

Transcript: A Conversation with the Author of *Superficial Korea*

Yong Suk Lee: Hello, I'm Yong Lee, the deputy director of the Korea program. I welcome everyone to a conversation with the author of *Superficial Korea*-- that is, our very own Gi-Wook Shin. Leading today's conversation will be also our very own Professor Dafna Zur. As you can see, we have set up a more collegial setting in light of the conversational aspect.

And I had a chance to take a glimpse at some of the questions and it looks to be a very interesting event today. So now to introduce our speakers, as many of you know, Professor Gi-Wook Shin is the director of the Walter Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center, the Tong Yang Korea Foundation, and Korea Stanford alumni chair of Korean studies. the founding director of the Korea program, a senior fellow of the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, and a professor of sociology here at Stanford. As a historical comparative and political sociologist, his research has concentrated on social movements nationalism, development, and international relations.

Professor Shin is the author and editor of 20 books and numerous articles. I won't list all of them, but a few of his books include *Divergent Memories*, *Opinion Leaders and the Asia Pacific War*, *Global Talent—Skilled Labor as Social Capital in Korea*, *Criminality, Collaboration, and Reconciliation: Europe and Asia Confronts the Memory of World War II*, *South Korean Social Movements: From Democracy to Civil Society*, and *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea: Genealogy, Politics, and Legacy*. His articles have appeared in academic journals, including the *American Journal of Sociology*, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, *Political Science Quarterly*, *International Sociology*, *Nations and Nationalism*, *Pacific Affairs*, and *Asian Survey*.

Due to the wide popularity of his publications, many of his books have been translated and distributed to Korean audiences. And most recently, he wrote a book directly to the Korean audience—that is, *Superficial Korea*. So this is what it looks like in case you haven't had a chance to look. And if you're interested, I think there's ways to purchase this even here in the United States.

Now professor Dafna Zur is an assistant professor in the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures here at Stanford. She teaches courses on Korean literature, cinema, and popular culture.

She is getting ready to teach a new undergraduate course on food next quarter along with other colleagues in her department. I'm sure it will be a very popular course. Her book, *Figuring Korean Futures: Children's Literature in Modern Korea*, just came out earlier this month from Stanford University Press. This is the book as well. So we might have an event celebrating that.

It tries to answer why literature for children became important and contentious for Korean writers in the early 20th century. She is now working on a new project on morality and science and literature of postwar North and South Korea. She has published articles on North Korean science fiction, the Korean War in North and South Korean children's literature, childhood, and

cinema in Korean popular culture. She is also a published translator and recently completed the translation of a novel by Kim Dong-in.

Before we start today's conversation, I would like to announce that our next Korea program event will be on November 10, featuring Dr. Hak-Kyu Sohn, just right over here. Also on October 26, there will be a panel on innovation and entrepreneurship in Asia. This is a center-wide event.

But the director of research from Thompson Research America will be one of the panelists in that event. So please visit our home page for more information. And now, without further delay, please welcome Professor Shin and Professor Zur.

[APPLAUSE]

DAFNA ZUR: Welcome, everyone. For those of you who haven't had a chance to read this really interesting and, you know, honestly very fun and challenging book, I am just going to say a couple of things about it and then dive right into some questions. So this book really provides an insider's view into some of the biggest challenges that face South Korea and South Korean society today.

It's divided into three sections. The first section is called "Superficial Korea." The second is "The Spirit That Animates Silicon Valley." And the third chapter is called "An Other's Global Perspective."

And as Professor Shin explains, the vantage point, the point from which he is writing this book, is unique because it's not coming from a DC or New York perspective. This is a Silicon Valley perspective on Korea. And being where we are in the hub, the center of the most innovative companies in the world, and also being on the edge of the Pacific Rim, it has a lot of really interesting insights to offer.

These three sections challenge some of Korea's most entrenched customs—social structure, immigration policies, gender, particularly higher education and its struggle to attract foreign talent and stay competitive, business culture, and its location in Asia in relations with China, Japan, and Korea. So each section has really interesting insights which I think make it a must read for anyone who works with Korea. But this book, and now I'm turning to you, was written in Korean for Koreans.

So I found that really fascinating. I think it actually has a lot of insights for the United States as well. It actually puts the United States, paints the United States, in quite a positive light.

And you talk about a lot of things that—I'm not sure we have that much to be proud of these days. But you bring a lot of those up. So I think I'll start by asking you, you know, why write this book now? You know, what compelled you to write it and what were some of your motivations and if you can share also some of the anecdotes of writing some difficult conversations you may have had. Why write this book now?

GI-WOOK SHIN: First of all, thanks for coming to this event. This is my first book in Korean.

But as Yong said, I have written more than 20 books. All of them were in English and then all of them actually written for academic and the world policy communities. But this is the first one targeting a wider audience. So in this sense, it's quite challenging to write this book, to be honest.

A while, like maybe three years ago, I think many Koreans know about this sinking of *Sewol* and a lot of young children died in the instance. After that instance, I got actually a call from a publisher in Korea asking me to write a book. You know, that's kind of the beginning of this project. And they were saying that until the *Sewol* sinking, a lot of Koreans believed and very proud that Korea has become an advanced country. But after having seen that, you know, they say that a lot of Koreans began to wonder if Korea is a really advanced country or still a developing, third world country. And therefore, a lot of Korean people began to wonder how people outside of Korea look at Korea.

OK, so that's why they like to have a book seen from outside. And of course they could turn to foreigners. And I think there are some books on Korea written by foreigners. In a sense, I'm in kind of a unique position because I'm not really *Korean* Korean living in Korea.

I'm not totally foreigner either because I grew up in Korea. I went to college in Korea. I came to US in 1983. Since then, I lived here.

So in a sense, I get an in between-- not a real Korean Korean, but also not totally a foreigner. So therefore, my perspective was like a Korea seen through the inside, also through, you know, outside. But that's kind of the beginning of this project.

And then that's about three years ago—four years ago, three years ago—three years ago. I got so busy. So I said, OK, I'm going to write a book during my sabbatical, which is coming up.

So I went to Korea in late September 2015 with the intent to write a book on this topic during my sabbatical. I just say in my book I got so busy in Korea, there's no way I could finish this book. So actually I began writing like one or two chapters, and then I gave up because the constant calls, text messages, lunch, dinner, drinking.

So I gave up. And then I came back to Stanford early June of last year. And then I finished writing over the summer. So that's kind of background for this book.

DAFNA ZUR: I'll jump right in on something that you just mentioned because one of the insights that you bring into this book is you really kind of take on this after-work meal and networking culture in Korea and, you know, as a source of a lot of anxiety and the source of a lot of the sort of super networking that you talk about in your book which I'd like to hear more about. But you offered a solution or perhaps another kind of culture that perhaps might be better suited, which you call the cocktail reception.

GI-WOOK SHIN: OK.

DAFNA ZUR: So I wonder if you can please talk about, you know, what is the cocktail reception as, you know, that you see here? What does it offer and do you think it can work in Korea?

GI-WOOK SHIN: So I describe Korea as a super-network society. In any society, networks are really important, right? I mean China, *guanxi* is very important.

Even in the United States, you know, school ties and all networks are really important. By my view, in Korea, that's really, really important. If you get into a really super network based on maybe school ties, ties from your hometown, and then you can have a fairly comfortable life doing things in Korea.

But if you're outside of that network, it's really tough to have a good life in Korea. But in order to get into the super network and maintain that, I felt Koreans make a lot of sacrifice for their personal life. I mean, here, we have some prominent Koreans from Korea.

I bet you, you don't really have any dinner at your home. You know, I talk to many of my friends and seniors. You know, they are very successful people in Korea.

But they are saying that on the average, they may have a dinner at home maybe once a week. And most of them have lunch outside, dinner outside. And then I thought that's the price of maintaining a super network in Korean society.

So another question is, is it really good to continue doing that? Or is there any way for Korea to develop a different social life? Here, Dr. Sohn here, but when he was running for president, his slogan was life with—you know, or something like that. That life, you can have dinner with your family.

So that indicates, you know, life in Korea. As I mentioned earlier, you know, I was spending my sabbatical. So I don't have any regular job to do.

I mean, you know, over a month, I think I had dinner almost all of the time outside—maybe like a few at home, but even for me. And so I think I begun to ask, you know, question by myself. If I were to come back to Korea, can I survive? And my answer was no. Actually, I came back to Stanford for a couple of weeks to take a rest.

DAFNA ZUR: Oh, no. So can you talk a little bit about what the cocktail reception means, or—

GI-WOOK SHIN: Right.

DAFNA ZUR: --how would this solve the problem?

GI-WOOK SHIN: So because of that, you know, I think Koreans feel most comfortable when they are with people they know. I mean, that's why I think when you see Koreans, they ask, how old are you? Are you married? Where's your hometown?

I think they are trying to find out where they stand, right? And then I think once they find out, then they can decide. Is this someone who I can really have to hang out or not? So with a cocktail party, I mean, that we do here—you know, oftentimes, we go to a party and then we talk to new people.

DAFNA ZUR: Mingle.

GI-WOOK SHIN: Yeah, mingle, and then try to make new friends. But I think Korean case, the culture is quite different. They go to like a dinner with drinks or usually with your friends or colleague in companies, right?

And there's a lot of pressure that you have to stay there. You have to drink, right? And then oftentimes they don't really invite new people.

They are very close networked community. OK, so early September, we had a book party actually to celebrate this publication. In Korea, typically they have a big celebration when they publish a book, like in hotel, and it is structured setting. But I intentionally tried to do a book party like a cocktail reception.

There's no seating. People come and go and have a drink and a conversation. But in a very interesting instance, some people come. And they only know—only handful. I see that a lot of people are not willing to talk to new people. So they hang out with each other. Some people say they just go out, you know, among themselves. So I think, you know, culturally, you know, very different between Korea and here.

DAFNA ZUR: OK, well, maybe to bring us back a little bit to the Silicon Valley question, I was curious about when you go to Korea and you tell them who you are and that you're a professor at Stanford, what are some of the misconceptions that Koreans have about Silicon Valley and what kind of myths about the Valley do you think it might be good to kind of bust?

GI-WOOK SHIN: Right, so you know, obviously we are in a good position because I'm teaching at Stanford, right? We're in the Silicon Valley. So a lot of Korean people are interested in Silicon Valley. I mean, not only Koreans, but I guess other Asians as well.

And they know the, like, Apple, you know, Google, you know, Facebook—they are all in this area. And they are very interested in, you know, how to make technological innovation.

I think their main concern is with the technical part, technology. And I keep saying that it's not really technology. It's a culture.

Then they look confused, right? Because I'm saying that unless Korea can promote, you know, culture, there's no way to bring technological innovation. And also I've been saying that Silicon Valley is not made by white, Caucasian Americans alone. I'm saying that without immigrants, like Chinese or Indian engineers, there's no way to create Silicon Valley.

So therefore, unless Korea can promote cultural diversity and be willing to embrace, you know, foreign talent, there's no way to emulate Silicon Valley.

So that's my message to Korean people. Over time, a lot of people come to Silicon Valley. But they're only looking for new technology and not really willing to understand a lot about these cultural aspects of the making of Silicon Valley.

DAFNA ZUR: Also, as someone who lived in Korea myself for about six years and—I went to Korea for the first time in 1993—and there are people in the room here who went to Korea of course much earlier than that. But even at that time, whenever I would walk into a subway, everybody's heads would turn and stare at me.

That's no longer the case. In fact, I know when I go to Korea now, nobody pays any attention to me. I kind of miss the old attention.

GI-WOOK SHIN: OK!

DAFNA ZUR: But clearly there are a lot more non-Koreans living in Korea, you know, making lives for themselves. And yet you point in your book to—you have really, really great insights about the many obstacles to really become a kind of diverse country that can absorb and accommodate people from all kinds of backgrounds. So I think—I was wondering if you could say a couple of things about where you think the obstacles are into really becoming the *damoonhwa*, the sort of culturally kind of accepting place. So what are some of these obstacles?

GI-WOOK SHIN: So where I was in Korea, there are really few or very small proportion of foreigners. But right now, I think there are about like 2 million, maybe more than 2 million foreigners living in Korea. So that's a big change.

So obviously, they're still very homogeneous. But you know, it's becoming diverse. But still I'm not sure whether Koreans really appreciate the diversity that they can bring.

If, for example, you know, foreign brides, migrants and laborers. I think most Korean people take them as instruments that are needed for Korea. I don't think they really try to understand their culture or their value.

I mean, even foreign skilled labor or professionals—you know, some people working in like big business or like, you know, top universities. I talk to many professionals working in top company like Samsung, and many of them come. But then most of them leave after a few years.

And also, like Yonsei and other universities have many foreign faculty. By and large, they are outsiders. You know, they're not really taken as, you know, insiders to their own community.

So oftentimes, when I see the president of SNU or Yonsei Korean university, I say that you really have to appreciate the value that foreign faculty can bring to your university. Because—they often say you know, we have many foreign faculty.

That's not enough. You know, you really have to appreciate their value. So often time, I say, you know, look. You know, I came from Korea. At that time, you know, Korea was still a developing country. But still, I got tenured professor at Stanford, right, with broken English.

Is it possible that it could happen in Korea? Think about, let's say, somebody coming from maybe Southeast Asia, right, coming to Seoul National University or Yonsei and then we have a full professor with major assignment in university. So still I think Korea's getting better, but in my view, it's still a long way to go.

DAFNA ZUR: Yeah, well, one of—this book actually touches upon some very sensitive topics in Korea, and one of them is racism. I mean, you kind of touch about upon it gently. But I was wondering if you can say a little bit more about what kind of racism—if racism is discussed in public discourse and what kinds of racisms you were seeing and possible solutions maybe that are coming out of Korea.

GI-WOOK SHIN: I know it's a sensitive issue, but I mean, the fact is there is racism in Korea. I mean, there's no question. And because still 96% are ethnic Korean, you know, most Koreans don't really recognize, right? But in my view, this not only racism—also very hierarchical.

But still I think most Koreans appreciate white Caucasians—most Americans or Europeans. But still they did look down on those coming from developing countries. That's a problem with multiculturalism because they're trying to teach Korean culture—maybe how to make kimchi, how to speak Korean.

But they don't really try too long or understand culture of those immigrants. OK, now I did a little research about religion in Korea. And do you know how many Muslims live in Korea?

Any guess? 2,000? More than 100,000.

Right? But most Koreans don't really understand what Muslim is, actually, right? And then they don't really try to understand. How many Mormons do you know we have in Korea? More than 100,000, right?

So you know, there's a lot of diverse [INAUDIBLE] in Korea, but most Koreans don't really care or don't really pay attention because in my view, that diversity can bring a lot of values to Korean society. And I think Koreans really have to better appreciate.

DAFNA ZUR: So perhaps this doesn't fall under the rubric of racism, but one of the things you talk about, especially in comparison with China, is the fact that you observe that Korea does not take as much advantage of its *kyopo*, sort of overseas Korean community as much as perhaps China does. And you yourself-- I mean, maybe you don't see yourself as a *kyopo*, but your children certainly are.

GI-WOOK SHIN: I became *kyopo* now.

DAFNA ZUR: You're a *kyopo*? OK. So—yeah, so you know, my question is what has stopped Korea from really kind of seeing-- are the obstacles there or how does Korea view its diaspora pop-- is it just a diaspora that they're just waiting to come back to Korea, or what is-- what are some of the issues?

GI-WOOK SHIN: OK, let me give an example. About four years ago when Park government came into power, the first minister of future and ICT, whatever, was Korean American, Dr. Kim Jong Hyun, who actually was my close friend. And you know, he got nominated by President Park to lead the new ministry, right?

And you know, he called me saying he got an offer from Korea. And I said, you know, don't go because he came to US, I think, in middle school. But his understanding of Korea was more limited. And his Korean is quite good, but not as good as mine, right?

But interesting is that before that, he was covered, featured in the Korean media as a very proud global Korean—a lot of praise for him. But once he got the nomination, all kind of accusations in the media, right? And he had to withdraw in the end.

Actually, I told him, you know, don't withdraw. Just fight. And then he did.

He told me he went against my view twice. So oftentimes, you know, I get a question from Koreans. Are you coming back?

They say, I'm not coming back. Don't worry. I'm not going to compete for your job, OK?

So I think it's a very interesting dynamic because like him—you know, when I go to Korea these days, they treat me very well. I sometimes wonder what if say I'm coming back. They might change their view. So I mean, that's a good example, you know, of how Koreans treat the Korean diaspora.

DAFNA ZUR: So can you talk a little bit about what kind of potential you think Korea can unlock by expanding or embracing the Korean-American network. What do you mean by that? I mean, what are some examples of what they can do?

GI-WOOK SHIN: Right, so the thing what I've been telling Korean-Americans, including students, is that rather than going back to Korea permanently, you know, try to bridge between Korea and the United States. In a sense, that's what I'm doing here. You know, I'm reaching between Korean-America academic and policy communities. So they don't really have to go back to Korea or stay here, but doing things with Korea.

So a few weeks ago, I had a chance to talk to HR person for Samsung in Silicon Valley. Well, these days, they are trying to recruit top talent from Silicon Valley. But many of them are quite hesitant to go back.

But now they're giving them options that they can spend half of time in Korea, the other half in Silicon Valley. So maybe that might be a good option because, you know, Korea needs global

talent because the decline in our fertility and an aging population and growing brain drain, right? So Korea really has to bring in more talent from foreign countries. Unless Korea can change cultural institution, Korea will be having a hard time to get those talent.

DAFNA ZUR: So maybe, still staying on the topic of minorities, visible minorities or invisible minorities, there's a moment in your book where you describe kind of walking into a meeting and realizing that every single person in the room was a man in a suit. And so I was wondering if you could talk a little bit from sort of longer perspective about how things have changed for women in Korea over the years and, you know, where—what you think still needs to change in order for that not to happen.

GI-WOOK SHIN: So I mentioned this in my book, but last year, I gave a lecture to executives of Samsung—so just like, you know, 40 CEOs belonging to Samsung group. So when I walked into the lecture room, one thing that really caught my attention was that every one of them—I'm not really exaggerating—every one of them was Korean male.

So maybe I live in the US maybe for too long, so I felt very uncomfortable because I know some of them had experience working overseas—all of them actually Korean men. And I think maybe the next month, I gave a lecture to one of the big corporations owned by the Korean government. It's about 120 people. They're executives and then key people. So all of them except one were Korean men—you know who's the only female in the meeting out of 120?

AUDIENCE: President Park?

GI-WOOK SHIN: No. So yeah, someone making an announcement, right?

DAFNA ZUR: Oh, my gosh.

GI-WOOK SHIN: So I mean, that's still, Korea. And I think in my view, Korea is wasting really deep talent of female labor. If you look at LPGA, I feel like Korean females better genes than Korean male, right? But then also, you know, a lot of smart people go to college. But when it comes to jobs and especially top rank, still be few Korean females. So you know, diversity can mean a lot of things, but one of them is to better utilize female labor, female talent for Korea.

DAFNA ZUR: There's one thing that I was curious about that actually I don't remember seeing you address it in the book. But just again on the topic of minorities, I was interested in what your sense is of discussion over sexual minorities in Korea, the gay movement, and also how a kind of maybe religious political discourse is taking over or has kind of made or changed or might have kind of manipulated also the development of those issues.

GI-WOOK SHIN: I think, you know, Korea is getting better at maybe understanding religious or sexual minorities. As I mentioned earlier, still a very poor understanding of minority religion or sexual orientation, I guess, because they maybe understand maybe Christianity or Confucianism or Buddhims but not Muslims or others. And so you know, once again, Korea needs to be more tolerant and more embracing those minorities.

DAFNA ZUR: So maybe a question now about this buzzword of global citizen. You know, there is—you know, we talk about wanting to raise global citizens. It's a major sort of educational goal here at Stanford as well. And so I was wondering what your thoughts are on, you know, where Korea stands now or how Koreans understand what being a global citizen means and how to raise such a global citizen.

GI-WOOK SHIN: Right. It looks like still Korea or Koreans are obsessed with English. For many of them, global citizen means having good English.

I mean, that's important. I'm not disputing that part, right? But then oftentimes, they focus on learning a language without understanding, once again, a different culture or different values. So in my view, to be a global citizen, you should be able to understand a different culture, a different religion, and different values.

And I'm not sure whether Korean colleges are teaching those things. They are teaching English but not those cultural diversity or sort of comparative, you know, global values. So I think we should focus more on teaching those values and diversity and minorities and so on.

DAFNA ZUR: So the first two sections of this book are really focused on Korean society and education and also sort of the business culture. The last section of this book focuses on global issues, on Korea and Asia and some of the big challenges that Korea faces today. And so I don't want to let you go before you have your five minutes of fame to tell us about North Korea, not just to talk very generally about the North Korean nuclear issue, which you talk about in your book. But you actually have some really interesting ideas about what reconciliation can look like. So I was wondering if you could talk about what your insights are from an outsider's perspective on reconciliation between North and South Korea that perhaps has not gotten a lot of attention.

GI-WOOK SHIN: Several months ago, I went to Korea, and we set up several media interviews actually to promote my book. But they all wanted to talk about North Korean issue because right before that, North Korea did six nuclear tests. So in the end, I end up discussing about nuclear issue than promoting what's in my book.

But it's a very tough issue, especially with Korean tension between USA and North Korea. It's very hard to even talk about reconciliation, engagements, or peace on the peninsula. But still, I think we shouldn't give up the value of engagement and diplomacy. And I believe that maybe after some period, still, you know, we will have to talk to each other and figure out how to achieve reconciliation.

So in the interview, you know, I said, you know, three things. One is South Korea should enter in joint international sanctions against North Korea. Another thing—I don't think North Korea will give up nuclear weapons even with increasing sanctions against the regime. But still, I think it's important for them to understand that there's a price for keeping nuclear weapon. That's one.

The second one—South Korea should increase its capability to deal with North Korean threat. I mean, now more and more South Korean people are saying that South Korea should go nuclear. I mean, you know, they may not have to go to nuclear, but still, they have to enhance their own

capability in dealing with those Korean threats because now I see some Koreans really questioning about American commitment to defend their nation.

The last one, still we shouldn't give up the value of diplomacy and negotiation. So, I've been saying that right now, we have to pursue three tricks—joining sanctions, enhancing its own capability, but also try to open the channels with North Korea so that in the end, we can solve the problem more peacefully.

DAFNA ZUR: Well, one of the things that's really puzzling to me as someone who works on North Korea—you know, North Korean literature—was when you are in South Korea, you cannot access any North Korean web sites. You have to go to one library in Seoul and give them all of your personal information in order to be able to go to the fifth floor and look at North Korean books. You just cannot access any of North Korean culture.

And as someone, I grew up in Israel, where we were encouraged to engage and to learn Arabic and to understand in which we are immersed. It's very, very hard for me to understand the mindset of closing North Korea off completely to South Koreans. So is there really a concern about contamination of North Korean psychology or thought in South Korea, or what is the obstacle there? Why will South Koreans not open up North Korean web sites to South Koreans?

GI-WOOK SHIN: I'm not sure, maybe Mr. Kim can give an answer. But my personal view is that we don't really have to do that. I mean, I don't know, unless maybe very few poor North Korean people in South Korea. I mean, North Korea is a failed regime. And I'm not sure what South Korea can be afraid of.

DAFNA ZUR: So you think that they should open the websites and—

GI-WOOK SHIN: That's my personal view, but there might be some, I don't know, security concerns on the part of the government which I don't fully understand, what I'm not aware of. [to Dr. Sohn] Would you like to say something about that?

DAFNA ZUR: You can think about it.

GI-WOOK SHIN: Yeah, or you can say it later.

DAFNA ZUR: So maybe before we open the floor to questions, there's one or two things I wanted to ask finally. One is this book really does touch on a lot of very sensitive issues, and there are a lot of, I think, difficult truths in this book about social relations, about global relations. And so I was curious as to what parts of this book have been the most difficult for Korean audiences to handle.

GI-WOOK SHIN: So actually, I wrote much more than this. And then editor cut a lot of things. For two reasons—one thing is parts that were not really interesting or maybe two heavy.

And the other one that they thought a little too sensitive to the Korean audience. you know, which part did they thought most sensitive? About Japan. I thought maybe more about North

Korea, but then I think actually a few parts of Japan got cut, actually, because editor, you know, thought they might provoke unnecessary reaction to hinder selling the book.

I was quite surprised, actually, that still Japan is very sensitive. I mean, in the book, I was saying, you know, don't be afraid or don't be shy saying that, you know, Korean learned from Japan because that's a fact, right? But then about history issue and a lot of parts were actually cut by the editor. So I was quite surprised that Japan is still the most sensitive issue for Korean people.

DAFNA ZUR: Well, he talks about Dokdo and he talks about comfort women and colonial history, colonial memories. Very diplomatically, I think.

GI-WOOK SHIN: Right, right.

DAFNA ZUR: But clearly--

GI-WOOK SHIN: Toned down.

DAFNA ZUR: But really, really interesting. So before I open the floor, I wanted to ask this question about the American dream. I think that you sort of embody the American dream, right? An immigrant, comes to this country, and you know, get to the highest echelons of your discipline at Stanford, and you've raised three children that are all really successful and independent.

GI-WOOK SHIN: We have to see that.

DAFNA ZUR: So—from my perspective. My children are still young. But I was wondering what you think the American dream is for you and also what the equivalent Korean dream is in Korea. And is it possible for Koreans to have those same aspirations?

GI-WOOK SHIN: I think that—also going back to my earlier point—I mean, that's a main trend of the United States. You know, that a foreigner like myself can become a tenured professor at Stanford University and one major center of the university. Is it really possible to do it in Korea? My answer is still not likely.

I haven't seen anyone like that, actually. So I think that's a value of United States. I mean, despite all those problems these days, you know, U.S. has a lot of good things to offer. And you know, sometimes as I mentioned earlier, some saying that maybe, you know, U.S. is now even worse than Korea.

In a sense, what we see right now, it's got a backlash, a reaction to what U.S. has achieved over the years like more value for women's rights and minorities and immigrants and so on. And I don't think this reaction will last for too long. But Korea has a long way to achieve given this stage of better appreciating minorities and immigrants and women's rights and so on.

So in Korea, in order to be successful, you have to go to top college, [INAUDIBLE]. And then, I don't know, you become, you know, bureaucrats or working for big corporations. But it's very limited.

And then if you fail, then you don't get a second or third chance. In Korea, if you lose, then you will become forever loser. But that's why I think Korea should give second, third chance for those people who may fail, you know, at first so that they can have a hope to be more successful—second, other try.

DAFNA ZUR: All right, well, I hope that the beginning of this conversation has encouraged you to buy this book and read it. It really is wonderful. But I'll open the floor now to questions from the audience.