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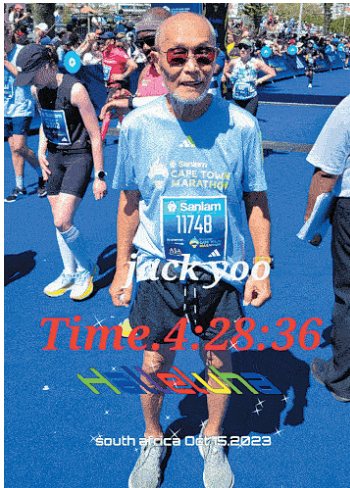
재외동포의 창



Window into Overseas Koreans



- Special Article - President Yoon Suk Yeol meets Korean compatriots in Netherlands, U.K., U.S.
- Special Feature - 2023 Overseas Korean Adoptees Gathering successfully held
- 2023 Future Leaders' Conference opens
- Newsworthy Topic - Basic Act on Overseas Koreans effective Nov. 10
- OKA delivers sympathy packages to permanently resettled Sakhalin compatriots



President Yoon Suk Yeol's speech for Dutch compatriots

Nice to meet you, compatriots. Thank you so much for welcoming my wife and me so warmly. This is the first time a Korean president has made a state visit to the Netherlands. I am very happy to meet you all for the first time.

As you know, the history of exchanges between Korea and the Netherlands is very old and deep, as we learn at school. Weltevree, also known as Park Yeon, and Hamel drifted from the Indonesian East India Co. to the port of Nagasaki, Japan, and came to Jeju Island. One lived there for the rest of his life, and the other returned to the Netherlands along the way.

Weltevree also provided immense help in producing cutting-edge weapons for our country's training department at the time. Hamel introduced Korea to European society.

Korea and the Netherlands have developed a special relationship despite the turbulence of modern and contemporary history. Even during the Korean War, the Netherlands willingly dispatched more than 5,000 soldiers, being the fourth-fastest country in the world to provide military support to Korea.

Since then, Korea and the Netherlands have expanded economic cooperation while sharing the values of freedom and the rule of law, and last year, bilateral trade volume reached \$16 billion, the highest ever. I understand that Korean restaurants in many cities in the Netherlands are crowded with Dutch people who enjoy Korean food, and that K-content, such as K-pop and K-dramas, are also very popular.

Over the past year and a half since taking office, I have met with Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte at many multilateral meetings and held three summit meetings. The summit on Dec. 13 will be the fourth summit. When I went to the NATO multilateral meeting for the first time after taking office, Prime Minister Rutte introduced me to many European leaders, one by one. Maybe it was because of that meeting that I have looked around first to see if Prime Minister Rutte had come to many multilateral meetings since then. As a result, I feel like my feelings for the Netherlands have become even more special.

What we are most interested in during this state visit is the semiconductor field. We have had very close semiconductor cooperation with the Netherlands. With this visit, semiconductor cooperation between Korea and the Netherlands will be upgraded to a semiconductor alliance. Semiconductors are an important field, not only for our industry but also for our security.

Of course, Korea and the Netherlands are expanding their horizons in various fields, starting with strategic areas, such as



President Yoon Suk Yeol makes a speech to Dutch compatriots.

defense and security, economic and cultural exchanges, and cutting-edge scientific and technological exchanges. Through this visit, many agreements and business agreements (MOUs) will be signed, deepening the relationship between Korea and the Netherlands. I believe that the role of our compatriots in the Netherlands was very important in making the relationship between our two countries so close.


I understand that the Korean community in the Netherlands, which started with international students in the theology and engineering fields in the 1950s, has now grown close to 10,000 people. This year is a significant year as it marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Korean Association in the Netherlands. I would like to thank our Dutch compatriots once again for playing a role as a bridge connecting our two countries by playing an active role in various fields, such as the economy, science and culture.

The Overseas Koreans Agency, which I promised during last year's presidential election, was launched in June of this year. The OKA will serve as a link that closely connects you with your home country and a strong fence supporting your compatriots. The government will make more careful efforts to ensure that adopted Koreans in the Netherlands and the next generation of Koreans do not forget their roots while continuing their ties with their homeland.

Dear compatriots!

Every time I travel overseas, I feel infinite pride and gratitude as I meet our compatriots in the destinations I visit. Our country is one of the few countries in the world that has a strong overseas Korean community in each country. Not long ago, the president of Italy paid a state visit to our country, and he said this while having dinner. It is said that the only countries in the world that have overseas communities are Italy and Korea. When I think about it, it seems like that. I think there are also overseas Chinese in China, but I think it is a little different from the overseas Korean community or the overseas Italian community.

I believe that our strong overseas Korean community is a valuable national asset not only for our compatriots but also for our home country, Korea. We must work together so that the Republic of Korea and overseas Koreans around the world can work together to responsibly contribute to world freedom, peace and prosperity and create a country that is envied and respected by the international community. Thank you again for your warm hospitality to my wife and me. I wish health and happiness to all my Dutch compatriots.

Thank you. 



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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 7.5 million 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>

President Yoon Suk Yeol meets Korean compatriots in Netherlands, U.K., U.S.

Encouraging words shared with compatriots during visits in November and December; ‘Please become strong bridge between homeland and residence countries’

In November and December, President Yoon Suk Yeol visited the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States, holding meetings with local compatriots, encouraging their hard work, explaining Korea’s changed international status and calling on the compatriot community to build strong bridges between their homeland and their countries of residence.

Korea-Netherlands semiconductor cooperation elevated to semiconductor alliance

During his state visit to the Netherlands, Yoon said on Dec. 11, “With this visit, the semiconductor cooperation between Korea and the Netherlands will now be upgraded to a semiconductor alliance.”

At a compatriot dinner in Amsterdam on the same day, Yoon said, “Semiconductors are not only important for our industries but also for our security.”

“The relationship between Korea and the Netherlands is expanding its horizons from strategic areas, such as defense and security, to various fields, such as the economy and culture, advanced science and technology, and education. This visit will deepen the relationship with the signing of many agreements and memorandums of understanding,” Yoon added.

“The history of exchanges between Korea and the Netherlands is very long and deep,” Yoon said. “The Dutch sailor Weltevree (Korean name Park Yeon), who washed ashore on Jeju Island, helped to build advanced weapons in the Joseon military, and Hamel introduced Korea to the European community. Korea and the Netherlands share the values of freedom and the rule of law and have expanded economic cooperation, with bilateral trade reaching a record US\$16 billion last year, as well as the strong popularity of K-content, such as K-pop and K-dramas.”

He also noted that the diaspora in the Netherlands has grown to nearly 10,000 people and encouraged them to “make our strong diaspora community a



valuable national asset not only to our compatriots but also to our home country, Korea.”

The meeting was attended by Yoon Won, president of the Korean Association of the Netherlands; Lee Jong-ho, minister of science and ICT; Park Jin, minister of foreign affairs; National Security Adviser Cho Tae-yong; Ahn Deok-geun, head of trade negotiations; Kim Tae-hyo, first deputy chief of security; and Choi Hyung-chan, ambassador to the Netherlands, and his wife.

‘Building cybersecurity and defense cooperation through state visit to U.K.’

President Yoon, who paid a state visit to the United Kingdom on Nov. 20, said, “Through this visit, Korea and the United Kingdom will build a new system of cooperation in security fields, such as cybersecurity and the defense industry.” Yoon made the announcement during a meeting with compatriots at a hotel in London, the first item on his schedule.

“Today, South Korea and the United Kingdom are partners in the universal values of freedom, human rights, the rule of law and an economic community connected by a free market,” he said. “We will resume negotiations to revise the Korea-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA) to further solidify our supply chain



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and cooperation.

“Korea and the United Kingdom have a long and deeply rooted history of cooperation and solidarity,” he said, noting that the United Kingdom was the first European country to sign a protective trade treaty with Korea in 1883. “After Korea’s liberation from Japanese colonial rule, Britain took the lead in defending Korea’s freedom against communist aggression. When the fate of the country hung in the balance after North Korea’s illegal surprise invasion in 1950, Britain deployed 80,000 troops, the second-largest number in the world, more than 1,000 of whom gave their lives.”

With regards to the Korean compatriot community, he said, “The Korean community, which numbered only 47 in 1950, began to grow significantly in the 1970s as Korean businesspeople began to expand their presence in the U.K. Now they number around 40,000, making it the largest and most active Korean community in Western Europe.

“The Korean diaspora in the U.K. is growing its local influence in many fields, including trade, law, health care and sports,” Yoon said. “I urge them to continue to excel in their respective fields, to make greater contributions and services to British society, and we ask you to be a strong bridge between Korea and the U.K.”

‘San Francisco is starting point of Korean history on American soil’

President Yoon visited San Francisco on Nov. 15 and said, “San Francisco is the starting point of the history of Koreans on the U.S. mainland.” At a luncheon for compatriots at a hotel in downtown San Francisco, Yoon emphasized, “The Koreans who arrived in Hawaii 120 years ago settled on the U.S. mainland through San Francisco.

“It’s very energizing to see you on my first scheduled stop on my visit to the United States,” said Yoon, who was in the country for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit. “And it’s even more meaningful that it is my first meeting with Northern Californians as the President of Korea after 11 years.” Noting that this is his fourth visit to the United States, he explained, “This year, the 70th anniversary of the U.S.-ROK alliance, will be remembered as a historic starting point for the two countries to take the first step toward a new 70 years of alliance as an alliance that acts.

“The history of the development of the U.S.-ROK alliance is also the history of the development of Koreans in the U.S.,” Yoon said. “The contributions of our fellow San Franciscans have been a big part of that. Many of our compatriots are excelling in the IT and high-tech fields that are developing day



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by day, especially in Silicon Valley, and I urge them to help advance the U.S.-Korea science and technology alliance by interacting and collaborating with talented people around the world.”

“I asked the Overseas Koreans Agency and the Advisory Council for Democratic Peace and Reunification to make a very close connection between Korean compatriots, so that we can create synergies in each field,” he said, promising to connect future generations in particular.

About 150 compatriots attended the luncheon meeting. [한]

- 1 President Yoon Suk Yeol delivers a speech of encouragement at a dinner for compatriots at a hotel in Amsterdam on his state visit to the Netherlands on Dec. 11.
- 2 President Yoon Suk Yeol and his wife, Kim Keon Hee, pose for a commemorative photo with compatriots during a compatriot dinner at a hotel in Amsterdam.
- 3 President Yoon Suk Yeol and his wife, Kim Keon Hee, pose for a photo with a celebratory performance group during a luncheon for compatriots at a hotel in downtown San Francisco on Nov. 15.
- 4 President Yoon Suk Yeol and his wife, Kim Keon Hee, receive bouquets of flowers from compatriots during a luncheon for compatriots at a hotel in London on his state visit to the United Kingdom on Nov. 20.

2023 Overseas Korean Adoptees Gathering successfully held

Hosted by OKA, 112 participants from 14 countries visited home country

The 2023 Overseas Korean Adoptees Gathering, hosted by the Overseas Koreans Agency to form bonds between adopted compatriots and their home country and foster solidarity among the compatriots, was successfully held at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Yongsan Ward, Seoul, from Dec. 11 to 14. In this gathering, held under the slogan of “Connect, a new leap,” 112 people, including 70 adoptees living in 14 countries and their families, participated. Most of the participants set foot on their native land for the first time after their adoption.

“The adoptees who have been relatively marginalized until now will be embraced and carefully cared for as part of the inclusive overseas Korean policy,” Lee Key-cheol, commissioner of the OKA, said in the opening speech that was delivered by Kang Bok-won, director of the Exchange and Cooperation Department of the OKA. “We will protect the rights and interests of adopted Koreans. It will be a strong fence and advocate that enables mutual development.”

Rep. Lim Jong-seong, senior vice chairman of the World Korean Democratic Conference of the Democratic Party of Korea, said in his congratulatory speech: “This event is an opportunity to confirm that Korea is always by your side. I hope this will be an opportunity to continue to interact as a member of the Republic of Korea while experiencing Korean culture and learning about history.”

Carlo Colombo (Korean name Park Heung-guk), president of KOR.I.A., an Italian Korean adoptees association, said in a congratulatory speech representing the participants: “We have not become completely close, but we share many things in common. It is only a matter of time before we become closer. We are all Koreans.”

Following the opening ceremony, panel discussions were held on themes that included “Korea and me, difficulties and overcoming them in the process of growing up, and thoughts on the connection to our home country.” Four adopted Koreans, living in the United States, Germany, Denmark and Sweden, respectively, participated as panelists and shared their thoughts.

On Dec. 12, the second day of the conference, the adopted



Participants take a group photo at the opening ceremony of the 2023 Overseas Korean Adoptees Gathering held at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Yongsan Ward, Seoul, on Dec. 11.

Koreans participated in an information session, where the OKA provided various information related to adoption in cooperation with related organizations. In this session, the Ministry of Justice and the Seoul Immigration Office provided guidance on how to restore nationality and the procedures for obtaining an overseas Korean visa (F-4).

The Global Overseas Adoptees’ Link (GOAL) provided information on finding biological families, and the National Center for the Rights of the Child explained the genetic testing procedures for finding biological families.

During the competition, participants visited the National Museum of Korea and Kukkiwon, experienced Korea’s history and culture, and looked back on their home country’s development through industrial inspection. We also had time to build networks among participants by country and region and learn about their home countries.

On the last day of the competition, a general discussion was held, and a declaration was adopted expressing expectations for mutual development between adopted compatriots and Korea, followed by a closing ceremony and a promise for the next meeting.

“I hope that this conference will serve as an important opportunity for adoptees and their home countries to become closer, and the OKA will work harder to build a global Korean network together with adoptees in the future,” Choi Young-han, deputy commissioner of the OKA, said in his closing speech. [3]

2023 Future Leaders' Conference opens

Hosted by Overseas Koreans Agency; 'strengthening Korean identity and leadership'

The 2023 Future Leaders' Conference was held in Seoul and Gyeonggi Province from Nov. 28 to Dec. 2 by the Overseas Koreans Agency, which invited outstanding young talents who will lead the future of the Korean diaspora in their respective countries to strengthen Korean identity and enhance their leadership capabilities.

Under the slogan "The World in Our Embrace, the Future in Our Hands," 89 next-generation Korean leaders from 20 countries participated in the event. The participants are active in various fields, including politics, economics, law and the arts.

Among those visiting Korea were Hwang Soon-sik, an aerospace engineer at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), who advised the task force on the establishment of the Korea Aerospace Administration, as part of the Korean aerospace initiative pursued by President Yoon Suk Yeol; Amanda Cho, chair of the Korean Adoptee Association of Georgia and also a certified public accountant, as well as a Korean American adopted by a family in the United States; and soprano Lee Seul-ki, a professor at the National Conservatory of Music in Asuncion, Paraguay, and the conductor of the Children's Choir of the Korean Association of Paraguay.

OKA commissioner: Strive to cultivate identity, improve status in resident countries

Lee Key-cheol, commissioner of the OKA, spoke at the opening ceremony of the event held at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Yongsan Ward, Seoul, on Nov. 28.

"In the past, it was a beneficiary relationship in which the government protected and supported overseas Koreans, but with the establishment of the Overseas Koreans Agency, this has become a reciprocal relationship," he said. "The Ministry of Foreign Affairs established overseas Korean policies and the Overseas Koreans Foundation implemented projects, but now the policy establishment and project implementation have become unified and future-oriented."

"We will strive to cultivate the identity of overseas Koreans and improve their status in their countries of residence," he said, emphasizing, "We will build a global network and strengthen the infrastructure for domestic Koreans, while actively supporting our overseas compatriots, including marginalized overseas Koreans."




Lee Key-cheol, commissioner of the Overseas Koreans Agency, delivers opening remarks at the opening ceremony of the 2023 Future Leaders' Conference.

In a keynote lecture following the opening ceremony titled "Changes in Overseas Korean Policy Following the Establishment of the Overseas Koreans Agency," Commissioner Lee asked the participants to take an active role in promoting the political and economic development of the proud nation of Korea.

On Nov. 29, the participants visited the Prime Minister's Office in Samcheong-dong, Seoul, for a meeting with Bang Ki-sun, minister of the Office for Government Policy Coordination, followed by sectoral and regional discussions. On Nov. 30, the third day of the conference, the participants visited the Samsung Innovation Museum in Suwon, Gyeonggi Province, and the Korean Folk Village in Yongin, Gyeonggi Province, for industrial tours and traditional cultural experiences.

On Dec. 1, the OKA held a briefing on a global talent project to help the next generation contribute through practical exchanges with their home countries. Participants engaged in sectoral discussions and regional networking, as well as general discussions, and finished with the closing ceremony and a promise to meet again.

The Future Leaders' Conference has been held annually since 1998 to explore ways for the next generation of compatriots to enter the mainstream as Korean leaders and to build the next generation of Korean networks. Over the years, more than 1,500 next-generation leaders from various fields have participated in the convention. 



Participants take a group photo at the closing ceremony of the 2023 Future Leaders' Conference.

Basic Act on Overseas Koreans effective Nov. 10

Definition of overseas Koreans, basic direction of policy, establishment of implementation plan



A public hearing on the Basic Act on Overseas Koreans is held at the National Assembly on March 10.

The Basic Act on Overseas Koreans and its subordinate legislation, the Enforcement Decree on the Basic Act on Overseas Koreans, which are the legal basis for the systematic and comprehensive implementation of overseas Korean policies, went into effect Nov. 10.

Despite the fact that there are more than 7.5 million overseas Koreans in various parts of the world, there have been significant difficulties in the systematic and comprehensive implementation of overseas Korean policies due to the lack of a legal foundation that provides basic goals and directions for overseas Korean policies.


President Yoon Suk Yeol's administration has made the establishment of the Basic Act on Overseas Koreans and the establishment of the Overseas Koreans Administration a major part of its national agenda, and by achieving both, it has enhanced the effectiveness of the establishment and implementation of overseas Korean policies and established a legal and institutional framework for policy promotion.

The Basic Act on Overseas Koreans and the Enforcement Decree of the Basic Act on Overseas Koreans clearly define overseas Koreans and overseas Korean policy, establish a basic plan for overseas Korean policy and a yearly implementation plan, and stipulate the Overseas Korean Policy Committee to comprehensively deliberate and revise policies on overseas Koreans.

Based on the Basic Act on Overseas Koreans and the Enforcement Decree on the Basic Act on Overseas Koreans, the Overseas Koreans Agency will further systematically protect and support the 7.5 million overseas Koreans and strengthen the legal and institutional foundations for effective policy implementation, including improving institutions and revising laws and regulations. Ultimately, the government will continue to work to ensure that South Korea and the overseas Korean community develop together.

"As the main ministry in charge of establishing and implementing overseas Korean policies, we believe that the implementation of the Basic Act on Overseas Koreans and the Enforcement Decree of the Basic Act on Overseas Koreans will contribute to significantly strengthening the momentum of overseas Korean policies, in addition to laying the legal foundation for the promotion of overseas Korean policies," OKA Commissioner Lee Key-cheol said.

In order to implement the Basic Act and the Enforcement Decree of the Basic Act, the OKA released the Road Map for the Promotion of Overseas Korean Policy on Sept. 13, marking the 100th day of the agency's establishment, including its past achievements and future plans in seven major areas, 23 major tasks and 41 detailed projects.

In addition, the government will establish the "First Overseas Korean Policy Basic Plan" (2024-2028) in consultation with relevant central administrative agencies and finalize it after deliberations by the Overseas Korean Policy Committee in January. 

OKA delivers sympathy packages to permanently resettled Sakhalin compatriots

Commissioner Lee, ‘We will not let our compatriots suffer alone and shed tears’

The Overseas Korean Agency delivered sympathy packages to more than 3,000 Sakhalin compatriots, who have permanently returned and are living in 27 regions across the country, for the holiday season. On Dec. 21, OKA Commissioner Lee Key-cheol personally visited Gohyang Village in Ansan, Gyeonggi Province, home to more than 800 Sakhalin compatriots and gave them gifts to lift their spirits. The event was attended by Kwon Kyeong-seok, chairman of the National Association of Sakhalin Returnees; Joo Hoon-chun, chairman of the Permanent Returnee Senior Citizens' Association of Gohyang Village; and more than 100 Sakhalin compatriots living in the village.

“The amendment to the Sakhalin Compatriots Act, which expands the eligibility for the permanent return program from a Sakhalin compatriot and one direct relative to all of their immediate family, is about to be passed by the National Assembly,” Lee said at the handover ceremony. “We will continue to provide practical help to our compatriots. The OKA will continue to fulfill its role as a strong fence and advocate for proud overseas Koreans, and will take care of them and embrace them warmly so that they do not suffer and cry alone, no matter where they are.”

The Gifting Program for Permanently Resettled Sakhalin Compatriots in Korea is a project to support the resettlement of Sakhalin compatriots, who were forced to live in the Russian territory of Sakhalin during the Japanese colonial period and returned to their homeland in 1994 under the Korean and Japanese governments' Sakhalin Korean Permanent Return Project. It has been implemented annually since 1998.

Briefing on permanent return and resettlement support for compatriots held in Sakhalin

The OKA held an in-person briefing session about the Sakhalin Compatriots Permanent Return and Resettlement Support Project in the Sakhalin Korean Cultural Center in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, Russia, on Nov. 30.

The Sakhalin Compatriots Permanent Return and Resettlement Support Project supports the permanent return and resettlement of Korean compatriots and their families who moved to Sakhalin due to forced mobilization during the Japanese occupation but were unable to return to their homeland after liberation.




OKA Commissioner Lee Key-cheol (8th from L) poses for a group photo with officials after visiting Sakhalin compatriots, who have returned to their home country, in Gohyang Village in Ansan, Gyeonggi Province, on Dec. 21.



A briefing session on the Permanent Return and Settlement Support Project for Sakhalin Compatriots is held by the OKA at the Sakhalin Korean Cultural Center in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, Russia, on Nov. 30.

This year, 270 people were selected to permanently return. They are compatriots who were born in Sakhalin or emigrated to Sakhalin by Aug. 15, 1945, as well as their spouses, offspring and their offspring's spouses.

In accordance with the Special Law on Assistance to Compatriots of Sakhalin, which came into force in January 2021, the recipients will receive financial support for return fares and initial settlement costs, operating expenses for housing and living facilities, and rental housing.

The in-person briefings, which were held online due to COVID-19 and resumed this year with the launch of the OKA, were attended by representatives from the OKA, the Korean Red Cross and the Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk branch office of the Korean Consulate General in Vladivostok, as well as officials from the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health and Welfare, and the Korea Land and Housing Corp. 

90-year-old Korean American marathon runner to run in Antarctic next year

Yoo Jae-joon, former miner in Germany, currently settled in U.S. and running laundry store

A 90-year-old U.S. resident who took up running a decade ago and has since completed the full course of six of the world's biggest marathons, is getting attention after taking on the challenge to run a marathon in Antarctica early next year.


According to Canadian journalist Song Kwang-ho, the main character is Jack Yoo (Korean name Yoo Jae-joon), who lives in Chicago. When he turned 80 in 2013, Yoo started running marathons for his health.

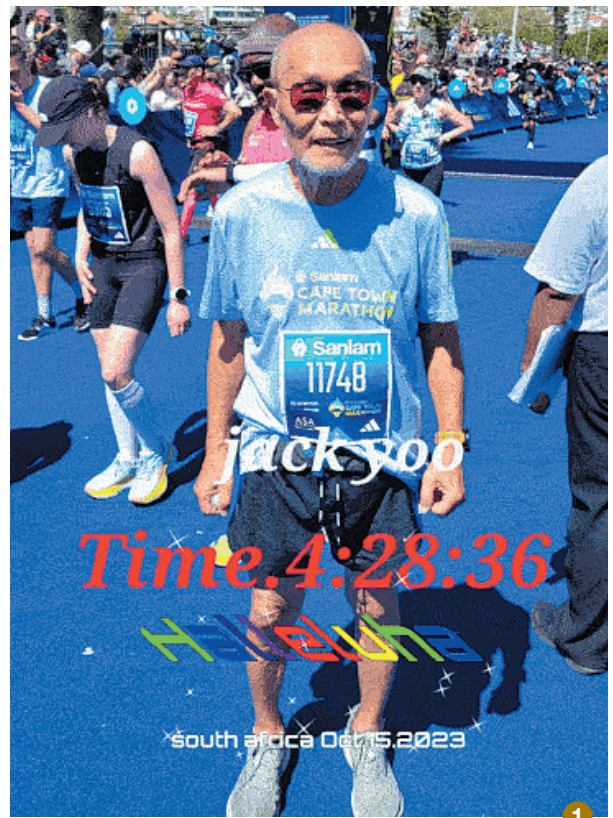
He first ran the Chicago Marathon that year in 3 hours, 30 minutes, 38 seconds and went on to finish the Tokyo (2014), Berlin (2014), Boston (2015), New York (2016) and London (2017) marathons, all in the sub-3 1/2-hour range.

"I first participated in the Chicago Marathon, where I live, and completed six major marathons, culminating in the London Marathon in 2017," said Yoo. "Last October, I participated in a marathon in Cape Town, South Africa, and finished with a time of 4 hours, 28 minutes, 36 seconds."

Born in Cheongju, North Chungcheong Province, Yoo was sent to Germany as a miner in 1964 but never returned to Korea and instead immigrated to the U.S. There, he settled down and mainly ran a laundry store. After retiring at age 70, he worked as a missionary in China for 12 years.

"I am preparing to compete in the World Marathon in Antarctica on March 21 next year," he said. "I have been doing light exercise every day, such as playing table tennis and walking."

The Antarctic Marathon, organized by a U.S. travel company, has been held annually since 1995. It's a 13-day, 14-night race that starts in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and finishes on King George Island. 



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1 Jack Yoo poses for a photo after completing the marathon in Cape Town, South Africa, in October.

2 Medals that Yoo has won in marathons over the years

First Korean American woman's face to appear on back of U.S. coin

Disability rights activist Stacey Park Milbern



1 Korean American disability rights activist Stacey Park Milbern (C) (Photo from Google Arts & Culture homepage)

2 The design of Stacy Park Milbern's coin being considered by the U.S. Mint (Image from the U.S. Mint website)

For the first time, the face of a person of Korean descent will appear on the bottom of a quarter (25 cents) issued by the United States Mint (USM). According to the American JoongAng Daily and the USM website, Stacey Park Milbern, a Korean American female disability rights activist, will be featured on the coin.

Born in 1987, Milbern was the daughter of an American soldier father, stationed in South Korea, and a South Korean mother. She was born in Seoul, then moved to the U.S. and grew up in North Carolina. From birth, she suffered from congenital muscular dystrophy, a degenerative muscle disease, and her personal experience inspired her to become involved in the disability rights movement.

Milbern played a role in the passing of a North Carolina law requiring schools to teach disability history courses. The governor of North Carolina also appointed her to the Commission on Disability.

She has also founded organizations that serve underserved communities. In 2014, she served as a disability policy adviser to the Barack Obama administration's President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, she was responsible for creating prevention kits and for distributing masks and hand sanitizer to people with disabilities and low-income communities. She remained


active even when she had cancer and passed away on her birthday, May 19, 2020, at the age of 33.

U.S. Mint selects 5 women for 2025 American Women Quarters Program

After reviewing 20 female candidates for the 2025 American Women Quarters Program, the U.S. Mint announced the five finalists on Oct. 17 to appear on the reverse of a coin featuring the face of the nation's first president, George Washington.

For four years, between 2022 and 2025, the USM has been choosing American women to honor for their achievements and contributions on the reverse of the 25-cent coin, and this year will be its last. The project is in response to a law passed by Congress in 2020 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, which prohibits discrimination based on sex.

"It is an honor to respect women and tell their stories through coinage -- those who have contributed to American history and made a difference in their own way," said Ventris Gibson, the director of the program.

In addition to Milbern, the list includes black journalist Ida Wells, Girl Scout founder Juliette Gordon, astronomer Vera Rubin and black tennis player Alcee Gibson. The USM will determine the final design of the coins featuring their faces after a review process. 

GLOBAL KOREAN



First Korean American company to be listed on Nasdaq donates US\$8 million to Sookmyung Women's University 'Hoping that with 117-year history of educating women it grows to become global university'

Sookmyung Women's University (SWU) announced on Nov. 22 that Hwang Kyu-bin, the founder of TeleVideo, the first Korean American company to be listed on the U.S. Nasdaq, and his wife, Gemma Hwang, an alumna of the university, pledged US\$8 million to the Sookmyung Development Fund. SWU explained that TeleVideo pledged an additional \$6 million last month after donating \$2 million in February, which is the university's largest amount based on individual donation commitments.

"(We) hope that this support fund will serve as a foundation for SWU, a private women's university with a history of 117 years, to grow into a university that nurtures the world's best global female talents," the Hwangs said in a joint statement.

SWU plans to use these funds to build a multiplex building and dormitories. Gemma Hwang graduated in 1959 from the Department of Home Economics at SWU's College of Human Ecology, the predecessor to the College of Human Ecology, and majored in food engineering at the University of Vienna in Austria.

Her husband is the founder of TeleVideo, a venture company that developed the world's first PC network system in 1975. Eight years after starting the business, he became the first Korean American to list a company on the Nasdaq.

Park Ji-eun, civil servant at Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, pledges to serve as 'bridge between majority and minority' Visited Korea to attend 2023 Future Leaders' Conference

"It's an attractive job because I can help those who need help the most. We take pride in communicating between mainstream Canadian society and immigrants. I want to continue to serve as a bridge between the majority and the minority."

Park Ji-eun (32), an overseas Korean working as a program adviser at the department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), met with the press at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Yongsan Ward, Seoul, on Dec. 1 and said, "I am part of a large organization, but I am having fun working."

She visited Korea to attend the 2023 Future Leaders' Conference, where the Overseas Koreans Agency (OKA) invites young talents who will lead the future of overseas Korean communities in their respective countries and helps them foster their Korean identities and cultivate leadership skills.

Canada is a multicultural country where 40 percent of the population are immigrants or children of immigrants, and immigrants are viewed as a driving force for national development and a key element of economic development. The Canadian government is active in accepting immigrants and refugees to resolve problems, such as the low birth rate, aging population and declining working population.

The IRCC, with 10,000 employees, announced its "2023-2025 Immigration Plan" at the end of 2022 and announced that it plans to accept about 1.45 million immigrants over the three years to solve the labor shortage issue. The settlement department, where Park has been working for three years, supports about 500 settlement service organizations to help immigrants and refugees settle in Canadian society to realize the economic, social and cultural



benefits of immigration.

There are about 100 people working in Park's department, and she is the only Korean among them. Park said that the process of permanent residents applying for settlement services used to be inefficient due to the dispersed structure of the organizations. Park proposed an improvement plan with her colleagues and felt greatly rewarded to see her proposal reflected in policy.

Park immigrated to Calgary, Alberta, Canada, with her family at the age of 15, when she was a middle school student. Park also lived in China for two years when her father, who worked as an engineer at a large Korean company, became an expatriate in China, so she had no objection to immigration.

She majored in International Relations at the University of Calgary and minored in the Chinese and French languages. After interning at the National Assembly in Ottawa, she worked as an aide in the office of Rep. Yuna Martin, Canada's first Korean American senator.

She was later appointed as a civil servant and worked at the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy for three years before moving to her current position at the IRCC.

Choi Ye-rim, assistant to U.S. senator: 'We will launch Korean American aide group' **Holding bachelor's & master's degrees in criminology; active in U.S. Army Reserve for 9 years**

"The number of young Koreans trying to enter the political world is increasing, but there is a lack of connections to exchange help. I plan to start a group of next-generation Korean aides with about 20 people, including acquaintances, and make it a representative organization for Koreans, not only in the United States but also around the world."

Choi Ye-rim (28), aide to a U.S. senator (the office of U.S. Sen. Alex Padilla), visited Korea to attend the 2023 Future Leaders' Conference and met with the press at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Yongsan Ward, Seoul, on Nov. 30.


"There should be more Korean American politicians to increase the representation of the overseas Koreans community," she said.

Choi plans to join forces with Kim Min-seon (29), a senior aide in the office of Vice Mayor Tammy Kim of Irvine, California, to launch a nonprofit organization aimed at forming a network for young Korean aides within the year.

There are quite a few Koreans working as aides in various countries, including the U.S., but there is no proper organization to represent them. In the past, there was the Korean Aide Association created by current and former Korean American aides, but it is currently inactive.

"We will create a place where Korean aides can actively exchange information with each other," she said. "I came up with this plan because I thought it would be good to help young juniors who are interested in politics."

Choi and Kim, both Korean women of the same age, became acquainted while serving in the U.S. Army Reserve. Choi and Kim have been active in the U.S. military since 2015 and 2014, respectively, and are participating in various regular training exercises.

Born in Busan, Choi emigrated to Los Angeles with her family in 2001 at the age of 6. She graduated from a master's program in criminology at the University of California, Irvine. She was impressed by a lecture by then U.S. Sen. Kamala Harris during her college days and chose to pursue a career in politics. She started as an intern in Rep. Harris' office and then served as an aide, working in the office for three years before Harris became the vice president. 



‘Volunteering is part of my life,’ says Korean Kazakhstan Rep. Kim Vera

Established National Volunteer Network to unite and network volunteer organizations

“Volunteering is part of my life. It’s a way of life. I don’t think I could live without volunteering, and even though I am a member of the House of Representatives, I continue to volunteer whenever I have time.”

Kazakhstan Parliamentary Rep. Kim Vera, 41, who visited Korea for the 9th World Forum of Korean Politicians, told the media on Nov. 16, “I didn’t think that volunteering, which I started in college because I had a lot of time on my hands, would bring me so much.”

After working for a volunteer organization for 10 years after college, she founded and became chair of the National Volunteer Network (NVN) in 2012 to unite and connect volunteer organizations, in order to develop and popularize the volunteer movement in Kazakhstan.

She has also served as the director of the Project for the Development of Nonprofit Organizations in West Kazakhstan and as the director of the Zhas Project, a joint World Bank and Kazakhstan Ministry of Education and Science initiative to support vulnerable youth, people with low incomes, people with disabilities and rural residents.

In 2019, she proposed and won approval from Kazakhstan President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev to call 2020 the “Year of Volunteers” and was instrumental in institutionalizing the awarding of credits for volunteering in university admissions and civil service employment.

She entered politics in 2021, in her late 30s, after more than 20 years of volunteer work. Her commitment to improving people’s quality of life through legal reforms based on her hands-on experience has not changed. She first became interested in volunteering when she volunteered at a nursery school while in college.



Kazakhstan Parliamentary Lower House Rep. Kim Vera

She revealed that one day, while volunteering as a cultural expedition leader, a child said, “I also want to take my children to the theater when I grow up,” which made her think about what she could do for children in need.

Kim, who majored in accounting and auditing at the Almaty Academy of Economics and Statistics, is more interested in helping others than in making a lot of money. Her university studies also naturally led her to learn how to efficiently manage volunteers and organizations.

As the first Korean woman in Kazakhstan’s parliament, she was elected to the 7th House of Representatives in 2021 as a proportional representative of the ruling Amanat party. However, due to the

changing political landscape in Kazakhstan, including the push for constitutional reform, the lower house was dissolved earlier this year, and she was unable to complete her five-year term. She lost the general election in March this year but took over as a proportional representative when another lawmaker resigned, and she has been a member of the 8th House of Representatives since September.

She is also a member of the Kazakhstan Association of Distinguished Compatriots and has pledged to work for the empowerment of her fellow Koreans. Her maternal grandparents were Koreans who suffered forced relocation to Kazakhstan during the Soviet era.

“Starting in December, I plan to hold regular meetings with the Association of Koreans in Kazakhstan once or twice a month to talk openly about the difficulties faced by Koreans and the issues that need to be resolved,” Kim said. “I also want to serve as a bridge for cooperation between Korea and Kazakhstan, which celebrated the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations last year.” 장

Nam Ji-eun, second-generation Korean in Poland, seeking Korean cultural assets looted overseas

Researcher at Cultural Heritage Recovery Foundation; ‘Returning cultural properties embodies reconciliation, cooperation and justice’

“Cultural property is not just a legacy of the past but a mirror that reflects the past, present and future of humanity, so it makes sense to return looted cultural property to its original owners.”

Nam Ji-eun (29), a researcher at the Cultural Heritage Recovery Foundation, said in a recent media interview that “The return of looted cultural property is a symbol of reconciliation and cooperation between countries, not only in the past but also in the present.”

Nam is the child of Nam Jong-seok, chair of the Federation of Koreans in Poland, and is a second-generation Korean in Poland. Growing up in a faraway land, she continued to study the language and history of her native country thanks to her father, who emphasized the importance of roots and identity. As a result, she was naturally interested in Korean cultural heritage.

She graduated from Seoul National University with a bachelor’s degree in psychology after being selected as a homeland scholarship student by the former Overseas Koreans Foundation. She also received a master’s degree in international relations from Yonsei University. Since 2020, she has been a researcher at the Cultural Heritage Recovery Foundation, to which her father belongs, and has participated in the return of Korean cultural assets located overseas, including the Uam Songshiyool Woodblock, the Leejakjongyo Woodblock and the Munsin Gyeonghwi Cemetery Stone.

Last year, Nam published “Symbolic Diplomacy of Cultural Property Returns” in English, a paper about forgetting the painful past and building an equal future relationship between the countries that looted cultural properties and the countries from which they were taken. In May of this year, she took the lead on a survey of Korean cultural assets in three Eastern European



Nam Ji-eun, a researcher at the Cultural Heritage Recovery Foundation

countries: Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic.

On being able to retain her Korean identity even while living abroad, she said: “From a young age, my parents always emphasized that I should have a Korean identity even if I live abroad,” adding, “They taught me how to use chopsticks and gave me kimchi to eat.”

Regarding the difference in the perception of cultural assets between Korea and Poland, she said: “In Korea, we still tend to think of cultural preservation and development as a sector of industry. Unlike Poland, which accepts cultural assets as precious

heritage and strives to preserve them, Korea seems to be more focused on utilizing them for tourism and business.”

Regarding the meaning of returning looted cultural property from overseas, Nam said: “The meaning of the return of cultural property can be summarized in four words: reconciliation, cooperation, dispute and justice. Sometimes two countries can reconcile and cooperate through a return agreement, but they can also be involved in a dispute. In other cases, justice is served by recovering looted cultural property. As a point of contact between various interests, the return of cultural property can be a key to resolving human conflicts.”

Regarding Korea’s international role in the return of looted cultural property, she said, “Korea’s rise from a poor country to a developed country has been the fastest in world history. It is also a cultural powerhouse thanks to its soft power with various K-content, such as K-pop. Through this role as a cultural powerhouse, Korea can play a pivotal role in the return of cultural property. We are in a position to help other countries, and because of our painful history of being looted, we can become a global leader in this area.” 🇰🇷

Next year marks 160th anniversary of Korean immigration to Russia

Private sector-led initiative to organize commemorative event; it will be held in August and September next year in both Korea and Russia

“The preparation to bring Korean compatriots from around the world and Koreans from Russia and Central Asia to Primorsky next year are so intense that I couldn’t even do them if I had two bodies,” Kim Hyun-dong (61), co-chair of the Northeast Asia Peace Fund based in Ussuriysk in the Russian Far East, told a journalist.

According to Kim, the Primorsky Northeast Asia Peace Fund and the Primorsky Korean Ethnic and Cultural Autonomous Association and Korean Associations are currently joining forces to form a steering committee for the 2024 Commemoration of the 160th anniversary of the Korean migration to Russia, including developing a program and securing a budget for the event. In Korea, organizations, such as the Northeast Asia Peace Coalition and the Korean People’s Movement for Mutual Support, are also working in tandem to support.

Next August, the organizations plan to hold performances by the Uzbek Koryo dance troupe and a photo exhibition in more than 10 cities in South Korea to set the tone for the 160th anniversary of the Korean migration to Russia. In September, the organization will hold the main event in two Primorsky regional cities, Vladivostok and Ussuriysk, including performances of Korean traditional culture and K-Pop, a photo exhibition of Korean migration and seminars.

Thousands of Koryo people and 400 Koreans from around the world to participate in event

The organizations expect thousands of Koryo people living in Russia and Central Asia, as well as more than 400 Korean compatriots living in China, Japan and elsewhere, to participate in next year’s main events. To ensure the success of the event, the organizations plan to establish the 160th Anniversary Project Promotion Committee, which will include stakeholders from each area, by February of next year.

So far, 70 people have signed up for the steering committee, which will consist of 160 members. To secure a budget of 2 billion won (US\$1.54 million) for the commemorative project, the Primorsky Northeast Asia Peace Fund and others have requested 1 billion won from the Overseas Koreans Agency. The plan is to raise the remaining 1 billion won through fundraising from local governments and the private sector.



Previously, in 2004, the 140th anniversary of the migration of Koreans to Russia, a project to build a memorial hall (Koryo People Cultural Center) in Ussuriysk was launched with funding from the Korean government and public fundraising. Today, the center is used to teach the descendants of Koryo people about our traditional culture and to bring compatriots together.

Russian official records state ‘Koreans first settled in Primorsky on Sept. 21, 1864’

It is believed that Koreans in the Joseon period first settled in Primorsky around 1863, when they cultivated the wild land to build a new life. On the other hand, the Russian official record of “60 Koreans from 13 families settled in the village of Jishinhe, Primorsky” is dated the following year, on Sept. 21, 1864.

The Russians called the Joseon-period Koreans who migrated to their country Kareites Koreans or Kareisky, which means Koreans. However, the Koreans who migrated to Primorsky Krai referred to themselves as Koryo people. The number of Koreans in the Primorsky region continued to grow afterward, and at one point, there were more than 30 Korean villages in Vladivostok and elsewhere in the region.

During the Japanese occupation of Korea (1910-1945), the Koryo



people fought a fierce independence movement against the Japanese, alongside the patriots who crossed over from Korea, and in 1937, they also endured forcible relocation to Central Asia under Stalin's migration policy. For this reason, there are many historical sites and monuments honoring anti-colonial sentiment in various places in Primorsky, including the Choi Jae-hyung Memorial Hall, the Lee Dong-hwi and Unknown Independence Activists Monument, and the Shinhan Village Memorial Tower.

Koryo people descendants working to preserve culture, history: 'Solidarity among Korean compatriots must continue'

Locally, descendants of Koreans are working hard to preserve their culture and history, even under difficult conditions. Valeria Kim (62), the principal of the Choi Jae-hyung Korean National School, is one of them. Principal Kim is a third-generation Koryo person. The school, which was established to teach the Korean alphabet, Hangeul, among other things, to the descendants of the Koryo people in Ussuriysk in September 2019, with support from the Choi Jae-hyung Memorial Foundation, is currently in danger of closing due to financial problems.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing crisis in Ukraine, most of the budgetary support from domestic institutions and organizations and donations from Korean visitors have been cut off, resulting in a shortage of money to pay the rent and operating costs of the school. Currently, the school's kindergarten is closed, and the educational space has been drastically reduced.

"Some Korean organizations and anonymous donors have donated money, so we are able to operate until next spring," Kim said.

Since 2019, Lee Jinaida (65), a third-generation Koryo person living in Vladivostok, has been managing the Shinhanchon Monument, a prominent monument protesting Japanese colonial rule.

Established in 1999 by the Overseas Korean Research Institute with a donation of 300 million won (US\$230,958), the memorial was initially managed by Lee Veceslav, a third-generation Koryo person, but since his passing due to an illness, his wife, Lee, has taken over. The Korean Consulate General in Vladivostok is pushing for the task to be handed over to the city of Vladivostok for more efficient management.

According to the Primorsky Northeast Asia Peace Fund, there are currently an estimated 450,000 Koryo people living in Russia and Central Asia, and 100,000 in South Korea.

"Even as relations with Russia are strained due to the Ukraine crisis, efforts to build solidarity among Koreans must continue," said Kim Hyun-dong, co-chair of the organization. "We ask for your interest and support for the success of the event." 🇰🇷

Choi Soo-ho,
correspondent, Yonhap News Agency, Vladivostok, Russia

- 1 A Koryo people's traditional fan dance during the Hanmadang Festival (We are the One in Ansan), commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Korean migration to Primorsky, in Gyeonggi Province, South Korea, on Oct. 12, 2014.
- 2 A ceremony to mark the 104th anniversary of the March 1 Independence Movement is held at the Shinhanchon Memorial Tower in Vladivostok, Russia, on March 1, 2023.
- 3 Lee Zinaida, 65, a third-generation Koryo person, explains the facilities of the Shinhanchon Memorial on Khabarovskaya Street in Vladivostok on March 1, 2023.
- 4 The Koryo People's Cultural Center in Ussuriysk, Russia

Korean American Community Center of San Francisco renovated for first time in 100 years; OKA donates US\$500,000 for renovation

The Korean American Community Center of San Francisco was renovated for the first time in 100 years. According to the Consulate General of Korea in the Californian city, two years of remodeling work on the community center in this area was recently completed in November. It has been 100 years since this building was built and 36 years since the Korean Association purchased it in 1987.

The existing building had a closed structure as a former Jewish synagogue, which was completely redesigned into an open structure with a modern design, and many of the walls were removed to improve the utilization of the space. A large auditorium was prepared for corporate and group networking events and weddings, and a history museum housing the traces of independence activists, such as Dosan Ahn Chang-ho, was also newly built.

A total of US\$3.6 million was raised for this remodeling. The Kim Jin-deok and Jeong Kyeong-sik Foundation and the Overseas Koreans Agency donated \$1 million and \$500,000, respectively, and overseas Koreans also participated in the public fundraising. Samsung Electronics donated a large screen. The 49ers, an American football team based in San Francisco, also donated \$5,000.



The San Francisco Korean American Community Center, which was renovated for the first time in 100 years

Hurricane victims in Mexico express gratitude for overseas Korean organization's relief supplies

Residents of Acapulco, Mexico, suffering from the damage of a powerful hurricane, expressed their gratitude for the relief supplies provided by an overseas Korean organization. According to Hands of Love, a Mexican Korean volunteer organization, on Nov. 5, relief goods collected through donations from Mexican Koreans were delivered to victims in Acapulco, Guerrero, the previous day.

A total of 2,100 1-liter bottles of water, cups of instant noodles, leggings and other necessary items were transported from Mexico City to the area affected by Hurricane Otis in a 4-ton truck. The organization explained that within five days of announcing the donation initiative, numerous relief goods were delivered. Mexican residents expressed their gratitude by waving the small Taegeukgi flag that was given to them by this organization.

"I pray that we can give hope and courage to those who are devastated," Hands of Love Chairman Kang Deok-soo said.

In the early morning of Oct. 25, Otis, a Category 5 hurricane, the highest level, struck the western coast of Mexico, causing great damage to Acapulco, a famous resort city, and its surrounding areas.

The scale of the casualties from Hurricane Otis is being updated every day by the Mexican government in its daily response report, and as of Nov. 4, 47 people were counted as dead and 59 as missing.



Overseas Korean organization officials deliver relief supplies to damaged areas in Mexico.

World Overseas Korean Leaders Association launches fundraising ceremony for construction of Syngman Rhee Memorial Hall in Australia

The World Overseas Korean Leaders Association (Chairman Kim Myung-chan) held the "Inauguration Ceremony to Raise Funds for the Construction of the President Syngman Rhee Memorial Hall" in Sydney, Australia, on Dec. 9. Attending the event were key figures of the overseas Korean community, including Mayor Karen Pensabene of Strathfield; Yoo Sun-woo, standing member of the Democratic People's Congress; Bang Seung-il, president of the Australian branch of the Veterans' Association; and Choi Ji-soo, chairman of the launch ceremony preparation committee.

"I hope that the fundraising initiative will spread throughout the overseas Korean community and lead to a movement that correctly establishes history," Chairman Kim said in his welcoming speech.

Pensabene provided words of encouragement, saying, "I will definitely visit the memorial hall honoring the first president of the Republic of Korea when it is built."

On this day, US\$770,000 in donations were raised through an



The launching ceremony held in Sydney, Australia

impromptu fundraiser at the event venue. Last October and November, the committee held fundraising launch ceremonies for the construction of memorial halls in Ho Chi Minh City and Washington, D.C. The committee plans to continue fundraising launches in Asia, Europe, China and the Middle East with the goal of raising 1 billion won.

20 yet-to-be-awarded independence activists discovered in Mexico and Cuba

A research team, led by professor Kim Jae-gi of Chonnam National University, announced on Nov. 17 that they had discovered 20 activists in Mexico and Cuba who contributed to the Gwangju Student Independence Movement but were not awarded posthumous honors. The research team conducted field research in Mexico and Cuba with support from Chonnam National University's academic research grant.

Koreans who immigrated to work on Mexican farms in 1905 formed the Mexican branch of the Korean National Association in 1909 and raised funds for independence. About 300 of them emigrated to sugar cane farms in Cuba in 1921, then formed the Cuban branch of the Korean National Association and contributed funds to various independence movements.

In 1930, when the news of the Gwangju Student Independence Movement spread to Mexico and Cuba, a special gathering was convened and a support rally and special fundraising campaign



First-generation overseas Korean independence activists who are operating in Mexico and Cuba

were held, with about 300 people raising US\$300. For these contributions, about 60 people from Mexico and 40 from Cuba were posthumously awarded honors by the Korean government.

However, it has been found out that among these, only about 30 independence activists were awarded the honor, and there

are about 200 independence activists who have yet to receive the posthumous honor. Professor Kim and others identified 20 such activists, including Kim Su-kwon, who worked on a sugar cane farm in Mexico and funded the independence movement.

The research team also discovered 20 independence activists who were recognized for their contributions to the independence movement and were posthumously awarded honors but were unable to receive the medals. Martyrs and patriots who were posthumously awarded the Order of Merit can be buried in national cemeteries, such as Daejeon National Cemetery, with the consent of their descendants.

Traces of Baekje: Tomb of King Muryeong, Magok Temple, Gongsan Fortress in Gongju

All three are UNESCO World Heritage Sites

Gongju, South Chungcheong Province, is a World Heritage City. This is because it is home to three World Heritage Sites designated by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). These are the tomb of King Muryeong, the only royal tomb from the Three Kingdoms Period where the identity of the deceased is known with certainty; Magok Temple, one of Korea's seven major mountain monasteries; and Gongsan Fortress, an iconic ancient castle.

It has been half a century since the accidental discovery of King Muryeong's tomb in 1971, which caused a stir at home and abroad. The many artifacts that were discovered have been the keys to establishing Baekje's valorous history and splendid, sophisticated culture.



with the owner's identity and a "jinmyeosu," an imaginary animal that guards the tomb, have attracted great interest from scholars. Metal artifacts, such as golden crowns and golden earrings, provide a glimpse into the elegance and delicacy of Baekje's creativity, sophisticated craft skills and craftsmanship mentality of the Baekje people.

The discovery of the tomb of King Muryeong is considered one of the most groundbreaking events in the history of Korean archaeology in the 20th century because it dazzlingly revealed the essence of Baekje culture, which had been trapped in darkness. The number of artifacts has grown from fewer than 3,000 at the beginning of the excavation to more than 5,000 around 50

years later. Research is still ongoing, and as it progresses, Baekje's history and culture will continue to shine.

King Muryeong's Tomb breathed life back into Baekje

Baekje was an enigma because so little had been discovered about it. Baekje tombs were built in a way that meant they were easily looted, so even when new tombs were discovered, there were often no artifacts left. Records were also largely lost over the years. The excavation of King Muryeong's tomb was the event that breathed new life into the history of Baekje.

The tomb of King Muryeong, which was excavated during the construction of a drainage ditch for an ancient tomb, retained its original appearance from more than 1,500 years ago. The tomb of King Muryeong is the only royal tomb of the Three Kingdoms Period where the interred, construction date, internal structure and burial artifacts have not been damaged and have been found intact.

The tomb of King Muryeong has taught us a lot about the history and culture of Baekje. It also confirms Baekje's interaction with China and Japan. The tomb of King Muryeong, with its interior walls constructed from brick, was influenced by Chinese mausoleums. The coffins of the king and queen were made of Japanese lacebark, which is resistant to moisture.

Unique artifacts found in the tomb, such as a tombstone inscribed

King Muryeong, leader of the revival of Baekje

Because the discovery and excavation of the royal tomb were so dramatic, the tomb's owner, King Muryeong (462-523), has not received enough attention. He was the fourth to ascend the throne after Baekje lost Hansung (now Seoul) to Goguryeo's King Jangsu and moved its capital to Ungjin (now Gongju). He succeeded King Dongseong at the age of 40. In his sixth year on the throne, he implemented a relief policy by opening warehouses in response to a great famine. In his tenth year, he repaired the banks and supported nomadic citizens to return to the fields, establishing an agricultural base and establishing state finances. He introduced Confucianism and Taoist ideas imported from the Southern Dynasties of China to Japan.

The most prominent feature of King Muryeong's foreign policy was his offensive against Goguryeo. After the fall of Hanseong, Baekje attacked Goguryeo again under King Muryeong and won several victories. He was the only one of the five kings who reigned during the Ungjin period to live out his natural lifespan, and the country grew by leaps and bounds in many areas, including



- 1 Gongju Magok Temple's Daegwangbo Hall and five-story stone pagoda
- 2 The entrance to the Gongsan Fortress in Gongju
- 3 The Tomb of King Muryeong and the Royal Mausoleum Gardens in Gongju
- 4 Artifacts excavated from the tomb of King Muryeong and displayed at the National Gongju Museum

diplomacy, military, economy and culture. The revival under King Seongwang, the son of King Muryeong, was possible because the foundation was laid during the reign of King Muryeong.

'Chunmagoksa' (春麻谷寺) 'Chugapsa' (秋甲寺)

Spring in Magok Temple is so beautiful that the saying goes, "Magok Temple in spring, and Gap Temple in fall." Magok Temple is one of the main Buddhist temples in South Chungcheong Province, overseeing more than 100 temples and hermitages. Built in the 41st year of King Mu of Baekje, Daeungbo Hall is one of the few mid-rise traditional Korean wooden buildings in existence. It is a beautiful representation of wooden architecture. Magok Temple, along with Tongdo Temple, Buseok Temple, Bongjeong Temple, Beopju Temple, Seonam Temple and Daeheung Temple, is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site as one of Korea's mountain temples or mountain monasteries. The five-story stone pagoda in front of Magok Temple's Daegwangbo Hall was built in the late Goryeo Dynasty under the influence of Yuan Dynasty Lamaism.

Magok Temple also has a poignant story to tell. The oldest building in the Magok Temple complex, Yeongsan Hall, is the site that King Sejo of the Joseon Dynasty proclaimed would last 1,000 years. When Sejo overthrew Danjong and usurped the throne, Maewoldang Kim Si-seup shaved his head and became a monk. Sejo visited Maewoldang, who was in seclusion at Magok Temple, but he shunned him. Sejo left his palanquin at Magok Temple, saying, "I can't take my palanquin with me because Maewoldang has abandoned me."

Sejo's palanquin is still stored at the temple today.

Independence activist and politician Baekbum Kim Koo was imprisoned after killing a Japanese army officer who participated in the assassination of Empress Myeongseong of the Korean Empire,

then escaped and hid in Magok Temple. When he revisited the temple after the liberation of Korea, he was overwhelmed with emotion when he saw the phrase "Gakraegwansagan yuyeomongjongsu" (却來觀世間 猶如夢中事) (I wake up and the world seems like a dream) from Daegwangbo Hall. In front of the Baekbum Hall, there is a juniper tree planted by the teacher and an inscription written by him. At Magok Temple, there is another famous person's inscription. Next to Beomjongru, the Dongjeonggak inscription was written by artist Unbo Kim Ki-chang.

Gongsan Fortress overlooking Geum River, beautiful as silk

Gongsan Fortress is a royal castle built by Baekje after its conquest of Ungjin. With the Geum River flowing to the north, it is a natural fortress built along the ridges and valleys of Gong Mountain, 110 meters above sea level. The entire wall is 2,660 meters long. During the Baekje Dynasty, there were both earthen fortresses and stone fortresses, but during the Joseon Dynasty, it was rebuilt as a stone fortress.

In 630, King Mu of Baekje stayed here for five months when he repaired the palace in Sabi (present-day Buyeo), and during the fall of Baekje, King Euija temporarily resided here. It was also a stronghold where Injo took refuge during Yi Gwal's rebellion in the Joseon Dynasty.

There are various ruins from the Baekje to Joseon period, including the remains of a presumed Baekje royal palace, "seokbinggo" (ice house), four city gates and "ssangsujeong." Gongbukru at Gongsan Fortress is one of the best places from which to admire the "silk-like" Geum River. Currently, excavations are under way at the site of the presumed royal palace in Gongsan Fortress. With 1,500 years of history behind it, it's exciting to see what new stories it has to tell. [한글]

2023 Invitational Training for Overseas Korean Journalists held

The Overseas Koreans Agency held the 2023 Invitational Training for Overseas Korean Journalists from Dec. 4 to 12 to foster the Korean identity and strengthen the expertise of overseas Korean journalists from China, Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

Nine journalists from four countries -- China, Russia, Kyrgyz Republic and Kazakhstan -- participated in this training, which was held for nine days and eight nights in Seoul and other regions, including Busan.

With the cooperation of the Korea Press Foundation, the journalists took lectures to strengthen their capabilities, such as “Domestic and



Training participants take a photo in front of Yonhap News Agency after visiting its media center in Jongno Ward, Seoul, on Dec. 11.

international media status and trends” and “Know-how for discovering topics and writing articles.”

On Dec. 11, they experienced the advanced system of domestic media companies through a tour of Yonhap News Agency, South Korea’s key wire service, and Yonhap News TV, its affiliate. Additionally, they had the opportunity to practice reporting on the development of their home country by visiting cultural and industrial facilities in Busan and Ulsan.

“Through this training, we hope that the participants

will strengthen their expertise as journalists and feel pride in their home country,” OKA Commissioner Lee Key-cheol said.

‘Overseas Koreans: from beneficiary recipient relationship to mutually beneficial relationship’; policy debate held at Korea University

The Overseas Koreans Agency’s foundational planning public forum was held both online and offline on Dec. 8 at Korea University’s Hana Square Multimedia Room in Seongbuk Ward, Seoul. The forum claimed that unlike in the past, when overseas Koreans were the recipients of government benefits, they are now in a reciprocal, mutually beneficial relationship with their home country.

“The vision of the policy for overseas Koreans is to become a strong fence for overseas Koreans around the world,” OKA Commissioner Lee Key-cheol said in his opening remarks. “Our mission is to contribute to Korea becoming a globally pivotal nation and the common prosperity of mankind through the joint development of overseas Koreans and Korea.”

The OKA held this debate to establish mid- to long-term governmentwide policies for overseas Koreans by collecting the voices of overseas Koreans at home and abroad and the opinions of experts from all walks of life. Choi Yun-seon, head of the Overseas Korean Policy Department at the OKA, introduced the basic plan and mentioned the unification of policy establishment and implementation, including overseas Koreans residing in Korea as the target of the policy, and the integrated provision of civil service services scattered across ministries. She also said that next year will be the first year of the basic plan for the Overseas Korean policy, and that the first plan will last for five years until 2028.

The following were mentioned as the main policy tasks:



Attendees take a group photo at the Overseas Koreans Agency’s foundational planning public forum at Korea University on Dec. 8.

strengthening education support for overseas Koreans, expanding next-generation Korean compatriot invitational training and scholarship projects, establishing and operating overseas Korean education and culture centers, improving the status in the country of residence commensurate with national status, supporting compatriots who are in danger or alienated, improving civil service quality and discovering next-generation talent.

The first session, which was held under the theme of “Policies and identity development for overseas Koreans at home and abroad,” included professor Yoon In-jin of the Department of Sociology at Korea University; Lim Young-eon, president of the Korean Society Abroad; professor Jang Tae-han of UC Riverside University; Choi Mi-young, principal of the Dasom Korean School in California; and Choi Byeong-cheon, editorial director of World Korean, who gave presentations and participated in discussions.

In the second session, which was themed on “Improving the status of the country of residence for overseas Koreans,” Lee Jin-young, a professor of political science and diplomacy at Inha University; Lee Seung-woo, a professor at Chonnam National University Law School; Lee Cheol-woo, a professor at Yonsei University Law School; and Kwak Jae-seok, director of the Korea Migrant Policy Institute, participated. The discussion was co-hosted by the Korean Society Abroad and the Korea University Institute for Asian Studies.

Lee Byeong-seok's 'Father Donald' wins grand prize in poetry category at Overseas Korean Literary Awards



The collection of the winning works of the 25th Overseas Koreans Literary Awards

"Father Donald" by Lee Byung-seok, a Korean American, was selected for the grand prize in the poetry category of the 25th Overseas Koreans Literary Awards, which is considered a gateway to success for overseas Korean writers around the world. The Overseas Koreans Agency selected 33 works as winners of the award and announced the list on Nov. 14. The OKA holds an open contest for writers every year to enhance the literary sensibilities, nostalgia and identity of overseas Koreans around the world.

The grand prize in the short story category was awarded to "Nogang(노강, 怒江)" by Cha Jun-hee (China), and in the essay category, "Today's Delicious" by Kim Tae-jin (Panama). The grand prize for middle and high school writing went to Joo Hee (Germany) for "Reading the Difference," and the elementary school writing went to Son Han-bit (United States) for "My Korean Study with My Grandmother." The Korean School Special Award went to the Gainesville Korean Language School in the U.S. and the Frankfurt Korean School in Germany. A total of 707 works from 35 countries were submitted this year, and the winners came from 14 countries, including the U.S., Kazakhstan and Argentina.

"Over the past 25 years, (the Overseas Korean Literary Awards) have received the attention and love of the overseas Korean community, establishing itself as a representative contest, and is serving as a stepping stone for the winners to enter the literary world," OKA Commissioner Lee Key-cheol said. "I hope that the creative activities of Korean literature will contribute to cultivating the identities of Koreans and enhancing the understanding of Koreans."

Overseas Koreans Agency's Recommended Poem



Father Donald

Lee Byung-seok (Korean American)

Spring Street cobbler Donald became a Leatherneck U.S. Marine in 1951 at the age of 19, and was sent to fight in the war in Korea, a country he had never heard of before.

The battle he was sent into was called Operation Punch Bowl. In the battle, in the dead of night, shrapnel from a shell flying into his bunker pierced his thigh, making him the owner of a rough gait. His shop on Spring Street was a place where the harsh tongues of old comrades-in-arms mixed, the hammers and sanders played a melody, and the smell of glue was intoxicating.

We became friends at our first meeting, and I called him Father Donald. That's how I became the nephew of former U.S. Marines.

In my first year in the U.S., I didn't know how to drive, even at the age of 21. Father Donald took me to practice my driving. "In America, you have to learn to drive from your dad," he said as he came over in his pickup truck. We headed out into a vast, seemingly endless field of weeds.

He gave me the wheel and said, "Go wherever you want to go, drive wherever you want to drive. There are no obstacles here. You are the clouds, you are the wind. This is your own space." My momentarily trembling hands found the keyhole, and my knuckles were already sweating as I gripped the steering wheel.

As I started the car, I heard his voice. "My Son! I am on your side. Go. Just Go."

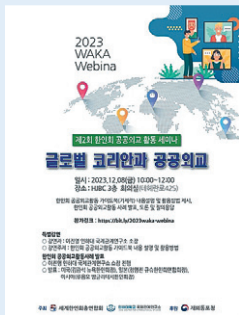
My foot on the brake moved slowly. I carefully stepped on the accelerator. His old friend, the truck, moved. The truck heading out into the seemingly endless field.

Tension had long since taken over my muscles, and my gaze was fixed on the road ahead.

The blades of grass, the wind, passed the truck bumper and over the windshield. The tension that had taken over me eased a little.

That's how I began to drive.





WAKA holds 2nd Global Koreans and Public Diplomacy Activities Seminar

The World Assembly of Korean Associations (WAKA, Chairman Sim Sang-man) held the Second Korean Association Public Diplomacy Activities Seminar at the HJ Business Center in Gangnam Ward, Seoul, on Dec. 8. Under the theme of “Global Koreans and Public Diplomacy,” the event was organized with the purpose of seeking to revitalize public diplomacy in countries around the world and promote the status of the Korean community. Inha University’s Institute of International Relations participated as a co-host. The seminar, held via Zoom, was attended by officials from the Overseas Koreans Agency, which sponsored the event, scholars in the field of overseas Koreans and civic group officials.

Dasom Korean School publishes Korean history textbook ‘Life and Dreams of Korean-Americans’

The Dasom Korean School (Principal Choi Mi-young), located in Sunnyvale, California, published “Life and Dreams of Korean-Americans,” a textbook that introduces the history of Korean immigration to the U.S. with a focus on historical figures, on Dec. 9. The book introduces independence activists Ahn Chang-ho, Seo Jae-pil and Rhee Syng-man, as well as Ahn’s daughter Susan Ahn, who is the first Asian female officer in the U.S. Navy; Yu Gwan-sun, who was introduced in The New York Times; Kim Jong-rim, the so-called Rice King, who founded the Willows Korean Aviation School; and Kim Hyeong-soon, who first developed the nectarine breed of peach. Over the past year, the Dasom Korean School has been conducting a Korean history and ethnic studies class at Korean schools and has compiled it into a textbook by summarizing the stories of people who left a mark on Korean immigration history.



Korean Language and Culture Foundation holds ‘I Love Kimchi’ event

The Korean Language and Culture Foundation (Chairman Koo Eun-hee), a nonprofit organization created by Korean school teachers in California, U.S., held a “I Love Kimchi” event at the local Mission San Jose High School on Nov. 17. About 80 Koreans and locals participated in the event, including Him Nuen Lokanna, a congressman’s aide; UN PEACEKOR Vice President Jeong Seung-deok; Fremont Rep. Raj Salwan; Korean Language Education Foundation adviser Choi Kyung-soo; and Mission San Jose High School Principal Amy Perez. After singing the “I Love Kimchi” song, participants made and tasted kimchi, using cabbage and seasonings provided by the foundation. In her welcoming speech, Chairman Koo said: “The California state government established Kimchi Day on Nov. 22 last year, and interest in Korean food has increased rapidly.”

VANK launches promotional site with overseas Koreans for Kimchi Day

VANK, the cyber diplomatic mission, announced it established a promotional website (kimchiday.prkorea.com) to celebrate Kimchi Day on Nov. 22 together with the 7.5 million overseas Koreans around the world. Kimchi Day is an official memorial day in Korea and is also the first case in which a specific food became the subject of a memorial day. Nov. 22 was designated as a memorial day to reflect the symbolic meaning that each (1) and every one (1) of the various ingredients of kimchi produces more than 22 effects, including immune enhancement, antioxidant, anti-obesity and anti-cancer properties. Since August 2021, starting with California, the U.S., 14 cities in four countries around the world have declared this day to be a memorial day.



Promoting Korea through foreign textbooks

This year, the number of “hallyu” (Korean Wave) fans around the world exceeded 170 million. However, the world’s interest in the Korean Wave does not equate with interest in Korea. People around the world know about BTS, Blackpink and Korean dramas, but they don’t know much about Korea.

I would like to introduce a message we received at VANK, the cyber diplomatic mission of which I am the representative. A compatriot in the United States said, “During my 12 years of elementary, middle and high school, I only learned about Korea for 20 minutes. It was all about the Korean War, in which the U.S. participated.”

A French hallyu fan said: “In French school classes, we are told two stories about Korea. The first is Japan’s invasion of Korea, and the second is the Korean War. European textbooks that portray Korea as a country victimized by other countries have a pessimistic view of Korea.”

An overseas Korean who identified themselves as a parent said, “Children say, ‘When I go to school, there are more friends who want to know about Korea due to the Korean Wave.’ But they say that in textbooks, Korea is still only introduced as a poor country.”

So, how can we properly introduce Korea in textbooks around the world?

A solution can be found in the success story of Lee Key-cheol, the commissioner of the Overseas Koreans Agency, who worked as a Korean ambassador to the Netherlands and worked with local compatriots to introduce Korea in Dutch textbooks. Together with his Dutch compatriots, he contacted local textbook publishers and said that Korea’s example of achieving democracy and economic development in just half a century, which took 300 years for advanced Western countries to achieve, would convey entrepreneurship, challenge and hope to Dutch students and make them the protagonists of global change.

He convinced me that he would instill in me the dream that this could be possible. In particular, he emphasized that Korea’s remarkable economic development from the ruins of the Korean War can teach young people the lesson that “The fate of a country depends on the will, attitude and efforts of its people.” He also made



Park Ki-tae,
CEO of VANK (Voluntary Agency
Network of Korea)


a compelling case that Korea’s success story had “historical significance” for the world, and that it could develop Dutch youth into world leaders.

After such efforts, the content on Korea’s democracy and economic development was finally added to the two types of exam books and middle school geography textbooks with the largest market share in the Netherlands. When Korea was proudly introduced in Dutch textbooks, local compatriots also welcomed it, saying that their Korean identity and pride in their home country had increased. It goes without saying that the Dutch youth’s perspective on Korea has changed. The Korean Wave, which was all

about dramas, movies and music, expanded to include stories of Korea’s economic development listed in textbooks, and Korea’s attractive image was imprinted on the Dutch people.

VANK signed a business agreement (MOU) with the OKA last September and is referring to the example of promoting Korea in Dutch textbooks to promote Korea’s development in textbooks around the world. First, we are working with overseas Koreans to persuade textbook publishers in each country to include Korea’s development in textbooks. Reflecting Korea-related content in foreign textbooks requires more time and patience than anything else.

It is also important to gain the favor of local teachers to teach students about Korea, which has not yet been introduced in local textbooks. To this end, we are working with teachers at overseas Korean schools to create lesson plans that reflect Korea’s development and make it easier for teachers around the world to teach the subject in class. We plan to create and share sites and digital content that provide Korean historical and cultural materials in accordance with the local culture and circumstances of each country.

We also hope that the 7.5 million overseas Koreans will actively participate in this project to make a new positive impression of Korea on the world. 



Demand survey launched for 2024 construction support projects, including Korean community centers

The Overseas Koreans Agency is carrying out the Korean Community Center Construction Support Project to help cultivate the identities of overseas Koreans and for the harmony and development of overseas Korean communities. The OKA will be conducting a demand survey for projects in 2024 (further details below). Overseas Korean organizations should refer to the attached materials and submit their demands through the online application system.

A. Support criteria

- Projects, such as the construction, purchase, renovation and expansion, of Korean community centers for nonprofit purposes carried out in the name of overseas Korean organizations
- Projects in which more than 50 percent of the total project cost has been secured through self-resourcing efforts of the overseas Korean community, such as fundraising
- Projects under individual properties, for-profit businesses, businesses promoted by disputed groups, debt repayments, less than 50 percent of self-resourced businesses, businesses that bypass the local embassy, etc., will not be supported.

B. Application procedures and schedule

- Overseas Korean organizations must submit the application form (designated form) and all supporting documents to the online application system and the local embassy between Dec. 13, 2023, and Jan. 17, 2024.
- The OKA will hold an application review committee in March 2024 to decide and notify the availability and scale of support (there may be requests for the submission of additional documents when necessary).

- The OKA remits support funds to the local embassy, according to the progress of the project, and the embassy transfers the support fund to the overseas Korean organization when it is judged that the completion of the project is confirmed.
- Overseas Korean organizations must submit a report on the project outcomes to the OKA via the local embassy within 30 days after the termination of the project.
- In the case of missing documents, delays in the project implementation, changes in the project and failures to meet support requirements, etc., the decision to support the project may be canceled or the support funds may be withdrawn.

C. Contact information

- Online application system (technical support): 02-3415-0144 (weekdays 09:00~18:00, KST), pms01@okocc.or.kr
- Manager of the support project (project information): +82-32-585-3203, shmoon22@korea.kr
- For further information, please refer to Korean Net's information page.



OKA Commissioner's Activities

- Nov. 28: Attended the 2023 Future Leaders' Conference opening ceremony
- Dec. 1: Presided over the appointment ceremony of civilian members of the Overseas Koreans Policy Working Committee
- Dec. 7: Attended the virtual conference for operation of the World Korean Business Convention
- Dec. 8: Attended the Overseas Koreans Agency's foundational planning public forum



750만 재외동포와 대한민국이 하나로 통하는 첫 번째 온라인 세상 코리아넷

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