



**Commercial Signs in Hangul  
and Transliterated Korean  
from Tappan New York to Closter New Jersey**

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and Transliterated Korean  
from Tappan New York to Closter New Jersey**

A Catalog by Charles Turner

Summer 2018

*Commercial Signs in Hangul and Transliterated Korean  
from Tappan New York to Closter New Jersey*

With heartfelt thanks to my wife Alexandria.

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# Introduction

Bergen County New Jersey, which lies west and north of New York City, is home to the largest concentration of Koreans in the United States. Of the top ten U.S. municipalities with Korean-American populations, all can be found in Bergen County. Palisades Park is the largest, and Fort Lee is perhaps the best known. Of the other communities in this catalog, Norwood is fourth with a 24% share of its population, Closter ranks fifth with 22%, and Northvale is 18% Korean-American, making it ninth. Old Tappan is 12% at fifteenth.

From 1986 to 2004, I lived in Rockland County New York, which lies just above Bergen County, and begins New York State's turn westward. In the early 1990s, I had discovered a Korean supermarket affiliated with the Independent Grocers' Association (IGA) in Northvale, which was a fifteen minute trip by car south from my house. In the intervening years, smaller Korean markets and caterers opened shop in Northvale, but by the turn of the millennium, the IGA had gone, and perhaps these other businesses headed south to Norwood, whose business district is currently undergoing a renovation, as can be seen by the front and back cover photos of this catalog. Rockland County might mark the northernmost reach of Korean communities in the New York area, as it begins to approach the 45-minute commute circle from Manhattan. Tappan, just across the state line from Northvale for example, has only 4% of its population claiming Korean ancestry. Leaving Bergen County New Jersey also means leaving its excellent public school system.

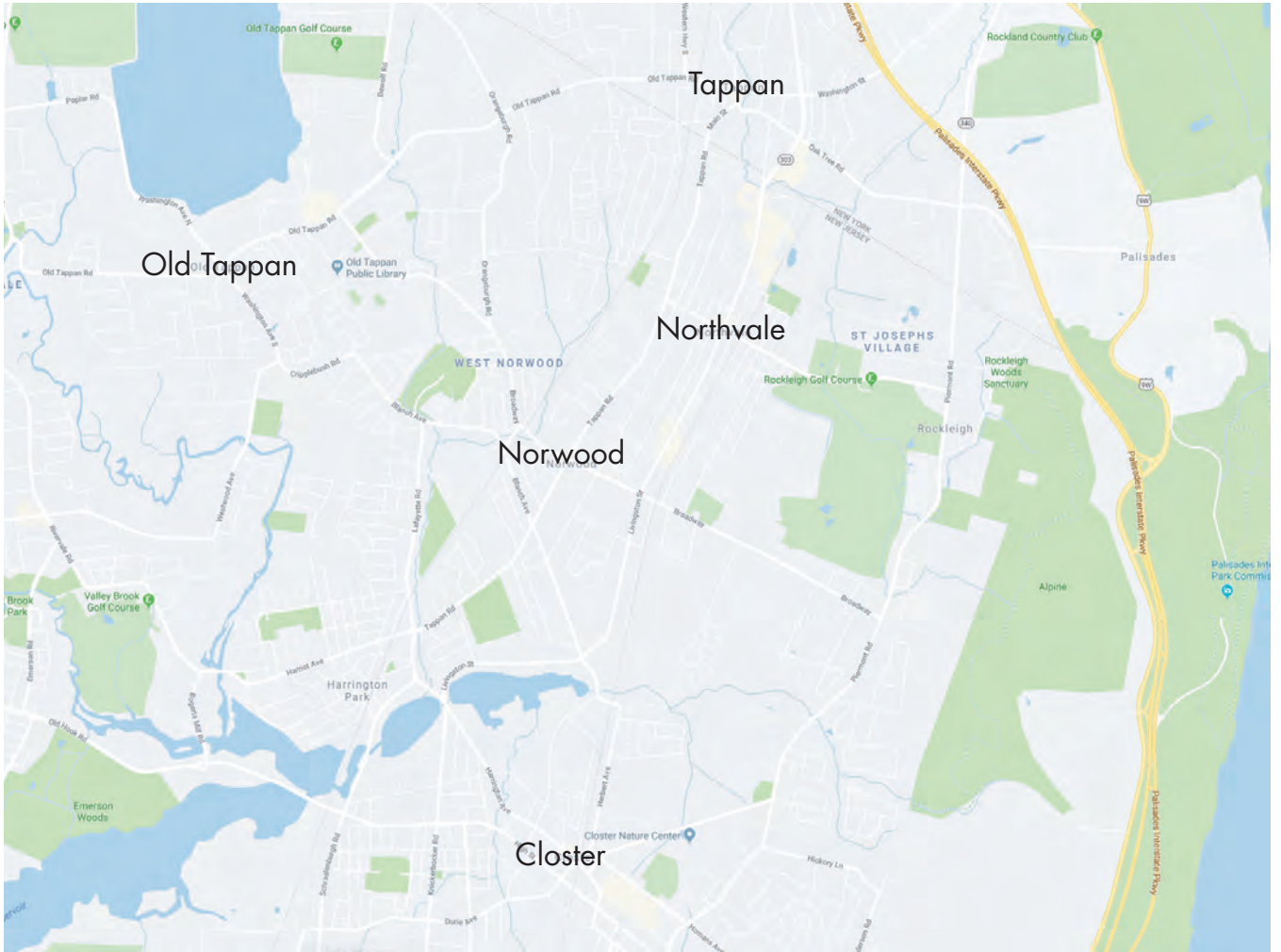
Signs exhibit strong force in the landscape. Especially in the urban environment, our eyes are so often led down the street by signs which bear commercial or regulatory messages. These signs collapse our perceptions of space, landscape and architecture to literate dimensions, capturing our attention without regard for our interest. The landscape so often becomes a reading experience.

Signs have been a point of contention in Flushing Queens New York, a topic which has been covered by the *New York Times* since about 2001. Originally complaints arose from the earlier White residents, who felt that Korean business signs' use of Hangul excluded them from Flushing's shopping district. Laws exist in New York State that require English on signs, but given that Korean businesses largely rescued Flushing from its derelict state in the 1980s, these laws go mostly unenforced. Additionally, the laws don't appear to address the issue of transliteration, which would qualify as readable English, but would be hardly any more understandable to the wider public. These language issues also cast wide net, and draw sympathy from those who recall similar discrimination with regard to Yiddish signs on the Lower East Side of Manhattan in the early 1900s, or contemporaneously, in Brighton Beach Brooklyn with its Cyrillic signs advertising the Russian businesses there.



The suburban environment of Bergen and Rockland counties, home to U.S. headquarters for the likes of Samsung, LG Corporation and Hanjin Shipping, is by contrast more relaxed and affluent. My selection of signs is not exhaustive. Sharp observers will note the absence of Korean church signs, and the many business signs that give no clue to their Korean proprietorship. I have not scoured the landscape for every Korean business, but have concentrated on the ones most visible on the main roads running through these counties. In another sense, it's the auto route I travel twice a week from my home in Manhattan, and these signs greet me along the way.

The requirement for inclusion in the catalog was the display of Korean characters (Hangul), or transliterated Korean that either named or described the business. Local U.S. commercial properties, building practices and sign fabrication methods are certainly different in character from those in Korea, and it is in the use of the Korean language on signs that sets the businesses in this catalog off from the rest. This is—to my mind—the strongest mark of Korean culture on this North American suburban landscape.



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Pulmuone Wildwood Incorporated  
30 Rockland Park Avenue  
Tappan, New York 10983





Bulkwang Zen Center  
104 Route 303  
Tappan, New York 10983



Woori America Bank  
234 Closter Dock Road  
Closter, New Jersey 07624





Woo H T, CPA  
550 Durie Avenue  
Closter, New Jersey 07624



Woo "Michelle" Choi - Realty7 L.L.C.  
41.02260, -73.96055 Old Tappan Road  
Old Tappan, New Jersey 07675





Dr. Chung's Medical Office  
469 Livingston Street  
Norwood, New Jersey 07648



Bo Orthodontics  
269 Livingston Street  
Northvale, New Jersey 07647





Crystal Dental  
474 Livingston Street  
Norwood, New Jersey 07648

Wee's Physical Therapy & Pain Clinic  
474 Livingston Street  
Norwood, New Jersey 07648





ARTCOM Art School  
450 Livingston Street  
Norwood, New Jersey 07648



Beautiful Hair Club  
463 Livingston Street  
Norwood, New Jersey 07648

One Art Studio Art School  
463 Livingston Street  
Norwood, New Jersey 07648





Ewha Music School  
3 Lewis Street  
Closter, New Jersey 07624



Hyun Music School  
251 Closter Dock Road  
Closter, New Jersey 07624





Tae Poong Tae Kwan Do  
216 Old Tappan Rd  
Old Tappan, New Jersey 07675





Yong In Elite Tae Kwan Do  
553 Livingston Street  
Norwood, New Jersey 07648

To Sok Chon Korean Food Specialists  
559 Livingston Street  
Norwood, New Jersey 07648



Sae Shim Kumdo Academy  
540 Livingston Street  
Norwood, New Jersey 07648





Kumdo Academy Sung Moo  
570 Piermont Road  
Closter, New Jersey 07624



Poochie Pet Spa  
463 Livingston Street  
Norwood, New Jersey 07648





deWet Water Supplier  
565 Livingston Street  
Norwood, New Jersey 07648

Jeong Beauty Salon  
567 Livingston Street  
Norwood, New Jersey 07648





Nou Belle Collections  
466 Livingston Street  
Norwood, New Jersey 07648

Lucy Hair  
464 Livingston Street  
Norwood, New Jersey 07648



Forever Young Cosmetics  
463 Livingston Street,  
Norwood, New Jersey 07648





KaKa BoKa Beauty Salon  
257 Closter Dock Road  
Closter, New Jersey 07624





Hye Kim Hair  
536 Livingston Street  
Norwood, New Jersey 07648



Dong Yang Barber Shop  
570 Piermont Road  
Closter, New Jersey 07624





BoBo's Hair Salon  
247 Closter Dock Road  
Closter, New Jersey 07624



New Hair Event Salon  
227 Closter Dock Road  
Closter, New Jersey 07624





Kahee Beauty Salon  
570 Piermont Road  
Closter, New Jersey 07624



Woori Mart Supermarket  
206 Pegasus Avenue  
Northvale, New Jersey 07647





[Um Ni] Umny Market  
571 Livingston Street  
Norwood, New Jersey 07648



Doorebak Caterers  
218 Closter Dock Road  
Closter, New Jersey 07624





[Nulboneh Banquet] Young's Foods  
461 Livingston Street  
Norwood, New Jersey 07648



Dduk Bo Ne  
563 Livingston Street  
Norwood, New Jersey 07648





Gateaux Bakery and Café  
570 Piermont Road  
Closter, New Jersey 07624



Yedang Traditional Confections  
570 Piermont Road  
Closter, New Jersey 07624





Cocohodo Walnut Pastry Café  
255 Closter Dock Road  
Closter, New Jersey 07624



Tappan Sushi & Sashimi  
205 Oak Tree Road  
Tappan, New York 10983





Ewha Won Chinese Korean Restaurant  
570 Piermont Road  
Closter, New Jersey 07624



Go Ba Woo Korean Barbeque  
4 Route 303  
Tappan, New York 10983





Spring Korean Restaurant  
221 Closter Dock Road  
Closter, New Jersey 07624



Garden [Banquet] Kitchen Restaurant  
542 Livingston Street  
Norwood, New Jersey 07648





Hwe Sarang Sushi  
209 Closter Dock Road  
Closter, New Jersey 07624

Kulpi Chicken Restaurant  
211 Closter Dock Road  
Closter, New Jersey 07624



Homung Nangmyun Cold Noodle House  
570 Piermont Road  
Closter, New Jersey 07624





Myung Ga Tofu Restaurant  
 570 Piermont Road  
 Closter, New Jersey 07624





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