

KOREAN NATIONAL LIBERATION DAY
DAY OF GWANGBOK, AUGUST 15, 1945
RESTORATION OF LIGHT

CKVA GREETINGS AND EDITORIAL FREEDOM is not free—and no people on earth should realize that more than the combined populations of North and South Korea. Your Chairman of the CKVA cannot observe this annual remembrance without reflecting on the sacrifices of scores of patriots—American and Korean—who no longer can exult in what we have so far accomplished on the Korean Peninsula in that portion where Republic of Korea sovereignty is established.

I honor Dr. Park, Seh-jik, Major General, ROKA, Retired, who died less than a month ago. I honor Dr. Kim, Sang-chul, another patriot of the first rank. Others are still in the battle for freedom: Bishop Dr. Kim, Hong-do, General BB Bell, US Army, Ret., Major General John Singlaub, Retired, Lt General Kyung, Koon Chang, ROKA, Retired, Colonel William Weber, US Army Retired, and myriad others. I miss these and other trusted comrades from the battles. God bless them and continue to raise up giants of their ilk.

The US National Korean War Veterans Memorial is located in Washington, DC, immediately adjacent to The Lincoln Memorial, and within sight of the Vietnam and WWII Veterans Memorials. Many Americans celebrated there this past July 27th—and have done so for several years.

But, there is another, greater Memorial to our service then—and since.

The Republic of Korea today is itself a memorial to American and Korean sacrifices which is written not in stone but on living hearts located in our flesh and blood, and as such is the Supreme Enduring Korean War Veterans Memorial. For this reason, if no other, we must take every measure, devise and carry out every plan, and work until we can work no longer to build up, then build up again, and then again, the US-ROK Alliance.

Should our Alliance fail, grow gray, then feeble, then exist only on life support, and finally disappear, then I suggest to you that something of our mutual National bodies will have died. Something which has energized us to accomplish the best possible through the past few years will have been excised. And, just as surely as our physical bodies will perish when the heart is ripped from them, the very essence of mutual accomplishment shall leave us, orphans as it were, to try to make our individual ways--rather than the Allied way--in a hostile world.

Korea is great not because the USA is great; the USA is better, or great, because Korea is great. That is the kind of relationships we have between ourselves and the ROK, my fellow veterans of Korea. We must preserve, defend, and ever build higher our relationship.



IN HONOR OF DR. PARK, SEH-JIK, PATRIOT

An article by a young contemporary Korean/Korean-American patriot follows. I know Hannah Kim—I named and have always called her “Peacekin” honoring her supreme inner desire for ALL Koreans.

Louis T Dechert

THIS WE'LL DEFEND!



The Korea Times

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Our Tryst With Destiny

By Hannah Kim

This past Aug. 15 called for celebration to one-sixth of the world's population as it marked the 62nd anniversary of India's day, appointed by destiny, in which she stood again, “after long slumber and struggle; awake, vital, free and independent.” India's tryst with destiny finally arrived exactly two years after Korea gained its freedom from colonial rule in 1945.



Six decades later, both of these independent nations rank in the top 15 of the world's economy, and Indian and Korean-Americans are among the most financially successful in the United States.

Nearly 2 billion Indians spanning the globe had every reason to celebrate as the country boasts “the world's largest democracy,” and is respected for independence “pledged to the principles of fairness, dignity, peace, and democracy.” These exact words are

contained in the resolution that passed (S. RES. 102) in the 105th United States Congress, designating Aug. 15, 1997, as Indian Independence Day: A National Day of Celebration of Indian and American Democracy during its 50th Anniversary.

Having yearned and struggled long and hard for their own freedom, Koreans rightfully deserved to rejoice on **Aug. 15 in worthy recognition that the ``independence of Korea was not only significant to Koreans, but also a turning point in the history of all countries in East Asia in the fight for democracy and civil liberties."**

This is precisely the language used in a resolution (H. CON. RES. 227) submitted by Rep. Joseph Crowley in 2005 during the 109th United States Congress, though I wonder how many knew such an effort was made in ``Commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Korean independence movement and recognizing Korean National Liberation Day."

So I cringed in guilt when I read the part in the resolution where it matter-of-factly states: ``Whereas Korean National Liberation Day serves as a reminder and heightened awareness among the younger generations of Koreans for the struggle for independence through the noble deeds of their forefathers." How many of us young people, especially living in America, can actually fathom the full depth of Korean independence, and how we can express our appreciation are questions I began to genuinely ponder while reading the resolution.

Fortunately I found some relief and hope toward the end when it encouraged Americans to ``reflect upon the relationship between the United States and Korea and remember the lives lost during the Korean conflict, once termed the `Forgotten War.'"

Gratitude comes naturally to me because I know so many Korean War veterans who shed blood to preserve South Korea's independence, but nonetheless say, as did Congressman Charles Rangel, who conveyed congratulatory remarks this past Independence Day weekend in New York. ``It gives me great pride to see how the nation has flourished into a country of democratic and free people."

Indeed, Korea's economic and cultural prosperity has come at a great cost, including the ultimate sacrifice of a myriad of lives. And Korean-Americans now thrive in the land of the free and participate in the world's best democracy.

In fact, it is further humbling to hear Ed Buckman, who served in Korea from 1950-1952,

tell me: "All Korean veterans are so proud of what your homeland has achieved with their freedom. We are equally proud of our new citizens from Korea; they have raised the bar for all others to follow as new Americans."

However, as we continue to celebrate our current success, we would be remiss not to think about the 25 million people who share the same independence yet do not enjoy the freedom.

Regrettably, the two Koreas still remain at war. The status quo on the peninsula brings much suffering not only to people in North Korea, but also to many in the South and Koreans everywhere.

In this regard, I hope we can take a moment to reflect upon these breathtaking words by India's first Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, at the stroke of midnight on Aug. 15, 1947, in proclamation of their independence:

"Before the birth of freedom we have endured all the pains of labor, and our hearts are heavy with the memory of this sorrow. Some of those pains continue even now.

Nevertheless, the past is over and it is the future that beckons to us now. That future is not one of ease or resting but of incessant striving so that we may fulfill the pledges we have so often taken and the one we shall take today."

I sincerely believe the past is key to understanding the present and unlocking the problems of the future. As Nehru uttered in his renowned "Tryst with Destiny" speech, "... as long as there are tears and suffering, so long our work will not be over."

On Aug. 18, 1945, on the "Day of Gwangbok," Korea reclaimed its light. So that the sacrifices of the freedom fighters and the Korean War veterans were not made in vain, let us not forget our history, nor allow that torch of freedom to be blown out, however high the wind or stormy the tempest."

Hannah Kim is a 2009 Master's graduate at the George Washington University Graduate School of Political Management, specializing in Legislative Affairs. She spearheaded the passage of the "Korean War Veterans Recognition Act, U.S. Public Law 111-41," which was signed by President Obama on July 27, 2009, 56 years to the day after the Korean War Armistice was signed in 1953. She can be reached at hkim@remember727.org.

