

President Tanaka's Remarks

Waseda University and Korea University have a long history of academic, athletic and cultural exchange, dating back to regular soccer matches between the two universities beginning from 1962, and the signing of an academic exchange agreement in 1973. Furthermore, in 2002, the alumni associations of both universities signed an agreement enabling further exchange at various levels, including among students, faculty and staff, and alumni.

In May 2024, I received an honorary doctorate from Korea University. I still remember the impressive ceremony and warm welcome I received that day as if it were yesterday. Since then, I have visited Korea University twice more: in October 2024 for the Japan-Korea Millennium Forum and in July of this year on a business trip to Korea. On each occasion, I was warmly greeted by everyone at the university, including President Kim. I would once again like to express my sincere gratitude.

I am delighted and honored to invite Dr. Cha-Yol Koo, as well as all of you in attendance, to today's Honorary Doctorate Conferral Ceremony, adding a new page to the long history of exchange between our two universities.

As mentioned in the opening remarks, Dr. Koo has made significant contributions to strengthening the competitiveness of the Korean industry on the global stage through his accomplishments such as serving as Chairman of the LG Group and leading its evolution into a global enterprise with operations in 100 locations across 25 countries. In 2021, he was appointed the 31st Chairman of the Korea International Trade Association, where he established the "Japan-Korea Exchange Special Committee", contributing significantly to restoring economic trust between the two nations by maintaining continuous dialogue with Japan's political and business circles from a business perspective.

After being appointed the 33rd President of the Korea University Alumni Association in 2019, he devoted himself to supporting Korea University students in continuing their studies throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, he revitalized the activities of the alumni associations of both universities, and through his proactive leadership, he ensured that exchanges continued uninterrupted, including mutual visits and the hosting of forums. Needless to say, these efforts led to the further deepening of the relationship between the two alumni associations.

As Waseda University approaches its 150th anniversary in 2032 and looks ahead to 2050, our aim is to be an internationally distinguished research university that contributes to humankind throughout the world. Tomorrow, on October 19, we will officially launch our 150th anniversary celebrations with the "Waseda University 150th Anniversary Project Opening Ceremony." Dr. Koo's exceptional accomplishments as a global leader are a shining example for our university in its promotion of contribution to society. It is therefore deeply meaningful that we have taken this opportunity today to confer upon him an honorary doctorate degree.

I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to the representatives from Korea University who will be in attendance at tomorrow's ceremony. I sincerely hope that, through this special occasion, the friendly relations between our two universities will deepen and develop into an even stronger partnership. Waseda University is committed to evolving into a university that contributes to humankind through the world by fulfilling its mission through "Waseda's Research," "Waseda's Education," and "Waseda's Contribution."

In closing, I wish for the continued development of friendly relations and academic exchanges between Korea University and Waseda University, as well as the continued good health and success of Dr. Koo.

Thank you.