



Window into Overseas Koreans



Special Article - U.S. adoptee reunites with birth family 40 years after genetic testing
 OKA supports stem cell transplants for overseas Koreans with blood tumors
 OKA to host 2,000 next generation Koreans for training in homeland this year

Policy in Focus - OKA launches Coming-to-Your-Home Comprehensive Civil Services
 OKA appoints 11 policy advisory committee members, professor Park In-gi as chairman

Current Issues & Topics - 62.8 pct turnout from overseas voters recorded for 22nd general elections





Create new Korean Wave with K-paper folding and promote world peace

Korea is represented by 7 million overseas Koreans around the world, promoting their homeland and its culture. In that sense, they are Korea's most valuable and appreciated civilian diplomats. Their integration into the mainstream societies of their host countries and their steady settlement in the country of residence raise Korea's international profile and demonstrate that they are growing in synergy with their homeland.

K-paper folding (Jongie Jugi) desperately needs the attention and support of overseas Koreans. Under the motto of "Creating a New Korean Wave and World Peace," K-paper folding is actively spreading around the world.

As a product of human civilization, eco-friendly paper symbolizes wisdom and peace. Paper folding is math, science and art. Dr. Wilder Penfield (1891-1976), a Canadian neurosurgeon and cerebral physiologist, once said, "The hand is the outside brain" and "To use the hand is to use the brain, and the handy man is the brainy man." Paper folding, which uses both hands, enhances brain activity, and talent in this can be extended to other important creative activities, such as technology, art, science, literature, crafts and computers.

In the 21st century's cultural and information age, the keyword that determines the future is creativity. Creating hundreds or thousands of different shapes through paper folding is the ultimate



Dr. Noh Young-hye,
president of the Paper Culture Foundation and the
World Paper Folding Federation

exercise of creativity, and it is also important for the next generation of overseas Koreans to cultivate their identity, creative personality education and the movement to restore humanity.

There are countries that use paper for doors, walls and ceilings, but Korea is the only country that uses paper sheets on the floor of a room. K-paper folding is a traditional cultural heritage that contains the heart and soul of Korea, the country with the world's greatest paper culture.

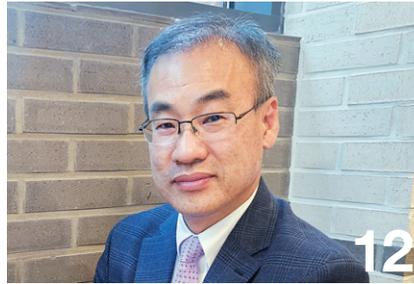
Koreans used to make "gokkal" (paper cones), the origami template, and wear them on their heads to make wishes, dance and sing. They would fold the gokkal one more time to make a paper boat and float it down a stream with their wishes. It was said that if you folded a lot of paper, you would become wiser, so people folded "ddakji," nicknamed "jihye-ji" (wisdom-ji), and would play "ggum-ddamukii" (dream picking), make shield kites and paper airplanes, and send them into the sky with their hopes.

Unfortunately, due to the 36 years of Japanese occupation and the Korean War, the excellent paper folding culture of our ancestors was not properly passed down and almost disappeared.

I have been leading the movement to revive and reinvent paper folding culture since 1987 and have trained over 300,000 K-origami instructors. I am working with pride and a sense of mission to help paper folding blossom into a part of K-culture around the world. One such activity was the creation of 80 million gokkal, which contain the Buddhist philosophy of "heaven, Earth and people" held up in humble prayer, which portrays the core one people value of "Hongik Ingan" (弘益人間), symbolizing the number of Koreans in the North and South and the number of overseas Koreans.

Let's contribute to the creation of a new Korean Wave and the promotion of world peace by actively utilizing Korea's excellent and ancient paper culture and K-paper folding for festivals and events at cultural learning centers, overseas Korean educational institutions, Korean Cultural Centers and Sejong Institutes, among others, around the world. 





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Publisher: Lee Key-cheol
Publishing Company: Overseas Koreans Agency
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YouTube: @OKAKOREA
Designed and edited by: Overseas Koreans Agency **Production:** Yonhap News Agency

The Overseas Koreans Agency is an external agency of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that conducts various policies and projects to support the rights and interests of the overseas Koreans around the world and their integration into mainstream society in their countries of residence.

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

U.S. adoptee reunites with birth family 40 years after genetic testing

Benjamin Park reunites with birth mother via video with help from OKA and others

A Korean who ran away from home at the age of 5 to find his mother and was deemed lost and subsequently sent for adoption to the United States has been reunited with his birth family after 40 years through genetic testing. Benjamin Park (Korean name: Park Dong-soo, age 45), a Korean adopted to the United States, met his biological family, including his mother, Lee Ae-yeon (83), via video on March 18 through the “Genetic Testing System for Overseas Adoptees Without Family and Friends,” a joint program of the Overseas Koreans Agency, the National Police Agency and the Child Rights Protection Agency.

Since 2020, the government has been implementing a genetic testing program through 34 overseas diplomatic missions to collect the genes of Korean adoptees who do not know their families and match them with the families of Korean missing persons. This is the fifth time a family has been found through the program.

According to the OKA, Lee briefly left Park and her four siblings in a large house in Gimhae, Gyeongnam Province, in 1980. The siblings disappeared after leaving the house in 1984 to look for their mother, and Park was taken in by the Korea Social Welfare Association, a shelter and adoption agency, and sent for adoption to the United States the following year.

While attending college in the U.S., Park first set foot on his native soil in 2001. He went to an adoption agency in the hopes of finding his family but found no clues to locate them.

Park returned to the U.S. but then returned to Korea in 2012, where, while attending a language school at Keimyung University in Daegu, he visited a police station to register his genes. Still, no match was found, and Park returned to the United States in 2016.

Meanwhile, Park’s brother, who was also living in South Korea, registered his mother Lee’s genes in October 2021, saying he wanted to find his two missing brothers. In August of the following year, there was hope that a family reunion might be possible, as the National Institute of Forensic Science and Investigation found that Park and Lee were most likely related.

However, Park lives in the United States and had no contact information other than the email address he used while attending a



Benjamin Park (on screen) and his mother, Lee Ae-yeon (5th from L), pose for a photo with family members and the officials who helped them, following their video reunion.

language school at Keimyung University. In response, the Jeju Police Department transferred the case to the Jeju National Police Agency’s Cold Case Investigation Team for an intensive investigation to determine Park’s whereabouts.

The investigation team confirmed Park’s past residences in the U.S. through cooperation with the Immigration and Foreign Affairs Service and by utilizing the Nuri communication network. The team also

worked with the Korean Consulate General in Chicago through the National Police Agency to determine his final location. In February, it was finally confirmed that Ms. Park was the biological mother of Mr. Lee through a second opinion by the Korean National Prosecutors’ Office.

Benjamin Park thanks South Korean government for helping him find his family

The National Police Agency organized a reunion between Mr. Park and his family and coordinated schedules, and the reunion finally took place. The reunion took place via video at the nursing facility where his mother was being cared for, as Mr. Park was unable to enter the country immediately and wanted to at least meet his family online first.

“The joy of being reunited with my family is indescribable. I am deeply grateful to the South Korean government for helping me find my family,” said Park, adding that his brother appealed to “help us find my sister Jin-mi, 47, who is still missing.”

“We will strive to help all overseas Korean adoptees who want to find their roots regain their identities through family reunification and feel that Korea still remembers them as important,” OKA Commissioner Lee Key-cheol said.

“We hope this case will serve as a catalyst for finding more missing children,” said Yoon Hee-geun, chief of the National Police Agency, and Jung Ik-joong, director of the Office for the Protection of Children’s Rights, in a joint statement. “After the reunion, we will actively support post-reunion services, such as name changes, family reunification and psychological counseling.” 장

OKA supports stem cell transplants for overseas Koreans with blood tumors

Distributed outreach materials to 51 overseas missions, 106 Korean associations worldwide

The Overseas Koreans Agency is promoting a program to support stem cell transplantation that offers hope to overseas Koreans with incurable blood tumors. Hematopoietic stem cells are mother cells that self-replicate and differentiate to produce blood cells, such as white blood cells, red blood cells and platelets, and are used to treat various blood cancers.

As part of the “Caring for Overseas Koreans” program, the OKA recently distributed brochures and other promotional materials on the “Overseas Korean Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation Support Project” to 51 overseas diplomatic missions and 106 Korean associations around the world.

This is a follow-up to the agreement signed with the Korea Marrow Donor Program (KMDP) in December last year to facilitate stem cell transplantation for overseas Koreans.

The promotional materials introduce the donor recruitment program and the transplant coordination support program, which provides counseling and sample collection during stem cell

transplantation between blood relatives of overseas Koreans and the patient treatment fee support program, which covers a portion of the stem cell collection fee for overseas Koreans.

“This will provide practical help to overseas Koreans who have had difficulties in treating blood tumors due to the low probability of human leukocyte antigen (HLA) matching between different races in their countries of residence,” OKA Commissioner Lee Key-cheol said. [\[창\]](#)



A flyer for the “Overseas Compatriots Stem Cell Transplantation Support Project”

OKA to host 2,000 next generation Koreans for training in homeland this year

Largest program ever; 8 one-week sessions

The Overseas Koreans Agency has announced it will invite 2,000 overseas Koreans to Korea for a training program this year, the largest in its history, to help the next generation, the future leaders of the Korean community, connect with their homeland.

The program, called the 2024 Overseas Korean Invitation Training Program, will target Korean youth and university students. The number of participants is 53 percent higher than last year's 1,307. The training will be held for 1,800 participants over six sessions in July and August and 200 participants over two sessions in January, during the winter break, for a total of eight one-week sessions.

The program is designed to provide the next generation of Koreans with the opportunity to experience political, economic, social, cultural and historical experiences and to understand Korea's development in order to build their Korean identity and increase their pride in their homeland. In particular, this year, it will add a program to experience Korea's political and economic development story and also provide education to foster global leadership through understanding Korean history, visiting historical sites, experiencing local culture and receiving global citizenship



A scene from the 2023 Overseas Korean University Students Motherland Training Program

education.

“The OKA is promoting various projects to foster the identities of the next generation and help them enter mainstream society,” OKA Commissioner Lee Key-cheol said. “We hope that the next generation will continue to expand opportunities to visit their home countries and grow into leaders of the Korean community through the training and grow alongside their home countries in harmony.”

Participants can apply to the Korean Embassy in the country of their residence by April 22 and will be individually notified of their selection on May 10 after a review. [\[창\]](#)

OKA launches Coming-to-Your-Home Comprehensive Civil Services

Starting with Korean residents in Japan, video consultation for civil complaints, regarding nationality, military service, family relations, etc.

Lowering threshold for overseas Koreans to use domestic digital public, financial services

The Overseas Koreans Agency launched the Coming-to-Your-Home Comprehensive Civil Services using online video on April 3 to improve the civil service experience for overseas Koreans on matters regarding nationality, military service and family relations, among others. This is one of the projects implemented for the “Convenient Life for Koreans” goal listed in the 1st Overseas Koreans Policy Basic Plan, established by the OKA.

The Overseas Korean Service Support Center (Director Kim Yeon-sik, located in Jongno-gu, Seoul) under the OKA connected with compatriots from Kobe, Yokohama and Hiroshima in Japan via video to answer questions on major civil issues in the overseas Korean community. Video consultations also provided Japanese interpretation services for compatriots who are not fluent in Korean. The Japanese Embassy in Korea, which showed interest in implementing this non-face-to-face video service, dispatched its staff to observe the entire process.

“Starting with Japan, we will continue to expand the region so that overseas Koreans can be provided with more accessible and professional services wherever they are,” Kim said.

In addition, the OKA also upgraded their service, which allows overseas Koreans to conveniently receive phone calls and KakaoTalk counseling services at any time in five languages (Korean, English, Japanese, Chinese and Russian) through the 365 Civil Service Call Center (02-6747-0404).

Starting this year, the OKA will operate the Coming-to-Your-Home Comprehensive Civil Services on a regular basis. In addition, they decided to provide an integrated service that allows people to attend nationality and military service information sessions or to visit overseas embassies if necessary. In addition, the online complaint submission process will be simplified so that overseas Koreans can receive civil service at an ideal level. In particular, they decided to focus on improving various services by visiting the site of the complaint when necessary and actively discovering contentious points.



The Overseas Koreans Agency's Coming-to-Your-Home Comprehensive Civil Services is held virtually for Korean residents in Japan on April 3.

Overseas Koreans without domestic bank accounts can also verify their identities with financial certificate

OKA Commissioner Lee Key-cheol and Park Jong-seok, head of the Korea Financial Settlement Institute, signed a memorandum of understanding in the field of digital certification and certification at the Overseas Korean Service Support Center on April 23 to launch an Overseas Diplomatic Certificate Issuance Service, which will allow overseas Koreans without domestic bank accounts to use digital public and financial services

smoothly.

This service has been promoted as one of the Digital Consular Civil Complaint System Construction Projects, a national project promoted by the OKA. Until now, in order for Korean nationals residing abroad to receive domestic digital services, they needed a domestic mobile phone or domestic bank account as a means of identity verification. However, with this service, overseas Koreans who do not have access to these means can also use domestic-level digital services by obtaining a financial certificate from the embassies abroad.

The Overseas Embassy Financial Certificate Issuance Service completed system development last March and is scheduled to be officially launched in May after training and a test run for working-level staff at overseas embassies in April. Once the service is launched, Koreans living abroad can visit the nearest embassy abroad and receive a financial certificate to access: ▲ Financial sector (banks, securities, cards, insurance, savings, etc.) ▲ Governmental/public sector (Government 24, Hometax, Supreme Court electronic family relationship registration system, etc.) and ▲ My Data, more easily and conveniently than before.

“Koreans living abroad will now receive world-class digital services through this financial certificate issuance service at offices abroad,” Lee said. “We hope that overseas Koreans who have been excluded from using domestic digital services will now be able to enjoy more convenience.” [장]

OKA appoints 11 policy advisory committee members, professor Park In-gi as chairman

Committee members agree at first general meeting on major projects, such as promoting Korea's history of development

The Overseas Koreans Agency held an appointment ceremony for policy advisory committee members at the OKA's main building in Yeonsu-gu, Incheon, on April 11. The committee was formed to provide in-depth and comprehensive advice from experts in various fields and to regularly discuss pending issues related to overseas Korean policies and projects. Eleven members from the fields of overseas Koreans, media, education and economics were appointed.

The 11 members attended the appointment ceremony, including Professor Emeritus Park In-gi of Gyeongin National University of Education; Koh Sang-gu, chairman of K&K Vietnam Trading; Inha University professor Lee Jin-young; Choi Mi-young, principal of Dasom School in the U.S.; and Park Ki-tae, head of the cyber diplomatic mission VANK. Professor Emeritus Park was appointed as the first chairman of the committee at the meeting, where major executives of the OKA, including Commissioner Lee Key-cheol, were present.

"As a central administrative agency that oversees policies for overseas Koreans, we need the experience and wisdom of advisers to carry out major tasks, such as cultivating the identities of the next generation and strengthening protection and support for Koreans befitting our status while also building a global Korean network," Commissioner Lee said.

Lee, who presided over the plenary meeting, explained the major pending projects of the OKA, including informing people of Korea's history of political and economic development, supporting compatriots residing in Korea, supporting the Korean Residents Union in Japan (Mindan) and calling for policy proposals that could be of practical help to the OKA.

In particular, he introduced the project of educating overseas Koreans on Korea's political and economic development and including them in overseas textbooks as the OKA's core project.

"This will raise the pride of the next generation of overseas Koreans and foster their identities while improving the status of Koreans in their countries of residence," Lee said.



Advisory committee members take a group photo with Overseas Koreans Agency Commissioner Lee Key-cheol (C) at the policy advisory committee appointment ceremony held at the OKA's main building in Yeonsu-gu, Incheon, on April 11.



The policy advisory committee meeting is held at the OKA on April 11.

The advisory committee members expressed active support for the project to spread awareness of Korea's development status and agreed to provide practical advice to achieve desirable results. Professor Park said that given the impact and permanence of textbooks, he evaluated the project as being very effective and timely, and said he would unite the 11 members' capabilities for the project's success.

Participants also fully agreed on the need to prepare measures to support the settlement of domestic compatriots and establish a dedicated department to handle the growing demand for domestic compatriots, such as the return of elderly compatriots to their homeland.

The OKA plans to hold general meetings and subcommittees on a timely basis to develop them into a substantial advisory body so that the experiences and expertise of the advisers can be reflected in policy implementation. 

62.8 pct turnout from overseas voters recorded for 22nd general elections

27.8 pct of 1.97 million eligible voters registered; 4.7 pct actually voted

The 22nd general overseas elections, held from March 27 to April 1 at 220 polling stations in 115 countries (178 overseas missions) around the world, recorded a voter turnout of 62.8 percent, the highest ever for a general elections, but some in the overseas Korean community said it was “disappointing.”

According to the National Election Commission and the overseas Korean community, the number of overseas Koreans in 2023 came to 7.08 million, of which 1,974,375 (27.8 percent) were eligible to vote in the general elections. There were 147,989 (7.5 percent) registered to participate in the general elections, of which 92,923 (62.8 percent) voted. However, the actual voter turnout, which is the number of eligible voters compared with the total overseas electorate, was only 4.7 percent.

Local Korean associations in each region described a positive mood, saying their members were more enthusiastic than ever to vote. The Asian Federation of Korean Associations, which represents the continent with the highest number of voters, said that each Korean association shared its voter turnout rate as if they were competing with each other. However, the diaspora community acknowledged that the voting promotion campaigns centered on local embassies and

Korean American associations have their limitations, and said that it is necessary to take practical measures to encourage overseas Koreans to vote.

‘One voter’ traveled 1,600 kilometers round trip; ‘law needs to be changed to make it easier for compatriots’

A Thai compatriot who traveled 1,600 kilometers round trip from Phuket to Bangkok to cast his vote has renewed calls for changes to the overseas election system to make it more convenient for overseas compatriots. This has been an issue that has been raised before but has not been resolved.

“The low voter turnout is due to the fact that you can register to vote by email or mail but still have to physically visit overseas missions or remote polling stations to vote,” said Heo Jun-hyuk, secretary-general of the United Nations Foundation for Peace and Prosperity in the Korean Peninsula (UNPEACEKOR). “Despite the longstanding wishes of overseas Koreans, the Public Offices Election Law has not been amended to improve this situation.”

Jang Eun-sook, president of the Korean Association in Hanoi, Vietnam, said: “The election enthusiasm among Korean Americans in Vietnam was high. However, it is unfortunate that only a small percentage of the 2 million overseas voters actually voted. The election system needs to be improved to make it more convenient for overseas Koreans to exercise their right to vote.”

To increase voter turnout, the overseas Korean community has called for amendments to the Public Offices Election Act to allow mail-in or email voting. The U.S. uses postal voting, along with fax, email and webpage voting in some states, and most countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) also use postal voting.



1

2



- 1 An overseas Korean casts his ballot in the 22nd general elections as election officials look on in the large conference room of the Korean Embassy in London on March 27. (Courtesy of the Korean Embassy in the UK)
- 2 Overseas voting information is displayed in front of the Korean Consulate General in New York on March 27, the first day of overseas voting for the 22nd general elections.
- 3 Korean Ambassador to Japan Yoon Duk-min and his wife (2nd and 3rd from L) cast their ballots at the overseas voting center at the Korean Consulate General in Tokyo on March 27, the first day of overseas voting for the 22nd general elections.

Call for proportional representation members for overseas Koreans fails again

The diaspora community has been calling for political parties to appoint someone to represent the interests of overseas Koreans as a proportional representative, but this has not been realized since the start of overseas elections in 2012. Several candidates have applied for proportional representation, but all have been unsuccessful.

“We are disappointed and concerned that the government, ruling party and opposition parties have not nominated a single overseas Korean as a proportional representation candidate, regardless of their electoral stability,” said James Ahn, president of the Korean Association of Los Angeles in the USA. “We believe that overseas Koreans should be able to vote for candidates who represent compatriots’ interests and issues in the same way that voters residing in Korea elect their local representatives.”

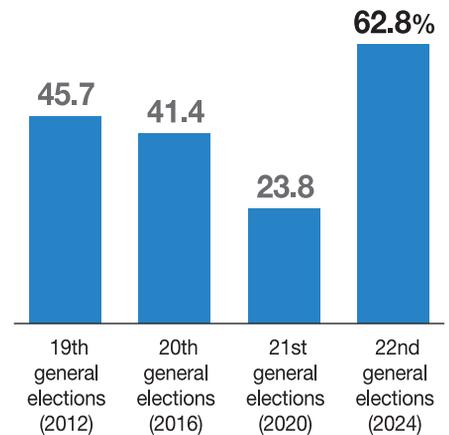
“While the turnout of active participants may have been high, the actual voter turnout was less than 5 percent, which is unfortunate as the enthusiasm for the elections seems to be waning overseas,” said Kim Jum-bae, president of the United Korean Association in Africa and Middle East. “Each party should allocate one proportional representative for each continent to ensure true participation.”

On the other hand, there are those who believe that the proportional representation of overseas Koreans raises concerns.

Noh Jong-hyun, former president of the Korean Association of Singapore, said: “Korean associations in each country are autonomous. I think it is unnecessary for them to get involved in their homeland’s politics. The Korean Association of Singapore has banned all political activities for fear of dividing the Korean community.”

Meanwhile, according to the National Election Commission, the results of

Overseas Korean voter turnout at 19th-22nd general elections



Source: National Election Commission

the overseas vote proportional representation parties were as follows: the Cho Kuk Innovation Party (34,965 votes - 37.6 percent), the Democratic Party’s satellite party, the Democratic Alliance (25,884 votes - 27.0 percent), the People Power Party’s satellite party, the People’s Future (21,182 votes - 21.7 percent), the New Reform Party (2,915 votes - 3.1 percent) and the Green Justice Party (2,891 votes - 3.1 percent). The overseas vote was not separately tallied for the 254 local representative candidates across the country. 🇰🇷

‘I immigrated to New Zealand and was bullied, but I never forgot my Korean DNA’

‘Writing is diplomacy,’ says Graci Kim, 1.5-generation Korean diplomat-turned-writer

“New Zealand is a multiethnic and multicultural society, but I was the only Korean among my childhood friends. I was bullied and hurt because I was an immigrant, but I never forgot my Korean DNA.”

Graci Kim (Korean name: Kim Sung-eun, age 38), a 1.5-generation Korean former New Zealand diplomat, recently met with a reporter at a cafe in Mapo-gu, Seoul, and said, “I am a Korean Kiwi. I’m proud to be Korean.”

Kim honeymooned in South Korea in 2018 and returned in late March, six years later, as part of a New Zealand Embassy invitation program. The birth of her daughter, Haneul (5), brought them back to Korea, along with her husband, Neil Cribbens, 37.

In the meantime, she had left the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, where she worked for nearly 10 years, to pursue a freelance career. After a near-blindness scare in 2017, which caused her to undergo retinal surgery while working in Beijing, China, she started writing to contemplate the meaning of life and left the Foreign Office in May last year to pursue writing full time.

First novel in fantasy series ‘Gifted Clans’ hits No. 1 on New York Times Best Sellers

“The Last Fallen Star,” the first installment in the children’s fantasy “Gifted Clans” trilogy, released in May 2021 through Disney Publishing, has garnered attention, including reaching The New York Times Best Sellers list.

“If you look at the diaspora, Koreans are the third- or fourth-largest group in the world, but there have been very few novels with expatriates as the main characters,” she said. “I wanted to write a story that was neither Korean nor foreign but about our own unique identity.”

“I’m no longer a diplomat, but it’s like I’m still working as a diplomat,” she said. “I have no regrets about leaving the diplomatic service. Communicating with readers from all over the world in



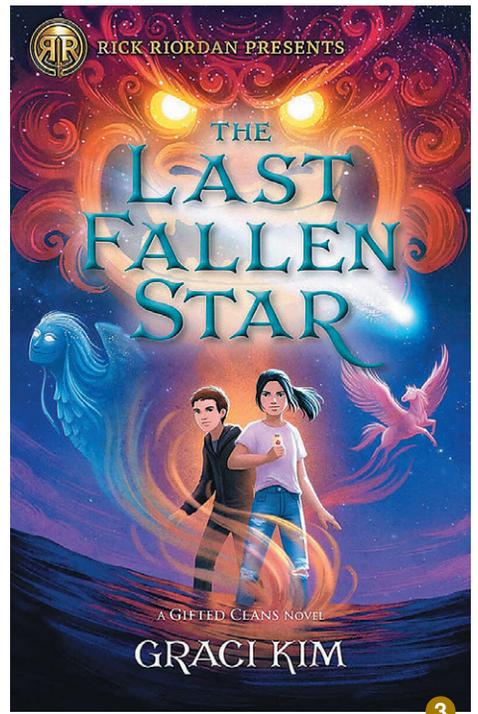
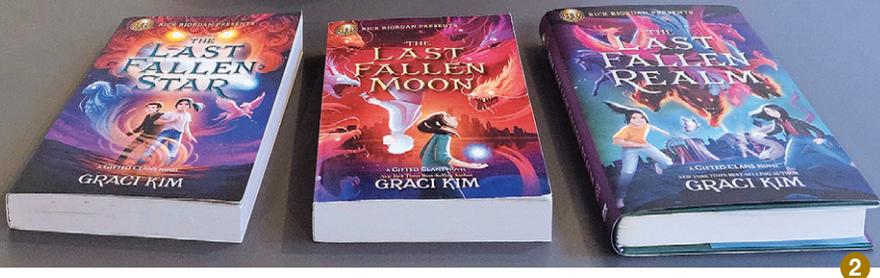
various ways through writing is also diplomacy.”

The “Gifted Clans” series is set in Los Angeles and utilizes Korean mythology, such as creation stories and fairytale tropes, as well as characters often found in Korean fairytales, such as tigers, “gumiho” (nine-tailed foxes), crows and sea turtles, and presents them in a modern light.

“When I was young, my grandmother and parents told me many stories about ghosts and goblins,” Kim said. “I always wondered why Greco-Roman and Egyptian myths were welcomed worldwide, but Korean mythology was not well known. Disney was going to make a drama based on the novel, but it was canceled due to the Hollywood actors’ and writers’ union strike, so we’re back to square one. If we get a good proposal in the future, we will actively pursue it.”

‘Stories written from overseas Korean’s perspective, please look at them with an open mind’

As Kim watches her daughter grow up, she says: “I realize



- 1 A family photo of Graci Kim, her husband, Neil Cribbens, and daughter Haneul
- 2 Kim, a 1.5-generation Korean, who is a former New Zealand diplomat, gives a press interview at a cafe in Mapo-gu, Seoul.
- 3 The cover of the English-language edition of Graci Kim's first fantasy novel, "The Last Fallen Star" (Courtesy of Yes24)

that there is magic hidden in ordinary life. I want her to be able to read this book when she grows up. I want to tell her that she can be the hero of her life, just like the main character in the book."

"I hope Korean readers will look at the stories written from the perspective of a foreigner of Korean heritage with an open mind, saying, 'This is another way to understand Korean mythology,'" she said. The first installment of the novel will be published in Korean by Dasan Books next summer, followed by the second and third installments.

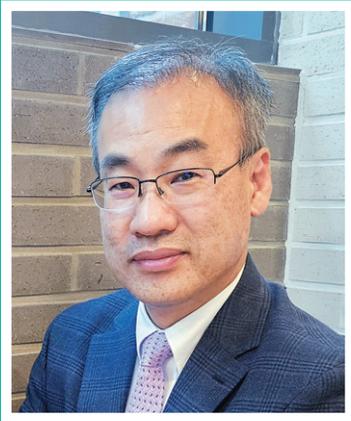
Kim also plans to publish a second fantasy novel, "Dreamslinger," in English next year. She envisions it as a two-part series, but it

could go up to four. It's based on the X-Men and Pokémon concepts and follows Aria, a Korean American child with a mutant gene that turns her dreams into superpowers, as she searches for her identity.

Kim has worked to flex her creative muscles in the past, including hosting a cooking show and running a business that turns children's drawings into plush toys. After experiencing both success and failure in these various endeavors, writing was the path she ultimately chose.

"I have an interest in exploring what people at the end of their lives are thinking and feeling," she said. "I plan to work or volunteer in a hospice someday if I get the chance." 📖

GLOBAL KOREAN



Incoming president of Korean-American Scientist and Engineers Association will 'focus on international cooperation in R&D' President Oh Tae-hwan, a 1.5-generation Korean American, explains direction of August conference in San Fran

"In the era of global business, international cooperation in research and development (R&D) is important in the field of science and technology. It can be in the form of joint research between universities, collaborations between companies or cooperation between academia, industry and the government. I would like to focus on international cooperation and put it on the agenda."

This is how Oh Tae-hwan (57), the incoming president of the Korean-American Scientist and Engineers Association (KSEA), explained the direction of the 37th U.S.-Korea Science and Technology Congress (UKC), which will be held in San Francisco from Aug. 21-24, when he met with reporters at a cafe in Gangnam, Seoul, on April 3.

KSEA, which celebrated its 53rd anniversary this year, is an organization of Korean American scientists living in the United States, with 30,000 registered members and 8,000 active members. The UKC, which KSEA has organized every year since 1991 for the exchange of science and technology between the United States and Korea, is the organization's largest project each year.

KSEA usually selects a chairman a year in advance to prepare for the UKC. Oh, who arrived in Korea on March 30 to solicit participation and cooperation from Korean universities, companies and the government, stayed for about three weeks before leaving the country in mid-April.

The congress, which will be held at the Hyatt Regency San Francisco Airport hotel, is co-hosted by KSEA, the Korea Federation of Science and Technology Societies (KOFST), the Korea-U.S. Science Cooperation Center (KUSCO) and the National Research Foundation (NRF). The theme is "Science, Technology and Entrepreneurship in the Next Era Using Artificial Intelligence (AI)."

"While research centered on academia is important, we believe that balancing it with industry will help develop the science and technology community in the long run," Oh said. "We will also address the entrepreneurship sector by connecting with outstanding companies in Silicon Valley to participate in the competition."

The keynote lectures at this year's congress will be delivered by Thomas Südhof, professor of medicine at Stanford University, winner of the 2013 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, and Alissa Park (Korean name: Park Ah-hyung), dean of the Henry Samueli School of Engineering at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

Oh, a 1.5-generation Korean American who immigrated to the U.S. with his family at age 12, earned his bachelor's degree in electronics engineering from Texas Tech University and his master's and doctoral degrees from Southern Methodist University. He is currently a professor at the Rochester Institute of Technology.

Julie Suk, 1.5-generation Korean American, named New York Champion of Women's Equality Law professor at Fordham Univ. School of Law, only Korean American among 7 champions

Julie Suk (Korean name: Suk Ji-hye, 49), a 1.5-generation Korean American, has been recognized by New York as a Champion of Women's Equality in honor of Women's Month in March.

According to the local Korean American community, the state of New York will host a "Champions of Equality: New York Women and the Equal Rights Amendment" exhibit from March



1-29 in the Governor's Reception Room of the New York State Capitol in Albany. The exhibit highlights seven women who have fought for equal rights for women, and Dr. Suk is the only Korean American included.

Aside from Suk, other people selected include former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg (1933-2020), who is called an American "icon of progress," and Shirley Chisholm (1924-2005), the first black woman to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives.

"She is the author (in 2020) of 'We the Women,' a book about the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and the campaign for its ratification," the New York state government said of Suk, "a comparative jurist whose work focuses on women as constitutional framers across disciplines, including law, history, sociology and political science."

Dr. Suk immigrated to the United States at the age of 4 and grew up in Queens, New York. She graduated from Harvard University, where she majored in English literature and creative writing, and Yale Law School. She earned a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Oxford, England. She has been a visiting professor at Harvard and Yale Universities, and a professor at the City University of New York before joining the Fordham University School of Law.

She is the younger sister of professor Suk Ji-young, 51, who was the first Korean American to join the Harvard Law School faculty in 2006 and the first Asian American woman to receive tenure at Harvard Law School in 2010.



Kim Chul-yong, president of Korean-Kyrgyz Friendship Association, receives honorary professorship at Kyrgyz National Agrarian University Traveled to Kyrgyzstan in 2015 to work in agriculture related to Korean legumes and seeds

Kim Chul-yong (50), a Korean soybean and seed farmer who has been working for 10 years in the Kyrgyz Republic (Kyrgyzstan), a major country in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), was recently named an honorary professor at Kyrgyz National Agrarian University.

According to the Korea-Kyrgyz Friendship and Exchange Association, Kyrgyz National Agrarian University Rector Risbek Nurgaziev recently held a ceremony on campus and handed Kim an honorary professorship, who has served as an adviser to the university for the past two years.

The Kyrgyz National Agrarian University is located in Bishkek, the capital of the Kyrgyz Republic, and was founded in 1933. Over the past 90 years, it has graduated more than 70,000 food and biology specialists and is committed to developing agriculture and cultivating specialized human resources.

"After spending time abroad, I realize that Korea is a great country, and it has the potential to become even greater," Kim said. He revealed his sentiments that, "As a Korean farmer, I want to play a necessary role in expanding Korea's agricultural competitiveness."

After graduating from Kyungpook National University with a degree in economics, he worked on the political front lines for 10 years, mainly in Daegu. His relationship with the Kyrgyz Republic began when he worked as a secretary in the National Assembly from 2006 to 2008. His work on cooperation projects between Korea and the Kyrgyz Republic led him to Kyrgyzstan, where he founded the Korea-Kyrgyz Friendship and Exchange Association in 2007. His experience with agriculture-related items influenced his decision to settle in the Kyrgyz Republic.

In 2013, he founded Dasan, an agricultural company, and began farming overseas, traveling back and forth between Korea and the Kyrgyz Republic. In 2015, he left South Korea with his family and settled in the Kyrgyz Republic. He started by farming crops, such as onions and barley, then expanded to Korean beans and seeds. 🇰🇷



Children's author Jang Kyung-sun releases picture book on Sakhalin Korean massacre

'That Summer in Sakhalin' recently published; 'I hope you can empathize with the pain'

"Sakhalin, in southern Russia, is a place where many Koreans were taken for forced labor during the Japanese occupation. I want children to understand this sad history and be able to empathize with the pain. It's about caring for others."

Children's author Jang Kyung-sun, 48, who released a picture book about the Sakhalin Korean massacre, "That Summer in Sakhalin" (publisher: Small Forest), on April 15, said in a recent media call that "I wanted to make a heavy subject easy to understand."

After Japan's fall on Aug. 15, 1945, Sakhalin's military police and vigilantes killed Koreans indiscriminately, fearing that they might start a riot. According to Soviet court records, the victims included people from Kamisiska, Sikka, Estoru and Mizuho. Jang's picture book is set in the village of Mizuho (now Pozharsky), where about 35 Koreans are said to have been killed.

Author lived in Sakhalin for three months to research local history of Koreans

In July 2013, Jang was selected as a recipient of the Overseas Creative Dispatch Artist Program in Literature by the Korean Arts Council under the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism to live in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk in the Sakhalin Province for three months, to research the history of Koreans in Sakhalin. While staying at the home of Park Seung-ui, a second-generation Sakhalin compatriot and former professor of Korean at Sakhalin State University in Russia, she traveled around Sakhalin, interviewed Korean Russians and tried to get to the bottom of the massacre.

Based on this experience, she published a children's storybook in March 2015 titled "I Was a Crow," in which two of its stories, "I Was a Crow" and "Grandma Jeon's Tears," were based on the Mizuho Massacre. This picture book is a compilation of some of the stories from this collection. In 2018, she published "Goodbye, Myeongja," a picture book about Myeongja, who moved to Sakhalin following her older brother after he was forced into labor.

"Most of the works about Sakhalin are about the lament of forced labor," Jang said. "I was interested in the village of



This compiled photo shows children's author Jang Kyung-sun with the cover of her picture book "That Summer in Sakhalin." (courtesy of Small Forest publishing house)

Mizuho because it focuses on the massacre of civilians, as I have been dealing with genocides, such as the Holocaust. Mizuho breaks our hearts because Koreans and Japanese lived together like one family, even marrying each other. This painful history has been buried so deeply, so I wanted to revisit it."

'I wanted to show Japan's official apology, even if only in a book'

In the book, which features two friends from the village of Mizuho, a Japanese boy named Matsuyama and a Korean girl named Hana, she set up a scene where the Japanese perpetrator kneels down. Jang says she wanted to show Japan officially apologizing, even if only in a book.

"On the 'Hill of Remembrance' in Korsakov, south of Sakhalin, there is a memorial tower in the shape of a carved ship. The unattached, cracked ship tells the tale of the day's pain. Fortunately, after the establishment of diplomatic relations with Japan in 1990, Koreans in Sakhalin were finally able to walk in their homeland again," Jang explained. "The Sakhalin capital, Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, is a beautiful city. It has minimal development, creating houses and buildings in harmony with nature. It was our people who made the barren land rich. Sakhalin Koreans live proudly shoulder to shoulder with Russians," she emphasized. 🇰🇷

Jasmine Yoon becomes first Korean American federal district judge in Virginia, U.S.

1.5-generation Korean American lawyer will begin term in July

For the first time in the history of the U.S. state of Virginia, a Korean has become a federal district court judge. The U.S. Senate recently met in a plenary session to confirm Jasmine Yoon (Korean name: Yoon Hye-jung, age 44), a 1.5-generation Korean American, to serve as a judge for the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, according to the Korean American Society.

President Biden announced Yoon's nomination in January after receiving the recommendations of U.S. Sens. Mark Warner and Tim Kaine, and the Senate confirmed her two months later.

"As Virginia's first Asian American federal judge, Jasmine Yoon has remarkable skills and a deep commitment to public service, and we are confident she will be a great asset to the federal judiciary," Warner and Kaine said in a press release shortly after the confirmation vote.

Judge Yoon will begin her term in July, when Chief Judge Michael Urbanski retires. A native of Ulsan, South Korea, Judge Yoon immigrated to Maryland with her family when she was 14 years old. She graduated from the University of Virginia and its School of Law and practiced law at a law firm. She received the firm's Pro Bono Attorney of the Year award for her pro bono work on behalf of immigrants and victims of sexual assault and domestic violence. She then spent six years as a prosecutor in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Virginia, where she investigated and prosecuted more than 80 financial crimes and public corruption cases.

She served as general counsel at the University of Virginia for three years, beginning in 2019, and from 2022 until most recently, she was vice president of business ethics and investigations at Capital One Financial Corp., a financial services company. Her husband, Christopher Kavanaugh, is a prosecutor in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Western District of Virginia.

In a written response to the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee, Yoon previously stated that if she were confirmed as a federal judge, she would conduct her business in a manner that would not create conflicts of interest. 



U.S. District Court Judge Jasmine Yoon for the Eastern District of Virginia



66 pct of people overseas who experienced ‘hallyu’ ‘changed their perception of Korea positively’

2024 Overseas Hallyu Survey results: per capita consumption of 11.6 hours of K-content per month on average

Nearly 6 out of 10 people who have experienced “hallyu” (Korean Wave) overseas say their perception of Korea has changed positively. According to the 2024 Overseas Hallyu Survey (2023 data) released on April 2 by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism and the Korea Foundation for International Cultural Exchange, 66.1 percent of respondents who have been exposed to Korean cultural content abroad said their perception of Korea has improved.

This is an increase of 5.8 percentage points from 60.3 percent in 2022. On the contrary, 30.1 percent said there was no change, and 3.8 percent said it changed negatively. By country, the positive change was greatest in the United Arab Emirates (85.9 percent), India (85.3 percent) and Vietnam (84.7 percent), while it was lower in Japan (38.8 percent), Italy (48.7 percent) and France (49.4 percent).

In terms of favorability toward Korean cultural content, 68.8 percent of respondents said they like Korean cultural content, a 3.7 percent decrease from the previous year. Favorability ratings were higher in Southeast Asia, mainly in Indonesia (86.3 percent), India (84.5 percent), Thailand and the United Arab Emirates (83 percent each), and Vietnam (82.9 percent). Compared with a year ago, a total of 89.4 percent said their interest in Korean cultural content has

either increased (45.9 percent) or stayed the same (43.5 percent).

Egypt (67.6 percent), India (67.1 percent) and Saudi Arabia (65.1 percent) were the countries with the highest percentage increase, showing that interest in Korean cultural content in the Middle East has increased over the past year.

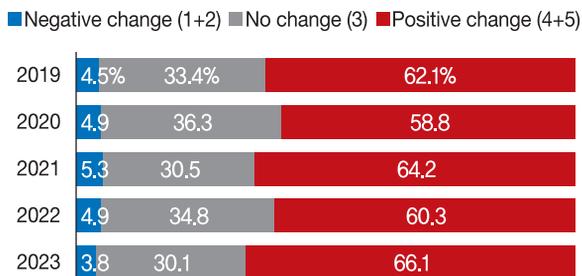
However, negative perceptions of hallyu have also increased. Of the respondents, 32.6 percent agreed with the negative perception of hallyu, an increase of 5.5 percentage points from last year. The main reasons cited were “overly stimulating and sensationalized” (24.9 percent), “uniform and formulaic” (22 percent) and “overly commercial” (21.1 percent).

The average monthly consumption of Korean cultural content per person was 11.6 hours. By country, India (18.6 hours), Thailand (18.4 hours), Indonesia (17 hours) and Vietnam (16.4 hours) had the highest average consumption. On the other hand, Japan (4.4 hours), Canada (5.8 hours), Australia (6.2 hours) and Italy (6.3 hours) spent less than 10 hours per month on average.

‘Squid Game’ is favorite Korean drama for third consecutive year

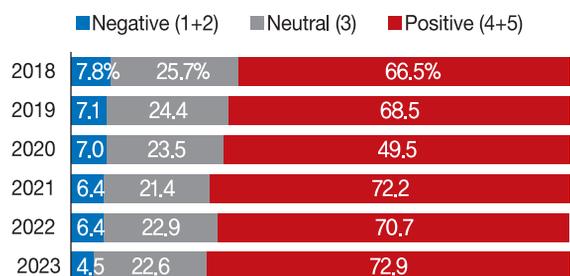
For the third year in a row, “Squid Game” was respondents’

Change in perception of Korea after experiencing Korean cultural content (2019-2023)



Courtesy of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism

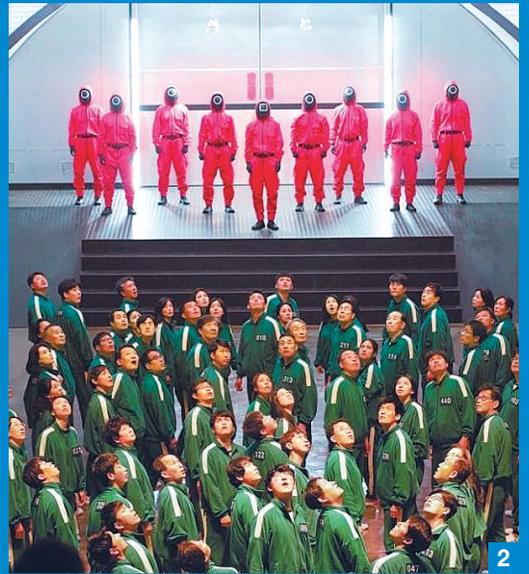
Overall perception of Korea (2018-2023)



Courtesy of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism



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1 The "BTS: Yet to Come" concert (Courtesy of Coupang Play)
2 A scene from the drama "Squid Game" (Courtesy of Netflix)

favorite Korean drama. It was followed by "The Glory" (3.4 percent) and "King The Land" (2.6 percent) in second and third place, respectively. "Squid Game" was popular in Europe (23.7 percent) and the Americas (8.3 percent), while "The Glory" was popular in the Asia-Pacific (5.4 percent).

For the fifth year in a row, Korean films were led by "Parasite" (7.9 percent) and "Train To Busan" (6 percent). "Parasite" was a consistent favorite in Europe (10.7 percent) and the Americas (12.6 percent), while "Train To Busan" was a consistent favorite in the Asia-Pacific (8.2 percent). This is due to the continued global preference for existing works distributed on global OTT services and the lack of new releases that outperformed them, the report analyzed. Lee Min-ho (6.4 percent) topped the actor category for the 11th consecutive year since the survey began.

In the singer (group) category, BTS (29.1 percent) took the top spot for the sixth consecutive year, and BLACKPINK (13.1 percent) took the second spot for the fifth consecutive year. BTS' Jungkook (2.7 percent) and BLACKPINK's Lisa (1.4 percent), who have achieved success in their solo careers, were ranked fourth and seventh, respectively.

Half of those who have experienced hallyu 'intend to buy Korean-made products and services'

The survey also explored interest in Korean-made products and services. Around half (50.7 percent) of those who have experienced hallyu said they would be willing to purchase Korean-made products and services in the future. This is a 3.4 percentage-point increase from the previous year.

By country, interest from Middle Eastern and Asian countries was high, including Egypt (75.6 percent), Saudi Arabia (73 percent), the UAE (72.9 percent), Vietnam (72.1 percent) and India

(70.7 percent). In contrast, the percentage of "not willing to buy" was higher in Japan (41.7 percent), Italy (20.4 percent) and Spain (20.8 percent).

In terms of products and services, food (64.7 percent) was the most popular, followed by intentions to visit Korea (61.8 percent), eat at Korean restaurants (61.4 percent), use Korean cosmetics (54 percent) and purchase Korean clothing (52.8 percent). K-content consumption also has a significant impact on related industries, as 57.9 percent of respondents said that hallyu influences their use of Korean products and services. This was especially true in Indonesia (81.4 percent), Vietnam (78.6 percent) and Saudi Arabia (74.5 percent).

Ministry of Culture, Sports, Tourism launches various initiatives to expand K-content overseas

Based on the results of the survey, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism will implement various initiatives to expand K-content overseas. It will expand the number of overseas business centers of the Korea Creative Content Agency to 25 and establish a corporate support center for content companies in Japan. It will also open a permanent Korean culture center, Korea 360, in Dubai, the UAE, and organize a "K-Fair" in Jakarta, Indonesia.

"If we focus on promoting K-content in regions where hallyu is popular and where related industries are highly favored, we can multiply exports of related industries, along with content exports," a Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism official said.

The survey was conducted through an online questionnaire from Nov. 10-30 last year among 25,000 people who have experienced Korean cultural content in 26 countries around the world. 🇰🇷

By Lee Eun-jung, culture reporter, Yonhap News Agency

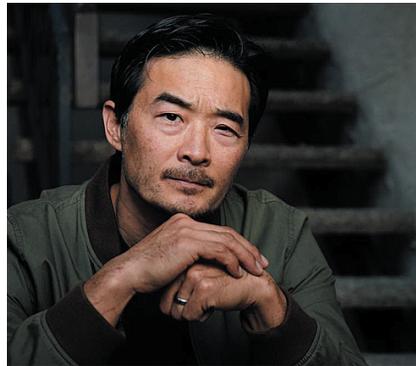
Korean American actor and director Arnold Chun produces film on Korean War

Second generation Korean; looking for Korean children to star in ‘Children of War’

Arnold Chun (Korean name: Chun Hyo-gong, age 48), a second-generation Korean American who works as an actor and director in Hollywood, recently began producing a short film on the Korean War. According to the Korean American society, Chun has decided to produce a film called “Children of War” that looks into the Korean War from a child’s perspective and is publicly recruiting children of Korean descent to appear in the film.

Chun is accepting applications until the end of April for auditions from Korean children aged 5 to 10 who will play the four roles of Mi-suk, Yeong-il, Seong-mo and Jeong-min. Children must be able to speak Korean. Filming is expected to take place sometime this summer.

Tony Eldridge, who has worked on Hollywood films, such as “The Equalizer” and “The Naked True,” will join the project as executive



Second-generation Korean American actor and director Arnold Chun

producer. It all started 12 years ago when Chun heard the story of his father, Andrew Chun (Korean name: Chun Young-il), a Korean War survivor, and has been working on turning the narrative into a movie.

Chun, who is from Boston, Massachusetts, majored in history at the University of California, Irvine (UC Irvine). As an actor, he has appeared in “Kidding,” “The Big Bang Theory,” “Hawaii Five-0” and “It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia.” The Amazon original series “The Man in the High Castle,” in which he participated, won an Emmy Award, one of the four major awards ceremonies in the U.S.

As a film producer, he produced “Eli’s Liquor Store,” which tells the story of a black man who runs a liquor store in Los Angeles’ Koreatown in 2007 and won the Best Short Film Award at the Harlem International Film Festival the following year.

Russian and Kazakh Korean dance troupe visits Korea: ‘We are proud of our Korean heritage’

Dance training for 12 members of Mugunghwa Dance Co. and 10 members of Bidulgi Dance Co. at Koryo Youth School

Koryo people from Russian and Kazakh dance companies who recently visited Korea to learn Korean dance remarked in unison: “We live thinking that we are Koreans. We are proud to be of Korean heritage.”

The dancers who visited Korea are 12 members of the Mugunghwa Dance Troupe (Director Choi Irina) from Koryo Youth School, a Korean language school registered at the Rostov-on-Don Korean Education Center in Russia, and 10 members of the Bidulgi Dance Troupe (Director Kim Rim-ma), an art troupe under the Almaty Koryo National Center in Kazakhstan. Most of the troupe members are Koryo people.

The Mugunghwa Dance Troupe and the Bidulgi Dance Troupe entered Korea on March 26 and March 30, respectively, and stayed in Seoul, visiting Gyeongbok Palace, Myeongdong and the National Museum of Korea to experience Korean culture. Those selected for the 2024 Overseas Compatriots and Korean Traditional Music Group Invitation Training Project received Korean dance training at the National Namdo Korean Traditional Music Center in Jindo, South Jeolla



The Mugunghwa Dance Team from Russia’s Koryo Youth School is visiting Korea to learn Korean dance.

Province, from April 2 to 11. The Mugunghwa Dance Co. learned Beokkuchum, Gayageum and Taepyeongso, while the Bidulgi Dance Co. learned Udo Seolsogo Dance.

Director Irina Choi (48) met with the media in Seoul on April 1 and said, “I have learned Samulnori, Sogo dance, Nanta and Jindo drum dance in Korea every year since 2022, and the members’ satisfaction was so high that I decided to come again this year. When we perform back in our locales, we receive great response from Koryo people and others.”

The Mugunghwa Dance Co. was founded in Rostov-on-Don, a city in southern Russia, in February 2019 and currently has about 60 members. While practicing three times a week, they go on stage to perform various performances for Koryo people and locals, performing Korean and traditional dances.

The Bidulgi Dance Co. was founded in 1989 by Kim Rim-ma (78), a second-generation Korean. About 50 Koreans, Kazakhs and Russians aged 7 to 17 serve as members. Although they mainly perform modern dance, they also often display traditional Korean dances.

Federation of Korean Associations in Africa & Middle East receives 5th Choi Jae-hyung Award

Independence Activist Choi Jae-hyung Memorial Society holds award ceremony at Seoul National Cemetery

The Federation of Korean Associations in Africa & the Middle East (Chairman Kim Jeom-bae) received the 5th Choi Jae-hyung Award in recognition of its dedicated contribution to the local community through various volunteer activities for Korean compatriots and locals in Africa and the Middle East.

According to the Overseas Koreans Agency, the federation was selected in March as the winner of the group category of the award given by the Independence Activist Choi Jae-hyung Memorial Foundation (Chairman Moon Young-sook).

“They are practicing love for our compatriots while leading Korean associations in Africa and the Middle East,” the foundation said, when explaining the reason for selecting the federation as an organization that practices the “pechka spirit” abroad.

The Choi Jae-hyung Award was established in 2019 to honor the spirit of Choi Jae-hyung (1860-1920, Russian name: Choi Pyotr Semyonovich), who fought for Korea’s independence in Russia’s Primorsky Krai. “Pechka,” which means stove in Russian, is Choi Jae-hyung’s nickname. It symbolizes his spirit of love for his homeland, national spirit, sharing, service, dedication and noblesse oblige.

“It is an honor to be evaluated as having put into practice the spirit of Mr. Choi,” Kim Jeom-bae (67), president of the federation, said in a phone call

with the media. “I take this as a sign that we share more with the Korean and local communities in Africa and the Middle East who are living in difficult situations.”

The federation has been carrying out eye-opening surgeries for local residents, the Spring of Peace project to create facilities to produce clean water and projects to help refugees. In addition, they are conducting exchange projects by inviting and visiting cultural delegations from overseas Koreans in Africa and the Middle East and participating in projects by relevant organizations for overseas Koreans. This year, they are also actively participating in the OKA’s project to include the history of Korea’s development in textbooks around the world.

The Choi Jae-hyung Award Ceremony was held at the Seoul National Cemetery at 10:30 a.m. on April 3, along with a memorial service commemorating the 104th anniversary of Choi’s death.



An announcement for the 104th Memorial Ceremony for Choi Jae-hyung and the ceremony for the Choi Jae-hyung Award

Second-generation immigrant Eo Joong-soo elected new president of Korean Association in Christchurch, New Zealand

‘Keeping Korean identity and culture; we will foster young and vibrant Korean community’

For the first time in its 33-year history, a second-generation immigrant in his 30s was elected the new president of the Korean Association in Christchurch, New Zealand’s South Island’s largest city. The association recently held an interim general meeting at Riccarton Baptist Church, in which it voted to elect Simon Eo (Korean name: Eo Joong-su, age 32). He ran as the sole candidate, and the meeting announced his election as the 17th president.

The Christchurch Korean Association was established in 1991 for Koreans living in Christchurch and Canterbury. Externally, it represents the Korean-New Zealander community, and internally, it co-hosts events and projects for overseas Koreans with other organizations.

“As a second-generation Korean-New Zealander, I have lived while preserving my Korean identity and Korean culture, and I will continue to do so in the future,” Eo said. “I will play a role in connecting Korea and New Zealand. There may be people worried about whether I will be able to lead the association well because I am young and lacking experience, but I want

to create an organization that is ahead of the curve because times are changing. We will create a young and vibrant Korean community.”

Eo, who was born in Christchurch, graduated from the Department of Landscape Architecture at Lincoln University in New Zealand and currently works at the telecommunications company Two Degrees. He is also active in the Christchurch Korean Garden Steering Committee, which regularly manages the local Korean garden, and In Common, an organization for cultural exchanges and the eradication of racial discrimination.



Eo Joong-su, the new president of the Korean Association of Christchurch, New Zealand

Gunsan, North Jeolla Province, a modern cultural city

Explore history through architecture



Gunsan, North Jeolla Province (North Jeolla Province), is home to many examples of modern Korean architecture, including those from the Japanese colonial period. In the old city center, the former Gunsan Customs Headquarters, a bank building and the Ddun-dari (Floating Bridge) Pier are all located within a short distance of each other. This makes it easy to get around. I visited each of these buildings in turn after getting a general overview of Gunsan's history at the nearby Gunsan Modern History Museum.

Gunsan Modern History Museum visualizes city in the 1920s

Along the coastal route adjacent to Gunsan Inner Harbor, there are many striking buildings, including museums and art galleries. It is known as the "street of modern culture." Among these buildings, the Gunsan Modern History Museum is characterized by its light green and brown exterior. The design is based on the image of a modern city in the 1920s.

In the lobby on the first floor, there is a model of the Gunsan Eocheong Island Lighthouse. According to the information board, the lighthouse was built in 1912 due to the importance of the Chinese sea route after the Sino-Japanese War. The history museum is a good place to get an overview of the local history. I thoroughly explored the three floors of the museum, including the Maritime Logistics History Hall, the Independence Heroes Hall and

the Modern Life Hall.

Gunsan is one of the locations where the Joun Warehouse (漕運倉庫) was established to store and transport tributary crops (segok, 稅穀) collected from the people during the Goryeo Dynasty. Gunsan is also famous for being the site of Gen. Choi Moo-sun's major victory in the Jinpo Campaign against the Japanese in the late Goryeo Dynasty. Gunsan's geographical advantage at the mouth of the Geum River Estuary, where it meets the West Sea, has only grown over time. With the arrival and departure of ferryboats, merchant ships and fishing boats transporting the tributary crops to the capital city, and the flourishing of commercial activities, Gunsan laid the foundation for the development of a modern city.

It also explained that the 1919 Gunsan March 5 Korean Independence Manse Movement was the first independence movement in the Honam province after the March 1 Movement. The Modern Life Museum on the third floor is an experience and exhibition space that recreates 14 buildings that existed in Gunsan in the 1930s. You can see a general store, a rubber shoe store, a liquor store and the Gunsan Rice Grain Dealer, where grains, mainly rice and beans, were bought and sold.

Former Gunsan Customs House and Museum of Modern Art are also notable visitor locations

After leaving the Gunsan Modern History Museum, I turned right

to see a red brick building. This is the main building of the former Gunsan Customs House. Built in 1908, this Western-style single-story building was used to collect customs duties on goods entering and leaving Gunsan Port. Along with Seoul Station and the Bank of Korea's headquarters, it is one of the three remaining Western classicist buildings in Korea. The information board also states that it was a historical site of grain harvesting in Honam, a grain-growing region. In the 1930s, Gunsan Port was filled with rice baskets. The site is now utilized as the Honam Customs Museum.

Next, I visited the Gunsan Modern Art Museum. It has a white exterior and a pale green roof. The building's entrance is marked with a sign that reads "Former 18th Bank of Japan Gunsan Branch" on one side and a sign for the modern art museum on the other. The 18th Bank is a bank that was headquartered in Nagasaki, Japan. The building became a registered cultural property in 2008 and was renovated and restored before opening as the current Modern Art Museum in 2013. The museum exhibits works by local artists and holds special exhibitions. At the time of my visit, a private collection was on display.

As I left the museum and crossed the street, I noticed a slightly faded brick building that looked like it had seen better days. From the side, it looked like it had bumpy columns at an angle to the entrance. The roof was also sloped. This is the Gunsan Museum of Modern Architecture. Built in 1922, it is the former Gunsan branch of the Bank of Joseon. The information board explains that it is a symbolic building that shows the modern history of Gunsan and is also featured in Chae Man-sik's novel "Takryu," which is set in Gunsan during the Japanese occupation.

As I visited each building, I kept thinking about the times that the buildings and people must have gone through. When I entered the



architecture building, I was surprised by the spacious interior. The building is two stories high, which is unusual because it creates a large sense of openness. You can read explanatory texts and see models of various buildings in Gunsan, including public institutions and educational institutions. Some of the walls, columns and ceilings of the buildings have been preserved and exposed as exhibits.

Ddun-dari Pier, symbol of rice harvesting during the Japanese colonial period

We move on to the nearby Gunsan Inner Harbor's Ddun-dari Pier. It was built in 1938 to overcome the limitations of the pier's function due to the difference in tides. The

information board explains that it was used to transfer rice shipped to Gunsan Port onto ships and is a symbolic facility that shows the plundering of rice harvests during the Japanese occupation.

A 10-minute drive from here is the Gunsan 3.1 Movement Centennial Memorial Hall. The building recreates the appearance of the former Yeongmyeong School, which was an important pillar of the Gunsan Manse Movement.

The former Gunsan Customs House, the Gunsan Modern History Museum, the Gunsan Modern Art Museum and the Gunsan Museum of Modern Architecture are all separated from each other by a distance. However, even at first glance, they look like modern architecture and are easy to find if you are in the area. There are signs, so you can even walk around with just a travel brochure. Nearby is the Jinpo Marine Park, which adds to the sightseeing.

These buildings are illuminated at night. Starting with the old Gunsan Customs House and ending with the architectural museum, four buildings on the main street were lit up in red, purple, white and green. During the day, I walked around and explored the buildings up close. The colors of the roofs of the buildings, which I didn't notice at the time, were clearly visible from the opposite street when I stood to see the night view. [장]

- 1 The photo shows a view of the Gunsan Modern History Museum, located on the sea route adjacent to the Gunsan Inner Harbor. It is characterized by its light green and brown exterior.
- 2 A rubber shoe shop on display at the Gunsan Modern History Museum
- 3 A view of the Honam Customs Museum (formerly Gunsan Customs House) taken at night
- 4 Ddun-dari Pier in the Gunsan Inner Harbor, symbolizing the plundering of rice during the Japanese occupation

Overseas Korean Policy Working Committee meets to consider this year's policy action plan

The Overseas Koreans Agency held the 33rd meeting of the Overseas Korean Policy Working Committee on the 17th floor of the Annex of the Government Complex in Seoul on April 18 to deliberate on an action plan to support the 2024 Overseas Korean Policy.

The working committee deliberates on issues to be submitted to the Overseas Korean Policy Committee (chaired by the Minister of Foreign Affairs), which deliberates and coordinates major issues for the comprehensive and systematic promotion of overseas Korean policy and is chaired by the OKA commissioner under last year's enacted Basic Act on Overseas Koreans.

The meeting was attended by government members from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice and the Office of the National Security Council, as well as 13 civilian members.

"This year's action plan, which is the first to be drafted under the Basic Plan, is important as it serves as a reference point for future annual action plans," OKA Commissioner Lee Key-cheol said. "As we approach the first anniversary of the launch of the OKA, it is necessary to speed up policy implementation in accordance with the action plan to meet the high expectations of overseas Koreans."

In particular, Lee emphasized that "the project to include Korean



Overseas Koreans Agency Commissioner Lee Key-cheol (5th from left, 2nd row from front) explains the agenda during the 33rd meeting of the Overseas Korean Policy Working Committee on April 18 on the 17th floor of the annex of the government complex in Seoul.

political and economic developments in foreign textbooks with overseas Koreans satisfies the four core goals of overseas Korean policy in one project, which are to (1) foster the identity of overseas Koreans and (2) improve their status in their countries of residence but also (3) contribute to the spread of Korean culture and (4) help Korean small and medium-sized enterprises that lack their own brands to expand overseas."

The "2024 Overseas Korean Policy Implementation Plan," which was presented as a single agenda item, was prepared in accordance

with the five-year mid- to long-term "First Overseas Korean Policy Basic Plan" (2024-2028) finalized in January. The government will establish a yearly implementation plan for each year to specifically implement the basic plan and improve its effectiveness.

The implementation plan is composed of 89 detailed tasks for 17 central administrative agencies in line with the five policy goals of the Basic Plan (establishing a system for strengthening overseas Korean policy, fostering overseas Korean identity, strengthening protection and support for overseas Koreans, building a Korean network and contributing to the realization of a global backbone nation).

The action plan reflecting the results of the deliberations of the Overseas Korean Policy Working Committee will be finalized by the Overseas Korean Policy Committee at a later date.

21 overseas institutes to carry out internships for overseas Korean youth

The Overseas Koreans Agency is implementing the "Youth Internship Program" to expand opportunities for the next generation of overseas Korean youth to participate in national affairs and strengthen their capabilities. With the recent generational shift in the Korean diaspora, there is a need to recognize and nurture them as tangible assets of the country.

The internship program is designed to foster young overseas Koreans as global talents through experiences in public affairs, strengthen their bonds with their home countries, and promote the role of bridges between their countries of residence and their home countries.

Starting in April, 24 young adults will participate in the six-month internship program from 21 Korean overseas missions in 13

countries, including the United States, Japan, Canada, Germany and Kazakhstan. The interns will work in political affairs, economic affairs, consular services, public relations and cultural affairs, depending on the circumstances of their respective missions.

"The internship is a project to realize the core goal of the overseas Korean policy, which is to cultivate the identity of the next generation of Koreans and realize their entry into mainstream society," OKA Commissioner Lee Key-cheol said. "We expect talented young people to contribute to the growth of the global Korean network."



A poster introducing the "Youth Internship Program" for 2024 for young Koreans at overseas diplomatic missions (Courtesy of Hansang Net)

Koryo teachers from CIS region to receive Korean language training

The Overseas Koreans Cooperation Center (Director Kim Young-geun), an affiliated organization of the Overseas Koreans Agency, will host an invitational training program in July to improve the professionalism of Koryo people teaching the Korean language in the CIS region. The training aims to help Koryo teachers strengthen their Korean language skills and teaching methods, as well as their Korean identity, so that they can better teach the Korean language, as well as Korean history and culture, in their local communities.

From July 5 to 25, participants will participate in Korean language training according to different proficiency levels, special lectures on teaching methods and history, and Korean cultural experiences. The center will provide round-trip airfare and accommodation during the training period. Priority will be given to current Koryo people in the



Participants of the 2023 Koryo Teacher Training Program for the CIS Region pose for a group photo at Gyeongbok Palace in Seoul.

CIS region who have worked as Korean language teachers for at least two years, with some non-Koryo people also accepted.

Overseas Koreans Agency's Book Recommendations



'Minor Feelings'

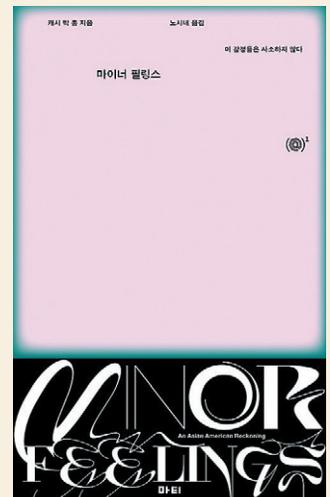
Written by Cathy Park Hong, Korean American /
Translated by Noh Sinae / Published by Mati Books

This book is an autobiographical essay by Cathy Park Hong, 48, a second-generation Korean American immigrant. The author delves into the emotions that subtle and ongoing internalized discrimination and labeling can leave in an individual's mind. Beginning with the line, "My depression began with a fictional tic," the essay introduces the author's dual story of discrimination in the United States as a woman and a racial minority.

"From childhood, I was raised and educated to please white people, and the desire to please was deeply ingrained in my consciousness," she writes.

"I witnessed countless instances of my parents being humiliated like children by white adults," she reveals. Watching her mother shrink back when she spoke English, she felt a responsibility to protect her from a young age. Racism in the United States, consisting of discrimination, exclusion and marginalization, has had a profound and lasting impact on her life.

"I have experienced all kinds of rough treatment and name-



calling from white people that is ubiquitous in American society, but at least I never played the role of the submissive Asian girl they wanted me to play," she emphasizes.

In addition to the personal story, the book also conveys social and cultural content, such as the history of racism and the Los Angeles riots. It is the winner of the 2020 National Book Critics Circle Award for Autobiography.





3 Korean French artists invited to 2nd Korean-French Art Festival in Saint-Mandé

Three Korean artists based in France have been invited to participate in the 2nd Korean-French Art Festival in Saint-Mandé, near Paris. The Korean French cultural exchange organization EcoDracore (Korean name: Echoes of Korea, Director Lee Mia) held the 2nd Korean-French Art Festival from April 3-13 at Saint-Mandé City Hall under the theme “The Way to Spring.” The festival was organized by EcoDracore to provide an exhibition space for Korean artists and support their work. The works of three Korean artists, Choi Young-woong (40), Kim Sun-mi (48) and Kwon Hyuk-yi (40), and four French artists, including Charles Bell, were exhibited. Choi, a painter of Western-style art and a video performance artist, lives and works in Versailles, outside of Paris. She graduated from the École des Beaux-Arts de Versailles and pursued a master’s program in plastic arts at Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University. A member of the Association of Young Korean Artists in France, Kwon lives in Paris and is active in Europe. He studied art at the École des Beaux-Arts de Versailles in France and completed his master’s program in plastic arts at the Paris 1 University. Kim, who majored in Western painting at a Korean university, has been working in Paris since 2000. She majored in printmaking at the École des Beaux-Arts de Versailles and studied at the Paris 1 University for a master’s degree in plastic arts.

Badminton star Lee Yong-dae organizes first badminton tournament with Korean Americans in U.S.

Badminton star Lee Yong-dae (36, Yonex) recently held the “1st All-American Badminton Tournament” with Korean Americans from across the United States. The Lee Yong-dae Badminton Development Association (Chairman Lee Yong-dae) and the Korean Badminton Association in the U.S. held the tournament on April 6 at the International Badminton Center (IBC) in Pine Brook, New Jersey. The tournament was attended by Koreans from all over the United States, including California, Texas, Washington, D.C., Maryland, Virginia, New York, Georgia and New Jersey. The events included men’s doubles, women’s doubles and mixed doubles. “This event was attended by many Koreans from all over the United States,” said Michael Lee, president of the U.S. Branch of the Lee Yong-dae Badminton Development Association. “We are grateful that Lee Yong-dae was able to create memories for his fellow compatriots in the U.S. The first badminton event organized in the United States under my name was successful, and I will continue to plan events to interact with American badminton enthusiasts.” Lee founded the association in 2023 to foster dreamers and run various programs, such as badminton mentoring and badminton camps, to develop badminton in South Korea. The tournament is the first event organized by the association and a special event for Lee to travel to the United States and compete with the tournament participants.



Korean horn player Kim Jae-hyung becomes endorser for German horn company

Horn player Kim Jae-hyung (35), a lifelong assistant principal of the Mainz Philharmonic Orchestra in Germany, was recently appointed a model for Cornford (Firma Cornford Metallblasinstrumentenbau), a German horn manufacturing company. This is the first time a Korean performer has become the face of a German horn company. Kim rose to prominence as a sophomore at Seoul Arts High School when he became the youngest person to win third place at the Jeju International Competition and went on to study at the Düsseldorf University of Music and the Berlin University of Music and earned a doctorate in performance at the Munich University of Music. As a member of the German Contemporary Ensemble and the XII Cornist, which is an ensemble of 12 principal horns from orchestras around the world, he performs extensively in Europe and Asia. Based in Münster, in the North Rhine-Westphalia region of Germany, Cornford produces horns for professional players and has recently been recognized for its state-of-the-art triple horns. Widely recognized as an advanced or professional horn, the 3S triple horn from Cornford weighs 2.25 kilograms, significantly lighter than the 3.6 kilograms of the previous full double horn. “Korean musicians are recognized in the world’s top rankings for piano, strings and voice, but there is still a huge gap in the case of brass instruments,” Kim said. “I will strive to expand the horizons of Korean brass instrument performance as an endorsement model.”

How to better educate next generation of overseas compatriots who will become ‘pillar of global civil society’

Spring is in bloom. Magnolias, forsythia and other spring flowers have emerged from the cold, and soon the whole landscape will be covered in colorful spring flowers. Looking at the spring flowers in full bloom, I suddenly thought of the young people of the next generation who will be the main pillars of overseas Korean development in the future. How can we help them grow into great leaders with a strong Korean identity? For me, who has been teaching the Korean language and culture to overseas Koreans and foreigners for over 30 years, this is a big concern and topic of discussion.

The most important thing for them is their identity as Koreans. Without a well-defined identity, their achievements and accomplishments can easily crumble like a sandcastle. So, what are the keys to forming the identity of the next generation of overseas Koreans? First, language, and second, also language. The language we speak, Korean, is the core foundation of our identity.

As a tool of communication, language is the foundation of how we think, act and interact with the world. We need to make it easy for the next generation of overseas Koreans to learn and use Korean and Hangeul and make it their identity and also their competitive advantage. It is said that what is the most Korean is also the most global. Those who are proficient in Korean language and culture, those who are the most Korean, can be the most global. With a strong sense of identity, we need to educate the next generation of overseas Koreans to lead the agenda for sustainable human development, including poverty, human rights, the environment and peace. The education of the next generation of overseas Koreans should be centered on the Korean language and cultivate global citizenship.

This requires policy and institutional support, as well as concrete ways to teach Korean language and culture. A close network should be established between Korean educational institutions, Korean Cultural Centers and Hangeul schools in each country and the local



Professor Kim Jung-sup,
director of the Institute of
International Education, Kyung
Hee University

Korean community there, with the Overseas Koreans Agency at its heart. Based on such a network, various practical systems and policies can be put in place for local communities.

The efforts and achievements of the Foundation For Korean Language and Culture in USA in Los Angeles, where I have been volunteering for many years, are exemplary in this regard, including the expansion of Korean language courses and educational support in elementary, middle and high schools, the sale of 2 million copies of its own textbooks, the purchase of its own building, and the petition for the inclusion of

Korean among the Advanced Placement (AP) exams. This is because it has made a significant impact on the education of the next generation of overseas Koreans, as well as the spread of Korean language education in the local community.

However, Korean language education abroad still suffers from a lack of material and human resources, including textbooks and Korean teachers. This is a longstanding problem that has plagued the overseas Korean community for decades, but the solution is not simple. Times are changing rapidly, and science and technology are advancing at an incredible pace. I hope that artificial intelligence technologies, such as ChatGPT, which are resonating globally, can be used as a driving force to solve the difficulties of Korean language education and develop it to a new level. Through edtech (education + technology), we hope to find a new level of developmental solutions.

I also hope that more attention and support will be given to the education of the next generation of overseas Koreans in marginalized regions. Through such efforts, attempts and support, I hope that the next generation of overseas Koreans will be able to take leadership in leading global discourse and solving problems in the societies they live in. I also hope that Korean language and Korean culture, which constitute their identity and essence, will bloom like spring flowers in the hearts of people around the world. 🌸

* The contributor's claims or opinions may differ from the position of the Overseas Koreans Agency.

**Overseas
Koreans
Agency
Major
Activities**

18th Korean Day (Oct. 5) call for overseas Korean candidates for merit award (April 8-28)
 Future Leaders' Conference (April 30-May 3)
 Overseas Korean Adoptees Gathering (May 21-24)
 Future overseas Korean leaders & Korean language teacher invitational training (July 22-27) / Advance online training (July 1-19)
 * For detailed schedule and information, please refer to the OKA website (<https://oka.go.kr/oka>).

OKA Announcements

Call for 18th Korean Day merit award candidates

Awarded to individuals and organizations that have contributed to the development of their home country and compatriot society (April 28)

Ahead of this year's 18th Korean Day (Oct. 5), the OKA is calling for candidates for overseas Korean merit awards until April 28. Individuals and organizations that have contributed to the advancement of the rights and interests of overseas Koreans and the development of Korea and compatriot society are eligible for the award.

Awards and decorations include the Order of Civil Merit, Medals of Honor and commendations from the president, prime minister and OKA commissioner. Anyone who has received a governmental award cannot receive a medal again within seven years, a decoration within five years or a commendation within three years, regardless of the discipline of the award already received.

Any overseas Korean or Korean citizen can nominate a candidate via mail or email. For further details, including the submission of mandatory documentation, please refer to the OKA's website (www.oka.go.kr).

Once the nomination is complete, a list describing the major achievements of all candidates will be made public on the official websites of the OKA, orders, decorations and medals of South



President Yoon Suk Yeol awards the National Merit Rose of Sharon Medal to Bae Hyo-Jun (Japanese name: Takatoshi Takemoto), chairman of the board of the Asia Foundation, at the 2023 World Korean Association Presidents Conference and 17th Korean Day Ceremony at Lotte Hotel World in Jamsil, Songpa-gu, Seoul, on Oct. 5, 2023.

Korea and overseas Korean offices to go through verification for at least 15 days. Opinions collected through this process will be verified through self-vindication and statements from stakeholders and will be reflected in the deliberations of the public review committee. The winners will be announced on the OKA website and South Korea's orders, decorations and medals website in October.

"Since its inception in 2007, the Korean Day Merit Award has strengthened the bond between the home country and the overseas Korean community by encouraging those who have quietly dedicated themselves around the world," OKA Commissioner Lee Key-cheol said. "We hope that many hidden contributors will be discovered through this call."

**OKA
Commissioner's
Activities
in April 2024**

- April 1: Meeting and luncheon with president of Korean Association of Chicago, USA (OKA)
- 2: Meeting and luncheon with vice minister of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam (OKA)
- 8: Meeting and luncheon with YTN global center director (Overseas Koreans Office)
- 11: 1st Policy Advisory Committee Appointment Ceremony and General Meeting (OKA)
- 12: Meeting with director of Incheon Free Economic Zone Authority (Songdo)
- 15: Meeting with representative of Leeum School in France (OKA)
- 16: Meeting with director of Military Manpower Administration (OKA)
- 17: Meeting with governor of South Pyongan Province, Committee for Five North Korean Provinces (OKA)
- 18: 33rd Overseas Korean Policy Working Committee and Luncheon (Seoul Government Complex)
- 22: Attendance at opening ceremony of 2024 Heads of Diplomatic Missions Meeting (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
- 23: Attendance at Overseas Koreans Office-KFTC business agreement ceremony (Gwanghwamun)
- 26: Presiding over 2024 Overseas Diplomatic Heads' Meeting and Luncheon (Seoul)
- 29: Keynote lecture and congratulatory address at World Association of Korean Journalists (Seoul)
- 30: 2024 Future Leaders' Conference opening ceremony and keynote lecture (Seoul)



750만 재외동포와 대한민국이 하나로 통하는 첫 번째 온라인 세상 코리아넷

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