

SEPTEMBER 2023

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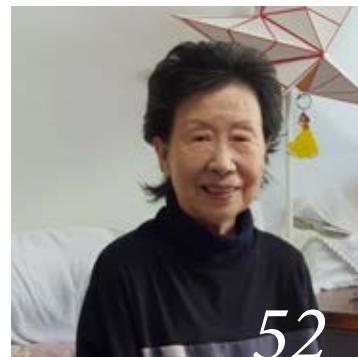
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Celebrating Chuseok

Jitae Kim and his family invite us into their home and share the significance of Chuseok in their lives and across South Korea

Cover: Photo by Erin Henderson



The Path of Sookja Hong

Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Inbum Chun writes about Sookja Hong, South Korea's first female diplomat



Explore Nami Island

Jetta Allen walks us through her tour of Nami Island



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UNITED ON THE RoK

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Launched in July 2022, *United on the RoK* is a civilian information and lifestyle magazine distributed monthly at all USFK installations. The purpose of the magazine is to enhance connectedness within and across our diverse communities and to help community members adapt to life in Korea.

United on the RoK is monthly publication for members of the United States Forces Korea Community. Editorial content is the responsibility of *United on the RoK*. Contents of the publication are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or Oriental Press.

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An elephant getting a drink of water in South Africa. Check out the article on pages 38-43 to see more gorgeous photos from South Africa taken by Erin Henderson.

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SEP28

What is Jazz? 2nd Autumn Jazz Festival with TOWMOO

Lotte Concert Hall
lotteconcerthall.com/eng



OCT06-08

Universal Ballet: Don Quixote

Seoul Arts Center, Opera Theater
sac.or.kr/site/eng



OCT07-08

2023 Busan International ROCK Festival

Samnak Ecological Park, Busan
ticket.yes24.com



OCT07-08

One Universe Festival 2023

Seoul Forest Park
globalinterpark.com



OCT13-15

Musical MAMMA MIA! - Suwon

Gyeonggi Atr Center Grand Theater
globalinterpark.com



OCT14

60th Anniversary Concert: 2023 NAMJIN TOUR CONCERT - BUSAN

BEXCO Auditorium
ticket.yes24.com



OCT15-NOV19

Les Miserables - BUSAN

Dream Theatre
ticket.yes24.com



OCT17

2023 Sam Smith Gloria The Tour - Korea

KSPO DOME
globalinterpark.com



OCT20-22

Charlie Puth Live in Seoul

KSPO Dome
ticket.yes24.com



OCT30

Oslo Philharmonic

Lotte Concert Hall
lotteconcerthall.com/eng



NOV04

Busan Firework Festival

Gwangalli Beach
ticket.yes24.com



DEC01

Munich Philharmonic

Lotte Concert Hall
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EDITOR'S NOTE

*"If you want to change the world, you must be
your very best in the darkest moment."*

— William H. McRaven

September is a great time of year. The season kicks off professional and college football and is the first month of Autumn. This year, the start of the harvest months is also the month Korea celebrates Chuseok. Often described as Korean Thanksgiving, Chuseok is one of the most important public holidays in Korea. Two writers draw us in to learn about the special occasion. Jitae Kim, pictured on the cover with his parents, shares an overview of Chuseok, how his family celebrates, and advice on how non-Koreans can celebrate. Yeonjoo Lee takes us on a journey through her childhood, sharing how she preserves her heritage through the traditions of Korean Thanksgiving.

This issue features an article about the Global Knowledge Exchange and Development Center (GKEDC), established by the Korean government as the commemorative project for the 70th anniversary of Korea's liberalization. GKEDC is located in Hongneung, Seoul, and provides an objective platform to review and share Korea's development experience with domestic and international partners through exhibitions, capacity building programs and international cooperation.

Lieutenant General (Retired) Inbum Chun of the Republic of Korea Army writes about his mother, Sookja Hong, South Korea's first female diplomat and advocate for gender equality. The experience Korean women endured in the early twentieth century is familiar and yet astonishing. She is a woman of substance, ahead of her time and her determination is inspiring.

Colonel (Ret.) Chong Tae Je of the Republic of Korea Army writes about his commitment to faith, family and community. He opens up about his time in service, his family, his church, his garden, and how he has stayed connected to the United States Forces Korea (USFK) community.



An endearing message comes through an interview with MyeongJun Kim, the Training Specialist in the Quality Assurance Office at 8th Army Wightman NCO Academy. He shares how the KATUSA Program created an opportunity to have the American Dream in Korea.

For baseball fans, John F. Behrend, Master Gunnery Sergeant Retiree, U.S. Marine Corps writes about umpiring in Korea. If you love the sport, he is a great person to follow on social media. His knowledgeable commentary during baseball season brings excitement to the game.

This issue also features an article by YECCO Content Creator Seung-yun Kim contrasting borrowed scenery in Japanese, Chinese and Korean gardens.

Jong Dae Kim of the Chungcheongnam-do Tourism Council, speaks in an interview about the role of tourism in economic development across various countries and industries.

Jetta Allen contributes two articles to this issue. In the first, she shares a reflection on why she started writing for United on the RoK and what she has gained from the experience. In the second article, Allen describes a trip to Nami Island.

There are a number of flyers from First Signal Brigade, Humphreys United Club, Grace Stables and Rebel Rescue for September events you do not want to miss. These events are great ways to get connected in your community.

Eighth Army shares information about the Community Strengths & Themes Assessment. Eighth Army cares what you think and this is an opportunity for you to share your thoughts on quality of life, health, safety, and readiness at your Army installation.

There are many more articles, covering a variety of topics that will enrich your experience in Korea and provide healthy reminders to take care of yourself. The theme of this issue is "Celebrating Chuseok" and it is apropos to harken back to the theme of the September 2022 issue, "Better Together." Whether your colleagues, your friends, your family, or a combination comprises your unit, you can preserve your traditions and heritage by sharing and celebrating with others.

If you have any questions, concerns or are interested in contributing to the magazine, reach out to me at editor@unitedontherok.com.

Caitlin Ward
Editor in Chief

Celebrating Chuseok:

An Introduction to the mid-autumn harvest festival

By Jitae Kim

In Korea, Chuseok is one of the most important public holidays of the year. Chuseok is often explained to foreigners as Korean Thanksgiving day. The celebration begins the day before, and lasts through the day after Chuseok. Traditionally, Koreans return to their hometowns to celebrate with their families, which means there are a lot of people traveling by car, train or bus to different provinces outside of the major cities. Traffic is very heavy during this time.

Chuseok takes place on the day of the full harvest moon, which on the lunar calendar is the 15th day of the eighth lunar month. This year, Chuseok is on September 29, 2023. The period will last from September 28, 2023 to September 30, 2023. Under the full harvest moon, families gather to enjoy time together and give thanks to their ancestors for the plentiful harvest. Traditionally, women of the family prepare an ancestral memorial ceremony called Charye by setting a table full of food. This trend is changing nowadays as men and women prepare the ceremony together.

Koreans celebrate Chuseok by making special foods, such as a rice cake called Songpyeon, which is made with ground rice, sesame seeds, red beans or other similar ingredients. On the eve of Chuseok, family members gather to make pancakes and Songpyeon together. We usually gather in the house of the oldest family members, which is often the grandparents.

We celebrate Chuseok to honor the efforts of our ancestors so preparing and performing Charye is very important. However, my family is



Catholic so the way we celebrate is different. We don't prepare a lot of food but instead, we gather in the house and have a mass, which is more simple than the traditional ritual. Everything else we do on Chuseok is similar to other Korean families.

Typical Chuseok meals include traditional Korean food such as rice cake (Songpyeon), beef soup (Goggi kok), spiced Korean BBQ (Galbi), Korean pancakes (Jeon), and various vegetable dishes (Namul).

After the preparations, cooking and ritual, families enjoy dancing, playing games and exchanging gifts.

Since long ago, Koreans have played the games Ganggangsullae, Juldarigi and Ssireum.

Ganggangsullae is a game specifically for women and children. Several people gather under the moon and dance. They begin in a circle, holding hands, with singing from a selected singer. The dancers move in a circle while holding hands and slowly form other shapes.

Juldarigi, also known as a tug-of-war, is played with a gigantic hand woven straw rope. Traditionally, entire villages would play. Dangjin and Yeongsan are two places famous for holding large-scale Juldarigi events. Juldarigi used to be a ritual for good fortune and a good harvest.

Ssireum is a wrestling event between two participants who wear thick fabric belts. The game is played by grabbing onto the opponent's thigh with one hand, their belt with the other and trying to send the opponent to the ground. The game is traditionally played on sand, however it can also be safely played on mats at home.

How can I celebrate Chuseok?

Chuseok may be described as Korean Thanksgiving but Korean culture is very unique. The best way to learn about Chuseok is to visit historical sites in Korea during the holiday and partake in activities often set up like shooting arrows, driving a roll pin and making rice cakes. Participating in these activities can help you understand Chuseok.

Should I get my friend/co-worker a gift for Chuseok?

It is appropriate for a non-Korean to give a gift to a Korean coworker or friend for Chuseok. Koreans will appreciate the gesture. We do not assume people from other countries know Korean culture and traditions, so if you choose to give a friend a present for Chuseok, it will surprise them and bring joy.

What is an appropriate gift?

Gifts given for Chuseok include home appliances, food, or essential and practical items such as toiletries

and hair care products. If you are looking for ideas, markets and grocery stores sell Chuseok gift packages leading up to the holiday. You can also give people flowers but giving out white colored flowers should happen only during funerals because the color white means "death" in Korean culture.

Chuseok Greetings

Have a good Chuseok

추석 잘 보내세요

"Chuseok jal bonaeseyo."

Have a full-hearted and generous Hangawi.

마음까지 넉넉해지는 풍성한 한가위 보내세요.

"Maeumkkaji neokneokhaejineun pungseonghan hangawi bonaeseyo."

Have a nice Chuseok with your family.

가족들과 함께 즐거운 추석 보내세요.

"Gachokdeulgwa hamkke cheulkeoun chuseok bonaeseyo."

Have a happy Chuseok with a bright full moon.

밝은 보름달처럼 행복한 추석 보내세요.

"Balkeun boreumdalcheoreum haengbokhan chuseok bonaeseyo."

Have a rich and leisurely Hangawi.

풍요롭고 여유로운 한가위 보내세요.

"Pungyorobgo yeoyroeun hangawi bonaeseyo."

Have a full-hearted Chuseok like the full moon.

보름달처럼 마음마저 가득찬 풍요로운 추석 보내세요.

"Boreumdalcheoreum maeummaja gadeukchan pungyoreun chuseok bonaeseyo."

MENTORSHIP MATTERS:

The Importance of Telling Your Story During and After Your Military Service

By Benjamin Effinger

I had one of the greatest supervisors at my first duty station, Staff Sergeant Hearn, a Noncommissioned Officer (NCO) who held me accountable as a young airman and taught me how to use my education benefits to give myself options at the end of my enlistment. He was a six-year enlistee and was separating to go back home and pursue a career in supply chain logistics and loss prevention. During his six years of service, he finished a bachelor's degree at Minot State University.

He not only told me how to maximize my military experience, but also showed me what to do, which was invaluable as I progressed in my military career. SSgt Hearn took the time to invest in me as an airman, and as a human being. I strived to carry forward his impactful approach when I became an NCO by mentoring my troops to use the benefits available to them to create future options. These were the seeds of mentorship and instilled within me the importance of telling my story to others.

Transition While Still in the Military

When SSgt Hearn separated from the military, I felt somewhat lost. I was reassigned to other NCOs who were not as passionate about teaching, training, and mentoring their airmen. They were more so about keeping airmen in line, to keep them off the command radar. For a while, I lost the desire to pursue education and share my experiences with others because I was caught up in the life of being an airman, doing my duty and enjoying rest and relaxation, living from paycheck to paycheck. It was time for change,



so I applied for special duty to leave the missile field and transfer to Joint Base Andrews, Maryland to be assigned to Presidential Support Detail. When the orders came in, I knew it was time to buckle back down because I had to extend my enlistment to take the orders, which reminded me of the lack of options that



SSgt Hearn had coached me about long before.

When I moved to Andrews, I found another NCO, SSgt Geisinger "Goose," who pushed me toward pursuing my education and reinforced many of the principles that SSgt Hearn had taught me earlier in my military career. I doubled down on my education, maxing out my tuition assistance (\$4500) each year. I concentrated on expanding my military experience and focusing less on promotion testing (to the dismay of my superiors). When I separated from active duty in 2010, after eight years and 12 days of service at the rank of E-5, I separated with my Bachelor's of Science in Sports and Health Sciences from American Military University. Upon separating, I opened my Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) and completed my Master's of Public Administration, with a concentration on Security Management in 2013. I had realized the importance of applying military education benefits to set myself up for success after leaving the military.

Fast forward, I am now a third-year doctoral student, using my Post-9/11 GI Bill to complete this terminal degree – a Doctorate of Public Admin-

istration (DPA). Although I am no longer active duty, I am in a position to teach, train and mentor transitioning military members through various platforms such as LinkedIn, Veterati, ICMA Coach Connect, ICMA Veterans Advisory Committee, and Heare Brotherhood. For links to any of these resources, check out my LinkedIn profile at - <https://www.linkedin.com/in/benjamin-m-effinger-mpa>. I utilize the power of telling my story to help transitioning military members and veterans find their passion after they take their uniform off and I am an active advocate for veterans in local government.

Tell Your Story

Your story is unique to you, but by telling it to others, you can share your experience with others who might be travelling the same or similar path that you did upon your transition out of the military. Many times, military members in the transition process will try to figure it out themselves and will not ask for help. This is why I add extra emphasis on telling our stories publicly. When we share our stories publicly, whether in a publication or on social media, we increase the likelihood of our story connecting with others, when someone comes across the article accidentally or when someone else does and shares the story with the transitioning military member or vet-





eran. When we share our stories, we are supporting each other and providing information about potential consequences of different courses of action. In sharing out stories, we might give someone the encouragement they need to act on thoughts that they think are irrational or impractical because they have never it done. Sharing our experiences is a way to impact other people's lives. Trust me, I have seen it happen!

Whether you are a military member, military spouse, transitioning military member, or veteran, there is power in your story and there are others out there telling their stories who you can connect with to validate your experience. You are not alone! You have a story that needs to be told, to add value to your community, and create a tribe of like-minded individuals with whom you can travel the path of life. If you withhold your lived experience and do not tell your story, you are not only holding yourself back, but you are also depriving others of the opportunity to relate and identify with your experience. There is power in finding community and tribe to face life. Without my

NCOs, I would not have learned this early on in my military career, and without taking the time to share my lived experience, I would not have been able to help other military members transition to a career in local government. I am blessed to have the opportunity to share my experiences and hope that you will consider the value that your story has and begin to share your story.

About the Author:

Benjamin M. Effinger, MPA is an eight-year veteran of the United States Air Force Security Forces, with a combat tour to Iraq in 2005. He is currently a third-year doctoral student at the University of La Verne and actively serves as the Student Public Administration Association President. He has written articles for the International City/County Management Association and American Society for the Public Administration on military transition, careers in local government, leadership, and management.

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How the KATUSA Program Created an Opportunity to Have the *American Dream in Korea*

Written by Caitlin Ward
Photographed by Erin Henderson

MyeongJun Kim is the Training Specialist in the Quality Assurance Office at 8th Army Wightman NCO Academy. Previously, Kim served as a Korean Augmentation to the United States Army (KATUSA) Soldier at Camp Casey and attended Basic Training for the KATUSA Program at Camp Jackson (since then, Camp Jackson closed and training programs transferred to USAG Humphreys, 2017). Here he shares why he joined the KATUSA Program, how the Program opened doors for him, and why he chose to stay in the Republic of Korea.

The KATUSA Soldier Program was initiated on 15 July 1950 to augment the U.S. Army in Korea with ROK Army Soldiers, in order to increase the ROK/U.S. combined defense capability on the Korean peninsula. The KATUSA Soldier Program represents ROK/U.S. cooperation, the combined commitment to deter war, and friendship and mutual support. The KATUSA program is beneficial to the U.S. Army for the added military manpower and cost savings, and the Korean-speaking soldiers allow for greater military functionality and maneuverability throughout the Korean peninsula.



MyeongJun Kim went to Anchorage, Alaska as an exchange student in pursuit of the American dream. He wanted a big house, a lot of friends, and to drive a Mustang. While he was a student, it came time for his compulsory military service.

"Korean males are obligated to serve for the country when they hit the age of twenty," Kim explained. "There are many options to choose from: Republic of Korea Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines, National Guard, Police, and local civil service offices. Among them, the Army provides the future Soldiers a variety of options to choose from

including Truck Drivers, Chefs, Foreign Diplomats and more in terms of Military Occupational Specialist (MOS). The KATUSA Program is categorized under Foreign Diplomats. KATUSA Soldiers are trained to assist in communication in Korean and English with the different national military members. I applied for the KATUSA program to continue utilizing and improving my English skills as I was a senior student at the University of Alaska, Anchorage and wanted to continue my education flawlessly when I headed back to the state after finishing the mandatory service."

Kim applied for the KATUSA

Program and was accepted. He returned to Korea and began his service, entirely unfamiliar with military installations in Korea.

"I served as an Interpreter for the Area I Director of Emergency Services and Provost Marshall at the Area I Directorate of Emergency Services (DES). I participated in numerous semi-official and official meetings that were held between the U.S. Army and local emergency services such as Fire Departments or Police Offices. I provided verbal translation services to the parties and translated documents."

Many of his peers who served as KATUSA Soldiers had visions to work for big companies, build new companies or move to the U.S. following their service. Unexpectedly, Kim realized a different opportunity.

"At the DES office, I became familiar with the abundance of Civilian job opportunities. In that office alone, there were ten Civilian employees. I admired them for serving the country and asked them about Civilian career opportunities. In Particular, Ms. Yon Ok K. Mathis, who worked at the office for more than ten years, mentored and guided me when I was looking for information."

The Civilian job opportunities on United States Forces Korea (USFK) installations would utilize the English speaking skills he had invested in. The new career path also provided the opportunity to have the American dream and American lifestyle, in Korea, close to his family.

Kim described his work on the military installation as the same way he felt when he was working in the U.S.

"First of all, I believe that there is certainly Equal Opportunity. I

worked as a Resource Assistant and Student Ambassador at the college. I remember that my former supervisors valued every individual without any bias and respected the Veterans. Here at the installation, I have felt the same. The leaders I have worked for and the ones I currently work for, care and treat people with dignity and respect.

"Equal opportunity has enabled me to advance professionally. Age matters in Korea. I have been working for the U.S.-ROK government since 2018 and was promoted to a KGS-11 position, which is equivalent to a section chief or team lead level at the private companies off-post. I would not have been promoted to this level at my age if I worked for a company outside of the installation because hiring professionals in Korea review education background and age rather than the skills that job candidates possess.

"Additionally, I can manage and request my own work schedule. Working off post in Korea generally requires employees to stay busy. I have seen my friends working for private companies stay late at work and seldom have family or free time after work. In this job, I have had the same experience as in the past when I worked for the university. I can request to set up my own schedule or take leave, and the supervisors understand my excuses and circumstances.

"The senior leaders care for the assigned Soldiers, Civilians, and their Family Members, for example, by allowing people to have compensation days off for their anniversary or birthday. The leadership believes that taking care of families and individuals are

the driving forces for organizational success."

In addition to feeling supported by leadership, Kim has felt welcomed and accepted by his coworkers.

"Soldiers and Civilians always make the environment positive. At my current workplace, the Family Readiness Group (FRG) plans and holds lots of events to promote welfare and provide entertainment for Soldiers, Civilians, and their Family Members. I have been invited to every single event and I feel very appreciated. Furthermore, sometimes I get invited to experience different cultures such as Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI). All the experiences are welcoming."

Despite the frequent turnover, Kim has been able to build and maintain a sense of community.

"The Wightman Academy is a unique environment; Soldiers are usually on a one year tour. The turnover is very quick. I maintain a sense of community through the Academy's quarterly potlucks and other social events where we get to know each other. Also, we maintain that our policies and processes are seamlessly transferred to the next person."

In his role as the Quality Assurance Evaluator, Kim also supports community building through his daily work.

"Community building happens when I have a conversation with personnel within the organization. I can get a glimpse of whether the organization is on the right path or not and how the leadership influences the working environment. I sometimes hold focus groups with each section to identify and collect the sense of the organization's climate."



My Commitment to Faith, Family and Community

By Chong Tae Je, Colonel (Ret.), Republic of Korea Army

I was born in Chongju city, Chung-buk province Korea in 1962. I am the youngest son of six siblings, five sons and one daughter.

I worked in the ROK military for about thirty years and retired honorably from the military as a colonel.

I initially served as a infantry platoon leader in the Second Infantry Division and continued to work in various levels of units such as Commander of 3rd Railway, Commander of 32nd Highway

Movement Control Center of Transportation Command, Second ROK Army in Daegu, Chief of Transportation Plan Branch C4 CFC (ROK-US Combined Forces Command/Yongsan, Seoul), Chief Faculty of 2nd Trans Training School (Daegu), Commander of 662nd Medium Transportation Battalion ROK Port Operation Group

(Pusan) of the Transportation Command, Transportation Operation Officer of the Second ROK Army (Daegu), and Transportation Plan and Support Chief of Staff 3rd Logistics Support Command (Incheon) of the Third ROK Army.

My major assignments include Chief of Operation Branch (3rd Logistics Support Command), and DTO (Division Trans Office) of 6th Infantry Division (5th Corps Com), Instructor of ROK Trans School (Consolidated Logistics School/Jinhae), Company Commander of 68th Trans BN (1st Logistics Support command/Kangreung), Staff Officer of 46th Trans Company of 501 Support Group of the United Eighth Army (USFK 19th Support Command/Pyeongtaek), Instructor of ROK Trans School (Movement Control Operation) (ROK Technical Branches School), Company Commander of 65th Trans BN (2nd Logistics Support command/Pocheon), and

Trans Platoon Leader of 20th Mechanized Division (Yangpyeong)/88 Olympic Support Command (Sepi). I worked as a commander of the Security Guard at USAG Humphreys for about five years and then I worked as a director in the company. Now I am working as the Senior Manager of Fleets Town for U.S. families.

My Family

My wife is Lee Mi Kyung (MK), the owner of MK Catering & Cafe. When my elder brother met my wife in Seoul in 1982, my brother's first impression was great; she was nice and beautiful. My elder brother thought that if she married me, she and I would live happily together as a match made in heaven, so he introduced her to me in 1982. At that time, I was a cadet at the Korea Military Academy (KMA), and she visited KMA to see me for the first time.

My wife is wise, beautiful, kind and good natured. She met and married me when I was a professional officer in the ROK Army.

She had to move out and move in 42 times while I worked in the military. She took care of her parents-in-law for about eighteen years with all her heart and soul, and raised our two daughters and a son. I feel grateful whenever I think about my wife. She is the best of the best wife, mother, daughter, and daughter-in-law. She always loves to study various fields such as flowers, gardening, cafe food, making food, and more. My family is full of love and grace from God because of my wife. My wife is really precious to me and if I could, I would marry my wife again, even if I die and marry again.

MK and I have two daughters and a son. Our daughters are married and our son is single. I think my family is a happy family, living faithfully as a Christian family, and that all my family members are blessed with overflowing God's love and grace. Our family believes in God faithfully. I am the church elder, my wife is the senior deaconess and my youngest daughter and son in law are missionaries in Vietnam. My youngest daughter has a 4-year-old daughter and a 3-year-old son.

My eldest daughter has a 4-year-old daughter and lives in California with my son-in-law, who is attending the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School. My son is single working in the ROK Navy (2nd Fleet Command/Pyeongtaek Port) as a professional.

Our family is a harmonious family that lives with mutual respect, love, and care for each other. We are always full of gratitude, respect adults and are devoted to filial piety.





My Garden

I have a garden by my house. Working in my garden is one of my favorite hobbies. I grow various kinds of vegetables and fruits in the garden. Above all, I think health is my top priority, so I do not use pesticides, I grow them myself organically.

Some of these organic and fresh vegetables and fruits are used in the MK Catering Cafe that my wife MK runs.

The vegetables I grow include various kinds of lettuce, kale, cabbage, radish, red pepper, purple onion, and beet by season. I have some fruit trees such as persimmons, apricots, plums, biocherry, Japanese apricot, peaches, aronia and apples.

I raise six chickens in my garden; one is a rooster and the other five are hens. They're called cheonggye (청계) because they lay blue eggs every day.



My Church

My church is Paengseong Baptist Church (팽성 침례교회) located about five minutes away from the Maingate/Walk-in gate. There are about 350 church members in the church. We always welcome foreigners in our church and provide transportation anywhere, anytime for church members.

Our Pastor is Kim, Dong Chul. The Church had worship service on Sunday, Wednesday and holidays, as well as programs for children and youth, Bible School, Discipleship College and Disciple Training.

- Address: 166 Paengseong Songwha-ro, Paengseong-eup, Pyeongtaek-si
- Telephone: 031-691-6905

Fleets Town

I have been the Senior Manager at Fleets Town since the completion of the complex in 2018. Fleets Town hosts 38 units for rental as well as a Community Center for US Military families to use while they stay on the Korean Peninsula.

Fleets Town was named by combining the names of General James Van Fleet and his son Captain Jimmy Van Fleet. General Van Fleet served as a Commander of the United States Army. He participated in World War II and worked as the 8th Army Commander during the Korean War, to protect freedom and peace on the Korean peninsula. After the Armistice was signed, he contributed to the friendship between Korea and the United States through the Korea Society.

His son joined the Korean War as a U.S. Air Force B-26 pilot. Captain Van Fleet was shot down by an anti-aircraft gun during a night bombing mission over Haeju, North Korea, in April 1952. General Van Fleet ordered a halt to the search, judging that the search in dangerous areas could result in more casualties. He buried his son's death in his heart and sent a letter to his wife back home: "My son Jimmy died dedicated to his mission. For heaven's sake, please bear this sorrow with dignity."

After that, General Van Fleet improved the combat capability of the Korean military. They succeeded in defending capabilities against the communist countries, North Korea and China. He also worked hard to develop self-defense forces by establishing the Korea Military Academy (KMA).



General Van Fleet contributed to protecting freedom and peace. Korean people pay tribute to the blood and sweat he shed and his noble spirit of sacrifice for Korea's present prosperity and peace.

I think of the military families who move into Fleets Town as my family. My priorities are to do my utmost to prepare, inform, communicate and help residents so that they can get used to living in their new home as soon as possible. I hope and pray that residents living in Fleets Town have a joyful experience in Korea and make good memories.

Tips on Shopping for Groceries in Korea

By Erin Henderson



The 3/8 Market near Humphreys ▲▼

Welcome to Korea! On top of probably feeling a bit overwhelmed from your move, if you have made an inaugural trip to your local commissary on base, you might have noticed produce prices and other goods can get a bit high, putting a stressor on your wallet. While convenience may trump price, here are some other options and tips if you want to save a few dollars on your monthly grocery bill while you are in Korea.



Outdoor Local Markets

If you want to get a taste of the local Korean culture, the outdoor markets are a great place to start. Local vendors set up their booths to sell items ranging from clothes, shoes, and toys to whole fish, seaweed, dumplings, produce and more. Stroll through the booths and immerse yourself in the sights and smells while sampling some of the street cuisine. Before you venture out, make sure you have plenty of won on hand and your reusable grocery bag to carry your goods. The markets take place, rain or shine and typically are set up by 9AM until about 5PM (sometimes later).

3/8 Market

Located near the Anjeong-Ri gate at Humphreys is the 3/8 market. Like the name suggests, this outdoor market is set up every date that ends in a 3 or 8. You can snag a variety of seasonal produce items at a great price. Some of the produce is sold in large quantities, so if you do not need a lot of a product, grab a buddy to go with you and split your finds.

One of the most popular stops at the 3/8 Market is the Hotteok vendor (during winter months). Hotteok is a sweet Korean pancake filled with cinnamon, sugar, seeds, and honey. This delectable treat is a popular street food in Korea and irresistible on market days.

From the Anjeong-ri gate, the 3/8 Market is set up half a mile down the road through the Ville.

4/9 Market

The 4/9 market (also called the Songtan Street Market or Songbuk) is set up in Songtan near Osan Air Base on every day that ends in a 4 or a 9. The 4/9 Market is much larger than the 3/8 Market and offers a much wider variety of vendors and goods. You can



The Hotteok Vendor at the 3/8 Market ▲▼



try to find parking nearby, but like with the 3/8 market, your best bet is to park at the Osan Walk Out (Songtan) Gate and walk from there. It is just under a mile walk to the market and it's through the Ville where there are plenty of coffee and food options, should you need to stop for a little break during your excursion.

Indoor Markets/Stores

E-Mart Traders

Similar to Sam's Club or Costco, E-Mart Traders sells goods and produce in bulk without a

membership requirement. There are several E-Mart Traders locations in South Korea.

Costco

There is a Costco located in Cheonan and another in Yongin. They accept U.S. membership cards and offer a variety of U.S. products as well as Korean items.

N Mart

N Mart is a large local grocery store chain and probably a bit more similar to what we are used to a grocery store feeling like in the states. They have locations in



The 4/9 Market in Songtan ▲▼

the North Western part of South Korea (Asan to Seoul). The Asan location is open 24-hours daily so if you ever need to run out at an odd hour, you are in luck!

- *Asan Address: 3-4 Ungyo-ri, Dunpo-myeon, Asan-si, Chungcheongnam-do*

Joy Mart

Joy Mart is a local grocery store near Humphreys that has more of a neighborhood market feel. They offer produce at a great price (not quite as great as the 3/8 or 4/9 markets) and you can grab other grocery items here as well.

- *Address: 8 Anjeongsunhwan-ro 225beon-gil, Paengseong-eup, Pyeongtaek-si, Gyeonggi-do*

Pandamart

Panda Mart can best be described



as a Korean Big Lots. You can pick up a few food items like candy, snacks, and drinks, but the bulk of their inventory is household goods. Go in for a notebook, leave with a spatula, box of cook-

ies and Chapstick. A Panda Mart is located near Humphreys, across the street from Joy Mart.

- *Address: Anjeongsunhwan-ro 225beon-gil, Paengseong-eup, Pyeongtaek-si, Gyeonggi-do*

Write for *United on the RoK!*

United on the RoK is accepting submissions. The civilian information and lifestyle magazine launched in July 2022 offers readers and contributors a unique opportunity to get connected, share information, lifestyle tips, and leadership advice as well as to promote organizations, events, volunteer opportunities or initiatives.

Contributions are accepted via email to the Editor in Chief at editor@unitedontherok.com.

Information About *United on the RoK*

United on the RoK is a civilian, information and lifestyle magazine with a monthly distribution to USFK military installations. Launched in July 2022, the no-cost magazine provides individuals with a robust platform to share information that enhances connectedness within and across our diverse communities, and improves our quality of life. We publish content about organizations, initiatives, events, culture, history, health, experiences, lifestyle tips, leadership advice and other human-interest pieces.

Check us out at unitedontherok.com and follow @unitedontherok on Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn.

Details on Submissions

Submissions are accepted on an ongoing basis. We only use unpublished work. We accept factual articles 1,200 to 1,500 words. We accept commentaries or op-eds 750 to 1,200 words. We accept reviews or recommendations 500 to 750 words. If you have not written for *United on the RoK* before, we encourage you to send your submission.

If you are interested in writing and would like a prompt, reach out to let us know and describe your areas of interest or expertise. We also publish art, photos, poetry and cartoons.

Submitted articles should be in Microsoft Word or plain text, sent as an email attachment or in the body of an email. Images should be attached to the email. Do not embed photos or graphics in your text file. The Photo Consent form should be signed by all

individuals, and parents of individuals under age 18, who appear in submitted photographs.

Headings

We encourage contributors to suggest a headline for your article or commentary.

Bylines

Your name and title should be below the heading as you would like it to appear when published.

Author Biography

Your submission should include a brief biography, at the bottom of the article with information that adds value to why you are writing about this topic.

Editing

We will fact-check and copy edit your article. We will convert as necessary to Associated Press style.

Photographs

We encourage authors to submit photographs. We can only use original high-resolution digital photos, sent as separate files. If file sizes are large, they could be sent one at a time due to server limitations or sent via a free online transfer program at wetransfer.com.

Captions should be included as well as the source of the photo.

Choosing to write for *United on the RoK*

By Jetta Allen

Why did I choose to write for *United on the RoK*? It's simple, it was an opportunity I could not pass up and you should not either. I have been writing stories and poetry since I was 10 years old, mainly as an outlet for creativity and emotions. The idea of ever getting my work published seemed out of reach.

Being a military spouse is amazing and challenging. While moving to new places can be fun, it also means we pick up and leave, starting all over more often than the average person. It means our support networks, contacts and sense of connection to places are constantly being rebuilt. With this challenge to relationship-building, having my work published was something I hoped to figure out one day, but I did not have high hopes of that time being any time soon.

One day, Caitlin Ward shared her dream with me of a magazine for everyone in the United States Forces Korea military community, with content by community members. She talked

with inspiring passion, in a way only someone who truly loves something can do. She spoke about spotlighting home-based businesses and organizations, sharing information about Korean history and culture, stories of travel and lifestyle tips on the RoK, sharing recipes, and supporting each other.

The idea sounded wonderful and I jumped at the opportunity to be published and share information to support the community. Initially, I wrote support columns for our schools and diverse populations here with exceptional needs.

Caitlin's dream became a reality thanks to support from Mr. Charles Chong at Oriental Press, the company that publishes and distributes this magazine. If your dream is to get published, you can make it a reality. Writing for *United on the RoK* is an opportunity to share your experience and knowledge, develop your writing skills, and get published, and you are doing this for our community.



Little Greece:

Bringing a Taste of the Mediterranean to Humphreys

By Erin Henderson

Greek cheese
& olives

Stepping

through the doors into Little Greece is like being transported from Korea to the picturesque Greek Isles. The blue ceilings, crisp white walls and floor reminiscent of the cobblestone streets in Santorini create a Mediterranean atmosphere that is complemented by the array of Greek dishes you can order.

Chef George, the owner and founder of Little Greece is from Athens and grew up with a deep love of cooking. After spending several years cooking and saving, he attended the prestigious Swiss Alpine Center in Athens, receiving his certificate in Culinary Arts in 2009. That same year, he met his future wife in Mykonos. After two years of a long-distance relationship, George moved to Korea to be with her.

Upon arrival in Korea, George worked in Seoul at several restaurants before starting a job at Samsung Welstory in 2019. Samsung Welstory is a branch of Samsung that develops menus for companies' private lunches or dinners; he was in charge of cultivating the European menus. In 2021 George left Samsung to pursue his dream of opening his own restaurant.

The first Little Greece restaurant was opened in Cheonan in 2021 and saw great success in its two years there. As the lease was



Chef George prepping Gemista, which translates to "stuffed"



Dining area in Little Greece



Gemista served with roasted potatoes

coming to an end, George and his family made the decision to relocate the popular restaurant to Pyeongtaek near Camp Humphreys. The new restaurant location opened its doors July 2023.

Growing up, George loved the challenge that playing sports offered. Nowadays, being in the kitchen and finding new ways to improve upon a dish, such as a subtle mixing of spices is the challenge he lives for. Coming from a large Greek family, cooking is a part of his heritage. Whenever he is recreating a dish from his childhood, he has no qualms about calling his mom in Greece for a recipe or missing ingredient.

George describes his menu as traditionally cozy, and includes Greek favorites such as chicken souvlaki served with fresh pita bread and a zesty tzatziki, pork gyros and his personal favorite, moussaka. The menu also features rotating seasonal items such as watermelon salad during summer and the current special, “gemista”, or stuffed peppers. He bakes fresh pita bread bright and early each morning and many



Chicken souvlaki paired with a Greek white wine



Greek wine available for purchase



Homemade pita bread being warmed for serving



Dinner is served at Little Greece

of the ingredients he uses are sourced from Greece. He grows some of the herbs he uses and ingredients he cannot source from Greece, like produce items, are procured from local farms here in Korea.




Chef George has been delighting palates with Greek cuisine for twenty years and welcomes the opportunity to cook for you. Vegetarian and vegan options are available by request. The restaurant is open for lunch and dinner Wednesday-Sunday, 11:30-15:00 (break from 15:00-17:30, no break on the weekend) and 17:30-21:00 with the last order being taken at 20:30. Reservations are not required but encouraged and can be made by calling or through Naver.

- Address: Gyeonggi-do, Pyeongtaek-si, Paengseong-eup, Anjeongshopping-ro, 91 리틀그리스 1층
- Phone: 010-4292-8983
- Instagram: @littlegreece.official





Chef George

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Walk It Off

By Caitlin Ward

Sometimes we struggle to walk. Poor air quality, too much sunshine, too little sunshine, too many things to do, physical pains and limitations, shyness, discomfort, boredom, the weight of heavy thoughts on our hearts, and plenty of other reasons can be the one or many that keep us from committing to an exercise routine, going to the gym, or even just going for a walk. As the saying goes, every journey begins with a single step. If you are not ready to commit to the gym or a workout routine, walking is a great first step, a way to clear your mind, and get some exercise.

The air quality and heat can be unbearable. If that is the basis of your resistance, consider walking on the track at the gym. If you are comfortable getting on an elliptical or treadmill, you can add some incline and speed variation, which is great for your heart. If the gym is not your place, you can stroll around a mall or the Post Exchange near you.

Whether you need to walk off stress, weight, negative thoughts, high blood pressure, or something else, not enough good things can be said about walking. As we move toward the cooler months, now is a great time to draw up a game plan to ensure you keep exercising. Walking is an activity you can set aside as time for yourself, or time



with family or friends, and that you can fit into your day.

How, you ask? Well, I want to spend time with my kids and I need to walk so I take them out and ask them about what we are seeing on the walk, quiz them on the multiplication tables, ask them how to spell things or to read signs, talk about their day, talk about our plans, talk about anything. We are spending time together and generating endorphins. If you need some time away from your kids, arrange with your significant other, or a sitter, or a friend, to watch your little ones while you go for a stroll.

Everything is easier said than done until you figure out how to make it work for you.

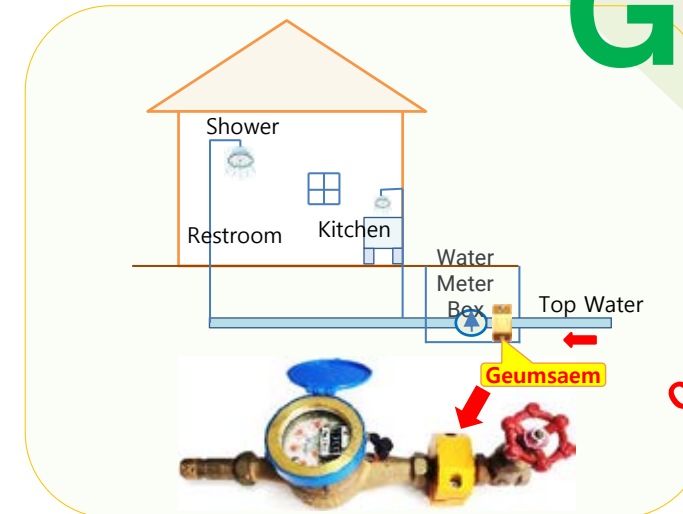
Common recommendations are to walk for 30 minutes or 10,000 steps. If you have a lot of things

to do, make a plan to incorporate walking into your day. For example, set aside 45 minutes for yourself to do your grocery shopping and try to walk at a brisk pace. Consider walking to work or to pick up your kids, it is good for your heart and for the environment. If you are at home because you or a member of your family is feeling under the weather, consider going on YouTube and finding a cardio, yoga, or a Jazzercise video. Or just play some music until you hear your jam and it gets you moving.

In addition to the health benefits, stress relief, mood lift and mental clarity gained from walking, another benefit is increased focus and creativity. When your mind is clear, you have more space to think and come up with ideas and solutions.

Let's go!

Geumsaem



Home Geumsaem installation drawing

Still haven't installed Geumsaem on your old one? Geumsaem is a must-have product for your home. Installing Geumsaem has the following effects:

- Sterilization and disinfection.
- Eliminates odors.
- Remove scale and rust in pipes.
- Prevents scale and rust from adhering to the pipe.
- You can wash dishes and clothes without using detergent.
- Drinking water that has passed through Geumsaem is beneficial to our body.
- Washing fruits and vegetables will prevent them from spoiling.
- There are many other effects.

Sterilization, Sterilization Experiment

Item	Unit	Time	Before passing	After passing	Remarks
Bacteria	ea/ml	24hr	1,000,000[10 ⁶]	100,000[10 ⁵]	90% decrease
		48hr			

Geumsaem experimental data(Hyundai Motor Co., Ltd)

Apricot Decay Experiment(4 days later)



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Only BM World can do it



Application



Apartment



Common house



Underground water



Villa



Sauna



School



Plant



Hospital

Descale Top water pipe(Φ3")



Before

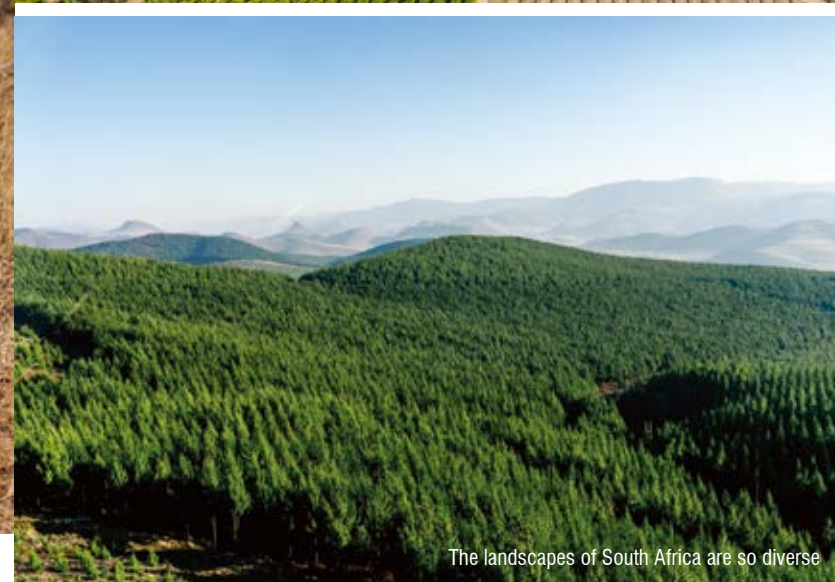
After(60 Days later)



Erin on morning safari in South Africa



Views from near Blyde River Canyon in South Africa. Taken from above in the Hope For Wildlife Helicopter piloted by Jana



The landscapes of South Africa are so diverse



Hope for Wildlife Helicopter. Jana uses the proceeds from tourist flights to help rescue wildlife, identify areas of issues and fly K9 trainers when they have been called in to help track down poachers.

TRAVEL- SOUTH AFRICA

By Erin Handerson

A trip to Africa has always been on my travel bucket list, but was certainly not on my radar while I was living in Korea. Having never traveled anywhere in Asia, my plan was (still is) to visit as many countries nearby as I can before our time in Korea comes to an end. Enter Amy with Flyga Twiga.

I photographed her for the November issue of United on the RoK and we got to talking about Africa, as she plans African safaris for individuals and families. After chatting for a bit, she mentioned she would send over a unique trip she had just put together for me to just check out. Fast forward to the present day, I am sharing some of my favorite images from an unforgettable ten days I spent exploring South Africa in July.

If you have ever considered traveling to Africa and aren't sure where to start, I highly recommend reaching out to Amy (flygatwiga.com).



Sunrise in South Africa



Mom and babies grazing



Local member of a small village stirring mielepap, similar to what we know as grits



Village member taking a break from crafting a straw mat



One of our super knowledgeable safari guides, Terrence



When you get in close on lions, most of them all have scars or marks from hunting and playing with each other



A black rhino crossing the road in front of us.



For photographers or aspiring photographers here is the gear I used the majority of the trip!

- Cameras:
Sony A1 & A7Riii
- Lenses:
400mm f2.8
135mm f1.8
24-70mm f2.8

Check Out a Temple Near You

By Erin Henderson

If you are new to Korea and looking for great day-trip adventures, visiting local temples is a great way to immerse yourself in Korean culture. There are numerous Korean Buddhist temples throughout the country. Here are a few great ones within two hours of Pyeongtaek that are worth a visit!

1) Gakwonsa Temple

Located just a short drive away from Pyeongtaek in Cheonan, Gakwonsa Temple is home to a famous 49-foot bronze Buddha statue. The stunning grounds nestled in Mount Taejosan make this large temple a popular location year round. Get there early morning or later in the evening to avoid the crowds.

- Address: 45 Gagwonsa-gil, Dongnam-gu, Cheonan-si, Chungcheongnam-do



2) Beopjusa Temple

If you are looking for a day or even weekend hiking trip, Songnisan National Park is a great place to go. Located about an hour and a half from Pyeongtaek and two hours from Osan, the park offers nine different hiking trails and is home to Beopjusa Temple (translates to "Buddha stays here"). Beopjusa displays a 100-foot golden bronze Buddha statue and has the only five-story wooden pagoda in Korea (Palsangjeon). It is also one of the 26 temples in Korea that offers a templestay program.

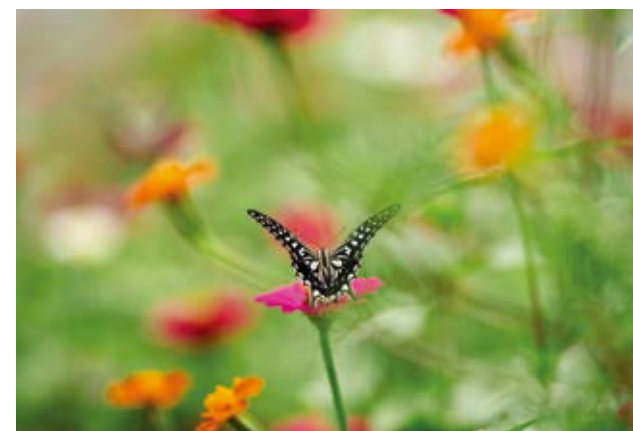
- Address: 405 Beopjusa-ro, Songnisan-myeon, Boeun-gun, Chungcheongbuk-do



3) Botapsa Temple

From Pyeongtaek, the one-hour drive through the mountainous countryside to Botapsa is beautiful. Botapsa means "Jewel Pagoda Temple." This temple is located in Yeongok-ri in Jincheon. The lush grounds are meticulously maintained and beautiful to stroll through. During the summer season, the wild flowers behind the pagoda are in bloom and you can see butterflies everywhere you look.

- Address: 641 Gimyusingil, Jincheon-eup, Jincheon-gun, Chungcheongbuk-do



4) Mangisa Temple

Mangisa Temple is located thirty minutes from Camp Humphreys, and only six miles from Osan Air Base. If you are looking for something to do close to Pyeongtaek, make sure you add Mangisa Temple to your list of temples to visit.

- Address: 548 Dongcheon-ri, Jinwi-myeon, Pyeongtaek-si, Gyeonggi-do (Comes up as Mangisa Temple in Waze & Naver)



5) Seoknamsa Temple

Seoknamsa is located in Anseong among the quiet hills and is perhaps a lesser traversed temple. It is the site where the popular K-drama “Goblin” was filmed in 2016. The temple is surrounded by some great trails so pack your hiking shoes!

- Address: 3-120 Sangchonsaemal-gil, Geumgwang-myeon, Anseong-si, Gyeonggi-do



5) Seoknamsa Temple

Seoknamsa is located in Anseong among the quiet hills and is perhaps a lesser traversed temple. It is the site where the popular K-drama “Goblin” was filmed in 2016. The temple is surrounded by some great trails so pack your hiking shoes!

- Address: 3-120 Sangchonsaemal-gil, Geumgwang-myeon, Anseong-si, Gyeonggi-do



SPONSORSHIP: The Impact of a Warm Welcome

By Caitlin Ward

Whether you have moved once or so many times you cannot count, support resources make moving easier. One of the most impactful resources is a sponsor.

A sponsor is assigned to a newcomer by the gaining unit—if you have not been assigned a sponsor, you can reach out to your new unit and request a sponsor. Units strive to match service members and sponsors by rank and family status. The role of the sponsor is to help the newcomer before, during and after a move.

The responsibilities of the Sponsor may include:

- Reaching out to the service member and family with an introductory email
- Staying in contact with the service member throughout the moving process
- Sending information about the new community and duty assignment, responding to questions and providing information about resources
- Confirming transportation and lodging arrangements
- Helping with post office arrangements
- Meeting service members and family members upon arrival
- Going with service members to unit check-in point
- Introducing service members to the Military and Family Support Center and loan closet, if it's available
- Familiarizing service members and families with the installation and key locations, like the commissary

Note: Responsibilities may vary based on service-specific policies and guidance. Make sure to check with your service branch for sponsor training requirements.

If you had a great sponsor and warm welcome, we hope you will consider writing an article to share tips on how to do the same for someone else. If this sounds too good to be true, then be part of the change. Check out this list of tips gathered on what makes a great sponsor.

Five things you can do as a sponsor:

1. Reach out to the incoming service member or civilian. Get to know them and their needs. Do they have kids? Get them information about the schools on base. Do they have a spouse? Get information about the spouse club. Are they interested in living

on base? Get them information from the housing office. Do they have a pet? Find contact information for local veterinarians. Ask them about their concerns and be a connector.

2. Put together a packet with information about the installation and local area. Helpful items include a map of the installation with key locations highlighted, a list of resources on base with phone numbers, an Army Community Services (ACS) calendar, a list of Family Morale Welfare Readiness (FMWR) activities, tips on the local culture and language, currency exchange, must-see sights, and more. Send this information via email, with a welcome note, before they come, along with a link to the PDF file of the guidebook DMZ to the Sea: <https://www.humphreysunited.org/dmz-to-the-sea>.
3. Let them know what you know about housing on-base and off-base, as well as what is required for the housing office.
4. Greet the family in person. How would you feel if your sponsor greeted you at Incheon and helped guide you to your base? If you cannot be there and cannot arrange for someone else to be there, let them know the basics of the arrival process and how to get to their base, especially if they have kids or pets.
5. Show them around the base and let them know where the installation's loaner furniture office is and the closest thrift shop for immediate needs while they wait for their household goods.

This list might come across as a heavy “to do” list, but think of it as a “can do” list. Remember, the purpose of the Sponsorship Program is to:

- Provide newcomers with a sense of belonging
- Ease the transition for inbound service members or civilians and their family members
- Increase productivity of service members and loved ones
- Help newcomers make informed decisions
- Cultivate new friendships
- Improve morale

Choose to be kind, give someone a warm welcome and help strengthen our communities.

The VA Loan Benefit – Tailored for Active Duty Service Members

By Jay Miller

The VA home loan is one of the best available benefits to Military Members. If you are looking to buy a home at your current duty station or considering home shopping at your next assignment, this is likely the best mortgage loan option for you and your family. The features and benefits of the VA home loan are so good, you would need at least 25% down and a high FICO score for conventional financing to be comparable to the VA loan.

One of the best ways to leverage a VA loan is with 100% financing. The VA no longer imposes a maximum loan limit for 100% financing if you have never used your VA benefit or have full VA entitlement restored after selling/refinancing a previous VA loan.

*Note: many lenders have a maximum loan amount they will support with \$0 down payment, such as \$1.5M for example. This means you can purchase a home for \$500,000, \$900,000 or even \$1.5M or more without a down payment! The major stipulation is qualifying for the housing payment.

Things You Need to Know About the VA Loan

When buying a home, your VA home loan can only be used to purchase your primary residence that you will occupy within 60 days of closing. As an owner occupant, you must live in the property for at least 12 months to satisfy this requirement.

There are exceptions to the 60-day move in requirement, for example, if you are deployed or are overseas, your spouse may be able to satisfy this condition for you. Also, you may be able to depart your home within the 12-month owner occupancy period if you receive PCS orders or are required to relocate for other situations beyond your control.



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Credit Requirements

The VA does not establish a minimum credit score but the vast majority of VA lenders require a minimum credit score of 620. The higher your credit score, the better your interest rate and purchasing power. Even if you do meet the minimum, it is far better to have a FICO score over 680 to obtain better financing terms.

VA loans can be used to purchase newly built or existing single-family homes and condominiums. The condition of the property must meet VA Minimum Property Requirements (MPRs). These MPRs are established to ensure that the property is structurally sound, safe, and sanitary.

Basically, if the property has some cosmetic issues, it is satisfactory for VA financing. However, if it needs repair or has obvious signs of damage, these issues may have to be corrected prior to loan closing.

There are local requirements for VA loans by State so you can do additional research as it relates to your specific locality.

Condominium projects must be approved by the Veterans Administration prior to closing on a condo in the project with a VA loan. Once a condominium project is approved by the VA, it remains on the same approved list until something warrants the suspension of the approval.

Most established condominium projects are already VA-approved and can be verified on the VA Condo Search website. If the condo is not VA-approved, many lenders will submit the necessary paperwork on your behalf to approve the condo for VA financing during your purchase transaction.

For Condo projects, be wary of the HOA (Home Owner Association) Dues as these can be a costly addition to your monthly housing payment. Make sure to factor in the amenities, utilities, and other expenses included in the HOA dues to determine their benefit to you as the home buyer.

Multiple VA Home Loans

You can have more than one VA loan simultaneously! If you have an existing VA loan outstanding or have part of your VA entitlement used due to a previous foreclosure or short sale, then you are limited to the Fannie Mae County loan limit in the County you intend to buy your new home. For example, the Honolulu County loan limit is \$1,089,300. The easiest way to figure this out would be to subtract the original loan amount for your existing VA loan from \$1,089,300 and the result would be your remaining limit for 100% financing.

Example:

If you used your VA eligibility to buy a home in CONUS with a VA loan of \$489,300 and then are re-assigned to Oahu, Hawaii, you have \$600,000 remaining for 100% VA financing. This is determined by subtracting the \$489,300 of loan eligibility in use from the Honolulu County loan limit of \$1,089,300.

There is no limit to the size of a VA loan, however, any purchase price that exceeds your remaining VA eligibility amount requires a down payment of 25% of the difference between that amount and the purchase price.

Referencing the example above, you are not limited to a \$600,000 purchase price. You can still purchase a home for \$700,000, for example, but you will need a down payment of 25% of the difference between the \$600,000 remaining eligibility and the \$700,000 sales price. The \$100,000 difference results in a minimum down payment of \$25,000 and you have a \$675,000 VA loan plus VA Funding Fee, if applicable.

If you sell or refinance the original residence that you purchased with VA financing, then your full VA eligibility can be restored so you can purchase a home WITHOUT concern for the County loan limit with 100% financing (assuming you qualify for the payment and find a lender to lend as high as you desire).

What are the other advantages of the VA Home Loan?

Interest Rates are Typically Lower with VA Loans: Generally, VA loan interest rates are lower than conventional loans and other types of financing potentially resulting in a lower monthly payment than other options.

Flexible Qualifying Guidelines: There are no rigid debt-to-income limitations with VA loans. Lenders are able to review your entire credit profile and make a decision to approve your VA loan by demonstrating you have sufficient income to cover the new mortgage payment along with other existing debts and living expenses.

No Private Mortgage Insurance (PMI): With VA loans, there is no separate monthly PMI payment as the Veterans Administration guarantees a portion of the loan for the lender to satisfy this requirement. The VA Funding Fee helps to support the VA guarantee.

The VA Funding Fee

This fee is included on most VA loans and is the fee the VA charges to guarantee your VA loan. These funds are used to offset lender loan losses as a result of VA foreclosures and short sales. The VA requires lenders to collect this fee directly from you as a closing cost or it can be financed into your new VA loan (most common).

The dollar amount of the VA funding fee is calculated as a percentage of the loan amount and depends on several factors, such as the down payment amount and whether or not you have previously used your VA benefit.

Here is the chart reflecting the current VA funding fees for all VA loans:



Type of Loan	Down Payment	Percentage of First Time Use	Percentage for Subsequent Use
Purchase and Construction Loans	None	2.30%	3.60%
	5% but less than 10%	1.65%	1.65%
	10% or more	1.40%	1.40%
Cash-Out Refinance Loans	N/A	2.30%	3.60%
IRRRLs	N/A	0.50%	0.50%
Loan Assumptions	N/A	0.50%	0.50%

For example, if you are buying a home at \$500,000 with 100% VA financing and using your VA benefit for the first time, the VA funding fee is 2.3% (\$11,500).

If you finance the VA funding fee into the loan (most common), the total loan amount for your home purchase is \$511,500. The property must appraise for the sales price of \$500,000 for 100% financing as the VA funding fee is allowed to be financed above the sales price/appraised value.

The VA funding fee can be waived entirely for Veterans who receive service-connected VA disability compensation and all others who have at least a 10% VA Disability rating. If the VA funding fee is waived, it is indicated on your VA Certificate of Eligibility. Purple Heart recipients are exempt from the VA funding fee. To document this, provide a certificate or military orders to evidence the receipt of the Purple Heart.

VA Eligibility

Your eligibility is determined by your type of service, whether you served active duty, reserves, or national guard, your length of service, and your character of service. Here are the most common minimum eligibility requirements:

Current active-duty service members (since 2001): 90 continuous days of active service.

Recent Reservists and National Guard members: six good years of service and either honorably discharged or continuing to serve in good conduct. Reservists or National Guard deployed on Title X Federal orders to OIF or OEF are eligible with 90 continuous days of active service.

Reservists or National Guard activated under Title 32 State active duty do not meet this requirement.

Special circumstances: some service-connected disabled veterans (who have not already met the requirements above) and spouses of deceased veterans may also be eligible.

Each VA-approved mortgage lender can access your VA Certificate of Eligibility (COE) through the online VA lender portal to verify your eligibility.

You may also request a VA COE directly through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in advance of your home purchase to be certain you are eligible. You may need a copy of your DD214 or Active Duty Statement of Service to verify your service.

How VA Loans Work

The U.S. Dept of Veterans Affairs does not directly fund mortgage loans to Veterans. You apply for a VA home loan directly through a VA approved mortgage lender, bank, or credit union.

The VA's role is to provide a guarantee to the mortgage lender for up to 25% of the loan amount in the unfortunate event of a loan default.

Your VA loan benefit does not expire, so you can use it at any time throughout your lifetime as long as you have remaining eligibility in the County in which you intend to purchase.

What to look for in a VA Lender

Each VA approved lender will likely be able to provide you with VA financing for your home purchase. However, the customer service you receive and the overall experience of the VA loan approval process with vary wildly from lender to lender.

Recommended “Dos” and “Don’ts”

- Do take the recommendation of your real estate agent. If your agent is experienced with VA buyers, they will have a trusted lending source for VA financing that has demonstrated excellent service to their clients.
- Do ask lots of questions. Even if you are not a first time home buyer, none of these concepts are taught in school and you shouldn't be expected to know and fully understand all of the aspects of VA lending. There are no dumb questions.
- Do expect great service. If your VA lender is responsive to your inquiries, takes the time to explain the process to you, and answers your questions informatively, look no further, this is the lender you want to use. Great service is often worth the extra expense.
- Don't choose a lender simply because they have VA or “Veteran's” in their name. No mortgage lender is part of the Veterans Administration, they are indepen-

dent mortgage lenders, just like all banks and credit unions. Many loan officers at these VA lending companies are inexperienced and may not be capable of guiding and advising you through one of the largest purchases of your lifetime.

- Don't settle for a bad lending experience. Find a new lender immediately if you believe you are being misled, ignored, over-charged, or if you feel your loan officer cannot adequately answer your questions. As long as you have at least 3-4 weeks remaining in your purchase timeline, a new lender can step in to assist.

Joint VA Loans and VA Loans with Non-Veteran Family and/or Friends.

A joint VA loan is typically between two VA eligible buyers who are not married. Each Veteran would use half of their eligibility for the purchase but it is not nearly as advantageous as a VA loan jointly with Veteran and Spouse. Joint VA loans with two non-married Veterans are limited to the County loan limit for 100% financing where the home is purchased.

Joint VA loans with Veteran and non-Veteran(s) are also available now but cannot be done with 100% financing. For

example: If the primary buyer is a Veteran and the co-buyer is a non-Veteran, then half the Veteran's eligibility is used and a 25% down payment is required for the non-Veteran's half of the purchase price. Overall, this works out to 12.5% down payment on the purchase price. If the primary buyer is a Veteran and there are 2-3 non-Veteran co-buyers, the Veteran's eligibility percentage equates to their portion of participation in the purchase. In this case, a 25% down payment would be necessary for 67% or 75% of the purchase price if there are two or three other non-Veterans on the loan.

Closing Thoughts

The VA home loan is an excellent option for you to consider to help finance your first home purchase or your next home purchase. Spend the time to research and investigate various VA mortgage lenders to find the one with the responsiveness, expertise and communication skills to help guide you throughout your home purchase process. The VA lender you choose for your home financing can make all the difference between a smooth and enjoyable buying experience and a complete nightmare. Choose wisely!



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SOOKJA HONG:

South Korea's First Female Diplomat and Advocate for Gender Equality

By Inbum Chun, Lieutenant General (Ret.),
ROK Army

My mother's name is Sookja Hong. She was born in 1933 and was the first woman diplomat for the Republic of Korea. She quit after ten years, mainly because she could no longer bear the injustices of the male chauvinistic Korean bureaucracy. She advocated for women's rights and was the first woman to run for president in 1987.

My mother's father was a landlord with a good size of land. He never had to labor during his entire life. His lands had been inherited from his father who had also been a landlord. The Japanese respected private property and with liberation, much of the land that had been privately owned was bought by the Korean government with an offer of 150% of the average earnings of that land for the past five years. The tenant farmers were then allowed to buy and own the land for the same price. The landlord made money and the farmers now owned their own land.

My mother's mother married her husband at the age of sixteen. She had never met him and was expected to bear the family many sons. Her dream was to read and write but chore after chore awaited her and she was unable to have children for seven years. During this time she was constantly reminded of her duty to have a child and how much of a failure she was because she was unable to do so.

Finally she gave birth but the child was a girl; my mother. It's hard to imagine now but in 1933, a girl was a disappointment and my grandmother was in no better situation than before she had her daughter. It is a tragedy that my mother was not loved by her mother and their relationship bordered on hatred towards each other.

Another seven years passed and my uncle was born, and then another seven years for my second uncle to come to this world. During this time, my mother found solace in studying and being number one in

class. It was when she came home with a report card stating that she was top of the class that my grandfather showed his pride for his female child.

During this period, my mother became a devoted Christian. Initially, it was to learn English. It seemed the Japanese were lenient to Christians, which is opposite of the Soviet-backed Communists who came to rule North Korea.

As my mother grew, she entered Kyunggi Girls Junior High School. Every year, the teacher would take a survey of the class by asking the students to raise their hands as he asked questions. How many of you are daughters of ministers? How many of you are daughters of vice-ministers? Such was Korean society in the late 1940s. By publicly asking young girls their parent's official title, it belittled girls like my mother. My mother, although financially comfortable, vowed that this would never happen to her children.

She graduated from high school but the Korean War interrupted her studies. By the time she arrived in Busan, the first phase entrance exam had already passed the date. Up until the late 1990s, Korean college entrance exams occurred in two phases; the first tier schools, like Seoul National University, were in the first phase. If you failed to get in you could apply for the second tier colleges or try again next year. In the 1950s, a girl trying again the next year was unthinkable. She entered Dongkuk University as the first woman to enter the Political/Diplomatic major.

My mother prayed everyday for a miracle. She needed one to fulfill her dream to study in the U.S. During this time, the only way a Korean was able to go to the U.S. was if he or she had a scholarship. There were very few girls that were given the opportunity. To improve her English she joined a student Christian club.

One day, the club asked my mother to escort a U.S. minister from a Boston church who was visiting Korea. Dr. Wright was also selecting a Korean student to go to the U.S. on a church scholarship. The club already had a candidate and there was no expectation for anyone else, especially a woman. But on the final day, just before leaving Dr. Wright asked, "Sookja wouldn't you like to go too?" This is why to me, random acts of kindness are important.

In the U.S., my mother finished her masters degree in three semesters and bumped into my father who was also studying in the U.S. Dad came from a very wealthy family. The two were not a good match; my mother was an ambitious person. My father needed a good housewife. His poor judgment led to their mar-

riage and my birth.

My mother ate rice and Spam during her pregnancy and when she was seven months along, graduated from Columbia University. People told her to give birth to her first child in the U.S. so that the child could have U.S. citizenship, which was what all students dreamed of. My mother lied to Cathay Pacific that she was five months pregnant and returned to Korea and that is how I came to this world.

Sookja, with a double masters degree in Political Science and International Relations, was recruited by the Korean Foreign Office as the first woman diplomat. She initially worked for the First Lady as her translator but was frustrated that she was not getting a "real" job like the boys.

She petitioned to the First Lady and was assigned to the office of the Republic of Korea United Nation (UN) Mission in 1965. Korea was not a member of the UN until 1991 and was an observer at that time. The senior Korean representative of the Korean UN Mission was not happy with a woman in the office, especially one who was hardheaded and divorced.

He put her in a room with no windows and made her bring the newspaper and make coffee. Sookja refused. As soon as her three and a half year-term finished, she quit the Ministry. By this time, nearly all of my father's family had immigrated to the U.S. My uncles came to me and asked that I live in the U.S. with them and free my mother to remarry.

"A Korean should know how to sing the National anthem and speak the language," my mother said. It's your choice." I chose to come back from the U.S.

Upon her return and separation from the foreign service in 1974, she taught International Relations at her Alma Mater and began to fight for women's rights through writing, advocacy and other efforts. She became the president of the Korean National Council of Women during 1973 and finally became the president of the World Council of Women during 1982.

In 1987, Sookja ran for president with the Social Democratic party but was unable to gain much public support. In the run off, she resigned and declared her support for Young-sam Kim who eventually became president. Since then, Sookja Hong has stayed out of public life. I once asked her why and she replied, "This is how I want to be remembered."

As of this writing, Sookja is 90 years old and in good spirits. Although she has stopped painting, she still enjoys reading and is fiercely independent. Her faith in God is testimony to who she is.

An Interview with Jong Dae Kim

on Chungcheongnamdo and the Role of Tourism in Economic Development

By Caitlin Ward
Translated By Jitae Kim



Tourism is an engine for economic growth and international relations. Jong Dae Kim understands that correlation and has dedicated himself to the tourism industry. Kim serves as the chairman of the Chungcheongnam-do Tourism Council and the CEO of T And A Korea. He describes himself as an expert of coordinating cross-cultural events and exchanges for tourists. His work focuses on bringing tourists to see the beautiful parks, ocean, spas, and historical monuments in Chungcheongnam-do.

"By doing so through the tourism industry, I want foreigners to know and have good impressions of Korea and this is probably the best thing I could do," Kim explained. "As a Korean person, I have the vision and pride of our race so I am trying hard, planning and running on a daily basis."

T And A Korea is an international tourism agency, focused on history, culture, entertainment, and organizing events. Before Kim started T And A Korea, he worked in the hotel and convention industry where he first had the opportunity to learn about the tourism industry and the importance of tourists.

"As more tourists come to the city, the local economy gets better and tends to be more activated," said Kim. "We are all aware of the fact that active economic and exchange activities in the local areas are important."

"The tourism industry is the primary industry which other countries have been focusing on developing and it has been developing constantly. Countries invest a lot of money and time in the tourism industry and travelers spend lots of money on trips to foreign places? Tourism has an incredible impact

on our lives, perspectives, relations and economies. Tourism is the activity of experiencing another culture, nature and history by getting out of your comfort zone. It also can be the process of acquiring new perspectives and knowledge by exchanging and learning from one another. Touri can be designed and organized based on one's hobbies, interests, mindset and personal preferences. Tourism is an important industry that contributes to national and local economic, social and cultural development."

In Korea, tourism supports community building and the ROK-US alliance.

"Chungcheongnam-do Tourism Council, which is a nonprofit organization, consists of local people who run tourist attractions, hotels, restaurants and transportation services and who are able to volunteer so the council has a huge support for gathering foreign tourists," said Kim. "The alliance between the ROK and the U.S. maintains peace and stability amidst threats from North Korea and plays a major role of reinforcing local peace and balance. As a local citizen, through my role of introducing tourist attractions, operating tour programs and giving out discount vouchers, I think I am helping soldiers to relax and be more comfortable while staying in Korea."

Tourism also has the potential to support the environment.

"When it comes to the growth of the country, a lot of industries exist such as the agriculture industry, public industry and service industry," Kim explained. "The tourism industry is sometimes called an industry without a chimney; it is so environmentally-friendly and can provide economic profit to people who work in fields like merchandising, service, manufacturing or agriculture. This is also the only such type of industry in the world. This industry could solve issues such as environmental contamination, unemployment and improve quality of life for all."

While Kim has a deep appreciation for the impact of tourism on Korea's economy and development, his passion has been reinforced and strengthened by foreigners. He recalled one interaction with a service member that inspired him to launch T And A Korea to facilitate more cross-cultural exchanges for U.S. service members.

"Before COVID-19, I was more focused on attracting tourists from China and Japan," Kim said. "I hosted various cultural arts exchanges, group tours and coordinated events with tourism-related festival officials that provided an introduction to Korea. Following the outbreak of COVID-19, tourists from other countries



had trouble visiting Korea. I had an opportunity to meet with a person who works on one of the USFK installations. During our conversation, I learned about the stereotypes that some U.S. soldiers have towards Korea and about some of the challenges they face. The person I spoke with has a genuine heart for U.S. soldiers who are living in Korea and I embraced the opportunity to address the issues he raised. I started getting to know more about the U.S. military and how I could help U.S. service members who are stationed in Korea. From there, I started my business, focused on introducing foreigners to Chungcheongnam-do.

"I hope that when they visit, they can be relaxed, be comfortable, learn about the culture and history of Korea, and enjoy the nature here with their families and friends," Kim described. "I wish to conjure an image of their hometown, like a grandmother's house back home. Hometown is where you are always comfortable to go to, where your parents live, and because of that you get excited to have the idea of visiting your hometown. This is how I want people to feel on a tour of Chungcheongnam-do."

NAMI ISLAND YOUR WAY

By Jetta Allen



Korea is full of opportunities to explore. I love adventures to new places and making memories with my family. During summer 2023, our family had the opportunity to attend a tour of Nami Island organized for United States Forces Korea (USFK) service members and their families.

Trips organized by our Host Nation are invaluable opportunities to engage and learn through our guided experiences. Tours are often customized with travel accommodations, a tour guide and translators provided to enrich the experience. Our family has learned so much about Korea that we wouldn't have on our own, such as local and national customs, phrases, recipes and favorite foods of areas, and we have learned about the hard work and strength of the Korean people.

These tours open doors to understanding our USFK community and Korea's long and proud history. I always enjoy these cultural trips and encourage you to join. Information about organized tours are typically available on social media such as your installation's Facebook page, International Groups, and one of the many local travel groups. Spots are usually limited so it is like winning the lottery when you get the confirmation!

Our program itinerary included:

- mM Art Center with Brunch in Pyeongtaek
- Lunch at Dulle-gil Trail Charcoal Spicy Stir-fried Chicken in Gapyeong
- Nami Island for fun in the sun and shade

The first stop of the day was at mM Art Center in Pyeongtaek. The featured exhibits were Wild Wild West and Back Into Light. There was a wide range of art including abstract, contemporary, and cultural. There were oil paintings, mixed media art, photography and a moving art exhibition.

My first favorite painting was oil on canvas by Ahn Dae Hyun of a beautiful saucer





magnolia titled "The Trace of Time." The beautiful painting reminded me of spring blossoms in Korea welcoming the warm weather, sunshine and the promise of outdoor fun. It was stunning. The color radiates off the canvas and creates a magenta glow around it.

My second favorite was an impressive, moving, growing and massive piece of art called "Creature" by Lee Byungchan. In places, the piece was as black as a pit, and yet shiny and reflective. Other areas consisted of silver pieces as well as red, green and holographic materials. The artist used black plastic bags, plastic pipe, silver plastic and an air motor to breathe life into "Creature". As you entered, the space seemed to grow with air, then release and shrink. It was truly like a living organism.

The artist said about the piece, "I believe that the plastic and packaged goods that contain the objects we use every day explain the basics of this city." I interpreted that to mean that our community efforts to reduce, reuse, and recycle represent the living organism that is community; we are all living it together. This installation had everyone in awe as we watched it breathing in... and out... Air filling each tentacle-like arm and then releasing was mesmerizing.

After touring the gallery, we moved to the restaurant and cafe at mM Art Center and ate a delicious brunch. The salad had a pineapple balsamic vinaigrette to die for, complemented with salty bacon. The French toast and sausage kept us all stuffed through the three-hour bus ride to Gapyeong. We stopped a few times along the way to stretch our legs and breathe in the mountain air.

The three-floor art gallery complex includes a cafe and an area just for kids with a library and children's art lessons. We could have spent the entire day there.

We finally arrived in Gapyeong, not far from Nami Island. There we had lunch at Dulle-gil Trail Charcoal Spicy Stir-fried Chicken; their specialty is salted grilled

chicken called dak-galbi. They made it not too spicy to ensure a pleasurable dining experience for a wide range of palettes. The generous banchan (small side dishes) included spicy pickles, delicious fermented kimchi, shredded cabbage and radishes. The service was impeccable. I hope we can go back soon.

After lunch we headed to our final destination. Not too far from Seoul is a half-moon-shaped island on the Han River in Chuncheon, Gangwon Province. Our guide told us that this island is a perfect example of beauty from waste as it was once a wasteland from 1944 to 1964. This reminded me of the art installation "Creature" which is also beauty from waste.

Once a wasteland, now Nami Island is a lush garden island full of nature, wildlife, and many tourist attractions including a zip line, boating, cafes, pottery studios, art galleries, themed-outdoor exhibits and a goblin garden.

After paying a small entrance fee, you can travel via a small ferry across the Han River to Nami Island. Nami Island is a self-declared micronation called the Naminara Republic. The Naminara Republic declared its cultural independence from the Republic of Korea, and has its own diplomatic and cultural policies. The republic lacks legal recognition by world governments or major international organizations, however, the Naminara Republic has its own flag and declares its exports are "imagination and fairy tales." No passport needed.

As you approach the island by ferry, you would never believe it was once a wasteland. The island is a haven for artists, musicians, writers, film and screenwriters and there are a number of unique exhibits to fill your day and many scenic areas to take pictures that can also be seen in various K-Dramas like "When My Love Blooms," "Hi Bye, Mama!" and "Winter Sonata."

The Central Korean Pine Tree Lane is the official main path through the entire island. The pine trees seem to be touching the sky



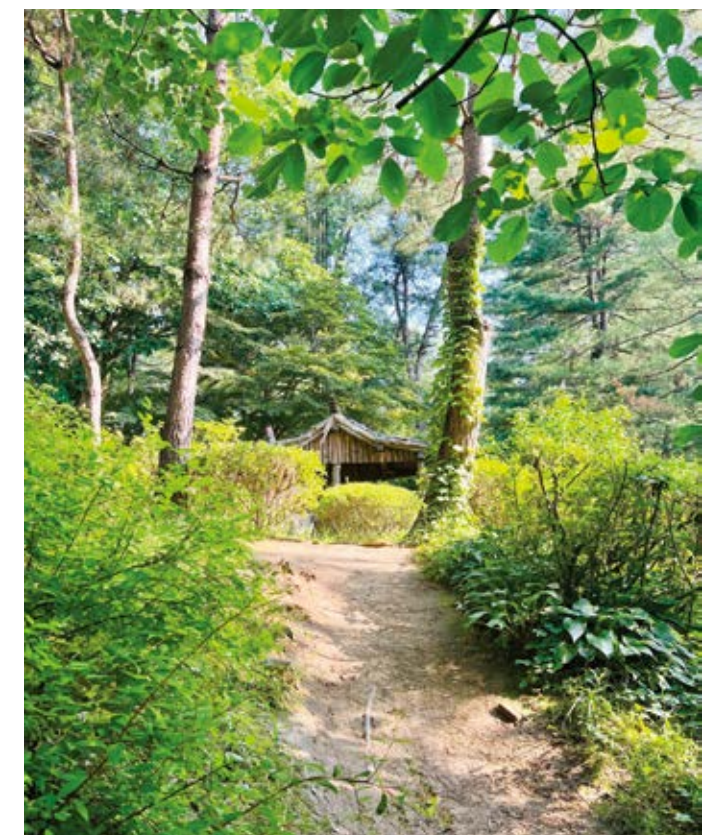


along the pathway to all the sites.

Our first visit was to Dodamsambong Garden. The trees, flowers and shrubs frame a rock garden with a pond and a pavilion painted in the Korean Dancheong (단청) style. The pond is filled with lily pads and budding lotus flowers; even in the heat of summer, something is always in bloom. The pavilion, while faded, was spectacular with a relaxing ambience. Even on the weekend with many people around, we still found private and quiet moments to ourselves. There are free range birds on the island including peacocks, ducks and geese. We were told there are swans, but we did not see any.

Pitowon Garden was serene with waterfalls and other water features. The garden is home to Goblin Knoll where landscaping genius meets whimsy with fantastical goblins, butterflies, and larvae coming out of walls. It is quite a site.

There are also cultural experiences on





the route including pottery and curtail statues along with the Tomb of General Nami (1441-1468) from the Joseon dynasty. General Nami was said to have been brave since he was a boy. He began his military career with tests on Confucianism and misty classics, martial arts, archery, horse-back riding, and lancing at just 17-years-old.

There was so much to see on Nami Island. Our family will definitely be back, to explore the places we did not have time to see, armed with the information we gained on this trip. Back on the ferry, we said goodbye to Nami Island with the wind blowing in our hair. It was a fantastic trip we will always remember.

Tips when you visit

- Download the map before arrival and prioritize where you want to go. There is so much to do, it is hard to do everything in one day.
- When the weather is warm, wear lightweight, breathable clothing. It can get hot under the canopy of trees.
- Hats and sunscreen encouraged, parasols make great photo props too.
- Won or credit cards were accepted everywhere, except for postcard stamps, which can only be purchased with Won. Don't forget to send yourself a postcard!
- There are not many places to charge your phone, so consider bringing a back up charger. There are tons of photo opportunities.
- Be flexible but mindful of the time, there's so much to see and do. Be in the moment.

I encourage you to explore Korea. Find a friend, a travel group, or join an organized tour to experience this great country. The generosity and hospitality of Koreans is second to none. We love Korea and hope our trip inspires you to embark on memorable adventures.

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Difference and Similarity:

How to appreciate Korean, Japanese and Chinese gardens

By Seung-yun Kim

Similarity: A borrowed scenery

A borrowed scenery refers to an East Asian architectural technique that utilizes the external landscape as if it were a part of the architecture. It is also known as the term 'cha-gyeong' in Korean, 'shakkei' in Japanese, and 'jiejing' in Chinese.

Architecture requires walls and ceilings to protect humans from the external environment, inevitably forming exclusive boundaries from the exterior. In a garden, architecture can be created through borrowed scenery. Borrowed scenery is the principle of incorporating the background landscape into the composition of a garden. Through borrowed scenery, space is extended by incorporating nature into the architectural design. In this style, no individual element takes greater importance, instead all aspects exist in perfect harmony.

One of the common usages of this technique is designing doors and windows as frames that capture the background landscape like a painting. The architecture is integrated with nature. This practice is very common in East Asian countries.

Another approach is to fully integrate an architectural complex into the surrounding environment as can be seen at Gyeongbokgung Palace in South Korea. Royal palaces are designed to represent the majesty of the royal authority, which explains why we may feel overwhelmed when facing some of the monumental palaces armed with grand scales and colors, such as the Palace of Versailles and Tajmahal of India.

Gyeongbokgung Palace absorbs the mountains in the background into the architecture. The grandiosity of the palace does not come from the architectural elements alone. By breaking down the borders and harmonizing with the surrounding geographical features, the palace is simultaneously grand and natural.



The Secret Garden of Changdeokgung Palace, Korea © Seung-yun Kim



The garden in Tenryuji Temple of Kyoto, Japan © In-young Choi



The Secret Garden of Changdeokgung Palace, Korea © Seung-yun Kim



The complete view of Gyeongbokgung Palace © Seung-yun Kim



Gyotaejeon area of Gyeongbokgung Palace, Korea © Seung-yun Kim



Saenggwabang of Gyeongbokgung Palace, Korea © Seung-yun Kim

Difference: How Naturalistic Philosophy differs between cultures

Korea, Japan and China embraced borrowed scenery, however, there is a clear difference in the way Korea, China, and Japan approached nature. The different cultural approaches can be seen in the designs of gardens.

Chinese Gardens

The approach to landscaping gardens in China is based on the idea of recreating an entire natural scene

in a garden. Actual caves, mountains, and waterfalls are reproduced in Chinese gardens. In particular, bizarre stones are commonly used to express the image of mountains. In some cases, a whole mountain is constructed. In the Beijing Summer Palace for example, there is a 60-meter-high artificial mountain stacked up by soil that was dug up when the artificial Kunming Lake was created. You can observe famous sceneries from various parts of China recreated in a single garden.



Korean Gardens

Korean houses and gardens are intentionally constructed on a site with excellent natural scenery. The natural scenery itself is perceived as a garden and part of the architecture. This blurs the boundary between the garden and pristine nature.

The essence of traditional Korean gardens can be found in Changdeokgung Palace. By preserving the sloping terrain and natural scenery of the mountain, the pavilions are naturally fused into the natural setting. Eleven ponds are filled up naturally by drawing the existing waterway to the ponds.



The Secret Garden of Changdeokgung Palace, Korea © Seung-yun Kim



The sand garden in Ginkakuji Temple of Kyoto, Japan © Yi-hyun Baek / © Jae-in Kwon

Japanese Gardens

Japanese gardens are designed to create an idealized version of nature and to express philosophical concepts through finely modified nature, featuring metaphors and the abstract. This technique is commonly used in Karesansui. Also referred to as a Japanese dry garden, Japanese rock garden, or zen garden, Karesansui is a distinctive style of Japanese garden where only broken stones and white sand are used to express Buddhist teaching that constant Zen meditation can lead one to the truth. The simplicity and abstraction of Japanese gardens provide an ideal environment for meditation and contemplation.

About the Author

Seung-yun Kim is the current Content Creation Team leader of YECCO. YECCO Content Creation Team plans and creates content that covers diverse aspects of Korean culture and history, which are posted on Instagram @yecco_official.



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CHUSEOK

Traditional Korean Holiday of Bountiful Harvest

Courtesy of Korea Tourism Organization

Chuseok, Korean Thanksgiving Day, is one of the biggest and most important holidays in Korea. Family members from near and far come together to share food and stories and to give thanks to their ancestors. In 2023, the day of Chuseok falls on September 29. As the day before and the day after are also part of the holiday, this year's holiday period is from September 28 to October 1, including the weekend.

Many Koreans visit their hometowns to spend quality time with their family. For tourists, the holiday also provides a good opportunity to experience traditional culture throughout Korea. Let's take a closer look at the traditional Korean holiday of Chuseok.



The Meaning of Chuseok (Hangawi)

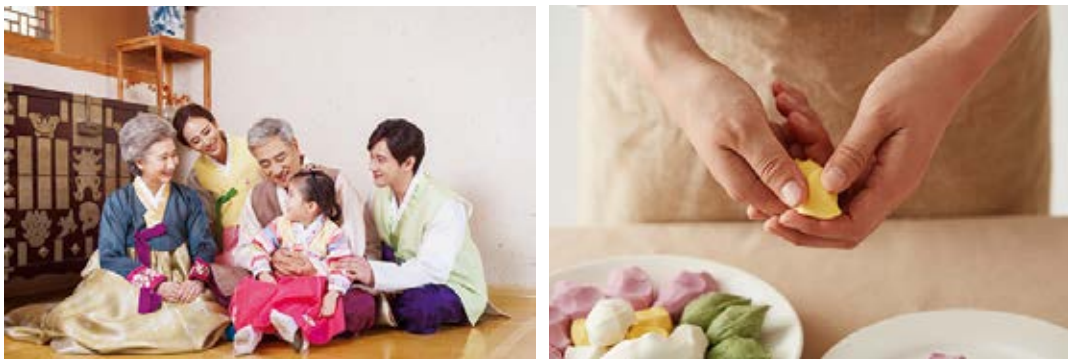
Chuseok is one of Korea's three major holidays, along with Seollal (Lunar New Year's Day) and Dano (the 5th day of the 5th lunar month). Chuseok is also referred to as hangawi. Han means "big" and gawi means "the ides of the 8th lunar month or autumn." According to the lunar calendar, the harvest moon, the largest full moon of the year, appears on the 15th day of the eighth month.

Charye (ancestor memorial services) and Seongmyo (visit to family graves)

In the morning of the day of Chuseok, family members gather at the head house of the family to hold memorial services called charye in honor of their ancestors. Formal charye services are held twice a year: on Seollal and Chuseok. During Chuseok's charye, freshly harvested rice, alcohol and songpyeon (half-moon rice cakes) are prepared as an offering to the family's ancestors. After the service, family members sit down together at the table to enjoy delicious food.



Another traditional custom of Chuseok is seongmyo, or visit to the ancestral graves. Seongmyo is an old tradition that is still carried out to show respect and appreciation for family ancestors. During seongmyo, family members remove weeds that have grown around the graves and pay their respects to the deceased with a simple memorial service.



Traditional Folk Games

As Chuseok is a celebration of harvest and abundance, the holiday period is made joyful with various entertainment and folk games such as samulnori (traditional percussion quartet), talchum (mask dance), ganggangsullae (Korean circle dance), and ssireum (traditional Korean wrestling). Ganggangsullae is performed during Jeongwol Daeboreum (celebration of 15th day of the first lunar calendar) and Chuseok. In this dance, women dressed in hanbok (traditional Korean clothing) join hands in a large circle and sing together on the night of the first full moon and on Chuseok. There are several stories about its origin. One of the most well-known stories says that the dance dates back to the Joseon dynasty (1392-1910) when the Korean army used to dress the young women of the village in military uniforms and had them circle the mountains to give off the appearance that the Korean military was greater in number than it actually was from the enemy side. The Korean army enjoyed many victories thanks to this scare tactic. Ssireum, another significant traditional entertainment, is a one-on-one wrestling match held on a circular sand pit that requires strength and skills.

Chuseok Foods

A variety of foods are prepared during Chuseok to celebrate the bountiful harvest of the year, and one of the most significant foods that represents Chuseok is songpyeon. Songpyeon is prepared with rice powder that is kneaded into a size that is a little smaller than a golf ball, and then filled with sesame seeds, beans, red beans, chestnuts, or other nutritious ingredients. During the steaming process, the rice cakes are layered with pine needles to add the delightful scent of pine. It is an old tradition for the entire family to make songpyeon together on the eve of Chuseok. An old Korean anecdote says that the person who makes beautifully shaped songpyeon will have a beautiful baby.



Other significant Chuseok foods include traditional liquor and jeon (Korean pancakes). Jeon are made by slicing fish, meat and vegetables and then lightly frying them in a batter of flour and eggs. They make a perfect pair with traditional Korean liquor.



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Preserving Heritage:

Korean Thanksgiving Traditions Through the Lens of My Childhood

By Yeonjoo McDonough

Korean Thanksgiving, also known as Chuseok (추석), is an important holiday in South Korea that revolves around family and tradition. It is celebrated on the fifteenth day of the eighth lunar month, which usually falls in September or October. During this time, Koreans honor their ancestors, pay respect to the elders, and gather with their families to enjoy special traditional activities and food. The entire country would come alive with vibrant festivities, as families traveled from near and far to reunite and honor their ancestors.

As a Korean American who was born and raised in Korea, Korean Thanksgiving holds a significant place in my heart. This holiday is not merely about preparing a lavish meal and gathering with family; it represents a precious opportunity for me to reconnect with my grandmother. She used to reside far away from my home. Throughout the year, we communicated through occasional phone calls, but nothing compared to the warmth and joy of being in her presence during this special holiday.

One of the most crucial aspects of Korean Thanksgiving is the ancestral memorial service, known as Charye (차례). Families come together at their ancestral homes or local cemeteries to pay homage to their deceased relatives. In my household, Charye, a traditional Korean ritual, was dedicated to my late grandfather who passed away in his 30s. My dad was an only child, we didn't have any cousins from his side of the family. Therefore, my grandmother was the only family member who joined us in preparing Charye.



My grandmother always emphasized the importance of putting our hearts into preparing delicious food to honor his memory and pay respects to our ancestors during the holiday season. These moments of sharing her life story while getting ready for the Charye hold a special place in my heart.

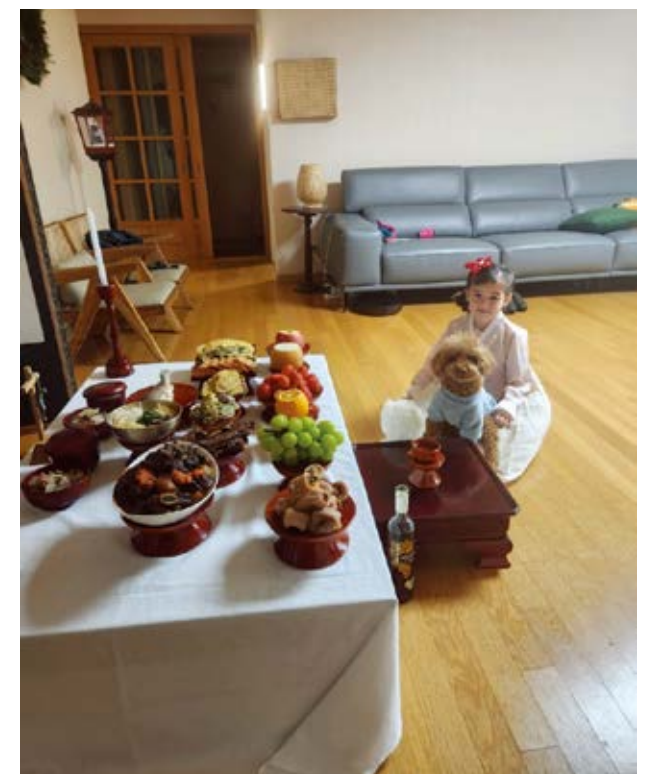
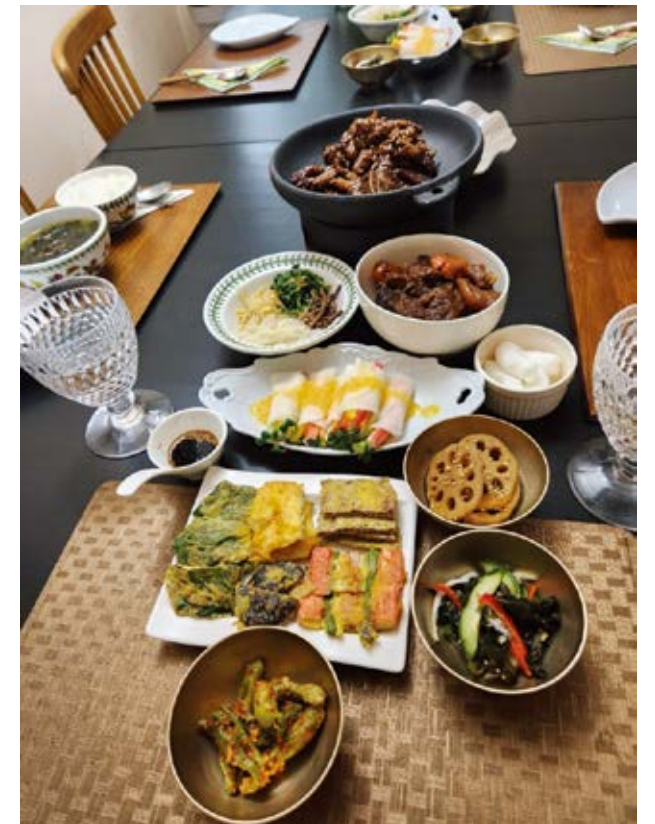
Since my earliest memories, the preparation of Charye has always demanded two full days of cooking and meticulous preparation. As a young child, I eagerly played the role of my mother and grandmothers' little helper, absorbing invaluable skills along the way. My grandmother, in particular, took me under her wing, teaching me the art of crafting meatballs with exquisite precision and the art of cleaning and cutting bean sprouts to perfection. These two days of culinary labor not only allowed me to bond with my grandmother but also provided me with a profound appreciation for the time spent together.

Beyond the culinary expertise, my grandmother also imparted her wisdom and shared stories that carried the weight of our family's traditions and values. Hours were spent meticulously arranging the memorial table and performing ancestral rituals, paying homage to those who came before us. Through these sacred practices, I learned the profound significance of honoring our Korean heritage and the unbreakable bonds of family.

During the ceremony, it is customary for the eldest family member, in my case, my father, to take the lead. He gracefully offers food and drinks to the spirits of our ancestors and our late grandfather. This ritual not only pays tribute to our family's lineage but also serves as a means for younger generations to connect with their roots and embrace their heritage.

Unfortunately, this year brought a somber note to our Chuseok celebrations. My grandmother, the pillar of our family, departed from this world. Her absence left a void that cannot be filled, but her spirit continues to guide and inspire me. This upcoming Korean Thanksgiving will mark my half-Korean daughters' first time celebrating with my family in Korea. It saddens me to think that we will be missing my grandmother, who would have cherished the opportunity to spend time with her great-granddaughters.

Nevertheless, I firmly believe that as long as our family keeps the memory of our departed loved ones alive, they will continue to reside in our hearts. Moreover, I hope that my daughters will strive to uphold this cherished tradition even after we eventually return to America.



My Experience with Compulsory Service in Korea

By Jitae Kim



I was born and raised in Asan, and have participated in many exchange programs since I was young so I have had numerous chances to improve my English. After graduating high school, I started expanding my connections and getting actively involved in the Camp Humphreys community.

I do not think doing compulsory military service is necessarily important; however, if you have a certain skill or are good at certain things, you can contribute your skills to the community. I am fluent in both English and Korean, and I provide English translating services. For example, when public officials from other countries visit Asan as a guest, I am present as a translator to assist with communications. As another example, Asan city hall and Camp Humphreys communities often interact at events so I also provide English translating service during events, such as international festivals. At these events, I get to meet up with U.S. Soldiers and their families.

I believe I am supporting the ROK-U.S. alliance through my work. Firstly, I am enabling communication between Korean people and USFK members. Through communication, we experience cultural exchange and we build relationships. Communication is key. Secondly, I am involved in the community and doing activities. For example, I have played in the company softball league—I play for Bravo company, 602nd battalion. I enjoy going out, traveling and working out when I am free. The majority of my close friends are service members; I help them with sightseeing and understanding the culture of Korea by taking them to various tourist attractions in Korea. I feel like everything I do related to the Humphreys community is meaningful.

I am currently doing my mandatory military service in Korea. In Korea, every male has to complete two years of mandatory military service. However, if you have a physical disadvantage, you get to work in society with civilians. I have flat feet so I became a social service agent. I am currently working in the Asan City Hall.



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Area I/II



Area III



Area IV





Umpiring in Korea

By John F. Behrend

In 2016, there were 46 umpires at the highest professional level in the Korean baseball league.

Most umpires in Korea have played baseball in youth leagues, high school, college, or even in amateur ranks, but not many have played professional baseball in Korea with any of the Korean Baseball Organization (KBO) teams.

If you want to become a professional umpire in Korea, playing experience is not a requirement, but it helps. One can join the Korean Baseball Association (KBA), an umpire school run by the KBO. The school lasts about 45 days and anyone can attend – even this author. Those who earn the highest scores can get an opportunity to umpire in the Futures League (low minor-league baseball). If you make the cut, before you can call in the Korean professional league, you will have to work at least five years in the Futures League. One umpire, Um Jae-gook, had no prior baseball-playing experience; he passed the KBA but retired after three years of umpiring Futures League ball. As of 2017, he worked as a freelance amateur-league umpire.

Some Korean umpires have attended the two professional umpire schools in the U.S., run by former umpires

Jim Evans and Hunter Wendelstedt. There are some female umpires in Korea in the amateur ranks and some are very good; one with whom I have worked in umpiring amateur ball is Munsook Jeon. Some have attended KBA; some have passed all the requirements but were not eager enough to accept a position.

While the rules of game are the same, umpiring in Korea is unique. One difference is that in the KBO, umpires work in a five-man crew instead of the standard four-man crew used in the U.S. major leagues, so the rotation is different. The home-plate umpire doesn't move to third base the next game as in the U.S.; that umpire sits out the next game and is part of the instant-replay team. Only one umpire from the crew reviews the questioned call while the other three remain on the field. In the U.S., the umpire who made the call and the crew chief go to the headphones and are in contact with the umpires making the actual replay calls.

In Korea, there is no pre-game meeting at home plate. The batting orders of both teams are received by the plate umpire during batting practice. Five minutes before the game, the umpires enter the playing field together and jog straight to their positions on the field, and then the Korean National Anthem is played. In-

stead of a seventh-inning stretch, KBO has a fifth-inning stretch, during which time the umpires leave the field, returning in about two minutes, while the grounds crew drags the field and re-marks the home-plate area. The grounds crew also drags the infield after the third inning.

Umpires in the KBO have neither a union nor a retirement system. The retirement age is 57. They are independent contractors, hired from year to year. They are evaluated in listed categories. Plate umpires, for instance are rated on Body Head Positioning, Timing, Judgment/Consistency of Strike Zone, Use of Voice, and Positioning of Plays. All umpires are graded on Communication with Partner(s), and Knowledge of Four-Umpire Mechanics.

Pay for umpires in Korea is very low. Umpires almost went on strike one season for that reason. The starting pay for a rookie umpire is about twenty million won for a season, equal to about \$17,590. A twenty-year-veteran umpire gets up to 100 million won (\$87,950), plus hotel and travel expenses. Because they have no union, if an umpire makes a serious mistake, he may be paid less. After a third serious mistake, he will be demoted to the Futures League. One umpire named Park was demoted in 2015 for making some serious mistakes such as in signaling safe and out and was sent down for six months to the Futures League.

Do players give the umpires a hard time in the Korean League? It is probably no different than in the U.S. professional leagues, but sometimes the players can be punished for their actions. In one example from 2014, pitcher Charlie Shirek of the NC Dinos, a team that plays in the city of Changwon on South Korea's southeast coast, was fined two million won and had to perform 40 hours of community service as punishment for swearing at an umpire. He showered abuse on umpire Kim Jun-hee in the first inning of a game against the SK Wyverns. Shirek strongly complained about Kim's calls on his pitches. Despite repeated warnings from the plate umpire, Shirek continued to swear in both Korean and English and was soon ejected – or, as they say, ordered to leave the pitcher's mound.

Another odd practice: The pitcher can wear foreign objects attached to his body unless the opposing team



appeals to the umpires. If they determine that it neither confuses the hitters nor affects the movement of his pitches, it will be allowed. An example would be the wearing of "health necklaces." If it doesn't affect the game and there is no intention to cheat, then it is permissible. The rules also allow taping, jewelry, and so on, quite different from U.S. major-league standards.

Umpires are human, and that is part of the human element of the game. The statement that the best umpires in baseball are the ones

the fans don't know is not necessarily true. Some of us do know their names.

Fans naturally hope for fewer missed calls from umpires. Complaints arose over a series of controversial calls by umpires, many of which were obviously incorrect. The KBO, which had long turned a deaf ear to outcries from fans, players, and coaches, finally decided to expand its replay system, which was not as accurate as that in the U.S. major leagues.

At first, the system was only for home-run calls. The KBO had to amend its rules, which banned challenges to ball/strike, fair/foul, and safe/out calls. Managers can only challenge fair/foul and safe/out calls, or a questionable home-run call. Even this was a drastic change in the stance of the league, which had merely stressed that the umpire's authority should be respected. During replays, the stadium scoreboards do not show the play, but spectators can see them on their smartphones, even watching frame-by-frame. While the playing rules are universal, Korea illustrates that umpiring varies from country to country in terms of training, compensation, and on-field procedures.



John F. Behrend is a retired Master Gunnery Sergeant, which is the 9th and highest enlisted grade in the United States Marine Corps. Behrend served in the U.S. Marines for 26 years during and during that time, served in Korea. He subsequently returned to Korea where he worked as an MWR NAF Employee Supply Technician for the U.S. Army for nineteen years. Behrend loves baseball and here he writes about umpiring in Korea.

Global Knowledge Exchange and Development Center

By Jongin Sun, Senior Research Associate and
Yena Ko, Research Associate

Introduction

The Republic of Korea is renowned for its remarkable socioeconomic development over a short period of time. Although liberated from 35 years of colonial rule, the outbreak of the Korean War left the country devastated and in ruins in the 1950s. However, Korea has risen triumphantly from poverty and now stands tall with a prosperous economy and a vibrant democracy. Along the way, the Korean government, enterprises, and its resilient people have collectively overcome numerous challenges and hardships.

In light of Korea's unique development experience, the Korean government established the Global Knowledge Exchange and Development Center (GKEDC) as the commemorative project for the 70th anniversary of Korea's liberalization. GKEDC is located in Hongneung, Seoul, which was formerly occupied by Korea Development Institute (KDI), Korea's leading think-tank that has supported Korea's socioeconomic policies with evidence-based research and consultations. GKEDC now carries on this legacy, providing an objective platform to review and share Korea's development experience with both domestic and international partners through exhibitions, capacity building programs, and international cooperation.

GKEDC invites you on a journey into the past, present, and future of Korea.



GKEDC Exhibitions

Through various digital images and interactive data visualization provided in our exhibitions, visitors can view and experience Korea's socio-economic development progress.

A variety of exhibition halls in the GKEDC bolster pride in Korean citizens about their history and offer international visitors an opportunity to learn from Korea's development experiences. Specifically, we find that the key players in the socio-economic development of Korea were not limited to a small number of well-known figures. Rather, it was ordinary citizens like our grandparents, our parents, and ourselves who led and shaped Korea's today. For visitors from Korea and around the world, the GKEDC provides hope and strength to embrace new challenges ahead, with the lessons learned from Korea's past.

Exhibitions	Focus
Prologue	Sketch the changes of the past and the present of Korea, which has risen from ruin into the world's 10th largest economy in just 70 years.
Economic Development Hall	Present the dynamic history of Korea's economic development, which has achieved both economic growth and democracy.
Industrial Development Hall	Demonstrate Korea's industrial transformation led by corporations such as light industries, heavy and chemical industries, electronics industries.
Human Hall	Narrate stories of ordinary people behind Korea's development, as well as perspectives of the world-renowned economists.



Economic development hall / Credit: GKEDC



Industrial development hall / Credit: GKEDC

International Cooperation

The GKEDC plays a vital role in promoting international cooperation through facilitating knowledge exchange and establishing collaborative partnerships worldwide. Korea's remarkable socio-economic development, achieved despite limited natural resources, serves as a compelling example that resonates with countries across the globe. Notably, the GKEDC collaborates closely with partner nations and international organizations, including Multilateral Development Banks, as they aim to enhance their country-support initiatives. Leveraging its transition from an aid recipient to a proactive donor, Korea holds a prominent position in international cooperation. With an unwavering commitment, the GKEDC diligently utilizes its expertise and experiences for the collective betterment of all.

Guided Tour Program

The GKEDC offers guided tours of the permanent exhibition halls along with a docent's commentary in English or Korean. To join the tour, provided free of charge, reservations should be made at least one week before the desired visitation date. A confirmation email will be sent if the reservation is complete.

E-mail for guided tour programs: g7@gkedc.co.kr



Audio guide tour / Credit: GKEDC



Guided group tour / Credit: GKEDC

Unique Capacity Building Programs

The GKEDC operates various capacity building programs based on Korea's economic/industrial development experiences and sustainable development for both domestic and international participants, including students, undergraduates, postgraduates, officials, and other business people. Each program mainly comprises exhibition tours and expert sessions to share economic development experience and hands-on activities to discuss our roles for future sustainable development.

E-mail for educational programs: kyn@kdi.re.kr



Participating activity session on Korea's economic development / Credit: GKEDC



Creating a comprehensive mind map on economic development / Credit: GKEDC



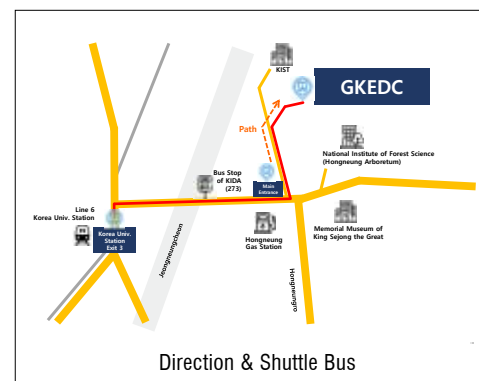
Applauding the presenter during the winter program's closing ceremony / Credit: GKEDC

Visit the Center

The GKEDC is located at Hoegi-ro 47, Dongdaemun-gu, Seoul. It is open from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. every day, except on Mondays and national holidays. Admission is free of charge, and shuttle bus service is provided on every Tuesday through Sunday. The timetable and route of shuttle bus can be found on the GKEDC website's visitor information.

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Sinheungsa Temple

By Caitlin Ward

Sinheungsa is one of two temples in Seoraksan National Park in Sokcho, Gangwon Province, South Korea. Sinheungsa is a head temple of the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism and was founded under the name of Hyangseongsa Temple during the Silla dynasty by Buddhist monk Jajang. The temple was originally built at the site of Kensington Hotel but after being destroyed by fire several times, the temple was rebuilt at the present location during the Joseon dynasty. Located near the entrance to the park, the temple offers a temple stay which includes activities such as chanting, 109 bows, making a lotus lantern and more.

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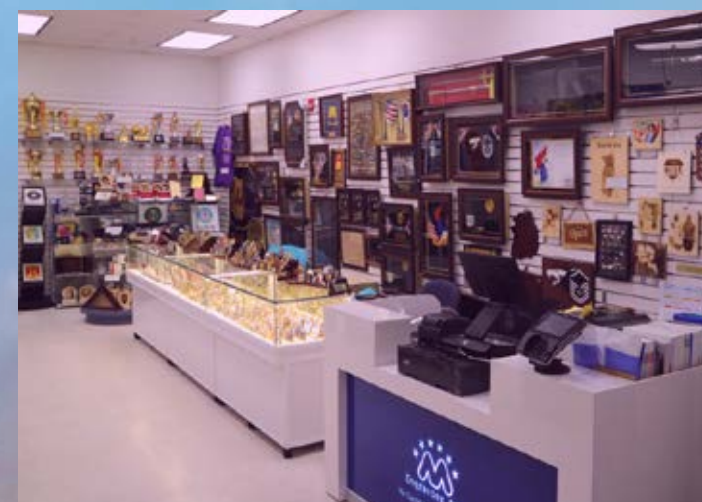
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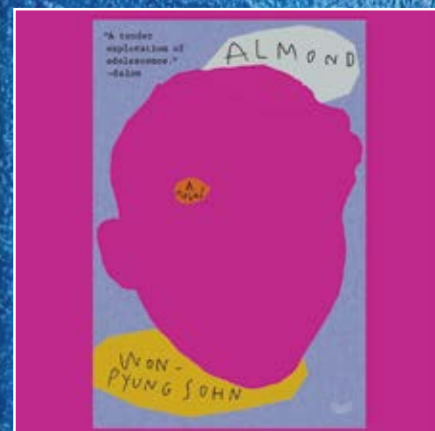
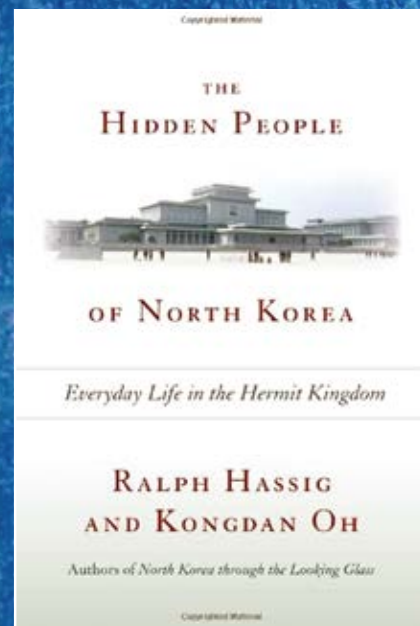
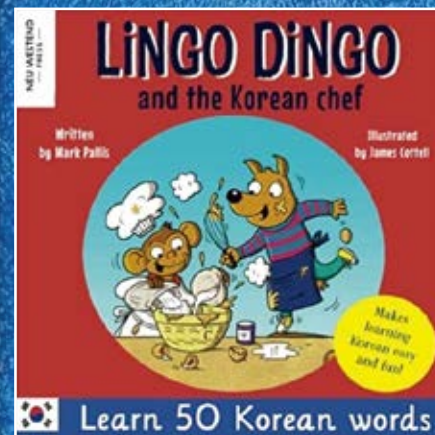
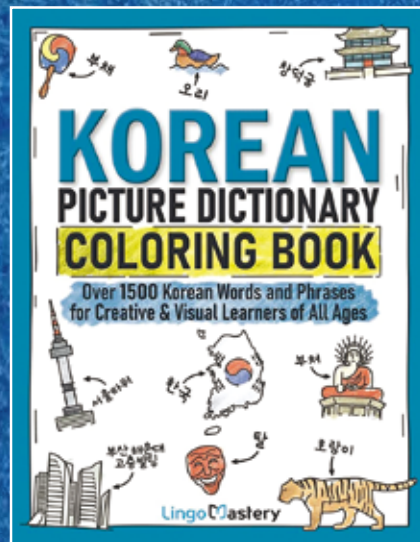
M : 010-9082-7955

E : strapfactory45@gmail.com

Contact : Harry SHIN

Meet Your Next Favorite Book!

Wondering what to read next?
Check out these books about Korean history, society, and culture!



Korean Picture Dictionary Coloring Book: Over 1500 Korean Words and Phrases for Creative & Visual Learners of All Ages

Learn Korean while coloring! The coloring book includes a Korean guide at the beginning, with tips on pronunciation, spelling, word order, vocabulary, insight into the Korean writing system and the extremely important rules of formality and transliteration!

Lingo Dingo and the Korean Chef, Mark Pallis

A bilingual English-Korean book for kids and children about Lingo Dingo who helps a Korean chef make a birthday cake.

Love in the Big City, Sang Young Park

A romantic comedy about a young gay man searching for happiness in the lonely city of Seoul.

The Hidden People of North Korea: Everyday Life in the Hermit Kingdom, Kong Dan Oh and Ralph C. Hassig

A comprehensive overview of all aspects of life in North Korea today. The authors describe how the secretive and authoritarian government of Kim Jong-il shapes every aspect of its citizens' lives, how the command socialist economy has utterly failed, and how ordinary individuals struggle to survive through small-scale capitalism.

Almond: A Novel, Won-pyung Sohn

This coming-of-age story is about Yunjae was born with a brain condition called Alexithymia that makes it hard for him to feel emotions like fear or anger. His life is disrupted by a random act of violence and he retreats into silent isolation until a troubled teenager arrives at his school and begins to bully Yunjae. The tormentor and victim learn they have a lot in common.

Every Falling Star: The True Story of How I Survived and Escaped North Korea, Sungju Lee This is a story written for young readers about a North Korean boy named Sungju who was forced at age twelve to live on the streets and fend for himself.

RESOURCE INFO

Emergency Numbers

- 119 - Fire and medical emergencies that require an ambulance
- 112 - Police
- 1339 - Korean Help Center for Disease Control (foreigner helpline that provides information about first aid and diseases in English, Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, and Mongolian)
- 1345 - Immigration (for simple immigration-related questions)
- 1331 - National Human Rights Commission of Korea (for questions related to human rights law and social justice in Korea)

National Suicide Prevention Crisis Line

Commercial: 1-800-273-8255/080-855-5118
DSN: (315)263-8255/118
Chat: www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help/chat

Osan Emergency Room (ER)

A Mental Health provider is always on call to assess mental health emergencies.
DSN 784-2500, or present to the Emergency Room

Domestic Abuse Victim Advocate (DAVA)

This is a 24/7 resource for those in need of Family Advocacy support.
DSN: 784-5010 (business hours) or COMM: 010-9300-8753 (24/7)

Sexual Assault Response Program (SAPR)

This is a 24/7 resource for those in need of Sexual Assault Response support.

SAPR Hotline: 031-661-7272; DSN 784-7272
Osan DSN (during duty hours): 784-2832
24/7 SHARP Hotline: DSN 158 or 763-5700
Daegu Local Cell: 0503-363-5700
From the States: 011-82-53-470-5700
DoD Safe Helpline: +1 (877) 995-5247
Safe Helpline Website: <https://safehelpline.org>

Non-Emergency Resources

Military and Family Life Counselors (MFLC)
Licensed professionals who can provide problem-focused counseling to service members and their families outside of the medical appointment system. No medical record documentation.
Camp Walker: 010-6445-9001
Camp Carroll: 010-5960-3287
2-1 ADA: 010-5960-3287

Military & Family Readiness Center

Osan AB: 784-5440 or <https://www.facebook.com/OsanMFRC>

Osan Chaplains

Chaplains provide 100% confidentiality.
DSN 784-5000 during duty hours, contact via command post after hours
DSN 784-7000

Osan Mental Health Clinic

Active Duty Outpatient Behavioral Health Services: DSN 784-2148
Behavioral Health Walker: 0503-337-4784 (DSN: 737-4784)
Behavioral Health Carroll: 0503-337-4236 (DSN: 737-4236)

Off Base Counseling Resources near Osan AB and USAG Humphreys (TriCare approved)

- Adaptable Human Solutions 02-749-7915
- Mind Care Institute of Korea 010-8263-8277
- Seoul Counseling Center 031-692-5556
- You & Me Psychological and Consultation Services 02-6929-3014

Military OneSource: 1-800-342-9647

Families OverComing Under Stress (FOCUS)

Resilience enhancing services for service members and their families.
Offers telehealth appointments ('TeleFOCUS')
www.focusproject.org or call +1-703-784-0189 or email at TeleFOCUS@focusproject.org

Spouse Resilience Toolkit:

<https://www.afpc.af.mil/Airman-and-Family/Spouse-Resilience/>
9 online, skills-based and self-paced modules to build healthy family bonds and overcome the unique challenges of military life.

Holidays - 4 Month Outlook

Korean Holidays

15 August – Liberation Day
*28 September-October 1 – Chuseok

* The celebration takes place on the 15th day of the 8th lunar month. Date is adjusted every year according to the lunar calendar.

US Holidays

4 September – Labor Day
11 September – Patriot Day

Main Airports

Incheon International Airport is the main airport on the RoK, located on the coast west of Seoul. It is one of the busiest airports in the world and is full of entertainment for travelers with time before, between, or after flights including a spa, a golf course, a casino, an ice-skating rink, and much more.

Other airports include:

- Jeju International Airport
- Gimpo International Airport
- Muan International Airport
- Yeosu Airport

K-CAR RENTAL

rent a car



Compact

KIA K3 ₩55,000~



Standard

HYUNDAI SONATA ₩65,000~



15
Passenger
Luxury

HYUNDAI SOLATI ₩300,000~



Mid-size
SUV

HYUNDAI TUCSON ₩85,000~



Full-size
SUV

HYUNDAI PALISADE ₩160,000~



9
Passenger
Minivan

KIA CARNIVAL ₩110,000~



12
Passenger
Van

HYUNDAI STAREX ₩100,000~

- Best Price Guarantee
- Free Cancellation
- 24/7 Roadside assistance

K-CAR
RENTAL

Reservation
Center
031-618-6112

Customer
Center
010-7676-8233



Photo taken by Erin Henderson at Elephant Rock during a family hike. Elephant Hike is a 1.8 mile round-trip hike located at Hwanggeumsan Mountain, which is a little over an hour drive from USAG Humphreys. Follow the All Trails app to make sure you stay on the path that leads down to the stone beach.

Waze: Hwanggeumsan Mountain
Naver: 충남 서산시 대산읍 독곶리
Free parking on site.

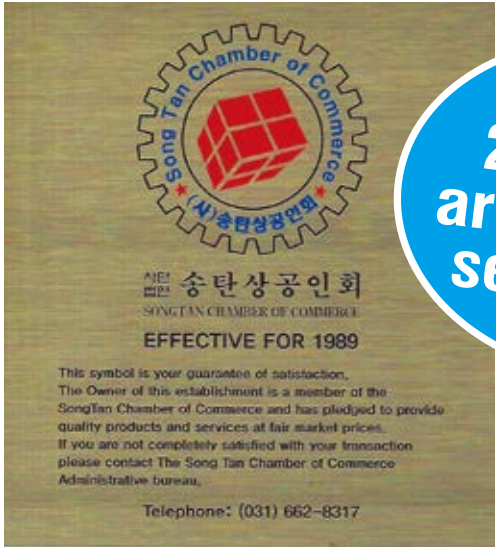
SHINJANG SHOPPING MALL



Outside of the Main Gate at Osan AB.
Lots of Places to Eat and Shop for U.S. Troops.



**AT SHINJANG SHOPPING MALL,
EVERYONE IS A HAPPY SHOPPER!**



Over
200 Shops
are ready to
serve you!



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Ha, Young Heui / President
Please call for any questions or suggestions!
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UPCOMING EVENTS

AT DRAGON HILL LODGE



SEP
23

WINE FEST

Indulge in the finest wines from around the world and expand your palate. Join us for a leisurely afternoon of wine tasting and a variety of finger foods right in our hotel lobby.

OKTOBERFEST

The Dragon has the best Oktoberfest tent in Korea! Come for authentic Bavarian cuisine, our very own crafted Märzen beer, German yodeling bands, bouncy castles, games, and more!

OCT
6-8



DEC
31

NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY

Don't miss out on the Greatest Party of the Year! Enjoy music, food, and dance throughout the whole hotel. RSVP early!



YOUR U.S. MILITARY RESORT IN SEOUL USAG YONGSAN

Our American style guestrooms and suites make a welcoming home base for all your Seoul searching. Whether it's a short staycation or a long stay, you will find the best deal for U.S. Military Service Members, Families, and DoD Civilians on our website.