

Asia Society Korea Center

Lotte Hotel Seoul, Suite 615
30 Eulji-ro, Jung-gu
Seoul, Korea 04533, CPO Box 3500
Tel: 82 2 759 7806
Fax: 82 2 757 0034
Email: koreacenter@asiasociety.org

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Students Discussion Panel on the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election



Students discuss at the American Center Korea, US Embassy Seoul

The Asia Society Korea Center hopes to convene leaders from the public and private sectors to address relevant issues before an audience that includes Asia Society contributors and members, as well as leaders from Korea's corporate, cultural, media and civic sectors. We look to introduce innovative programming concepts that serve to foster open debate and civil discourse on various issues as well as social responsibilities in Korean society.

These online virtual discussions and presentations will help connect Korean university students around the world, **giving them a platform to voice their opinions and thoughts** on the new U.S. government. We will be collecting videos from Korean university students around the world which will be edited and then played during the US Embassy Seoul's Election night on November 9th, 2016.

Ambassador Interviews

Exit Interview with H.E. William Paterson, Ambassador of Australia to the Republic of Korea



H.E. William Paterson, Ambassador of Australia to the Republic of Korea

The diplomatic community in Seoul plays a huge role in the successes of Asia Society Korea Center and no one contributes more than Mr. Bill Paterson PSM, Ambassador of Australia to the Republic of Korea.

Since his arrival on the Peninsula in March 2013, Ambassador Paterson has been an active member at the Center volunteering his time and energy to attend and moderate events, host dinner parties at his residence and give regular interviews on Australia-Korea relations. Unfortunately, Ambassador Paterson's time in Korea recently came to an end; Asia Society caught up with the 2015 "Asian Ambassador of the Year" to talk about his experiences over the past 3 1/2 years.

(Continued on Page 2)

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Ambassador Interviews

Exit Interview with H.E. William Paterson, Ambassador of Australia to the Republic of Korea

(Continued from Page 1)

1. Upon arriving in South Korea, what prompted you to get involved with the Asia Society Korea Center?

I had attended Asia Society events in Australia and had delivered briefings to it in Sydney and Melbourne, so it seemed a natural extension of this to participate in Korea. The Asia Society's mandate fits neatly with our own objectives – to increase knowledge about Asia, its growth, opportunities, history and culture – and, for us, to build awareness in Korea of Australia as an Asia-Pacific country whose interests intersect closely with those of Korea. It was also a means of me meeting significant players in Korea and learning from attendance at the talks and briefings. A key part of the Asia Society's role is to build knowledge about Asia amongst influential people outside Asia – indeed this is how it began in the United States.

2. You have been involved in many programs at the Korea Center over the past 3 years. What event stands out for you personally?

A difficult question, for I think I gained from every event I attended. But I was privileged to join the Asia Society's seminar on "Asia Rising: Our Shared Future", chaired by Asia Society's Research Director (and former Australian Prime Minister) Kevin Rudd, in Seoul in March this year. With strategic dynamics moving fast in this region, it was particularly interesting to hear from senior Chinese, Korean, Japanese and American participants on their views of the challenges in the region, and to draw on Kevin Rudd's research on US-China relations. There was naturally a strong focus on North Korea, which engages the interests of all major powers, and useful discussion of North Korea's objectives and how it might be brought around to more responsible behavior. This exposed considerable differences of view on the level of urgency in resolving the North Korean impasse. Discussion on regional architecture discussed fault lines developing in the region, and that optimism about a benign 'Asian Century' fueled by high economic growth had failed to account for strategic discontinuities, the limits to growth and increasing nationalism and protectionism. This sort of intelligent discussion is a hallmark of the Asia Society's programs – and hopefully plays into the development of sensible government policies.

3. As we know, Korea is a rapidly changing country. What significant changes have you witnessed since taking up your position in 2013?

Korea is, as we all know, a hugely impressive story in economic and social development in a remarkably short period of time. I first came here in 1987, and again in 2003 and 2012, so have witnessed some of the stages in the maturation of the Korean economy, Korean democracy and civil society. But over the last few years I've seen a Korea with some big looming challenges: the slowdown in global growth impacting on Korea's export-oriented economy, the

ageing of the population, the search for new drivers of growth, new competitors, the need to build a bigger services economy to meet the needs of a wealthier, older and better-educated population and the need to address regulatory and labor inflexibilities and to develop safety and other civic cultures. It's a sobering list, but Korea is a highly capable country as well-equipped as any to respond to these challenges.

4. Seoul has been your home in recent years. What things about Korea will you miss the most after you leave?

Korea's fast internet speeds and wi-fi coverage, arguably the best in the world. Its transport systems – the subways, the KTX. The stimulation of being in a dynamic and fast-moving environment. The satisfaction of being a key part of one of Australia's most important relationships, and being able to be involved in everything from trade negotiations and promotions to defence exercises, engaging with Korea's most important political, official and business leaders. Personally, I love Korea's mountainous landscapes, playing on its outstanding golf courses, hiking around the Seongbuk-dong area, visiting galleries, and going to concerts with Korea's superb musicians.

5. What are your hopes for Australia-Korea relations moving forward?

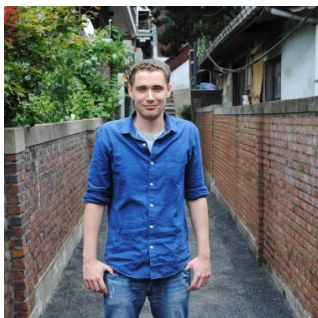
The conclusion of a free trade agreement with Korea (KAFTA), late in 2014, was a seminal event, and one that is producing good results in traded goods for both countries. But there's a lot more to do on services and investment. Both countries need to ensure they provide attractive conditions for investment and give effect to the liberalization of professional services which KAFTA provides for. We need to build our bilateral defence relationship further, making it easier for our forces to operate seamlessly in each others' countries. We need to develop our '2+2' (Foreign and Defence) ministers forum into a strategic partnership with ambitious outcomes. But there are some really good things happening now: 260,000 Koreans visited Australia in the last year, and 27,000 young Koreans are undertaking full-time study in Australia – while more Australians are now studying in Korea. That lays the base on which almost everything else can be built.

6. Following a successful period in Korea, what does the next chapter hold for Ambassador Paterson?

I expect to leave the foreign service later this year, but not to end my engagement with strategic, security and business issues, particularly in Asia. I hope this will provide opportunities to continue to use my experience, and to maintain the many friendships we've made across the region. But it's also an opportunity to spend more time with our family, to lower the golf handicap and to explore our own country more – and its superb wines and foods.

North Korea Coverage by Steven Borowiec

The Myth of “non-political” Contact with North Korea



Steven Borowiec

In late April, a group of academics traveled to North Korea on a trip they described as non-political. Nobel laureates from the fields of economics, medicine and chemistry went to Pyongyang with plans to meet scientists from universities and discuss questions related to science and education. Such trips, and the “engagement” they entail are sometimes presented as an alternative to the international community’s sanctions on North Korea. Further cutting the already isolated country off from the outside world will only make it poorer and more dangerous, this line of thinking goes, and by building non-governmental links in fields such as education or sports or culture, North Koreans can have contact with outsiders, and come to understand that not all foreigners wish their country harm.

Aaron Ciechanover, who won the 2004 Nobel Prize for chemistry, told reporters, “We didn’t come to criticize them, we didn’t come to ask about the meaning of democracy in their eyes. We really came to converse and to exchange dialogue with students.” That’s all well and good, but the

question is, how do outside actors, like the Nobel laureates, or Dennis Rodman or whomever, get access to a country whose leaders wish to control every person or idea their people have access to?

(Continue reading here <http://asiasociety.org/korea/myth-%E2%80%9Cnon-political%E2%80%9D-contact-north-korea>)

Where Chinese Fishing Boats are Scarier than Kim Jong Un North Korea

Park Tae-won was born and lives on Yeonpyeong, a rocky island in the Yellow Sea, and flashpoint in the long standoff between the South and North Korean militaries. He is used to his normally calm island being a sporadic site of conflict. Park, 56, was here in 2002 when six South Koreans died in a battle at sea with North Korean vessels, and in 2010 when Yeonpyeong was shelled by North Korea, causing four deaths and the decimation of the island’s main commercial area.

Nowadays Park is scared for his livelihood, but it’s not North Korea that has him jittery. In recent years, Park and the other fishermen on Yeonpyeong have been coming home with smaller and smaller hauls of blue crabs, the seafood delicacy their island is known for. The source of the threat Park and the other fishermen face looms in plain sight off the coast of Yeonpyeong in the form of swarms of Chinese fishing boats that operate illegally, scooping up blue crabs and anything else they can catch in their nets. (Continue reading here: <http://asiasociety.org/korea/where-chinese-fishing-boats-are-scarier-kim-jong-un>)

What Two Very Different Korean Leaders Have in Common

At first glance, Park Geun-hye and Kim Jong-un don’t appear to have much in common. Park is around twice Kim’s age, and she’s a slender, unimposing woman while Kim is a bloated man with a cartoonish haircut and chipmunk cheeks. Park leads a technologically advanced democracy while Kim lords over a backward one-party state. Kim seems happy in front of cameras, chuckling with underlings and bouncing small kids on his lap. Park is reclusive and appears in public as little as possible.

While their differences are numerous and easy to spot, in following both of their times in power, I’ve noticed one intriguing tactic they both employ: when taking the podium at key moments, when they’re trying their best to be convincing, both leaders regularly call for “unity”, asking their countries to come together as one in pursuit of a common goal.

(Continue reading here: <http://asiasociety.org/korea/what-two-very-different-korean-leaders-have-common>)

A Drop of Celebrity Culture is no Sign of Reform in North Korea

Even drab dictatorships get the occasional dash of glamour. The summer of 2012 offered a break from the monotony of observing North Korea, which might be the least sexy country on Earth, one whose public face is an overweight, homely man clad in an all-black jumpsuit.

Suddenly on the scene was a young, glowing woman, stylishly dressed in colorful western attire. Ri Sol Ju, who we now know is leader Kim Jong Un’s wife, appeared in images carried by the country’s state media accompanying Kim on his field trips. Beyond her western-style garb, the mere fact of her public appearances was noteworthy, as previous leader Kim Jong Il almost never went out in public with a female companion.

(Continue reading here: <http://asiasociety.org/korea/drop-celebrity-culture-no-sign-reform-north-korea-0>)

Understanding the Korean Language



Professor Sonia Seo-young Chae

Professor Sonia Seo-young Chae's "Journey into Hangeul" series. Explore the complex nature of Korean language, and its relationship with society. Professor Chae, a leading expert in Linguistics who has taught at Ehwa, Hanyang, Sungkyunkwan, and Sogang university, provides her keen insight and perspective on this topic. She responds to questions regarding the intricate relationship Korean language plays in social structure, inter-personal relationships, and thought process. Professor Chae is able to answer these questions deftly using creative narrative, and drawing upon her historical and professional knowledge of the language.

1. Korean is a language with various levels of politeness. How did these levels evolve historically?

Early examples of the complex speech level system in the Korean language can be traced back to the start of the Silla Dynasty which started in 57BC during the Three Kingdom Period of Korea. The first examples of this system appeared in *hyangga* poems. These poems, written in the Idu system of abbreviated Chinese script, contained characters such as 賜, 白, and 音 which expressed deferential speech (Park 1989, p. 95-96). The earliest Korean documentation of speech levels was during the 15th century when King Sejong and his scholars created Hangeul, the Korean writing system. Koreans had always spoken Korean, but up until this time had been using Chinese characters for writing until the invention of Hangeul in 1443. By this time, speech levels already existed in their fully-fledged form.

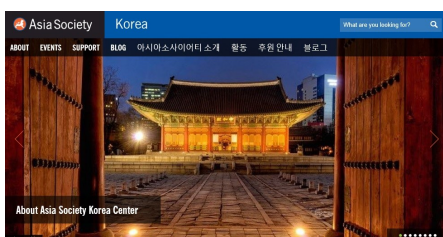
It seems plausible to track the origins of speech levels to the strict hereditary social class system of ancient Korea. The Silla Dynasty was recognized for its hierarchical system known as the "bone order". Similarly, the Goryeo Dynasty (918-1392) also distinguished nobility from common people. In addition, the more recent Joseon Dynasty (1392-1897) had a hereditary status system based on Confucian ideals, but was more complicated in its detail and similar to India's caste system in its strictness. During this period, the divisions between royalty, nobility, commoners (farmers, artisans, blacksmiths, and merchants), slaves (personal or public) and outcasts (such as butchers) were rigid and clear.

From this soil emerged speech levels, which expressed not only the formality of the situation, but also levels of deference towards the listener, as well as the subject, the object or the complement of a sentence.

2. How complex is this honorific system of speech and how is it taught?

Korea's honorific system is quite complicated. To be exact, though people often refer to it as 'honorifics', the Korean speech level system is not just an honorific system. Honorifics usually describe language that honors the other party, often by using honorific address terms. Korean, however, not only has different terms of address to honor the listener, but also multi-tiered speech levels, which include expressions of lowering of self (e.g., calling oneself as "jeo(저)" instead of "na(나)"), honoring of the subject, object, and complement of the sentence, as well as honoring of the listener. The choice of the level for each component is determined by the following three factors; (1) the relative status differences between the interlocutors, (2) the degree of intimacy or solidarity between them, and (3) the formality of the speech situation. For example, in Korea a mother and her daughter have a clear social status difference, but they may use lower level speech to each other (perhaps with the exception of a few words) because they are intimate and conversing in an informal situation.

(Continue reading the interview here: <http://asiasociety.org/korea/understanding-korean-language>)



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Tel: 82 2 759 7806
Fax: 82 2 757 0034
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Tuesday, September 20th

Tuesday, October 11th

Tuesday, November 15th

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Thursday, December 8th

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