

## ‘The hearts that write in Hangeul from abroad leave deep resonance’

Record number of participants with 2,467 entries from 61 countries; 12 winners, including  
3 Grand Prize recipients

OKA: ‘Horizons of Korean literature will expand by connecting globally through Hangeul’

Overseas Korean writers who have chronicled their lives in Korean while living in foreign lands have gathered together to share their stories. The Overseas Koreans Agency (Commissioner Kim Kyung-hyup) held the 27th Overseas Koreans Literary Awards ceremony on Nov. 19 at the Kyowon Tour Concert Hall on Cheonggyecheon-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul.

Twelve individuals, including the grand prize winners in the poetry, short story and essay categories, received awards at the ceremony. The event held special significance as it was the first time the OKA invited all winners to their homeland, creating a platform for literary exchanges.

“The useless time spent writing at the dining table late at night while my family slept saved me. I will continue to write honestly, one sentence at a time,” said Kim Hye-jin (Australia), who received the Grand Prize in the short story category, in her acceptance speech.

### For first time, all award winners invited to homeland

Kim Ji-hyun (U.S.), who received the Grand Prize in the Essay category, shared her thoughts: “When my voice grew faint in a foreign land due to the language barrier, the sound of my fingertips gathering ‘gosari’ ferns brought me back to myself. If my writing touches someone’s heart like light, that alone is enough. I dedicate this award to my mother’s memory.”

Park Tae-in, Grand Prize winner in the Poetry category, remarked: “It is deeply moving that compatriots from around the world can gather in one place through the common language of literature. As this is my first award, it feels like an even greater honor.”

Li Yong, a Chinese-born writer who received an honorable mention in the poetry category for “Apple-Pear,” introduced the origin of Yanbian’s apple-pear hybrid.

“Just as the apple-pear embodies dual characteristics, the identity of overseas compatriots also embraces two worlds,” he said, bringing tears to the eyes of attendees. “This award is not for me personally but a glory bestowed upon our generation of Yanbian compatriots and all those worldwide who have preserved



The “Conversation with the Author” event takes place at the 27th Overseas Korean Literary Awards.

our language and culture.”

Novelist Park Sang-woo, who has served as a judge for 16 years, remarked, “Every time I encounter the life trajectories of people worldwide through their works, I realize how narrow my own perspective has been.”

He diagnosed the current of diaspora literature as “an expanded world encompassing refugees, climate, economics and digital culture, moving beyond the stages of immigration and identity. Overseas Korean literature has great potential to become a stream of world literature.”

### Record-breaking 965 participants from 61 countries submitted 2,467 works

In his congratulatory address, OKA Vice Commissioner Byeon Cheol-hwan emphasized: “The Overseas Koreans Literary Awards reaffirm our ethnic identity, language and the power of literature. The very effort of writing in Korean overseas is a precious sentiment connecting them to their homeland and the Korean people.”

Participants unanimously expressed their hope in a joint statement, “This gathering will further strengthen the literary solidarity that is shared in the solitary journey of writing abroad.”

Launched in 1999, the Overseas Koreans Literary Awards annually honors winners to support the Korean literary creation



The ceremony for the 27th Overseas Korean Literary Awards takes place.

activities of the 7 million overseas Koreans worldwide and to discover and introduce outstanding literary works embodying the Korean identity.

Over its 27 years, it has produced 721 award-winning works, establishing itself as the “world’s only Korean language literary contest for overseas Koreans.” Notably, this year saw a record-breaking 2,467 entries submitted by 965 participants from 61 countries.

### Domestic literary figures invited; ‘Conversations with Authors’ also held

Following the 27th Overseas Koreans Literary Awards ceremony, the OKA hosted a reading of the winning works and also arranged a “Conversations with Authors” event featuring invited domestic writers. Following voice actress Yoon So-ra’s “Award-Winning Works Reading Session,” a special lecture by author Woo Han-yong was held, followed by a “Conversation with Authors” between authors Koo Hyo-seo and Park Sang-woo and the award winners. This led to a serious discussion on the future direction of overseas Korean literature.

Woo explained the concept of diaspora and life as a diaspora member, while Koo introduced a novel featuring a diaspora character. At this event, author Park Sang-woo emphasized, “Elevating our language into literature is the most meaningful way to preserve the Korean language.”

Particularly noteworthy during the conversation with the authors was the serious discussion on how far artificial intelligence (AI) can replace literature and how it should be utilized. Deep discussions unfolded on a wide range of topics, including the direction of literary creation in the AI era, the identity of diaspora literature and the limitations of the author’s experience.

### ‘AI writing lacks human consciousness; it is merely repeated plagiarism’

The first topic of conversation was the issue of AI-generated

creativity.

“AI is merely a tool that recombines existing novels; it cannot capture human consciousness and experience,” writer Park emphasized. “Sentences generated by AI may seem plausible at first glance, but most are closer to the rehashing of existing texts processed through machine learning. It is not pure creation but rather remains at the level of flat imitation.”

Author Koo Hyo-seo stressed the absence of literary consciousness in AI, stating, “If you ask ChatGPT for a poetry critique, it produces elegant language, but this isn’t accurate evaluation -- it’s closer to a data-based trick.”

The Korean literary world’s response also came under scrutiny. Writer Park raised the concern, “While newspapers use AI detection programs to judge the authenticity of works in their New Year Literary Contest, the accuracy is low. It is risky to base disqualification solely on AI usage.”

The use of AI in judging the Overseas Koreans Literary Awards was reportedly a topic of actual discussion. Writer Park, who served as a judge, stated, “We analyzed the grand prize candidates using a program, reviewed the percentages and discussed them. It’s an era-defining variable we cannot ignore or exclude.”

Meanwhile, the OKA organized events during the award-winning authors’ visit to Korea, including introducing the winning works at Seoul Library and visits to the Yun Dong-ju Literary Museum and Namsan Library, providing overseas Korean writers with opportunities to directly experience the cultural and literary scenes of their homeland.

The anthology of winning works, “2025 Window of Overseas Korean Literature,” is available on the OKA website ([oka.go.kr](http://oka.go.kr)). The audiobook can be downloaded via the download service guide available at Seoul Library and Namsan Library or directly from the download site ([buly.kr/6ii8yAD](http://buly.kr/6ii8yAD)). Videos of the awards ceremony and author discussions will be released via the OKA YouTube channel. 