



# When Spring Comes to the DMZ

Uk-Bae Lee

Let me tell you a story...

# What is the DMZ?





# KOREAN WAR

25 June 1950 – 27 July 1953



1945: After WWII, Korea (formerly occupied by the Japanese) was split into two spheres of influences along the 38th parallel:

- The Soviets administered the North and the Americans administered the South.

1948: The occupation zones became two sovereign states:

- In the South, the First Republic of Korea was established under the authoritarian leadership of Syngman Rhee, following Western capitalistic ideals.
- In the North, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was established in the north under the communist totalitarian leadership of Kim Il-sung.
- Both governments claimed to be the legitimate rulers of Korea.

1950: The war began when the Northern army crossed the border into the South.



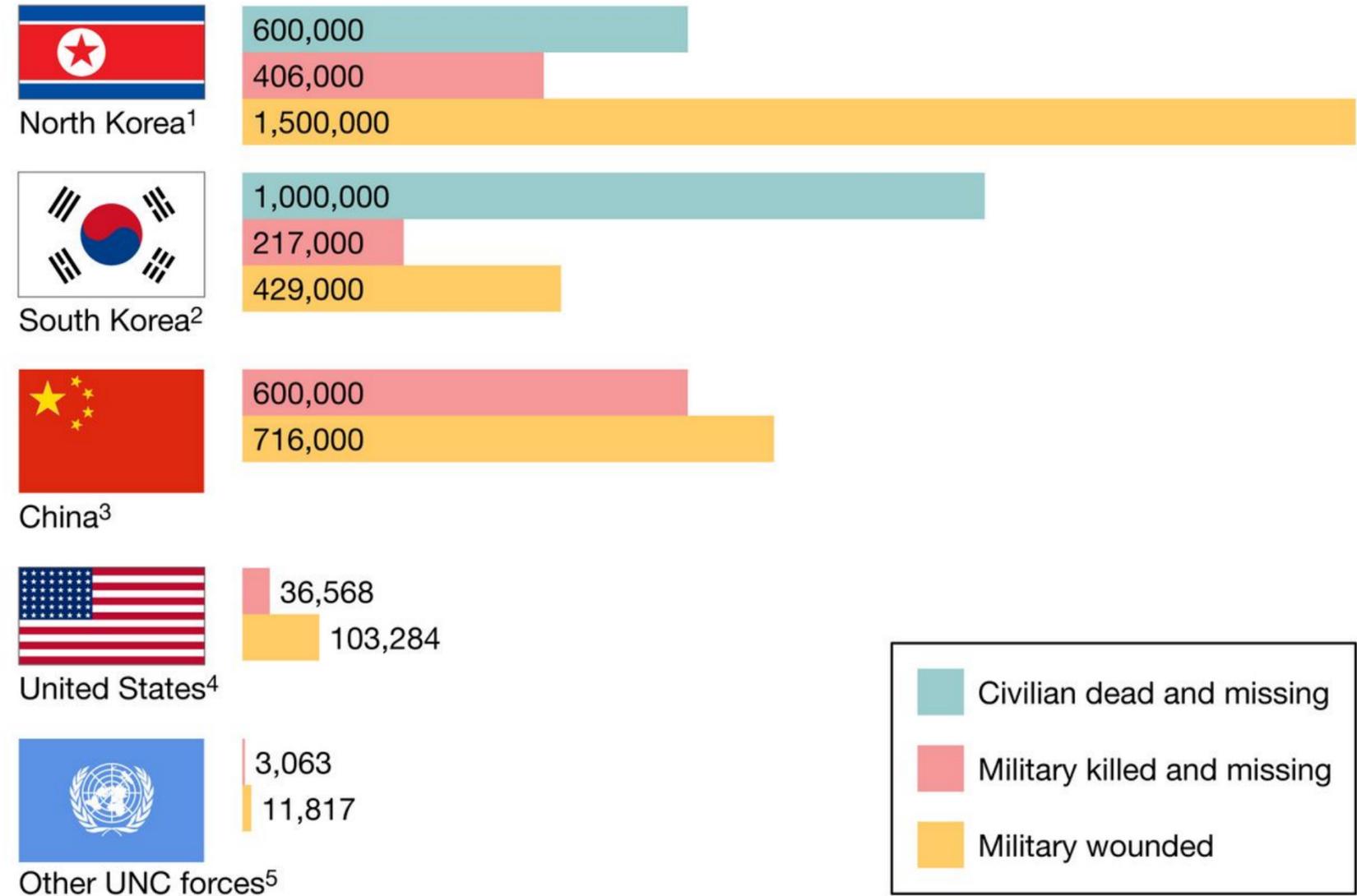
# 3 Years Later



Photograph: Jeon Heon-Kyun/EPA

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/gallery/2008/jun/20/conservation.wildlife>

## Battle casualties of the Korean War (1950–53)



<sup>1</sup> Figures reflect the higher end of U.S. and South Korean estimates, which range from 500,000 to 600,000 civilian dead and missing, from 294,000 to 406,000 military killed and missing, and from 226,000 to 1,500,000 military wounded.

<sup>2</sup> South Korean estimates of civilian dead and missing range from 500,000 to 1,000,000. Official figure of military killed in action is 187,712.

<sup>3</sup> Figures are U.S. and South Korean estimates. Official Chinese figures acknowledge 152,400 military killed and missing, 238,000 military wounded.

<sup>4</sup> Figures reflect official U.S. tally, which counts 33,741 battlefield killed and missing and 2,827 dead and missing in war zone from other causes. U.S. military deaths outside the war zone were 17,678, bringing the total military dead and missing during the Korean War to 54,246.

<sup>5</sup> No UNC member had more than 700 battlefield deaths except Turkey (721).



The DMZ is approximately 160 miles long and approximately 2.5 miles wide.

Contains heavily fortified fences, landmines armed guards, and listening posts

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean\\_Demilitarized\\_Zone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean_Demilitarized_Zone)

# THE DMZ AS AN ECOLOGICAL RESERVE

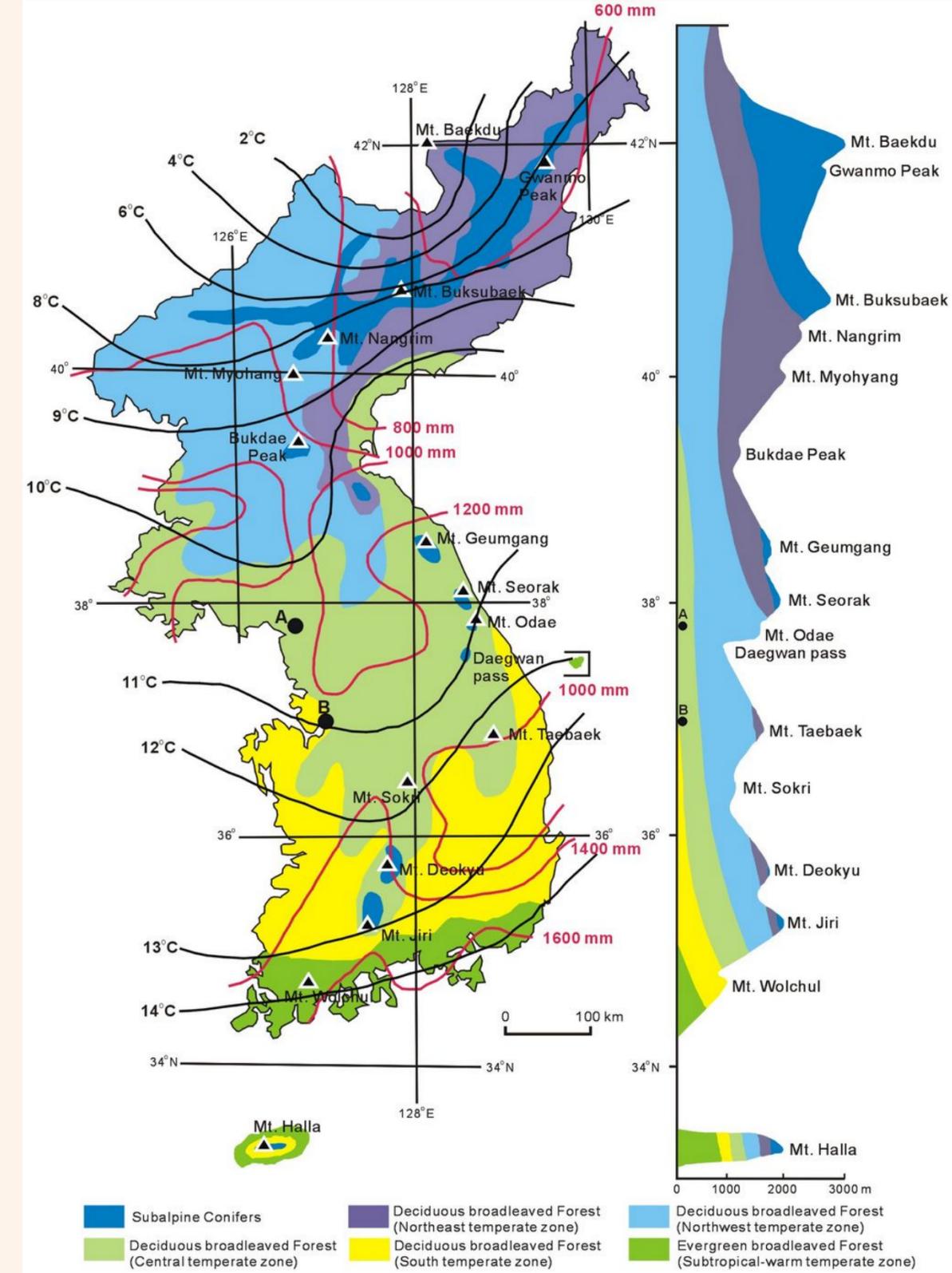
- First proposed in 1966 as a protected reserve, talks are still ongoing
- One of the most well protected temperate habitats in the world
- Endangered Species:
  - Red-crowned crane
  - The white-naped crane
  - Korean fox
  - Asiatic black bear
  - Siberian tiger (?)
  - Amur leopard
  - Western gray whale
  - Eurasian lynx
  - Goral sheep



# ECOLOGY OF THE KOREAN PENINSULA

- 70% of Korea is mountainous, wide coastal plains to the west and south
  - Conifer forest, deciduous broadleaved forest, and evergreen forest
- Over 3,000+ islands associated with the peninsula
- Warm-temperate, temperate, and cold-temperate zones
- Over 5,000 miles of marine coastal ecosystems
- Situated on inactive volcanoes, but still active hot springs
- Rainfall heavier in summer than winter; cold winters

<https://www.intechopen.com/books/climate-change-geophysical-foundations-and-ecological-effects/holocene-vegetation-responses-to-east-asian-monsoonal-changes-in-south-korea>



# ASSIGNMENT:

Part 1: Read The Guardian's article: *How wildlife is thriving in Korean peninsula's demilitarized zone* and NPR's *DMZ: A Haven For Many Species Of Wildlife* and answer the questions below:

- What has been happening in the Korean Peninsula since the 1900s that has impacted the environmental integrity of the region?
- What is the speculated biodiversity of the DMZ? What is this number so hard to capture?
- What are some of the challenges that ecologists see with conserving the DMZ as a wildlife refuge in the future?
- What are two additional things that you learned that are of interest to you? Why?

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2012/apr/13/wildlife-thriving-korean-demilitarised-zone>

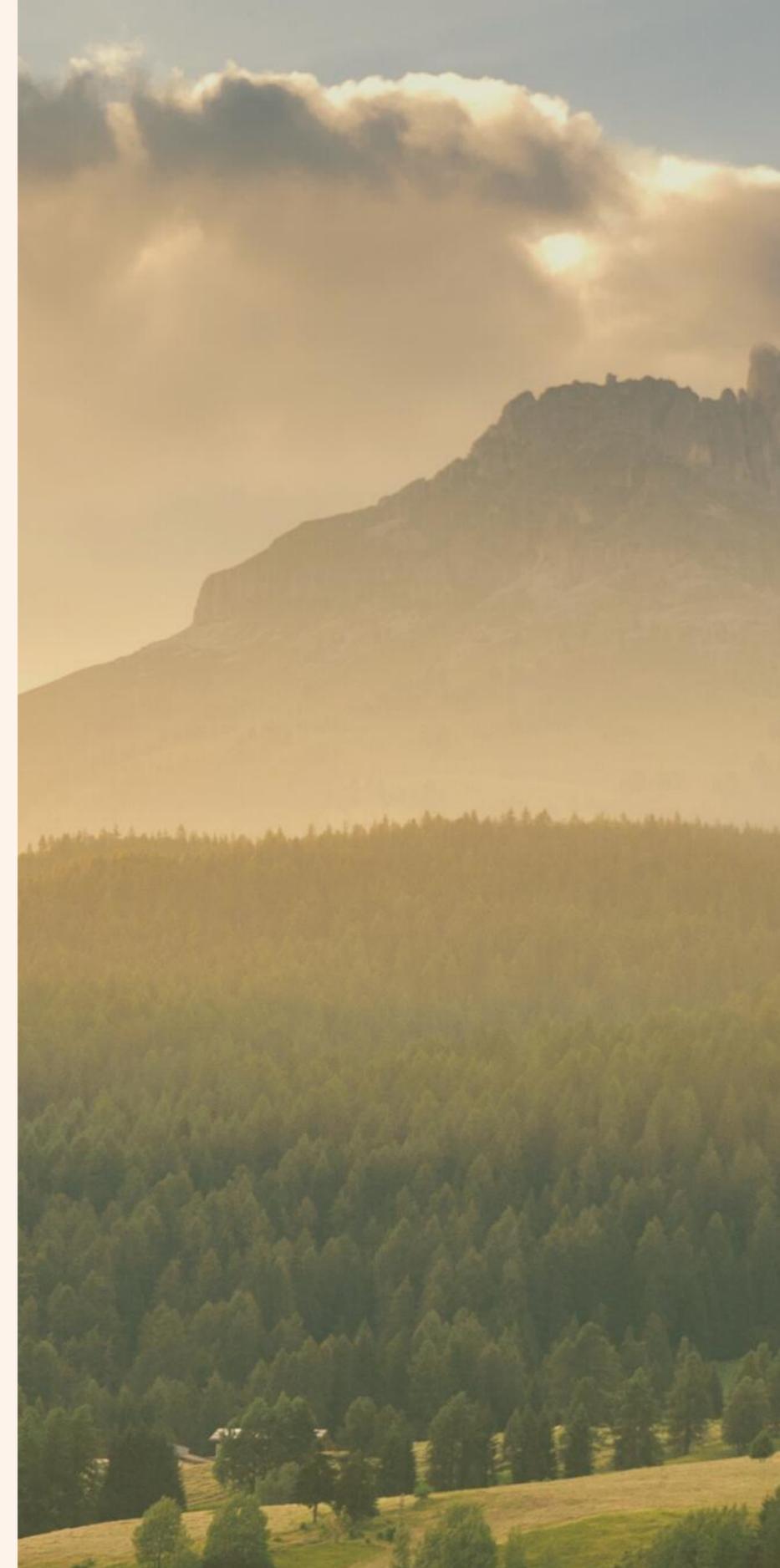
<https://www.npr.org/2019/05/08/721552490/dmz-a-haven-for-many-species-of-wildlife>



# The Korean Sijo (시조)

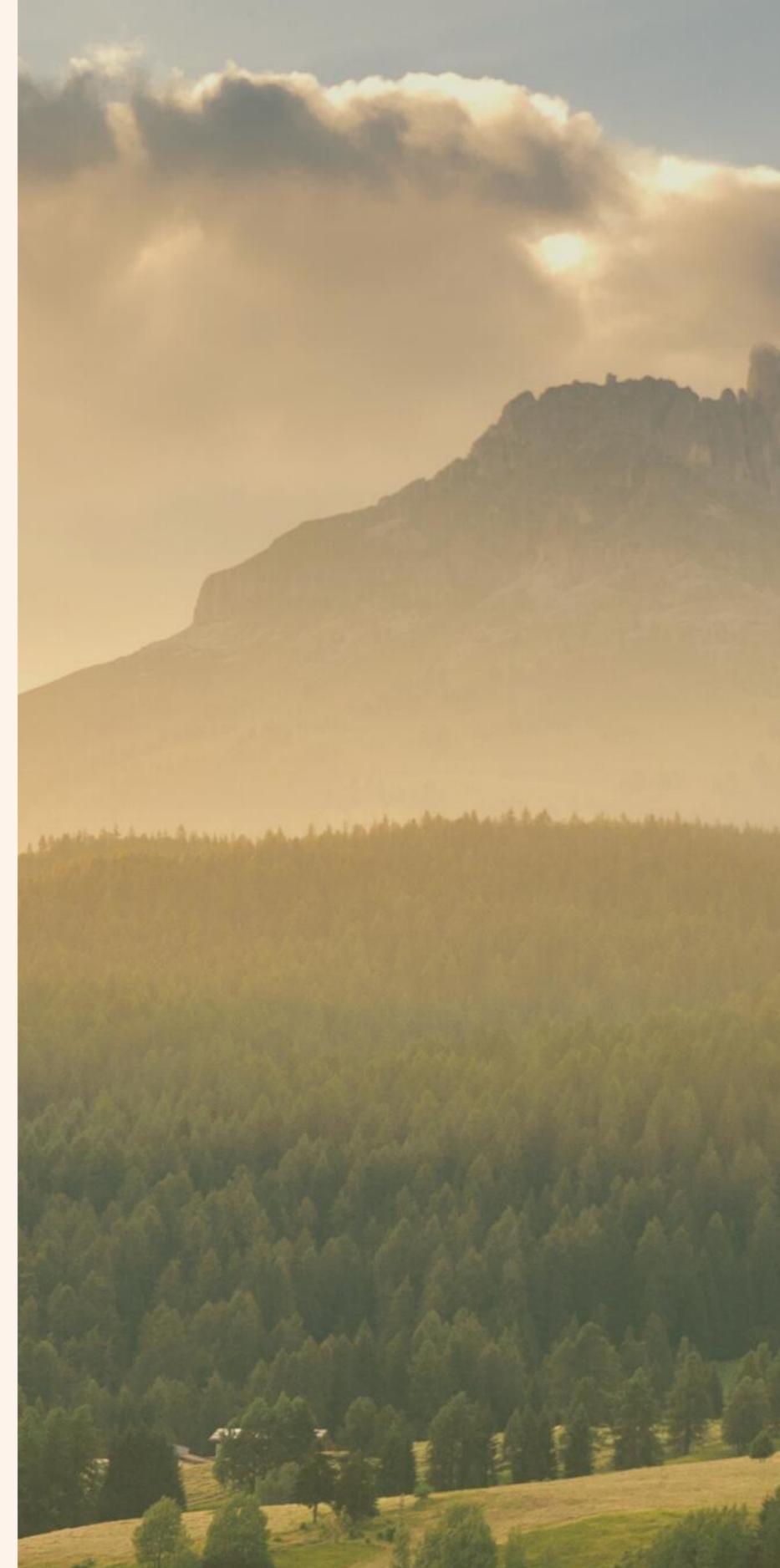
# SIJO

- Pronounced SHEE-jo
- The sijo is a traditional three-line Korean poetic form
- Organized both technically and thematically by line and syllable count.
- Themes of Korean sijo masters
  - cosmological or metaphysical,
  - description of nature
  - love songs, humor,
  - political statements,
  - instructional



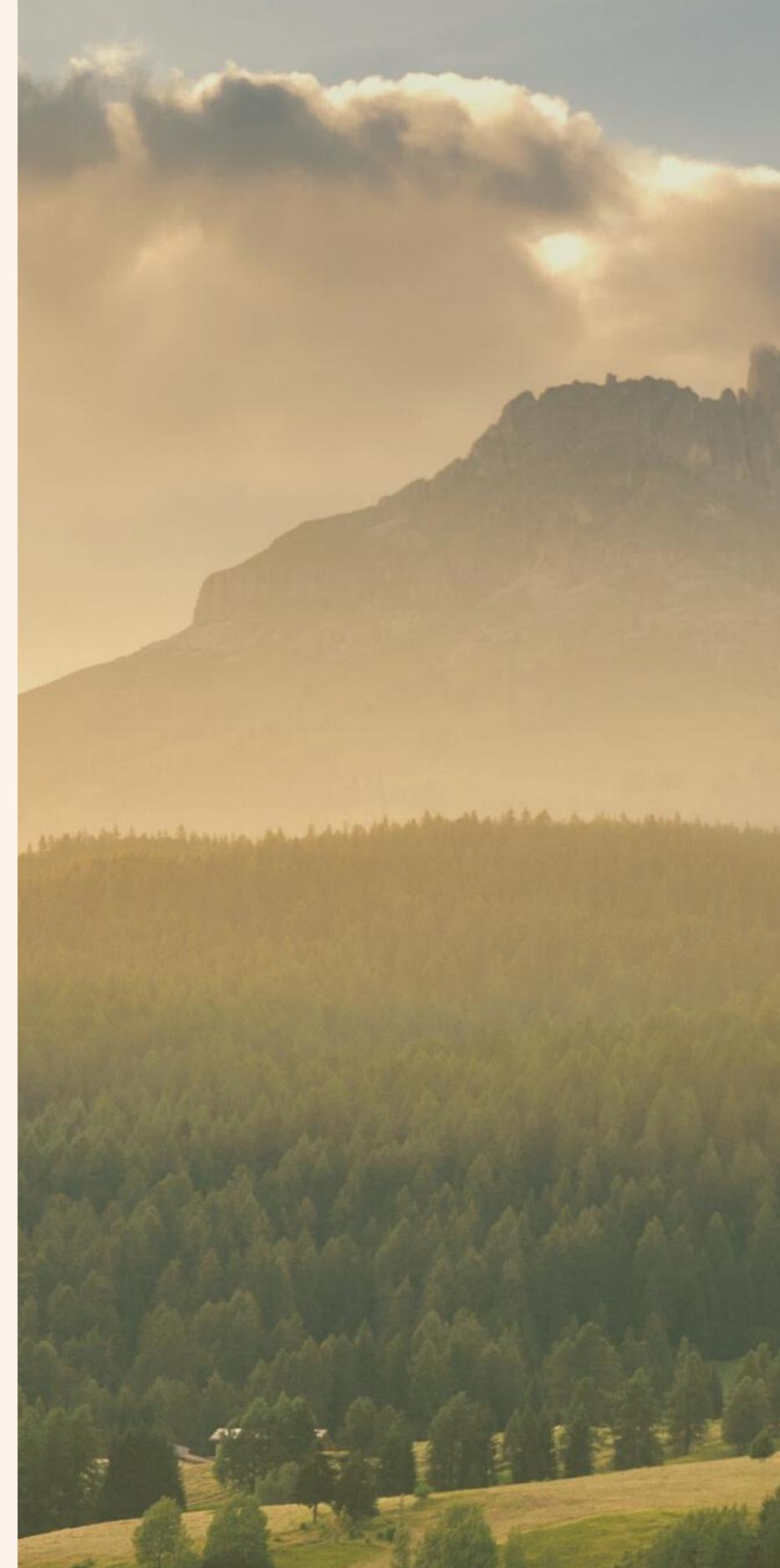
# SIJO

- The traditional Korean sijo are lyrical, as they were originally sung.
- 20th century and later sijo poets deliberately composed them to be printed on a page and read as modern poems.
- Singer is accompanied by Dae-gum (bamboo flute) and Chang-gu (hour-glass shaped drum).
- All sijo chang are sung in a very deliberate pace, and the singer must be trained to extend the notes of the song for effect.



# 3 LINES, 44-46 SYLLABLES

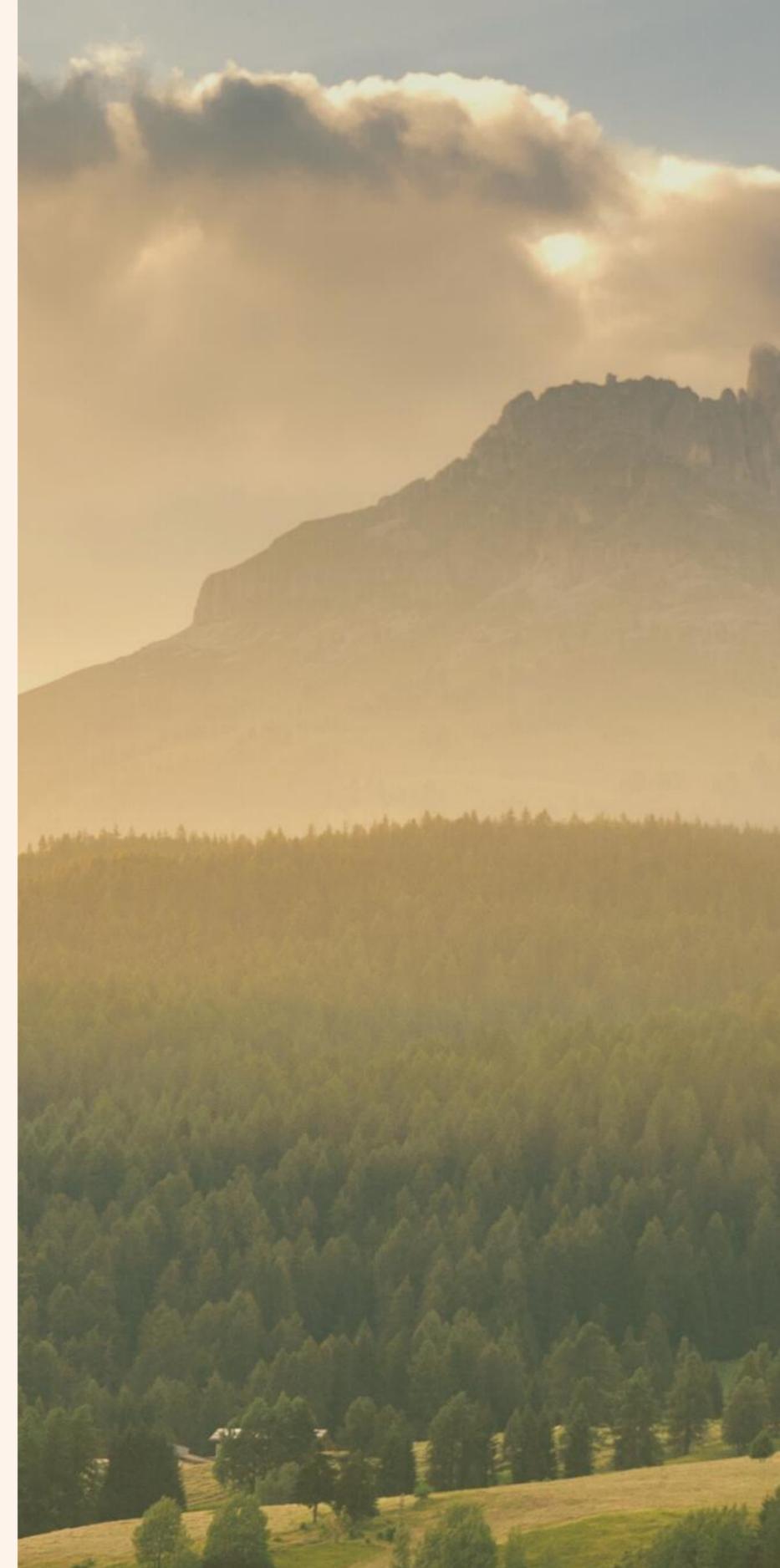
- First line
  - Introduces or states the theme
- Second line
  - Expands or develops the theme in equal length and power
- Third line
  - Twist or surprise at the beginning of the last line acts as a counter-theme before the rest of the line completes the poem



# 3 LINES, 44-46 SYLLABLES

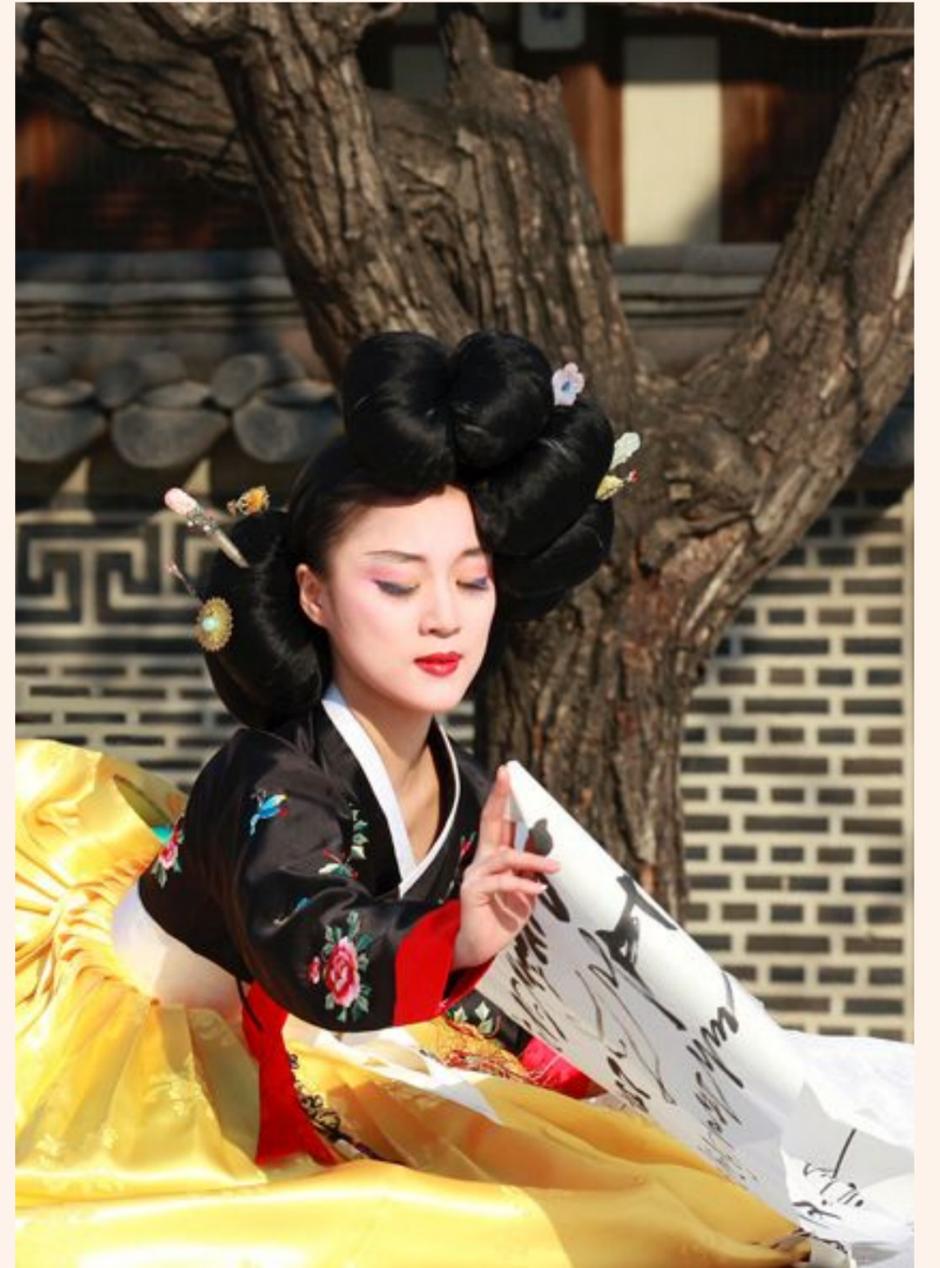
The basic standard:

- First line      3      4      4(or 3)      4
- Second line    3      4      4(or 3)      4
- Third line      3      5      4              3



# HWANG CHIN-I (1506-1544)

Jade Green Stream, Don't boast so proud  
of your easy passing through these blue hills.  
Once you have reached the broad sea,  
to return again will be hard.  
While the Bright Moon fills these empty hills,  
why not pause? Then go on, if you will.



청산리 벽계수야 수이감을  
자랑마라  
일도 창해하면 다시오기 어려오니

# YANG SAŌN (1517-1584)

T'aesan is mighty high, they say,  
but it still is a hill beneath the sky.

Climbing it and climbing,

there's no reason you can't climb all the way.

It's people who won't try to climb

who say, "That hill's too high, it's too high."



태산이 높다 하되 하늘 아래 뒤편으로다  
오르고 또오르면 못오를리 업건마는  
사람이 제 아니 오르고 뒤편 높다 하더라

# ASSIGNMENT:

## Part 2: Artistic Reflection

In that spirit, you are going to write a sijo about the DMZ or the natural world. Based upon your interest, choose one of the options below:

- You can write your sijo about the DMZ as a demarcation of war, but also as a natural preserve
- You can write your sijo in honor of an endangered/threatened species on the Korean peninsula:
  - <https://www.iucnredlist.org/search/grid>

Extra Credit: Write your sijo on nice paper and illustrate it.

# Editing Your Sijo

The tangled wire snarls a red scar(e)  
Across the heart of a nation  
Festering feelings of loss  
A connection I never knew  
In shadows, life thrums a new beat  
Turning red ichor into green

The tangled wire snarls an **iron** scar  
Across the heart of a nation  
Festering feelings of loss  
A connection I never knew  
In shadows, life thrums a new beat  
**Corrupt ichor, now blooming green**

The tangled wire snarls a red scar  
Across the heart of a nation  
Festering feelings of loss  
A connection I never knew  
In shadows, life thrums a new beat  
**Rusting red blood, now a green hue**

The tangled wire snarls a red scar  
Across the heart of a nation  
Festering feelings of loss  
A connection I never knew  
In shadows, life thrums a new beat  
Turning **brick ochre** into green