

Korean National Day Reception
Seattle
October 2, 2014 (as prepared)

Thank you, Mr. Chewon Lee and Ms. Susan Joo.

Consul General Moon Duk-ho, it is nice to see you again. We are happy to have you here. Having the consulate of the Republic of Korea in Seattle is very important to our state and has been very beneficial to our ongoing relationship with South Korea.

Martha Choe, I hope you have found time for some well-earned rest after what must have been an extremely busy and stressful 10 years with the Gates Foundation. You certainly did a lot of incredible work for the foundation while there, and the world is a better place for it. *(Also acknowledge Rep. Cindy Ryu if there, strong participate in LCEDIR with a lot of thoughtful questions).*

It is my honor to help you celebrate Korea's National Foundation Day called Gaecheon-jeol, *(Pronounced Gae (as in Gary) Chun (as in unbelievable with ch sound in the front) Juhl (as in haul but replace h sound with j),* marking the legendary founding of Korea on Oct. 3, 2333 BC by Tangun. In the United States of course we can only trace our roots back to founding of the first colony in 1605. So Korea has us beat by nearly 4,000 years.

Washington state has a unique and strong relationship with the Republic of Korea, one that just seems to get better with time. South Korea is our state's sixth-largest trading partner, and the signing of the U.S.-South Korea Free Trade Agreement two-and-a-half years ago now means our extremely important trade relationship continues to grow stronger.

We sell Korea a lot of aircraft. But we also move many U.S. automobiles to Korea through our ports, millions in seafood products and millions more in fresh cherries and other agricultural products. Many Korean products come through our ports too.

Korean influence is everywhere, from Korean restaurants and other businesses, large and small, to large Korean festivals in many of our communities.

We are proud to count within our citizenry 130,000 people of Korean descent, including two of my adopted sons, Mark and Adam. We have about 2,500 students from Korea studying in our state's colleges and universities.

For many years now Washington has enjoyed a sister-state relationship with the Jeollabuk-do (JOL-LA-BOOK-DOH) Province in the Republic of Korea. It is through enhanced trade and cultural exchanges with the state of Jeollabuk-do (JOL-LA-BOOK-DOH) and other provinces that we prosper and grow. Beyond the sister state relationship, there are ten Washington cities that have sister city or friendship city relationships with cities in Korea.

I was able to spend a few days in Korea last December, thanks to the hospitality of our Korean Consulate, and very much enjoyed my visit. Among other things I had the great honor of meeting some Olympic archers at the Athletes Training Center in Seoul who are training for the 2016 games in Rio. I happen to be an avid archer myself, so it was very kind of our hosts to make sure I got a dose of my favorite sport while in Korea.

Korea is very special to me, as it is for the state of Washington.

So today we celebrate not only the founding of early Korea, the kingdom of Chosen, but we also celebrate all of the good that crosses between Washington and Korea. The Republic of South Korea is a very important part of our family, and may our ties continue to be close and strong for a very long time.