

# The human cost of South Korea's era of transnational adoption

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Since the 1950s but peaking in the 1980s, an estimated 200,000 South Korean babies and children have been adopted into mainly white families in western nations, leaving a trail of fractured identities. Why did the South Korean government allow so many of its children to be sent permanently abroad? What have been the fates of the adoptees, some now well into middle age? And how are some adoptees working to reconnect themselves to the land and culture of their birth? South Korea social scientists Assoc Prof Eleana Kim and Dr Ryan Gustaffson examine the legacy of the transnational adoption program with host Peter Clarke.

An Asia Institute podcast. Produced and edited by profactual.com. Music by audionautix.com. Transcript [here](#).

*Main image: L->R: Assoc Prof Eleana Kim and Dr Ryan Gustaffson.*

*Listing image: Korean toy. Credit: Richard Schatzberger/Flickr.*