

Unificationist Je Hun Yoo elected head of National Association of Koreans in Germany

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Je Hun Yoo (fourth from the left) soon after he won the election as head of the association

Mr. Je Hun Yoo was blessed to a Japanese woman among the 6,500-couple blessing group. In May 2014, members of the Nationwide Association of Korean Residents in Germany reelected Mr. Yoo their chairman.

Mr. Yoo went through an intense election campaign when he first ran for chairman in 2012, travelling around the country campaigning. The incumbent chairman, a Christian church elder, spread propaganda against his opponent claiming that the Unification Church was funding Dr. Yoo's election campaign with the intent of taking over the entire association.

Out of 220 electoral representatives, a substantial number of representatives supported Mr. Yoo. However, around fifty of his supporters were unable to take part in the vote. Despite these odds, Mr. Yoo gained 104 votes out of 158 valid votes and bested the incumbent chairman, who got 54 votes.

Visit to Cheon Jeong Gung Museum

For Mr. Yoo, running for office for this association was putting True Parents' honor on the line. He recounts that his election was a struggle between good and evil, where he was able to obtain victory by visiting all thirty-eight local associations and win the hearts of their members through his sincerity.



He ran for this prestigious position because he dreams of having all the Korean residents in Germany, who contributed to the modernization of Korea, welcome True Mother were she to come to Germany. On March 28, 2014, Korean President Park Geun-hye was in Frankfurt as part of an official visit to Germany. At a meeting for Korean residents, Dr. Yoo gave the welcoming address on behalf of all Korean residents in Germany.

His address reflected the wishes of Koreans dispatched to Germany in the 1960s and 1970s that the Korean government enacts reasonable policies to ease their happy return to Korea, bringing closure to the historical dispatch of Koreans to Germany.

In October of the same year, he had the opportunity to meet President Park again, during the annual meeting in Seoul of Korean community representatives from all nations. There, President Park conveyed her appreciation to the Koreans in Germany and requested their support in bringing about the reunification of Korea. On October 9, after this annual meeting, twenty-one executives from the association including Mr. Yoo visited Cheon Jeong Gung Museum, which True Mother kindly approved.

Mr. Yoo arranged with staff members at the Chung Pyung Heaven and Earth Training Center and of Cheon Jeong Gung Museum so that the delegation could visit the museum on their way to Namiseom Island, where the delegates would hold a two-day seminar. The delegation to Cheon Jeong Gung Museum included leaders of the local associations of Korean residents throughout Germany. Some were devout Christians. Despite their background, when Mr. Yoo told them about this visit to a Unification Church

holy ground, they voluntarily agreed to go. That everyone in the entire delegation (excluding one person who had a previously arranged personal appointment) gladly took part in this visit is meaningful.

After arriving in the Chung Pyung area, the delegates were briefed for an hour on the background of the Chung Pyung holy ground. They watched a video of True Parents' activities before heading toward the Cheon Jeong Gung Museum. Arriving at Cheon Jeong Gung, the delegates were deeply impressed with the beautiful view, including Chung Pyung Lake, that the museum commanded from atop the hill.

A museum official explained the providential significance of Cheon Jeong Gung. The delegates were then ushered into the museum, where staff members explained each item on display, all of which were articles True Father had used in his lifetime. The visitors were able to get a better understanding of True Father. Mr. Yoo notes that after they returned to Germany, the participants would thank him whenever he met them and comment on how impressed they were by the Cheon Jeong Gung Museum. During their visit, Mother had made special arrangements for them by providing a bus during their tour and giving gifts of ginseng and the museum's official teacup souvenir.

The association's main activities

As a student in Germany, Mr. Yoo first gained prominence in the Korean community through his efforts to normalize the local associations of Korean residents in Frankfurt, the activities of which German courts had suspended for seven years because of legal complications. After being elected the chairman of the association in Frankfurt, he reconciled the parties embroiled in the disputes and brought them into the association. His exemplary services during his time as chairman of this local association, culminated in his obtaining the enthusiastic support of the Korean Embassy and Korean Cultural Center in Berlin for the Little Angeles performance in that city. The Korean ambassador to Germany came to the VIP room to watch the performance and greeted True Parents. Thirty-six years after first coming to Germany as a student, in 2012, Mr. Yoo was elected chairman of the Nationwide Association of Korean Residents in Germany. Currently, he is serving his second-term. This year, he will oversee a number of important events, including celebration of the seventieth anniversary of Korea's independence, sports competitions for all Korean residents in Germany, cultural events that evening, commemorative events for the March 1 Independence Movement and an annual Korean speech contest, which his association will host for the seventeenth year.

During Mr. Yoo's tenure

On March 1, 2013, the Sam-il Cultural Foundation presented the association with its 3.1 Cultural Award for organizing (annually for more than a decade) events commemorating the March 1, 1919 Korean independence uprising and a Korean speech contest for the purpose of upholding and carrying on the spirit of the 3.1 Independence Movement.

Mr. Yoo carried out events after his election as the nationwide leader that he had planned while leading the local association in Frankfurt. These events took place in Frankfurt. Once Koreans in other countries heard about them, these events won the admiration of many Korean associations around the globe. The association organized events to commemorate the 130th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between South Korea and Germany and it held a Korean Cultural Festival to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the first Korean laborers dispatched to Germany.

The intent of these events was to arouse hope for the reunification of Korea. The cultural festival lasted four days (June 5–8, 2013) at the Rossmarkt Plaza in Frankfurt. The highlight of the opening ceremony for this cultural festival was a colossal bibimbab (bowl of rice mixed with meat and vegetables) enough to feed 2,013 people.



Eminent societal figures at the opening ceremony rolled up their sleeves to mix the huge bowl of bibimbab, the ingredients for which the cooks had laid out in the shape of the Korean Peninsula. A large sign written in calligraphy expressing the wish for a reunified South Korea was placed at the center of the plaza and a choir comprised of Korean residents in Germany performed. Other events they held concurrent with this festival included the third World Korean Wrestling Tournament and co-hosted by the World Korean Wrestling Association.

These events made a lasting impression on the hearts of the German people. Having attracted tens of thousands of spectators, the festival was a success.

Sharing Happiness and Rice: Most of the laborers that South Korea had initially dispatched to Germany are now in their seventies and eighties.

Due to the near-absence of policies for these aged Koreans, most of them had been living in difficult circumstances.

Since last year, Mr. Yoo initiated a project of sharing rice with these elderly Koreans under the slogan Rice is Love. By the end of last year, association members had delivered ten kilograms each of rice and kimchi to more than three hundred elderly Koreans.

Publication of the Quarterly Magazine for Korean Residents: The association prints and distributes 3,500 copies of a sixty-four-page magazine, which reports news of local Korean associations throughout Germany and serves as a conduit for building solidarity among the Korean community.

Promoting the association to important organizations in South Korea is another important function it fulfills. Plans for a publication on the 130-year history of diplomatic ties between South Korea and Germany: This year marks the 132nd year since South Korea established diplomatic ties with Germany. Over those many years, some bumpy, South Korea and Germany have maintained international exchanges. Germany, which had been divided into East Germany and West Germany, loaned money to Korea, which helped Korea's economic development. The sweat shed by Korean laborers dispatched to Germany also served an important role in bringing the two countries together.

At the center of all this was the Nationwide Association of Korean Residents in Germany. The Association is currently planning to produce a publication covering the 130 years of diplomatic relations between South Korean and Germany in order to highlight the turbulent histories of the two nations, both of which saw war and division. The publication will also cover the reunification that Germany achieved and that South Korea still seeks.