

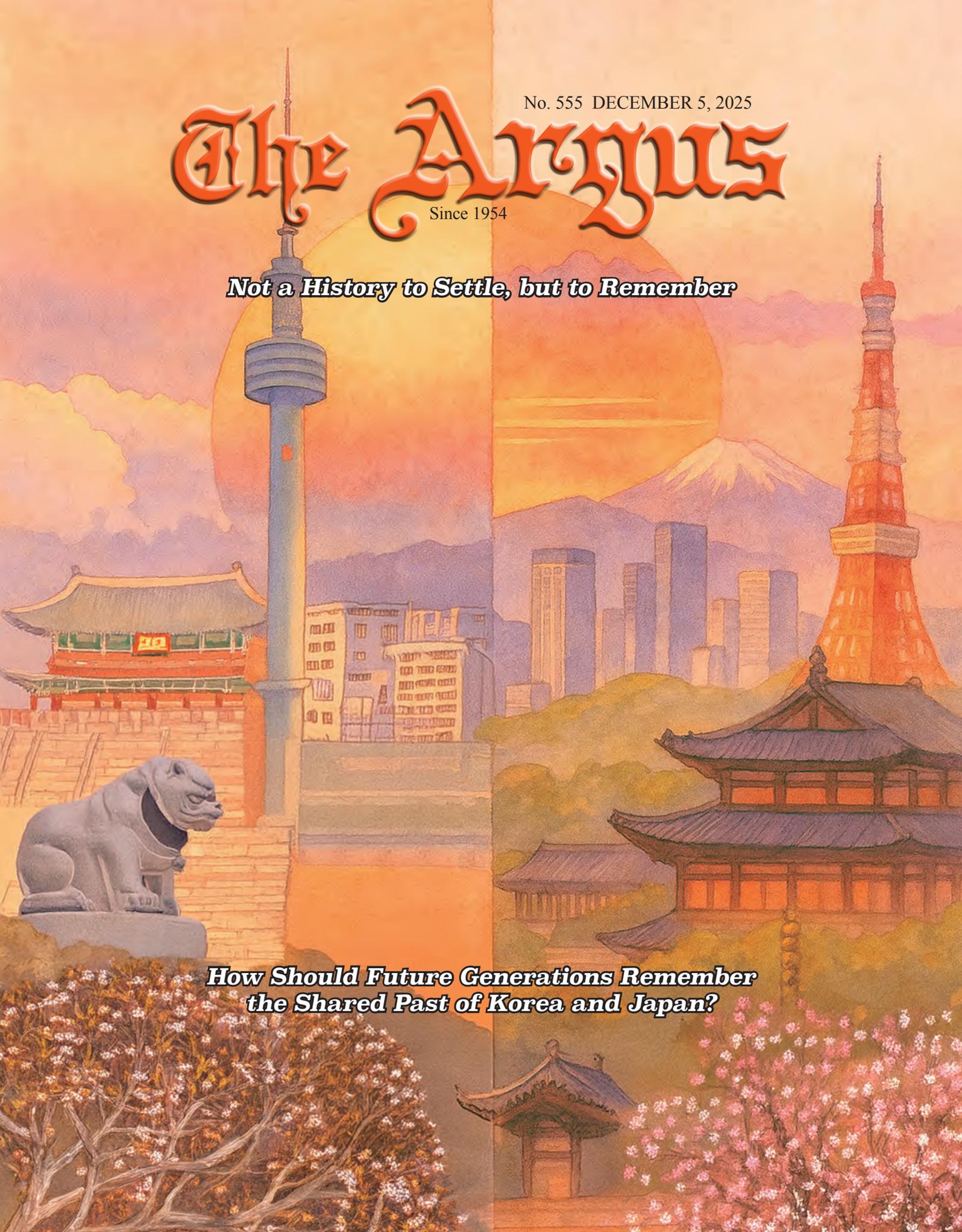
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The Argus

Since 1954

Not a History to Settle, but to Remember

***How Should Future Generations Remember
the Shared Past of Korea and Japan?***



The Argus

ESTABLISHED 1954

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Editorial

The Name the Next Generation Writes

The relationship between South Korea (hereafter Korea) and Japan has carried many names throughout history. On August 29, 1910, the Japanese Empire “forcibly annexed” the Korean Peninsula. Countless Koreans were forced to work, while many were sent to the front. Korean women were forced into sexual slavery by the Japanese army as “comfort women.” Yet, discussions between the two nations over these colonial atrocities did not take place until 1965, twenty years after Korea’s liberation. Then, diplomatic relations were normalized as the Treaty on Basic Relations Between Japan and the Republic of Korea entered into force on December 18, 1965. However, the process excluded any genuine apology or acknowledgment from Japan for its colonial rule. Still, from that point, Korea and Japan came to be referred to as “allies.” Yet that name omitted the names that must never be forgotten in the narrative of Korea–Japan relations: those connected to the restoration of honor and rights for the victims of Japan’s colonial rule.

Sixty years later, what name should define the relationship between Korea and Japan today, in 2025? Multiple surveys in 2024 including a joint survey by *The Yomiuri Shimbun* and *The Korea Economic Daily* confirmed that citizens in both Korea and Japan hold positive views of each other. While mutual goodwill is evidently growing between the two populations, the phrase “friendly relations” alone does not fully capture the current generation’s perception of one another. Now, Korea’s younger generation is moving beyond the absolute anti-Japanese sentiment of the past, distinguishing cultural appreciation from historical criticism. Among Japanese youth, the rising popularity of K-pop, K-fashion, and K-beauty has also fostered a more positive perception of Korea. These generational shifts suggest the possibility of transforming what was once a domain of diplomatic confrontation into a shared pursuit of justice for the victims of colonial rule.

Now, the history between Korea and Japan should no longer be treated merely as a diplomatic issue to be “resolved,” but as a moral and historical responsibility to “remember and honor the victims.” Neither government has truly placed the victims at the center of their historical discourse. Japan still refuses to acknowledge the illegality of its colonial occupation, while Korea has often prioritized diplomatic compromise over a victim-focused approach. Only when the two nations confront their shared past with sincerity and accountability can Korea–Japan relations gain a new name: one that embodies not only reconciliation but also remembrance.

By Kim Si-yon
Editor-in-Chief

김시연



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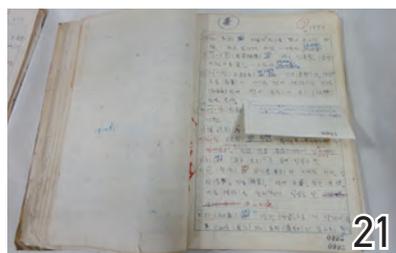
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>> Under the Treaty on Basic Relations Between the Republic of Korea and Japan, which entered into force on December 18, 1965, the two countries restored diplomatic relations. Alongside the main Treaty, four supplementary agreements, led by the Agreement on the Settlement of Problems Concerning Property and Claims, were concluded. However, the Treaty was concluded without Japan's explicit acknowledgment of the illegality of its colonial rule. Furthermore, it failed to address the individual rights and direct compensation claims of victims who suffered under Japanese colonial rule. Because of these deficiencies, the rights and reparations of colonial victims remain unresolved, and historical disputes between Korea and Japan persist to the present day. Marking the 60th anniversary of the Treaty, The Argus reviews the trajectory of relations between South Korea and Japan and offers readers an opportunity to consider the future course of the relationship.

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Dear, 2025

Travel Discounts for HUFS Students to End in December

The 59th General Student Council (GSC) at HUFS Seoul Campus, BAKDONG, has partnered with Cathay Pacific airline to offer discounted airfare to enrolled students. The discount applies only to tickets booked by Dec. 31, 2025, and the discounted fares are valid for travel until March 31, 2026.

BAKDONG has partnered with Cathay Pacific to provide discounted flight tickets for enrolled students, supporting HUFSans as they reach out to the world. The Partnership was established to ease the financial burden of airfare and help students gain broader international experiences. Students can receive a 10 percent discount on short-haul routes and a 15 percent discount on long-haul and India routes. The discount is available for Economy, Premium Economy, and Business Class tickets. To use the discount, students must register and sign into Cathay Pacific using their HUFS school email, then enter the discount codes, “CXHUFS10” for short-haul flights and “CXHUFS15” for long-haul and India flights. Further details can be found on the Cathay Pacific website, and inquiries may be directed to the GSC’s External Affairs Department.

Park Ji-won, a sophomore studying Business Administration said, “After hearing about the new Partnership, my friends and I started planning an overseas trip for the vacation. I used to hesitate because flight tickets were always a burden, but thanks to the student-exclusive discount, I can finally prepare for the trip realistically.” This partnership is expected to encourage more HUFSans to explore global opportunities. 🌍



▲ Cathay Pacific Partnership helps HUFSans broaden their global experiences.

By Song Eun-seo
flues0315@hufs.ac.kr

Restroom Hygiene Becomes a Growing Concern at HUFS

As December arrives and the temperature drops, toilets in the HUFS Seoul Campus buildings are becoming clogged. Consequently, complaints are mounting at HUFS over restroom hygiene.

Lee Sang-Hyeok, a junior studying Political Science and Diplomacy also expressed his concern, “Having to find another toilet when one is clogged is stressful. Some action seems needed.” However, this problem is expected to worsen in December, as temperatures typically drop. When the temperature drops below the freezing point, the internal pipes become cold, causing tissue and other debris to harden and clog the sewage system more easily. At HUFS, automatic flush toilets that rely on water pressure often fail to function properly when the pipes lose pressure in cold weather.

To address this issue, students can help by keeping the restroom doors closed to maintain the indoor temperature and by keeping the toilet clean after use. The school could also employ additional methods that have been successfully used to address similar issues in public restrooms outside of campus. One straightforward solution would be to attach a “cleaning necessity needed” tag on restroom doors. When a restroom stall needs cleaning, the tag can be turned to the “dirty” side, allowing the students to avoid the unpleasant experience of checking inside directly. These clogged toilet issues highlight the school’s responsibility to ensure a pleasant environment and a high quality of life on campus. 🌍

By Choi A-won
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HUFS Global Campus Roads Reveal Structural Traffic Congestion Problems

Recently, as the number of visitors to Myeongsoodang a reservoir in HUFS Global Campus, has increased, external vehicle entry has risen, worsening traffic congestion due to the campus's limited road capacity. This has disrupted campus shuttles and inter-regional buses connecting the campus to nearby areas, restricting students' mobility. Since the HUFS Presidential Election was held last November, attention is focused on how the new administration will address the issue.

The HUFS Global Campus has only one main road connected to its entrance, and although the university distinguishes between registered and unregistered vehicles, a lack of clear guidance has caused even the road designated for registered vehicles to become congested. Campus shuttles then become inefficient, causing inconvenience for students with consecutive classes, and experience significant delays departing the campus, affecting commuting students. Despite the continuous complaints, the issue has shown little sign of clear improvement.

Regarding this matter, the General Affairs Support Team said, "While fully restricting outsider access is difficult, we recognize that exceeding parking capacity causes disorder and delays, inconveniencing everyone and leaving visitors with a poor impression. To prevent this, we are considering either fully restricting external vehicle entry or allowing only a limited number of vehicles on campus." The newly elected president will face pressure to address the issue of campus connectivity and accessibility. 📰



©Jo Hae-deun / The Argus

▲ Visitors to Myeongsoodang crowd the area in front of the HUFS Global Campus main gate.

By Jo Hae-deun
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HUFS Completes First Major Selection for Newly Established Seoul Open Major Division

In November 2025, students from this year's newly established Seoul Open Major Division made their first major selections. Students in the Seoul Open Major Division could freely choose their major without specific restrictions.

Seoul Open Major Division at Minerva College, established in 2025, allows students to choose a major matching their interest by the end of their freshman year. Unlike other students, those in the Seoul Open Major Division can choose their major without being subject to grade or credit requirements. The system was designed to maximize student autonomy. However, this freedom-focused system has raised concerns that students might concentrate excessively in a few popular departments. In particular, concerns about fairness have arisen regarding the method of selecting a major without established criteria.

To prevent students from gravitating only toward popular majors, HUFS has offered several opportunities to help students make informed choices rather than selecting a major based on popularity, including freshman seminars and major exploration seminars. Lee Jee-soo an assistant professor of the Seoul Open Major Division at Minerva College, stated, "The concern is understandable, but it is expected to ease as the school continues major exploration programs and lifts department restrictions next year." Minimizing side effects while maintaining the purpose of the Open Major Division will depend on HUFS's careful management and the students' considered decisions. 📰



©HUFS Seoul Open Major Division

▲ HUFS Seoul Open Major Division students make their first major selections amid growing worries over concentration in certain departments.

By Kim Ga-ui
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Sharing Warmth the HUFIS Christmas Way

By Choi A-won
Cub Reporter

What comes to one's mind when people think of December? For some, it is coming back home after walking in the cold, sitting with one's parents on the heated floor under a shared blanket, chatting about little things, and warming hands on the dog's cozy belly. And of course, there is the highlight: Christmas. When December arrives, the streets glow with little sparkling lights, full of people sharing warmth and cheer. Even though the weather is freezing, December always brings warm stories to mind. Depending on one's religion, culture, and even the weather, people celebrate the holiday in many different ways. The Argus therefore, asked HUFISans who came from overseas how they spend Christmas and with whom they would like to spend it.



Arad from Iran (Graduate School of Business '25)

People usually spend Christmas by making their tree beautiful, buying stuff like gifts, and inviting everyone over to celebrate in my country. Usually, it is Christians who do that. Because of my religion, I do not celebrate it as a religious holiday, but I really enjoy seeing others decorate their own streets. That is very beautiful. If I had a girlfriend, I would like to spend Christmas with her. However, since I am not dating anyone right now, I want to spend it with my father and thank him for all the effort he has made for me.



Riya from Italy and India (Graduate School of Business '25)

I want to spend the holidays with my family. I have an Italian family who are Christians, and we usually get together on the 24th at night, which is the first family dinner we have, and we put presents underneath the Christmas tree. Then the next day on the 25th, we open presents, have lunch together, and stay together all day and have a second family dinner. I want to spend it with my mom this year. I love my mom. I would like to tell her that I appreciate everything she does for us, and I hope that she likes the present I got for her this year.



▲ Alina (R)

Alina from Germany (College of Education '25)

We usually spend Christmas with our family, and the 24th is always like the "main" Christmas day. Still, it really depends on the family, as some celebrate on the 25th. In Germany, people celebrate differently because there are so many cultural traditions. If I imagine who I want to spend Christmas with, I will always choose my family. This year we cannot be together, so I will celebrate with friends, which is also nice. But if I could choose, I would always prefer to be with my family.



Choi Young-eun from Korea (Dept. of Political Science and Diplomacy '23)

It really depends on who I spend Christmas with. When I am with my family, we usually stay at home, cook together, and enjoy a cozy meal in a warm and simple way. But when I am with my boyfriend, we like to go out on a date, doing things we normally do not get to do, like visiting special places or trying something new. Since I have a boyfriend now, I would like to spend Christmas with him this year, and I would like to say to my loved ones, "Let's make unforgettable memories together this season."

JSO:

A Bridge Between HUFS and Japanese Students

By Song Eun-seo

Staff Reporter of Culture Section

December 18, 2025, marks the 60th anniversary since the Treaty on Basic Relations Between Japan and the Republic of Korea was implemented, normalizing diplomatic relations between the two countries. The passage of 60 years not only prompts reflection on the history of conflict and cooperation that the two nations have undergone but also encourages people to reconsider what Korea–Japan relations look like today. According to an article published on May 1, 2025, by *Maeil Business Newspaper*, data from the Japan Student Services Organization (an independent administrative institution under Japan’s Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology) shows that approximately 8,000 Japanese students came to study in South Korea (hereafter Korea) in 2023, representing a 79 percent increase compared to the previous year. This figure indicates that more young people in Japan are becoming interested in Korea.

This trend is also seen at HUFS. As the number of Japanese students increased, the need arose for an organization that could represent them. Established in the second semester of 2025, the HUFS Japanese Student Organization (JSO) is an officially recognized student organization on the Seoul campus, created with the purpose of supporting Japanese international students so that they can enjoy a more stable and fulfilling university life. Beyond simply supporting the daily lives of Japanese students, HUFS JSO functions as a space for cultural exchange by providing opportunities for Japanese and Korean students to meet naturally and broaden their mutual understanding. Therefore, by interviewing HUFS JSO President Kitani Tamaki and Vice President Oto Hanaki, this article aims to explore the experiences of Japanese students at HUFS and the mutual perceptions formed between Japanese and Korean students on campus. The Argus seeks to create an opportunity to reflect on the desirable direction of future relations between the two countries, and to explore ways for Korean and Japanese students at HUFS to engage in more active exchange and communication.

[Before Reading] JSO

Instagram Account: @hufs_jso

Meeting Location: To be determined

Participation Fee: None

How to Participate: No registration needed



A Reliable Community for Japanese Students
at HUFS: JSO

1 **The Argus: Thank you for joining us. Could you please introduce yourselves to our readers?**

Kitani Tamaki (Kitani): Hello, my name is Kitani

Tamaki, and I am a student in the Department of English Linguistics and Language Technology, and I enrolled at HUFS in 2022. I am currently serving as the President of the HUFS JSO.

Oto Hanaki (Oto):

Hello, my name is Oto Hanaki, and I

am a student in the Department of English for International Conferences and Communication, and I enrolled at HUFS in 2023. I am serving as the Vice President of the HUFS JSO.



▲ The Argus interviews JSO President Kitani Tamaki (R) and Vice President Oto Hanaki (L).

2 *The Argus: Could you introduce the HUFS JSO to our readers?*

JSO: The HUFS JSO is a student group created for all students at HUFS who have personal, cultural, or linguistic roots in Japan. We are a newly established organization that began its activities in August 2025. The organization currently consists of four departments and has around twenty active members. As a new organization, many aspects of our operations and activities are still in development, and we plan to operate flexibly as we continue to grow.

3 *The Argus: What motivated the founding of JSO? HUFS already has the International Student Organization (ISO), which supports international students, including those from Japan. What led you to establish a separate organization exclusively for Japanese students?*

JSO: One major reason is the broader movement currently taking place among Japanese students studying abroad, “to establish Japanese student associations across Asia.” This movement aims to create networks among Japanese students studying in different Asian countries. A company called Baton, which develops educational and entertainment-based content, has played a leading role in promoting this movement, encouraging Japanese students abroad to connect with each other. Following this trend, Japanese student organizations began to form at several universities in Seoul, starting with Yonsei University, Ewha Women’s University, Hanyang University, and others. We learned about this growing movement through networks and communities of Japanese students at other universities, and this led us to recognize the need for a similar organization at HUFS.

Although the ISO and the General Student Council are accessible to Japanese students, these groups primarily operate in English. Some Japanese students who are not fully

comfortable communicating in English found it difficult to receive adequate support through existing organizations. Furthermore, Japanese students make up the second-largest population among international students at HUFS. Considering this, we felt that it was necessary to establish an organization where Japanese students could comfortably seek support and connect with one another in a familiar linguistic and cultural environment. This became the basis for founding the HUFS JSO.



JSO Connects HUFS with Japanese Students

4 *The Argus: Why do you think Japanese students choose Korea, and in particular HUFS, as a place to study abroad? Additionally, how do you think Korean students at HUFS perceive Japanese international students?*

Oto: Since the COVID-19 pandemic has eased, the number of Japanese students choosing to study abroad has increased. One major reason many Japanese students select Korea is because they have grown familiar with Korean popular culture, such as K-pop and Korean dramas, and this has led to a broader interest in Korean society and lifestyle. The fields of study that bring Japanese students to Korea are also quite diverse. Some come to study makeup, media, or broadcasting influenced by popular culture, while others come because they are interested in languages. In the case of students who choose HUFS, many are motivated by the desire to learn multiple languages. Among Japanese students here, some study Chinese or English, while others study political science and diplomacy, or international trade. There is a wide range of academic interests represented. Even outside the university, many Korean people have positive attitudes toward Japan, especially because of Japanese animation and J-pop. Because of this, they often approach us with curiosity and warmth, and we find many opportunities to talk about shared cultural interests.

Kitani: From my experience at HUFS, I feel that many students here are very proactive when it comes to international exchange and overseas experiences. Many are accustomed to interacting with people from other countries, and they are generally very friendly toward international students. I think that sense of open mind and hospitality is one of the reasons why people choose to study here.



▲ JSO holds an orientation for freshmen students in August 2025.

5 *The Argus: Have you experienced any cultural or perceptual differences while studying in Korea?*

JSO: Yes. One of the noticeable differences comes from the university systems in the two countries. The university acceptance rate in Korea is higher than Japan. In Japan, the university acceptance rate is around fifty percent, while in Korea it is over seventy percent. We feel that Korean students tend to view the four years of university as a critical period that determines their future, so they approach their studies with strong dedication. Many Korean students also actively pursue extracurricular experiences such as student clubs, internships, or external academic programs, in order to prepare themselves for their future careers. In contrast, Japanese university life is often described as “the last summer vacation of youth.” As a result, university life in Japan tends to place greater emphasis on enjoying campus life itself, participating in clubs, part-time jobs, and building memories during youth. These different priorities influence how students in each country experience university life.

6 *The Argus: Have you faced any difficulties while navigating your academic life here?*

JSO: There are difficulties, especially when it comes to understanding information provided by the university. Many important announcements, such as academic guidelines, notices, or administrative information, are provided only in Korean. These documents often use formal or technical vocabulary, which can be challenging for international students to understand. For example, when we first checked the course catalog, it was difficult to find information about required courses, graduation credit requirements, and other essential procedures. While the course catalog is available in English and Chinese, it is not yet available in Japanese, so we often had to rely on translation tools to understand it.

7 *The Argus: What kinds of support does JSO provide to help Japanese students settle into daily life in Korea?*

Kitani: We aim to provide assistance related to employment as well. This includes information and advice for students who wish to work in Japan after graduation, as well as for those who wish to build careers in Korea.

Oto: In Korea, all foreigners must have a Alien Registration Card to live and access daily services. Food delivery applications, package delivery services, and even the campus community platform “Everytime” all require this registration.

To support students who are new to Korea, JSO conducts orientation sessions for incoming first-year Japanese students. During these sessions, we explain how to apply for the Alien Registration Card and provide guidance for adjusting to everyday life in Korea. In general, we share the essential information needed for settling into life here.

8 *The Argus: What kinds of activities does JSO conduct to help bridge the distance between Japanese students and Korean students on campus?*

Oto: During the campus fall festival “Look Up!” in September 2025, we ran a booth where we sold Japanese snacks such as takoyaki and melon soda. Many students visited the booth, not only friends we already knew, but also many others who were simply passing by, and they showed interest in Japanese food and culture.

Kitani: Since we are still a newly established organization, we are just beginning to expand our activities. For now, we mainly promote various Korea–Japan exchange programs through our JSO social media accounts. For example, we share information about exchange activities hosted by the HUFS Korea–Japan exchange club, events organized by the College of Japanese Studies, and mentoring programs offered by the International Student Support Center of HUFS.



▲ JSO meets Korean students and offers a variety of Japanese snacks at the 2025 fall festival, “Look Up!”.

3 The Future of JSO

9 *The Argus: Could you share any Korea–Japan exchange programs or projects that JSO hopes to organize in the future?*

JSO: We would like to plan a short trip to areas near Seoul.

Round Talk

For example, we are considering organizing a visit to cities in Gyeonggi Province, such as Suwon, or perhaps a slightly longer trip to Gangneung in Gangwon Province. We have noticed that many international students from other countries travel around Korea and explore various regions during their studies. However, Japanese students, especially compared to English-speaking international students, tend to travel less frequently within Korea. We hope that by organizing group trips, we can help Japanese students develop more motivation to explore Korea and gain a wider range of experiences during their time here.

10 *The Argus: How would you like JSO to be perceived in the future? What are JSO's goals and vision?*

Oto: Our immediate goal is to ensure that more Japanese students are aware of JSO. Ideally, students would know about JSO even before enrolling at HUFS. Starting university life in a foreign country can be overwhelming and confusing, especially when doing so alone. JSO hopes to support Japanese students from the very first step of their university journey so that they can enter university without fear or uncertainty. We also hope that when Japanese students face difficulties during their time at HUFS, JSO will be the first group that comes to mind. Although our organization is not yet widely recognized, we hope that in the future JSO will be remembered as a reliable and reassuring presence among Japanese students at HUFS.

Kitani: The goal of JSO is to “make university life better for Japanese students studying at HUFS.” To achieve this, we want to be an organization that provides resources and a stronger sense of community, especially for students who may have struggled through university life in Korea alone until now.

11 *The Argus: Lastly, could you share a message for The Argus readers who hope to build positive relationships with Japanese students on campus?*

JSO: We hope that the divisions or barriers based on being a domestic student or an international student will gradually disappear. I hope that the perception of “difference” becomes smaller, and that we can build positive memories together simply as fellow students. JSO will continue working hard to make this possible.



▲ JSO hosts a snack event in front of the the Globbee Dorm.

The fact that students who have grown up in different societies, Korea and Japan, now share their daily lives on the same campus shows that the relationship between the two countries does not remain solely at the level of abstract diplomatic discourse. Instead, it is expressed and shaped within the everyday experiences of individuals. The JSO is not merely a support group for Japanese international students; it serves as a natural space for exchange, where students can reconsider the vague images and preconceived notions they may have held about one another through everyday interactions. For Japanese students and HUFS students to continue building meaningful and lasting relationships, it is essential, just as JSO aims to promote, to accumulate more small moments of conversation and shared experiences. In this process, JSO will function as a reliable companion for Japanese international students and as an important gateway for HUFS students to understand one another more deeply. 

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Korea–Japan

Youth Culture Exchange: From Trend to Understanding



By Song Eun-seo

Staff Reporter of Culture Section

On December 18, 2025, South Korea (hereafter Korea) and Japan will mark the 60th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations. The 60th anniversary serves as a moment to reflect on the past conflicts and cooperation between the two countries and to reconsider the current state of Korea–Japan relations. Today’s younger generation understands each other’s cultures through various everyday experiences, which has led to an increase in mutual favorability between the two nations. According to a *Money Today* survey published in March 2025, 66 percent of Koreans aged 18 to 29 said they have a favorable impression of Japan. Among them, 74 percent also said they feel positively toward Japanese people. This is much higher than the national average of 47 percent. A similar tendency is seen in Japan. The “2024 Public Opinion Survey on Diplomacy” released by the Japanese Cabinet Office showed that 66.2 percent of Japanese youth aged 18 to 29 felt an affinity toward Korea. This trend among young people goes beyond shared tastes and reflects their view of Korea–Japan relations. Their cultural exchanges, even amid diplomatic and historical tensions, serve as key indicators of the future of both nations. The Argus therefore, explores how these interactions can help build a healthy and sustainable foundation for future ties.



Popular Media

Phenomenon 1 : Expansion of Cross-Cultural Fandom

Today, young people in both Korea and Japan consume each other’s popular culture as part of their everyday life. In Korea, Japanese animation has gained strong popularity. Films such as *Suzume* (2022) and *Demon Slayer: Infinity Castle* (2025) each drew more than five million viewers, demonstrating this trend. This popularity goes beyond entertainment, as anime success drives demand for related goods, collaborations, and pop-up stores that have become part of everyday culture. For example, *Demon Slayer: Infinity Castle*, opened a pop-up store in Korea following its success. The store attracted more than 3,000 visitors per day. Fans lined up as early as 6:30 a.m., and some brought suitcases to purchase large quantities of merchandise.

During the reservation period, more than 2,500 queue numbers were issued within six seconds, demonstrating the level of demand. Animation voice actors also visited Korea for various promotional events. Voice actors from *The First Slam Dunk* (2023), which became the highest-grossing Japanese animated film in Korea at the time, visited Korea to commemorate surpassing four million viewers. Shugo Nakamura, the voice of Ryota Miyagi, and Jun Kasama, the voice of Hisashi Mitsui, met devotees through stage greetings and fan events.

In Japan, Korean dramas have also gained significant popularity. Titles such as *Itaewon Class* (2020) and *The Glory* (2022) reached the No. 1 ranking on Netflix Japan, and *Crash Landing on You* (2019) was listed as the most talked-about TV series in Japan in 2020. According to a report from the Korea Foundation for International Cultural Exchange published on July 24, 2025, Japanese media outlets including *TV LIFE* and



▲ Visitors line up to buy various items at the *Demon Slayer: Infinity Castle* pop-up store.

ORICON NEWS continue to track and highlight the popularity of Korean dramas across the country. Korean drama pop-up stores have also opened in Japan. *Queen of Tears* (2024) reached the No. 1 spot on Netflix Japan shortly after its release. A *CJ Newsroom* report in July 2024 noted that the drama continued to receive strong support from international fans even months after airing. Pop-up stores were set up in Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya, and Fukuoka. Items such as keychains, postcard sets, and tote bags sold out, and more than 10,000 people visited the stores within two weeks.

Cause 1 : Continuous Exposure and Growing Familiarity

The difference in generational experience plays a major role in why today's young people in Korea are more familiar with Japanese culture. Many young Koreans grew up watching Japanese animations like *Crayon Shin-chan* (1992~) and *Doraemon* (2005~). This shift began with the 1998 cultural opening under the Kim Dae-jung administration, which aimed to promote exchange and boost Korea's cultural competitiveness. Consequently, today's twenties are the first generation to grow up naturally consuming Japanese culture as part of daily life. A similar pattern can be observed in Japan. Japan's young generation is also the first to grow up with Korean culture as part of daily life, introduced through older generations. Their parents enjoyed the Korean drama, *Winter Sonata* (2002), and the next generation embraced K-pop artists like BoA and TVXQ in the 2000s. As a result, today's youth naturally encountered Korean culture from childhood, forming familiarity and lowering psychological barriers. This pattern reflects the "mere exposure effect," a psychological principle in which frequent exposure increases positive feelings and comfort. In both countries, growing up with shared cultural products fostered positive feelings toward each other's pop

culture.

However, familiarity alone does not explain the depth of interest. Korea and Japan share cultural values that emphasize social relationships and harmony with others. Kim Dong-kyu, a professor in the Department of Japanese Language, Literature and Culture at HUFSS, explained, "Both countries belong to a broader East Asian Confucian cultural sphere." Adding that, "Both societies value clear social roles and relationships with others, which makes easier to understand each other." Despite this familiarity, each culture expresses emotions differently. Korean dramas like *The World of the Married* (2020) show intense conflict, while Japanese works like *Midnight Diner* (2009) focus on calm, reflective storytelling. This "close yet subtly different" emotional distance offers familiar but fresh appeal to today's youth. Professor Kim explained, "Japanese audiences are drawn to the boldness and emotional openness found in Korean media, while Korean audiences are drawn to the sensitivity and understated diversity expressed in Japanese media. These qualities provide young people in both countries with cultural experiences that feel both comfortable and new."

Perspective 1 : Concerns over Uncritical Cultural Consumption

As Korean and Japanese media spread, cultural exchange has grown richer, extending beyond consumption to creative collaboration. The Japanese remake of the Korean drama *Marry My Husband* (2024), which reached the No. 1 ranking on Amazon Prime Video Japan in June 2025, shows this change clearly. According to a report by *The Kyunghyang Shinmun* in July, the remake was not merely a case of importing Korean content. The drama was co-produced from the start, with Korean director Ahn Gil-ho and Japanese writer Satomi Oshima collaborating on the script. Korean and Japanese teams worked together to localize it for Japanese audiences, reflecting a shift toward shared production strengths. Such co-productions and creative collaboration are expected to expand, enhancing both countries' cultural capacity.

However, as cultural exchange grows, responsibility for historical sensitivity becomes essential. When entertainment blurs past wounds, exchange loses its meaning. Japanese media have often been criticized for trivializing war and colonial memory. For example, the animated series, *Demon Slayer* was criticized for using a design resembling the Rising Sun flag, and *My Hero Academia* (2014) for naming a character

after Unit 731* victims. Though later corrected, such cases show the need for awareness of historical context. These controversies raise questions about how popular culture treats historical memory. Cultural exchange between Korean and Japanese youth is meaningful, but it must not let past violence fade into mere entertainment. Conversely, Korean pop culture also shows emotionalized portrayals of history. The film *The Battleship Island* (2017) depicts Japan's forced labor during colonial rule but faced criticism for distortion due to unverified elements, such as Japan planning a mass killing of Korean workers or children in labor sites. Focusing on dramatic escape and revenge scenes, it turned tragedy into emotional catharsis rather than reflection, emphasizing anti-Japanese sentiment over historical nuance.

For cultural exchange between Korea and Japan to continue in a meaningful way, enjoyment itself must take place alongside awareness of what must be remembered. The growing closeness between the two cultures is significant, but it requires a responsible approach that acknowledges historical context rather than glossing over it.

*Unit 731: It is a Japanese Imperial Army unit and research institution established during World War II where countless civilians and prisoners of war were subjected to inhumane human experimentation for the purpose of developing biological and chemical weapons.

the “Mori-girl style,” which means “forest girl” in Japanese became popular in Korea. Originating from Japan’s social media platform Mixi as a “forest-like fashion” and known as actress Aoi Yū’s signature look, it gained popularity with the return of Y2K trends, inspiring layered outfits like dresses over jeans and a natural, pure aesthetic.

Japanese youth are also showing increased interest in Korean fashion. Korean fashion is known for its clean and trend-conscious style, and similar styles have become popular in Japan. According to a report by *Hankook Ilbo* published on June 26, 2024, Korean casual brands such as Matin Kim, Marithe François Girbaud, and Mardi Mercredi often referred to collectively as the “3-Ma” brands have quickly gained popularity, particularly among young Japanese women. These brands feature simple and minimal designs and appeal to consumers in their teens through thirties. Their growth led to dedicated stores, including a two-story Mardi Mercredi shop in Tokyo’s Daikanyama. In addition, a survey conducted by Rakuma, a flea-market application operated by Rakuten, found that Japanese women across age groups from their teens to forties most frequently look to Korea for fashion inspiration.

Makeup trends also move actively between the two countries. The “Igari makeup” style, which features flushed cheeks under the eyes to create a slightly intoxicated appearance, began in Japan and later became popular in Korea. The style spread widely after Korean K-pop idols wore the look in media appearances. Conversely, Korean makeup trends have gained popularity in Japan, influenced by the broader spread of Korean cultural content. Korean beauty brands have adapted their product lines for the Japanese market. For example, in “@cosme,” a Japanese beauty retail chain, Korean cosmetic brands including Tirtir, Rom&nd, Innisfree are widely loved by Japanese customers.

Everyday Cultural Embodiment

Phenomenon 2 : Tastes and Aesthetic Styles Becoming Part of Daily Life

Young people in Korea and Japan share and adopt each other’s fashion and makeup trends, creating common styles through mutual exchange. In Korea, Japanese fashion trends such as genderless style and vintage-inspired aesthetics have influenced local fashion. In 2024, the Japanese “Amekaji look,” featuring wide silhouettes like cargo pants and Bermuda shorts, gained popularity in Korea. From 2024 to 2025,



▲ An Instagram creator shares Mori-girl outfit ideas.

Cause 2 : Shared Cultural and Lifestyle Foundations

Korean and Japanese fashion blend naturally because both societies share similar aesthetics and body proportions, allowing styles to fit seamlessly into daily life. Fashion exchange thus goes beyond imitation, as trends adapt realistically to each context. Tone-on-tone layering and simple silhouettes from Japan spread easily in Korea through brands like Uniqlo and MUJI. Both cultures favor balanced, modest designs. It is seen in Korea’s “minimal and natural” look and

Japan’s “normcore” style emphasizing harmony and soft tones.

The contrast between Korea’s embrace of the “Mori-girl Style” and the limited popularity of the “slick back bun” shows the importance of silhouette compatibility. The slick back bun, part of the Western “clean girl” trend, was less favored in Korea, where softer face-framing styles are preferred. In contrast, the layered, natural Mori-girl look aligned with Korean aesthetics. These examples show that fashion exchange thrives on shared style compatibility. Professor Kim explained, “When contact becomes frequent, change naturally occurs,” adding that “both physical contact through travel and non-physical contact through social media have increased familiarity and positive feelings between the two countries.”

A similar pattern is observed in makeup trends. The exchange between Korean and Japanese beauty industries is rooted in shared preferences for natural and subtle styling. In both countries, makeup trends focus on creating an even skin tone, enhancing natural complexion, and emphasizing facial features without making them overly sharp or dramatic. Makeup tends to highlight texture and natural light rather than strong contouring. This differs from American makeup trends, which emphasize sculpted facial structure, and Chinese makeup trends, which often highlight bold features and matte finishes. Instead, Korean and Japanese makeup styles have evolved alongside each other, reflecting shared aesthetic standards rather than moving in a one-directional influence pattern.

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▲ Online fashion platform Musinsa opens a large pop-up store in Shibuya, Tokyo, in October 2025.

Perspective 2 : Everyday Familiarity and the Risk of Forgetting the Past

Recently, Korea–Japan cultural exchange has expanded from sharing trends to influencing industry and distribution.

According to a report by *The Chosun Ilbo* in August 2025, Hyundai Department Store opened “The Hyundai Global,” a permanent store in Shibuya PARCO, Tokyo, in September of the same year, 2025, the first Korean department store branch in Japan featuring rotating Korean fashion and cultural content. It also plans additional stores, including a flagship in Omotesando by 2026. Likewise, Korean platform Musinsa opened a Shibuya showroom showcasing 80 brands and 2,800 items, attracting over 20,000 visitors in its first week. These developments show Japanese youth actively engaging with Korean products offline, signaling that shared aesthetics are evolving into industrial collaboration that enriches both countries’ fashion and lifestyle cultures.

The natural incorporation of each other’s styles into daily life indicates a closer cultural distance between the two societies. However, this sense of closeness does not automatically lead to deeper understanding. If cultural exchange becomes centered only on pleasant or visually appealing elements, historical issues between the two countries may become treated as uncomfortable subjects to avoid. Professor Kim explained “Proper education is necessary to address this gap,” emphasizing the importance of building historical understanding alongside cultural familiarity. The growing appeal of each other’s popular culture is meaningful, but positive feelings should not replace understanding. If only aesthetic enjoyment remains and uncomfortable historical memories are ignored, a false sense of reconciliation may emerge, overlooking the responsibility to remember and discuss unresolved issues. For Korea–Japan exchange to develop sustainably, the relationship must not be built on closeness that erases memory, but on understanding that includes and reflects on memory. When consuming each other’s culture, awareness of the historical and social context behind it is essential. Only then can the relationship move beyond temporary trends and develop into a lasting form of mutual understanding.



Travel

Phenomenon 3 : “Pilgrimage-Style” Travel

Young people in Korea and Japan are developing a form of travel that goes beyond general sightseeing. Instead of simply

visiting well-known tourist destinations, they travel to specific neighborhoods, stores, and spots considered symbolic or meaningful among their peers. Information about popular locations, “must-buy” products, and notable foods is widely shared online. As a result, travel has become a way to directly experience trends from another country. For many young

Koreans, Japan feels both familiar and new. They plan trips around photo spots or anime locations, such as Shibuya and Harajuku in Tokyo, the night view from Tokyo Tower, and Osaka’s neon-lit Dotonbori and Glico sign. Places like “Suga Shrine” from



▲ The iconic Glico sign in Dotonbori, Osaka, shines brightly.

the discount store Don Quijote are also popular stops. Lists of recommended Don Quijote items circulate on YouTube and Instagram, making these trips a way to experience everyday Japanese life beyond simple sightseeing.

For young Japanese travelers visiting Seoul, Korea, it is a chance to experience daily life in a slightly different atmosphere. Many Japanese travelers visit neighborhoods like Yeonnam-dong, Seongsu, and Hongdae to experience daily Korean life. In Yeonnam-dong, they enjoy the Gyeongui Line Forest Park and cafés. In Seongsu, cultural spaces, pop-ups, and brand showrooms are popular. Lastly in Hongdae, travelers spend time shopping in vintage shops and watch street performances. K-dramas and K-pop also shape routes such as *Guardian: The Lonely and Great God's* (2016) Samcheong-dong Stone Wall Road, and Ilsan Lake Park where BTS filmed music video scenes. Convenience stores are also must-visit places, with snacks like banana milk, “Viyott” yogurt cups, and “Malang Cow” candies shared online as essentials. These trips let Japanese youth experience the Korean lifestyle they’ve seen in media.

Cause 3 : Geographic Accessibility and Familiarity-Based Travel

The travel trend among Korean and Japanese youth stems

from shared consumption habits, similar lifestyles, and online platforms that reinforce them. Many visit places seen in films or animations to recreate familiar scenes through photos. In this process, travel between the two countries has evolved beyond exploring unfamiliar places to experiencing and confirming familiar scenes in real locations, a trend that continues to spread in real time through social media. YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram continuously present ready-made travel itineraries such as recommended photo spots in Dotonbori, one-day travel routes in Seongsu, lists of must-buy items at Don Quijote, and shopping guides for Olive Young. As a result, travel is no longer the outcome of individual planning and discovery. Instead, it has become a process of experiencing scenarios that others have curated. Abundant travel information reduces uncertainty, allowing travelers to follow shared templates. Travel between Korea and Japan now focuses on confirming familiar experiences rather than facing the unknown. With similar living environments and shared media, travelers can easily recreate what they’ve seen online, making trips feel more accessible.

Korea and Japan also share similar urban lifestyles. In high-density cities like Seoul and Tokyo, daily life revolves around compact homes and walkable neighborhoods with small restaurants, cafes, and convenience stores at the center. Professor Kim explained that, “Both societies display a tendency toward compact, community-based living, which shapes how people interact with their surroundings.” The shared structure of daily life is also reinforced through social media, where trends are observed and reproduced simultaneously in both countries. As a result, trends do not travel across borders with delay; they emerge and circulate in parallel. These similarities extend into travel experiences. Public transportation systems in both countries are based on subways and buses, and the rhythm of daily life is structured around compact residential zones. Travelers do not need to make significant adjustments to navigate new environments. For Koreans, Japan is perceived as a nearby destination where they can experience a slightly different, yet familiar daily atmosphere. For Japanese travelers, Korea is a place where they can quickly change their surroundings while maintaining comfort. In this sense, the two countries function as spaces where the familiarity of domestic travel and the freshness of international travel coexist.

Perspective 3 : The Risk of Quick Generalizations Based on Limited Impressions

Travel among young people in Korea and Japan has shifted from simple tourism to experiencing everyday life in each other's countries, fostering a sense of closeness. This change shows that cultural exchange is moving beyond diplomacy or historical discourse toward understanding through daily contexts. According to a June 2025 news report from *JoongAng Ilbo*, immigration lanes designated for Korean and Japanese travelers were temporarily operated at airports to mark the 60th anniversary of diplomatic normalization, with users expressing hope for the system's continuation. In addition, an August 2025 news report from *The Kyunghyang Shinmun* stated that Korea and Japan were discussing a revision that would allow working holiday visas to be issued up to twice, rather than only once. If implemented, this would enable young people to live, study, and work longer in each other's countries, promoting deeper and more continuous cultural exchange beyond short-term visits. Such developments have the potential to strengthen long-term, everyday forms of cultural exchange.

However, even given these positive shifts, there are concerns. Short-term experiences abroad can lead to overly broad generalizations about the other society. Some young Koreans return from trips to Japan saying, "All Japanese people are polite," or "Japanese social order is strictly maintained." Similarly, some young Japanese visitors conclude that, "All Koreans speak quickly and express emotions strongly" or that

"people in Korea are always energetic." These impressions are based on specific encounters and locations and extending them to characterize an entire society can create new stereotypes. Direct experience often feels convincing, which can make it difficult to recognize the diversity and complexity of another society. For this reason, travel experiences should not be treated as the basis for cultural judgment. Instead, they should be the starting point for broader understanding. When travelers interpret their experiences thoughtfully rather than generalizing from them, the cultural exchange between young people in Korea and Japan can move toward deeper and more sustainable mutual understanding.

©JoongAng Ilbo



▲ Korean travelers enter Japan through the one-month Fast Track lane launched for the 60th anniversary of diplomatic normalization between Korea and Japan.

The trend of young people in Korea and Japan naturally sharing and consuming each other's daily lives through popular culture, style, and travel is clearly a positive change. Such sensory exchanges help soften relations and increase mutual affinity, but as culture-centered interaction deepens, it may also create an atmosphere where historical issues become harder to discuss. This situation can, in turn, limit the growth of genuine exchange. For Korea–Japan relations to remain sustainable, it is necessary to separate liking from understanding. Even if one appreciates the other country, it is important to recognize its unresolved issues and historical controversies. The essence of a relationship lies not in building affection but in managing what follows it. When responsible memory and contextual awareness are added to cultural exchange, the relationship built by the younger generation can evolve from a fleeting trend into a lasting structure of mutual understanding. 

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Unsettled Settlement: Unresolved Legacy of the 1965 Korea–Japan Claims Agreement

By Jo Hae-deun

Staff Reporter of Social Section

Sixty years after the normalization of diplomatic relations between South Korea (hereafter Korea) and Japan, countless victims still live with the scars of Japan’s colonial rule. Victims of forced labor who were taken to Japan and deprived of their wages, and victims of the Japanese military sexual slavery known as “comfort women,” continue to suffer. Yet these acts were declared “completely and finally settled” under the 1965 Treaty on Basic Relations Between Japan and the Republic of Korea and the Agreement on the Settlement of Problems Concerning Property and Claims (hereafter Claims Agreement). During negotiations, discussions about the victims were excluded, leaving their voices marginalized in ongoing debates on historical issues. Although the 60th anniversary of the Treaty’s ratification approaches on December 18, 2025, efforts toward apology and restoration of victims’ rights remain slow. The Argus, by examining how the Treaty’s claims settlement clause contributed to the neglect of victims’ rights and fueled continuing disputes over individual claims, ultimately urges that future Korea–Japan discussions prioritize justice and redress for historical victims.



Colonial Victims Excluded from the Postwar System

1) Korea Neglected in the Treaty of Peace with Japan (1951)

The 1965 Korea-Japan Agreement system was rooted in the framework of the Treaty of Peace with Japan, which effectively recognized the legitimacy of Japan’s colonial rule and the Pacific War*. Signed in September 1951 between Japan and the Allied Powers, the treaty served as the foundation for postwar settlements and as a precursor to the 1965 Claims Agreement. It defined the scope of countries eligible to claim compensation for wartime damages and limited reparations strictly to losses resulting from Japan’s acts of war, excluding compensation for its colonial rule. Because Korea had been a colony of Japan during the war, it was classified as a territory separated from Japan, and thus was excluded from receiving compensation or participating in the postwar settlement process.

Article 4 Paragraph (a) of the Treaty of Peace with Japan required that issues concerning



▲ Prime Minister of Japan Shigeru Yoshida (C) signs the Treaty of Peace with Japan at the War Memorial Opera House on September 8, 1951.

property and claims related to territories separated from Japan be resolved through separate negotiations. This meant that each government would settle matters regarding assets Japan had owned in its former colonies and properties left by colonial subjects in Japan through bilateral talks. Whether compensation for colonial damages would be included was left for the countries to decide. Accordingly, Korea and Japan began negotiations, which ultimately led to the 1965 Treaty on Basic Relations of Japan and the Republic of Korea and



Claims Agreement.

The Treaty of Peace with Japan was highly favorable to Japan, excluding any discussion of colonial reparations and leaving Korea outside its scope. This outcome reflected the Cold War system centered on the United States, which sought to rebuild Japan as a central ally and a base for the capitalist bloc in East Asia. Prioritizing Japan's stability and economic recovery, the United States adopted a peace of leniency policy that avoided imposing heavy reparations, shaping the postwar order in East Asia and influencing the Claims Agreement system.

^{*}Pacific War: This refers to the war fought between the U.S. and Japan, along with their allies, across the Pacific and Southeast Asian regions from 1941 to 1945.

2) Colonial Victims Excluded from the Claims Agreement

When discussions on the Claims Agreement began, Syngman Rhee, then president of Korea viewed the issue as one that should include both reparations for Japan's illegal colonial rule and the settlement of property relations following the end of colonial governance. Japan, however, did not recognize its colonial rule as illegal and therefore denied any obligation to pay reparations, limiting the discussion to the settlement of property and credit relations after its withdrawal. In 1948, then President Syngman Rhee declared before the National Assembly that Korea would exercise its legitimate right as a member of the Allied Powers to demand reparations. In 1949, the Korean government reaffirmed this position by stating that the legitimacy of Korea's demand for colonial reparations was beyond doubt. However, as U.S. sought to rebuild East Asia around Japan and reduced the scope of its reparations, the Treaty of Peace with Japan excluded colonial damages from recognized claims. Unable to oppose this trend, Korea saw the focus of its negotiations narrow from colonial reparations to the settlement of property relations after liberation.

At the first Korea-Japan conference in 1952, Korea maintained that Japan's rule had been illegal but excluded direct demands for reparations, instead seeking to resolve claims concerning residual assets and unpaid wages. Japan argued that such issues had already been settled, asserting that mutual claims were waived and payment was impossible. Korea countered that U.S. Military Government Ordinance No. 33 had already transferred Japanese property in Korea to the Korean government and demanded compensation for unpaid wages and property rights of Koreans in Japan. Korea's position was supported by Article 4 Paragraph (b) of the Treaty

of Peace with Japan, while Japan cited Article 4 Paragraph (a), arguing that the matter should be resolved through a separate agreement. Japan instead asserted "counterclaims" that the confiscation of Japanese assets violated international law and human rights, insisting on the return of Japanese private property. The negotiations broke down as the two sides failed to narrow their differences. The talks, which should have addressed the illegality of colonial rule, instead centered on Japan's "counterclaims," excluding colonial victims from consideration.

Professor Lee Chang-min of the Division of Integrated Japanese Studies at HUFs said, "After taking power in 1961 under the goal of economic reconstruction, President Park Chung-hee resumed negotiations mainly to secure economic cooperation funds." Pressured by the U.S. to normalize relations, then President Park met then Japanese Prime Minister Hayato Ikeda and agreed to pursue a quick settlement. While Korea maintained that Japan's colonial rule had been illegal, it recognized that direct reparations were unrealistic and instead sought de facto compensation through economic aid. In 1961, Korea proposed compensation for forced labor victims amounting to 364 million dollars, but Japan rejected the demand, claiming that Koreans had been Japanese nationals and could not receive compensation from their own government. To avoid further delays, then President Park dropped the issue of individual compensation. Japan suggested providing larger funds if they were treated as economic cooperation rather than reparations. Ultimately, under the Claims Agreement, which is a sub-agreement of the Treaty on Basic Relations Between Japan and the Republic of Korea, Japan agreed to provide 300 million dollars in grants, 200 million in low-interest loans, and more than 100 million in private loans.

The funds were used for national industrialization projects such as POSCO, the Pohang and Iron Steel Company and the Gyeongbu Expressway. In 1971, the Korean government enacted the Act on the Report of Civilian Claims against Japan, providing compensation of 300,000 won (US\$204.40) per deceased forced labor victim, but no payments were made to surviving laborers or comfort women victims. The President Syngman Rhee had reduced the issue from colonial reparations to property claims, and the Park Chung-hee administration used those funds for economic development rather than compensation.



▲ In June 1965, then President Park Chung-hee (C) signs the Claims Agreement.



The Korea–Japan Claims Agreement and the Exclusion of Individual Colonial Victims

There is no doubt that the Claims Agreement resolved the issue of claims between Korea and Japan as states. However, whether it also extinguished individuals' rights to make direct claims against Japan remains debated. The Japanese government has long argued that while individuals' rights still exist, what was renounced was only the state's right of diplomatic protection. This interpretation originated from cases involving Japanese atomic bomb victims, where the courts ruled that individual rights to claim damages were not extinguished, only the state's right to act on their behalf. This reasoning was later applied to the Claims Agreement. In 1966, Tanita Masami, a Japanese official who joined the negotiations, stated that only the right of diplomatic protection had been waived. That same year, Japan enacted the Act on the Measures for the Property Rights of Japan and its Nationals, which addressed extinguishing property and interests. If the Claims Agreement had already nullified individual rights, such legislation would have been redundant, suggesting that individual claims remained intact. Evidence supporting this was later found in a confidential 1991 report by the Korean Embassy in Japan, declassified in 2023, which indicated that both delegations had implicitly agreed that while state claims were settled, individual rights were not extinguished. However, Japan's stance changed in 2000 after a U.S. court accepted a lawsuit by Korean forced labor victims. Concerned about further litigation, Japan asserted the principle of comprehensive settlement, stating that all claims, including those of individuals, were completely and finally resolved by the Claims Agreement. Japan cited Article 27 of the Vienna Convention and the Doctrine of Estoppel to argue that it could

not contradict its treaty obligations. The Supreme Court of Japan has since upheld this view in cases involving Korean victims.

The Korean government initially held that individual claims were extinguished. Its 1965 Explanation of the Treaties stated that all unpaid wages and compensation for conscripted workers were completely and finally settled. Based on this interpretation, Korea enacted laws in 1971 and 1974 to compensate bereaved families of forced labor victims, assuming the state had taken over those claims. However, surviving victims and comfort women received no restitution. Over time, Korea's position evolved. In 1995, then Foreign Minister Gong Ro-myung acknowledged that individual claims were recognized, and in 2000, then Foreign Minister Lee Jung Bin affirmed that the Claims Agreement did not affect individuals' rights to bring lawsuits. In 2005, a joint government civilian committee concluded that the Claims Agreement addressed property relations, not reparations for colonial rule or crimes against humanity, and that issues such as comfort women were not covered.

Ultimately, the ambiguous wording of the Claims Agreement, including terms like settlement and all claims, allowed both governments to maintain differing interpretations. Yet both have acknowledged that individuals' rights to claim damages were not extinguished, forming the legal and moral basis for victims of forced labor and "comfort women" to pursue direct claims against Japanese corporations.



The Issue of Claims by Actual Victims of Colonial Rule

1) Forced Labor

In the Claims Agreement discussions, unpaid wages of forced labor victims were included, but this did not amount to compensation for colonial rule. It only represented the settlement of post-liberation financial obligations between the two countries. The Claims Agreement did not address reparations for the illegality of colonial rule or related human rights violations, a limitation rooted in the 1951 Treaty of Peace with Japan, which excluded colonial reparations and did not recognize Korea as a party, thereby exempting Japan from responsibility.

Forced labor victims filed a damages lawsuit against Nippon Steel Corporation in 1997. In 2003, the Supreme Court of

Japan dismissed the case, denying the company's liability but acknowledging the victims' individual rights to claim. The court admitted that the victims were forced into unpaid labor but ruled that Nippon Steel had not inherited the debts of the former Japan Iron and Steel Company and that such debts were extinguished under the Claims Agreement. The Japanese judiciary thus viewed individual claims as already resolved under the principle of a comprehensive settlement.

When remedies in Japan failed, the victims turned to Korean courts. The Supreme Court of Korea ruled that Japan's colonial rule was unlawful and that forced labor resulting from it was illegal. It recognized Nippon Steel as the same entity as Japan Iron and Steel, confirming the succession of obligations. The court interpreted the the Claims Agreement as one settling property relations, not compensating for colonial rule, and therefore held that individual claims were not extinguished and that diplomatic protection rights remained valid.

Because the case involved both Japan and Korea, the courts of Korea asserted jurisdiction, viewing domestic litigation as necessary to fulfill the requirement of exhausting local remedies. In earlier trials, the courts had accepted the Japanese verdicts, ruling that although individual claims existed, they could not be exercised. The Supreme Court of Korea, however, departed from this view, rejecting Japan's claim that its colonial rule and forced labor were lawful. It applied Korean law to determine that Nippon Steel and Japan Iron and Steel Company were the same legal entity, noting that the company's assets, executives, and operations had continued without change. Therefore, using Japanese domestic law to deny liability toward Korean victims was deemed unacceptable.

While Japan acknowledged individual rights but considered them settled by the Claims Agreement, the Supreme Court of Korea ruled that the treaty addressed civil and property claims, not reparations for colonial rule. It applied only to matters such as property left in Korea by Japanese nationals or unpaid wages owed to Koreans, not to damages caused by colonial domination. A secret report from the Korean Embassy in Japan in August 1991 supported this interpretation, noting that both sides had understood that the Claims Agreement did not extinguish individual claims. The court further held that the Korean government still retains the right to pursue diplomatic protection on behalf of its nationals.

Finally, the court emphasized that it contradicts modern legal principles for a state to nullify citizens' personal rights through a treaty without their consent, even under the name



▲ Victims of forced labor urge the companies responsible for their wartime exploitation to provide compensation.

of sovereign diplomacy. Even if international law allows such waivers, individuals and states are distinct legal entities. Therefore, unless a treaty explicitly provides for the extinction of individual claims, such rights remain valid. The court concluded that there was no clear the Claims Agreement on extinguishing individual rights.

2) "Comfort Women"

The term "comfort women" refers to women forced into sexual exploitation under Japan's military comfort station system across occupied territories during World War II. Professor Cho Jung-hyun of HUFs Law School has explained that "The "comfort women" system constitutes wartime sexual violence." Under international law, wartime sexual violence is a crime against humanity, defined as systematic sexual violence by a state or military during war that violates victims' bodily freedom and dignity. The "comfort women" was a government-run system, as the state used women's bodies as tools of war, making it a systemic human rights violation rather than an individual crime. Similar atrocities occurred across Asia, including the Philippines, Taiwan, China, and Indonesia. In response, the Asia Solidarity Conference began in 1992, gathering victims and civil groups from multiple countries to seek joint solutions. The issue thus became recognized internationally as a transnational women's human rights problem and a crime against humanity, with global calls for Japan's legal responsibility.

The Claims Agreement did not address the "comfort women" issue, which only gained attention after Kim Hak-soon's public testimony on August 14, 1991. At the time of the Claims Agreement, both governments lacked awareness of the issue, and it was excluded from discussions unlike unpaid forced labor wages. After the issue became public, victims demanded an apology and legal compensation from Japan

and began weekly Wednesday demonstrations at the Japanese Embassy in Seoul. Starting in 1992, the Asia Solidarity Conference was held across Asia to collect testimonies and strengthen international solidarity. In 2000, the International Tribunal on Women for the Japanese Military Sexual Slavery found Emperor Hirohito guilty and recognized Japan's state responsibility.

As international recognition grew, the Korean government announced in 2005 that the “comfort women” issue was not covered by the Claims Agreement. Calls followed for the government to exercise diplomatic protection for victims. In 2011, 109 victims filed a constitutional complaint, arguing that the government's inaction toward Japan violated its duty to protect citizens' rights. The Constitutional Court of Korea agreed, ruling that the state has a constitutional obligation to pursue victims' rights through diplomatic negotiations. On December 28, 2015, Korea and Japan reached an agreement declaring the issue “finally and irreversibly resolved,” with Japan contributing 1 billion yen (US\$6,435,027.00) to establish the Reconciliation and Healing Foundation.

However, the deal failed to meet victims' demands that Japan admit the illegality of colonial rule and assume legal responsibility. Japan maintained it bore only moral, not legal, responsibility—avoiding acknowledgment of colonial wrongdoing. Although the 2015 agreement used the term “responsibility” without “moral,” its legal scope remains ambiguous. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe did not directly apologize, victims were excluded from talks, and the Kono Statement's commitment to proper history education was omitted. The phrase “finally and irreversibly resolved” has thus been criticized as an attempt to minimize Japan's accountability for the “comfort women” issue.

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▲ On 8 May 2025, “comfort women” victims hold a protest in front of the Korean National Assembly Building, calling for amendments to the Sexual Violence Prevention and Victims Protection Act to penalize victim-insulting and history-distorting acts.



Prospects

The Korean government has shown inconsistent attitudes toward the Claims Agreement, with its stance fluctuating depending on the ruling administration. Successive governments have repeatedly prioritized diplomatic convenience over victims' rights, treating the claims issue merely as a tool of foreign policy. Conservative administrations have generally leaned toward recognizing the Claims Agreement as having achieved a “complete and final settlement” of the issue. For instance, during the President Park Geun-hye in 2015, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs declared that “individual rights to claim were extinguished under the Claims Agreement.” Building on this stance, the Yoon Suk-yeol administration in 2023 acknowledged that the Claims Agreement had nullified Koreans' individual claims against Japan and attempted to implement a policy in which the Korean government, rather than Japanese companies, would provide compensation to the victims. In contrast, progressive administrations have taken a more critical stance toward the Claims Agreement. The Kim Dae-jung administration, through the 1998 Joint Declaration on a New Korea-Japan Partnership for the 21st Century, explicitly addressed the illegality of Japan's colonial rule and acknowledged the existence of individual rights to claim arising from it. The Roh Moo-hyun administration in 2005 formed the Joint Public Private Committee on Follow up Measures after the Disclosure of Korea-Japan Negotiation Documents, which reaffirmed that crimes against humanity, such as the “comfort women,” issue had not been included in the Claims Agreement.

Because Korea's interpretation and approach to the claims issue have shifted with each administration, its diplomatic position has lacked credibility in the international community. This inconsistency, inherited from the 1965 practice of using the claims issue as a political or economic bargaining tool, has made it difficult to ensure stable and lasting protection of individual rights. Such inconsistency not only disregards victims' rights but also weakens Korea's legal legitimacy in asserting its claims. Professor Kim Kee-chang of Korea University Law School has argued that “For the international community to recognize the validity of individual claims, Korea must first assert them consistently and firmly.” Professor Kim stressed that “Korea should continue to affirm, as in the 2018 Supreme Court of Korea ruling, that victims of colonial



▲ In December 1970, German Chancellor Willy Brandt kneels in Warsaw, Poland, to mourn Jewish victims and atone for Germany's atrocities during World War II.

rule possess individual rights to claim compensation, and should do so persistently on the international stage.” Professor Nam Ki-jung of Seoul National University’s Institute for Japanese Studies also noted that “A fundamental resolution of the claims issue must begin with compelling the Japanese government to acknowledge the illegality of its colonial rule, which it still denies.” Ultimately, the core of the Korea–Japan claims issue lies not in economic interests but in clarifying the illegality of colonial rule and respecting victims’ rights. Only by restoring diplomatic consistency and establishing principles grounded in historical justice can Korea legitimately represent the rights of colonial victims in the international community.

Japan, for its part, must also make genuine efforts to reflect on its past and strengthen its sense of political responsibility. Germany serves as an example, where social discussions began with the younger generation’s critical engagement with their parents’ history. Japan, by contrast, has shown widespread indifference toward its own history, largely stemming from its education system. Japanese history textbooks have long been criticized for distortions that downplay or obscure the country’s wartime aggression. For example, in 1982, the Japanese government approved a high school history textbook that replaced the term “invasion” of Korea and China with

“advance,” thereby minimizing the aggressiveness of Japan’s imperial expansion. According to analyses by the Asia Peace and History Education Network and the Asia Peace and History Institute, the publisher Daiichi Gakushusha removed the phrase “forced to sign” from the sentence “In 1910, Japan forced Korea to sign the annexation treaty and made it its colony,” thus obscuring the coercive nature of the annexation and reinforcing the perception that it was a legitimate act. Similarly, the publisher Teikoku Shoin deleted the term “conscripted” when discussing the forced mobilization of Koreans, weakening Japan’s responsibility. Such issues continued to stir controversy even in 2025. Professor Shiode Hideyuki of Kyoto University pointed out in his paper “How Has Japan’s History Education Conveyed War and Colonial Rule: Reflections on Textbooks and the Classroom” (2023) that Japan’s modern and contemporary history education remains insufficient. Japanese society tends to be ignorant or indifferent toward its past wrongdoings, such as forced labor and the “comfort women,” and its view of war is centered on Japan as a victim, seeing the conflict as something imposed by state authority.

Therefore, Japan must enhance education on modern history and foster social dialogue similar to Germany’s. The Japanese government’s acknowledgment of its political responsibility for the past must go beyond diplomatic apologies or financial compensation. It should involve continuous acts of remembrance that preserve victims’ voices in public memory and reject distorted narratives. Education that encourages historical reflection can be the first step toward Japan’s collective internalization of its responsibility for colonialism and war crimes. A culture of remembrance and mourning, shared by victims and citizens alike, could become a crucial moment for Japan to confront the political responsibility it has long avoided.

The Claims Agreement done in 1965 reflected an era when state sovereignty outweighed individual rights. By declaring a “complete and final settlement,” it resolved issues from Japan’s colonial rule at the state level but failed to represent the rights and experiences of victims. Today, international law increasingly recognizes individuals’ rights to seek justice for serious human rights violations. Reexamining the agreement does not deny its validity but highlights the limits of a state-centered settlement. Legal measures alone cannot address its unresolved issues. Only when diplomatic discussions include victims’ perspectives and respect their rights can Korea and Japan truly ease tensions over their shared history. 

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The Lingering Shadows of Japanese Words in Korean Identity

By Lee Seun

Editor of Theory & Critique Section

“**S**hall we go get some tteokbokki and ‘odeng’ (fish cake) for lunch?” “Don’t ‘gura’ (lie) to me.” These are common phrases heard in everyday conversations in South Korea (hereafter Korea). Among them, “odeng” and “gura” are actually words of Japanese origin. Many words that seem purely Korean are, in fact, remnants of the Japanese language. Loanwords derived from Japanese carry a particular historical weight. They trace back to Japan’s colonial rule over Joseon, during which the use of the Joseon-eo was banned and Japanese was forcibly imposed. Following the annexation of Joseon in 1910, the Japanese Empire implemented a series of “Joseon-eo Eradication Policies” that lasted until Joseon’s liberation in 1945. Twenty years later, in June 1965, Korea and Japan signed the Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea to normalize diplomatic ties and revitalize postwar trade between the two nations. The treaty took effect on December 18 of the same year. As of December 2025, it marks the 60th anniversary of normalized diplomatic relations. However, even as exchanges between the two countries have deepened and mutual perceptions have improved, a shared history remains that should not be forgotten. This article explores the colonial legacy embedded in the Japanese-derived words still present in Korean today, examining how the unconscious use of these words may affect the historical consciousness of those who lived under or inherited the memories of colonial rule. The Argus, by tracing the origins of Japanese linguistic remnants across different sectors of Korean society, seeks to remind readers of the history that continues to impact Korea and Japan relations.

[Before Reading] Joseon and Joseon-eo

Joseon refers to the dynasty that existed from 1392 to 1910 in Korea. Throughout this article, the term “Joseon” denotes Korea during the period from Japan’s colonial rule to the establishment of the Korean government on August 15, 1948, that is, before the division of the Korean Peninsula. Joseon, therefore, encompasses the entire peninsula. After the signing of the 1910 Japan–Korea Annexation Treaty, Joseon was reduced to a colony of the Japanese Empire. At the time, the Japanese Empire retained the name Joseon, yet established a pervasive system of control over its politics, economy, and culture. In particular, under its language policy, Japanese was designated as the national language, while Korean was categorized as Joseon-eo, a subordinate linguistic system. Accordingly, throughout this column, the term “Joseon-eo” refers to the Korean language as spoken by Koreans during the colonial period from 1910 to 1945.



Joseon-eo Eradication Policy

“Hey, I heard Jeong-suk is getting married this ‘nichiyobi’ (Sunday). I saw lots of ‘subarashi’ (splendid) fabrics at her place. Even though she’s an ‘abada’ (pockmarked girl), the groom ‘oke’ (accepted) her, right?” “It wasn’t the groom who ‘horeru’ (fell in love); it was Jeong-suk who ‘horeru’ (fell for him).” “‘Naruhodo’ (I see), that’s new to me.” This is a dialogue that writer Eum Heung-seop recorded after hearing actual conversations of middle and high school students in 1948, 3 years after liberation. Despite being freed from the Japanese Empire, Japanese words still dominated the conversations of Joseon people. Why did Japanese infiltrate everyday speech so profoundly? The answer lies in the enduring effects of the Joseon-eo eradication policy carried out during the 36 years of the Japanese Empire’s occupation of Joseon, from 1910 to 1945.

On August 29, 1910, the Japanese Empire forcibly colonized Joseon, and for the next 36 years, deliberately chose to eradicate Joseon-eo. Park Kyoon-seop, professor in the Department of Education at Teachers College of Kyungpook National University, explained, “The core reason the Japanese Empire chose linguistic eradication lies in its attempt to dismantle their identity through the destruction of their language. To annihilate a language is to drive the very existence of its speakers toward ruin, and by doing so, the Empire sought to imprint the idea that Joseon people were neither independent nor valuable as a distinct group.” In this process, the Japanese Empire designated Japanese as the national language, while downgrading Joseon-eo to a subordinate status. The Japanese Colonial Government of Korea, established in Gyeongseong-bu, modern-day Seoul, oversaw these language policies to control the language used in daily life. The Government-General’s policy on national language continued from the annexation of 1910 until 1945. Although it temporarily appeared to soften after the March



▲ The headquarters building of the Japanese Colonial Government of Korea stands in Gyeongseong-bu.

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First Movement of 1919, its repressive measures only became more overt and systematic over time.

1) Period of Military Rule, 1910 to 1919

From 1910 until the March First Movement in 1919, the Japanese Empire governed Joseon through brutal military rule, relying on soldiers and military police to maintain control through fear. During this period, a system resembling martial law was imposed, with Japanese troops dominating everyday lives of Joseon people. Even in schools, teachers carried swords, creating pervasive intimidation. In August 1911, the Japanese Empire announced the First Joseon Education Ordinance to suppress the use of Joseon-eo. The Ordinance laid out the principles and systems of colonial education, implementing a “national language policy.” Under this policy, Japanese replaced Joseon-eo as the “national language,” while Joseon-eo was relegated to subordinate status. The subject, Joseon-eo, was even merged with Classical Chinese, creating a single curriculum titled “Reader of Joseon-eo and Classical Chinese.” In all schools, Japanese became not only the general language of teaching and learning, but also the language in which every textbook, except the Reader of Joseon-eo and Classical Chinese, was written. Moreover, even during classes that used the Reader of Joseon-eo and Classical Chinese, a large portion of the lessons were for learning Classical Chinese rather than Joseon-eo, resulting in an even smaller amount of time devoted to the actual teaching of Joseon-eo. This systematic dissemination of the Japanese language extended beyond schools to administrative offices, police departments, and military garrisons, mobilizing all available Japanese personnel in Joseon to enforce linguistic assimilation.

As the Japanese Empire enforced a harsh regime of military rule and repression, the people of Joseon grew increasingly determined to fight for independence. Throughout the 1910s, numerous underground



▲ Japanese military police stationed in Joseon enforce Japan's rule during the occupation.

resistance groups were organized within Joseon to oppose Japanese authority, while independence bases were established abroad in regions such as Manchuria and the Russian Far East. By the end of 1918, domestic nationalist leaders from religious circles began to take note of the shifting global order, and collaborated with student organizations to prepare for a nationwide independence movement. Around the same time, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson’s postwar principle of “national

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self-determination,” declaring that “every nation has the right to decide its own destiny,” and the February 8th Declaration of Independence proclaimed by Joseon students in Tokyo, Japan, inspired hope among the Joseon people. Encouraged by this momentum, on March 1, 1919, the March First Movement erupted in a nationwide protest against the Japanese Empire’s military rule. People from every social class gathered across the country, shouting “Long live Korean independence!” Beginning in Seoul, the movement quickly spread nationwide as people across the provinces recited the declaration and waved the Taegeukgi, the Korean national flag, echoing the cry for independence across the entire peninsula.

2) The So-Called Cultural Rule Period, 1919 to 1938

After the March First Movement in 1919, the Japanese Empire realized that ruling through military force and oppression only provoked greater resistance. Seeking to pacify discontent, it restructured its colonial governance and launched what it called “cultural rule.” The new policy appeared to be a modern reform, however in reality, it was a deceptive strategy designed to divide Joseon society and foster submission to Japanese rule. The Japanese Colonial Government of Korea reformed the governorship system, which had previously allowed only military officials to serve as Governor-General, extending eligibility to civilian officials. Yet in practice, not a single civilian governor was ever appointed. Although the military-police system, in which military police had performed ordinary policing duties, was officially abolished, surveillance actually intensified. The number of police stations rose dramatically, from 751 in 1918 to approximately 2,000 by 1920, and the police budget tripled. Under the guise of “civil policing,” the militarized system of control became even more pervasive.

In November 1920, the existing Joseon Education Ordinance was partially revised, bringing changes to the education policy. Between 1922 and 1929, a significant change was the separation of the combined subject “Joseon-eo and Classical Chinese” into two independent subjects, “Joseon-eo” and “Classical Chinese.” During the First Joseon Education Ordinance period, “Joseon-eo and Classical Chinese” accounted for about 21 percent of the total curriculum. Under cultural rule, however, the proportion of Joseon-eo was reduced to roughly 12 percent of total class hours. As cultural rule deepened, the Japanese Empire pursued broader administrative reforms that directly affected education. One notable shift was the policy of Extension of the Japanese Homeland, which sought to integrate Joseon more fully into

the Empire by applying Japan’s domestic legal and institutional systems to the colony. Under this policy, two distinct education systems were established: one for Japanese residents in Joseon, referred to as “those who habitually use the national language,” and another for Joseon students, referred to as “those who do not habitually use the national language.” The term “habitual use” was deliberately vague, masking racial and linguistic discrimination behind bureaucratic language. Through such classifications and the systematic reduction of Joseon-eo’s role in the curriculum, the Japanese Empire aimed to erode the linguistic identity and national consciousness of the Joseon people.

Since the Japanese Empire banned the use and teaching of Joseon-eo in an attempt to eradicate Joseon national identity, Joseon linguists fought to preserve their language. In 1921, the Joseon Language Research Society was founded to study, promote, and spread Joseon-eo. Inspired by the pioneering linguist Ju Si-gyeong, it was organized to research the grammatical principles of Joseon-eo. In 1926, the society designated the twenty-ninth day of the ninth lunar month as “Gagya Day,” based on the Veritable Records of the Joseon Dynasty record of the completion of Hunminjeongeum. This day later became today’s Hangeul Day. From 1927, the society published the magazine Hangeul, and in 1929 it formed the Joseon Language Dictionary Compilation Committee to create a comprehensive Korean dictionary. By the 1930s, the society had evolved into the Korean Language Society (KLS). Language preservation movements also began in rural areas. From 1931 to 1934, *The Dong-A Ilbo* led four rural enlightenment movements to promote public education and national development. The first three were called the Vnaron Movement, and the fourth was the Enlightenment Campaign.

A total of 1,547 lectures were held across thirteen provinces of Joseon and among Joseon people living in Manchuria, Japan, and China. More than 4,000 people participated, and about 80,000 attended the lectures.



▲ The *Dong-A Ilbo*'s rural enlightenment movement spreads education across Joseon as participants gather for Vnaron lectures.

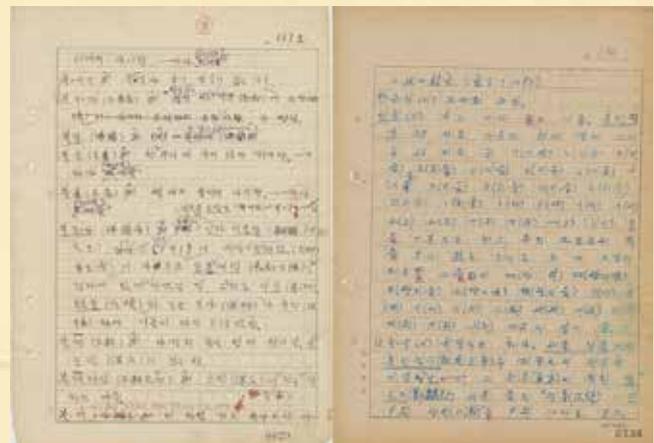
3) The Ethnic Eradication Period, 1938 to 1945

After the Great Depression of 1929, the Japanese Empire waged a series of wars around the world. Amid the economic crisis, it sought to secure resources and expand its power by occupying Manchuria. In 1931, the Japanese Kwantung Army bombed part of the Manchurian Railway, falsely blamed Chinese forces, and seized control of Manchuria in what became known as the Manchurian Incident. Even after that, the Japanese Empire continued to invade China, and in 1937, the Marco Polo Bridge Incident* triggered the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War. As Japan's wars expanded, the United States imposed an oil embargo to restrain its aggression. In response, Japan launched a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor in Hawaii in 1941 to secure military dominance in the Pacific, marking the beginning of the Pacific War.

As the wars dragged on, the Japanese Empire faced a shortage of soldiers and began mobilizing Joseon people for military service. To ensure that Joseon people would perceive themselves as Japanese and actively participate in the war effort until the very end, the Japanese Empire initiated an extreme policy known as "Nae-sun-il-che." From the 1930s, this policy evolved into an all-out ethnic eradication rule, designed to make Joseon people perceive themselves not as Joseon people but as Japanese. To implement this, in 1938 the Japanese Empire enacted the Third Joseon Education Ordinance. It excluded Joseon-*eo* from the list of required subjects in all schools, reclassifying it as an optional or temporary subject, while stipulating that all other subjects must be taught in Japanese. Later, with the Fourth Joseon Education Ordinance, the subject of Joseon-*eo* was completely removed from all school curricula. Professor Park added, "From 1941 to 1945, under the Primary School Ordinance, subjects such as ethics, national language, national history, and geography appeared under the name 'Gukmin-gwa,' which means national subjects. Although the term 'gukmin' was an abbreviation of 'Hwang-guk-sin-min,' meaning subjects of the Japanese Emperor, we continued to use the name 'gukmin hakgyo,' meaning national school, without much resistance until late 1995. The Japanese Colonial Government of Korea's Joseon-*eo* eradication policy extended beyond the education system to personal identity itself. In 1940, it enforced the renaming policy, forcing Joseon people to adopt Japanese names and prohibiting the use of Joseon-*eo* even in their own names. It also ordered the shutdown of all newspapers and magazines printed in Joseon-*eo*, including *The Dong-A Ilbo*, silencing the last remaining

voices written in the Joseon-*eo* script.

In response to the Japanese Empire's extreme oppression, the people of Joseon launched movements to preserve their national culture and language. A representative example was the KLS, a private academic organization reorganized from the Joseon Language Research Society in 1931. The KLS aimed to study, systematize, and unify the spoken and written language of Joseon. While striving to promote the use of Joseon-*eo*, it announced the "Unified Korean Orthography," the "Standard Korean Language Dictionary," and the "Unified System for Loanword Orthography," achieving the scientific codification of Joseon-*eo*. In August 1942, the society began work on the "Joseon mal keun sajeon," a Joseon-*eo* dictionary, but the project was ultimately halted by the Japanese Empire. This event became known as the KLS Incident, which began when a student was questioned for speaking Joseon-*eo*, leading Japanese authorities to arrest dictionary compiler Jeong Tae-jin and force him to confess that the KLS was a nationalist organization involved in the independence movement. As a result, the Japanese Empire labeled the activities of the KLS as subversive acts promoting Joseon nationalism and launched a large-scale crackdown. On October 1, 1942, key members including Lee Jung-hwa, Jang Ji-yeong, and Choi Hyun-bae were first arrested, and by April of the following year, a total of thirty-three people had been detained. The Heungwon Police Station charged them with treason under the Peace Preservation Law for their involvement in dictionary compilation and imprisoned them in Hamheung Prison. Among them, Yi Yun-jae and Han Jing died in custody, while the others were sentenced to imprisonment or suspended sentences after prolonged interrogation and trials. The Japanese Empire defined dictionary compilation as a "nationalist



▲ Shown here are the draft manuscripts of the Joseon mal keun sajeon.

movement preserving the spirit of the Joseon people,” using it as justification for repression. Through this, it sought to control and ultimately eradicate Joseon-eo itself.

*Marco Polo Bridge Incident: It is the incident which began on July 7, 1937, when Japanese troops attacked Chinese forces near the Marco Polo Bridge in the suburbs of Beijing.



가나다 Japanese Linguistic Remnants by Field

1) Journalism

In the field of journalism, many Japanese terms are still in use today. When rookie reporters join a newspaper, they are trained by visiting police stations for on-site reporting. This training is called “さつまわり” (satsumawari), or simply “まわり” (mawari). Expressions such as “Our satsumawari reporters had a hard time last night during ‘はりこみ’ (harikomi, stakeout duty)” show that Japanese words remain openly used in Korean journalism. This stems from the modernization of Korean journalism having been modeled after Japanese press organizations during the colonial period, adopting their technology, structure, and terminology. Printing techniques, editing design, and page layout methods were all introduced from Japan, and technicians became accustomed to Japanese terms. For efficiency and brevity, these Japanese-origin technical expressions took root in everyday newsroom language.

Even after liberation, the Korean press underwent no major organizational restructuring, and most of the pre-existing newspaper personnel and systems remained, perpetuating Japanese practices to later generations. Immediately after liberation, reporters, editors, and technicians who had worked during the colonial period continued to train newcomers, transmitting their experience and know-how. They used Japanese-style terms as if they were their own common language. The apprenticeship system in newsrooms involved senior reporters directly training newcomers in the field. In this way, Japanese expressions mixed with newsroom slang were used for work instructions and training. Such terms became entrenched as professional jargon known only to journalists, reinforced by seniority culture and on-site routines. Reporters preferred short and familiar Japanese-style slang for quick communication in the field, and this use of shared terminology became a means of building camaraderie among them.

2) Law

One of the laws enacted to protect minors from sexual exploitation and sexual crimes is “아동·청소년의성보호등에관한법률,” which is written without any spacing between words. In Korean, where spacing is a basic writing rule, why are official legal titles written without spaces? This originates from Japanese, a language that does not use spacing. Japanese influence persists even in court rulings. A representative example is the predicate phrase “~된다고 할 것이다,” which comes from the Japanese expression “のである” (nodearu), which means “will be” or “is to be.” On December 4, 2019, the Supreme Court’s Review Officer Section recommended replacing it with more natural alternatives such as “~라고 할 수 있다” or “~가 될 수 있다,” to eliminate remnants of Japanese syntax. Other examples of Japanese remnants include phrases frequently used in criminal rulings such as “~로 볼 여지가 상당하다,” and in administrative litigation judgments, expressions like “상당한 인과 관계가 인정된다고 할 것이다” and “~하지 않으면 안 된다고 할 것이다.” As in the last example, double negative constructions also stem from Japanese syntax.

Thus, the legal field remains one of the areas where remnants of the Japanese Empire persist most deeply. This is because the laws and systems established during the colonial period continued to exist even after liberation. Immediately after liberation, Korea was placed under the rule of the U.S. military government, during which the Japanese legal system remained in use. When the Original Constitution of the Republic of Korea was enacted in 1948, Article 100 of the Supplementary Provisions in Chapter 10 stated, “Existing laws shall remain in force insofar as they do not conflict with this Constitution.” This clause allowed the laws from the colonial period and those enacted under the U.S. military government to remain effective as long as they were not inconsistent with the new Constitution, thus incorporating preexisting systems into the new state. In addition, Article 103 of the same chapter stipulated, “Public officials in office at the time this Constitution takes effect shall continue to perform their duties until their successors, elected or appointed under this Constitution, assume office.” This provision enabled officials who had served under the U.S. military government to continue in their positions in the new Republic of Korea until replacements were appointed. Because many of these officials had been pro-Japanese bureaucrats during the colonial period, the clause provided an institutional foundation that allowed them to retain their administrative positions without interruption. Even after liberation, these

Tongues

officials continued to draft official documents, rulings, and administrative regulations using the Japanese-style expressions they had employed under colonial rule. As a result, many of these linguistic remnants became formalized and remain embedded in official writing styles to this day.

3) Military

In the military, “점호,” a roll call conducted every morning and evening to check personnel and any special circumstances, remains in use despite its Japanese origin, with no Korean alternative established. The term “총기 수입,” referring to firearm maintenance, also contains a Japanese remnant. In this context, “수입” (手入) comes from the Japanese word “手入れ” (teire), which means “to repair” or “to maintain.” The reason such expressions remain in the military stems from the origins and personnel composition of the armed forces immediately after liberation. After Korea’s liberation, under the U.S. military government that governed the transitional period before the establishment of the Republic of Korea, it was urgent to create a military organization to fill the gap in security and defense. To maintain order, the U.S. military government established the Korean Constabulary Reserve in 1946. At that time, they were compelled to appoint experienced military personnel as key officers. Many members of the Independence Army or Liberation Army who had returned to Korea were focused on organizing private armed groups or were reluctant to cooperate with the U.S.-led effort to form a new army, while a large number remained in China. In contrast, those who had served in the Japanese Army or graduated from the Manchukuo Military Academy were familiar with modern military organization, training, and administration. Consequently, officers who had served in the Japanese Armies or Manchukuo Imperial Armies and had been educated at the Imperial Japanese Army Academy or the Manchukuo Military Academy took leadership roles in establishing the Korean military. Although the U.S. military government established the Military English School to train new officers, more than 98 percent of the initial 100 entrants and graduates were former Japanese or Manchukuo army personnel. These officers naturally introduced Japanese military terminology, command systems, and administrative customs into the newly founded Korean army. Consequently, Japanese-style expressions and practices became deeply rooted in the military from its inception, and some of these terms remain in use today, as no proper replacements have yet been found.



▲ The Korean Constabulary Reserve carries Japanese military terminology into the new army.

가나다 Language and Identity

The suppression of Joseon-eo and the enforcement of Japanese during the Japanese colonial period, when language was not merely a tool for communication but a political instrument used to implement the ideology of “Nae-sun-il-che,” were not just matters of linguistic control but fundamental issues that threatened the core of Joseon’s national identity. Professor Park explained, “National identity represents the distinctiveness and solidity of a community’s shared history, culture, and sense of belonging, so it is inseparably linked to language. The life of a people and the life of their language move in the same direction.” In the colonial education system, learning Japanese meant accepting one’s position as a “colonial subject.” Writers of the generation who lived through the colonial period and its aftermath, such as Shin Dong-yeop and Lee Ho-cheol, experienced identity fragmentation from this contradictory position. Shin Dong-yeop, known by his Japanese name 平山八吉 (Hirayama Yakichi), received colonial education in Japanese and was even recognized as a model student, yet these experiences left him not with linguistic pride but with a profound sense of ethical guilt and self-denial. The recurring image of “primitive purity” in Shin’s poetry originated from his shame as a “tainted Korean” who had internalized the Japanese language. He condemned himself for having learned Japanese and perceived the world through it as a Joseon person, seeking redemption from that linguistic contamination through poetic expression.

According to Han Soo-yeung of Yonsei University in “‘Imaginary Mother Tongue’ and Its Others-Linguistic

Consciousness of the Post-war Generation and Im/possibility of the Linguistic Liberation” (2014), the postwar generation’s confessional writings regarding linguistic identity were shaped by a sense of atonement. For them, returning to Joseon-*eo* while learning Japanese was an ethical imperative, and the transition from Japanese to Korean became a rite of passage to excise colonial memory. Writing in one’s mother tongue represented a desire to break from the colonizer’s language, yet the “mother tongue, Korean” they sought no longer existed in a pure, uncolonized form. Already shaped by Japanese, Western languages, and colonial education, Koreans could not return to linguistic innocence. Their writings therefore carried guilt and an irreparable linguistic wound. Realizing that even their mother tongue bore traces of colonization, their language shifted from one of national return to one of atonement and remembrance. Professor Park added, “It is in this sense that David Malouf’s reflection on the fate of one’s mother tongue becomes especially resonant: ‘A deeper shudder sweeps over me when I imagine that my mother tongue no longer lives on in the mouths of people. It is the sum of the death of my entire people.’”

There were also writers who regarded the use of Japanese as an act of resistance. After liberation, the use of Japanese was no longer a forced practice but a consciously chosen language, an act reinterpreted as carrying both liberation and resistance. Writer Kim Soo-young, in 1966, wrote a manuscript in Japanese and then translated it into Korean for publication, prompting a renewed reflection on the relationship between the two languages. Kim did not conceal the fact that he could not completely free himself from the bondage of Japanese; rather, he revealed it openly. For him, using Japanese was not an act of shame, but a confrontation with the lingering specter of the language, a struggle against the ghost of the colonial tongue. Writing in Japanese was no longer an act of submission to the language of domination, but a resistant practice, an attempt to

reveal colonial memory and record its wounds.

If Japanese was once used as a conscious act of resistance, how do younger generations, who never lived through colonial rule, now relate to the Japanese-derived words that remain in Korean? Recently, younger generations have begun adopting Japanese-derived expressions in different forms from those of the past. This trend is influenced by the growing presence of social media platforms, such as YouTube, as well as by an increasingly positive and interactive relationship between Korea and Japan among younger people today. However, without accurate education on Japan’s colonial aggression and wartime crimes, superficial and sentimental responses emerge easily, leading to distorted sympathies. Professor Park remarked, “When historical memory is lost, people may come to sympathize with the aggressor’s power rather than stand with the victim’s suffering.”

Language embodies more than communication. It carries the worldview and consciousness of its speakers. Professor Park remarked, “While perceptions of Japan and its language grow friendlier among the younger generation, Japan’s right-wing and ultranationalist forces are simultaneously amplifying their denial and justification of past invasions. They refuse to confront historical truth and instead romanticize the image of a militarized imperial Japan.” Professor Park added, “Referencing Abraham J. Heschel’s concept of a ‘misalignment between apology and forgiveness,’ even a sincere apology cannot be accepted on behalf of victims by those who did not experience the crimes. Thus, any discussion of reconciliation or partnership that ignores historical context risks becoming a sentimental misreading of modern history rather than a step toward genuine resolution. Addressing Japanese linguistic remnants, then, requires clarity of historical consciousness rather than an easy appeal to generational flexibility or abstract future-oriented slogans.”

Language is not merely a tool for communication but a symbol of a people’s history and identity. Linguistic traces reflect the time and experiences a society has passed through, and the Japanese remnants still present in the Korean language are no exception. As younger generations without colonial experience have emerged, the use of Japanese remnants has become largely unconscious, yet this very familiarity poses the greatest danger because it allows history to be forgotten. Therefore, when using Japanese-derived expressions, one must not dismiss them as mere linguistic habits but understand the colonial history and context that allowed such words to persist. Only by recognizing the history embedded in language can we remember the past and view our present language with critical awareness. 📖

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Peace and Justice

By **Kim Yi-eun**
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“**A**nation with a large territory and population is not necessarily a great country. Even if its land is small and thinly populated, a nation is truly great when it produces many virtuous people. What is the meaning of life and death? There are people who are spiritually dead, though still breathing, and there are those who live on even after their last breath. If a man does not live rightly, it is worse than dying. If a man dies rightly, he will live forever. Living and dying depend entirely on oneself. So strive with all your heart to awaken to the true meaning of life and death.” – Yi Jun’s Words

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The Yi Jun Peace Museum, this house, is a historical site where patriot Yi Jun passed away on July 14, 1907. At that time, along with patriots Yi Sang Sul and Yi Wi Jong, Yi Jun sought to inform the world of the invalidity of the Eulsa Illegal Treaty (hereafter Illegal Treaty) and to restore the Korean Empire’s national sovereignty by attending the Second Hague Peace Conference (hereafter Peace Conference) in 1907 held in The Hague, The Netherlands, as a Korean representative. However, their mission failed due to obstruction by Japan and indifference from the Great Powers. The De Jong Hotel, where Yi Jun was deceased and the three patriots had stayed at the time, was renovated and opened as the Yi Jun Peace Museum in 1995 with the aim of commemorating Yi Jun and educating people around the world about the spirit of peace and justice.

◀ The De Jong Hotel, where the envoys stayed, opens later as the Yi Jun Peace Museum.

At the time, Japan was attempting to annex the Korean Empire. In November 1905, Japan threatened Emperor Gojong and his ministers, forcing them to sign the Illegal Treaty in order to deprive the Korean Empire of its diplomatic and governing rights, thereby making it a Japanese protectorate. Emperor Gojong asserted that the Illegal Treaty was invalid, sending messages to five heads of state, Russia, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy and France, to expose the wrongful nature of the Illegal Treaty. In 1907, he attempted to appeal for the independence of the Korean Empire before the international community by dispatching special envoys to the Peace Conference. The Korean Empire was facing a period of national crisis. The United States ignored an urgent message declaring the Illegal Treaty invalid. Furthermore, Russia, which had included the Korean Empire on the list of invitees, later informed Japan of its intention to exclude it, thereby acknowledging Japan’s protectorate over the Korean Empire.

▶ Yi Jun (L), Yi Sang Sul (C), and Yi Wi Jong (R) are dispatched as The Hague envoys to the Conference.



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“The sovereign independence of the Korean Empire has been recognized by many nations around the world, and since we have concluded treaties with them, it is our rightful duty to dispatch envoys to this international conference. On November 15, 1905, Japan violated international law by forcibly seizing our diplomatic authority, thereby severing our friendly relations with other nations. We entrust the special envoys to attend the Peace Conference to express our nation’s hardship and reclaim our diplomatic authority.” – Excerpt from Emperor Gojong’s credentials issued to Yi Jun

◀ Emperor Gojong confers credentials on Yi Jun for The Hague envoy mission.

In April 1907, Yi Jun, dispatched by Emperor Gojong, departed the Korean Empire, and was later joined by Yi Sang Sul and Yi Wi Jong. They arrived in The Hague on June 25. The special envoys requested an audience with the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, but the request to attend the conference and to address it was denied. The reason was that since many nations had already approved the Illegal Treaty, they could not recognize the Korean Empire’s diplomatic authority. Subsequently, the envoys’ appeal was published in the *Courier de la Conference de ia Paix* on July 5. Furthermore, during an interview with a reporter, Yi Wi Jong demanded the right to participate in the Peace Conference, asking, “Why are they excluding the Korean Empire?” and declaring, “We have traveled all the way to The Hague, where the altar of the God of Peace is said to be, to find that very deity.”

▶ The *Peace Conference News* features the story of the envoys.



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“The Japanese always speak of peace, but how can people know peace while facing the barrel of a machine gun? Unless all Koreans are dead and gone, there can be no peace in the Far East until Korea’s independence and the restoration of the Korean people’s freedom are achieved. The Korean people are spiritually united in pursuit of the common goal of independence and freedom, and for this purpose, they are risking their lives to oppose the cruel, inhumane, and selfish aggression of Japan.” – Excerpt from the speech, “A Plea for Korea,” by Yi Wi Jong.

©Yi Jun Peace Museum



On July 8, 1907, the envoys were invited to address at The Foundation of Internationalism, and Yi Wi Jong delivered a speech titled “A Plea for Korea,” addressing the invalidity of the Illegal Treaty, the injustice of Japanese aggression, and the legitimacy of Korean independence, and he appealed for international understanding of Korea’s plight.

◀ Yi Wi Jong gives a speech at the Press Center.

Now, as South Korea and Japan mark the 60th anniversary of the Treaty on Basic Relations Between Japan and the Republic of Korea, there is a need to reflect on six decades of cooperation and tension, as well as the era before it, on the meaning of the peace and justice for which the three envoys strove in The Hague. Their voices, which were silenced amidst Japan’s aggression and the indifference of the world powers, continue to convey a message that transcends time. True reconciliation and harmony do not come from ignoring the past, but from facing and acknowledging it. Their purpose, which emerged in the distant city of The Hague, The Netherlands, was not only for the restoration of Korea’s sovereignty but also the aspiration to lay the foundation for peace among nations. 

▶ The patterns of the Taeguk-gi, Korean national flag, used in 1907, differ from the current version.



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Yakiniku Dragon: Hearts Across the Table

By Park Se-eun

Editorial Consultant

“A near yet distant country” is a phrase often used to describe the relationship between South Korea (hereafter Korea) and Japan. Although they are only a few hours apart geographically, the two nations have long felt emotionally distant because of historical wounds and lingering emotional rifts. However, a recent trend of mutual cultural exchange and appreciation has gradually begun to narrow this emotional gap. The film *Yakiniku Dragon* (2018) delicately portrays this ambivalent, love-hate relationship, one that shares the pain of history yet celebrates cultural connection. It also portrays the complex identity and suffering of the Zainichi Koreans* living in Japan.

The film’s setting is the spring of 1969, four years after diplomatic relations were normalized with the Treaty on Basic Relations Between the Japan and the Republic of Korea on June 22, 1965. The Korean couple, Yong-gil and Young-soon, are remarried and run a tripe restaurant named Yakiniku Dragon in a shanty town near Osaka Airport, together with their children from previous marriages. Their children include Shizuka, who walks with a limp due to an accident; Rika, who is about to marry a Japanese man named Tetsuo; Mika who falls in love with a married man; and the youngest son, Tokio. Their bloodlines are slightly different, but they live, laugh, and cry together as a single family.

*Zainichi Koreans: The phrase refers to ethnic Koreans and their descendants who are permanent residents of Japan, many of whom trace their roots to the migration, both voluntary and forced, during Japan’s colonial rule of Korea.

Small but Warm Diplomatic Ties Forged in *Yakiniku Dragon*

Yakiniku Dragon is not just a simple eatery. This small, warm space is always filled with the smell of meat and smoke, but within this smoky air, people’s genuine feelings are revealed. Japanese and Korean customers sit together, laughing, singing, and offering clumsy greetings in each other’s languages, demonstrate the potential for reconciliation fostered by the empathy born from this friendly atmosphere. In the late 1960s, while the gates of Korea and Japan were opened through the normalization of diplomatic relations,



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▲ *Yakiniku Dragon* portrays emotional exchanges that transcend national boundaries between Koreans and Japanese.



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▲ Koreans and Japanese share warmth and laughter as their everyday conversations naturally blend their cultures into one.

the actual emotional distance between the people remained deep. Politically, diplomatic ties were restored, but relations between the people were awkward and easy. In *Yakiniku Dragon*, diplomacy among individuals takes place rather than diplomacy between nations. Korean-style tripe and Japanese seasonings are placed on the same table, and laughter erupts as Japanese and Korean languages mingle. This is the reality of coexistence in a world of different cultures, languages, and wounds, yet one in which people learned to live together.

Wounds Transmitted Differently, Warm Memories Shared

Generational Difference: The Survivor's Memory and the Misunderstood Wound



▲ Yong-gil comforts his son Tokio, who faces bullying at his Japanese school, filling the boy's heart with the steady love of family.

Yong-gil belongs to the generation that experienced war, poverty, and discrimination firsthand. Despite losing his arm during the war and living in an illegal shantytown, he runs a tripe restaurant on Japanese soil and devotes himself to protecting his family. For him, Japan is a place where “you must fight just to survive.” Therefore, even when his son Tokio is bullied at his Japanese school, he refuses to transfer him to a Korean school. However, Tokio, who shows traits of autism, cannot understand his father. This misunderstanding eventually drives Tokio to the sea, where he takes his own life. His despair is a reflection of the reality faced by the second-generation Zainichi Koreans struggling to survive within Japanese society. The parental generation speaks of “the reason they had to stay,” but the children’s generation cannot comprehend “the reason they must endure.”

Nevertheless, Yong-gil deeply loves his family. He gives the disheartened Tokio a ride in his cart, where he silently reassures him with a pat on the back.

Cultural Crossroads: Different Languages, Same Heart

Inside *Yakiniku Dragon*, the Korean traditional instrument *jangu* and the Japanese accordion resonate together. The Korean folk song *Nilliriya* blends with a Japanese melody, and food and music naturally unite the two cultures.

However, the film does not merely depict simple harmony. The relationship between Rika and Tetsuo exposes the deep-rooted social prejudice of the time. When the two go to submit their marriage registration, the clerk sneers at them because Tetsuo is marrying a Korean. Faced with that cold gaze, Tetsuo cannot contain his anger and tears up the form. The ensuing argument between the two back at *Yakiniku Dragon* is a reflection of how difficult it was for Koreans and Japanese to live together at the time. People love each other, yet they hurt each other simply because they are different. Despite all this, their genuine efforts to understand one another symbolize a reconciliation born from humanity rather than politics.



▲ After a painful conflict over marriage, Tetsuo and Rika open their hearts to each other and find reconciliation.

“Our family is connected by blood little by little, yet also disconnected little by little.” This line, spoken by Tokio as he describes his family, mirrors the relationship between Korea and Japan. The two nations share many similarities in language, culture, and lifestyle, yet a clear gap still exists. The family in *Yakiniku Dragon* also experiences numerous emotional fluctuations within that subtle gap, similar yet different, connected yet not entirely one. The relationship between Korea and Japan has likewise alternated between long periods of warmth and coldness. Even when moments arise to draw closer, the pain of history makes each side falter. The people in *Yakiniku Dragon*, despite speaking different languages and bearing different wounds, share a table, sing together, and ultimately remain a family. The normalization of relations between Korea and Japan begins not merely with a treaty, but with mutual understanding and empathy between individuals. Diplomatic relations were established on paper, but the relationship endures through people. This is the true meaning we must reflect upon now, as we approach the 60th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations. 🇰🇷

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Dear, 2025



✉ *Kim Si-yon*

I want to remember 2025 as a voyage with The Argus. Serving as editor-in-chief for a semester felt like sailing across an unfamiliar sea. Each day, I got caught in a storm of anxiety and uncertainty, but I was never alone. There were editorial consultants who had already charted this course before me, and the reporters of The Argus who shared this journey with me. Now, as I reach the end of this voyage, the destination before me exceeds anything I imagined. I find a more mature version of myself, friends I will treasure for years to come, and memories that no one can take away. Though my role at The Argus has come to an end, I will set sail once again in 2026, toward a new horizon.



✉ *Song Eun-seo*

When I first joined The Argus as a cub reporter, I had a lot of worries. As a senior, I did not have much time to devote to campus activities, and more than anything, I lacked the mental space to take on something new. However, my year with The Argus became a chance to reflect on myself and grow. Of course, the work was not easy. I had to think critically and invest a great deal of time. Even so, I do not regret participating, because when I looked back after a year, I could see how much I had developed. And above all, I was able to work alongside truly great colleagues, which is what made the year possible. To me, The Argus of 2025 will be remembered as the last chapter of my university years where I gave my very best.



✉ *Lee Seun*

The year 2025 will be remembered as a time of challenge and setbacks. When selecting topics for The Argus articles, I boldly chose subjects that I had long wanted to explore but had hesitated to tackle because they were difficult or unfamiliar. Studying unfamiliar topics was often overwhelming, yet it made me realize that I was growing step by step. Because of these challenges, I became more deeply attached to each article I wrote this year. Every time I revisit those completed pieces, I realize that even my moments of stumbling were an essential part of my growth.

 *Jo Hae-deun*

After moving to Seoul and leaving my mother's care, there was no one to point out my shortcomings, and chances to grow became rare. I often sensed my own limits while facing challenges, yet rarely received feedback. This semester at The Argus, however, offered generous guidance on how to conduct interviews politely, structure arguments, and use research effectively. Thus, I will remember the 2025 Argus for my "shortcomings." They are not a source of shame, but proof of growth. Following that direction, I hope to write stronger and more thoughtful articles next year.

 *Kim Yi-eun*

2025 was a year of taking a breather while also embracing many changes and challenges. Last year, serving as vice president of the mentoring club and editor-in-chief of The Argus allowed me to learn and grow significantly, though it was also somewhat challenging. Last semester, I took a leave of absence, worked part-time, and gained new experiences. Currently, I am still part of The Argus as an editorial consultant and studying abroad in Germany as an exchange student, learning anew from every little detail of daily life. And someday, when I look back on 2025, I want to remember it as a year filled with diverse experiences that I enjoyed, and one where I felt proud to have been part of The Argus.

 *Park Se-eun*

2025 was a year of challenge and discovery. In the first semester, I poured my time and passion into The Argus as editor-in-chief. It was an intense yet rewarding period that pushed me to my limits and I could learn what it truly means to lead a team. In the second semester, I took a break from school to give me time to slow down, find balance and reflect on what kind of future I want to build. The lessons I found throughout 2025 taught me that real growth begins when I step beyond what is familiar.



POST

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