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Asia Society Korea Center's New Year Celebration



January 22, 2015 - The Asia Society Korea Center celebrated the beginning of 2015 by holding its New Year Celebration on January 22nd, 2015. The event, hosted by **Shin Dong-Bin**, Chairman of both Asia Society Korea Center and the Lotte Group, included a tour of the Lotte World Tower construction site and Lotte World Mall, and was followed by a banquet. In attendance were Honorary Chairman **Dr. Lee Hong-Koo**, over 30 members of the foreign diplomatic community, and corporate and individual members of the Asia Society. The highlight of the evening was a guided tour of the construction site of the new Lotte World Tower. Upon its completion in 2016, the tower will become the tallest skyscraper on the Korean Peninsula with 123 floors and a total height of 555 meters. (Continued on Page 6)

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News & Events

Meet the Author Series

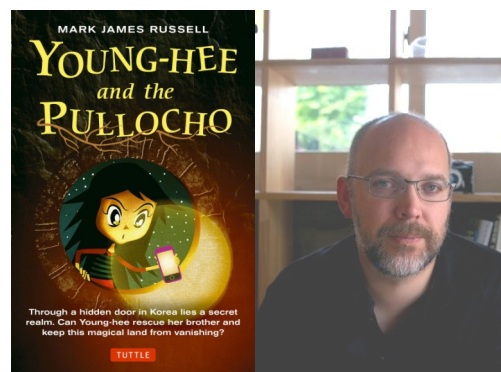
As part of the Asia Society Korea Center's 'Meet the Author' series, Asia Society Korea Center's contributing writer Matthew Fennell met with several authors based in Seoul to find out more about the authors and to get an insight into their new books.



Daisy Lee Yang is a former professor at Seoul's Korea University and wife of **Yang Sung-chul**, a former lawmaker who served as the South Korean ambassador to the United States from 2000 to 2003.

Although Daisy Lee Yang, also known as Jung Jin Lee, has not done much work in translation in the past, she wrote her first novel, *Lady Bora from Diamond Mountain*, which is based around a superhero whom young people can look up to. Set in the Chosun Dynasty, the story tells how a super heroine overcomes her misfortune to come to the aid of her country in its time of need. Endowed with supernatural powers, Lady Bora can fly, change her appearance, see events taking place in the future, and use other magical powers.

Mark James Russell has already published two books on Korea, and he's not done yet — in early 2015 he will publish his first novel, a fantasy tale titled *Young-hee and the Pullocho*. His first book, *Pop Goes Korea: Behind the Revolution in Movies, Music and Internet Culture* focused on the amazing changes that transformed Korea's popular culture and entertainment industry from the 1990s to the 2000s. His second book, *K-Pop Now! The Korean Music Revolution* looked at Korean pop music and the culture that created it. In this new book debut, Mr. Russell puts a Korean spin on an evergreen fantasy trope, interweaving Korean folktales with the story of a young girl who, without realizing it, is in search of herself. Readers follow Young-hee as she finds herself on an epic quest, encountering dragons, ghosts, tigers and all sorts of creatures from out of fairytales.



One of the main attractions that bring visitors to the neighborhoods of Bukchon, Insa-dong and Samcheon-dong, is the Hanok, or traditional Korean house. Although many people get to see the picturesque small streets lined with these traditional houses, not many people get to go inside. This is what inspired **Nani Park**, Robert Fouser and Jongkeun Lee to write and publish *Hanok: The Korean House*, which was released in late 2014. Nani Park was born in Korea, but grew up in Hawaii, which gives her the special perspective as an insider and outsider in Korea. Currently residing in Seoul, she started this project when she realized there was a lack of well-made books on Hanok in the market.

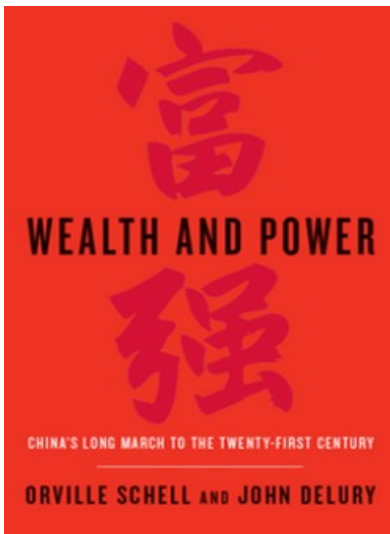
James Pearson is a correspondent for Reuters in Seoul, where he covers politics and general news in North and South Korea. He holds a BA in Chinese and Korean from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) and a Master's of Philosophy in Oriental Studies from the University of Cambridge. One of the most informative and contemporary books to be released on North Korea in early 2015, *North Korea Confidential* focuses on real daily life in the country as opposed to broader strategic security questions. James Pearson and Daniel Tudor, formerly of The Economist are two leading British journalists who deliver an insight into the North Korea through their personal insights and first hand reporting.



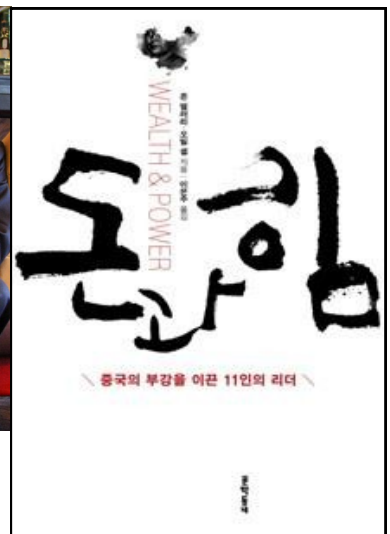
Read the full interviews at www.asiasociety.org/korea

Meet the Author

John Delury



John Delury (left) and H.E. William Paterson (right)



February 26, 2015 – The Asia Society Korea Center hosted the first book party of 2015 by welcoming **John Delury** to talk about, and answer questions on his new book, **“Wealth and Power: China’s Long March to the Twenty-first Century”**. Dr. Delury is a renowned Chinese and North Korean historian and expert, current professor at Yonsei University in Seoul, and a fellow of the Asia Society’s Center for U.S.-China Relations. The book party was moderated by the Australian ambassador to Korea, **H.E. William Paterson**, a big supporter of the Korea Center. Pierre’s Bar, on the 35th floor of the Lotte Hotel Seoul, was the fitting venue for the event in which a number of dignitaries and members were in attendance.

Ambassador Paterson kicked off the evening by talking about how he was so compelled by Dr. Delury’s talk at last year’s monthly luncheon event that he actually went and purchased the book on the way home that day. H.E Paterson summed up the central thesis of the book by explaining how the wealth and power has been the central guiding purpose of China for more than 2500 years and is still guiding policy today. He also talked about how China looms large for his own country Australia by being its biggest trading partner, largest source of immigrants and tourists, and Australia’s principle strategic focus as it seeks to understand Chinese intentions in the region.

Dr. Delury took up the next part of the event by explaining how the framework of wealth and power, although developed by the authors, was structured around the readings of Chinese history from key intellectual and political people of the 19th and 20th century, all who kept on using this refrain of wealth and power. Although wealth was historically the more important of the two, power is quickly catching up; economic power over time naturally translates into military power, diplomatic influence, financial influence and structural influence. Although Xi Jinping is enjoying this paradigm shift, Dr. Delury believes that China is not looking for territorial expansion but is more focused on consolidating the territory that is currently held. This pivotal shift from wealth to power under Xi Jinping is interesting to both commentators within China as well as internationally with many asking the question of what the implications are for the future of one of the most powerful countries and economies in the world.

Following Dr. Delury’s short talk, the floor was opened up for discussion in which a lot of compelling and interesting conversation followed with both dignitaries and journalists engaging with Dr. Delury on a number of issues. The evening was a resounding success and all in attendance left with signed copies of the book that they were able to purchase through the Korea Center.

Asia Society Korea Center Welcomes a New Member!



The Asia Society Korea Center would like to offer a warm welcome to The Federation of Korean Industries. FKI was founded in 1961 as a non-profit independent organization which consists of Korea’s major conglomerates and associated members. The main objectives of the organization tie closely to the approach of the Asia Society of helping to promote sound economic policies while also internationalizing the Korean economy. FKI works closely with the government on major economic issues and policies, helps promote cooperation with major international and foreign economic organizations, disseminate free market principles and assists corporations in promoting corporate community relations. The Korea Center welcomes its new member and looks forward to working together to help promote Korean on all fronts.

Meet the Author

Dan Washburn

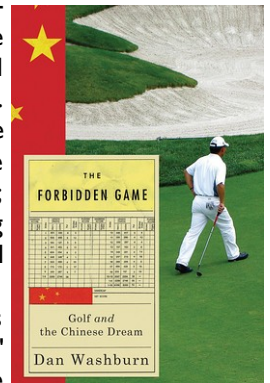


John Delury (left) and Dan Washburn (right)

March 25, 2015 – **Dan Washburn** was the guest speaker of the Asia Society Korea Center’s second “Meet the author” event of the year. Washburn is an award-winning journalist and Chief Content Officer at the Asia Society, and was in town to talk about his new book, *The Forbidden Game*. The event was moderated by **John Delury**, renowned Chinese and North Korean historian and expert, current professor at Yonsei University in Seoul, and a fellow of the Asia Society’s Center for U.S.-China Relations. Washburn explained how *The Forbidden Game* follows the lives of three men intimately involved in China’s bizarre golf scene, where new golf courses are at once banned and booming.

Washburn had been travelling around the world talking about his book at Asia Society Centers, and in Seoul, he explained how the book explores a unique path through China by following the lives of three men heavily involved in China’s bizarre golf scene. These are the chain smoking, blue-collar type who pursued an interest in golf as an alternative to working as farmers or in agriculture. He introduced the main character of the book, a peasant turned golf pro named Zhou, who fell into the game when he won a job as a security guard at a high end golf club. While following Zhou’s career on the fledging China Tour in 2006, Washburn was able to get a unique insight into the emerging Chinese middle class. The second character in the book is Wang, a farmer whose life is turned upside down when a golf resort moves in next door to the small village in which he was living; and the final character was Martin, an American golf course designer who did increasingly well designing courses in the US, Thailand, and ultimately China. Washburn explains how through these 3 personal stories the reader gets a glimpse into China’s transformation from an inside perspective.

Washburn, who lived in China from 2002 to 2011, talked about how he spent more than seven years researching and writing the book described as “strikingly original” by *The Wall Street Journal* and “gripping” by *The Economist*. He spoke about how he wanted to give a ground level view of the golf scene in China, one that was true and real to the reader. After explaining the book and giving background on the three main characters, Washburn then engaged in a question and answer session with the invited guests before signing copies of the book that were snapped up on the night.



The Forbidden Game: The Golf and Chinese Dream
Dan Washburn

In the News

“중국의 이중성, ‘금지된 게임’ 골프 통해 볼 수 있죠”

아시아소사이어티 편집국장 댄 워시번 ‘금지된 게임’ 펴내
중국 정치인 골프 ‘금기’이지만 글로벌 골프시장 먹여 살려



“금지된 게임”은 중국 미사시에 대한 거울이다. 중국의 골프산업은 중국사회의 급속한 경제 성장은 물론, 빈부격차, 환경문제, 부패를 묘사하기 때문이다.” 중국의 모순된 골프산업을 세 명의 삶을 통해 풀어낸 책 ‘금지된 게임’(The Forbidden Game)의 저자 댄 워시번은 25일 매일경제와의 인터뷰에서 이 같이 밝혔다. 전 세계에 아시아를 알리는 비영리단체인 아시아소사이어티(Asia Society)의 편집국장인 워시번은 ‘이코노미스트’ ‘ESPN닷컴’ ‘FT위켄드매거진’ 등 저명한 잡지에 기고해 온 워시번은 골프장 건설이 불법인 중국에서 수많은 골프장이 매년 새로 생기는 기이한 현상이 흥미로워 이 책을 쓰기 시작했다고 설명했다. 그는 “세계적인 스포츠 강국으로 부상한 중국에서 골프만큼 이중적인 운동은 없다. 글로벌 골프 시장이 경제위기로 흔들리는 사이 세계 골프시장을 주도하고 있는 게 바로 중국이지만 골프에 대한 인식은 적대적이다”라고 강조했다.

워시번은 “중국에서 골프는 ‘부자들의 운동’이며 마오쩌둥 전 국가주석은 골프를 비난하는 발언을 쏟아내기도 했다. 공산주의인 중국에서 정치인들은 골프를 칠 돈이 있어선 안 된다. 정치인들 사이에서 골프는 말 그대로 ‘금기’다”라고 밝혔다. 그는 “골프에 대한 이 같은 따가운 시선에도 불구하고 2010년 중국에 골프장 수는 600개가 넘어 5년 전보다 세 배 증가했다. 중국 골프산업이 부패와 모순으로 가득 차 있음을 보여준다”고 덧붙였다.

Meet the Author

James Pearson



John Delury (left) and James Pearson (right)

Part III of Asia Society Korea Center's "Meet the Author Series" was held on Thursday evening at Pierre's Bar, Lotte Hotel Seoul. Leading British journalist **James Pearson** was in attendance to talk about his new book, *North Korea Confidential*, one of the most informative and contemporary books to be released on North Korea in 2015. Once again the event was moderated by **John Delury**, renowned Chinese and North Korean historian and expert, current professor at Yonsei University in Seoul, and a fellow of the Asia Society's Center for U.S.-China Relations.

Dr. Delury opened the event by giving a brief overview of "*North Korea Confidential*" explaining how the focus of the book is on what life is actually like in modern North Korea today for the ordinary man and woman on the street. Through a variety of diverse sources, the book explains how the North Korean famine of the 1990s was an important catalyst which accelerated North Korean

marketization and paved the way for a form of free capitalism which holds today's North Korea together.

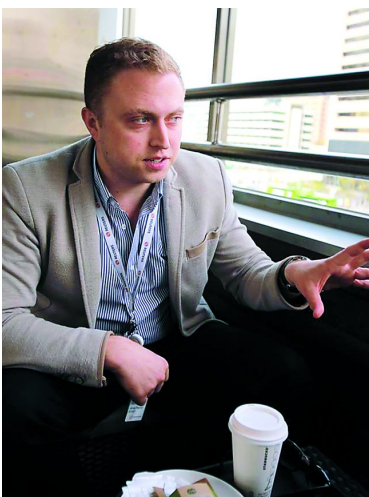
A wide range of issues were covered on the night with Pearson delivering a fascinating insight into the North and how the famine of the 1990's sowed the seeds of North Korean capitalism. North Korea's dual currency system was explained and more importantly how money matters in North Korea – with money you can buy both goods and favors. Pearson described some examples of unusual North Korean businesses such as apartment buildings as brothels, bus services, and private investors. It was described how money is an equalizer in the country and how bribing across "military first" lines can buy yourself both in and out of trouble.

Pearson wrapped up the discussion by talking about how Chinese-North Korean traders, with less ideological obligations and more links to China, are some of the best-placed capitalists in North Korea. It was highlighted how the government's every day battle is to deal with its new economic order – how that works in the regime's favor, and why there will likely be change before collapse. The evening proved to be another resounding success with lots of captivating discussion and networking.

In the News

N. Korea, no longer confidential

Book parades compelling up-to-date picture of N.K.



Two journalists, after covering the two Koreas for a while, were frustrated with the narrow focus of media reports and books on North Korean leadership, its nuclear program and propaganda.

"We wanted to clearly and concisely explain the real daily challenges ordinary people face, and the surprises which that brings," James Pearson, a Korea correspondent for Reuters, told the Korea Herald through an email interview.

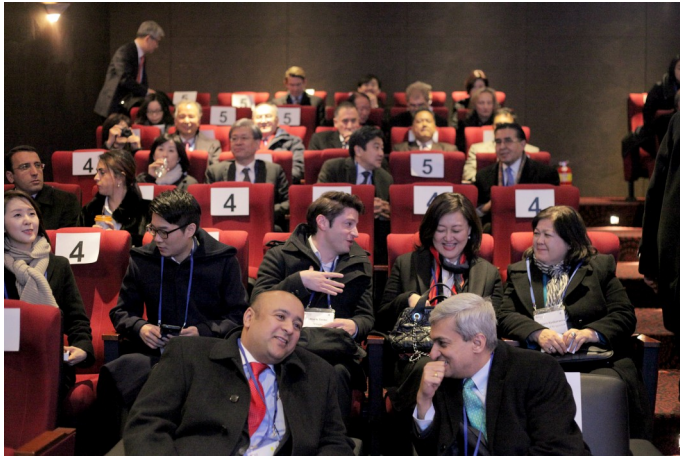
"There are few (books) which really lay out in very clear terms what life is really like for the average person on the street." The result is his new book "*North Korea Confidential*," co-authored with Daniel Tudor, a former correspondent for the Economist. Their book paints the most timely, realistic picture of North Korea that has often been overlooked by existing literature in the market. Tudor believes that the North Korean regime is pretty stable. "The geopolitical situation is balanced," he added. "But the people's psychological distance from the state is increasing, meaning that they are more ready to break the rules than before. I am not talking about political rules, but more economic and social rules. This is where the change in North Korea is happening," he said.

"Journalistically, I find it a million times more interesting than 'is Kim Jong-un going to launch a rocket?' or 'is Kim Jong-un addicted to cheese?'" Tudor said.

So in their book, the authors compiled their visits to North Korea, journalistic backgrounds, copious research and interviews of experts to give a snapshot of the world's most reclusive country through the average citizen living there.

They are, the authors said, concerned with living costs, raising children, looking fashionable and having fun from time to time. The book, at 192 pages, is a full exposure of the communist state, a home to some 24 million people, as best as it could from outside the country, through the lens of the black market and everyday people-to-people encounters. When describing the economy of North Korea, collective farms, communism and state ownership are outdated terms, the authors write.

Asia Society Korea Center's New Year Celebration



(Continued from Page 1) The New Year Celebration tour saw guests make their way to the 68th floor of the building, where they could sample a taste of the spectacular view over Seoul that the Lotte World Tower is going to offer upon completion. After returning to solid ground, the tour then showed guests around the Lotte World Mall, the shopping mall complex that occupies the lower floors of the Lotte World Tower.

During the dinner, Honorary Chairman **Dr. Lee Hong-Koo** presented **H.E. Vishnu Prakash**, the Ambassador of India to South Korea, with the 2014 Ambassador of the Year Award for his continued and exemplary support to the Asia Society Korea Center. Due to the overwhelming contributions from the foreign diplomatic community in 2014, the Korea Center felt that one award was not enough, and **H.E. Jasem Albudaiwi**, the Ambassador of Kuwait to South Korea, became the first recipient of the new Distinguished Patron Award for 2014 for his outstanding contributions. New members were also welcomed and guests participated in a raffle draw for prizes donated by the new members. New corporate members were recognized: **Kim & Chang, KDB Daewoo Securities, KB Investment & Securities, LEE&KO, SHIN & KIM**, and **Shinhan Bank**, and new individual members in attendance included **David Cotterchio, Hyung T. Hong, Kumjoo Huh, Don K. Mun, Nani Park, James Pearson, Kay Song, Mark Tetto** and **Wonhi Yoo**.

As the night drew to a close, Honorary Chairman Dr. Lee offered his closing remarks for the evening. In his speech he drew from the past while looking forward into the future, emphasizing the important role that the Asia Society plays in promoting understanding between cultures and the effect that has on international relationships. He stated that the Asia Society Korea Center is determined to make the neighborhood of Asia, and as a result the larger global village, a better and more peaceful place through promotion of mutual understanding, while stressing just how important the diplomatic community is to the Asia Society in promoting this understanding.

Overall, the night was a celebration of the past, while also giving a glimpse into what the future holds. The contributions of current members were honored, while new members were warmly welcomed and with everyone associated with the Asia Society working together, 2015 promises to be a successful year.

Monthly Luncheon Series

Independence Movement, Artificial Division, and Long Journey to Unification



**Dr. Lee Hong-Koo , Honorary Chairman,
Asia Society Korea Center**

February 10, 2015 – The Asia Society Korea Center held the first lecture of its 2015 Monthly Luncheon Series on February 10th. The speaker was the Center’s Honorary Chairman **Dr. Lee Hong-Koo**, former Prime Minister of Korea, Unification Minister, and also Ambassador to the United Kingdom and the United States of America. With extensive experience in both in politics and academia, Dr. Lee shared his knowledge regarding the state of South and North Korean relations in his lecture titled “Independence Movement, Artificial Division, and Long Journey to Unification”.

The first part of Dr. Lee’s lecture focused on the Korean Independence Movement which had its roots as far back as 1910 when Korea was colonized by Japan and the age of imperialism reached the Asian region. The aim of Korean independence was not to return to the past, but to build a new republic - although at that point there was no clear idea of what they wanted that republic to be. As such, a model was required and two political ideas were addressed to the Korean people.

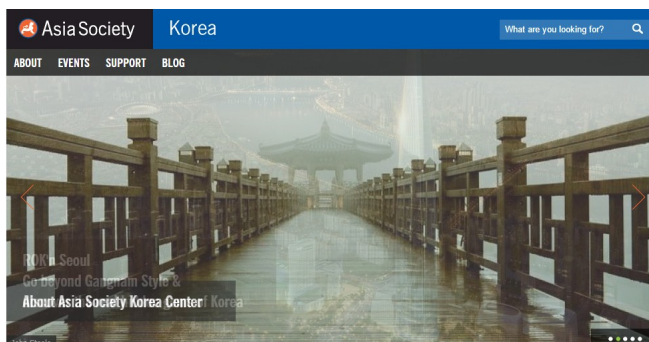
The first was the type of democracy that had been seen in the United States of America and Europe; this group was led by Syngman Rhee, who had lived and received education in the United States of America from several prestigious universities. The second group was largely influenced by the success of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. The idea that a small group of people could overthrow the government and take power left a strong impression on many Korean people, and Kim Il Sung would join this group after the end of World War II in 1945.

Dr. Lee then turned to the topic of artificial division. Although both groups had begun with the same goals - independence from Japanese rule, their political ideas divided

them, and this division became even greater when American and Soviet Union troops entered the country in late 1945. In 1948, the first election in Korea was held only in the South. This signaled the formation of the Republic of Korea. Not long after, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea was formed in the North, splitting the country in two. Soon after the formation of these two governments, in 1950 the North invaded the South and thus began the Korean War. With the help of the United Nations forces, South Korea was able to hold off invading forces and retained their government in the South. However, as a result there were many casualties, both directly from the war and also from this political division.

Moving on to the topic of Unification, Dr. Lee strongly focused on both the possible unification of the Korean peninsula, and the unification of the global community, as well as the need to support the United Nations. He expressed the need for Korea to be thankful to the United Nations and also support the work that they and Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon are undertaking. Rather than just focusing on local issues, South Korea has thrived due to its open nature towards the global community, while the North has closed its doors and become isolated in the world.

Dr. Lee closed his speech by reiterating the two main points of his talk and appealing to the audience and wider public. The first was how our interpretation of history is dependent on the collective memory of the people and what is considered the right interpretation is determined by this. Therefore it is time to let go of lingering feelings towards the North or the South; something that is required in order for the next generation to move towards unification. His second wish is that South Korea should support the United Nations as much as possible and people should take an interest in the initiatives they are working on, as these are issues that will affect us all on a global scale. This unification between global communities is also necessary in order for us to move forward in the right direction.



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Monthly Luncheon Series

Lost in Translation: Cultural Differences in Linguistic Aspect



From left: Christoph Heider, Secretary General of the European Chamber of Commerce in Korea, Seo-young Chae, Professor in the English Language and Literature Department at Sogang University, and Mark Tetto, CFO of Korea-based startup Vingle.

March 17, 2015 – The Asia Society Korea Center, in partnership with Kyobo Life and the European Chamber of Commerce in Korea, hosted the second lecture of its Monthly Luncheon Series at the Lotte Hotel Seoul on Tuesday. The event was a cross cultural training seminar based around the topic, “Lost in Translation: Cultural Differences in Linguistic Aspect”. The guest speakers were **Christoph Heider**, Secretary General of the European Chamber of Commerce in Korea, **Mark Tetto**, CFO of Korea-based startup Vingle and **Seo-young Chae**, Professor in the English Language and Literature Department at Sogang University.

Professor Chae kicked off the seminar by giving an insight into Korean culture from a linguistic perspective in an attempt to explain issues such as why Koreans often ask your age or want to call you brother or sister. The talk focused around 3 main points; the evidence of hierarchy in the Korean language, how social hierarchy is reflected in Korean language and why family is considered prototype for a lot of Koreans.

Dr. Chae explained how social hierarchy is ingrained in the language, more than any other language of the world, and depending on who you are talking to will determine what vocabulary, verb endings, particles, suffixes and address terms to use. Scholars say that traditionally there were 8 levels of honorific endings and around 4-6 are in use today.

The next perspective into cultural linguistic differences was given by Mark Tetto who gave a foreign take on things through many anecdotes and real life examples. The key point that Mr. Tetto made was that the Korean language forces you to make a choice every time you speak. When addressing someone, you need to decide what level of honorific ending to use and how this can sometimes lead to confusion or misunderstanding. Mr. Tetto gave some examples of his own faux pas while living and working in Korea and how these misinterpretations came about. Another example of confusion is the use of names in the working environment; Korea is trying to model itself on Silicon Valley so the use of first names was encouraged. However, this can be very harsh to the Korean ear and usually leads to the switching between different speech levels depending on if English or Korean is being spoken. Read more about this event at <http://asiasociety.org/korea/lost-translation-cultural-differences-linguistic-aspect>

Facereaders: Can They Really Predict the Future?



Physiognomy scholar Sang-Jin Rho

April 21, 2015 - Physiognomy scholar **Sang-Jin Rho** was the guest speaker for Asia Society Korea Center's April Luncheon Lecture. Face reader Rho, who has been studying physiognomy for more than 30 years and has 3 different MA's in the area, opened by saying he can read a person's face in just 0.4 seconds. Rho broke down his lecture into answering 5 common questions that people have about physiognomy: What exactly is face reading? Why Koreans are so interested in physiognomy? What is fate and are we destined to live a certain life? Is it possible to change our fate by getting plastic surgery? Does the face of a king or leader actually exist?

Rho explained that being able to read a face is something that you are born with and is related to yin, yang and the 5 elements. There are two ways to read physiognomy; looking at the face itself and examining everything else that one does. In terms of the face, it is the facial expressions, balance of the face and position of the eyes, nose, mouth and ears which are analyzed, while the way you walk, or how you sit and speak are aspects of everything else. So why are Koreans so interested in having their face read? Rho talked about how there are 5 different kinds of greed that humans are born with: money, fame, food, sleep and future. It is this greed for the future that leads people to wanting to know their fate and to the consulting of face readers.

Read more about this event at <http://asiasociety.org/korea/facereaders-can-they-really-predict-future>

Articles and Interviews

One Attack Can Tarnish, But Can't Break an Alliance



Steven Borowiec, Los Angeles Times special correspondent in Seoul

By Steven Borowiec

Living in Korea as a foreign journalist means living with the possibility of breaking news at any moment. News can break and flip a day's, even a week's, schedule on its head at a moment's notice. Usually the news is fairly benign. North Korea firing missiles into the waters off its east coast, or some official making uncouth comments about a 'sensitive' topic. The article(s) get filed, the news is dissected and the public's attention moves on.

On rare occasions, the news is genuinely horrifying, as it was on Thursday morning when it was learned that U.S. Ambassador Mark Lippert had been attacked by a blade-wielding assailant, suffering serious wounds to his face and wrist. He was rushed to hospital and underwent surgery to repair a deep wound on his cheek. Doctors said that had the cut to his face been slightly deeper, the attack could have been fatal. Lippert was attacked by Kim Ki-Jong, a 55-year-old extreme nationalist with a history of violence. In 2010 Kim lobbed blocks of concrete at the then-Japanese ambassador to Seoul, and once attempted to light himself on fire outside the Blue House. ('Too bad he didn't succeed', some probably thought on Thursday morning.)

Kim has been described in the media as an 'activist', which he is, in the sense that he liked to stand around in public places holding placards and shouting slogans. But he represents no organized political movement. His online community 'Woori Madang', or 'Our Garden', is said to have had little more than a dozen active members.

Read the full article at <http://asiasociety.org/korea/one-attack-can-tarnish-cant-break-alliance>

Unhealed



Nathan McMurray

By Nathan McMurray

As we know, a violent extremist attacked US Ambassador Mark Lippert. Many of us have seen the horrific picture of the fresh wound on Mr. Lippert's face, which was published (in bad taste) in the Korean media. The awful image remains at the forefront of my mind.

But Korea is not Benghazi. As anyone who has spent any time at all in Korea knows, it is a very safe place. I worry much more about my personal safety as I walk the civic centers of America than I do walking in Korea. It would be a mistake for Ambassador Lippert to now lock himself away. And I don't expect that the gregarious Ambassador—who up until now spent his days openly tweeting his whereabouts as he walked his dog—to vanish from the public eye.

But is also a mistake to pretend this means nothing. Many have disregarded the attack by saying, "The attacker is a dangerous nut." Yes, the man is clearly a disturbed person, but why did he choose this victim and this ideology? Rather than a random event, this attack marks a significant point in the US-Korea relationship.

In Korea there is a feeling of discontent. It stems from many things, including the rising class divide, an uncertain economic future, and the recent string of traumatizing disasters. And then

there is that persistent feeling that Korea may not even be Korea anymore. Many feel that the nation traded in dwenjjang and kimchi for Starbucks and fusion pasta a little too recklessly—and lost something in the process.

Read the full article at <http://asiasociety.org/korea/unhealed>

Korea's Oldest Singing Competition Show



Greg Priester

By Greg Priester

전국노래자랑 (Nationwide Singing Competition) is a hidden gem of South Korean culture. These days, there are many popular singing programs in South Korea such as Superstar K and K-Pop Star, but long before them there was 전국노래자랑, which began in 1980. It's amazing that this program has managed to broadcast for nearly 35 years which makes it South Korea's longest-running TV program.

On the surface this is just a talent show which caters to the older generation of South Koreans. Each Sunday the program travels to a different part of South Korea to host this competition for local participants. The live audience members for the show are usually elderly; therefore, the competitors generally sing traditional styles of music like Trot (트로트) and Pansori (판소리). Trot music which is also called Ppongjjak (뽕 짝) for its rhythm, is considered to be the oldest form of Korean pop music. Pansori is the traditional Korean narrative song which tells a story with dramatic, powerful vocals. These are huge pieces of Korean culture which this program has kept thriving and even produced some of the top stars in the country.

Read the full article at <http://asiasociety.org/korea/koreas-oldest-singing-competition-show>

Articles and Interviews

Baek-il, 100th Day Celebration in Korea



A baby celebrating her baek-il

Every birthday is special and well celebrated in Korea, but some milestones hold greater significance than others. In modern day Korea, “Dol” is one of the best-known birthday celebrations in which a party is thrown when the child reaches one year old. These parties are becoming more and more lavish and the first birthday, or “Doljanchi”, is now an event where affluent parents in one of the world’s biggest economies flaunt their wealth. Another important and celebrated day in the life of a Korean infant is “Baek-il”, and is held on the 100th day after the child’s birth. In 2015 Korea, “Baek-il” carries less significance than “Dol”, but a look back into Korea’s past reveals that this was not always the case.

Long ago in Korea childhood diseases were common and the survival rate for new born babies was very low. The high death rate was due to a lack of medical information, poor hygiene, Korea’s harsh winters and humid summers, and many other childhood related diseases. To protect their children and to give the best chance of survival, parents refrained from taking the baby outdoors until the 100th day after the birth. On that 100th day, a family would traditionally pray and give food offerings to thank the Shaman spirit of childbirth for the child having survived this difficult period. If the child was sick at this time, the family would pass the day without celebration or party as this would be considered bad luck for the infant. At this time in Korea, the 100th day was seen as a critical day of a child’s life. Read more about baek-il at <http://asiasociety.org/korea/baek-il-100th-day-celebration-korea>

Innovative Minds Part I: Stephen Revere

Author of the Korean language educational books *Survival Korean* and *Survival Korean: Basic Grammar Skills*, **Stephen Revere** is also one of the founders and the managing editor of [10 Magazine](#) and [Chip’s Maps](#). Since its start in October of 2008, 10 Magazine has emerged as a force in the English-language media scene in South Korea. The content focuses on monthly entertainment such as concerts, exhibitions, parties and festivals around the country, while also showcasing entertaining activities to experience while visiting or residing in Korea. 10 Magazine has developed both a passionate readership and subscriber base over the last 6 years of operation, and continues to grow with a new redesign to the print magazine and a brand new website. **Stephen Revere** arrived in Korea in 1995 and immediately began studying the Korean language. He completed the highest level of intensive Korean language programs at both Seoul National University and Yonsei University, as well as earning a MA Degree in Teaching Korean as a Second Language graduating from Yonsei University in 2004. He has appeared on a variety of Korean television programs in both Korean and English, including a 3-year stint as the teacher on Arirang TV’s Let’s Speak Korean.



Stephen Revere, CEO, Managing Editor, 10 Magazine

Find out more about our Innovative Minds Series at <http://asiasociety.org/korea/innovative-minds-part-i-stephen-revere>

Innovative Minds Part II: Elevating Innovation



Mr. John Kwon, President of the Otis Korea, with the Korea Center team

Otis is a name synonymous with elevators, escalators and moving walkways; here in Korea this is no different. As part of Asia Society Korea Center’s “Innovative Minds Series”, ASKC met up with the Otis Korea team, including Operations Director **John Kwon**, at their Yeouido headquarters to talk about innovation and what the future holds for the company. Burj Khalifa in Dubai, the world’s tallest building, is home to Otis elevators that soar to the summit at a speed of 22mph. At Namsan Tower, otherwise known as the N Seoul Tower, people are transported to one of the best views overlooking Seoul. However according to Mr. Kwon, Koreans will soon remember Otis as the provider of the country’s fastest elevators which are being installed at the new Lotte World Tower at Jamsil. The 123-story, 555-meter-tall building will include high-tech Otis elevators that will reach the observation deck in only one minute.

Find out more about our Innovative Minds Series at <http://asiasociety.org/korea/innovative-minds-part-ii-elevating-innovation>

Articles and Interviews

Panokseon: Unsung Hero



Panokseon (Photo: CJ Entertainment)

The biggest Korean film of all time at the South Korean box office was the 2014 movie, “The Admiral: Roaring Currents”. The film, based around the 1597 Battle of Myeongnyang off the south west coast of Korea, was a critically acclaimed success with more than 17 million admissions and the first Korean movie to gross more than US\$100 million. The plot revolves around legendary Admiral Yi Sun-sin and his defeat of the Japanese navy despite only having 13 ships compared to the fleet of 133 Japanese warships and at least 200 logistical support ships. Given the disparity in numbers, the battle is regarded as one of Admiral Yi’s most remarkable victories and has led to a lot of discussion about the strength of the “Panokseon”, the Korean vessel used in the battle and how its characteristics played a crucial part in the victory. The most famous Korean warship of the Joseon dynasty was the “Geobukseon”, more commonly known as the turtle ship because of its protective shell like covering. However it was the construction, characteristics and weaponry of the lesser known Panokseon that was instrumental in the defeat of the Japanese at Myeongnyang. One interesting difference that separated the Panokseon from its Japanese counterpart, the “Atakebune”, was the use of wooden pegs rather than iron nails.

The use of wooden bamboo pegs meant that the ship could absorb water without the worry of rust or corrosion; something that the Japanese vessels suffered from and therefore resulting in a weakened hull. Wood also played an important factor in the design of the hull with the Panokseon using thick, high density pine which improved the sturdiness of the ships structure, while

the Atakebune used light weight cedar and fir to improve speed at the expense of structural integrity. Read the full article at <http://asiasociety.org/korea/panokseon-unsung-hero>

Movie Review: Ode to My Father



Ode to My Father (Photo: CJ Entertainment)

Ode to My Father (Korean title: Gukje Shijang, translation: International Market), directed by JK Yoon (Known for titles such as Sex is Zero, Haeundae and Sector 7) and starring Hwang Jung-min as lead character Deok-soo, is far from subtle - it’s an unabashedly sentimental journey through some of the most important, tragic and difficult times in Korea’s modern history. The film was a huge hit in Korea, managing to stick towards the top of the charts for eight weeks after its release, and drawing crowds upwards of 13 million, making it the second most successful Korean film of all time. The story follows the exceptional life of one man, Deok-soo, from his childhood until his old age. Much like the titular character of 1994’s Forrest Gump, Deok-soo experiences some of the most important events throughout his country’s modern history, all while meeting a cast of interesting characters both fictional and pulled from the annals of history.

Among the cast of important individuals Deok-soo meets with are the future founder of Hyundai, Chung Ju-Yung, who a young Deok-soo encounters as a shoe shiner on the streets of Busan. Later on in life, Deok-soo meets with an eccentric fashion designer named Andre Kim, on the search for the perfect fabric he needs for a design. Perhaps the individual with the most influence on Deok-soo is Nam Jin, a famous trot singer who he meets on the frontline in Vietnam. Trot itself is a form of Korean pop music that blends Korean elements with influences from Japanese and Western music, and is considered the oldest form of Korean pop music.

Deok-soo almost seems to be a metaphor for his entire generation, a generation that lived through the Korean War, was shipped off to foreign lands to earn money to survive, fought through the Vietnam war and more. The main driving force behind all of Deok-soo’s actions are to protect the family he has left and try and find those they left behind at when they fled North Korea at Hungam. The Hungam Evacuation, carried out by UN forces in late December of 1950, saw the evacuation of around 100,000 North Korean refugees by sea. 14,000 of these refugees were loaded onto a single vessel, the SS Meredith Victory - this is the vessel Deok-soo’s family boards, save for his father and baby sister who are tragically left behind.

Find out more about the movie at <http://asiasociety.org/korea/movie-review-ode-my-father-korean-title-gukje-shijang>

Articles and Interviews

Modern Korea by Andrew Salmon



Andrew Salmon



Englishman **Andrew Salmon**, 48, covers the Koreas for Al Jazeera, The Daily Telegraph, Forbes, Nikkei Asia Review and The South China Morning Post. He writes a biweekly column for The Korea Times and presents the weekly show “Bizline” on Arirang TV. His five published books include works on the Korean War, Korean restaurants and U.S. business in Korea. His *To the Last Round: The Epic British Stand on the Imjin River, Korea, 1951* (London, 2009) was awarded the “Best Military Book of 2009” prize in the UK and a “Korean Wave” award in South Korea’s National Assembly. Salmon holds a BA in History/Literature from the University of Kent and an MA in Asian Studies from SOAS, University of London. He is also a Council Member of the Royal Asiatic Society’s Korea Branch. Salmon met with the Asia Society’s contributing writer Matthew Fennell to talk about his new book *Modern Korea*. Read the full interview at <http://asiasociety.org/korea/modern-korea-andrew-salmon>

“Musok”: Korean Shamanism through a Western Lens



Barney Battista

American **Barney Battista** is a current English Professor at Suwon Science College in Korea. After arriving in Korea in 2007, he worked at various language institutes in Seoul while at the same time studying Korean at Yonsei University. After spending 2 years in South Jeolla province, he decided to pursue his interest in Korean culture by enrolling in Kyunghee University’s Masters Program in Korean Studies. It was here that he developed an interest in traditional Korean Shamanism. Battista met with Asia Society Korea Center’s contributing writer **Matthew Fennell** to talk about his unique journey into Korean culture.

After about a year and a half of living in Seoul as an English teacher, Barney Battista was becoming frustrated with city living. His main gripe was that it seemed impossible to get away from English speaking Korea for any appreciable amount of time. He decided to move to Goheung in South Jeolla Province with the hope that the countryside would allow him to greater experience the Korean language, while at the same time immersing himself into the provincial way of life.

So why Goheung? Battista explains how he loves an underdog, “Jeolla Province consistently gets the short end of the stick both politically and economically. It seems there is a political pipeline from Seoul to other parts of the country and that reflects in the economic stimulus to certain regions of Korea. I wanted to remove myself somewhat from the Korea of privilege I’d seen so much of living in Seoul and Jeolla seemed like a logical choice.”

Read the full interview at <http://asiasociety.org/korea/%E2%80%9Cmusok%E2%80%9D-korean-shamanism-through-western-lens>

Misaeng meets Jordan



H.E. Omar Al-Nahar (left) and a scene from Misaeng (right)

Not only did *Misaeng* become a cultural phenomenon in Korea, but it was also the very first Korean drama to be filmed on location in the Middle Eastern country of Jordan. The cast traveled to Amman to shoot the prologue scenes for the drama and also filmed in ancient Petra City, Wadi Rum and other areas of the country. The Asia Society Korea Center met up with Jordanian Ambassador to Korea, His Excellency Omar Al-Nahar, to talk about both the drama and Korea-Jordan relations.

Read the full interview at <http://asiasociety.org/korea/interview-he-omar-al-nahar-ambassador-jordan-korea>

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