

Korea movies
reaction paper –
movie1: arirang;
movie2: tae guk gi –
brotherhood o...

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Movie 1: Arirang

The documentary has two parts, “ The Korean American Journey,” which covers the community’s history from 1903 to about 1960, and “ The Korean American Dream,” which continues the story through the present. The film begins the story of how and why, in less than three years in the early 1900s, more than 7, 000 Koreans left their strife-torn homeland for new lives on the sugar plantations of Hawaii. The film is more than just another tale of a people immigrating to America and finding success. It reveals the little known story of how a country, obliterated from the world’s consciousness, was kept alive and eventually restored by the determination, sacrifices and patriotism of her people overseas. We learn how, soon after the first wave of migration, Korea was taken over and annexed by Japan, which attempted to stamp out the Korean language and culture and reduce Koreans to second-class Japanese. In this strange circumstance, the migrant Koreans became settlers.

As American settlers, the Korean sojourners organized around the cause of independence for Korea while simultaneously sinking roots deep into their new home. As they achieve astonishing success in American terms, they kept the idea of an independent Korea alive throughout Japan’s half-century occupation of the Korea. They quickly acquired first-rate educations, established businesses and entered the professions - all the while drawing on the Christian church as a source of continuity. As they organized around the cause of independence for Korea, they simultaneously sank their roots deeply into American soil. After 1970, the Korean-American population

expanded rapidly, at times perilously, to over one million today. This is a story about distances: from Seoul to New Jersey; from storekeeper to Harvard graduate; and from the devastating Los Angeles riots of 1992 to a heightened involvement in the American scene. The film captures a community in transition from anonymity to national prominence.

Movie 2: Tae Guk Gi - Brotherhood of War

One of the successes of this movie is that it can illustrate the realistic of war, while instilling the impressive brotherhood to the audience. From the start, the sacrifices that the older brother, Jin-Tae, makes for his younger brother, Jin-Seok, are clear; Jin-Tae gave up going to school and became a shoeshiner in order to support his family and let his brother go to school. When Jin-Seok is forcefully recruited into the South Korean army, and in an attempt to rescue him, Jin-Tae is recruited as well. Jin-Tae is willing to do anything to allow his brother to be discharged, and is told by his commander that he can accomplish this task if he gets the Medal of Honor. Because he is trying to get the medal, Jin-Tae risks his life on the dangerous missions. In the process of these missions, and the war, Jin-Tae changes into something that even his own brother cannot recognize. Yet even through these changes, Jin-Tae never stops caring, loving, and looking out for his younger brother.

Besides the impressive and sacrificial brotherhood, one of the most impressions to me is when a communist general called Jin Tae the "dirty pawn of American imperialism." We suddenly recognized that the war was not just single side hatreds but both. When the South treated the North as

the pawns of Chinese and Soviet communist schemes, at the same time, the North viewed the South as pawns of the American geopolitical struggle.

The movie can be viewed in more than one way. It is a fact that war often changes those who fight in it, but it is also a fact that those, whom soldiers protect, simply can't understand the soldiers or why it is that they must do some of what they do. As the war in *Tae Guk Gi* becomes one of brother against brother, the conflict between the sensitive, intellectual Jin-Seok and the simple, tough, and increasingly brutal Jin-Tae starts to look a bit like the clashes between soldiers and their critics in our own time.