

Asia Society Korea Center

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**Asia Society Korea Center
2012 Holiday Cocktail Reception**



December 6, 2012 — Asia Society Korea Center celebrated the holiday season with a cocktail reception at the Lotte Hotel Seoul's Athene Garden. Since the inauguration of the Korea Center in April 2008, the Center has conducted nearly 100 high-profile programs and events with over 20,000 guests across the fields of policy, business, arts and culture, and education.

2012 Scholarship Award Ceremony



December 14, 2012 — The Korea Center awarded scholarships to 35 multiethnic children and families in the Chungcheong province this year. The scholarship was generously funded by the Lotte Foundation. The Korea Center established scholarship fund in 2009 and has continuously engaged in education programs for the children of multiethnic families in Korea.

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News & Events

Celebration of 50-Year Diplomatic Ties between Panama and Korea



H.E. Aram B. Cisneros Naylor
The Republic of Panama's
Ambassador to Korea

September 25, 2012 — **H.E. Aram B. Cisneros Naylor**, the Republic of Panama's Ambassador to Korea, commemorated 50 years of diplomatic ties between his country and Korea at the Asia Society Korea Center's September luncheon, in a lecture entitled "Opportunities for Business and Friendship Between Panama and Korea for the Next 50 Years."

The Ambassador summarized what has been achieved between the two countries, emphasizing that they have very different features: the Panamanian population is mixed with Americans, Spanish, African Americans, and Indians while Korea is a homogeneous country, which can be a strength for Korea. Moreover, whereas Korea has succeeded as an industrial powerhouse, Panama is growing into a service powerhouse.

Despite these differences, Panama and Korea have been actively collaborating in economic and industrial areas. For example, Korean companies such as Hyundai Samho supplied both skilled labor and equipment during the development of the Panama Canal and the construction of subway lines in his country.

The Ambassador also proudly stated that Panama has the Colon Free Trade Zone, the second-largest free trade zone in the world. At the same time, the Ambassador acknowledged that Panama remains underdeveloped and has many obstacles to overcome to become a more desirable place for foreign investors, like Singapore and Hong Kong, and emphasized that the friendship between Panama and Korea will be the key for that economic partnership.

The Ambassador also promoted the Knowledge Sharing Program, which pursues active exchange of knowledge in diverse areas such as education, public services, and labor market for the next 50 years. "Korea was poor 20 years ago, but [is] rich now. However, Panama was poor 20 years ago, and still poor. I think what has made this difference is knowledge," said the Ambassador.

New Lecture Series on the North-South Korea Relations

In October 2012, Asia Society Korea Center launched a new series of talks focused on the future of the North-South Korea relations to survey a wide range of expert views on the likely future shape of the Korean peninsula. The 2012 lecture series on the North-South Korea relations included two series: *The Kim Jong-un Cult* by **Brian Myers**, Professor of International Studies, Dongseo University (October 16), and *Partition and Unity: Lessons from the Irish and German Models* by **H.E. Eamonn McKee**, Ambassador of Ireland, and **H.E. Rolf Mafael**, Ambassador of Germany (November 20).

Part I: The Kim Jong-un Cult

October 16, 2012 — **Brian Myers**, Professor of International Studies at Dongseo University, and one of the world's foremost North Korea scholars, spoke about regime change in North Korea and the Kim Jong-un Cult at Asia Society Korea Center's monthly luncheon series.

Following the death of Kim Jong-il in December 2011, Kim Jong-un succeeded his father and solidified his position by putting himself forward as a military first leader. At the October luncheon, Professor Myers analyzed the similarity and difference between the two regimes and concluded that there would be no significant changes unless the 'Kim Jong-un Cult' is removed. He defined 'cult' as a political and secular term, not as a religious term and emphasized that peace on the Korean peninsula depends on how well or how poorly this personality cult is managed.

Professor Myers firstly mentioned about the regime structure and social mechanisms of North Korea. He criticized other North Korea experts for focusing too much on determining the ideology of the North Korean state, in particular, taking aim at the use of the term "failed communist state" to describe Pyongyang. He emphasized that the important thing instead is to look into its own regime structure without involving a Cold War terminology. He suggested that North Korea has given up economic welfare and poured its whole energy into fostering military power since the famine from 1994 to 1998 because its elite leaders knew they couldn't return to the subsidized Soviet days.

Therefore, there has been no room to discuss market reform in North Korea and it has only resorted to military power to gain public support. According to Professor Myers, North Korea exercised two main ways to hold public attention: one, encouraging a continuous, war-like atmosphere internally while growing tension with other countries; and two, winning continuous small victories rather than provoking big fights. Furthermore, some people may claim that the recent media reports about the introduction of the Western popular culture, such as Disney characters, in North Korea would represent a cultural change in North Korea. Professor Myers also added that these changes do not suggest any means of fundamental economic reform.

Professor Myers advised South Korea and the world not to look at Kim's public performances and stay optimistic as Kim is unlikely to abandon his political support and power to carry out political and economic reforms.



Professor Brian Myers, Dongseo University

News & Events

Part II: Partition and Unity — The Irish and German Models

November 20, 2012 — Irish Ambassador **H.E. Eamonn McKee** and German Ambassador **H.E. Rolf Mafael** gave a lecture titled *Partition and Unity: Lessons from the Irish and German Models* at Asia Society Korea Center's monthly luncheon series.



H.E. Eamonn McKee
Irish Ambassador to Korea

Ambassador McKee shared the Irish experience with cross-border North-South cooperation and explained what efforts Ireland, Northern Ireland and Britain made to bring peace. According to the Ambassador, there were two identities that needed to be reconciled: one was nationalist and the other was unionist. The majority of nationalists were Catholic and republican, and called for independence from Britain, whereas the unionists were British Protestant settlers and monarchists who were determined to remain a part of Britain. Because most of the unionists settled in the northern part of Ireland, six states in the north refused to be independent and form Northern Ireland with the partition of Ireland in 1921 when the south of Ireland became independent. The conflict started with the existence of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in Northern Ireland which called for a British withdrawal and a united Ireland. The IRA carried out violent campaigns for unity with support from the nationalist community in North Ireland.

Seeing the death of over 3,000 people and endless violence and fear, John Hume and other policy makers criticized the IRA's violent activism and strategies and came to sign the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985 for a partnership between the Irish and British Governments. Although the 1985 Agreement was hugely successful in forging a resilient relationship between the two governments and brought about intergovernmental cooperation, it failed to build a local power-sharing government between unionists and nationalists within Northern Ireland. Continuous talks and conferences led to the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, which laid the foundation for the establishment of stable power-sharing government in Northern Ireland. Ambassador McKee strongly emphasized resilience, patience, and comprehensiveness as three keys for peace on Ireland and suggested the same factors would be necessary for peace on the Korean peninsula.

German Ambassador Rolf Mafael lectured on the German model of unification which comprises two completely different elements of how the divided nations came to the point and how unification was implemented after the Cold War ended. Ambassador Mafael claimed that several courageous decisions and changes between 1969 and 1975 made a significant contribution. In 1969, West Germany accepted two independent German states with the notion that Germany was still one and that the ties among the European countries were stronger with the United States. Moreover, the Helsinki Final Act in 1975 valued democracy and freedom of speech in the eastern Europe and succeeded in promoting positive changes in East Germany. These bilateral and multilateral movements coincided and made the unification possible.



H.E. Rolf Mafael
German Ambassador to Korea

From 1972 to 1989, the basic deals were discussed in which West Germany provided financing and East Germany allowed more communications. Even though West Germany paid a very high political price, the migration and phone calls between the two German states dramatically increased during this period. According to the Ambassador, the unification came more quickly than expected and the word 'unification' was not used at that time because West Germany was not sure if the Western partners would accept their unification. The Ambassador emphasized that Germany chose the 'Absorption Model' because there were no other alternatives. The German unification was naturally followed by costs and benefits for both sides. 1.3 trillion euro was spent to rebuild infrastructure and support social services and security in East Germany. Nonetheless, the united Germany had a huge reduction in military expenditure and gained more economic strength in return. The Ambassador concluded by saying, "Today, it has been 25 years since the unification. But we need more time to finish the unification process than the period of time we were split. Therefore, we cannot conclude that Germany achieved its unification until 40 years finally go by."

News & Events

2012 Scholarship Award Ceremony



December 14, 2012 — Asia Society Korea Center held its 2012 Scholarship Awards Ceremony at the Multicultural Center in Chungcheong province.

Providing for the children of disadvantaged multiethnic and refugee families is a relatively new phenomenon in Korea, and poses particular challenges for the Korean government. As it has not traditionally been a destination for immigrants, Korea has in place neither adequate legislation nor workable mechanisms for ensuring proper education for children of multiethnic and refugee families who have difficulty. Even when these families manage to overcome society's many hurdles, they often lack the financial resources to cover the high cost of education in this country.

To help offset some of these costs and to give greater voice to children of mixed ethnicity families, the Asia Society Korea Center, in cooperation with the Seoul Global Center, established a scholarship

fund in 2009 to help further the hopes and dreams of these children. We seek to enhance awareness of such families, create a discourse about new partnership opportunities, embrace non-governmental approaches, and to stimulate the imagination, potential, and future growth—not just of multicultural children, but of Korea itself.

2012 Holiday Cocktail Reception

December 6, 2012 — Asia Society Korea Center held its year end cocktail reception with distinguished guests and members of the Korea Center. Sea-Yeon Kim, Chairman of the Asia 21 Korea Chapter, Stephen Revere, Managing Editor of 10 Magazine, and Steven Herman, Bureau Chief of Voice of America, received the Most Active Member of the Year Award; and Kag-Gyu Hwang, President of the Lotte Shopping, received the Most Active Corporate Supporter of the Year Award. The awards were presented by Dr. Kyongsoo Lho, Co-Chairman of the Korea Center. Mr. Dong-Bin Shin, Co-Chairman, presented raffle prizes, which were generously sponsored by the Lotte Hotel, 10 Magazine, and Fox Wine Bistro. The Korea Center also ran a Book Drive during the event and delivered the donated books to the Support Centers for Multiethnic Families in Chungcheong province.



Asia Society Korea Center

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On December 27, 2007, Asia Society Korea Center was designated as a public donation body by the Republic of Korea's Ministry of Finance and Economy. This means that donations to Asia Society Korea Center are subject to tax exemptions. The donor will therefore be able to receive full tax benefits, which gives prospective donors one more good reason to donate! The contributions will be used to develop innovative programs and world class events for Asia Society Korea Center's members. Help make a difference!

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2013 MONTHLY LUNCHEON SCHEDULE

Tuesday, January 15th

Tuesday, February 19th

Tuesday, March 19th

Tuesday, May 14th

Tuesday, June 18th

Tuesday, July 16th

Tuesday, September 24th

Tuesday, October 15th

Tuesday, November 19th

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