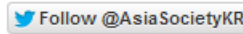


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## Special Lunch with Renée Fleming



**Renée Fleming**

member of the Asia Society Board of Trustees. As a show of her appreciation, Ms. Fleming gave everyone in attendance a signed copy of her new CD as a special gift.

July 2, 2017 – Asia Society Korea held a special event last Sunday with Chairman **Dong-Bin Shin** hosting a lunch for the world-renowned American soprano and Asia Society trustee, **Renée Fleming**. Signiel Seoul, the new 76-floor luxury hotel launched by Lotte Hotels and Resorts, served as the venue for more than forty Asia Society Korea members and their families. The program also included a guided tour of the concert hall at the new Lotte World Tower and a trip to Sky Deck, the world's highest glass-floor observation deck.

Ms. Fleming was in Seoul to perform at the Seoul Arts Center as part of her sold-out world tour and is one of the most acclaimed singers of our time, having performed in opera houses and concert halls around the world. She is the recipient of the National Medal of Arts and Best Classical Vocal Grammy Award. Chairman Shin first met Ms. Fleming at an Asia Society reception at Buckingham Palace in 2014, not long after she had joined him as a member of the Asia Society Board of Trustees.

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## Monthly Luncheon Series

# Future of the Asian Economy



**Dr. Richard R. Vuylsteke**

Tuesday, May 23, 2017 - **Dr. Richard R. Vuylsteke** was the guest speaker at Asia Society Korea's May Monthly Luncheon where he gave a lecture titled "Forecast Asia: The Future of the Asian Economy." Dr. Vuylsteke is the president of the East-West Center and an expert on strategic and operational leadership in multicultural organizations. He returned to the EWC following several decades of living in Asia, where he served most recently as the president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong. Having been involved in Hong Kong from an economic and business perspective, Dr. Vuylsteke spoke of three economic developments to watch in Asia: China's One Belt One Road initiative, smart city development, and the importance of jobs.

While the One Belt One Road contains a lot of rhetoric on the land routes taking shape throughout Asia, Dr. Vuylsteke believes the real focus should be on what is happening in the oceanic waters that surround the continent. China realizes that it is much easier to build ports than it is to build road and rail links through the deserts of central Asia. The development of the Pearl River Delta is a model for what OBOR is trying to achieve with high-speed rail networks, vast underground systems, highways, ports, and bridges now connecting Hong Kong and Macao to the nine major cities in South China. The project is a demonstration of what connectivity means both economically and intellectually.

The definition of a smart city is still unclear, with the concept being a relatively new phenomenon. For Dr. Vuylsteke, it is the adoption of information and technology to get people connected in urban areas. With the growth of new cities and the expansion of old ones, putting cities in the cloud will bring a variety of entrepreneurial business development. Making big data available to both the public and private sectors will enable mobile applications to bring e-commerce and e-governance to people living in these places. Seoul, Singapore, and Tokyo are the leading locations in Asia for smart city development while the Netherlands is leading the way in Europe.

Dr. Vuylsteke concluded his lecture by highlighting the problem of the lack of employment opportunities in the future. Robotics and artificial intelligence are resulting in the destruction of jobs, especially in the middle-level sector. For example, with many tasks now online, there has been a one-third cut of people within the law establishment. It is important to ask what we are going to do with all these people between the ages of 35-55 who cannot find jobs. While places like Japan, and to an extent Korea, do not currently have this issue, it is still going to be a problem in the future.

**\*This series is sponsored by Lotte Chemical.**

**LOTTE CHEMICAL**

## Monthly Luncheon Series

# The Press & The Presidency: A Year in Crisis



From left: Peter Pae, John Delury, and Jonathan Cheng

June 20, 2017 - Asia Society Korea held its final Monthly Luncheon before taking a break for the summer by hosting a panel discussion with foreign journalists **Peter Pae** and **Jonathan Cheng** on “The Press & The Presidency: A Year in Crisis.”

Peter Pae has been the Korea bureau chief at *Bloomberg News* since July 2015. He previously worked as an editor and reporter at the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Washington Post* and *The Wall Street Journal*. Jonathan Cheng is the Seoul bureau chief for *The Wall Street Journal*, overseeing the Journal's coverage of the Korean Peninsula, including North Korean politics, South Korean politics, and South Korean conglomerates including Samsung, Hyundai, and LG. The event was once again moderated by Asia Society's **John Delury**, an Associate Professor of International Studies at Yonsei University who oversaw the discussion on the last 12 months as a major news cycle that included the Korean presidential transition, North Korea nuclear and missile tests, and chaebol scrutiny.

Mr. Pae kicked off the discussion by giving his thoughts on the past year in journalism on the Korean Peninsula, which he says have been the busiest for a long time, maybe ever. No country has experienced so much in such a short space of time; starting with North Korea conducting a nuclear test, the presidential scandal involving **Park Geun-hye**, the corruption scandal, Korea's biggest conglomerates under the spotlight, the impeachment of the president, and finally the special elections which saw Moon Jae-in take power. Only now can the journalism community look back and reflect on the quality of their coverage. Pae believes that we saw some of the best of local journalism but also some of the worst in the last year. With so many local media, journalists, and outlets all vying for the same scoop, there have been some amazing stories, investigative pieces, and the highlighting of other relevant domestic issues. On the flip side, as there was so much competition to write a standout piece, some standards were put to the side with journalism ethics often thrown out of the window.

Echoing many of the previous comments, Mr. Cheng believes the past year has been wonderful in a journalistic sense because, as a reporter, you want to be in the middle of big, global stories. He believes foreign correspondents have an interesting role here in Korea, as their main job is to report back home what is happening on the peninsula. Despite Bloomberg having a relatively large operation in Korea, they have just a handful of bodies compared to the army of reporters that the local media have at their disposal. Therefore, like the role of the diplomatic community in Seoul, the biggest challenge is to interpret national events and relay this information to audiences overseas. Both Mr. Cheng and Mr. Pae took questions and comments from attendees that included representatives from embassies, news agencies, corporations, and educational institutions.

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## In the News

# A Shrimp's Quest: Can South Korea Make Peace Among the Whales



**Qingguo Jia, Dean of Peking University's School of International Studies**

President Trump. According to Jia, the president's "America First" strategy represents a refusal of hegemonic responsibility for maintaining the current international order. Vacating its position of leadership, the United States is looking to rising powers such as China to take up more responsibility.

However, China is not ready for such a central role. Despite its unprecedented rise, Dr. Jia claims that China does not have the equivalent resources, skill, experience, or alliances necessary to fill the American shoes. Under an America First strategy, China will be unable to bear primary responsibility for protection of the international order.

Despite the initial optimism of improved US-China relations following a positive first meeting between the countries' leaders, the relationship is certainly under threat. Foreseeing a weakened international order, Dr. Jia, believes that the America First strategy will result in further global uncertainty and raises the possibility of a US-China trade war.

Warning of possible fluctuations in US-China relations, Dr. Jia turned to South Korea and spoke of the country's need for flexibility in its relations with both China and the US. Although Dr. Jia urged South Korea to not take sides and be careful "not to offend anybody", he did not recommend a path of total neutrality.

In the context of strained US-China relations, Dr. Jia argued for South Korea to bridge the differences between the countries, rather than play the countries against one another. South Korea stands to gain most from a cooperative US-China relationship and, by acting as an intermediary to help facilitate cooperation, can raise its own regional standing.

In regards to security, South Korean mediation will be especially important. To avoid another diplomatic debacle such as the crisis following the deployment of THAAD, Dr. Jia believes that South Korea must develop a balanced strategy that is sensitive to both powers.

The America First strategy and the ever-deepening security crisis pose serious problems to South Korea. To adapt to these circumstances and become stronger, South Korea must heed Dr. Jia's words by shaking off its shrimp self-image and reimagining its role as a peacemaker among whales.

**By Tom Norris, Contributing Writer**

June 2017 - "In a fight between whales, the shrimp's back gets broken." So goes the old Korean proverb, lamenting the country's unfortunate position in East Asia. If the whales, China and the United States, are in conflict, Koreans believe they will suffer the most.

But, according to Qingguo Jia, Dean of Peking University's School of International Studies, it is Korea that stands to benefit most from the changing dynamics of US-China relations. By playing peacemaker among the whales, the shrimp can become strong.

Lecturing on the evolution of US-China relations and the implications for the Korean peninsula, Dr. Jia described the expected trajectory of US-China relations following the election of

## In the News

# Seoul Community Radio: Shaping New Genres and Sub-cultures



**By Matthew Fennell, Contributing Writer**

August 2017 - Launched just over a year ago, Seoul Community Radio (SCR) is one of Korea's leading music channels supporting the country's underground creative music and arts communities. Inspired by the power of radio to shape new genres and sub-cultures, as witnessed worldwide, the station operates a live studio based out of Seoul's multicultural hotbed Itaewon, broadcasting 24/7 to a young, diverse, and influential audience. **Matthew Fennell** caught up with the station's founder **Richard Price** to discuss the past year and his hopes for the future.

**What was the inspiration behind creating an online radio station here in Korea?**

Curating interesting and original content is really the heart of what good radio should be. The fact that it is live and there are real human voices delivering it gives it even more of a personal touch. All commercial radio, not just in Korea, is guilty of dumbing down and selling out music to attract a more mainstream audience. Our viewpoint is the opposite – we are a platform to give artists here in Korea a chance to showcase alternative and creative output people may not get to hear anywhere else – even in clubs.

**Seoul Community Radio recently celebrated its one-year anniversary. What were some of the biggest challenges you faced in your first year?**

We started with the idea back in early 2016, getting artists involved and having them contribute recorded mixes which we would post online. At the time, we didn't even have a studio or recording facility so were asking people to record at home – it was quite a surreal scenario! A lot of people hadn't used a mic before, so persuading them to do a 'proper radio' show was quite a job. A big shout out to all the people that helped us in the early days. It must have seemed like a real leap of faith!

**The radio station has developed quite a following since its inception. Are your listeners mainly foreigners or Korean?**

There's currently a mix of language on the air but it's increasingly becoming more Korean as local artists begin to interact more with our listeners. With international guests, we encourage them to reach out in the way they feel most comfortable. We've also done some takeover shows with the established stations Radar Radio and Berlin Community Radio where we have used English to showcase Korean underground in the language they know. We see it as a two-way street really; showcasing the best of international artists coming into Korea, and exporting the best home-grown talent globally.

**In terms of your operations, what are your plans for the future of the radio station?**

More events, more travel, more spreading the word of all the good things happening in Korea internationally! We have a lot of listeners from all over the world, particularly in other major Asian cities. There are some notable, credible music festivals which have arrived in Asia in places like Hong Kong and Thailand and we're looking to be a part of the next installment. In the short term, we've got pop-up shows and are also broadcasting festival-type events such as the dance stage at the Itaewon Global Village Festival coming up.

**What advice would you give to other people wanting to start a small business or venture here in Korea?**

Be prepared for less sleep and work basically becoming your life! Half-joking but I guess the moral is there. If you want to start a venture it might as well be something you are passionate about. At least then when you wonder why all the blood sweat and tears, you realize it's to get away from that boring office job you didn't really feel alive at in the first place.

## In the News

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# Educating a New Generation of Female Leaders Across Asia



## ASIAN UNIVERSITY FOR WOMEN

**By Matthew Fennell, Contributing Writer**

August 2017- Founded in 2008, the Asian University for Women (AUW) is an independent, international university in Chittagong, Bangladesh seeking to educate a new generation of female leaders across Asia. The Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Asian University for Women Support Foundation is Asia Society Korea's **Young Joon (YJ) Kim**. Contributing writer **Matthew Fennell** caught up with YJ to discuss the work of AUW and to talk about the role Korea is playing in the organization.

**The Asian University for Women (AUW) was established in September 2006. What are some of the reasons you got involved with the organization?**

Arguably, it is almost a cliché to say that education is transformative. Nevertheless, the fact remains that education is indeed transformative, or at least aspires to be so. I am a product of this educational transformation having grown up in South Korea in the 60's and early 70's and moving to the U.S with my family when I was 16. I was determined to absorb and learn as much as possible to make this move worthwhile. Having studied political science, economics, and philosophy as an undergraduate at Yale University, I went on to study law at Harvard Law School. I have always remembered that education is what made me who I am today, through not only the raw knowledge but more importantly through the values and ultimate purpose of the education. One of my favorite quotes is from Muhammad Ali, who said, "Service to others is the rent you pay for your room on earth." I wasn't seeking out AUW, but when I was presented, as the then President of the Harvard Club of Hong Kong, with an opportunity to help spread the message of AUW, I was struck by its unique mission to transform Asia and the Middle East by educating women. It sounded so compelling and convincing. My small initial contributions with AUW have snowballed over the years and here I am almost ten years later continuing to serve the organization in whatever way possible.

**What role does Korea play in helping and assisting AUW?**

Unlike the U.S, the most philanthropic of countries, and other Asian countries such as Japan or Hong Kong, with a British cultural influence regarding charity, Korea doesn't have the same history or cultural DNA for philanthropy, certainly not in the way it is carried out in other advanced countries. However, Korea values education very highly. Education is what made Korea the country it is in 2017, just as education is what made many Koreans who they are today. Korea is an increasingly important destination for higher education students wanting to further their education, including at the graduate level. Naturally, the Korean institutions that have been most responsive in cooperating with AUW, such as Ewha, Yonsei, and Sookmyung universities, have done so by way of granting exchange programs for current students and scholarships for graduate degree programs. We have had support from the Korea Export-Import Bank, which has been providing summer internships for AUW students since 2013 thanks to an MOU signed by AUW Chancellor and the president of Korea Eximbank. Another big supporter is the leading Korean garment manufacturer, Youngone Corp, best known for making North Face outdoor wear, which has been helping Bangladeshi garment workers pursue higher education at AUW by providing "Pathways for Promise" scholarships.

## In the News

(Continued)

**There have been ten current, or former, AUW students who have studied in Korea. What opportunities do they have in Korea once they have graduated?**

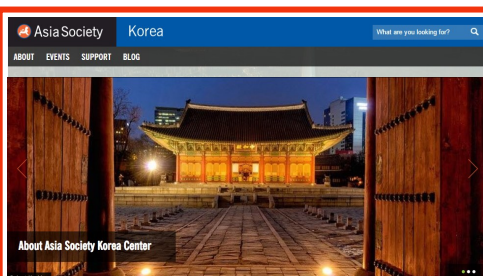
For AUW graduates who have studied in Korea, many of them want early-career job opportunities in research, business, or other fields, while some want to continue studying for advanced degrees. It is interesting to observe that most AUW graduate students pursuing PhDs and masters degrees do so in the field of STEM in areas such as environmental science, nutritional science, computer science, and engineering. Other students want to study the social sciences, such as majoring in international relations.

**Are there any plans to expand the program here in Korea in the future?**

Ideally, we would be thrilled to have a home-grown AUW support group or foundation based in Korea, as we do in Japan, Hong Kong, the U.S., and the United Kingdom. Korea had developed in large part due to help from the outside world, at a time when it was struggling to stand on its own after the devastating Korean War. It is entirely appropriate for Korea to share the fruits of its own economic and political achievements by sharing its wealth and imparting its accumulated knowledge and know-how with its regional neighbors, many of whom aspire to become like Korea in many ways. For example, one AUW graduate student studying Environmental Science at Ewha is truly excited about the opportunities to share weather forecasting and climate management knowledge between the Korean Meteorological Agency and its counterpart in Bangladesh to improve the latter's chronic struggle to predict and manage the aftermath of monsoons and the inevitable floods.

**Finally, what advice would you give to countries who have a history of ignoring the potential of women?**

It is no longer a cliché to repeat the well-established truth that, to ignore women's education is to ignore the potential of more than half a country. Having seen how AUW students have been transformed in a short span of time to become leaders and changemakers, and having had such a compounding effect on those around them, I'm more convinced than ever that women's education changes families, communities, and societies, much more than the education of the general population. It is truly the best form of investment one could make in the developing world.



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## Asia Society Korea's Cooking Class Series

### Spain



H.E. Gonzalo Ortiz (left), Julio J. Martínez Piérola (right)

May 20, 2017 - Asia Society Korea launched its international cooking class program last Friday in partnership with Lotte Shopping's Culture Center and the Embassy of Spain. From a list of eighty applicants, ten people were selected to take part in this first class to learn how to cook paella from Spanish chef Julio J. Martínez Piérola. The Spanish Ambassador to the Republic of Korea, H.E. Gonzalo Ortiz, also attended the event at the Lotte Culture Center Seoul Branch for an evening of culinary education.

Paella has a long history on the Iberian Peninsula, but the modern take on the dish originated around the city of Valencia, where it is made with rice, meat, green beans, snails, and various seasonings. Chef Piérola shared a unique recipe that was passed down to him from his mother, much to the delight of those in attendance. Participants were also pleased to see Ambassador Ortiz actively involved in the two-hour session as he helped prepare ingredients, serve food, and answer questions about Spain. The first cooking event with our embassy network was a huge success, and there is much anticipation for the upcoming classes scheduled at the Lotte Culture Center.

### Sri Lanka



May 22, 2017 - Asia Society Korea continued its cooking class program on Monday by teaming up with the Embassy of Sri Lanka and Mr. Karupan Selliah, junior sous chef at the Millenium Hilton Hotel in Colombo. Lotte Shopping once again provided the infrastructure for the class, and it was pleasing to see ten new budding chefs in attendance. Chef Selliah is an award-winning Sri Lankan chef who won three gold medals at the Sri Lankan Culinary Art competition in 1995, 1999, and 2003. Although now based in Colombo, he has cooked for patrons in Belgium, the Czech Republic, and China.

Sri Lankan food is known for its powerful flavors and rich taste. As Selliah brought many of the ingredients with him from Colombo, the food was very authentic and participants commented that they felt they were dining in Sri Lanka. Three dishes were on the menu; red chicken curry, mustard fish curry, and baked chicken. The event was a huge success with participants enjoying the cuisine so much that they took any leftover food home with them.



## Asia Society Korea's Cooking Class Series

### India



**Chef Deepali Praveen**

June 2017 – Asia Society Korea, in partnership with Lotte Shopping's Culture Center and the Indian Culture Centre, held the third class of its international cooking series on June 13 at Lotte Culture Center's Jamsil branch. As there has been a lot of recent interest in Indian cuisine, twenty people were invited to take part in the sold-out event with chef **Deepali Praveen** teaching the participants how to cook palak paneer and naan. Praveen has won many culinary awards and has also appeared in many cooking demonstrations including at the 2012 Asia Food Expo and the 2013 World Food Expo.

The Indian Culture Centre prepared all the ingredients and participants cooked following instruction from the chef. Explanations were accompanied by personal stories and experiences related to Indian culture and cuisine, helping engage students and deepen their understanding of the recipes. As with previous classes, the participants enjoyed the food so much that they took the leftover palak paneer home with them. Chef Praveen is currently cooking at the J.W. Marriott Dongdaemun and previously worked at the Dusit Thani in Manila.

### Switzerland



August 2017 - Asia Society Korea resumed its cooking class program last Thursday by teaming up with the Embassy of Switzerland and **Mr. Michel Eschmann**, executive chef at the JW Marriott Dongdaemun Square in Seoul. Chef Eschmann has 17 years of experience in the culinary field, beginning his career in Switzerland before moving to Asia eight years ago. He had worked at the Hyatt on the Bund in Shanghai, the Grand Hyatt Erawan in Bangkok, and the Grand Hyatt in Kuala Lumpur before recently moving to Seoul. Lotte Shopping once again provided the venue for the class, which was held at the culture center cooking room at Lotte Department Store in Pyeongchon.

While cheese and fondue are often consumed in Korea, little is known about other types of Swiss cuisine. Chef Eschmann prepared three unique dishes for the twenty people in attendance: Bündner Gerstensuppe, a barley soup popular in the Alps during the winter; Zürich Gschnätzlets, a Swiss-style veal ragout served with Rösti; and a Swiss-style carrot cake. The event was a huge success with participants enjoying the clear and concise instructions from Chef Eschmann who was pleased to see so many budding Swiss-cuisine cooks in attendance.

## Healthy Food of Asia

### Rice in India



**By Matthew Fennell, Contributing Writer**

July 2017 - Rice is one of the most consumed foods on Earth, a staple in many countries around the world including India where 50% of its population depends on the grain for sustenance. While many people are familiar with India's basmati rice, there are actually around 6,000 different varieties of rice cultivated in the country. Asia Society Korea's **Matthew Fennell** spoke with **H.E. Vikram Doraiswami**, the Indian Ambassador to Korea, about the importance of rice in Indian culture and cuisine.

**Like in Korea, rice plays a very important role in Indian cuisine. Has rice always been a part of Indian culture?**

Archaeological evidence of rice cultivation in India suggests that this grain was the basis of India's ancient civilizations, with signs that rice was being used in the valley of the Ganges river as far back as 6500 BC. The varieties used, and the absence of any known mechanism of transfer of data suggests that rice cultivation began in the great Asian civilizations in today's India, China, Thailand and elsewhere almost autonomously. In the last millennia, some 110,000 varieties of rice developed in India alone! Broadly, however, India has large scale production of both white rice varieties and brown rice varieties.

Today, rice is the most cultivated grain on the planet. India is not only the second-largest producer of rice in the world, accounting for some 20 percent of global production, it is also among the largest consumers of this grain, with over 50% of India's 1.2 billion people depending on rice for sustenance. It is the single most important staple item in almost all of India's extremely diverse cuisine cultures, with different words for rice in each of India's 29 official languages! Rice is repeatedly mentioned in ancient Indian texts, including the Yajur Veda (compiled in the period circa 1800 BC), and is closely associated with fertility and health across India's many cultural traditions.

So, yes, rice has always been associated with civilization in India.

**How many different types of rice exist in India? Are there regional variations?**

Today we still have around 6000 different varieties of rice in India, but ecologists estimate that we have lost tens of thousands of native varieties of rice in the last forty years or so. Even then, the diversity of Indian rice varieties is among the most in the world—from aromatic and fragrant long-grain basmati varieties that grow in the northern part of the country to roundish medium-grain, glutinous rice preferred in the southern coastal areas. There are other types, including "red rice" (a coarse-husked variety that has a reddish-brown external color), which is very popular in Kerala in the South of India, as well as in some of our neighboring countries. Parboiled rice, in which the rice is processed differently after harvesting, is also popular in India.

## Healthy Food of Asia

(Continued)

**Basmati rice is the most internationally well known of the rice grown in India. What do you think makes this rice so popular?**

As its name suggests in north Indian languages, it means 'fragrance-filled'. So, this variety of rice is particularly good for savory dishes incorporating other fragrant spices like saffron, cardamom, cinnamon, bay leaf, mace, pepper, etc. A fragrant meat-based rice dish like "Biryani" integrates these flavors with the fragrance of the rice, thereby doubling the sensory appeal of the food to the palate.

On the palate, itself, basmati has a uniquely nutty, warm flavor. Well-steamed basmati rice, served with fragrant gravies or meat, helps complement and enhance the flavor of the food by providing a warm base flavor on the palate.

And finally, visually, basmati grains are extra-long and non-sticky. When cooked, basmati grains separate neatly from each other. This gives a basmati-based dish a distinctly different appearance when compared to other rice-based dishes. Interestingly, there is a saying in the ancient language of Sanskrit that grains of rice should be like brothers: close, but not stuck together!

**Steaming is the preferred method of cooking rice in Korea. What is the best way to prepare Indian rice?**

Indian rice is also steam cooked most often when it is used as plain rice to accompany gravy-based dishes. However, when it is served as a pilaf, it is usually dry roasted with spices, other ingredients, and butter before being slow-cooked with water. Rice is also turned into a range of desserts, in which case it is cooked entirely in thickened milk. Or it can be turned into pancakes and savory rice cakes, in which case it is turned into a paste with lentils, fermented, and then grilled. In north-eastern India, rice is even cooked over embers in bamboo tubes.

**Do you have a particular rice recipe that is your favorite?**

Personally, I am very partial to Biryani—a kind of rice pilaf cooked with fragrant herbs, spices, and meat. There are varieties of biryani with significant regional variations, from the hot and spicy variety in Hyderabad to a version with prawns and coconut flavor in Kerala, to the subtle and slow-steam-cooked version of Lucknow in the North. It is a complete meal served with a thin yogurt and vegetable "raita".

Ideally, a rice fan should follow up an Indian biryani with a "firni", or a rice pudding that has the consistency of a chilled and gelatinous puree.

## Philippine Food Festival



June 2017 - Asia Society Korea was invited to attend the 2017 Philippine Food Festival at the Millennium Seoul Hilton. The event was hosted by the Philippine Embassy in Seoul to showcase its rich, unique cuisine. **H.E. Raul S. Hernandez**, Philippine Ambassador to South Korea, officially opened the event with comments that highlighted the importance of food in constructing and shaping a nation's character. For Ambassador Hernandez, "Filipino cuisine has evolved over centuries of cultural and geographic diversity with different regional foods spread across the archipelago."

This fusion of various cultural backgrounds and culinary inspiration was on full display at the festival with cuisine prepared by Michelle Adrillana, a distinguished chef who was flown in from the Philippines especially for the event. Adrillana is considered one of the

most sought-after chefs in Manila, having won many culinary awards and participating in various food festivals across the world. The 80 people in attendance sampled favorite Filipino dishes such as kare kare, kaldereta, sisig, chicken piaparan, ginataang kuhol, lumpiang hubad, and prawn sinigang. Desserts such as turon na munggo, palitaw, and halo-halo were also very popular throughout the evening. The event featured traditional dances performed by the Kaisahan ng Lahi ensemble as well as Filipino music sung by Mr. Reynan Dal-Anay and Ms. Faye Abadicio which gave guests an authentic Filipino cultural experience.



## UNESCO World Heritage Series by Matthew Fennell

### Part 5: Hwaseong Fortress



**Hwaseong Fortress**

The walls' unique defensive features included floodgates, observation towers, command posts, beacon towers, and secret bunkers. Three watchtowers initially protected the fortress, each three stories high with wooden pavilions on top. Smoke and fire from the chimneys on the towers communicated messages to the city's inhabitants. The number of signals indicated a special meaning; one for peace, two for the sighting of an enemy, three for an approaching enemy, four if the enemy had entered the city, and five signals meant that fighting had begun.

Hwaseong differed from other fortresses found in Asia in that it housed commercial, political, and military installations together. The carefully planned structure applied the latest in scientific knowledge to combine both residential and defensive features. It had a significant influence on the future development of Korean architecture, landscaping, and urban planning. Despite experiencing extensive damage during the Japanese colonial period and the Korean War, the restoration initiative between 1975 and 1979 helped return Hwaseong and its five-kilometer wall to its former glory.

For the next installment in our UNESCO World Heritage Series, the Asia Society made a trip to Hwaseong Fortress in the city of Suwon, Korea's second largest municipality after Seoul. Suwon, in recent years, is best known for being the home of Samsung, where Galaxy cell phones and other technologies are developed and tested. More historically, Hwaseong is the only remaining walled city in Korea, built by King Jeongjo in the late 18th century. There were three reasons for constructing the fortress: to safeguard the city from attack, to form a new political center, and to protect the tomb of the legendary Prince Sado. In 1963, the Korean government designated the site a National Treasure, and it was awarded UNESCO World Cultural Heritage status in December 1997.

When built, Hwaseong showcased the ultimate in 18th-century military construction, integrating ideas from Europe and East Asia.

### Part 6: Baekje Historical Areas



**Baekje Cultural Land**

Jeongnimsa Temple, Neungsan royal tombs, and the Naseong city wall located in Buyeo; and the Wanggung Palace and Mireuksa Temple in Iksan. According to UNESCO, these sites together "represent the later period of the Baekje Kingdom, during which time they were at the crossroads of considerable technological, religious (Buddhism), cultural, and artistic exchanges between the ancient East Asian kingdoms in Korea, China, and Japan."

While the art and architecture of the Baekje kingdom are considered some of the finest of the Three Kingdoms, they have also suffered the greatest destruction thanks to warfare with Silla, Goguryeo, and China over the centuries in addition to the various Japanese invasions. Despite this, a significant collection of tiles decorated with detailed landscape paintings still exists along with an extensive collection of pottery and ceramics. These remains, which include clay pipes, inscribed stones, and roof tiles, tell us that the kingdom was way ahead of its time concerning city planning and was also a place where social elites enjoyed an extremely high standard of living.

June 2017 - The most recent addition to Korea's UNESCO World Heritage catalog is the Baekje Historic Areas, put on the famed list in July 2015. The area consists of eight cultural heritage sites spread across the neighboring cities of Gongju, Buyeo, and Iksan, the three former capitals of the ancient kingdom of Baekje. Controlling territory in the south-western part of the peninsula from IBC to the 7th century, Baekje played a significant role in the development of the arts in Korea and helped contribute to the cultural development of East Asia. Many of the characteristics found in Baekje's art and artifacts stemmed from the development of Buddhism in the region, which was adopted from China and then exported to Japan and other neighboring countries.

The places that make up the historical areas include Gongsanseong Fortress and royal tombs found in present-day Gongju; the Busesanseong Fortress and Gwanbuk administrative buildings,



## UNESCO World Heritage Series by Matthew Fennell

### Part 7: Jongmyo Shrine



**Jongmyo**

present day, making Jongmyo the oldest and most authentic of the Confucian royal shrines that has been preserved.

July 2017 - While many tourists visit *Changdeokgung* and *Gyeongbokgung* to experience the splendor of Seoul's royal palaces, the atmosphere at the nearby *Jongmyo Shrine* is more solemn and sacred. Jongmyo, the next stop on our UNESCO World Heritage Site tour, is the royal shrine for performing ancestral rites for the deceased kings and queens of the Joseon Dynasty.

The shrine was originally built in 1394 by King Taejo, and was thought to be one of the longest buildings in Asia at the time. The complex underwent many more expansions over the following years, most notably under the guidance of the legendary King Sejong. However, like many other structures and buildings of the period, Jongmyo was burned to the ground by Japanese invaders during the Seven-Year War (1592–98). A new complex was constructed in 1601 and has remarkably kept its original form until the present day, making Jongmyo the oldest and most authentic of the Confucian royal shrines that has been preserved.

Dedicated to the ancestors of the Joseon dynasty, the buildings of *Jongmyo* contain the 'spirit tablets' of the kings and queens of this period and some of their most loyal government officials. Their spirits are believed to reside in special holes bored into the wooden tablets. There are 49 memorial tablets for the various kings and queens alongside a panel that lists each king's accomplishments.

Ritual services involving music, song, and dance still take place at Jongmyo, continuing traditions that go back to the 14th century. One of these ceremonies, *Sajik Daeje*, is one of Korea's most significant cultural traditions involving hundreds of participants who visit the shrine to give their offerings while royally-orchestrated music is played. The ceremony is held once a year in May and people who attend look spectacular in their black, white, red, blue, and yellow hanboks. The service has kept the original procedures from more than 600 years ago, by offering sacrificial gifts of food and drink using authentic ritual tableware.

### Part 8: Seokguram Grotto and Bulguksa Temple



**Seokguram Grotto**

August 2017 - In part 8 of our World Heritage Series, Asia Society Korea visited the Gyeongju Historic Areas, an area often labelled as "the world's largest museum without walls." This month, we return to the Gyeongju region to preview Seokguram Grotto and Bulguksa Temple, another world heritage site comprising two religious monuments rich in Far Eastern Buddhist art.

Despite its cultural importance to Korea, Bulguksa was never intended to be a major temple when it was constructed by King Beopheung in 528. However, the original wooden structure was transformed and expanded in 751 by Prime Minister Kim Daeseong who, legend has it, personally designed the temple and dedicated it to the memory of his ancestors. The temple was completed in 774 by the Silla royal court and given the name Bulguksa ("Temple of the Buddha Land"). The temple was renovated during the Goryeo Dynasty and the early Joseon Dynasty before it was burned to the ground during the Imjin War. Between 1604 and 1973, Bulguksa underwent various renovations and expansions involving extensive archeological investigations, most notably during the heritage practices of President Park Chung-Hee's era. The temple, along with Seokguram Grotto, was added to the World Heritage List in 1995, making it Korea's oldest UNESCO site.

Although Seokguram Grotto is located four kilometers from Bulguksa temple, it is still part of the same complex and was also constructed between 742 and 774 under the order of Kim Daeseong. The grotto overlooks the East Sea and, as the only fully intact structure from the Silla era, the cave contains some of the most important Buddhist sculptures in the world. Due to the location and the abandonment of the cave for many centuries, a restoration program was started during the Japanese occupation and completed in the 1960's using modern technology to help control the problem of humidity and mold that placed the structure under threat. Once inside the grotto, one can see Buddha surrounded by Bodhisattvas, the Ten Disciples, Eight Divine Guardians, two Devas, and two Vajrapanis making the white granite statues a masterpiece of East Asian Buddhist Art.

Both Bulguksa and Seokguram represent the highly developed architectural skills of the Silla dynasty and form a religious architectural complex of exceptional significance in North-East Asia.

## North Korea Coverage

# Dennis Rodman and Civil Society Engagement with Sŏngun Korea



Daniel Pinkston

By Daniel Pinkston, Contributing Writer

June 15, 2017 - Policymakers, journalists, and pundits often describe North Korea and its leadership as “unpredictable” or “irrational.” However, North Korea is neither irrational nor more unpredictable than any other country. Pyongyang’s intermittent belligerence, human rights abuses, and its long-term commitment to developing nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles are all unacceptable to the international community. While North Korean behavior is horrendous, this does not mean its leadership is crazy or irrational. On the contrary, North Korean actions are consistent with the leadership’s world view that is grounded in extreme nationalism, realist thought, militarism, and Lenin’s theory of capitalist imperialism.

In North Korea, domestic political issues are resolved through force or the threat of force. The Kim family dynasty repeatedly has demonstrated the will to use organized violence in pursuit of its political objectives, including two dynastic power transitions. The Kims have remained in power by eliminating their political opponents—not through democratic elections and coalition building. In this Machiavellian nightmare, no one can make credible commitments, even the dictator. Trust is in short supply because power asymmetry is the arbiter of political disputes.

Pyongyang’s realist interpretation of political order extends to international politics as well. North Korean ideology rejects the concept of collective security cooperation. Self-help and nuclear weapons are considered the only ways to ensure survival. This orientation is self-fulfilling and reinforcing at both the domestic and international levels. Suspicions and fears are continuously reaffirmed through cycles of actions and reactions in the forms of military exercises, nuclear and missile tests, diplomatic demarches, sanctions, threats, and declaratory policies. This never-ending process is tailor-made for an autocratic regime that controls the information space within its territory.

Despite North Korea’s isolation, the country’s identity and foreign policy can only exist in the context of its relations with other countries and its place in the international system. For the North Korean regime to continue in its current form, Pyongyang must maintain the basic tenets of a propaganda narrative it has constructed over nearly seven decades. North Koreans are subjected to relentless propaganda depicting Koreans as pure and innocent victims struggling to survive in a menacing world featuring blood-thirsty American imperialists who have been trying to enslave the Korean people since the 1830s. Yes, the 1830s.

The world according to Pyongyang is a Hobbesian hell where evil imperialists are determined to exploit innocent Koreans at every opportunity. This narrative has been reinforced for years; most North Koreans have no reason to disbelieve it. Few North Koreans have seen the outside world, and fewer still have had the opportunity to interact with foreigners while inside North Korea. Paradoxically, North Korea’s isolation and autarchy are completely dependent upon an internal social understanding that the outside world and foreigners are hostile and aggressive toward Koreans.

When a state is locked into this mindset, the international community has little choice but to respond with a deterrence posture to avoid exploitation and conflict. However, this deadlock can be sustained indefinitely with occasional risks of violent conflict. There are two ways to escape this suboptimal equilibrium: one side can eliminate the other through force or people’s thinking can change to accept peaceful coexistence and cooperative security arrangements. Realist power balancing is not the only pathway to survival and security, but cooperative alternatives will only become possible when the North Korean people begin to view others as “friends and partners” rather than “intractable enemies of the Korean people, generation after generation.”

The North Korean regime has many advantages in constructing and maintaining its propaganda narrative. North Korean thinking and attitudes are less likely to change in a positive way unless positive messages penetrate the country’s information space. Non-governmental organizations are working to provide more information about the outside world through a variety of means, and this work should be commended. However, the international community must play the long-game and use multiple methods to reach the North Korean people.

## North Korea Coverage

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(Continued)

Non-governmental and non-market-based people-to-people exchanges are one mechanism that serves as a conduit of information. Of course, we must have realistic expectations about the role of civil society and its role in transforming the North Korean mindset. We should not expect people-to-people exchanges to bring immediate results. Private citizens can neither negotiate for governments nor commit to binding agreements on behalf of governments. However, civil society exchanges are less risky than economic exchanges because trade and investment give the Kim family regime opportunities to skim off hard currency that is critical to the regime's survival.

After almost two and a half years, former professional basketball star Dennis Rodman has returned to North Korea. During his last visit in January 2014, Rodman led a group of American former NBA players to play an exhibition game with North Korean players. Rodman and the other players faced extreme criticism for playing the game on Kim Jong-un's birthday only a few weeks after Kim purged and executed his uncle, Chang Sŏng-t'aek. Critics viewed the game as a propaganda coup for the regime, which is not incorrect. However, the party's Propaganda and Agitation Department has no shortage of propaganda themes; the North Korean people would still get the same propaganda message but with a slight variation in details. If Rodman and the other players had not visited Pyongyang, the North Korean people would not have been spared from the propaganda narrative.

Critics failed to realize that Rodman's visit served other purposes. In 2013, Rodman signed an agreement with the North Korean sports minister that provided for basketball exchanges twice a year, alternating between Pyongyang and locations abroad. The first game was held on January 8, 2014, Kim Jong-un's birthday, but the next game was to be held in Europe in mid-2014. The two sides also agreed to hold discussions on expanding the exchanges into music and other cultural activities. However, the project collapsed after sponsors pulled funding in the aftermath of intense public condemnation. If the project had gone forward, so many young North Korean athletes, musicians, and artists could have traveled abroad to interact with foreigners, and subsequently learn that North Korean propaganda about "blood-thirsty imperialists seeking to kill and enslave Koreans" is not true.

Rodman's current visit can't work miracles. Otto Warmbier, an American student who had been detained in North Korea since January 2016, was released the same day that Rodman arrived for his visit. Warmbier's release was obtained through the efforts of the U.S. State Department, but we don't know if Pyongyang deliberately timed Warmbier's release to coincide with the Rodman visit. Unfortunately, Rodman's visit can serve as a distraction to the tragedy of Otto Warmbier's long detention. Hopefully, Warmbier's case will not become a distraction that derails Rodman's efforts to increase people-to-people contacts, reduce the dehumanization of all parties in the Korean conflict, change the mindset of the North Korean people, and eventually effect policy change and a transformation of the Korean peninsula.

## North Korea Coverage

# Connecting to Offline Kingdoms: Lessons from Cuba and Myanmar For North Korea's Underground Media



**By Tom Norris, Contributing Writer**

July 2017 - Extremely resilient to change, North Korea is one of the world's last offline kingdoms. Whereas countries like Cuba and Myanmar have been forced to ease state control and censorship in response to domestic and international pressure, North Korea has doubled down on its efforts to block access to information from the outside world.

Despite this great challenge, activists believe that Cuba and Myanmar's past may be a window into North Korea's future. Learning from innovative methods used by activists to avoid state detection in Cuba and Myanmar, South Korean organizations believe they will be able to devise better strategies for information dissemination in the North Korean context.

With this goal in mind, a unique assembly of international journalists and activists gathered in Seoul on Thursday, July 20th to share their experiences as independent media actors struggling against state control.

The first of the international guests, Pablo Diaz, began by recalling a story from his childhood, growing up under the Castro regime in Havana. As a young boy obsessed with baseball, Diaz would often sit outside the capital's largest international hotel, hoping to catch a glimpse of foreign baseball stars visiting the country. One day, a South Korean baseball player left the hotel for some fresh air and, upon seeing Diaz with his bicycle across the road, walked over and handed Diaz his Walkman music player. The player then took Diaz's bicycle and cycled off down the road. When he returned ten minutes later, the player smiled and collected his Walkman back from the stunned boy.

The experience was shocking to Diaz and changed his view of the world in an instant. It was the first time he had seen anybody act with individual freedom, spontaneity, and joy. Also, using the Walkman for just ten minutes, he had peered through a window into the free world for the first time.



## North Korea Coverage

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(Continued)

Diaz spoke of the effect technology can have on those living under repression but also was quick to warn Korean activists of the challenges of disseminating information to repressed populaces. According to Diaz, the greatest challenge of the work, besides avoiding state detection, is avoiding the alienation of citizens. He warned that “you cannot reach an audience if they are more interested in soap operas than the truth of their situation”.

The next speaker, Rafael Duval, an expert on anti-censorship tools, seconded Diaz’s opinion, cautioning that “if devices contain only informational, non-entertainment content then they will not be widely shared”. Duval then demonstrated to the audience his organization’s favored method of information sharing, the paquete.

The paquete, or packet in English, gained widespread popularity in Cuba after Duval and his colleagues found a way to copy entire websites (complete with linked content) to non-networked, untraceable devices. Called the “internet without internet”, the devices became very effective tools for disseminating information and were spread widely across the island.

After giving the audience a tutorial on how to create similar paquetes for North Korea, Duval shared what he considered to be the real key to their success. Aside from striking a proper balance of informational and entertainment material, it was crucial to incentivize the spread of the devices. As Cuban people began to make a living off of distributing the offline materials, the content reached a wider and wider audience.

Although the topic of the conference was the dissemination of information into North Korea. The next speaker, Khin Maung Win, spoke of an equal need for the opposite process- the need for information and images from North Korea to be shared with the outside world.

For decades, as the head of the Democratic Voice of Burma, Win worked to build an underground network of journalists within Myanmar, giving the repressed Burmese people a voice and bringing awareness of their situation to the international community. By training and equipping local people to disseminate information from within the authoritarian country to the outside world, Win’s organization was able to generate a groundswell of international support. This support would ultimately translate into pressure on the regime and, eventually, help lead to a successful democratic movement in 2010.

Putting his theory into the context of North Korea, Win urged activists in South Korea to consider a similar two-way approach. He argued that, by disseminating information both to and from North Korea, activists can work in two ways toward the same goal of eventual political change. North Koreans can also join the fight against their government’s repression by receiving knowledge from the outside and relaying back images from within their country.

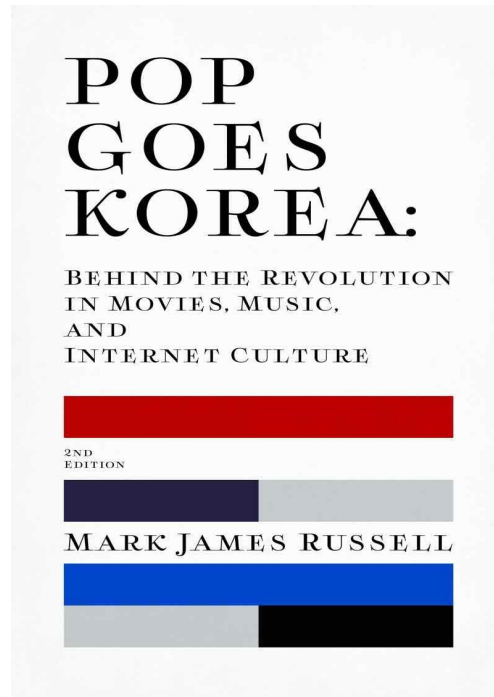
Emboldened by this encouragement and practical advice from Cuban and Burmese activists, North Korean human rights actors are now devising new and innovative methods of disseminating information both to and from North Korea. Although the North Korean government’s opposition is not likely to falter any time soon, thanks to the help of their Cuban and Burmese counterparts, activists in South Korea may now have greater success connecting to the offline kingdom.

## Meet the Author

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### Interview with Mark James Russell

# Pop Goes Korea: Behind the Revolution in Movies, Music, and Internet Cultures



By **Matthew Fennell**, Contributing Writer

July 2017 - In the ten years since the release of *Pop Goes Korea: Behind the Revolution in Movies, Music and Internet Culture*, Korean popular culture has become bigger and even more successful. This prompted **Mark Russell** to publish an updated edition of the book highlighting the amazing stories of Korean popular culture, including “Gangnam Style” and K-pop, the latest cinematic blockbusters, Korea’s indie music scene, and the rise of webcomics. Asia Society Korea’s **Matthew Fennell** caught up with Mark to discuss the new publication.

**Pop Goes Korea: Behind the Revolution in Movies, Music and Internet Culture** was first released in 2008. **What made you want to publish a second edition?**

So much has changed since 2008! And not just “Gangnam Style” (although clearly that took awareness of Korean pop culture to another level). Music, movies, TV, webtoons... pretty much all aspects of Korean pop culture have continued to grow since the first edition of *Pop Goes Korea*, and I thought that should be reflected in my book. The new edition is more than 10,000 words longer than the original, with a couple of new interviews and essays, as well as updates to all the old chapters.

Also, considering how important digital media has been for so much of modern Korean pop culture, I thought it would be fun to try out e-publishing too. I’ve had three books published the traditional way and while I’m reasonably happy with how they turned out, I’m also curious about the potential of the e-book. Since so much of today’s Korean pop culture has been shaped by modern digital trends, I thought I should follow suit.

## Meet the Author

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(Continued)

**Korea's popular culture and entertainment industry changed dramatically during the 1990s and 2000s. Have the past ten years brought about an equally remarkable change?**

I think the major storylines that I talked about in the original edition all hold up still — Korean entertainment is still overwhelmingly the story of ambitious producers, business people, and creators, all striving against the odds to make their mark and find success in very challenging fields. But each success has helped raise the bar for the next. The movies have gotten bigger. The K-pop artists are more influential. Korean TV dramas keep finding new audiences.

So, the changes since 2008 have been dramatic, but they've been more of an evolution. A change in degree more than kind... Korean popular culture has continued to grow and gain recognition, but the foundation for today's successes were largely in place a decade ago.

**Do PSY and "Gangnam Style" feature in the new edition? How much of an impact did the song have on promoting K-pop around the world?**

Certainly "Gangnam Style" was huge in terms of recognition around the world. I was living in Spain when that song hit, and it was amazing how suddenly everybody was aware of Korean pop music (even if Psy is a pretty atypical example of K-pop). In our crazy-busy, noisy modern world, one of the most important and hardest things is just to be noticed and "Gangnam Style" certainly got Korea noticed. It gave everyone everywhere an easy, mainstream access point to Korea.

But, for me, in terms of understanding what Korean popular music is about and its deeper trends, "Gangnam Style" was not that important. So, for the new edition, "Gangnam Style" gets mentioned, but it's not a focal point. I think there are a lot of other artists and trends that are more interesting and more important.

**K-pop and Korean cinema play a big role in your first book. Are there any new movements or trends you cover in this latest edition?**

For music, I added some information about Korean classic rock (from the 1960s and 70s) and a short essay about the rise of the modern indie rock scene, which are probably the two areas of Korean pop culture I love the most. Over the past decade, there has been a growing revival of interest in older Korean rock/pop music, as seen in groups such as Chang Kiha & the Faces or the Barbarettes, as well as the retro elements in electronic artists like DJ Soulscape. Indie rock is more vibrant than ever, with more and more groups touring North America, Europe, and other places.

For pop music, I guess the biggest change is how much the music industry has become integrated into the worldwide music business. Top songwriters from Sweden and around Europe work with local music labels to make pop hits. It's not just desperate labels throwing money at past-their-prime producers now. It's a much more mature business now, operating at a very high level of production.

For movies, most of the big stories for the past decade have been in commercial cinema. There have been more successful blockbusters, with new directors making fun, exciting, mainstream movies. When the first edition of Pop Goes Korea came out, I think people were still unsure of how strong the movie industry was, and whether its successes could last. But after a decade, I think it is pretty clear that the Korean film industry is one of the strongest in the world.

**Where do you see Korean popular culture heading over the next ten years? Do you feel that the future is bright for the industry?**

I think the next decade will certainly be challenging, and the changes pressuring the rest of the world's pop culture (Netflix and other digital services) are also causing pressure here. But Korea's creators have repeatedly shown themselves to be up to those challenges.

My thesis, from the first edition of the book to now, has been that there are structural reasons why Korea's pop culture industries have been able to stay at the forefront of these changes. It's not about government handouts or protecting artists from the rest of the world. It's about engaging with the best from around the world, and creating systems that let artists, producers, and entrepreneurs do their best work.

## Ambassador Interview

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### Interview with H.E. Peteris Vaivars, Ambassador of Latvia



H.E. Peteris Vaivars

**By Matthew Fennell, Contributing Writer**

Following 24 years of diplomatic relations, Latvia finally opened its official residence in September 2015 to become the newest embassy here in South Korea. **His Excellency Peteris Vaivars**, appointed as the first ever residing ambassador to Korea, caught up with Asia Society Korea's Matthew Fennell to talk about his first few months in the role and what the embassy hopes achieve in the future.

**The Latvian Embassy opened in Korea in September 2015 and is the newest embassy here in Seoul. How have the first 18 months been?**

Now that we have been in Seoul for more than a year, I can say that it has been an incredibly busy period for us. Initially, we were very active with the administration issues that come with establishing an embassy in Korea; while at the same time still carrying out our diplomatic duties. Most of all, we have spent a lot of time networking and developing contacts to promote Latvia, our businesses, culture, tourism, and so on. Being a very small embassy with just two diplomats has been quite tough at times. However, I am both happy and proud to have been appointed as the first residing Latvian Ambassador to Korea, and I look forward to building good relations with Asia Society Korea.

**Why were diplomatic relations between Latvia and the Republic of Korea only established in 1991?**

The Latvian state was declared an independent country in November 1918 and next year will mark our 100-year anniversary. Between 1918 and 1940, we experienced a period of rapid and fruitful growth as an independent European country. Unfortunately, our history has not always been bright, and because of the illegal dealings between two totalitarian regimes - Stalin's Soviet Union and Hitler's Nazi Germany - a pact was concluded which left Latvia under Soviet occupation from 1940 until 1991. It was only after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 that our nation regained independence and only then were we able to start diplomatic relations with Korea.



## Ambassador Interview

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(Continued)

### **Why did it take 24 years to establish an embassy in Seoul?**

After independence in 1991, we had to build our diplomatic network from scratch. Although 24 years may seem like a long time, one should understand that this is a very costly and difficult exercise, especially for a country of our size; Latvia is around two-thirds the size of Korea with a population of only two million. We have had to build and organize new embassies one step at a time. Currently, we have expanded our diplomatic presence to different regions of the world, with Asia being particularly important for our economic interests. In the last three years, we have opened embassies in New Delhi, Abu Dhabi, and Seoul.

There is another reason why it took so long to open an embassy here in Korea. In diplomatic relations, reciprocity is imperative. The Korean Embassy in Riga, the capital of Latvia, was only opened in 2014 - a year before we opened our embassy in Seoul. As a Charge d'Affaires currently heads the embassy in Latvia, we are hoping that an ambassador will be appointed soon to facilitate further cooperation between our two like-minded countries.

### **What are some aspects of Latvian cultural that you hope to promote here in Korea?**

While many Latvian customs are familiar in Korea, most Koreans do not associate them with Latvia; for example, Christmas tree decorations. Evidence shows that the adornment of the Christmas tree originated in Latvia; trees were first decorated by German merchants in Latvia more than 500 years ago. This tradition can now be seen all around the world, but Koreans do not know where it originated from, although they do know that Santa Claus is from Finland. Another Latvian custom that is popular in Korea is the wearing of jeans. This item of clothing, so common in so many countries, was invented and designed by Latvian Jacob Davis who emigrated to the US at the end of 19th century.

We are also very proud of our long list of Latvian musicians, such as world-renowned conductors Mariss Jansons and Andris Nelsons, violinist Gidon Kremer, ballet dancer and movie star Mikhail Baryshnikov, modernist painter Mark Rothko, and opera singers Elina Garanca, Kristine Opolais, and Marina Rebeka. In Korea, the famous song "A Million Roses", sung by Shim Soo-bong, was composed by Latvian Raimonds Pauls.

We are working hard on cooperation to help showcase Latvian culture. In a few weeks, we will be organizing a large tourism seminar to promote three Baltic States to Korea tour agencies. Many Latvian artists will also visit Korea; for example, Gidon Kremer and Kremerata Baltic will play at the Seoul Art Center on May 31st and several Latvian dance groups will attend various festivals across Korea this year.

### **What are your hopes for Korean-Latvian relations in the future?**

While Latvia is known as one of the three Baltic States of Northern Europe, we do have our unique language, history, religion, and culture. I feel that Koreans know very little about Latvia and at the same time, Korea is not well-known to Latvians. Therefore, both embassies must cooperate with each other to increase the level of recognition between the countries. I believe that tourism is the most important aspect in promoting this knowledge and understanding.

Additionally, we would like to focus on building cooperation through economics and trade. Latvia is famous for its wood and timber, interior design, fashion, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, and of course food. We think that Korea would benefit hugely from access to Latvian products. We are trying very hard to facilitate business relationships between our companies to bring many Latvian goods and products into the country. Latvia recognizes Korea as a highly advanced and technological country so any inward investment from Korean companies would be beneficial. Korean technologies can boost Latvian industries while opening the door for Korean businesses in Baltic, Scandinavian, and other markets.

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SHIN & KIM  
Yulchon Attorneys at Law

### CHAIRMAN'S CIRCLE

**(5,000,000 KRW)**

Bradley Buckwalter  
Haelyung Hwang  
Sean Sea-Yeon Kim  
Young Joon Kim  
Kay Song  
Mark Tetto

## 2017 MONTHLY LUNCHEON DATES

Tuesday, May 23rd

Tuesday, June 20th

Tuesday, October 24th

Wednesday, November 22nd

Tuesday, December 7th

## SPECIAL EVENT

Thursday, September 19th

## HOLIDAY DINNER

Monday, December 11th



Asia  
Society

Korea