

03  
2025

# 재외동포의



Window into Overseas Koreans



**Announcement of Overseas Koreans of the Month**

- OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk, 'We will actively discover cases of overseas compatriots contributing to their homeland to change the perception of overseas Koreans'

**Current Issues & Topics** - OKA, Korea Federation of SMEs and Korean American Chamber of Commerce USA conduct joint inspection meeting

**Current Issues & Topics** - 'I will convey K-SME tariff difficulties to U.S. government'

**Special Feature** - OKA builds connections with next-generation leaders worldwide



March's Overseas Korean  
Kim Pyeong-jin, former chairman of the Jeju Development Association in Japan

## Hoping and anticipating changes in Koryo-saram youth policy

Today, I heard a very happy and thankful story. It is the news that three of the graduates of the “1st Koryo-saram Youth Bakery and Patisserie Education” that the Asia Development Foundation (ADF) enthusiastically implemented last year have been hired by famous domestic bakeries. This is due to the passion and dedication of the ADF, which for the past 10 years has provided scholarships to Joseon and Koryo compatriots and children from multicultural families, which is beginning to bear small fruit. Above all, I think the great significance of this project is that it has greatly expanded the scope of interest in Koryo-saram, which has been already growing in Korean society.

So far, our society has primarily focused on Koryo workers who are facing difficult working conditions. However, there is something that our society is missing in the Koryoin issue. That is, the Koryo youth who have failed to keep up with Korean public education and have dropped out. They are not fluent in Korean and have no special job skills. Even if they want to develop their skills through job training, their economic conditions are not sufficient, making it difficult for them to have learning opportunities. They cannot receive the Tomorrow Learning Card, which provides up to 5 million won for five years to all Koreans, including students from multicultural backgrounds. It is a sad and frustrating reality.

Our society's understanding of Koryo-saram is still very lacking. About 160 years ago, our compatriots were driven to the harsh land of the unfamiliar Primorsky Krai, and they devoted themselves to the independence of their helpless homeland that could not protect, raise or care for them even in the midst of their difficult lives. This is a fact we are all familiar with through the stories of Choi Jae-hyung and An Jung-geun, the godfathers of the Primorsky Krai independence movement. If we add to this the story of their forcible relocation from the Primorsky Krai to the wilderness of Central Asia by Stalin in 1937, our society's ignorance of Koryo-saram is shameful. If we say that the Republic of Korea is a world-class economic powerhouse and cultural powerhouse, we cannot help but ask a more fundamental question of what exactly makes up a nation.

Since the implementation of the Ministry of Justice's “Regional Specialization Visa System” in 2022, the number of local governments that are trying to provide jobs, accommodations and



Cho Nam-cheol,  
executive director of the Asia Development  
Foundation (former president of Korea  
National Open University)

even educational spaces for children for our Koryo compatriots as a means of resolving the population decline problem has been increasing. This is welcome and appreciated. However, as I watch this process, I feel somewhat regretful. This is because it is not right to view our Koryo compatriots as beings who only solve the labor problem in an era of population decline. Who are the Koryoin? They are the unfortunate ones who practiced love for their country with devotion and affection despite their suffering and being abandoned by a weak and incompetent motherland in the late Joseon Dynasty, and who were forcibly relocated from Primorsky Krai, where they had finally settled down, to various Central Asian countries, enduring the pain of our modern history with their whole bodies.

At this point, I would like to mention Israel's policy toward its compatriots. Israel has a special background in that it was founded as a state for the Jewish people, but it grants Jews the “right of return” to come and live in Israel from anywhere in the world. Furthermore, it recognizes immigrant Jews as valuable human assets in various fields and provides support tailored to the characteristics of immigrant groups so that they can adapt well to Israeli society while maintaining the dignity of their identity and cultural heritage. This has great implications for our own compatriot policy, especially our policy toward Koryo compatriots. It is a time when our society and country need greater interest and support for our Koryo compatriots around us. 🇵🇰



**03**  
2025

**재외동포의 창**

Announcement of Overseas Koreans of the Month  
OKA Commissioner Cho Nam-cheol, 'We will actively discover cases of overseas compatriots contributing to their homeland through the perception of overseas Koreans'  
Current Issues & Topics - OKA, Korea Federation of SMEs and Korean American Chamber of Commerce (USA) conduct joint inspection meeting  
Special Feature - 'I will convey K-SME tariff difficulties to U.S. government'  
Special Photos - OKA's activities with next-generation leaders worldwide



March's Overseas Korean  
Kim Pyeong-jin, former chairman of the Jeju Development Association in Japan

재외동포청  
Overseas Koreans Agency

- 02 Opening the Window** Hoping and anticipating changes in Koryo-saram youth policy  
Cho Nam-cheol, executive director of the Asia Development Foundation (former president of Korea National Open University)
- 04 Announcement of Overseas Koreans of the Month** OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk, 'We will actively discover cases of overseas compatriots contributing to their homeland to change the perception of overseas Koreans'  
Kim Pyeong-jin, former chairman of the Jeju Development Association in Japan, who helped develop Jeju's tourism industry
- 08 Current Issues & Topics** OKA, Korea Federation of SMEs and Korean American Chamber of Commerce USA conduct joint inspection meeting  
'I will convey K-SME tariff difficulties to U.S. government'
- 10 Special Feature** OKA builds connections with next-generation leaders worldwide
- 12 Special Seat 1** Person who designated March 1 Yu Gwan-sun Day in California
- 14 Special Seat 2** 'My dream is to raise global leaders who can act as bridges between Korea, China, Japan'  
Tokyo Saemmul Hangeul School, hope of the 100,000 Joseon-jok (Korean Chinese) community in Japan
- 16 Global Koreans** NFL quarterback star Kyler Murray, 'I'm proud to have Korean blood in my veins'
- 18 Into the News** Dedicated service for adopted Koreans opens in Gwanghwamun, Seoul  
Sangji University to establish Korea's first 'World University of Hallyu Culture, Business and People'  
Lee Kyung-won, first mainstream Korean-descent journalist in U.S., passes away  
Kim Beong-soo, vice president of law at USC, appointed interim president
- 22 OKA News** 'To foster overseas Korean identity': OKA and Ministry of Veterans Affairs to cooperate (3 other pieces included)
- 24 Compatriot Garden** 'Cultivating global talents to contribute to development of motherland' (1 other piece included)
- 25 Column** As a compatriot, not a foreigner, I wish to be embraced by my homeland  
Kwak Jae-seok, director of the Migration and Diaspora Policy Institute
- 26 OKA Announcements** Recruitment for 2025 Overseas Korean Companies Youth Internship

**Publisher:** Lee Sang-deok  
**Publishing Company:** Overseas Koreans Agency  
**Address:** 34-36th Floor, Booyoung Songdo Tower, 241, Incheon Tower-daero, Yeonsu-gu, Incheon, Korea (22009)  
**Tel:** +82-2-6747-0404, [www.oka.go.kr](http://www.oka.go.kr)  
**Instagram:** @overseas\_koreans\_agency  
**Facebook:** facebook.com/oka202365  
**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>

## OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk, 'We will actively discover cases of overseas compatriots contributing to their homeland to change the perception of overseas Koreans'

The Overseas Koreans Agency has decided to uncover examples of contributions to the homeland by compatriot individuals and groups and to actively promote them through media and social media by establishing the Overseas Koreans of the Month in March. The Overseas Koreans of the Month are firstly those who have achieved great things, secondly those who have worked for the independence of the Republic of Korea and thirdly those who have made significant contributions to the overseas Korean community. The recipients can be either deceased or alive, but the plan is to give priority to the deceased.

The selection process will be conducted by gathering opinions from the overseas compatriot community and investigating historical documents and materials from overseas missions. In addition, the Overseas Korean Policy Advisory Committee will verify the results to ensure fairness in the selection of candidates, the OKA explained. The purpose is to actively discover those who contributed to the country during the Japanese colonial period or the founding of the Republic of Korea, even though they are not well-represented in history books, so that the public can properly recognize them.

"Overseas Koreans have always made significant contributions to the development of their homeland, all the way from the past when the country was struggling to the present day, but it is true that the results of their efforts have not received much attention in our society," OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk said in an interview with the press. "The government has launched the Overseas Korean of the Month program this year to inform the general public of the cases of overseas Koreans contributing to the country.

"In order to select the Overseas Korean of the Month, we will uncover overseas Koreans who have devoted themselves to the development of their homeland, from the independence movement before liberation to the Republic of Korea today, including independence, economic development, overcoming economic crises and advancing to become a cultural powerhouse.

"The OKA plans to publicize these people's contributions to their homeland through newspapers, broadcasts and social media channels," Lee said, adding that his hope is that this will help inform the public of the contributions and achievements of overseas Koreans, spread positive perceptions of overseas compatriots among domestic citizens and further help form a national consensus




OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk announces the creation of the Overseas Koreans of the Month, starting in 2025, at a briefing held at the Overseas Koreans Welcome Center in Songdo, Incheon, on Feb. 11.

in promoting overseas Korean policies.

In addition, the OKA is promoting a project to raise the public's awareness of overseas Koreans, including a survey on the domestic perception of overseas Koreans, and to include the concept of overseas Koreans and their contributions to their home country in elementary, middle and high school textbooks. In addition, it is carrying out various projects, such as "Understanding Overseas Koreans Education," to inform people of the importance of overseas Koreans as an asset to the Republic of Korea.

Lee also explained in detail the Overseas Koreans of the Month, including the reason why they selected a deceased person rather than a living person.

"In our modern and contemporary history, there are many compatriots all over the world who, with strong patriotism, spared no effort to contribute and dedicate themselves to the development of the Republic of Korea during difficult times, such as when our country achieved independence, achieved economic development and overcame economic crises," he said. "It is regrettable that their efforts and achievements have not been well known in our society. We wanted to first shed light on those who made significant contributions during Korea's difficult times in the past but have been forgotten, and to make known the history and importance of overseas compatriots' contributions to their homeland." 

## Kim Pyeong-jin, former chairman of the Jeju Development Association in Japan, who helped develop Jeju's tourism industry

The inaugural Overseas Korean of the Month honoree is the late Kim Pyeong-jin (1926-2007), former chairman of the Jeju Development Association in Japan, who was dedicated to the development of Korea and Jeju Island.

Kim was a successful overseas Korean businessman who made significant contributions to the development of his country and his home island of Jeju. Before the 1960s, Jeju was a remote island so cut off from the outside world that there were no regular air routes to or from the mainland, and even passenger ferries were irregular.

It was only with the arrival of Korean Japanese who originally came from Jeju that the island began to change. The Jeju Development Association in Japan was founded in Tokyo in February 1961, and its first president, Kim Pyeong-jin, organized a tour of his hometown with 14 other Jeju people residing in Japan, and the transformation of Jeju into Korea's No. 1 tourist destination began.

Having succeeded in his business in Japan, he used that capital to develop the tourism industry on Jeju Island. In 1963, he established the Jeju Tourist Hotel, the first modern tourist hotel on the island, and began to build a tourism infrastructure in earnest.

### A fateful meeting with former President Park Chung-hee

The subsequent opening of the Seogwipo Tourist Hotel and Honeymoon House played a crucial role in Jeju's transformation into an international tourist destination. At the time, Jeju had few facilities to accommodate foreign tourists, and Kim's investments laid the foundation for the island's tourism industry. It could also be said to be the beginning of today's Hometown Love Donation System, in which individuals donate to the development of their hometowns.

Kim was born in 1926 in Hoecheon-dong, Jeju City. He moved to Japan at the age of 15 and made his fortune in ironworks and hotel management.

He was active in social activities, founding and chairing the Jeju Development Association in Japan in 1961, which was before the normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and Korea in 1965, and created a boom that awakened the sense of roots among Jeju people and led to local development. He also served as deputy head of the central headquarters of the Korean Residents Union in Japan in the same year, vice chair of the Central Committee of the



The late Kim Pyeong-jin, former president of the Jeju Development Association in Japan

Korea-Japan Friendship Association in 1982, chair of the Korean Federation of Commerce and Industry in Japan, and vice chair of the Korea-Japan Friendship Association in 1985.

He contributed to improving the legal status of Koreans living in Japan and generously supported the development of Jeju Island with an exceptional sense of love for his hometown. In particular, he invested with great affection and love for his hometown.

According to documents from the time, when former President Park Chung-hee was chair of the National Reconstruction Council in 1962, the need for a hotel with modern facilities was raised on Jeju Island, and Kim, a self-made Korean Japanese from Jeju, promised to build a hotel during a fateful meeting with Park.

As a result, on Oct. 13, 1963, Jeju's first private hotel, Jeju Tourist Hotel (now Honey Crown Hotel), opened its doors. Although it was a



The unveiling ceremony of a statue takes place at Jeju Girls' Middle and High School on May 13, 1987, in the photo on the left. On the right, Kim Pyeong-jin delivers a speech expressing his appreciation at the unveiling ceremony.

small 33-room hotel with a total construction cost of 30 million won, it was very significant in Jeju's tourism history. At the time there were only thatched huts and traditional inns on the island, so there was no place for tourists, let alone dignitaries, to stay. Later, the Seogwipo Tourist Hotel was built and merged with the Honeymoon House.

Kim's construction of the Jeju Tourist Hotel is also documented in the book "Love for the Motherland of the Korean People in Japan" by Lee Min-ho, the Seoul bureau chief of the Japan Unification Daily. According to the book, the development of Jeju Island began in earnest when Kim Pyeong-jin and then Gov. Kim Young-kwan made contact.

### Jeju's first tourist hotel built in 1964

As a Korean Japanese, Kim Pyeong-jin had a mission to develop his hometown, and as an administrator, he worked to attract foreign investment and develop the region. In April 1962, at the invitation of Gov. Kim, Kim Pyeong-jin organized a tour of his hometown with 14



A meeting is held on the development of Jeju Island with the president of the Institute for Jeju Affairs in 1987.

other Jeju people residing in Japan.

Before traveling to Jeju Island, the group met with Park, chair of the National Reconstruction Commission, in Seoul. During lunch, he explained the reasons for the development of Jeju Island and also made specific requests.

"Shouldn't we build a hotel on Jeju Island to encourage private investment in tourism development?" he asked.

Chairman Kim Pyeong-jin responded, "I'll take charge and attempt this."

In October 1963, the year after his visit to his hometown, Kim opened the Jeju Tourist Hotel, the first hotel on Jeju Island. After 1 1/2 years of construction, it had 33 rooms, a coffee shop, a restaurant and a shopping area on a 2,890-square-meter site, according to a Jeju Shinmun report.

### Taking over Jeju Academy for Girls, which was in danger of closure, and restoring it to normalcy

Kim's activities did not stop at the hotel business. He always had a particular interest in the education sector, and as the chair of the Korea Institute in Tokyo, he had felt the importance of everyday education. In 1966, he took over the Jeju Academy for Girls, which was in danger of closing down due to management difficulties, and became its director. After that, he poured his heart into women's education on Jeju Island, including normalizing the Jeju Girls' Middle and High School. Currently, the Jeju Academy for Girls is reportedly being run in an exemplary manner by his eldest son, Chairman Kim Hwa-nam, with the lasting support of his father without any interference from the foundation.

In addition, the deceased became the chair of the Jeju Shinmun (now Jeju Ilbo) in 1973 and continued to make dividend-free investments, such as modernizing facilities, and devoted himself to the development of Jeju's media.

In addition, when he was the head of the Jeju Development Association, he spared no effort to support his hometown of

Hoecheon, providing electricity, building a school and renovating the village center.

In addition, he made great efforts to promote culture and sports by applying for a huge amount of money to build the Jeju Sports Complex and Aehyang Stadium so that it could host the National Junior Sports Festival.

### Significant contribution to Jeju's social and economic development

Despite the significant contributions made by Kim Pyeong-jin and Jeju residents of Japan to Jeju's social and economic development, their role in Jeju society has not been properly evaluated. As a result, there have been calls for active research on their role, especially in academia.

At a joint symposium held by Jeju National University's Center for Jeju residents in Japan (Director Lee Chang-ik) and Osaka City University on Feb. 22, 2013, on the topic of Korean businesses and entrepreneurs in Japan and the Korean market, professor emeritus Shinichiro Nagano of Daito Bunka University highlighted the idea of the role of "Jeju people in Japan."

"The role of Jeju people in Japan in the economic and social development of Jeju Island has been very significant since the early days," Nagano said. "In particular, it is necessary to properly evaluate the fact that the two major businesses that drive the island's economy today, tourism and the Jeju tangerine industry, were established by overseas Japanese residents."

Based on official data from the Jeju Special Self-Governing Province, Nagano analyzed that the total amount of donations from overseas Jeju people amounted to 28.1 billion won by 2007, and until the 1980s, most of the donations were made by Jeju residents of Japan. He estimated that the actual amount could have been much higher if currency fluctuations and unidentified individual and village-level donations of goods and cash were included.

### The man behind Jeju's citrus industry

Kim is also remembered for his efforts to develop Jeju's tangerine industry by distributing new varieties of Jeju tangerine seedlings and



The opening ceremony of the Jeju Tourist Hotel takes place in 1963 (above), in this photo released by the National Archives of the Ministry of the Interior and Safety. Below is the Jeju Tourist Hotel.

inviting Jeju farmers to Japan to learn advanced agricultural techniques.

For his pioneering and distinguished contributions to Jeju's tourism, education and media, Kim was awarded the Order of Culture of the Republic of Korea in 1963, the Order of Civil Merit Peony Medal in 1981 and the Order of Civil Merit Mugunghwa Medal in 1987. In 1998, he was awarded an honorary Doctor of Business Administration degree from Jeju National University.

A world-renowned Jeju man who dedicated his life to the development of the island and not just his personal success, Kim passed away on March 29, 2007, at the age of 80. 🇯🇵

A view of the Jeju Academy of Girls, which Kim normalized after taking over as the chair of its board of directors in 1966, when it was in danger of closing down.



## OKA, Korea Federation of SMEs and Korean American Chamber of Commerce USA conduct joint inspection meeting



OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk (4th from R) gives a speech at the joint inspection meeting of the heads of the hosting and supervising organizations for the 23rd World Korean Business Convention at the DMC Tower of the Korea Federation of SMEs in Mapo-gu, Seoul, on March 4.

On March 4, just over a month before the 23rd World Korean Business Convention (WKBC) to be held in Atlanta, U.S., the Overseas Koreans Agency announced at an inspection meeting with the Korea Federation of SMEs, the Korean American Chamber of Commerce USA (KACCUSA) and the Maeil Business Newspaper that “Preparations are proceeding without a hitch.”

The joint inspection meeting of the heads of the hosting and organizing groups was held at the DMC Tower of the Korea Federation of SMEs in Mapo-gu, Seoul, and was attended by the head of the hosting organization OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk, President of the Convention and Chairman of the Korea Federation of SMEs Kim Ki-moon, head of the co-hosting organization KACCUSA President Lee Kyung-chul and CEO of the co-hosting organization Maeil Business Newspaper Son Hyun-deok.

At the meeting, participants shared the main operational plans for the event one month before it takes place and reviewed the status of corporate exhibition booth recruitment. The host and supervisory organizations also agreed to work together to hold a successful event.

### Applications for 450 corporate exhibition booths close early

Above all, as the 450 booths of the corporate exhibition, which is the core program of the event, closed early due to active external

promotion and attraction activities, there will be thorough preparations so that booth installation and export consultations can proceed without a hitch.

In addition, a program will be prepared for major figures in the Korean and U.S. political and business worlds to interact in order to make this event a place to strengthen the Korea-U.S. alliance after the launch of U.S. President Donald Trump’s second administration.

The participants of the meeting agreed to hold this year’s event more successfully than ever before and make it an opportunity for compatriots in businesses around the world to make a new leap forward together.

### Preparations to ensure smooth export consultations, etc.

This year’s WKBC will be held from April 17 to 20 at the Atlanta Gas South Convention Center under the slogan, “Leaping into the Korean Business Zone - Korean Merchants Together Towards the Future of the World of Small and Medium-Sized Businesses” with the participation of 3,000 domestic and overseas Korean businesspeople and tens of thousands of general visitors.

OKA Commissioner Lee expressed his expectations, saying, “Through this convention, we will declare this year as the ‘First year of establishing the Global Korean Business Zone,’ and this will be a great stepping stone to promote the overseas expansion of domestic small and medium-sized businesses in the future.” 🇰🇷



## ‘I will convey K-SME tariff difficulties to U.S. government’

Kim Ki-moon, convention chair, visits venue to inspect site

The 23rd World Korean Business Convention (WKBC), where Korean businesspeople from all over the world are set to gather, is scheduled to be held in Atlanta, United States, from April 17 to 20. Chairman Kim Ki-moon of the Korea Federation of SMEs, who is presiding over the convention, visited the site in advance to check the preparations. He plans to invite political figures, including Kelly Loeffler, the administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration, to the convention to seek cooperation in resolving difficulties faced by Korean SMEs related to the high tariff policy set by U.S. President Donald Trump’s administration.

According to the Korea Federation of SMEs, Kim visited the Gas South Convention Center in Atlanta on March 18 and 19 to inspect the status of preparations for the 23rd WKBC. Kim was accompanied by Lee Kyung-chul, president of the Korean American Chamber of Commerce USA (KACCUSA), and Kim Min-chul, director of the Exchange and Cooperation Department at the OKA, along with about 20 officials from the hosting and supervising organizations.

Chairman Kim reviewed the preparations for key programs, including the opening ceremony, the corporate booths exhibition, and networking with economic officials from the U.S. federal and state governments, to ensure the successful hosting of the convention and discussed detailed implementation plans for each major event.

The WKBC is a global economic event held annually with the goal of strengthening networks through exchanges among Korean businesspeople around the world and supporting the overseas expansion of domestic small and medium-sized enterprises. This year’s convention is hosted by the Korea Federation of SMEs, the OKA and the KACCUSA, and is held under the slogan, “Leaping into the Global Korean Economic Zone, to the World of Korea with Korean Business! To the Future!”

Chairman Kim served as the honorary chairman of the 21st WKBC held in Anaheim, U.S., in 2023 and is serving as the official chair of this year’s convention. This is the first time that a Korean businessman or the chairman of the Korea Federation of SMEs has served as the chair of the WKBC. The reason Kim is presiding over the convention as president of the Korea Federation of SMEs is to create opportunities for active exchanges with Korean




Kim Ki-moon (2nd from L), chairman of the Korea Federation of SMEs, checks preparations at the Gas South Convention Center in Atlanta, U.S., where the 23rd World Korean Business Convention will be held from April 17 to 20. (Photo courtesy of the Korea Federation of SMEs)

businesspeople around the world and to lay the foundation for domestic SMEs to enter overseas markets.

“Last year, South Korea’s exports ranked sixth in the world, and more than 40 percent of them came from SMEs,” he said. “I will make this convention an opportunity to widely publicize the excellent products of our SMEs to the world and expand exports.”

This year’s WKBC plans to discover excellent domestic SME products, such as K-beauty and food, and set up approximately 400 corporate exhibition booths.

Kim plans to use this event as a venue for civil diplomacy and to work on securing the competitiveness of domestic small and medium-sized enterprises exporting to the U.S. in relation to the U.S. tariff policy. The U.S. recently announced 25 percent tariffs on steel and aluminum, and the reciprocal tariffs targeting 21 countries scheduled to be announced on April 2 are expected to have a significant impact on Korean SMEs that directly export to the U.S. or supply large U.S. exporters.

“I will meet with federal government officials, such as SBA Administrator Loeffler, and state government economic officials, such as Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp, to convey the difficulties that Korean SMEs are facing due to the U.S. high tariff policy,” Kim said. “I also plan to actively inform them of the importance and expected effects of economic cooperation between Korea and the U.S.” 

## OKA builds connections with next-generation leaders worldwide

Networking in Atlanta, regional next-generation conventions strengthen global next-generation connections



Participants pose for a photo at the first regional next-generation convention of the Future Leaders Conference (FLC) in Atlanta on March 8.

2025 was the year the first regional Future Leaders' Conference (FLC) was held in Atlanta, Georgia, U.S., on March 8. The FLC Atlanta can be seen as an extension of a reunion event organized by previous participants of the FLC.

Led by University of Georgia professor Katie Koo, Attorney Jung Joon and Lawrenceville Symphony Orchestra conductor Park Pyeong-kang, a meaningful event was held with 20 next-generation participants from Atlanta.

The event was also a networking event for other organizations, such as the Georgia Association of Korean Professors, the Korean American Scientists and Engineers Association, the Association of Korean American Educators, the Korean American Women in Science and Engineering association, the Korean

American Bar Association of Georgia, the America Korea United Society and the Korean Adoptee Association of Georgia.

In particular, the FLC Atlanta event provided an opportunity to explain the programs and policies of the OKA. It is expected to serve as an active communication channel between the next generation of overseas Koreans and the OKA. The next generation is hoping for an agency that is sensitive to the changed media environment, and they suggested that direct communication should be activated in various ways, especially through online content and various apps.

The regional FLCs are expected to serve as a focal point for the next generation of overseas Koreans to mobilize their capabilities and provide an official platform for them to explore ways to contribute to their home countries and communities. The OKA will continue to support this convention. It will become the core group that will organize and run the Global Next Generation Summit, which will be the official consultative body for the next generation of diaspora leaders.



(From top to bottom) Participants pose for a photo at the FLC New York regional next-generation convention in New York on Nov. 24, 2024. Participants pose for a photo at the FLC Eurasia regional next-generation convention in London on Nov. 16, 2024. Participants pose for a photo at the FLC regional next-generation convention in Almaty on Nov. 30, 2024.

Third, we strongly agree with and will actively participate in the Overseas Koreans Agency’s project to publicize Korea’s progress in order to foster the Korean identity, which we learned about through this conference.

Fourth, we propose to create a Global Next Generation Compatriots Committee to participate in building a global Korean network and to strive to expand next-generation networks in our respective countries, and propose that the OKA support our activities.

The FLC, organized annually in Korea by the OKA, brings together representatives of the next generation from each Korean community. Participants understand the current state of their respective communities, share their thoughts on identity and the homeland, and return to their countries of residence with a sense of pride and responsibility as members of the broader Korean community.

In order to ensure that this valuable experience of ethnic identity awareness and a strong sense of connection to the homeland does not become just a page of memories, the OKA (Next Generation Rights Department) is developing and promoting the FLC Regional Next Generation Convention, which is organized by the next generation of Koreans in the region.

The 2024 regional FLCs held in four locations: New York and Atlanta in the U.S., London in the U.K. and Almaty in Kazakhstan.

At each event, participants shared current issues in their local communities and discussed practical ways to address them. As the event is mainly for the next generation, mentoring and peer-to-peer networking to help them with their future career and academic direction is the main focus of the program.

Even if they live in the same region, this was an opportunity to fulfil the desire to meet older members of the community who can become mentors. Most importantly, the program has created an opportunity for the next generation to share various opinions on the development of the overseas Korean community. 장

The next-generation leaders who participated in the FLC, which was held in June 2023 to mark the launch of the OKA, gained attention when they released a declaration on Dec. 1 that year, recognizing their role as next-generation leaders in the overseas Korean community and pledging to strengthen their links with Korea.

In their declaration, the next-generation leaders adopted the following four-point resolution to help build a “Korean identity” and a “global Korean network.”

First, as participants of the 2023 Future Leaders Conference, we plan to promote exchanges and cooperation between overseas Koreans and Korea, and to actively strive for mutual development.

Second, we, as global Koreans, strive to learn the language of the Korean people, to inherit cultural traditions and to create an environment in which these activities can be sustained while contributing to world peace and human co-prosperity.

## Person who designated March 1 Yu Gwan-sun Day in California

Also proposed Ahn Chang-ho Day, Kimchi Day and Taekwondo Day  
'I am a person of Korean blood'

The California State Senate has proclaimed Yu Gwan-sun Day. With this, both the California Senate and House of Representatives have voted to designate March 1 as Yu Gwan-sun Day.

This resolution (MR 144) was proposed by Sen. Steven Seokho Choi (age 80) (District 37), the only Korean American member of the California State Assembly, and passed unanimously on March 3.

The resolution remembers the sacred meaning of the March 1st Independence Movement, prays for Korea's development and specifies this day as a symbolic day to show the multiethnicity and diversity of California.

"When martyr Yu Gwan-sun endured severe torture after the 1919 independence movement, she said, 'No pain can compare to the pain of losing one's country,'" Sen. Choi said after the bill passed. "After her resistance, many independence fighters followed that path."

Six years ago, when he was a member of the California House of Representatives, Choi also proposed and passed a Yu Gwan-sun Day resolution.

After graduating from Kyunghee University's English Literature Department and completing his military service, Choi was selected as a Korean language instructor for the Peace Corps dispatched by the U.S. State Department and immigrated to the U.S. in 1968. As a late blooming student, he earned a doctorate in education from the University of Pittsburgh and worked as a professor at the University of Southern California (USC) and UC Irvine before starting a private academy business in 1993. He was well over 50 years old when he began to take an interest in politics.

He is a seasoned politician who has served two terms as a member of the Irvine City Board of Education, two terms as a member of the Irvine City Council, two terms as the Irvine mayor and three terms as a member of the California House of Representatives. We met in writing with Sen. Choi, who was elected as the only Korean American member of the California State Assembly in the federal Senate and House of Representatives elections held alongside the U.S. presidential election last year.



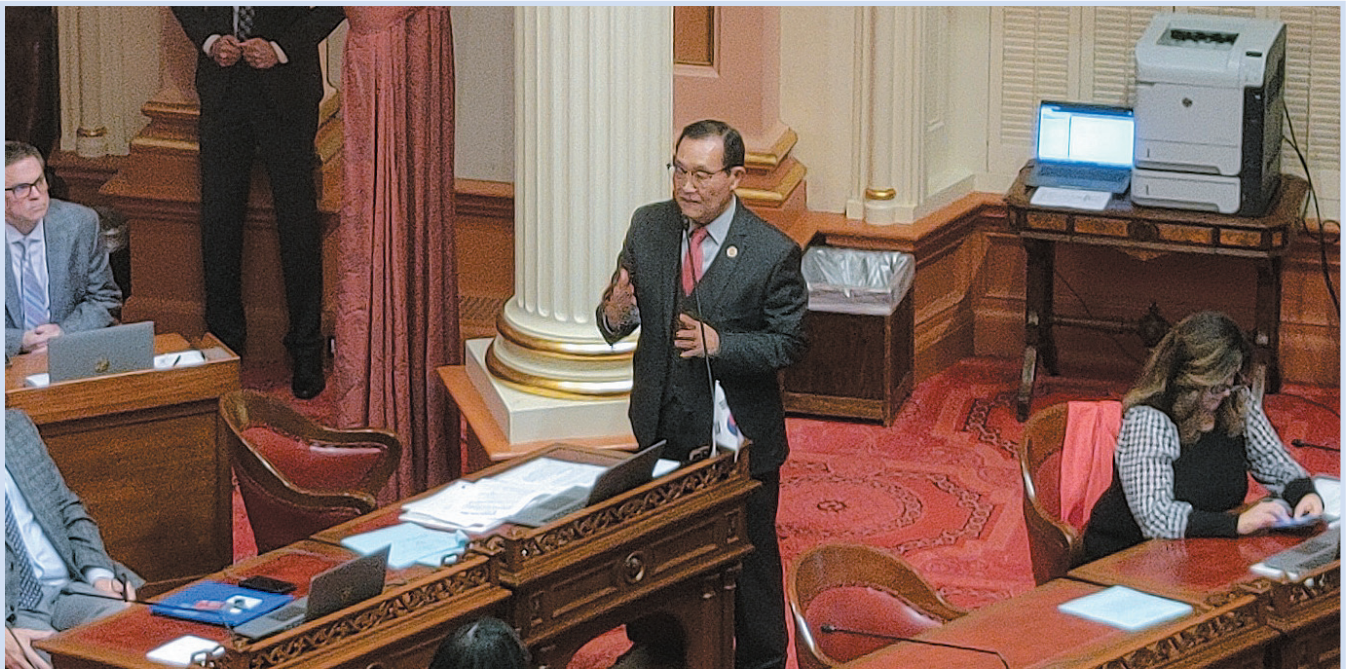
Steven Seokho Choi, a California state senator

**Although belated, please tell us how you feel about being elected as a state senator.**

I am not only the only Korean American to have been elected to the state legislature in California, which has the largest Korean population in the U.S. but also the only Asian American. I also broke the record for being the oldest person elected in California history. As a Korean American, I feel a great sense of responsibility put upon me as I stand in the position of representing Asians. Unlike when I ran, I believe that there will be a lot of interest and expectations from the Korean community now, and I will try to serve as much as I can.

**You have done a lot for the rights of Koreans in California. What is the most rewarding and memorable thing you have done?**

One bill that will have a long-lasting impact is AB 667, which passed while I was in the House. This bill, which went into effect Jan. 1, 2021, guarantees citizenship to foreign children adopted into California. The purpose is to prevent the tragedy of undocumented Korean adoptees who do not complete the necessary procedures upon entering the United States and, after turning 18, are deported to their country of origin. Citizenship is a federal matter, but the



Sen. Steven Seokho Choi gives a speech at the California State Senate on March 3, asking for support from senators while proposing a resolution on Yu Gwan-sun Day.

federal Congress has been delaying the processing of this bill for several years, so at least for children adopted into California, this bill requires that their births be registered in the county of residence within 60 days of entering the state. Next, I would think of the many resolutions related to Korea, such as Ahn Chang-ho Day, Kimchi Day, and Taekwondo Day, which have improved the status of Korea and Koreans.

**Please tell us what you think and what it means that March 1 is designated as Yu Gwan-sun Day in California.**

Through the March 1 Independence Movement, the Republic of Korea demonstrated the will and determination of Koreans who longed for independence, and the March 1 Independence Movement, which celebrated its 106th anniversary this year, became the impetus for the establishment of the Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea.

Martyr Yu Gwan-sun is one of the representative independence activists who peacefully resisted imperialist Japan. After the independence movement in 1919, Yu was tortured but said, “No pain can compare to the pain of losing my country.” After her resistance, many independence fighters followed her path. As a person of Korean descent, I have worked hard to promote my country and enact laws and adopt resolutions that are beneficial to not only California residents but also the Korean community in the U.S., and I plan to continue to do so in the future.

We have already commemorated Korean American Day on Jan. 13 and, in the House, passed the resolution designating March 1 as Yu Gwan-sun Day, as well as commemorating the six-year

anniversary of its first passing. We have also shown the power of Korean unity in Congress by having Korean compatriots and the consulate general attend each time. In emphasizing the need to support Yu Gwan-sun Day, we stressed that California is the state with the largest Korean population in the U.S., and Koreans have contributed greatly to the development of the state and to the diversity of California. I plan to continue such activities as these.

**Do you have any plans for other Korean-related commemorations in the future?**

I always consider the opinions and requests of Koreans, so I think more proposals will come in as time goes by. For example, “Hong Myung-ki Day,” “Jikji Day,” etc.

**What are your plans for this year and future goals?**

Similarly to when I was in the House of Representatives, I plan to work on the safety of California residents, the growth of small and medium-sized businesses, the improvement of economic security and the protection of Korean American rights.

**Please share with us any final remarks.**

From the perspective of a politician in the United States, I would like to urge you not to forget that when conducting diplomacy with a large country of 50 states like the U.S., it is very important to not only have diplomatic relations centered on Washington, D.C., but also for diplomacy at the state and city level. Even the state of California, which I represent, would rank as the world’s fifth-largest economy if it were considered an independent country. 🇺🇸

## ‘My dream is to raise global leaders who can act as bridges between Korea, China, Japan’ Tokyo Saemmul Hangeul School, hope of the 100,000 Joseon-jok (Korean Chinese) community in Japan

The only Joseon-jok Hangeul school in Japan attracts attention on the 60th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between Korea and Japan

“My dream is to raise global leaders who will act as a bridge between Korea, China and Japan. Saemmul School is becoming the hope of the 100,000 Korean Chinese community in Japan. I think the Hangeul school is a 21st-century version of an independence movement army at the forefront of globalizing Korean culture.”

Jeon Jeong-seon (69), the principal of Saemmul School in Tokyo, Japan, said this in a recent interview with Yonhap News Agency. The school is attracting attention as the only Korean language school for children of Joseon-jok (Chinese of ethnic Korean descent) compatriots in Japan on the 60th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between Korea and Japan.

As the number of Korean Chinese compatriots coming to Japan to study or do business has increased, the number of children born and raised in Japan has also increased significantly. There are approximately 100,000 Korean Chinese compatriots living in Japan.

In the case of many students at Saemmul School, their grandparents were born in Korea, and their parents were born in China. Children with this background are said to be experiencing double and triple identity confusion as they were born and raised in Japan, and educated as Japanese in Japanese schools.

“The issue of their children’s identity is one of the biggest concerns of Korean Chinese compatriots,” Jeon said. “As their children take classes in Japanese and spend time with Japanese children, if parents do not take care of their children’s Korean language education, they will not know Korean and will not be able to communicate when their grandparents from China visit them. This



Tokyo Saemmul Korean School Principal Jeon Jeong-seon said in a recent interview with Yonhap News, “My dream and goal is to raise Saemmul School students into global leaders who will act as bridges between Korea, China, and Japan.”

will lead to a vicious cycle where they will lose the opportunity to become familiar with Korean. That is why the school was established based on the parents’ earnest demand to educate their children in the Korean language.”

The Association of Korean Chinese Women in Japan, which the principal had been a leader of, was at the center of establishing Saemmul School in 2008. Although they were born in Japan, these people’s roots are ultimately Korean.

“You can change your nationality as you live, but you cannot change your origins as a Korean,” the former principal said. “The goal is to teach the children of Saemmul School to have pride in being Korean and become excellent world leaders.”

The Hangeul School Teacher Training and Next Generation Compatriots Home Country Invitational Training were a great support.

There are about 100 students attending Saemmul School, which runs every other week. In addition to the main school in Tokyo, there are branch schools in Toride, Kameido and Kanamachi. They are pushing for the establishment of another in Shin-Arai within this year. In addition to Korean, the school teaches Korean culture and Chinese, and also operates a Korean traditional culture class.

This school, which had been kept afloat by the volunteer work and donations of the Korean Chinese community in Japan, is gradually improving after it was recognized as an overseas education institution in 2015.

“Some of the operating expenses and Korean language textbooks supported by the Overseas Koreans Agency have been a great help. In particular, the Hangeul School Teacher Training and Next Generation Compatriots Home Country Invitational Training were supported by the Overseas Koreans Cooperation Center under the OKA, and the Korean language intensive camp for elementary school students is providing children with an opportunity to experience their motherland firsthand and provide a great opportunity to motivate them to learn Korean.”

### MOU with Paper Culture Foundation on globalization of K-paper folding

On March 7, at the Paper Museum in Jangchung-dong, Jung-gu, Seoul, the Paper Culture Foundation and the Global Paper Folding Association (Director Noh Young-hye) signed a business agreement (MOU) to cooperate for the globalization of K-paper folding and contribute to mutual development.

The same day, Jeon was invited to the seventh presentation hosted by the Global Korean Language School Future Forum (Co-representatives Park In-gi and Kim Bong-seop) at the Paper Museum and presented the achievements and challenges of the next-generation education of Korean Chinese in Japan under the title, “Next-generation education for overseas Koreans and the case of Tokyo Saemmul School.”

On March 16, paper folding was conducted as part of a traditional culture class held at Saemmul School. We are told that the event was successfully completed thanks to the volunteer activities of students who had visited Korea for the motherland invitational training.

### Invited to give topic presentation at Global Korean School Future Forum

“In 2014, the Saemmul School Children’s Choir participated in the



A paper folding class is held at Tokyo Saemmul School on March 16. The class was conducted using textbooks and materials provided by the Paper Culture Foundation (Director Noh Young-hye).

International Red and White Song Contest held in Tokyo for foreigners in Japan and achieved the great feat of winning the grand prize, which was the Minister of Tourism’s Award,” Jeon said in her case study presentation on March 10. “We were the only ones to sing in four languages -- Korean, Chinese, Japanese, and English -- and received a lot of attention, but we were embarrassed because we could only express ourselves in Japanese during our acceptance speech after winning the award.”

She said there are many students among the graduates of Saemmul School who have gone on to prestigious universities in Japan

and have successfully found jobs in professional fields after graduation.

However, Tokyo Saemmul School does not have a fixed classroom and faces an unfortunate situation of moving around various places, such as community centers, to conduct its classes. It is true that there are many problems because the Sejong Institute, which promotes Korean language education for foreigners, is run by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism; the Hangeul Schools are managed by the OKA; and the Korean Education Center, which aims to introduce Korean culture and promote exchanges with foreign countries, is affiliated with the Ministry of Education, and their roles are all mixed together.

There are many opinions that it is urgent to centralize the use of the Sejong Institute, the Korean Education Institute infrastructure and Hangeul schools all into one place. In particular, there is strong public opinion that the government should take an interest in allowing Hangeul schools in poor condition to utilize the spare space and infrastructure of the Sejong Institute and the Korean Education Institute.

“In my 17 years of running the school, I tried to quit several times due to financial difficulties,” Jeon said. “However, there was no one who would take charge of the operation, and my Japanese husband, a former university professor, encouraged me by saying, ‘Someone has to do it. Since you started the work, take responsibility for finishing it until the school is stably operated.’ That is why I am still doing this.”

In 2008, she founded the Association of Korean Chinese Women in Japan to protect the rights and support the social adaptation of Korean Chinese women living in Japan and to share and seek solutions to various difficulties, such as employment, business and child care, in Japan. She also served as the association’s first president. 장

## NFL quarterback star **Kyler Murray** ‘I’m proud to have Korean blood in my veins’ ‘My maternal grandmother is Korean. I grew up learning Korean at home and eating Korean food’



Kyler Murray is known to wear a jersey with the U.S. and Korean flags on it even during ordinary training (above). Murray, who also loves soccer, often wears a South Korean national team jersey to practice.

“This is my first time on a 14-hour flight,” Kyler Murray (27, Arizona Cardinals), a third-generation Korean American quarterback in the National Football League (NFL), recently told Yonhap News Agency and Yonhap News TV at the Yonhap News Agency headquarters in Jongno-gu, Seoul. “When I came out of the airport to collect my luggage, I was greeted by so many fans. It’s a blessing and a meaningful thing to be welcomed like this just because I’m Korean,” he said, smiling broadly.

“I’m proud to have Korean blood in my veins. There are not many examples of athletes of Korean descent playing at the highest level in American professional sports. I’m proud to be able to play at the highest level with my Korean identity,” he added.

Murray is a third-generation American of Korean descent whose maternal grandmother is Korean.

“I didn’t get to spend a lot of time with my grandmother, so I don’t have a lot of memories, but my mom raised me and always taught me Korean and exposed me to as much of Korea as possible, whether it was through food or children’s TV shows,” he said.

### ‘Blessed to be welcomed just because I’m Korean’

Murray became the first player in history to be drafted in the first round by both the NFL and Major League Baseball (MLB). He was selected by the Oakland Athletics with the ninth overall pick in the first round of the 2019 MLB First-Year Player Draft and then the NFL’s Arizona Cardinals selected him as the first overall pick of the first round in the draft.

At 178 cm, Murray is a rare “short quarterback” in the NFL, a league full of large statures. The downside of being a shorter quarterback is that it is harder to see where your teammates are when you are buried among larger players. In addition, the impact of a collision with an opposing defender, which is said to be comparable to a “car accident,” is more severe for smaller players.

Murray has overcome such physical disadvantages to become one of the NFL’s most dominant quarterbacks with his agility and strong shoulders.







Kyler Murray, a star quarterback of Korean descent in the U.S. National Football League who is visiting South Korea for the first time since he was born, talks to Yonhap News Agency and Yonhap News TV at the headquarters of Yonhap News Agency in Jongno-gu, Seoul, on March 11.

After earning a four-year, \$45.16 million contract when he entered the league, Murray's performance earned him a five-year \$230.5 million max contract with Arizona ahead of the 2022 season, which kicked in starting in 2024.

### Identity as 'Korean athlete' is key factor

Murray feels that being a Korean athlete is a key part of how he describes himself. He wears a Korean flag on his helmet during NFL games and even has "green light" written in Korean (초록불) in his Instagram bio.

"When I was younger, my nose was flat and my eyes were squinty, but that didn't affect me. I wore my Korean heritage with pride," he said.

The 2028 Olympic Games in Los Angeles will feature a new sport, flag football, a slight variation on American football.

When asked if he would like to play for South Korea, Murray, who appeared in the interview wearing an outfit with both the

Korean flag and the U.S. flag, said: "Of course I would like to play if I get the chance. Of course my biggest goal in life is to win the Super Bowl, but I don't think I would just be satisfied with winning the Super Bowl or being the best player in the league," he said.

### 'If I get the chance, I would play for Korea'

After playing as a baseball infielder in high school, Murray focused on American football at Texas A&M University before transferring to the University of Oklahoma, where he picked up baseball again.

As an outfielder, he hit .296 with 10 home runs, 47 runs and 10 stolen bases in 51 games in college, earning him the ninth overall pick in the first round of the Major League Baseball (MLB) draft by the Oakland Athletics.

But Murray went on to win the Heisman Trophy as the University of Oklahoma's starting quarterback in 2018, which is the trophy awarded to the college's top player, and was selected by Arizona with the No. 1 pick in the first round of the NFL Draft.


"Giving up baseball was the hardest decision of my life," Murray reflected in the interview. "The Oakland team allowed me to go back to college and play football."

Murray has always shown his love for baseball at every opportunity. The most famous example of a player who played both NFL and MLB is Bo Jackson.

Jackson was a running back for the Los Angeles Raiders in the NFL and an outfielder in MLB in the late 1980s. He didn't take time off from one sport to play the other but instead used the off-seasons to showcase his superhuman athleticism in both sports.

While Jackson became an all-star in both the NFL and MLB, Deion Sanders has been to both the Super Bowl (NFL) and World Series (MLB). Sanders has also left a huge footprint on the game of American football, having been inducted into the NFL Hall of Fame.

When asked if he would ever play baseball, Murray replied: "I would love to, and I think I could. The hardest thing I've ever done is hit a baseball. I think I can do both."

Recognizing that American football is not popular in Korea, he said: "It has everything: sacrifice, camaraderie, hard work and discipline to win. I've played baseball and basketball, but these are the things that make American football the best game in the world." 

## Dedicated service for adopted Koreans opens in Gwanghwamun, Seoul

Staff positioned to provide counseling at service center in Gwanghwamun and comprehensive counseling

OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk says, 'We will also hold a convention for adopted Koreans in Paris in May and a policy meeting with related organizations'

A dedicated service for Korean adoptees in Korea and abroad to consult on their grievances and difficulties, including finding their birth parents and other family members, opened its doors March 25.

The Overseas Koreans Agency (Commissioner Lee Sang-duk) has opened a first-of-its-kind dedicated service to quickly handle various requests from adopted Koreans. The service center is located in the OKA's Service Support Center on the second floor of Twin Tree Tower A, 6 Yulgok-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul.

By staffing the center with professional English-speaking counselors, it is expected to help resolve the difficulties of Korean adoptees who have experienced inconvenience in filing complaints due to difficulty in speaking Korean.

When a Korean adoptee visits the counter and applies for a service, the counselor understands the content and connects them to the relevant organizations to share details of the request and expedite the process.

In addition, the service will create convenience for Korean adoptees by providing comprehensive advice on requests, including genetic testing and searching for birth parents run by the police and the National Center for the Rights of the Child (NCRC), requests for disclosure of adoption information, application procedures for public projects by agencies (OKA, NCRC), advice on issuing visas (F-4, H-2), other civil documents (expulsion certificates, family relationship registers) and connections to related organizations.

In addition, the OKA plans to carry out various initiatives to strengthen the link between adopted compatriots and their home countries. The OKA plans to hold an adoptee policy forum in the first half of this year to explore ways to support the stable settlement of overseas adopted compatriots in Korea and will conduct a survey of adopted compatriots currently living in Korea to identify relevant policy needs.

"It is time for the OKA to take care of the 170,000 overseas adopted Koreans around the world who have suffered through the



OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk (C) cuts the ribbon with Jung Ik-joong, director of the National Center for the Rights of the Child (L), and Kim Sung-mi, secretary-general of the Global Overseas Adoptees' Link.

painful history, which is the flipside of Korea's high economic growth," OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk said. "Today's opening of the dedicated service for adopted Koreans is a small step, but I hope it will serve as an opportunity to bring overseas adopted Koreans closer to their home country. When adoptees come to Korea to find their birth parents, they have to go seek support from various organizations and have poor language communication, which has been a major inconvenience. From now on, we will be able to resolve related requests at a one-stop shop."

In particular, Lee promised, "We will hold an overseas adoptee convention in Paris in May in collaboration with the Korean Embassy in France and adoptee organizations to listen to the difficulties of adoptees living abroad and find ways to support them."

In addition to Commissioner Lee, in attendance were NCRC Director Jung Ik-joong, Chief of the Youth Protection Division of the National Police Agency Joo Seung-eun, Global Overseas Adoptees' Link (G.O.A.'L.) Director Kim Jong-woo and G.O.A.'L. Secretary-General Kim Sung-mi, who was adopted by a family in Sweden. [장]

## To be established in 2026 and open in 2028 Plan to transition to 'Global Hallyu Alliance University'



President Sung Kyung-ryoong of Sangji University gives a keynote speech at the seventh presentation hosted by the Global Forum on the Future of Hangeul Schools held at the Paper Culture Foundation in Jangchung-dong, Jung-gu, Seoul on March 10.

Sangji University Dean Sung Kyung-ryoong (former director of policy at the Office of the Presidential Secretary) will establish the first domestic “World University of Hallyu Culture, Business, and People.”

In a keynote lecture on March 10 at the seventh presentation of the Global Forum on the Future of Hangeul Schools (co-chairs Park In-gi and Kim Bong-seop) held at the Paper Culture Foundation in Jangchung-dong, Jung-gu, Seoul, Sung revealed that the university plans to establish the World University of Hallyu Culture, Business, and People in 2026.

To this end, Sung decided to establish a basic plan for the World University of Hallyu Culture, Business, and People this year and establish a cyber university as an affiliate of the university.

The plan is to establish and operate a cyber university with a maximum enrollment of 50,000 students in the first phase in 2026, and to open related majors in five educational fields: K-Hangeul, K-Culture, K-Food, K-Medicine & Sports and K-Management.

In the second phase, starting in 2027, the plan is to operate Sangji University as a global campus (hybrid campus), attracting up to 2,000 international students and significantly open up other majors, focusing on the five educational fields, including K-Hangeul. Through this, international students and Korean students will jointly participate in learning, cultural activities, sports, clubs and dormitory life. In terms of language, Korean, English and Chinese will be the

official languages, but students will be able to utilize high-performance simultaneous interpreters or simultaneous interpretation apps.

The third phase is to establish the Global Hallyu Alliance University in 2028, an Asian version of the Erasmus program based around Hallyu. The Erasmus program (ERASMUS-European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students) is an exchange student program between countries in the European Union. As of 2013, more than 270,000 students have participated in the program. Currently, more than 4,000 universities in more than 30 countries participate in the Erasmus program.

Sung announced that Sangji University is building an alliance with 20 universities across Asia. All students of participating universities are free to enter, attend and graduate from any of the universities. Each university will focus on its own country's language, culture and majors but will give students the opportunity to take a wide range of courses in the Korean language and culture.

Sung also decided to establish a planning committee and organizing committee for the “Global Hallyu Cultural Olympics” with Sangji University and Gangwon Province as the mainstays. He announced that he would promote the Global Hallyu Cultural Olympics and the establishment of “World Hallyu Day,” as well as a “Visit the hometown of overseas Korean merchants” project. [\[장\]](#)

## Leading the way in implementing human rights, equality, justice Also selected as journalist who defined the 20th century

Reporter Lee Kyung-won, who was the first Korean American journalist in U.S. mainstream media and helped exonerate Lee Chol Soo, who was falsely accused of murder and sat for years on death row, passed away March 9 from a chronic illness. He was 96 years old.

According to the Korean American media and the K.W. Lee Center for Leadership (Director Kim Do-hyung), the deceased, the son of Gov. Lee Hyung-soon, a patriot of the Independence Movement during the Japanese colonial period, was born in Gaeseong in 1928. After graduating from Korea University with a degree in English literature, the reporter moved to the United States in 1950, majored in journalism at West Virginia University and received a master's degree in journalism from the University of Illinois in 1955.

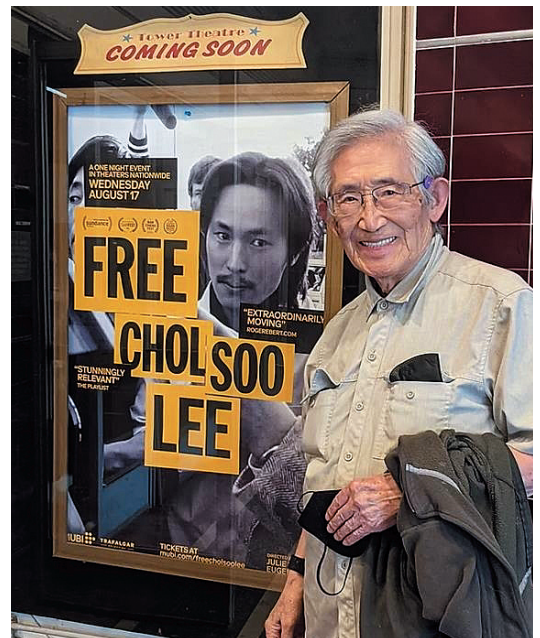
In 1956, when racial discrimination was still severe in the United States, he became the first Asian immigrant to join The Kingsport Times-News, a mainstream daily newspaper in Tennessee, as a reporter. After that, he moved to the Charleston Gazette and mainly covered black lung disease (pneumoconiosis) suffered by Appalachian miners, as well as other issues regarding poverty and the civil rights movement.

After moving to The Sacramento Union newspaper in 1970, he reported over 100 times on the story of Lee Chol Soo, who was serving a sentence for gang murder in San Francisco's Chinatown in 1973, and won his acquittal. Lee Chol Soo, who was only 18 years old at the time, was sentenced to life in prison due to the testimony of a white witness who could not distinguish Asian appearances.

After Lee Kyung-won, who came across this incident, persistently reported the story of injustice, a movement to save him spread like wildfire in not just the Korean community but the wider Asian one, leading to the release of Lee Chol Soo after 10 years in prison.

This story was depicted in the Hollywood movie "True Believer" and was also produced as a documentary about the rescue movement, "Free Chol Soo Lee," which won an Emmy Award, the most prestigious award in the American broadcasting industry, in 2003.

In 1979, the deceased also published the Koreatown weekly, the first Korean English-language newspaper, in Los Angeles to convey the voices of Koreans to mainstream society.



Reporter Lee Kyung-won takes a commemorative photo in front of the documentary "Free Lee Chol Soo." (Provided by K.W. Lee Center for Leadership)

The deceased, who was at the forefront of protecting the human rights of ethnic minorities throughout his life, served as the English editor-in-chief of The Korea Times English edition in 1990, then worked as an adviser to NBC and lectured on journalism at the University of California, Davis.

In recognition of his contributions to the realization of equality, human rights and justice, he received the Justice Award in 2007 from the Foundation for Improvement of Justice, a leading human rights organization in the U.S., and was also the first person to receive a lifetime achievement award from the Asian American Journalists Association.

The deceased also had the honor of being selected as the only Asian journalist among the "500 American journalists who shone in the 20th century" at the Newseum museum for journalism in Arlington, VA, just outside Washington, D.C.

The deceased's funeral was held privately in Northern California with only his family and close friends in attendance. 장

## Kim Beong-soo, vice president of law at USC, appointed interim president

Harvard graduate and federal prosecutor, 'I am considering the role of universities in current upheaval in U.S.'

The University of Southern California (USC), a prestigious private university on the west coast of the United States, has appointed Kim Beong-soo (52), a second-generation Korean immigrant and senior vice president and general counsel at USC, as its interim president. He will serve as interim president until a successor to current President Carol Folt, who is retiring in June, is selected. He is the first Korean to hold a high-ranking position at a private university in the United States.

Kim said that he is deeply concerned about the role of universities as U.S. research universities are currently in great turmoil with U.S. President Donald Trump's newly launched administration drastically cutting budgets.

"USC is a university that conducts research but also plays a diverse role in the fields of medicine, music and sports," Kim said. "I will think deeply about what kind of contributions USC can make to Los Angeles, California, the United States and the world in the future."

Kim has had an unusual career, having worked as a lawyer and a federal prosecutor and at Kaiser Permanente, the largest nonprofit health care organization in the United States, after graduating from Harvard Law School.

"I worked as a federal prosecutor, mainly dealing with white-collar crimes, and then while working at the law firm Jones Day, I received a job offer from Kaiser Permanente," he said. "I thought it would be meaningful to work at a health care organization with a large social impact, so I joined."

After being hired as vice president for legal affairs at USC in 2020, Kim played a key role in major issues at USC, such as resolving protests on campus. He expressed his joy at being given an important role at USC as a Korean American and expressed gratitude for the deep ties between Korea and USC.

"USC has a Korean Studies Institute, and many Koreans have been contributing. CEO Jaime Lee of Jamison Realty is a member of the USC Board of Directors," he said, adding that Korean immigrants play an important role not only at USC but also in LA and California.



Vice President Kim Beong-soo of the University of Southern California (USC)

"I am proud that Korea has creative capital, including K-pop and K-dramas, and is exporting it to the world," Kim said. "I am an old-timer, so I don't listen to K-pop, but I know that artists from Korea perform in LA."

Kim, who is an amateur cellist, held a small-scale performance at his home in Pasadena during the COVID-19 pandemic, which became a hot topic in the local community and was even featured in the LA Times.

"One weekend, when I couldn't meet people due to the lockdown, I went out and started playing the cello, and people started listening to me," he recalled. "As word spread, it became a regular performance, and after it was featured in the newspaper, more people came, and I played a total of 12 times."

Kim, who was born in the United States and often visited Korea with his parents during summer vacations when he was young, chose the ice cream (아이스크림) cart as the most memorable thing about Korea. He said that when coming to Korea, he mostly stayed at his grandfather's or maternal grandfather's houses and explained: "I still remember the ice cream I ate in the hot summer. I still remember the 'omok' game I played with my maternal grandfather." 장

## 'To foster overseas Korean identity': OKA and Ministry of Veterans Affairs to cooperate

Commissioner Lee Sang-duk and Minister Kang Jeong-ae sign MOU at National Memorial of Korean Provisional Government

The Overseas Koreans Agency (Commissioner Lee Sang-duk) will work with the Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs (Minister Kang Jeong-ae) to foster the Korean identity among overseas Koreans.

The two organizations signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to this effect on March 6 at the National Memorial of the Korean Provisional Government in Seodaemun-gu, Seoul, attended by Lee Sang-duk and Kang Jeong-ae.

The MOU includes ▲ Supporting veterans education to foster the identity of the next generation of overseas Koreans, ▲ Promoting veteran commemoration projects related to independence and wartime at home and abroad with overseas Koreans, ▲ Preserving and utilizing historic sites and heritage related to the independence movement abroad, and ▲ Strengthening the discovery and honoring of the descendants of independence heroes living abroad.

Lee gave meaning to the event by saying, "Since the establishment of the OKA, we have been promoting a policy of



OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk (R) and Veterans Affairs Minister Kang Jeong-ae pose for a photo after signing the MOU.

shared growth between Korea and overseas Koreans, and with the cooperation between the two organizations, we have now laid the foundation for mutual growth between Korea and overseas Koreans in the field of veterans' affairs."

After signing the MOU, Lee visited the exhibition titled "The Korean Liberation Army and the South Korean National Army" held in the special exhibition room on the first floor.

## OKA and Incheon Yeonsu-gu District Office 'Join Hands' to support overseas compatriots returning to Korea

Deputy Commissioner Byun Chul-hwan meets with District Mayor Lee Jae-ho to discuss improving educational environment

The Overseas Koreans Agency and the Yeonsu-gu District Office of Incheon metropolitan city (District Mayor Lee Jae-ho) have agreed to work together to support overseas Korean returnees. Byun Chul-hwan, deputy commissioner of the OKA, met with District Mayor Lee Jae-ho at the Yeonsu-gu government office on March 7 and agreed to work together to synergize efforts to support overseas Korean returnees.

Hambak Village, located in Yeonsu 1-dong, Yeonsu-gu, is home to more than 6,500 Koryo people who have returned from Russia and other CIS countries. The village is home to the third-largest number of overseas Koryo compatriots in the country, after Ttaetgol Village in Ansan, Gyeonggi Province, and



OKA Deputy Commissioner Byun Chul-hwan (R) visited the Yeonsu-gu Office in Incheon, South Korea, on March 7 to discuss how to cooperate in supporting overseas Korean returnees with District Mayor Lee Jae-ho.

Goryeo-in Village in Gwangsan-gu, Gwangju.

The OKA is conducting various policies and projects to help the growing number of returning overseas Koreans quickly adapt to Korea and live in mutual prosperity and to help them grow into the engines of Korean society, which is facing a demographic cliff.

"We look forward to expanding our mutual cooperation with the Yeonsu-gu District Office, which is actively implementing efforts, such as the

establishment and operation of the Win-Win Exchange Center and the Dagachi Learning Center in Hambak Village," Byun said. "The OKA is focused on improving the educational environment for the youth, who will grow into the future resources of Korean society."

## MOU on research & development of overseas Korean policy

Creating network to revitalize academic exchanges

The Overseas Koreans Agency signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Korea Political Science Association (KPSA) to work closely together to establish and implement effective overseas Korean policies.

Under the MOU, the two organizations will cooperate on ▲ Research, development and consultation on overseas Korean policy, ▲ Establish a network to promote domestic and international academic exchanges on overseas Korean policy, and ▲ Co-host academic seminars and forums on overseas Korean policy.

The OKA plans to establish a close cooperation system with the KPSA to exchange knowledge, information, and data for the effective formulation and implementation of overseas Korean policies.

The signing ceremony, held at the OKA headquarters in Songdo, Incheon, was attended by OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk, KPSA President Kim Bum-soo, KPSA Director of Research Kim Dong-soo and KPSA Secretary-General Hong Seok-hoon.



The OKA signs a business agreement with the Korea Political Science Association on Feb. 27 at its headquarters in Songdo, Incheon. From left to right, KPSA Directors Hong Seok-hoon and Kim Dong-soo, KPSA President Kim Bum-soo, OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk, OKA Director of Policy Lee Ki-seong, and OKA Director of Exchange and Cooperation Kim Min-cheol.

“It is important for us to cooperate with the Korean Political Science Association to prepare a variety of practical policies that can contribute to the development of Korea by pooling the resources and capabilities of the 7 million overseas Koreans,” Commissioner Lee said.

## OKA Commissioner Lee: ‘Companies in North Gyeongsang Province please participate in World Korean Business Convention’

Commissioner Lee and Gov. Lee Cheol-woo mutually agree to collaborate on domestic support projects for compatriots

Overseas Koreans Agency Commissioner Lee Sang-duk visited the North Gyeongsang Provincial Office on Feb. 25 and asked Gov. Lee Cheol-woo to allow local companies to participate in the 23rd World Korean Business Convention (WKBC) to be held in Atlanta, U.S., from April 17 to 20.

“At this convention, we plan to present a vision for the ‘Global Korean Business Economic Zone’ and provide practical support for our small and medium-sized businesses to enter the North American market through trade, investment and joint projects beyond the existing Korean business network,” Lee said. “This will be a great help for companies located in North Gyeongsang Province to enter overseas markets.”

Lee also explained the OKA’s customized project plans for overseas compatriots residing in Korea and proposed that they work together to support the overseas Koreans residing in the province.

“We will work harder to ensure that the major policies and projects implemented by the OKA can be tangibly felt and helpful to



OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk (L) meets with Gov. Lee Cheol-woo at the North Gyeongsang Provincial Office.

the lives of our compatriots,” he said.

In response, Lee said: “I hope that the WKBC held in Atlanta in the U.S. will serve as a bridge for companies in North Gyeongsang Province to enter the U.S. market. I will do my best to ensure that many companies participate.”



## 'Cultivating global talents to contribute to development of motherland'

Overseas Koreans Cooperation Center recruiting overseas Koreans for invitational student scholarship

The Overseas Koreans Cooperation Center (OKOCC, Director Kim Young-geun), an affiliate of the Overseas Koreans Agency, announced March 10 that it is recruiting for the 2025 Overseas Koreans Invitational Student Scholarship to foster global talents who will contribute to the development of the overseas Koreans community and the Republic of Korea. The target group is the next generation of overseas Korean university and grad school students who want to study abroad in Korea, and the number of students to be selected is 80.

Overseas Koreans with foreign nationality or permanent residency in their countries of residence, adopted Koreans and Korean nationals who have completed or are scheduled to complete all elementary/middle/high school courses abroad and are scheduled to enter university in the September semester of this year or the March semester of next year are eligible. Applicants for a master's



The scholarship certificate award ceremony takes place for scholarship recipients who were selected last year.

program must have a bachelor's degree, and applicants for a doctoral program must have a master's degree.

For just this year, the OKOCC has made it possible for students entering in the March semester of next year to apply. Scholars will receive an annual living allowance of 13.2 million won, which is a 16 percent increase from last year, as well as roundtrip airfare, thesis printing costs,

insurance premiums, etc., and students who lack Korean language skills will also be provided with support for a Korean language training course before entering the university. They will also have the opportunity to interact with previous scholarship recipients and opportunities for experiencing Korean history and culture.

Applicants must apply on Korean.net ([www.korean.net](http://www.korean.net)) by April 7 and submit the relevant documents to the overseas diplomatic mission where they reside. The final selection will be announced through the overseas missions and Korean.net in June.

## San Francisco & Bay Area Korea Center to screen Independence Movement films through August

The San Francisco & Bay Area Korea Center (President Kim Han-il) announced March 13 that it will screen Korean films about the Korean independence movement consecutively from March 22 to August to commemorate the 80th anniversary of liberation.

"We will screen six films, one per month, containing the stories of independence activists, national heroes and ancestors who devoted themselves to the country," a Korean Association official said. "Through films, we will create an opportunity to instill a sense of identity and a sense of homogeneity in the Korean people from future generations."

The film to be screened at the San Francisco & Bay Area Korea Center this month is "1947 Boston." It tells the story of Suh Yun-bok, the first Korean person to participate in the 1947 Boston Marathon after liberation, and his coach and legendary marathoner



A poster for the film screenings of the Korean Independence Movement

Sohn Kee-chung. Films that include "Malmoi," "Resistance: The Story of Yu Gwan-sun," "Assassination," "The Battle of Bongodong" and "Dongju" will be screened until August.

Ahead of the film screening on March 22, the Korean Association held a ceremony at the community center to commemorate the 117th anniversary of the righteous deeds of Jang In-hwan and Jeon Myeong-un. The two doctors assassinated pro-Japanese diplomat Durham White Stevens, who was a diplomatic adviser to the Korean Empire, in front of the San Francisco

Ferry Building in 1908.

"We hold an event every year to commemorate the righteous deeds of the two activists," President Kim said. "I hope that all Koreans will have time to reflect on their patriotism while commemorating the righteous deeds of the two martyrs who took action to save the country."



## As a compatriot, not a foreigner, I wish to be embraced by my homeland

As Korea's international reputation has grown, so has the number of overseas Koreans visiting their homeland. More and more overseas Koreans want to stay in their proud country, which has developed into a great place to live, to engage in economic activities, such as employment and investment, or to spend the rest of their lives in peace, alongside their families.

The Ministry of Justice reported there were more than 860,000 overseas Koreans living in Korea as of the end of October 2024, but the number exceeds 1 million if you include those who have already established a new life in their home country through nationality restoration or dual citizenship. As a country facing a demographic decline due to a declining birthrate and aging population, there is no reason why we shouldn't welcome our compatriots back to their homeland, along with their abundant capital and labor.

In June 2023, the government recognized the importance of overseas Korean policy and established the Overseas Koreans Agency as a control tower for overseas Korean policy. In particular, the Basic Law on Overseas Koreans was enacted, making it the responsibility of the government to support the stable stay of overseas Koreans returning to their home countries. However, the Korean diaspora community, which had hoped for a major change in the policy of overseas compatriots staying in Korea, has been frustrated by the slow pace of the government.

In this context, the "Dialogue with the Government, Academia, and Civil Society Organizations on Domestic Compatriots Policy (2024 Overseas Koreans Policy Academic Forum)" hosted by the OKA for the first time at the end of last year was a meaningful event. In particular, it was announced that lowering the permissible age for multiple citizenship would have a positive effect on the Korean economy, as the current system only allows for Koreans over 65, for whom participation in economic activities is more difficult and only increases costs. The issue of the F-4 visa (Overseas Korean visa) and the H-2 visa (Work and Visit visa), which are specifically applied to overseas Koreans, were also discussed in detail, including issues with how the visa and employment policies are causing great suffering to the lives of overseas compatriots residing in Korea.

However, the Ministry of Justice's Immigration and Foreign Affairs policy division, the department in charge of these policies, has maintained the policy position that compatriots living in their home

countries should be strictly managed and regulated as "foreigners, not compatriots," emphasizing "social consensus" as a prerequisite. The Ministry of Justice's statement that policy will be implemented once social consensus is achieved raises the question of whether it perceives compatriot policy as a means of maintaining and controlling the status quo rather than as a major tool for social change and national development. Despite the establishment of the OKA, participants expressed their disappointment that compatriot policy is still decentralized and not efficiently coordinated across ministries and that the Ministry of Justice's policy stubbornness to manage compatriots within the framework of immigration and alien policy remains.

In particular, the Korean diaspora has criticized the Ministry of Justice's "turf war" to block the OKA's domestic compatriot support projects, even though there is a legal system and budget in place for the OKA to support the stable residence of Korean compatriots in Korea. The Ministry of Justice is of the position that they are already operating a domestic compatriot program in the form of the Overseas Korean Support Center using private organizations, and therefore, it is not advisable for the OKA to carry out another domestic compatriot support project. However, it is a fact that the overseas Korean community already knows that the Ministry of Justice's Overseas Korean Support Center is a hollow system that has been operating for a long time without a proper budget and without a single successful project.

If overseas Koreans are treated as foreigners rather than compatriots in their home countries, how will it affect their social integration? The resentment and frustration that accumulate in their hearts as they struggle through their days in welfare blind spots, as well as how this will possibly aid the national task of building a community and establishing an identity for the Korean people, should be soberly reflected on. 🇰🇷



Kwak Jae-seok,  
director of the Migration and  
Diaspora Policy Institute

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

## OKA's Upcoming Events

Directors' meeting related to World Korean Business Convention (March 4)  
National Assembly Foreign Affairs and Unification Committee plenary meeting (March 11)  
4th Policy Advisory Committee meeting (March 25)  
Opening ceremony of dedicated service for Korean adoptees (March 25)

## OKA Commissioner's Activities in March

March 1: Commemoration ceremony for Independence Movement Day  
4: Meeting of heads of organizations related to World Korean Business Convention  
5: Meeting with Kim Deok-ryong, president of The World Federation of Korean Associations of Commerce  
10: Lunch with Noh Young-don, vice president of external cooperation at Incheon National University  
Meeting with actor Kim Young-chul  
11: Lunch with Kim Wang-ki, chairman of Win Media Group  
Plenary session of National Assembly Foreign Affairs and Unification Committee  
13: Lunch with Kim Dae-young, editorial director of Maeil Business Newspaper  
14: Meeting with Yoon Ki-ro, president of Korean Medical Association in U.S.  
Meeting with Seong Gyeong-ryong, president of Sangji University  
Meeting with Joo Hyung-hwan, vice chairman of Low Birth Rate and Aging Society Committee  
19: Maeil Business Newspaper's Vision Korea - World Knowledge Forum  
Meeting with Kim Jeong-ho, CEO of Korea Economic Daily, and Hyun Seung-yoon, CEO of Korea Economic Daily TV  
General meeting of the Legislation and Judiciary Committee of National Assembly  
20: Meeting with Kim Min-yong, president of Korea Food Expression Arts Therapy Association  
Interview with Koo Seong-mo, director of Policy Research Institute of World Korean Christian Federation  
24: Interview with Lee Sae-ho, president of Southern Southeast Asia branch of The Peaceful Unification Advisory Council  
25: 4th Policy Advisory Committee  
Opening ceremony of the dedicated service for Korean adoptees

## OKA Announcements

### Recruitment for 2025 Overseas Korean Companies Youth Internship

Recruiting 10 people till April 11; OKA to provide living support of 1.1 million won per month for 6 months

The Overseas Koreans Agency is implementing the Overseas Korean Companies Youth Internship project to strengthen the global capabilities of domestic youth and provide opportunities for overseas advancement, and is recruiting interns to dispatch for the second half of 2025 in the process outlined below.

The target for recruitment is 34 years of age or younger, a graduate (or expected graduate) or a current student who has completed at least four semesters of a four-year university (two semesters of junior college). The applicant must be a citizen of the Republic of Korea and not be disqualified from issuing a visa or traveling abroad in the relevant country.

In the case of the United States, the applicant must check the requirements for J-1 visa issuance before applying and must not have prior experience participating in an internship program. In addition, this year's project will be conducted in conjunction with the Jeonbuk International Cooperation Promotion Agency, so applications cannot be made concurrently with the Jeonbuk International Cooperation Promotion Agency's Youth Overseas Company Internship Support Project.

Ten people will be recruited, and the dispatch period is six months (from May to December). The recruitment period is from March 18 to April 11. The internship positions are office roles desired by compatriot companies in areas that include trade, administration, marketing and design.

Applications can be made through the Hansangnet homepage. After filling out the application form, you must click the submit button to complete the submission, and only one company can be applied to per person.

The support includes a monthly living allowance of 1.1 million won (up to six months) from the OKA, funds for a one-time overseas long-term stay insurance of 550,000 won and domestic education expenses. In addition, as an incentive, roundtrip airfare to the country of employment is also provided upon confirmation of employment.

In addition, when conducting an internship, the overseas company will pay a salary of at least US\$700 per month for six months. For information on other participation methods, please call 032-585-3226 or email mjan23@korea.kr.

산을 **타러** 가십니까?



산을 **태우러** 가십니까?

불법 흡연과 취사, 산림을 없애는 무기입니다.

산을 타러 가셨다면, 산은 태우지 마세요

오늘의 대한민국이 빛나기까지 **재외동포**도 함께했습니다.

하와이의 뜨거운 사탕수수밭과  
중남미의 선인장 농장에서 번 돈은  
우리의 **독립자금**으로 쓰였습니다.

파독 광부와 간호사들의 현지 송금은  
우리나라 **산업화 과정**에서  
**소중한 종잣돈**이 되었습니다.

일본에 있는  
대한민국 **대사관**을 비롯한 **총영사관** 등  
공관 10개 중 9개는  
**재일동포**의 기증으로 조성되었습니다.

**서울올림픽**을 개최할 때,  
또 우리가 **외환위기**를 극복할 때에도  
**재외동포**는 힘을 모아 주었습니다.