

## Barbara Zitwer's 'The Korean Book of Happiness' Offers an Enticing Glimpse of Korean Culture and Traditions

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Barbara Zitwer, an American literary agent renowned for bringing Korean authors like Shin Kyung-sook and Han Kang to global prominence. (Image courtesy of Barbara Zitwer)

**SEOUL, Jan. 12 (Korea Bizwire)** – Barbara Zitwer, an American literary agent renowned for bringing Korean authors like Shin Kyung-sook and Han Kang to global prominence, has released a book about her travels in Korea, titled 'The Korean Book of Happiness'.

Preferring the nickname "Barbara," she compiles her experiences in the book, recommending unique cultural aspects, food, nature, traditional temples, and distinctive professions that foreign

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travelers to Korea should explore.

Zitwer's journey includes a visit to Jeondeungsa Temple on Ganghwa Island, where she engages in conversations with monks, learning about meditation, humility, letting go of ego, not dwelling on the past, not comparing oneself with others, and the importance of gratitude for the present moment.

Defining happiness as a state of mind that can be chosen regardless of external circumstances, she humorously recounts her attempt at 108 prostrations, admiring a female devotee's graceful execution likened to an acrobatic performance.

The author shares her poignant experiences at the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), empathizing with the tragic separation of Korean families for over half a century.



In Jindo, she promotes the loyal Jindo dogs, while in Jeju, she admires the haenyeo (female divers) who have been diving for abalones since 1629, referring to them as 'Korea's mermaids' and 'Korea's first working moms'.

She uses the phrase 'Korean Amazonian warriors' to describe these divers, who braved the seas while pregnant after their husbands were taken as slaves by imperialist nations or lost in wars.

Zitwer expresses her delight in Korean cuisine, highlighting dishes like doenjang jjigae (soybean paste stew), kimchi jjigae (kimchi stew) and samgyetang (ginseng chicken soup).

She offers detailed recipes for these flavorful dishes that foreigners should try. She introduces bibimbap as a balanced meal of vegetables and meat, and also a method to use leftovers.

Referencing the hit show 'Squid Game,' Zitwer playfully suggests that eating live octopus is the real 'Squid Game' experience in Korea. She proudly notes that the works of the Korean female authors she introduced have won international literary awards like the Booker Prize and the Shirley Jackson Award, and have been New York Times bestsellers.

Before 'Squid Game,' 'Parasite,' and BTS brought Korea into the global limelight, Zitwer takes pride in having discovered and presented many Korean female authors on the world stage. She also expresses confidence that a Korean author will soon win the Nobel Prize in Literature.

Accompanying her on her travels in Korea was Shin Kyung-sook, with whom she shares a close friendship.

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