

Establishing systematic Korean language education system and need for strengthened communication with media

Continued efforts needed to improve image of areas with high concentrations of compatriot residency, as well as improvements to laws, systems, policies

The second session was titled “Measures to Spread Domestic Awareness of Overseas Compatriots in Korea,” with a presentation delivered by Kim Yong-pil, CEO of the Dongpo World Newspaper. Panelists included Lee Young-geun, director of the Overseas Koreans Cooperation Center; Song Seok-won, professor at Kyunghee University; and Jeong Yeong-sun, president of the Association of Koryo Saram.

“We must recognize the importance of domestic policies for Koreans,” CEO Kim Yong-pil said in his presentation. “Although the proportion of Koreans among foreigners residing in Korea is high at 33 percent, there are many Koreans who ‘come to their home country and worry about their identity.’” He also stated that the external influence of overseas Koreans is increasing and that they are also playing a role as transmitters of the image of the Republic of Korea to the world.

Kim emphasized that “Compatriots residing in Korea are playing a leading role in the population inflow and local economic revitalization in an era of local extinction due to population decline.” He pointed out that areas where Chinese Koreans live in groups are generally places where the local economy is stagnant, and expressed regret that while these compatriots live in groups and form commercial districts and play a significant role in revitalizing the local economy, they are not properly recognized.

Nevertheless, Kim pointed out: “Negative perceptions of Chinese compatriots in Korea are widespread. It is important to find solutions and analyze the causes of their creation.” Kim analyzed that as the Chinese compatriot population residing in Korea increases, they should be forming their own communities and assimilating with Koreans, but as Koreans emigrate, a segmentation phenomenon is occurring. He also determined that a combination of a lack of understanding of the identity of the Joseon-jok (ethnic Koreans from China) and “anti-Chinese sentiment” has influenced the negative perception of Chinese compatriots. In addition, he reported that as Chinatowns are formed in Chinese compatriots’ neighborhoods, movies and other mass media are contributing to emerging concerns about “hotbeds



Lee Young-geun (C), director of the Overseas Koreans Cooperation Center, who participated as a panelist in the second session, proposes a plan to spread awareness among overseas compatriots living in Korea.

of crime.”

In addition, as the number of compatriots who receive health insurance, purchase real estate, receive national pensions and receive unemployment benefits increases, there is a controversy over whether they are receiving special treatment, and public opinion on “reverse discrimination” is being formed. He also lamented that there is also a negative perception that excessive “suffrage” is being given to people from particular countries to encourage them to support certain political parties, and in the case of compatriots from China, they are becoming political scapegoats. He also pointed out that the media is directly spreading negative perceptions through movies, mass media and the internet, which is influencing public opinion.

He emphasized the importance of the role of the media in terms of halting the reproduction of negative images and preventing their spread through mass media. He also said we should consider how to spread positive public perceptions of our compatriots in the country. 