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재외동포의



Window into Overseas Koreans



Special Article - Joint reception by OKA and Korean Political Science Association  
Special Feature - 2025 Hangeul School Teacher Invitational Training Program  
Overseas Korean of the Month - Park No-hak, pioneer of Sakhalin Korean Repatriation Movement

2025 Hangeul School Teacher Invitational Training Program





## Lessons from Israel's policy on diasporic youth

Today, more than 3.6 percent of the world's population resides abroad as part of a "diaspora." Advances in transportation have accelerated this trend, and the success or failure of a nation's development now hinges on how effectively it absorbs and utilizes the assets of the dispersed diaspora. From this perspective, Israel is a prime example of successfully leveraging the diaspora as a key national driver.

Israel's diaspora policy is implemented through the organic collaboration of four ministries and agencies: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Migration and Absorption, the Jewish Agency and the World Zionist Organization (WZO). Each agency, according to its role, shares responsibilities, such as educational planning, program operation, diplomatic liaison and settlement support, creating an efficient system.

Israel is implementing various policies to strengthen the identity of diaspora youth and encourage their return. The WZO designs the ideology and curriculum for Zionist education and teaches Jewish identity to youth worldwide. The Jewish Agency runs practical programs, offering free 10-day visits to Israel for Jewish youth aged 18-26 from around the world, as well as long-term stays of five months or a year, and providing on-site education.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs maintains official diplomatic channels with diaspora communities and is responsible for promoting programs and providing government support. Finally, the Ministry of Migration and Absorption provides practical support for young people who decide to return ("aliyah"), including language training and job placement, completing the chain of "identity cultivation → return → settlement."



Lee Kang-geun,  
president of the Korean Association in  
Israel (director of the Jerusalem  
Institute for Jewish Studies)

In addition, the Maccabiah Games, held every four years and often referred to as the "Jewish Olympics," play a crucial role in strengthening Jewish solidarity and communal identity, with Jewish athletes from around the world participating.

Thus, Israel utilizes the diaspora as a vital national asset through close collaboration among various institutions.

Israel's diaspora policy offers five important implications for Korea.

First, it strategizes identity as a national strategy. Israel designs its programs to maintain Jewish identity through a combination of Zionist education, visits and return (aliyah). Korea should


also develop its overseas Korean youth programs into a strategic flow of "maintaining identity → participation → contribution → return."

Second, organic interministerial collaboration is essential. A system is needed where relevant ministries, such as education, foreign affairs and returnee settlement, collaborate organically. The current interministerial disconnect must be resolved, and a virtuous cycle must be established.

Third, the formation of a global youth network is crucial. Like Israel, communities and networks should be maintained even after the visit, and connections with domestic youth should be expanded to include internships and entrepreneurship.

Fourth, the reverse dispatch of leaders is crucial. Like Israel's "Shlichim," Korea could dispatch youth leaders to overseas Korean language schools and Korean organizations to directly implement local identity education.

Fifth, policies linking returnees and settlement are crucial. Israel supports the actual return and settlement of returnees after the visit. Korea, too, should develop long-term settlement policies, including language education, scholarships and support for entrepreneurship.

The Israeli case demonstrates that the diaspora is not simply a migrant population but a key driving force for national development. Diaspora youth policies are a crucial factor in determining a nation's future competitiveness. Korea, too, should closely analyze and apply Israel's success story to strengthen ties with overseas Korean youth and explore ways to contribute to national development. 





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This magazine can also be viewed at <http://webzine.korean.net>



## Interaction with Korean political scientists from 10 countries

OKA hosts reception, inviting approx. 100 participants from World Congress of International Political Science Association.



Leading political scientists attending the 28th World Congress of the International Political Science Association (IPSA) pose for photos at the Sono Felice Convention in Gangnam-gu, Seoul, on July 14. From left: Kim Beom-soo, president of the Korean Political Science Association; Lee Tae-gu, professor at Harvard University; Lee Sang-duk, OKA commissioner; Pablo Onate, president of IPSA and professor at the University of Valencia, Spain; Kim Dal-joong, professor emeritus of the Department of Political Science and International Relations at Yonsei University (former president of IPSA); and Park Chan-wook, professor emeritus of the Department of Political Science and International Relations at Seoul National University.

The Overseas Koreans Agency (Commissioner Lee Sang-duk) hosted a meeting on July 14 to hold a discussion with overseas Korean participants of the 28th World Congress of the International Association of Political Sciences, often referred to as the “Olympic Games of Political Science.”

This biennial conference serves as a forum for political scientists from around the world to present and exchange research findings. Korea is the only Asian country to have hosted the event twice, having hosted it in 1997. The current president of the International Political Science Association (IPSA) is professor Pablo Onate of the University of Valencia, a public university in Spain.

This year's World Congress, held in Seoul, opened July 12 at COEX in Gangnam-gu, Seoul, and attracted approximately 3,000 members from 80 countries.

Among them, approximately 170 overseas Korean political scientists are active in over 20 countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan, China, Germany and Australia, including Lee Tae-gu, president of the American Political Science Association.

On July 14, the OKA hosted the “Official Reception for Overseas Korean Political Scientists” at the Sono Felice Convention Center in Gangnam-gu, Seoul, in collaboration with the Korean Political Science Association (KPSA, President Kim Beom-soo, professor of Seoul National University). The reception invited approximately 100 overseas Korean political scientists and researchers.

The purpose of this reception was to build a channel between overseas Korean political scientists and the Korean government based on their academic expertise, and to simultaneously explore



the theoretical foundations and practical expansion of policies for overseas Koreans.

The reception included opening remarks by KPSA President Kim Beom-soo, welcoming remarks by OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk, congratulatory remarks by IPSA President Onate and remarks by President Lee Tae-gu (professor at Harvard University) on behalf of the participants.

“Since taking office as the head of OKA last year, I have been deeply impressed by meeting excellent and dedicated compatriots from all over the world, and today is a continuation of that legacy,” Commissioner Lee said. “The OKA has identity, connectivity and mutual prosperity as its core vision, and preserving the identity of the Korean people is a key priority.

“Overseas Korean political scientists are contributing to the Korean communities in each country through their knowledge and experience, and as opinion leaders and educators who promote Korea in the international community, they play an important role in instilling a Korean identity in the next generation. We will continue to support overseas Korean scholars so that they can continue to play a meaningful role on the international stage.”

#### **‘Overseas Korean political scientists play role in instilling identity in next generation’**

“The activities of Korean political scientists are becoming more prominent around the world, and I am grateful to the OKA for hosting this reception,” Onate said.

Lee Tae-gu emphasized: “The history of the Korean diaspora is closely linked to Korea’s struggle for freedom from imperialism. Currently, Koreans in the United States remain vulnerable in areas such as citizenship and health insurance. The OKA is a vital government agency that can work alongside the Korean diaspora.”

Following the event, a luncheon and networking session provided a free exchange of opinions among overseas Korean political scientists. The event also included a viewing of the documentary ‘Hawaii Love Song’ (directed by Lee Jin-young), which musically portrays the lives and loves of Koreans who immigrated to Hawaii in 1902, giving space for the audience to also share their emotions around compatriot identity.

After watching the film, participants deeply resonated with the message of “Koreans in the world, living as part of Korea” and offered diverse perspectives on Korean identity and connectivity.

The OKA plans to use this reception as an opportunity to establish a foundation for an academic community of overseas Koreans through continued communication with overseas Korean political scientists, who are both policymakers and opinion leaders.

Ahead of this on July 13, President Lee Jae Myung stated: “We must prove that democracy provides food on our tables. Only then can we prevent anti-democratic forces disguised as growth from exploiting the cracks of inequality and poverty to destroy



OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk delivers a welcoming address at the reception for the 28th World Congress of the International Political Science Association held at the Sono Felice Convention in Gangnam-gu, Seoul, on July 14.

democracy.”

President Lee attended the Seoul General Assembly of IPSA held at COEX in Seoul on this day and delivered an opening address, saying, “As witnessed by the military coup d’etat that destroyed the people’s economy, democracy and the economy are inseparable.”

He criticized the Dec. 3 martial law incident as “an anti-democratic outrage stemming from a desire to annihilate the opponent and seize power in perpetuity, excluding dialogue and compromise.”

#### **‘K-democracy, a beacon and milestone for global democratic citizens’**

“However, the process of overcoming sedition demonstrated the true power of democracy,” Lee said. “The Republic of Korea has embarked on a magnificent ‘Revolution of Light.’ The resilience and democratic strength demonstrated by the Republic of Korea belong not only to Korea but to the entire world. K-Democracy is a beacon and milestone for global democratic citizens.

“We must confront the inequality and polarization that deepen conflict and division, and the political extremism that divides the people. The core of K-democracy is the thorough restoration of freedom, equality and solidarity.”

Even as he said this, he emphasized, “The freedom I speak of is not simply the freedom from interference or restrictions. In these times of crisis, where inequality, polarization and the raging waves of poverty are hindering growth, freedom is linked to the economy.

“What kind of freedom can there be in a society where you have to endure the blazing sun at work without a break room or where your place of residence determines your life and death? Freedom is a warm meal that satisfies hunger and a social safety net that saves one from the swamp of debt.” [장]

Lee Tae-gu, president of American Political Science Association  
**‘Deportation decisions based on race in U.S. could become  
serious human rights issue’**  
**‘2 presidents impeached in 10 years; I admire the dynamism of Korean  
democracy’**



In an interview with Yonhap News, Lee Tae-gu, president of the American Political Science Association, emphasized, “What’s more important is that the threat to survival, rather than political hope, drove the action.”

“There is a tendency for deportation decisions to be based on race and political affiliation, which can lead to serious human rights issues.”

Lee Tae-gu, president of the American Political Science Association and professor of humanities at Harvard University, who visited Korea to attend the Seoul General Assembly of the International Political Science Association (IPSA), said this in an interview with Yonhap News Agency on July 14 at a joint reception hosted by the Overseas Koreans Agency and the Korean Political Science Association at the Sono Felice Convention in Gangnam-gu, Seoul.

“This visit to Korea holds great personal significance for me,” he said. “I am deeply moved by the thought that the path my parents chose in emigrating to the United States before I was even born has led me here.”

**‘Political threats lead to participation; universal policies  
are urgently needed’**

Lee is a political scientist who taught for nearly 20 years as a professor of political science at the UC Berkeley School of Law. He has served as an advisory member of the U.S. Census Bureau, a senior fellow at the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Civic Engagement Coalition and an advisory member of the Korean American Political Alliance (KAPA), focusing on issues of race and ethnicity, immigration and identity, and political and social inequality.

He first attributed the long-standing low political participation of Koreans and Asian Americans to “the failure of both political parties to seriously consider Asians as voters.”

“While Whites, Blacks and Latinos are politically organized, there has been a strong perception that Asians, despite their growing numbers, lack political weight.”

**‘Political participation is not a choice but a matter of survival’**

However, he said, this trend has been shifting over the past 10 to 20 years.

“As Korean Americans have settled in the United States for a long time, they have come to recognize the need for securing political rights and influence beyond economic and educational success,” Lee said. “There is a growing awareness that political participation is a





Lee Tae-gu is interviewed by Yonhap News at a joint reception by the OKA and the Korean Political Science Association at the Sono Felice Convention in Gangnam-gu, Seoul, on July 14.

way to demonstrate a sense of belonging in a new society.”

In particular, the rise in hate crimes and racial discrimination since the inauguration of President Donald Trump’s administration in 2016 has served as a powerful catalyst for political participation.

“President Trump’s anti-immigrant policies and the rise of anti-Asian hate have heightened the sense of crisis. With the support of NGOs and local organizations, Korean American and Asian American voters are responding in an organized manner.

“It’s important to note that the threat to survival, rather than political hope, has driven action. Hate crimes have deepened the perception of the socially vulnerable and have fueled the spread of identity politics.”

### Wealth inequality in United States is very severe

Lee also emphasized the importance of universalist policies.

“Policies that affect everyone are paramount,” he said. “In particular, wealth inequality in the United States is so severe that democracy itself is threatened.”

He pointed out that the top 1 percent owns far more wealth than the bottom 20 percent and proposed wealth redistribution, universal health insurance and strengthened education policies as solutions.

He also expressed concern about the recent controversy surrounding Korean Americans facing deportation due to

insufficient documentation. Lee expressed concern, saying: “Approximately 200,000 Korean Americans are at risk of deportation, and this is not limited to undocumented immigrants. Deportation decisions tend to be determined based on race and political affiliation, which could lead to serious human rights issues.”

He suggested that diplomatic responses from the Korean government and organized action by the Korean community are necessary solutions. He emphasized that a joint response within an international alliance could be the solution, saying, “The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the OKA must actively intervene to establish protective measures, and local Koreans must also unite and strengthen their political power.”

### ‘We must be selective about information and accept it critically’

Lee advised the next generation to “take on events in the world with a broad perspective and accurate observations. The ability to select and critically accept information is key to maintaining a democratic society in the future.”

Finally, he praised Korean democracy, saying: “It’s hard to imagine the impeachment of two presidents in the past decade in the United States. I deeply admire the vitality and dynamism of Korean democracy.” 장

Hong Ji-yeon, professor at Univ. of Michigan

## ‘Overcoming legacy of authoritarianism is work in progress. If we don’t overcome it, we will regress’

### ‘Like ‘Parasite,’ highlighting Korea’s contradictions and tragedies is country’s true globalization’

“Institutional democratization does not automatically guarantee democratic representation. Without sustained efforts to overcome the legacy of authoritarianism, political regression could occur.”

Hong Ji-yeon (46), a political science professor at the University of Michigan, who visited her home country to attend the International Political Science Association (IPSA) Seoul General Assembly, spoke with Yonhap News on July 14 at a reception for Korean political scientists from around the world, co-hosted by the Overseas Koreans Agency and the Korean Political Science Association.

The IPSA General Assembly is often called the “Olympic Games of Political Science,” bringing together some 3,500 political scientists from over 80 countries to discuss recent trends in global politics and future challenges. Hong specializes in the politics and economics of authoritarianism, with a particular focus on East Asia.

### ‘Political parties’ representative nature is biased towards certain elites. Diversity must be embraced’

Professor Hong, who completed her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in political science and international relations at Seoul National University and her doctorate in political science at New York University, served as a professor in the Division of Social Sciences at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology for nine years, starting in 2014. She is currently conducting various research projects at the University of Michigan, including the legacy of authoritarianism, the long-term impact of political violence, and the factors determining elite behavior and government policy under authoritarian regimes. She also serves as a Korea Foundation’s endowed professor of Korean studies.

Hong offered a profound perspective on the “authoritarian legacy” that underlies Korean politics.

“Because our politics began with authoritarianism, it’s difficult to



Hong Ji-yeon, a political science professor at the University of Michigan, emphasized in an interview with Yonhap News, “If we fail to overcome the legacy of authoritarianism, political regression could occur.”





Hong Ji-yeon is interviewed by Yonhap News at a reception for Korean political scientists from around the world, co-hosted by the OKA and the Korean Political Science Association, on July 14.

define what constitutes a ‘legacy,’” she said. “The process of changing institutions, culture and practices since democratization is, in itself, a struggle against and a process of overcoming that legacy.”

She explained this is a process not only experienced by Korea but also by all countries transitioning from authoritarianism to democracy, a process that involves regression, progress, and twists and turns.

#### **‘The roots of Korean politics are still in struggle against authoritarianism’**

“While both Korean political parties have elite-centered party structures, the Democratic Party broadly embraces former student activists and established elites, while the People Power Party tends to be centered around certain bureaucratic elites, such as prosecutors,” she said. “In addition to the ideological representation of political parties, efforts are needed to embrace diverse social groups.”

Regarding the relationship between authoritarianism and economic policy during the industrialization period, she noted: “Unlike the West, Korea is a successful example of a state-led development model. While it transitioned to a private-sector-centered system after the IMF foreign exchange crisis, the West, particularly the United States, has recently strengthened its industrial policy again, embracing the Korean model as a subject of study.”

She added that the recent U.S.-China economic war can also be

viewed as part of the restructuring of a state-led international political and economic system.

Regarding the globalization of Korean studies, she said: “It is clear that Korea is receiving attention as a country that has achieved both economic and democratic success, but the goal of Korean studies should not be mere boasting. As the movie ‘Parasite’ showed, true globalization of Korea is also about highlighting the country’s contradictions and tragedies.”

#### **‘Going beyond K-culture, the globalization of a deeper mode of Korean studies is necessary’**

“Expanding digital archives will further enhance the accessibility of Korean studies research,” she said. “Expanding materials with English explanations is crucial.”

She saw a clear positive impact of the K-culture craze on academic Korean studies. The influence of Korean culture leads to increased interest in Korea, which in turn leads to investment in and interest in Korean studies.

Hong emphasized that the next generation of Korean studies scholars “already possess exceptional linguistic sensitivity, a strong mindset and an interest in a wide range of topics. They are well-equipped to communicate and contribute to the global academic community.”

At the IPSA Seoul General Assembly, she presented on the topics of “The Impact of the Saemaul Movement on Rural Voting Patterns during Korea’s Democratization Process” and “Polarization and the Regression of Democracy.” 장

## Hangeul School Teacher Invitational Training Program concludes, 'Reviving educator pride'

## Teachers from 46 countries respond enthusiastically to AI-based lesson design and multicultural education field experience program

OKA Commissioner Lee: 'We will make Hangeul schools into places students wait to visit all week'



The 2025 Korean Language School Teacher Invitational Training, which drew a unanimous consensus that it “rekindled pride and a sense of mission as educators,” concluded with a completion ceremony at Songdo Convensia in Incheon on July 19.

Hosted by the Overseas Koreans Agency (Commissioner Lee Sang-duk), the training brought together 234 Hangeul school teachers from 46 countries. They participated in various programs, including the inaugural “AI-based Korean Language Teaching Workshop.”

The completion ceremony included a highlight video of the weeklong training session, presentations by regional representatives, awards for excellence from the “What does Hangeul school mean to me” postcard writing event, certificates of completion, and group and “Life 4 Cuts” photos.

**Event held under theme of 'Writing in Hangeul and Connecting with the Heart'**

Kim Jun-hwan, a teacher at Madagascar Hangeul

School, said, "This training program was a valuable opportunity to renew my sense of mission as a teacher responsible for identity education for overseas Koreans and to share experiences with colleagues from around the world who are walking the same path."

Kwon Young-nam, a teacher at Amsterdam Korean School, said: “It was a time when I deeply felt the bond and connection with my home country, including to the OKA, which hosted the training. The AI-based lesson design and hands-on experience with multicultural education were particularly beneficial.”

In a postcard writing event for participants, principal Jeong Gyeong-seon of Reading Korean School received an award for excellence with her message: "To me, the Hangeul school is a community garden. It's a place where parents, teachers and local Koreans come together to watch the next generation of overseas Koreans grow."

This year's training program consisted of 16 programs, including a special lecture on "Hangeul Education in the Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea," as well as workshops on teaching Korean speaking and writing at different levels, lectures on teacher well-being, playful learning to enhance their classes and a tour of the National Museum of Korea's exhibition halls.

The participants who drew attention at this year's Hangeul School Teacher Training were 17-year-old student teachers Yoo Ha-neul and Ha-byeol,





A total of 234 teachers from 46 countries who participated in the 2025 Hangeul School Teacher Invitational Training Program held at Songdo Convensia in Incheon on July 14 pose for a group photo (L). OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk delivers remarks at the opening ceremony.

siblings from Hawaii. Introducing themselves as student teachers at Hangang Church, Yoo Ha-neul shared her own Hangeul story in a clear voice, saying, “Every time I explain Korean names, my surroundings become a little Hangeul school for a moment.”

Born in Washington, Yoo currently resides in Hawaii, where the world’s first Hangeul school was established. She works as an assistant teacher at the newly established K-Hangeul School.

### 17-year-old assistant teacher Yoo Ha-neul says, ‘Hangeul school is seed of identity’

“The Hangeul school is the ‘School of the Republic of Korea,’ the country of my loving mother and respected father,” Yoo Ha-neul said. “The many overseas Korean students who are losing their Korean language skills desperately need the help of their teachers.”

Yoo’s younger brother, 15-year-old student teacher Yoo Ha-byeol, also said: “I can read, listen to and write Korean well, but speaking it is difficult. I want to learn more at Hangeul school and help my grandparents, who struggle with English.” He also expressed his aspiration to introduce Korean culture to his peers through K-dramas and K-pop.

The siblings’ presentations were imbued with their love for the Korean language and their concerns about the Korean identity.

Principal Cho Young-ae, who has volunteered at a Hangeul school for 37 years and was the longest-serving teacher among this year’s participants, said, “I hope this training will rekindle our passion and provide the strength to return to the classroom.”

At the opening ceremony, Heo Tae-gyun, a professor of the Department of Psychology at Korea University, delivered a special lecture titled “The Heart of Koreans Who Created the Republic of Korea.” This lecture offered a new perspective on identity education, drawing an enthusiastic response from the participants.

Furthermore, students from the Korea National University of Arts’ Traditional Arts Department performed “Arariyo” and “Beautiful Things in the World” for the teachers, enlivening the welcoming atmosphere.

“The Hangeul school is not simply a place to teach the Korean language but also a place to teach Korean culture and historical identity,”

Commissioner Lee emphasized at the completion ceremony. “I will do my best to make this a fun weekend school that young students will eagerly await for the whole week.

“I am glad that everyone completed their schedule in good health despite the continuous rain. I look forward to seeing you again in good health.”

### First lady Kim Hea Kyung: ‘Teachers provide deep connection between homeland and overseas Korean community’

During the training period, the OKA held meetings with local officials and teachers to listen to their voices and plan to reflect them in future education policies that foster the identity of overseas Koreans.

Meanwhile, at the opening ceremony of the invitational training program held July 14, first lady Kim Hea Kyung, the president’s wife, sent a congratulatory address to encourage the participants.

“Teaching Korean to overseas Korean children in a distant country goes beyond language education,” Kim stated in her video message. “It fosters an understanding of our culture and conveys our identity. The weekend Hangeul school goes beyond simple language education and serves as a framework that helps children grow with pride as Koreans.”

In particular, she said: “I express my respect to the teachers at the Hangeul School, who, in small classrooms in unfamiliar lands, create miraculous experiences where children connect with the emotions of our people through language. We will remember the dedication and hard work of the Hangeul school teachers who have deepened the connection between the Republic of Korea and the overseas Korean community.” 장

## Rewarding work of 37 years as guardian of Korean language Cho Young-ae, principal of Waverley Hangeul School in Australia

**‘Immigration began with love; Hangeul school has become my life’  
‘Hangeul school is cradle of education about roots; I’m proud of my students who have  
become teachers’**



Principal Cho Young-ae of Waverley Hangeul School in Australia

“It’s difficult to single out the most rewarding moment from my time at the Hangeul school. Every moment has been rewarding, which is why I’ve been able to continue steadfast on this path for 37 years.”

At the opening ceremony of the Hangeul School Teacher Training Program hosted by the Overseas Koreans Agency at Songdo Convensia in Incheon on July 14, Cho Young-ae (61), principal of Waverley Hangeul School in Australia, spoke these words as she reflected on the past 37 years in an interview with Yonhap News.

Principal Cho, who holds the longest tenure among overseas Hangeul school teachers, has journeyed far

and wide in pursuit of love, establishing herself as a “guardian of the Korean language.”

### In her youth she chose Australia over Austria to study abroad.

During her college years, she experienced an unexpected breakup when her boyfriend emigrated to Australia with his family. A chance reunion led her to decide to immigrate to Australia upon graduation.

“I gave up my dream of studying abroad in Vienna, Austria, and boarded a plane to Australia at a young age with tears in my eyes. Adapting to a new environment wasn’t easy, but now, my life is all about my work at the Hangeul school.”

After settling in Melbourne, Australia, she began teaching at a Korean language school in 1988. In 1991, she founded Waverley Korean School to serve around 20 students. Since then, the school has grown into one of Australia’s leading Korean language schools, with over 300 students.

“The Hangeul school is not simply a place to teach letters but a cradle of education in our roots that fosters identity,” Cho said. “I gain energy and a deep sense of accomplishment from seeing children learn about history and culture and develop a sense of pride. It’s a source of pride to see my students become Hangeul School teachers.”

### ‘Teachers teach with their eyes’: Cho’s philosophy

As president of the Australian Korean Musicians Association, she utilizes her major in composition to conduct the school’s children’s choir. Last year, the choir donated \$6,000 in proceeds from a concert to help Ukrainian children.

“Although the school’s finances are limited, the children were excited to participate in the cause of helping their peers suffering from war,” Cho said.

She is also planning a concert for July 27 for veterans at the Australian War Memorial to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Korean War.

“For 37 years, I’ve never missed a Sunday class, so I haven’t been able to take a family trip on the weekend,” she said with a laugh. “It got to the point where my husband said, ‘You’ve gone crazy about weekend school.’”

She emphasized that the most important thing in running a Korean language school is “making students love the school and teachers so that they want to attend.”





Principal Cho Young-ae delivers a welcome speech on behalf of the participants at the opening ceremony of the Hangeul School Teacher Invitational Training hosted by the Overseas Koreans Agency at Songdo Convensia in Incheon on July 14.

“Don’t try too hard to be perfect. Creating a school where children enjoy coming to school is more important than outstanding classes. That’s the starting point in the role of a teacher,” she said.

Waverley Korean Language School encourages voluntary participation from students by offering extracurricular activities like taekwondo, football, K-pop dance and choir.

“It’s heartwarming to see even children who once hated learning Korean arrive early because of their extracurricular activities,” she said.

“A Hangeul school is a space created by teachers,” Cho said. “What’s more important than the classroom environment is the teacher’s gaze and sincerity. Except for the COVID-19 pandemic, the past 37 years have been precious times full of gratitude. The trust of parents who entrusted their children to us and the dedicated efforts of our teachers have been a huge driving force.”


### Using her background in composition to conduct children’s choir.

Her life, embarking on the path of immigration in pursuit of love and then

dedicating her life to teaching Korean, demonstrates how Korean as a language plays a vital role in connecting the Korean people’s soul and identity in the overseas Korean community.

She actively utilizes the “Study Korean” content on the OKA website in her classes, and she also noted that the many teaching materials available for children were a great help to her.

Finally, the principal left a message for Korean youth around the world: “No matter where you live, you are precious beings with Korean blood. Be proud of who you are. I hope you will never be discouraged and, with your passion for learning, become people who create a better world.”

Thanks to dedicated overseas Korean teachers like principal Cho Young-ae, Hangeul is taking root firmly in many places around the world. 



The Waverley Hangeul School Choir performs the Korean and Australian national anthems under the direction of principal Cho Young-ae at the Korea Festival at Federation Square in Melbourne, Australia, on May 25.

## ‘Korean language education is my calling’ Baek Kyung-sook, principal of Arsenyev Hangeul school

28 years in foreign land of Russia: ‘planting seeds of Korean language and culture’  
Experiment with state-owned kindergarten; only collaborative model in Russia

“Teaching Korean language and culture itself brings me immense happiness and gratitude. I believe it is a calling from God.”

Baek Kyung-sook (66), principal of the Arsenyev Hangeul school, who has taught Korean for 28 years in Vladivostok and other regions of Primorsky Krai, Russia, calmly expressed her sense of duty and pride as an educator throughout an interview with Yonhap News.

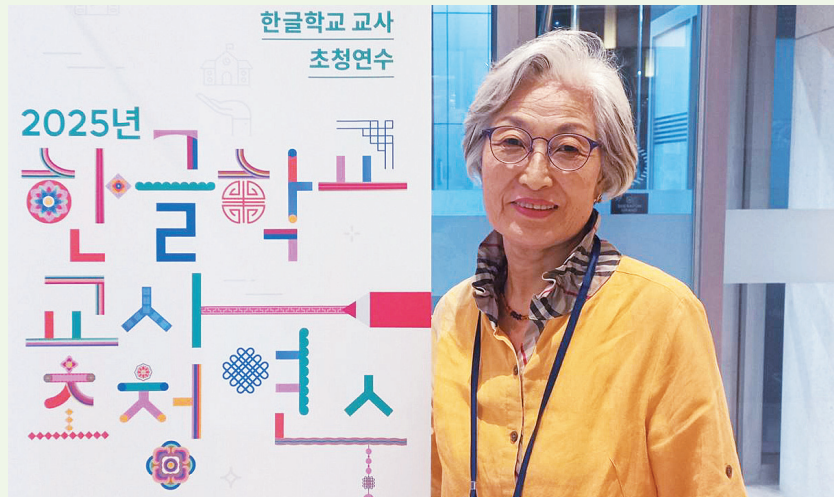
Baek, who attended the 2025 Hangeul School Teacher Invitational Training hosted by the Overseas Koreans Agency, which opened at Songdo Convensia in Incheon on July 14, calmly discussed her sense of duty and pride as an educator who has taught Korean for the past 28 years in various regions of Primorsky Krai, from the process of establishing the Hangeul school to her efforts to spread Korean culture, as well as her dreams for the future.

The Arsenyev Hangeul school was born under challenging circumstances from the beginning. The Consulate General of the Republic of Korea in Vladivostok supported the school's establishment, and the Arsenyev Koryo-saram National Cultural Autonomy Association appointed Baek as the principal. Baek, as a Russian citizen, a former teacher at a local Russian school and married to a local person, was the perfect candidate to lead the school.

One of the school's most unique achievements is its collaboration with state-run kindergartens. Currently, approximately 100 children in four classes at the local state-run kindergarten are learning Korean. It is the only Korean-language specialist kindergarten in all of Russia.

“During the Lunar New Year celebration, we hosted programs where children experienced wearing ‘hanbok,’ bowing to each other, and playing traditional Korean games. The response was overwhelmingly positive. The kindergarten director asked me to formally teach Korean to the children,” she said.

An interesting feature is that youth classes of the



Baek Kyung-sook, principal of the Arsenyev Hangeul school in Russia

Hangeul school participate in this kindergarten class as “practicing teachers.”

“As I taught kindergarteners with a sense of responsibility, my Korean language skills improved rapidly and my confidence grew,” Baek explained.

### COVID-19 brings turning point, expansion to online classes

COVID-19 presented both a crisis and an opportunity. Principal Baek boldly transitioned the Hangeul school to operating online. While there were many concerns, the results were remarkable.

“People who previously had difficulty commuting due to living in remote areas are now able to take Koryo compatriot youth and adult classes online. This has become an opportunity to overcome regional limitations.”

Currently, kindergarten classes continue to be held in person, while youth and adult classes are conducted online. In addition to regular classes, an integrated cultural class is held once a month, allowing all generations to learn about Korean culture and history together. Baek emphasized, “This activity plays a significant role in fostering mutual understanding and a sense of community.”

The Korean Culture Experience Camp, held every summer, is a valuable event open to youth and adult Koreans who have studied Korean for more than two years. Support and cooperation are provided by the Consulate General of the Republic of Korea in Vladivostok, the Korean Education Center,





Principal Baek Kyung-sook explains the New Year's bow to students dressed in "hanbok" at the Arsenyev Hangeul school during the Lunar New Year holiday.

the Korea Tourism Organization Vladivostok Branch and the Korean Association of Primorsky Krai in order to provide a hands-on experience of diverse Korean cultural content.

Baek expressed words of gratitude, saying: "During our March 2019 Korean Culture Experience program, our students were even able to enjoy admission to Lotte World thanks to the Korea Tourism Organization. The children loved it."

### 'Korea's son-in-law, Russia's daughter-in-law'; role as a private diplomat

When then President Moon Jae-in and then Prime Minister Lee Nak-yeon visited Vladivostok, Russia, in 2017 to attend the Eastern Economic Forum, Baek acted as a representative for overseas Koreans and presented activities at a forum for overseas compatriots. She garnered attention as a representative of the Korean community, dubbed "Korea's son-in-law, Russia's daughter-in-law."

She is enough of a focus of attention that her 2007 acquisition of Russian citizenship earned prominent coverage in the local media, and has effectively served as a "civilian diplomat" promoting Korea within Russia.

"Even the Consulate General's image of Koreans improved thanks to the newspaper articles," she said.

Baek's active work was also widely covered in local newspapers and television in the Primorsky Krai region.

"The greatest reward is that the previously divided Koryo-saram associations of Arsenyev city have united through the Hangeul school," she emphasized.

Last November, a state-run kindergarten opened featuring a Korean cultural museum tailored to the needs of young children, thanks to donations of museum furniture from a Korean businessman in Primorsky Krai and collections from the consulate, educational institutes, Korean residents and Korean acquaintances.

### 'It has been greatly rewarding to unite divided Koryoin associations'

Baek shared her expertise with 234 Korean language teachers from 46 countries during the training program after the Arsenyev Hangeul school was

selected as a model for excellence.

"I've walked this path with the goal of planting the seeds of Korea," Baek said. "There were tears at times, but when the children write and speak Korean, I feel like all my hard work is worth it. Running a Korean language school is not just about education; it's also about communicating with relevant organizations in the region, building trust and actively engaging in exchanges."

At the age of 32, she suffered a cerebral infarction and was on the verge of death, unable to do anything. After recovering a year later, she said she is living a second life.

"I majored in early childhood education, social education and Korean language education, and I'm also a certified social psychological counselor," she said. "I'm pouring all my knowledge and experience gained from studying various fields into running the Hangeul school. My belief is to share what I have and what I can do with those in need and do my best."

Baek expressed gratitude for the Overseas Koreans Agency's selection of Park No-hak, who spearheaded the repatriation of Koreans from Sakhalin, as the July Overseas Korean of the Month.

"The monthly project honoring overseas Koreans who have contributed to the development of their homeland will lend great strength to the 7 million overseas Koreans," she added.

Concluding the interview, Baek cautiously expressed her hopes.

"I wish our Hangeul school could have a classroom of its own, even if it was just a small space. My lifelong dream is to create a 'Korea-Russia Friendship and Cultural Center,' where Korean and Russian children can learn Korean together in a safe environment and experience Korean culture together." 🇰🇷🇷🇺

## Former Chairman Park No-hak, pioneer in Sakhalin compatriots' repatriation movement

Led repatriation movement in Japan; through 'Park No-hak Register' raised awareness of the presence of around 7,000 Sakhalin compatriots  
Leading exchanges through letter brokering and family reunions; laying foundation for institutionalizing permanent repatriation

The Overseas Koreans Agency (Commissioner Lee Sang-duk) has selected Park No-hak (1914-1988), former president of the Return of Detained Sakhalin Koreans Association, as its July Overseas Korean of the Month. He spearheaded the repatriation movement for Sakhalin Koreans and dedicated himself to achieving reunions of separated families.

Born in 1914 in Chungju, North Chungcheong Province, Park was forcibly mobilized to Sakhalin in 1943 during the Japanese colonial period. Even after liberation in 1945, he remained detained there and was stateless. He then married a Japanese woman and returned to Japan in 1958, where he dedicated his life to raising awareness of the presence of Sakhalin Koreans and to the movement for their return to their homeland.

### 'Hope of a single letter'; opening the door to reunions of separated families

After settling in Japan, Park established the Return of Detained Hwa-tae (Sakhalin) Koreans Association, a repatriation advocacy group, at his one-room office. Using money earned from manual labor, he drafted petitions and submitted them to relevant organizations in Korea and Japan, actively engaging in the repatriation movement for Sakhalin compatriots.

He volunteered to act as a "postman," delivering letters written from Sakhalin to families in Korea for those who had been cut off from contact for years.

At the time, Korea and the former Soviet Union did not have diplomatic relations, making postal correspondence impossible. Therefore, former Chairman Park received letters from Sakhalin Koreans in Japan, and forwarded them to his eldest son, Park Chang-gyu, who lived in Korea, to deliver them to their families. Each of these letters, containing confirmation of life or death, updates on family members and hopes for their return, was a miraculous message.

### The postman for Sakhalin Koreans

As word spread among Sakhalin Koreans to "Ask Park No-hak



Park No-hak, former president of the Return of Detained Sakhalin Koreans Association

and he will find your family," the number of letters rapidly increased. Over 30 years, the former Chairman Park and his son delivered over 30,000 letters.

Former Chairman Park also created the "Park No-hak Register," which recorded the nationality, region and desired return status of Sakhalin Koreans, beginning in the mid-1960s.

This register, which included approximately 7,000 names, was the first official record of Sakhalin Koreans' desire to return and served as crucial evidence in diplomatic negotiations among South Korea, Japan and the former Soviet Union regarding Sakhalin Koreans.

Furthermore, this register became a historical document that brought the existence of Sakhalin Koreans to light and served as a standard for prioritizing and verifying those eligible for permanent repatriation.



## 'A lifelong dedication to reuniting separated families'

Facing difficulties in repatriating Koreans from Sakhalin, he spared no effort in various ways, including requesting cooperation from Japanese politicians and other figures to facilitate reunions with their families in their homeland.

Working with Japanese politicians and others, he persuaded the former Soviet authorities and facilitated the first visit to Japan and family reunions for 10 Koreans from Sakhalin in 1984. This marked the first official departure of Koreans from Sakhalin since the war, sparking the beginning of the repatriation movement.

## Awarded Dongbaek Medal of Order of Civil Merit by gov't in 1988

Park personally selected invitees, arranged accommodations and provided interpretation services. His small "tatami" room became a tearful reunion space for separated families.

Later, considering the difficulties faced by families in Korea in reaching Japan, he proposed a reunion system where Koreans in Sakhalin would visit their homeland via Japan. In June 1988, a Japanese parliamentary delegation visited the former Soviet Union and requested this arrangement, and in September of that year, the first family reunions via Japan took place.

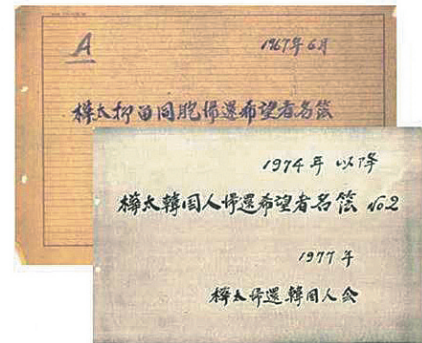
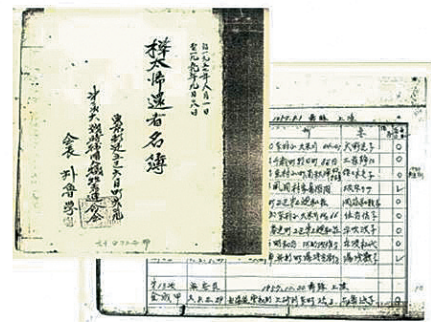
His efforts paid off, leading to the current Korean government's "Permanent Repatriation of Sakhalin Koreans Project," which continues to this day. In recognition of his contributions, the Korean government awarded him the Dongbaek Medal of the Order of Civil Merit in 1988.

## Park No-hak's room, the place of a tearful reunion

"Former Chairman Park No-hak was a true pioneer who brought awareness to the world of the existence of Koreans in Sakhalin who were forcibly taken away during the Japanese colonial period and never returned, and he comforted those who suffered during colonial rule and the Cold War," OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk said. "To honor his life, which left a mark on the history of Koreans in

Sakhalin, we are selecting him as the Overseas Korean of the Month."

The OKA identifies and announces a Korean compatriot who has contributed to the development of the Republic of Korea or to the advancement of the status of Koreans in their countries of residence as the Overseas Korean of the Month (March - Kim Pyeong-jin (1926-2007), former president of the Jeju Development Association in Japan; April - Hong Myeong-gi (1934-2021), former chairman of the M&L Hong Foundation; May - Im Cheon-taek (1903-1985), independence activist; June - Park Byeong-heon (1928-2011), former head of the Korean Residents Union in Japan). [장]



A list of those seeking repatriation compiled by Park No-hak (provided by the National Archives of Korea)



Letters and lists sent to Park No-hak by Sakhalin compatriots (provided by the National Archives of Korea)

## ‘If we don’t know our own language and culture, we are like a tree without roots’

**Victor Nam, third-generation Koryo-saram and Overseas Koreans Foundation scholarship recipient, president of Tashkent campus of Russian univ.  
‘Republic of Korea is my roots, and sharing its values is my mission; power to preserve my identity lies in language and culture’**

“The most powerful way to preserve our identity is to learn and share the Korean language and culture.”

Nam Viktor (49), president of the Tashkent campus of the Herzen State Pedagogical University in Russia, emphasized in a written interview with Yonhap News, “Korea is my roots, and sharing its values is my current duty and mission.”

Born in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, he is a third-generation Koryo-saram. He completed elementary, middle and high school at a local Koryoin school. In 1993, he enrolled in the Korean Language Education Department at the Nizami State Pedagogical University in Tashkent. Upon graduating in 1998, he was selected as a scholarship recipient by the Overseas Koreans Foundation, the predecessor of the Overseas Koreans Agency.

While studying in Korea, he completed his master’s degree at Kyung Hee University and later earned a doctorate in Korean language education from Seoul National University. He said that while he faced challenges early on in his studies, he solidified his academic foundation through interactions with Korean professors.

### ‘Focusing on what I loved opened doors’

After returning to Uzbekistan, he began his teaching career in Korean language education at his alma mater. In 2018, he was appointed the inaugural president of the newly opened Tashkent Bucheon University. While the presidency of a new university was challenging, he achieved three key objectives over the past six years.

“First, campus remodeling; second, student recruitment and departmental establishment; and third, faculty recruitment. The remodeling took three years, and later, we received additional land from the government, which allowed us to open an IT campus.”

The student body, initially 400, grew to 2,000. Nine departments were established, and faculty members traveled back and forth from Korea to build the university.

“We raised salaries to attract talented professors, which in turn



Nam Viktor, president of the Tashkent campus of Herzen Pedagogical University in Russia

led to increased student enrollment,” Nam said.

Following this, in July of last year, he was appointed president of Herzen University’s Tashkent campus by the Uzbek Prime Minister’s Office. Having studied in his home country on a scholarship from the Overseas Koreans Foundation, he has maintained a strong academic and educational background, ultimately becoming a leading educator in his home country.

### From scholarship recipient to chancellor of university: third-generation Koryoin’s educational leadership

Herzen University’s Tashkent campus is a joint Russian-Uzbek educational institution.



“Currently, we have about 1,000 students, and once the nine-story lecture hall and dormitory building are completed in September, the enrollment will increase to 3,000,” Nam said.

He expressed a strong commitment to establishing a Korean Language Department, saying, “We plan to pursue its establishment through bilateral consultations.”

Nam noted that Koryoin youth are currently facing many challenges in their career paths. He expressed concern, saying: “Koryo youth are living through truly difficult times. University graduation is not immediately leading to stable employment, and the international situation is unstable.”

He also emphasized the importance of experiencing Korean language and culture in our children’s education, citing it as a key to preserving their roots.

“If we don’t know your language and culture, we’ll be like a tree without roots. I learned Korean late in life, but I’m making sure our children learn it naturally from a young age.

“The Overseas Koreans Agency’s Motherland Invitational Training Program is a tremendously helpful program for education in our roots,” he said, encouraging active participation.

### ‘Don’t give up on what you love’

He said the Korean Wave is also raging locally. As president of Bucheon University, he personally planned active cultural events, including Korean speech contests and K-pop concerts.

“Students become interested in Korea through Korean Wave content and want to learn Korean,” he said. “Connecting this interest with academics is essential for effective education.”

He also expressed gratitude to the Overseas Koreans Agency (Commissioner Lee Sang-duk) and the Overseas Koreans Cooperation Center (Director Kim Young-geun).

“The invitation and scholarship programs for next-generation Koreans, as well as the training and dispatch of Korean language teachers, are providing a great boost to the overseas Korean community,” he said. “I hope that by increasing the budget, more of the next generation can connect with their homeland.”

Finally, he offered advice to the next generation of overseas Koreans.

“If you consistently pursue what you truly love and excel at, opportunities will surely come your way. Don’t hesitate and confidently forge your own unique path.” 📖



Bucheon University students perform at a K-pop concert personally planned by Nam Viktor during his tenure as president of Bucheon University in Tashkent in 2023.



The first graduation ceremony of Bucheon University in Tashkent



The Jaseng Medical Foundation presents scholarships to Bucheon University students, following a joint medical volunteer program between the Jaseng Medical Foundation and Bucheon University in 2023. Nam Viktor is third from the left.

## ‘Dreams come true when you don’t give up’

American football star Hines Ward visits Korea for first time in eight years, delivers message of hope to multicultural youth

‘My role going forward is to help multicultural children dream bigger’



American football star Hines Ward is interviewed by Yonhap News at the Bucheon City Museum in Gyeonggi Province on June 29.

“I’m a person who never gives up. Whether it’s the Super Bowl, or my own life, my mindset has always been the same.”

Hines Ward (49), a Korean American football legend and former NFL Super Bowl MVP who has returned to Korea after eight years, delivered a heartfelt message of encouragement to youth from multicultural and immigrant backgrounds in an interview with Yonhap News.

Ward had recently attended the “2025 Touchdown of Hope with Hines Ward,” an event held by the Pearl Buck Foundation Korea (Chair Ryu Jin) at the Bucheon City Museum’s Woollim Auditorium, and instilled hope and courage in multicultural youth.

He practiced basic American football moves with multicultural youth, participated in traditional games like “jegichagi” and “ttakjichigi,” and collaborated on a collaborative art project themed around dreams.

“The time I spent sweating and laughing with the children was so precious,” he said. “I hope these moments will leave a small source of courage in their hearts.”



Family members attend the event with Hines Ward. From left: Hines Ward’s mother, Kim Young-hee; Hines Ward; his daughter Jordyn Ward; wife Lindsay Ward; and mother-in-law, Jackie Georgalas.





Looking back on his own life, he confessed: “I experienced bullying and discrimination as a child because of my mixed race. I was always lonely and lost, not knowing who I was.”

He added that his mother’s support was a great strength, and his resolve to “never give up” shaped him into the person he is today.

“My mother endured much more difficult times than I did,” he said. “Some Koreans even sarcastically called her ‘coal mother.’ She came to the United States alone from Korea and raised me amidst prejudice. I have always respected her life, and I want to be someone who can share the love I received.

“To understand who I am, I had to first understand where I came from. My mixed-race identity and multicultural background are the most important assets that have shaped who I am today.”

Ward was born to a Korean mother and an American father and raised in the U.S. state of Georgia. Joining the Pittsburgh Steelers in 1998, he became a key player on the team as a wide receiver and made history by winning the 2006 Super Bowl MVP, becoming the first American of Asian descent to do so. He then led the Steelers to another victory in the Super Bowl in 2009 and completed an Ironman triathlon in 2013.

The Pearl Buck Foundation praised him, saying, “He has contributed significantly to enhancing youth self-esteem by practicing the values of inclusion and diversity from back in a time when multicultural awareness was lacking.”

### **‘I will help children from multicultural families dream bigger’**

Since 2006, he has supported mixed-race children’s visits to the United States through the “Hines Ward Trip” program with the Pearl Buck Foundation. He has also continued his social contribution activities, including hosting an event for multicultural children with the U.S. Embassy in Korea on



Hines Ward explains the fundamentals of American football to multicultural youth at the “2025 Touchdown of Hope with Hines Ward” event held at the Bucheon City Museum in Gyeonggi Province on June 29.



Hines Ward colors with multicultural children.

Children’s Day in 2010.

Ward explained: “My role going forward is to help children from multicultural families feel proud of themselves and dream bigger. This visit to Korea is part of a journey with ESPN, the American sports channel, to promote greater social change for multicultural families.”

He concluded by saying to the youth participants: “We are not alone. We are special. Never give up and believe in yourself.” 🇺🇸

## Koryo youth: 'I want to study like other Korean students'

OKA hosts meeting with Koryoin youth



At the "Dialogue with Koryoin Youth" meeting hosted by the OKA at the Overseas Koreans Welcome Center in Yeonsu-gu, Incheon, on July 4, Commissioner Lee Sang-duk (3rd from L, front row), along with representatives from Koryoin organizations and Koryoin youth, poses for a commemorative photo.

The Overseas Koreans Agency (Commissioner Lee Sang-duk) hosted a "Conversation with Koryoin Youth" on July 4 at the Overseas Koreans Welcome Center in Yeonsu-gu, Incheon, inviting approximately 30 Koryo youth.

The meeting was designed to hear about the difficulties faced by Koryoin youth who were born and raised in Russia and Central Asia (CIS) and then returned to Korea with their parents, and to reflect these experiences in policy.

The event was attended by Koryo high school students attending Rodemnamu International Alternative School (Chairman So Hak-seop) in Anseong, Gyeonggi Province, along with representatives from the Anseong Office of Education, the Asia Development Foundation, the Koryoin Global Network (KGN), the Kyung Hee University Industry-Academic Cooperation Foundation, the Koryoin Youth Education Council and the Green Umbrella Children's Fund.

The students in attendance openly shared their experiences of difficulties and discrimination across various areas, including language, culture, education and career paths, and called for practical support and institutional improvements.

"I want to attend school and study like other Korean students, but I often feel intimidated by the unfamiliar environment and discriminatory attitudes," Kim Anna said.

Lee Seo-hyun, a graduate of Rodemnamu International Alternative School who now teaches there, said: "I faced many


challenges during the settlement process, but it was frustrating not knowing where to turn for help. It is a great comfort to be able to share our stories at a gathering like today."

The meeting on this day also presented recommendations for government policies. KGN Chairman Chae Ye-jin emphasized, "Korean language education must be further strengthened, as many students are seeking to settle in Korea."

Cho Nam-cheol, executive director of the Asia Development Foundation, added, "It is also necessary for Koryoin youth to actively engage in efforts to enhance their understanding of their ancestors' history."

Chairman So Hak-seop expressed his gratitude, saying: "I am grateful for the opportunity to directly convey the voices of Koryo youth to the government. I hope the government will develop practical measures to address various settlement issues."

OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk stated: "The OKA will continue to support Koryo youth so they can grow into proud members of the Republic of Korea. Based on the grievances shared today, we will develop policies that provide practical assistance."

Meanwhile, OKA's Policy Director Lee Ki-seong attended the "2025 First-Half Koryo Youth Education Cooperation Association Forum" held at Hoseo University in Asan, South Chungcheong Province, on July 11, and heard expert opinions on education and career support measures for Koryoin youth. 



## Choi Tae-seong delivers first lecturer as ambassador for OKA

‘Outreach education for understanding overseas Koreans’ conducted at Shinsung Middle School for Girls and Saeseogwi Elementary School in Jeju on July 14-15

Screening of ‘Hawaii Love Song,’ a film about immigration to the Americas; film’s director Lee Jin-young also attended



OKA Ambassador Choi Tae-seong gives a special lecture on “Outreach education for understanding overseas Koreans” at Saeseogwi Elementary School in Jeju on July 15.

“Starting with our immigration to Hawaii, overseas Koreans who have established roots all over the world are another protagonist of our history.”

Choi Tae-seong, a Korean history lecturer appointed as a public relations ambassador for the Overseas Koreans Agency (Commissioner Lee Sang-duk), concluded his first half of the year’s official activities with “Outreach education for understanding overseas Koreans.”

Choi, known as “Big Star Teacher,” concluded the first half of this year with “Outreach education for understanding overseas Koreans” lectures at Shinsung Girls’ Middle School on July 14, Saeseogwi Elementary School on July 15 and Shinheung Middle School in Suncheon, South Jeolla Province, on July 17.

This lecture explored the history of Korean immigration to the Americas, focusing on the documentary film “Hawaii Love Song” (directed by Lee Jin-young), which depicts the lives of Korean immigrants who left for Hawaii in 1903.


Choi described the lives of the picture brides in the film and the

hardships and settling-in period of the first generation of labor immigrants. He emphasized, “Overseas Koreans are an important group that is rarely discussed in Korean history education.”

Following the lecture, director Lee personally interacted with the students, sharing the film’s production background and the lives of Korean immigrants to the Americas, furthering their understanding.

Kim Ji-woon (3rd grade) from Shinsung Girls’ Middle School said, “It was beneficial to learn about the history of overseas Koreans that I hadn’t encountered in textbooks,” while Min Ha-won (6th grade) from Saeseogwi Elementary School said, “I drew courage from the pioneering lives of the picture brides.”

Choi previously appeared on a program on understanding overseas Koreans for civil servants on July 10.

Having appeared on various broadcasts, including EBSi’s “Lectures on Korean History,” KBS’ “History Journal That Day” and tvN’s “Naked Korean History,” he said, “I hope that through this program, students will feel closer and warmer toward overseas Koreans.” 

# Korean American Michelle Kang leads French professional football team of Lyon

### Leading Ligue 1 club's relegation appeal; drawing attention as innovator in women's sports.



Michelle Kang, a Korean American businesswoman and owner of several professional football teams

Michelle Kang, a Korean American businesswoman and owner of several professional football teams, has been named the new president of Olympique Lyonnais, a French professional football team.

The Associated Press recently reported, "Kang has been appointed president of the Lyon team, which has won the French professional soccer league Ligue 1 for seven consecutive seasons."

Kang, a former vice president and general manager of Northrop Grumman Infotech, a global defense contractor, founded Cognosante, a public sector health care consulting firm in Falls Church, Virginia, in 2008.

She is the daughter of former lawmaker Lee Yoon-ja, who contributed to the advancement of women's rights as a member of the 11th and 13th National Assembly. While attending Sogang University, she went abroad in 1981 to study and became a successful businesswoman.

After winning Ligue 1 for seven consecutive seasons, beginning in the 2001-2002 season, Lyon was relegated to Ligue 2 (the second division) the following season due to financial regulation violations.

After the resignation of Chairman John Textor, newly appointed Chairman Kang spearheaded the appeal against the relegation.

Kang acquired Olympique Lyon Feminine (France), the prestigious eight-time UEFA Women's Champions League (UWCL) champions, in February of last year. She previously served on Lyon's board of directors since 2023.

Kang, who is particularly focused on women's football, began with the acquisition of Washington Spirit of the National Women's Soccer League (NWSL) in February 2022 and since 2023 has been leading London City Lionesses of the England Women's Championship (2nd Division) and Olympique Lyon Feminine.

In July of last year, she also established Kynisca Sports International, the world's first multi-club global organization focused on professionalizing women's football.

In November of last year, she announced a record-breaking donation of US\$30 million over five years to the U.S. Soccer Federation's Women's and Youth Programs, stating, "We are committed to elevating the level of women's soccer on and off the field by providing female players with the support they need to reach their full potential and the professional support they deserve."

Forbes, an American business magazine, estimated Kang's wealth at US\$1.2 billion. 





# ‘I miss my hometown, Gunsan’; 91-year-old grandmother from U.S. sends handwritten letter

Mayor Kang Im-jun responds to heartbreaking communication from Korean American, enclosing travel brochure.



“I’ve lived in the United States for nearly 60 years, but I still miss my hometown, Gunsan, so much that it brings tears to my eyes.”

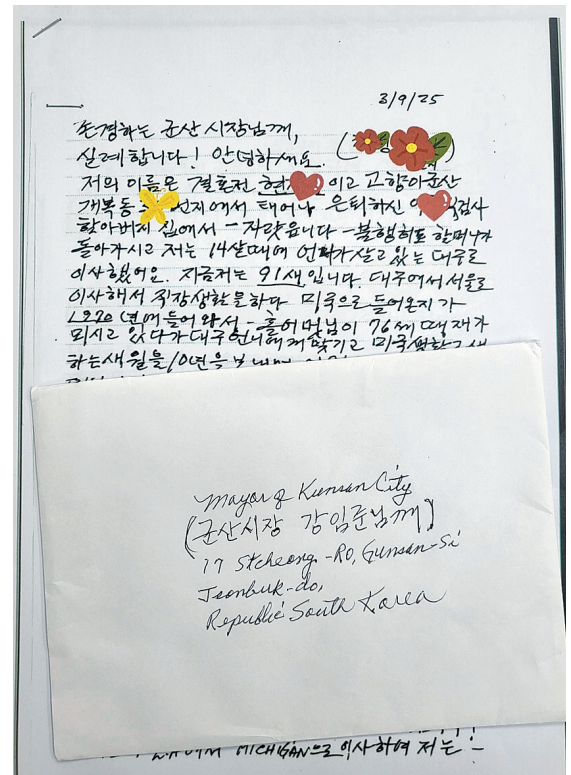
A 91-year-old Korean American woman, who left her hometown of Gunsan, North Jeolla Province, over 70 years ago, has delivered a deeply moving handwritten letter filled with longing. The protagonist of this story is a grandmother named Hyun Mo, who lives in Colorado.

Hyun sent a handwritten letter addressed directly to Gunsan Mayor Kang Im-jun in March, revealing that Gaebok-dong, Gunsan, was her hometown.

In the letter, Hyun stated: “I lived in Gunsan until I was 14, then moved to Seoul to work and immigrated to the United States in the 1970s. I’ve lived in the United States for nearly 60 years, but I still miss my hometown, Gunsan, so much that it brings tears to my eyes.”

Hyun expressed her longing for her hometown, saying, “After watching a performance by Gunsan native singer Kim Seong-hwan at the Gunsan Ggongdang Barley Festival on YouTube, I was reminded of my childhood memories,” and asked Kang about her elementary school friends.

As soon as the mayor received Hyun’s letter, he handwrote a letter of reply. Kang expressed his gratitude, saying, “I was deeply touched by the heartfelt sentiment you sent from a faraway land.” He also sent a booklet showcasing the beauty of Gunsan and tourist information materials.



A handwritten letter from a Korean American

Hyun responded to Kang’s letter in June of this year. She expressed her gratitude, saying: “I couldn’t be happier. Our people are truly warmhearted.”

She also sent a photo of herself and her family, along with a postcard depicting the natural beauty of Colorado, along with a reaffirmation of nostalgia for her hometown.

“The handwritten letter fostered a warm exchange between Gunsan and overseas Koreans who yearn for their hometown,” Kang said. “I will continue to strive to strengthen the pride and bond with our overseas Koreans in Gunsan through communication with our compatriots.”

## OKA's Events in July

July 4: Dialogue with Koryo-saram Youth

14: Joint reception by the OKA and the Korean Political Science Association

Opening ceremony for the 2025 Hangeul School Teacher Invitational Training Program

Outreach education for understanding overseas Koreans (Jeju)

19: Closing ceremony for the 2025 Hangeul School Teacher Invitational Training Program

## OKA Announcements

### Recruiting participants for 2025 World Korean Adoptee Convention

To be held in Incheon and Busan in Nov., applications accepted until Aug. 1, with total of 75 participants to be invited

The Overseas Koreans Agency is recruiting participants for the 2025 World Korean Adoptee Convention, which will be held in Incheon and Busan from Nov. 10 to 14 to help overseas adoptees restore their identity and strengthen their bonds with their homeland.

This year's convention is open to overseas adoptees aged 18 and older who are visiting Korea for the first time since adoption. A total of 75 participants will be invited. The application deadline is Aug. 1.

"This will be a meaningful opportunity for adoptees from around the world to experience Korean culture firsthand, share their stories with each other, and rediscover their identity and roots," the OKA stated.

The convention will begin with an orientation upon arrival. The second day will feature information sessions, an opening ceremony, a welcome luncheon and networking events with adoptee organizations.

The third day will feature a forum for leaders of each country and regional group discussions, followed by experiences with traditional Korean culture and industrial tours. The fourth day will feature volunteer activities and visits to institutions related to Korean history. The final day will conclude with a closing ceremony and farewell luncheon.

To apply for participation, participants must complete the two-step process: directly submitting the original application form to the Korean Embassy or Consulate General in their jurisdiction and emailing copies of the required documents to the OKA.

Applicants must submit the application form and self-introduction letter, as well as the following documents: ▲ Documentation release consent form, ▲ Liability waiver form,



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and ▲ Consent form for the provision and use of personal information. Additional support documents, such as vaccination certificates, may be attached if applicable.

The relevant embassy will conduct an initial review of the documents in July or August, and the OKA's review committee will make the final selection decision in August. Selected applicants will be notified individually, and applicants must book their own flights.

Applicants who are visiting Korea for the first time since adoption, who have not participated in the Korean government's homeland invitation program and who have a high recommendation ranking from the relevant embassy may receive preferential treatment in the selection process.

"We hope that this visit to the homeland will serve as an opportunity for adoptees to reaffirm their individual identity and strengthen the network of adoptees formed around the world," the OKA said.



# 산사태 국민행동요령

## 1. 일상 생활 중에

### 점검하고

집 근처 배수시설 등을  
점검하고 위험요인 발견 시  
시·군·구청 및 행정복지  
센터에 신고하세요



## 2. 산사태 발생 우려 시

### 대비하고

산사태정보시스템(PC),  
'스마트산림재난' 앱(스마트폰)  
또는 방송을 통해 산사태 예보  
발령 정보를 확인하세요



## 3. 산사태 발생 시

### 대피하고

산사태 방향과 멀어지는  
방향, 가장 안전한 높은  
곳으로 대피하세요



## 4. 산사태 발생 후

### 신고하세요

매몰자나 부상자가 있을 경우  
소방서(119)에 신고하세요



**산사태 막을 수는 없지만 피할 수는 있습니다**

산사태국민행동요령 관련 자세한 정보는  
산사태정보시스템, 국민재난안전포털  
또는 스마트폰 '스마트산림재난' 앱에서 확인하세요.

광복 80년

