

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO

DARCY SHIPMAN

WHO LOVED HER STUDENTS AND TAUGHT THEM
WELL.

NOTE FROM THE AUTHORS

The readings in this series were created from “authentic materials,” that is, transcripts of many tape-recorded interviews with Koreans and North Americans talking about their own real-life experiences. The transcripts were then put together to create discussions on various topics. A portion of the dialogue was created for functional reasons—reacting to something someone said, asking questions, getting the discussion to move along. However, all of the anecdotes and situations are based on someone’s real life experience. Our major character is a professor named Anne, who will bring you into our special, fictional coffee shop.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to thank first the many people who gave us their stories. Most people preferred to remain anonymous. The exceptions were Frank Concilus, Jeremy Seligson and Brian Barry, whose stories appear—with some editing to create a conversation—in *Bridges: Intercultural Conversation 2*. Second, our thanks go to the friends who agreed to have their photographs used in this volume, particularly to Darcy Shipman, whose photo was used for Anne. Third, we would like to thank Michael Hadzantonis for his hard work and persistence in publishing this series. Finally and most importantly, we thank the students of Dongguk University who for ten years helped us test this material. You have been very patient.

WELCOME TO THE ROUNDTABLE

Hi. My name is Anne. Every week a group of my friends—both Koreans and Westerners—meet in a Seoul coffee shop to talk. We represent differences in race, sex, culture, nationality, age, occupation, social class, religion, political opinion and lifestyle. We are busy people, so each week only a few show up, but gradually you'll meet all of us. Since the coffee shop is near my house, I'm always present at the discussions. You're welcome to join us, listen to the discussion, and then continue talking about the issues with your own groups.



Why are we doing this? Well, all of us believe that under the right circumstances we can climb over the walls which keep us apart. Actually, since most of us are already friends, we have some experience sharing with each other and participating together in activities we think are important. Our goals are to understand each other better and to give you the information you might need to understand us better.

As I said, we are a diverse group. In order to meet on terms of equal status, we have left off our titles and family names. Actually, this is a little artificial—just for the roundtable. In a real mixed group of Koreans and Westerners, some people would be called by given names, some nicknames, some family names alone, and some family names with titles. But treating everyone the same is democratic. For you, our readers, if we use our own given names it's easier to understand immediately who is speaking. We think it also establishes us as a group of friends who care about each other.

So get yourself a cup of coffee and pull up a chair. Enjoy.