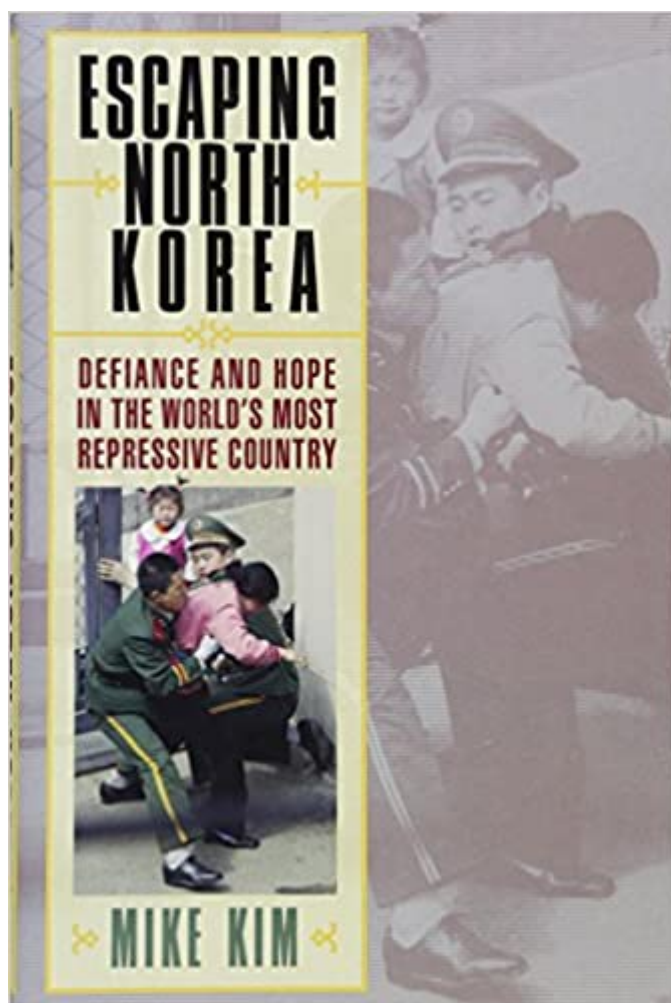


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# Escaping North Korea: Defiance And Hope In The World's Most Repressive Country



## Synopsis

The first of its kind, this book provides a unique inside look into the hidden world of ordinary North Koreans. Mike Kim, who worked with refugees on the Chinese border for four years, recounts their experiences of enduring famine, sex-trafficking, and torture, as well as the inspirational stories of those who overcame tremendous adversity to escape the repressive regime of their homeland and make new lives. One of the few Americans granted entry into the secretive "Hermit Kingdom," Kim came to know the isolated country and its people intimately. His North Korean friends entrusted their secrets to him as they revealed the government's brainwashing tactics and confessed their true thoughts about the repressive regime that so rigidly controls their lives. Civilians and soldiers alike spoke of what North Koreans think of Americans and war with America. Children remembered the suffering they endured through the famine. Women and girls recalled their horrific experiences at the hands of sex-traffickers. Former political prisoners shared their memories of beatings, torture, and executions in the gulags. With the permission of these courageous individuals, Kim now shares their stories and recounts his dramatic experiences leading North Koreans to asylum through the six-thousand-mile modern-day underground railway through Asia. His unflinching narrative exposes the truth about North Korea, stripping away the last veils that still shroud this brutal dictatorship.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Kim chronicles his effort to lead North Korean refugees through the 6,000-mile underground railway through China in this exposé of the astonishing day-to-day realities of famine, religious

oppression, torture and sexual abuse in the most secretive and impoverished member of the axis of evil. The author, a former missionary, spent four years at the China–North Korea border building shelters and orphanages, and his access to government officials, journalists, aid workers and hundreds of North Korean refugees provide him a unique vantage point from which to synthesize current research and policy on conditions in North Korea with affecting real-life testimonials. His intrepid effort to help four North Korean teenagers avoid arrest and repatriation on the journey from northern China to the British consulate in Shanghai is riveting, as is his insider knowledge of the perilous route refugees navigate across the borders of China, Laos and Thailand. The author's compassion and astonishing ability to penetrate the Hermit Kingdom and lift its shroud of secrecy do much to ameliorate the book's chief flaws, the clunky prose and occasionally amateurish conjecture and derivative political analysis. (Aug.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

[A] fascinating account of [Mike Kim's] efforts to smuggle North Korean defectors to freedom in the South. (The New York Review Of Books)[Kim's] intrepid effort to help four North Korean teenagers avoid arrest and repatriation on the journey from northern China to the British consulate in Shanghai is riveting, as is his insider knowledge of the perilous route refugees navigate across the borders of China, Laos and Thailand. (Publishers Weekly)The power of Escaping North Korea stems from the stories Mr. Kim tells. During his four years in China, he met hundreds of escapees from the North. He reconstructs their tales of the privations of daily existence in North Korea, of life on the lam in China in heartbreaking detail. . . . There are many heroes in Mr. Kim's book, not least the author himself. (The Wall Street Journal)A portrait of modern North Korea by an awareness advocate who was granted special access to the country's isolationist circles shares inspirational stories by survivors of such tragedies as famine, sex-trafficking, and gulag torture. (Forecast Magazine)Mike Kim focuses on the question why such a large number of North Koreans are seeking refuge in China. He describes their flight and their situation in China as well as the living conditions in North Korea, including the situation of Christians under the North Korean regime. Among their sufferings are the following: poverty, famine, unemployment, violence, alcoholism, theft, corruption, bribery, oppression, gambling, abuse, rape, human trafficking, child soldier slavery, etc. According to Kim, famine and the search of food is the most common reason why North Koreans defect. (International Journal for Religious Freedom)Mike's embrace of the spartan and hazardous vocation of protecting North Korean refugees in China is nothing short of exceptional. His book offers a personal and compelling account of this life-and-death rescue

operation for our cousins in the North. (Tim Peters, Helping Hands Korea)It is impossible to read the remarkable stories of personal suffering, endurance, and courage in these pages without believing that more can and must be done to help the North Korean people. It is not bad strategy or poor diplomatic practice to place human rights at the top of our agenda with Pyongyang and to challenge the rest of the international community to do the same. (Michael J. Green, Georgetown University)This is an inspiring yet tragic study of the brave few in North Korea who have chosen to vote with their feet to leave the earth's most repressive regime. An important and accessible piece of work, it should be read by generalists and specialists alike. (Victor Cha, Georgetown University)We hear about women refugees who suffer when sold as brides for rural Chinese farmers (a practice, incidentally, that involves many Chinese, not just Korean refugees, though this is not discussed), or who are sold into city brothels. We hear of children born to stateless North Korean mothers in China, who as a consequence are unable to attend school or obtain medical care. We hear that most refugees are sick when they cross the border. We gain insights into indoctrination and the mindset of North Koreans after six decades of socialist rule. We learn how refugees initially appear lifeless and rarely smile; that they are usually weak, thin, and malnourished; and so on. And it is here that the volume's strength resides. (Keith Howard Reviews)Americans and other foreigners have also opened a window to the suffering of the North Korean people, including Mike Kim, a young Tae Kwon Do expert who opened a string of martial arts studios in China as cover to help North Koreans defect. His book, Escaping North Korea, is a stunning story of tragedy and heroism. (Michael Green, Georgetown University, on CNN Opinion)

I am fascinated by North Korea. The people, the country, the "politics" of it. How a country of people can be so blindly following a person, how the propaganda even affects how we, the western civilization, views North Korea, it's all fascinating to me. I gobble up stories of people who defected to North Korea, and those who defected from North Korea. This book is about a person who did neither. He didn't go to North Korea. He didn't live there, he didn't experience, first hand, the horrors of living there, of the oppressiveness. He did, though, help those who did. This is the story of Mike Kim, and his 4 years helping those who most need the help. It was shocking to read that many who defect from North Korea want to willingly go back. It was also surprising to me to read about the peoples struggles, and China's role. I didn't realize that China, and their policies, were in a way contributing to the problem. There were parts that I skimmed over. There is a lot of quoting from other people, not the defectors, but other people helping those who defect, or who have studied it. There were also parts that, when you read the whole book, seem...odd. The part about most of

North Koreans being on meth? Yet no mention of how they overcome their addiction to the drug - or how this poor country can afford meth, even to make it. Overall though, it was fascinating to read about Crossing Borders NK and the work they do. Yes, it is Christian heavy if you aren't into that. But that is part of Crossing Borders (the group that Mike Kim was a part of during those 4 years). And the work they are doing with North Korean children who are now in China is so heartwarming. This is a wonderful book.... bit long at points, but it tells a story of North Korea that many of us do not know of...those of us who read these stories have read of the defectors to North Korea (then they defected back out), and those born in North Korea who escaped to other countries (usually China, then to other countries from there) to start a new life. This was from the viewpoint of the people who help those who defect...which is something I had not come across. My hope - unrelated to the book - is that one day, in the next 10 years, books like these are history...and not reality. That North Korea opens its borders, and treats its citizens with respect and dignity...and like humans.

Inspirational book; well-written, insightful, takes the reader to the heart of the plight of North Korean refugees. Thank you these brave warriors.

As someone who knows little about North Korea other than the fact that they are very seclusive, I found the book to be interesting. Organization is a little off, some chapters are about life in N.Korea, others about rescue attempts (some amusing because the author, at times, was just kind of "winging it" and expresses relief that things worked out). Some conclusions are drawn quite hastily and without much besides speculation. For instance, at one point the idea is presented that N.Korea intentionally turns a blind eye to coke problems because it decreases appetite (in a place of food shortage) while keeping people hyper-alert for work. If you are looking for a dramatic read, this isn't you. It hits a weird spot where it is mostly informative, but not in an empirical sense, more of a "satisfying your curiosity" kind of way.

Too long and not as well organized as I expected. There were a lot of examples and stories about people, but often (usually) with little analysis or follow up. I learned new things about N. Korea and the work on the China border, but was disappointed in the quality of this book. I expected more from this publisher.

It gives an overview of just what goes on in near the border between China and North Korea. The

author puts in some interviews from the people that were rescued giving another perspective about the issue. Even though it does not go into massive detail about day to day operations, it still gives you enough information for one to understand the hardships without actually having the author go into detail.

Maybe I expected too much but finished this book wanting more. It is unsettling how much the N Korean society is fed negative information about the outside world. Maybe there is no hope for anything changing and therefore no more to tell. Those who have escaped do not seem to do anything to dispel the untruths about the free world.

This book was packed with information from North Korean refugees. At first glance someone might be dissuaded by the fact that it isn't a first hand account from a refugee, but when you read the words the refugees have told the man in the book it will feel like you are right there.

Good, no complaints about purchase.

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