultural knowledge, the materials these citizens disseminate are affecting the social and political consciousness of a people, as well as their everyday lives.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 312 pages

Publisher: Yale University Press (November 15, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0300217811

ISBN-13: 978-0300217810

Product Dimensions: 6.1 x 1.1 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 10 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #12,070 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #6 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Specific Topics > Propaganda & Political Psychology #7 in Books > History > Asia > Korea > North #9 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Ideologies & Doctrines > Fascism

## Customer Reviews

"In the last two decades, North Korea has gone through dramatic changes, largely because the old system of self-isolation began to crumble. In vivid detail, Jieun Baek's book shows this hidden transformation and how it changed the lives of North Koreans. A truly interesting read for all people interested in North Korea." —Andrei Lankov, author of *The Real North Korea: Life and Politics in the Failed Stalinist Utopia* "For those befuddled by the Hermit Kingdom's antics and frustrated by our apparent impotence in addressing its challenge, Jieun Baek's *North Korea's Hidden*

Revolution provides a powerful beacon of light." "Graham Allison, Director, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School" A fascinating and intelligent overview of the ways that information is liberating North Koreans' minds." "Robert S. Boynton, author of The Invitation-Only Zone: The True Story of North Korea's Abduction Project" Drawing on deeply personal and thoughtful interviews with North Korean defectors from all walks of life, Jieun Baek's North Korea's Hidden Revolution sheds invaluable light on North Korea's information underground. It is a fascinating, important, and vivid account of how unofficial information is increasingly seeping into the North and chipping away at the regime's myths--and hence its control of North Korean society." "Sue Mi Terry, former CIA analyst and senior research scholar at the Weatherhead East Asia Institute, Columbia University" North Korea's Hidden Revolution humanizes a dark part of our world, gives agency and voice to North Koreans, and underscores the power of information in a uniquely closed society. A must-read." "Wael Ghonim, Egyptian human rights activist

Jieun Baek is a Ph.D. candidate in Public Policy at the University of Oxford. Previously, she was a research fellow at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard University and worked at Google, where, among other roles, she served as Google Ideas™ North Korea expert. Baek received her bachelor's and master's degrees in Public Policy from Harvard. Visit her at [www.JieunBaek.com](http://www.JieunBaek.com).

Although a little redundant at times, it remained very interesting and made me feel blessed to have been born in a free country. Fantastic insight into the world's most serious and horrific humanity crisis. Great read!

A fascinating look into North Korea from people from all walks of life in the Hermit Kingdom

The author has some very deep wells of perception she plumbs. She was the Google expert on N.Korea - brilliant.

North Korea's Hidden Revolution  
I met Jieun twice in the UK, once in University of Oxford and she visited my home end of November 2016. She gave to me her book when she visited my home and I read her book for a month. It was great, and amazing opportunity for me, I have read that a book and I also learnt inside North Korea again and was surprised, because many people

change mind and want to learn outside countries. I was born in North Korea in Chungjin, in the closed dictatorship of North Korea, where I was cut off from the rest of the world and brainwashed from birth to obey the state. Like all citizens, I went through school believing that North Korea was the greatest country on earth and knew nothing about the atrocities carried out against its people. I lived in North Korea I never heard any foreign countries radios and read books, so I did not know outside countries, but nowadays more and more North Korean are listening to foreign radio broadcasts, watching South Korean soap operas and Western films and they know their regime has been lying to them about South Korea and the rest of the world. In North Korea listen to the foreign radio is dangerous, it can cost your life and your families life, but people understand what is freedom. Every action take forward freedom comes with enormous risks and pains, progress takes time and there's no guarantee of success. However, it's more likely to succeed if you exploit the weakness of a dictatorship, rather than going head-to-head. The most important strategy among all ideas for engagement is to spread knowledge and information from outside to North Korean citizens. What is a person without food? What is a person without freedom? What is a person without information? In North Korean people, this is my people, I will tell you send to them hope and dreams and give to opportunity new freedom life same as you. It is information that pours oil into the flames of desire for freedom. Information is a driving force that turns hope of blazing freedom into hope.

Amazing and thought-provoking. Jieun provides heart, insight, analysis on North Korea and its hidden transformation through the use of information. A must read for anyone interested in learning more about North Korea.

Jieun Baek's 2016 book, "North Korea's Hidden Revolution: How the Information Underground is Transforming a Closed Society", is an insightful look into North Korea today and how the people are slowly getting information about the outside world at the risk of harsh punishment. The author also interviews some North Koreans who have defected to South Korea and a few to the U.S. It is fairly easy to cross at certain times at narrow points of the Tumen River into China, but there are armed guards on both sides. Some of the guards can apparently be bribed to look the other way, though. The Information Underground refers to the illegal radios that allow North Koreans to listen to broadcasts from South Korea and other parts of the world in addition to DVDs that are smuggled in from China into NK with South Korean movies and television shows that have enlightened many to the fact that they have been brainwashed and not allowed to know anything about the rest of the world. Young people like the fashions that they see on South Koreans in the movies and soap

operas, but dare not be caught trying to emulate them. A bit of capitalism has entered the country in the form of small markets where people sell food, clothing and other items. It is a way of making more money to buy food with and provides places for people to purchase food. During the famine in the 1990s, housewives would make anything they could, such as rice cakes or cookies, and sell them to make money to buy more food for their own families. These little home-grown markets have become bigger with more items for sale and the author tells about one woman who gets used clothes in bulk from China to sell. Jieun makes an interesting observation that there are no experts on North Korea, and she considers herself a North Korea watcher. The country is so closed off from the rest of the world that it's impossible for an outsider to study it from the inside. The prison camps are still in operation and school children are taken to watch public executions. The Kim regime governs with fear. This is quite a well-written book and allows the reader to learn about a changing society whether the regime knows it or not.

Perfect product that I just need.

This book contributes greatly to advancing understanding of how North Korean society works. Baek's approach of interviews and resourceful (and astute) analysis provide depth and richness to insight. Given the lack of clear information on the country, it will be useful to lay readers and experts. She traces what she calls the "information underground," which is a complex network of individuals, groups, and methods of communicating and exchanging information illustrating how people are working around the constraints imposed upon them. The primary sourcing of material is remarkable and compelling. On top of that the text is beautifully written.

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