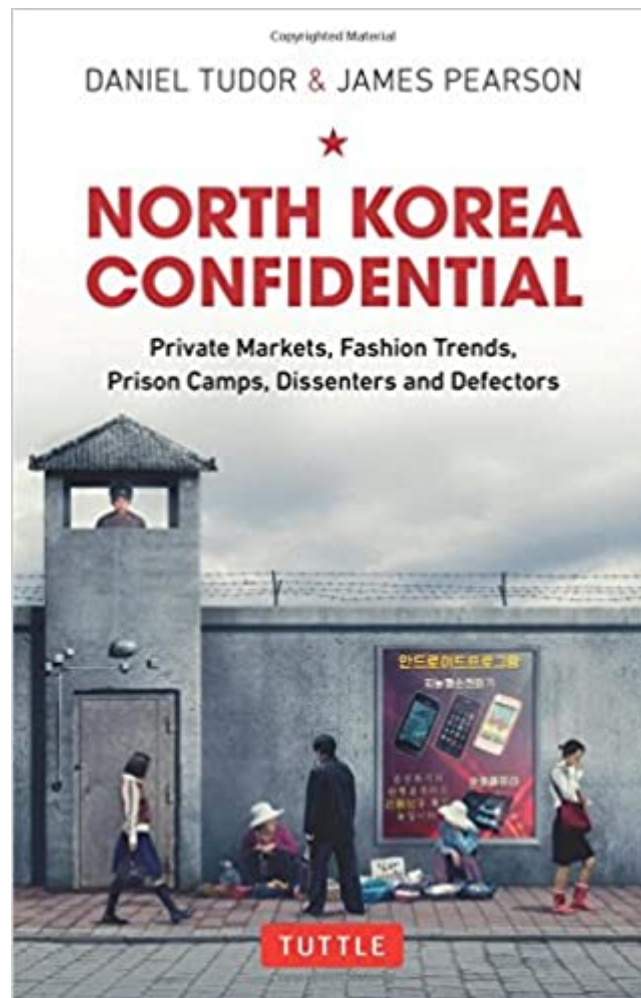




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# North Korea Confidential: Private Markets, Fashion Trends, Prison Camps, Dissenters And Defectors



## Synopsis

**\*\*Named one of the best books of 2015 by The Economist\*\*** Private Markets, Fashion Trends, Prison Camps, Dissenters and Defectors. North Korea is one of the most troubled societies on earth. The country's 24 million people live under a violent dictatorship led by a single family, which relentlessly pursues the development of nuclear arms, which periodically incites risky military clashes with the larger, richer, liberal South, and which forces each and every person to play a role in the "theater state" even as it pays little more than lip service to the wellbeing of the overwhelming majority. With this deeply anachronistic system eventually failed in the 1990s, it triggered a famine that decimated the countryside and obliterated the lives of many hundreds of thousands of people. However, it also changed life forever for those who survived. A lawless form of marketization came to replace the iron rice bowl of work in state companies, and the Orwellian mind control of the Korean Workers' Party was replaced for many by dreams of trade and profit. A new North Korea Society was born from the horrors of the era— one that is more susceptible to outside information than ever before with the advent of k-pop and video-carrying USB sticks. This is the North Korean society that is described in this book. In seven fascinating chapters the authors explore what life is actually like in modern North Korea today for the ordinary "man and woman on the street." They interview experts and tap a broad variety of sources to bring a startling new insider's view of North Korean society— from members of Pyongyang's ruling families to defectors from different periods and regions, to diplomats and NGOs with years of experience in the country, to cross-border traders from neighboring China, and textual accounts appearing in English, Korean and Chinese sources. The resulting stories reveal the horror as well as the innovation and humor which abound in this fascinating country.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Dispelling the myth of a brainwashed populace is one of the main goals of the book. Despite horrific prison camps, lack of Internet, and a national fabric called "vinyon," most people still take the risk to watch a foreign film, regularly consume South Korea pop culture, party, and even argue with the police." [The Daily Beast](#) "North Korea Confidential" [uses](#) extensive interviews with recent defectors and people still in the country to build a rich picture of daily life there." [Financial Times](#) "North Korea Confidential gives us a deeply informed close-up. Tudor, a former correspondent for The Economist, and Pearson, a Reuters reporter, have pieced together their story from North Korean insiders, defectors, diplomats and traders, and from a careful reading of texts in English, Korean and Chinese." [New York Times](#) "North Korean society is rapidly changing, affecting everything from what people watch on TV to what they sing at karaoke. With the help of a new book charting daily life we see if you've been paying attention." [The Guardian](#) "North Korea Confidential, by James Pearson and Daniel Tudor, says that nearly all North Koreans lead a 'double economic life', supplementing measly rations and puny state wages of as little as \$1 a month with extra work in their spare time." [The Economist](#) "In a new book that the authors say aims to document 'North Korea, the country' rather than 'North Korea, the state,' two journalists [Daniel Tudor](#), former correspondent for the Economist in Seoul, and James Pearson, currently a Reuters reporter in Seoul [tap](#) a wide range of sources to describe the lives of ordinary North Koreans." [Wall Street Journal](#) "The authors, both journalists in the region, do their best to beat the stereotypes that have been scraped together over the years, 'the ridiculous international media image that suggests that DPRK citizens are robots who simply live to serve their 'Dear Leader.'" [Associated Press](#) "It is refreshing to find a book that neither obsesses excessively over the nuclear issue nor treats the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) as simply a bad joke or the world's most irrational place." [Andrei Lankov](#), Reason

Daniel Tudor is from Manchester, England, and graduated with a BA in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics from Oxford University. He has lived in Seoul, Korea for a number of years, and served as The Economist's Korea Correspondent from 2010-2013. His first book, 'Korea: The Impossible Country' received strong praise and has also been translated into Korean, Chinese, Polish, and

Thai. Daniel is a regular columnist for a Korean newspaper, the JoongAng Ilbo, and has commented on Korea-related topics many times for the BBC, Al Jazeera, and others. He is also co-founder of The Booth, a small chain of craft beer pubs. James Pearson is a foreign correspondent for Reuters in Seoul, where he covers politics and general news in North and South Korea. He holds a BA (hons) in Chinese and Korean from the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) and a Master's of Philosophy (M.Phil) in Oriental Studies from the University of Cambridge.

The author's have done a fantastic job of giving us, the reader glimpse into everyday life in North Korea. If you have any interest in the DPRK, this makes for a fascinating read.

I had no idea that there was a class system there. The writer really showed a different view of what what described in other books. Worth reading.

interesting reading, informative.

It was to a degree of what I would expect from the mosyt isolated nation in the world. The fact that it's leader would kill his own relative because he disagreed with him is bizarre. I was a little surprised to read that if you knew who to bribe, then life could be a little better for your family than a lot of other families living in the DPRK. It painted a grim picture of the country and that is not a good thing to read about in the end. I was curious to read in greater detail from people living there actually what is taking place today. A good read if you want to appreciate how all the rest of the world's population is doing compared to the masses that make up PDRK.

Very informative. Provides an entirely different picture of North Korea than the one that is typically presented in the news.

A real eye opener of a book. An extremely interesting read.

Very well balanced. Read the review in the Economist and was not disappointed. This book explained many things about North Korea for me.

Good stuff but I would enjoy more details on North Koreans working in the economy and their

encounters with foreign culture.

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