

A GUIDE TO DXING KOREA

By Bill Haras

Korea (also known as Chosoen or "The Land of Morning Calm") is a peninsular country situated in between China on the north and west, Japan to the east and the Soviet Union on the north. It is a land with an ancient cultural heritage which has been politically divided into two separate states (Democratic People's Republic of Korea or North Korea and the Republic of Korea or South Korea). Despite Korea's political problems the Korean people have been able to maintain their own distinctive nationalistic character.

The Korean people are a racially distinct people with a total population of about 60 million (40 million in South Korea, 19 million in North Korea, and 2 million in adjacent China.)

The Korean language sounds very different from Chinese, although many Chinese root words are now incorporated into modern Korean. Korean and Japanese are considered by linguists to be in the same language group (the Ural-Altaic group) as they have a very similar grammar. There are many dialectic differences in Korean from region to region. But in South Korea the dialect most often heard on radio is the Seoul dialect which is considered to be the standard language. It is the dialect used in the mass media and taught in the schools.

Korean has been described as sounding like Japanese, but not as melodic or like Japanese spoken with a Russian accent, and it can also be recognized because it has a log of "ung" sounds. North Koreans are more distinctive than the South Koreans with the announcers sounding like they are mad, probably because most of the North Korean broadcasts are propagandistic in nature.

Probably the best way to understand what Korean sounds like is to tune to a station that is easily heard which broadcasts in Korean, such as KFAK-1100, which broadcasts in Korean on Saturday evening, or a shortwave broadcast station like VOA or Radio Korea as listed in the World Radio and Television Handbook.

The remaining portion of this article will deal specifically with South Korea. Another article dealing with North Korea will follow later. The specifics of the reception of stations is for a DXer residing in Western North America, but is it hoped that there is information which can be used by DXer's in other areas.

THE STRUCTURE OF BROADCASTING IN SOUTH KOREA

Broadcasting in South Korea has developed into a system of several networks divided as follows:

1. The Korea Broadcasting System (KBS).
This is the official government broadcasting organization in South Korea. It is by far the largest network in South Korea with some 75 total stations. It is comparable to networks in other countries like CBC in Canada or NHK in Japan. There are several types of programming on KBS, including educational, informational, propaganda, and Radio Korea broadcasts for foreigners living in Korea.
2. The Christian Broadcasting System (CBS).
This is the major religious broadcasting organization in Korea. The headquarters is in Seoul and feeds the network with news and other programming. Even though this is a religious organization, quite a bit of the programming is devoted to pop music (Korean style) and features. Each station broadcasts some local programming.
3. Other religious stations.
These include the sister stations, Far East Broadcasting Station (FBS) or "Team Radio" in Seoul and "A-Shi-A Broadcasting Station" in Cheju. Both are part of the Far East Broadcasting Company (FEC), a world wide evangelical broadcasting organization. They broadcast in the various languages of the region and English for both the people in Korea and in its neighboring countries.
4. The Mun Hwa Broadcasting Company (MBC).
This is the largest private network in Korea. The network programming originates from Seoul with most of the major population centers with their own studios broadcasting local programming. They have news on almost every hour and with a format of music (mostly Korean pop) and features the rest of the time.
5. Other private broadcasters.
These include the following: Dongyang Broadcasting Co. (TBC) in Seoul, Seo Hae BC (SHC) in Kunsan, Dong A BS (DAB) in Seoul, Cheon-il BC in Kwangju. These stations all broadcast mainly local programming. SHC and Cheon-il BC take a news feed on the hour from one of the above Seoul stations, but I can't remember which.
6. American Forces Korean Network (AFKN).
As its name indicates, this network serves the American servicemen stationed in Korea. Programming comes from three sources: 1) The main AFRTS feed in the States; 2) the main AFKN feed; and 3) the local station programming. As the network is mainly for entertainment, the programming is mainly news, music and sports with a few features.

RECEPTION OF SOUTH KOREAN STATIONS

South Korea has been widely heard in western North America. HLAZ-1566 seems to lead the many possible targets. HLKB-891 and "KBS"-1143 are also fairly good here (Provo, Utah). Others heard by various DXers in North America include (by frequency only): 559, 567, 603, 639, 657, 711, 738, 747, 756, 792, 837, 864, 882, 972, 1017, 1035, 1215, 1224, and possibly a few others. Most of these stations need a combination of good conditions, a decent receiver with good selectivity, and a loop or beverage antenna to be heard well. Even so HLAZ-1566 has been heard fairly well on "non-communication" type receivers like a Realistic TRF. "KBS" on 711 or thereabouts used to be heard quite frequently before the frequency change in November 1978, but hasn't been reported very many times since.

HLAZ-1566 has been heard in virtually every month of the year but seems to be the best in the fall to spring months. The other stations are also heard the best during the mid-fall to mid-spring months (i.e., October to April) and rarely during the rest of the year. The South Koreans, if they are in, are generally audible slightly after the Japanese stations fade in. They may peak for an hour or so and then fade out altogether for the rest of the morning or they may be audible right up until sunrise (local). Remember that even though the Japanese stations are in, South Korean stations may not be and if Japanese stations aren't in, South Korean stations probably won't be either. The only exception is HLAZ-1566 which on a few AMs is the only South Korean audible with the Japanese stations or occasionally is the only NE Asian audible.

Many of the other South Korean station not listed above are theoretically possible, but they would probably have to battle co-channel QRM from other TPs or domestic QRM.

For those east of the Rockies, it would take a minor miracle, but with patience, good equipment, skill, a low sunspot number and luck, who knows what can happen...

HOW TO ID SOUTH KOREAN STATIONS

Here are a few good ways to identify South Korean stations:

Time pips method - All "KBS" stations use time pips similar to NHK stations, 3 low and 1 high ...-. Most of the private stations use something similar, 3 and 1 or 2 and 1 (...- or ..-). Some stations don't use any at all. The AFKN stations never use time pips, instead they may use a tone on the hour like many U.S. stations do.

Parallel station method - This is the simplest way if you have two receivers, one tuned to a known station with the other used to tune to unknown stations.
Station identification method - For South Korean stations there are several ways in which they make an ID; namely the acronym of the station's network or the station's company name, the full name of the station, or its call letters. This is the best way to be absolutely sure.

All stations except maybe HLAZ are known to use the acronym of the parent organization; i. e., KBS, MBC, CBS, FBS, SBC, AFKN, etc. At times they may use the acronym followed by the station's location; i. e., "MBC Pusan." They may also use the full name in Korean (or English in the case of AFKN); i. e., MBC - Mun Hwa Bangsong, KBS - Hanguk Bangsong, CBS - Gi-dok-kyo Bangsong, etc. In short the name of the station followed by the Korean word for "broadcast" or "bangsong." The word "yeo-gi-neum" (meaning "this" in English) may be used in front of the station's name and the phrase "im-ni-da" (meaning "is" in English) may used after the name. The call letters may be used on the hour in conjunction with the above. Any combination of the above may be used at any time, so keep your ears open. A good example of an ID might be; "Yeogineun Gi-dok-kyo bangsongimida, CBS, Daegu, HLKT" or "CBS, Daeguimida, HLKT," followed by the time pips.

The letters used for the station names and call letters are in English. The AFKN stations will use their own nickname while broadcasting their own programming, i. e., Vagabond, Tomahawk, Kilroy, etc.

Please note On pronunciation of the vowel "o" when not next to another vowel it is the long "o" sound as in English. So "song" in "bangsong" is not pronounced like song in English because the "o" is pronounced like "o" in Boat.

QSL POLICIES

It has been the experience of DXers that KBS is a very reluctant verifier for its domestic broadcasts, while an excellent verifier for its overseas shortwave broadcasts. As far as I know, no DXer in North America has obtained a QSL for a KBS station on MW. However KBS has been known to verify its Japanese language Radio Korea broadcasts on MW to DXers in Japan. HLKB Pusan will verify directly for their own Radio Korea Japanese broadcasts to Japanese DXers. The only known verifer for any domestic

service station received in North America was for the shortwave relay of KdS Daegu 2510 khz for a Korean language report sent directly to the station. So maybe a report sent directly to the station, possibly in Korean, may yield a QSL. Perhaps the best thing is to hope for a QSL policy change at KdS. Until then...

Many of the commercial stations have been known to issue QSLs. MBC and CbS will verify directly, but if no response is received a follow-up report sent to Seoul may yield a QSL. QSLs from the stations have been received.

HLAZ and HLKX are very good verifiers. Jack Lentz, the administrative coordinator at HLAZ, has sent friendly letters to DXers who send reception reports.

AFKN has issued QSLs in the past by reports sent to the address in the WRTH.

If you are lucky enough to hear a station well enough to send a good report, it could net you a prized, attractive, QSL.

NOTES ON THE STATION LIST

Freq.: in Kilohertz.

"*": denotes reception has been reported in North America.

Power: in Kilowatts.

Prgr.: KBS1 - Korean Broadcasting System Channel 1; KBS2 - Korean Broadcasting System Channel 2; KBS3 - Social Education Program 1; KBS4 - Social Education Program 2; KBS? - Korean Broadcasting System Station, but exact program is unknown; TBC - Dongyang Broadcasting Co.; SBC - Seo Hae Broadcasting Co.; MBC - Mun Hwa Broadcasting Co.; DcS - Dong A Broadcasting System; CBS - Christian Broadcasting System; FbS - Far East Broadcasting Station; JBC - Jeon Il Broadcasting Co.; AFKN - American Forces Korean Network.

Schedule: times in UTC (GMT)

"**": denotes a KBS Radio Korea Broadcast.

Language - EE - English; CC - Chinese (probably Mandarin); JJ - Japanese;

KK - Korean; RR - Russian; Mo - Mongolian.

Parallels - (1) - May relay HLKA using 711 on MW and 3930 on SW, many of these stations are direct relays of HLKA, while others may relay HLKA only a portion of the time and broadcast their own local programming the rest of the time; (2) - Relayed on SW on 2510 Khz, 2000 - 0000 and 0600 - 1800 and 5975 Khz, 0000 - 0600, may be relayed by 3930 Khz at times; (3) - Reportedly parallel to SW as follows: Radio Korea broadcasts - 1100-1400 on 6135, 6165, 7275, and 7550 Khz; Social Education broadcasts - 0900-1100 and 1400-0500 on 6015 and 6135 Khz.

Remarks - AFKN station's nicknames are listed where known.

As this list was compiled by using bits and pieces of various lists and from monitor reports, errors are bound to appear. Any and all corrections to this list are appreciated by the author.

Freq	Call	Power	Location	Prgr	Schedule	Parallels / Remarks
540	HLSM	10	Jangcheung	KBS1	2000-1500	(1)
540	HLSN	1	Jangsu	KbS1	2000-1500	(1)
540	HLCZ	10	Hongseung	KBS1	2000-1500	(1)
540	HLSC	1	Jeoncheon	KbS1	2000-1500	(1)
549	-	5	Seoul	AFKN	24 hr	"Vagabond"
558+	-	250	Pohang	KBS2	0500-0000	
567+	HLKF	100	Jeonju	KbS1	2000-1700	(1)
576	-	5	Munsan-N1	AFKN	24 hr	"Indianhead"
585	-	5	Daegu	AFKN	24 hr	"Kilroy"
594	HLAG	10	Yeongju	KBS1	2000-1500	(1)
603+	HLSA	500	Suwon (Nam- yang)	KBS2	0500-0000	(2)
					*1100-1130 EE	
					*2330-0000 EE	
621	HLSJ	1	Hwangji	KbS1	2000-1800	(1)
621	HLCP	10	Seogwipo	KbS1	2000-1800	(1)
621	HLAY	1	Yeongdong	KbS1	2000-1800	(1)
630	HLCY	10	Yeosu	KbS1	2000-1800	(1)
639+	HLKC	50	Seoul	TBC	2000-1700	
648	HLSL	1	Hoseong	KBS1	2000-1600	(1)
657+	HLKM	50	Chuncheon	KBS1	2000-1800	(1)
675	-	1	Jinbu	KBS1	2000-1800	(1)
675	HLAS	10	Kumsan	SBC	2000-1600	
711+	HLKA	500	Seoul (Sorae)	KBS1	2000-1800	(1)
738+	HLKG	100	Daegu	KbS1	2000-1800	(2)
747+	HLKR	100	Wangju	KbS1	2000-1800	(1)
756+	-	100	Suwon (Nam- yang)	KBS?	0100-0500	
					0900-2100	
					*0900-0930 CC	
					*0930-1000 EE	
					*2000-2030 CC	
					*2030-2100 EE	

Freq	Call	Power	Location	Prgr	Schedule	Parallels / Remarks
765	HLGQ	50	Daejeon	MBC	2000-1700	
774	HLAN	10	Jeju	MBC	2000-1600	
774	HLAN	10	Chuncheon	MBC	2000-1600	
783	HLCV	1	Yeongweol	KbS1	2000-1600	(1)
783	-	5	Pusan	AFKN	24 hr	"Homesteader"
792+	HLKJ	50	Seoul	DcS	2000-1700	
810	HLCT	20	Daegu	MBC	2000-1700	
819	HLCN	20	Wangju	MBC	2000-1700	
837+	HLKY	50	Seoul	CbS	1900-1705	
846	HLAU	10	Ulsan	MBC	2000-1530	
846	HLKY	5	Yangu	KbS1	2000-1800	(1)
855+	HLCX	10	Jeonju	MBC	2000-1600	
864+	HLKR	100	Kangneung	KbS1	2000-1600	(1)
882+	HLV1	20	Daejeon	KbS1	2000-1700	(1)
891+	HLKB	250	Pusan (Kim- hae)	KbS1	2000-1800	(1)
					*1500-1600 JJ	
900	HLKV	50	Seoul	MBC	1900-1700	
909	-	10	Gumi	KbS1	2000-1800	(1)
918	-	50	Yeoncheon	KbS1	2000-1800	(1)
927	HLSU	1	Hadong	KbS1	2000-1500	(1)
927	HLQD	1	Hongcheon	KbS1	2000-1800	(1)
927	HLDB	10	buyeo	KbS1	2000-1800	(1)
936	HLKD	10	Masan	KbS1	2000-1800	(1)
954	-	1	Boeun	KbS1	2000-1800	(1)
963	HLFS	10	Jeju	KbS1	2000-1800	(1)
963	HLGR	10	Andong	KbS1	2000-1800	(2)
972+	HLCA	500/ 1500	Kimjae	KbS3	0900-0500	(3)
					*1100-1200 JJ	
					*1200-1230 KK	
					*1230-1330 JJ	
					*1330-1400 KK	
990	HLAP	10	Masan	MBC	2000-1610	
999	HLCL	10	Kwangju	CBS	2000-1600	
1008	HLCS	50	Seokcho	KBS1	2000-1800	(1)
1017+	HLAW	10	Andong	MBC	2000-1525	
1026	HLCG	1	Hwacheon	KbS1	2000-1600	(1)
1026	HLKW	1	Geochang	KbS1	2000-1700	(1)
1035+	HLCP	10	Pohang	KbS1	2000-1600	(1)
1044	-	1	Chuncheon	AFKN	24 hr	
1062	HLKQ	50/10	Cheongju	KbS1	2000-1800	(1)
1090	HLAT	10	Yeosu	MBC	2000-1610	
1099	HLGH	10	Chungju	KbS1	2000-1800	(1)
1098	HLGJ	20	Jinju	KbS1	2000-1500	(1)
1107	HLAV	10	Pohang	MBC	2000-1555	
1116	HLCI	1	Samcheog	KbS1	2000-1500	(1)
1134	-	100/ 50	Kimpo	KbS1	2000-1500	(1)
1143+	-	100/ 50	Jeju	KbS2	0500-0000	
1152	HLCW	10	Weonju	KbS1	2000-1800	(1)
1152	-	0.25	Kwangju	AFKN	24 hr	"Comet" relay
1161	HLKU	20	Pusan	MBC	2000-1700	
1161	-	0.25	Uijeongbu	AFKN	24 hr	"Vagabond" relay
1170	HLSR	500	Seosan	KbS1	1000-0500	Uses(3) but all of schedule not known.
					*1000-1030 EE	
					*1030-1100 CC	
					*1100-1200 JJ	
					*1200-1230 KK	
					*1230-1330 JJ	
					*1330-1400 KK	
1188+	HLKX	50	Seoul	FbS	2030-0100 (0200)	Sun KK
					0700-1100 EE	
					1100-1230 KK	
					1230-1400 RR	
					1400-1445 CC	
					1445-1500 Mo	
1197	-	1	Tengducheon	AFKN	24 hr	"Tomhawk"
1206	HLSW	1	Jeonson	KbS1	2000-1600	(1)
1206	HLQR	1	Cheongsong	KbS1	2000-1600	(1)
1215	HLCD	10	Jeocheon	KbS1	2000-1500	(1)
1215+	HLAK	10	Jinju	MBC	2000-1500	
1224+	HLAA	10	Kwangju	JcC	2000-1700	
1233	HLQC	1	Yeongyang	KbS1	2000-1800	(1)

Freq	Call	Power	Location	Prgrm	Schedule	Parallels/Remarks
1242	HLSa	10	Weonju	MbC	????-????	
1251	HLKT	10	Daegu	CbS	2000-1600	
1260	HLKI	10	Namweon	KbS1	2000-1500	(1)
1269	-	10	Yangju	KbS1	2000-1500	(1)
1269	HLSI	10	Kurye	KbS1	2000-1500	(1)
1278	-	1	Hapcheon	KbS1	2000-1800	(1)
1287	HLAX	1	Cheongju	MbC	1900-1600	
1287	HLAP	10	Kangneung	MbC	2000-1500	
1305	HLV	10	Ulgjin	KbS1	2000-1600	(1)
1314	HLCH	10	Iri	CbS	2000-1530	
1323	HLQJ	1	Yeongkwang	KbS1	2000-1800	(1)
1332	HLAO	10	Chungju	MbC	2000-1550	
1341	-	10	Kimpo	KbS1	2000-1500	(1)
1350	HLAQ	1	Sawcheog	MbC	2000-1500	
1359	-	1	Oean	AFKN	24 hr	"Comet"
1368	HLKO	1	Muju	KbS1	2000-1500	(1)
1386	HLAM	10	Mogpo	MbC	2000-1500	
1395	HLCO	10	Cheolweon	KbS1	2000-1800	(1)
1404	HLKP	10	Pusan	CbS	2000-1600	
1440	-	0.25	Weonju	AFKN	24 hr	
1440	-	1	Kunsan	AFKN	24 hr	"Mercury"
1440	-	0.25	Masan	AFKN	24 hr	
1440	-	1	Camp Humphreys (Pyong-taek)	AFKN	24 hr	
1449	HLQB	10	Ulsan	KbS1	2000-1800	(1) // HLAb - 891? *1500-1600 JJ?
1458	HLSH	1	Hanyang	KbS1	2000-1500	(1)
1458	-	1	Bongwaha	KbS1	2000-1800	(1)
1467	HLKN	50	Mogpo	KbS1	2000-1800	(1)
1485	-	1	Gonju	KbS1	2000-1800	(1)
1485	HLDF	1	Goheung	KbS1	2000-1800	(1)
1503	HLSK	1	Kimcheon	KbS1	2000-1500	(1) Could be (2)
1512	-	0.25	Chinhae	AFKN	24 hr	"Homesteader" relay
1512	-	0.10	Kwangcheon	AFKN	24 hr	
1512	-	0.25	Pohang	AFKN	24 hr	"Kilroy" relay
1539	HLQC	1	Daejeong(Gosan)	KbS1	2000-1800	(1)
1566+	HLAZ	250	Jeju	FEBC	2000-2030 EE 2030-2100 KK 2100-2230 CC 0955-1230 KK 1230-1330 JJ 1330-1500 CC 1500-1745 RR	
	exHLDA					
1584	HLDC	1	Damyang	KbS1	2000-1800	(1)

FINAL NOTE

The sources for this article are the 1981 WRTH, the FERC log, the DXWV columns in the DXM, and personal correspondence with other DXers. I wish to personally thank Nick Hall-Patch, Mike Hardester, Pat Martin, and Bruce Portzer for the information they provided and my wife, Becky, for her help in assembling the article.

Please send any comments, corrections, and criticisms to the author at University Station, P.O. Box 7428, Provo, UT 84602. They will all be appreciated.

February 7, 1981

