

Dr. Koo's Remarks

Esteemed President Aiji Tanaka of Waseda University, Professor Masahiko Gemma, Director of International Affairs, and distinguished guests from Japan and Korea, including Mr. Kwang Myung-ho, President of the Korea University Alumni Association, and former president Mr. Kim Dong-won, and others who traveled from Korea to join us today, I extend my heartfelt gratitude for this honorable occasion.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to all the staff and faculty from both universities who have contributed so extensively to academic affairs, including student exchange and faculty exchange programs.

I consider the honorary doctorate I am receiving today to be a symbol of the great trust you all place in me. It is a tremendous honor, for which I express my deepest gratitude.

As Waseda University approaches its 150th anniversary, I understand that it is making consistent efforts to contribute to humankind throughout the world through diverse research activities based on the concept of academic independence. As a graduate of Korea University, I have also worked to expand international exchange. Therefore, I deeply resonate with this ideal and sincerely hope that cooperation between our two universities will continue to develop.

I began my career at LG International in 1978. Over the next fifteen years, I worked as an international businessman in the U.S., Japan, and Singapore. In particular, I worked as the head of the regional headquarters in Japan in the early 1990s, which allowed me to directly witness the front lines of Japan-Korea economic cooperation.

At that time, the world was still in the shadow of the Cold War, Japan was recovering from the oil shock, and Korean economy was still in the process of development. I believe Japan-Korea relations were at a crucial turning point, developing not only economically but also through interactions between ordinary citizens and the youth.

In 1992, I started a two-year assignment in Tokyo, serving as the representative of LG Corporation's Japanese subsidiary, during which time I cultivated deep relationships with many Japanese people, both professionally and personally. At the time, my family lived in Hiroo, and we had many warm interactions with our neighbors. My wife still maintains close relationships with the Japanese friends she met during that period. In 1994, I had the opportunity to reconnect with the Japanese market when I became head of the international division of LG Investment & Securities.

Building on these experiences, after assuming the role of chairman of the LS Group, I continued to serve as a "private-sector diplomat," strengthening cooperative ties between Japan, South Korea, and other Northeast Asian nations. During a period when Japan-Korea relations faced challenges regarding diplomacy and security issues, I played an active role in addressing these issues through my positions as director of the Seoul-Tokyo Forum and through the Japan-Korea Business Council and Business Summits.

I was honored to receive the "Business Leader Award" from the Korea University Business Alumni Association and the "Most Respected Korean Business Leader Award" from the Korea Federation of Business Associations in recognition of these efforts.

Furthermore, after becoming Chairman of the Korea International Trade Association in 2021, I worked to forge cooperative relationships with the Keizai Doyukai in Tokyo and Osaka, established the "Japan-Korea Exchange Special Committee" and served as a liaison between key figures in Japan's political and business circles, promoting economic cooperation between businesses of both nations.

At the same time, Waseda University and Korea University have expanded their exchange activities to cover a wide range of fields, including culture and sports, and are leveraging their respective research and educational networks to develop the next generation of global leaders from Japan and Korea.

Today, I am honored to receive an honorary doctorate degree from Waseda University. This honor symbolizes the trust and exchange between our two institutions, and I also understand that it comprises your expectations for exemplary leadership in Japan and Korea. I keenly feel the weight of this responsibility, which has inspired within me a renewed sense of purpose.

I am determined to live up to the honor of this degree by continuing to work with a strong sense of purpose and dedicating my utmost efforts to fostering an active exchange and development between Japan and Korea.

Once again, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude for your kind sentiments and warm hospitality.

Finally, I hope for the continued health and success of everyone present today. I also ask for your continued support and cooperation so that the friendship between Waseda University and Korea University will continue to grow stronger into the future.

Thank you very much.