

Newsletter for Servas Korea



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Bulletin 30, December, 2025

Discover Korea 2025 in Suwon



A UNESCO World Heritage Site
Suwon Hwaseong Fortress



The national first-half gathering for members of Korea SERVAS and their families, along with international participants, was held in Suwon, a special city. The event offered a multi-sensory experience that blended exploration of UNESCO World Heritage sites with beautiful natural scenery, cultural observation, and

hands-on activities.

Venue: Suwon Youth Hostel

Date: May 17 (Sat) – 18 (Sun), 2025

Participants: Members of Korea SERVAS and their families; international participants.

A total of 120 people participated, including 20 foreign nationals.

The whisper of Blooming Flowers

After completing registration by 2 p.m., the meeting participants took a leisurely stroll



around the Sangnok Campus and the nearby Agricultural Museum. As it was a weekend, numerous events were

taking place on campus, filling the area with lively energy. Many of the programs were designed for children and parents to enjoy together... The gathering was held in Suwon as spring arrived, overcoming winter and making a fresh start, which mirrored the event's lively spirit.



After dinner, we watched the movie Ayla, the daughter of war, a story set around

the Suwon Ankara School, which was founded as a gesture of peace. The film and the school's history tell the touching story of how Turkish veterans of the Korean War extended compassion and support to orphaned Korean children.

Based on the true story of a Turkish soldier, Süleyman Dilbilay, who fought in the Korean War (6.25 War) and a Korean orphan girl, this film depicts their meeting, separation, and reunion after 60 years. Their story of practicing true love and peace left us solemn and gave us time to reflect on the task given to us.

Contest : 5-Minute Presentation

This chapter is a time for individuals or local chapters to give a 5-minute free presentation on a travel-related topic, or for chapters to perform a talent show. Two members shared their travel hosting experiences, focusing on hospitality and cultural respect. The following chapter talent show featured music and dance. Although prizes were promised for the most outstanding performances, all teams participated with hilarious and wholehearted effort, regardless of their perceived skill or popularity. Who knew such a small prize could inspire such fierce competition!

The performances, imperfect yet earnest due to limited rehearsal time, sparked laughter and fostered a joyful sense of unity.



A Scent of Spring, A Glimpse of Eternity: Feeling Joseon Architecture



- Appreciating Joseon-era architecture within Suwon Fortress, we sense the wisdom, spirit, and philosophy of our ancestors.-

The following morning, after breakfast, the group divided into two courses to explore Suwon Hwaseong Fortress with cultural commentary. Hwaseong Fortress, also known as Suwon Fortress, is a Joseon-era fortress wall. Its official name is Hwaseong, and it is alternatively called Suwonseong. It was designated as a South Korean Historic Site in 1963 and inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1997. Construction began in February 1794 (the 18th year of King

Jeongjo's reign) and was completed in 1796 (the 20th year). The total length of the fortress wall reaches 5.74 km. The motivation for its construction was more political, economic, and rooted in filial piety towards parents rather than purely military, making the fortress itself a vessel for the Eastern philosophy of "hyo" (filial devotion). Beyond its cultural value, it holds significant spiritual and philosophical value, and related cultural heritage is well-preserved here. Although it suffered damage from natural disasters, the Japanese colonial period, and the Korean War, thanks to the Hwaseong Seongyeok Uigwea (The Royal Protocols of the Hwaseong Fortress Construction) detailed record of the construction with drawings and text—it could be restored close to its original form. Originally, UNESCO World Heritage status was typically granted only to buildings

preserved in their original state, but its registration was exceptionally permitted in recognition that the restoration was faithful to the original, backed by meticulous historical documentation.



The Servas trip participants split into two teams—one taking an easier course and the other a more challenging one—and explored the site while listening to explanations from cultural heritage guides. We immersed ourselves in the essence of our architectural heritage, admiring the pinnacle

of Joseon architecture such as Hwaseong Haenggung (the temporary palace), Jang-an Gate, Hwahong Gate, Paldal Gate, and Banghwasuryujeong Pavilion, all under the fresh spring sunlight of May. After spending a half-day in Suwon, enchanted by the verdant fragrance of May and the beautiful architecture, we had lunch. Having grown fond of one another over the short time together, we exchanged repeated farewells, reluctant to part, eventually concluding with the lingering ritual of a long goodbye. Thanks to the hard work and dedicated efforts of Gyeonggi Chapter members, including President Choi Pil-gyu, who organized this event for over 100 participants, all members experienced the joy of unity. The event captured a beauty that felt like a reenactment of the sincere devotion our ancestors showed in crafting this fortress and its exquisite architecture.



Servas International Peace Riding



SIPR 2025 Korea

Servas International Peace Ride

The 2025 International Peace Bike Ride was held in alignment with the Discover Korea period in Suwon. Participants enjoyed the fresh, green atmosphere of May while cycling approximately 222 km along the South Han River and North Han River over a 3-night, 4-day journey.

Organized under the guidance of advisor Choi Byeong-wan, a veteran in the field, and led by Servas Korea President Yoon Young-beom, the ride was supported by photo and host coordinator

Kwak Sang-gyu, assistant Kim Seong-gil, and record keeper Kim Mi-sook, along with preliminary inspections and on-site surveys conducted by each group's leaders. Thanks to these efforts, the ride concluded safely and enjoyably.

The total number of participants was 40, consisting of 30 Koreans and 10 international attendees. The gathering's key locations shifted as follows:

1. Schedule: May 19th (Monday) to May 22nd (Thursday), 2025. A 3-night, 4-day itinerary.

2. Meeting Point: King sejong's Tomb Station Square, Yeosu, Gyeonggang Line.



On the Road:

Happiness Borne by the Wind

- Detailed Daily Routes

-Day 1 (May 19th, Monday):
60KM

-Gather at 9:30 AM.

-King Sejong's Tomb Square →
King Sejong's Tomb (4KM) →
Ipo Weir → Lunch (Makguksu
noodles) (18KM) → Yangpyeong
(16KM) → Yangsuri Dumo
Bridge Head (19KM) →
Riverside Park (3KM).

-Day 2 (May 20th, Tuesday):
54KM

-Yangsuri Dumo Bridge Head
→ Bright Square (2KM) →
Saetteo
Samgeori, Namyangju (14KM)
→ Daeseong-ri →
Cheongpyeong Station (12KM)

→ Lunch → Gapyeong UN
Commonwealth War Memorial
(UK, Canada, South Africa,
Australia, New Zealand) (16KM)
→ UOS Training Center,
University of Seoul (11KM).

- Day 3 (May 21st, Wednesday):
54KM

-UOS Training Center → Uiam
Dam (10KM) → Seomyeon
Doctor's Village (9KM) →
Shinmae Bridge Certification
Center (6KM) → Lunch →
Chuncheon Dam Intersection
(8KM) → Hajungdo Resort
(1KM) → Myeongdong Hotel,
Chuncheon (5KM).

-Day 4 (May 22nd, Thursday):
52KM

-Myeongdong Hotel,
Chuncheon → UN Ethiopian
War Memorial Hall →

Samaksan Mountain Cable Car (5KM) → Baekyang-ri Station (15KM) → Gapyeong (10KM) → Lunch → Cheongpyeong Station (14KM) → Daeseong-ri (9KM) → Light meal → Event concludes at Daeseong-ri Station. Participants return home via the Gyeongchun Line.

- Other Information:

The participation fee was 380,000 KRW, which included support for participants' SK point accrual and bicycle transport costs.

guitar, and bonded over glasses of makgeolli, becoming one.

It was like witnessing a beautiful scene from a fairy tale. The expressions of happiness and vitality in the photos guided us all to a magical place within that story.

I truly believe that the power of their solidarity, hands joined together, became a small but sure step in practicing peace.

-From Zorba the Greek: Mastering the santouri changed me entirely. Whenever I'm in low spirits or flat broke, I play it, and it revives my



The photographs, presented in sequence, show us passing by riverbanks adorned with lush white Korean evodia and vibrant rapeseed flowers. In the evenings, they shared simple dinners, sang songs to the

energy. That is the nature of passion.

So, as Zorba found his fire in the santouri, I celebrate the fire in each of you, fueled by the turn of your pedals and the freedom of the ride.

The butterfly effect in chaos theory



Yudeisy, a Cuban visitor to Korea who participated in the Discover Korea Peace Forum, was on a city tour of the Gyeongnam region with her Korean hosts after the forum schedule ended. While walking near the seaside in Jinhae, she and her group spotted a woman struggling to install a banner on a fence in the strong wind. Without hesitation, Yudeisy approached her, greeted her, and offered help. Her companions joined in as well.

The woman, who was helped, introduced herself as a

professor in the modeling department at Busan's Shilla University. She explained that the banner was for a senior fashion show to be held in a few days. Yudeisy, who is very interested in modeling activities herself, asked if she could participate in the show. The professor gladly agreed, and the host couple who were with her also got the opportunity to join.

The host couple, having just returned in January from a roughly four-month trip across South America, used accessories and props they had purchased there to create a special segment on stage. Cuban tradition, Korean hospitality, and South American memories blended together. It is said that Yudeisy performed the runway walk while wearing traditional Korean court attire (Hanbok).

Though it was an impromptu

decision made on the expert coach's suggestion, they delivered a stage performance rivaling that of any professional. Both the organizing professor and the special guest participants, Yudeisy's group, were highly satisfied, calling it a wonderful serendipitous success.

It feels as though there is no expression more fitting of the Servas spirit than this: an opportunity born from an open heart and a small act of courage. It was an experience of a world without borders—a place transcending age, nationality, or formalities—almost like the living realization of the "imagination" John Lennon sang of.

This experience was shared on the Servas online community by member Seong Jae-wi from the Changwon branch in Gyeongsangnam-do. Later, while visiting Gyeongju, Yudeisy injured her leg. Since it was not covered by her insurance, she faced very high

medical costs. A Servas Korea member learned of Yudeisy's situation, and through everyone's participation, a fund was raised to help her. However, as she firmly declined the support, the fund was reallocated for other purposes and is currently being held in reserve.

She is remembered as a young and capable Servas member who, when Korean Servas travelers visited Cuba, generously offered them unstinting support and care. Hearing this story feels like witnessing a beautiful tale of human warmth and connection.

Perhaps this very chain of events—this butterfly effect—might one day lead to unexpected and wonderful outcomes, like transforming a future desert into a thriving green meadow.



GENERAL Korea Servas General Meeting In Muju



The 2025 Servas Korea Second National Assembly was held in Muju, Jeonbuk Special Self-Governing Province.



Deogyusan National Park, it is rich in nationally designated treasures, historic sites, scenic spots, natural monuments, and cultural heritage.



Jeonbuk Special Self-Governing
Province: Muju

Muju, part of the highly autonomous Jeonbuk Special Self-Governing Province, leverages its regional, historical, and cultural characteristics. Blessed with the natural gift of

The area also offers year-round attractions, including beautiful landscapes and ski resorts. True to its reputation as a tourist destination with pristine nature, Muju hosts a Firefly Festival even in seemingly remote areas. It is also home to the

Taekwondowon, where visitors can experience all aspects of Taekwondo, Korea's representative martial art, making Muju a sacred site for the discipline.



In this way, Muju proudly showcases the spirit and martial arts tradition of Korean culture.



Life, After All, Moves Toward Better Days

The post-dinner general assembly meeting reviewed annual activities and future

directions, with a focus on recruiting younger Service members. Kim Seong-rye (Gyeongnam branch), who attended the France assembly, introduced via the Service band a French member's view: young members should be given room to learn and experience the Servas, mistakes included. The consensus was to embrace open communication, sense changes, consolidate opinions, and set a clear vision to move forward positively.

Following the formal session of the General Assembly, a lively recreation hour commenced, designed for full family participation. Activities such as the "Balloon Pass Relay" game and penalty dances brought joy and laughter to attendees of all ages. The segment successfully fostered a warm, community-oriented atmosphere, allowing families to bond and interact in a relaxed setting.



The evening further included an official greeting session, where representatives from each branch exchanged formal introductions and pleasantries. The program concluded with the communal singing of the Servas Song, a cherished tradition that reinforced unity and shared purpose among all present. These combined activities effectively and harmoniously wrapped up the first day's agenda.

A road within the road

The following morning's program featured a walk along the Eosagil Trail within

Deogyusan National Park. Following the vibrant autumn foliage path, we began at the beautifully and anciently named Wolhatahn (Moonlit Pool), continuing on to Inwoldam (Silver Moon Pond), Guwoldam (Nine Moon Pond), and Ansimdae (Peace Platform). Each location carries a mystical tale within its name, and through these stories, one could sense a mythical power encompassing the lifestyles, culture, and even the subconscious ideologies of our people, which was deeply enriching.



This trail, starting from the Baekryunsa Temple path, spanned approximately 15.6 kilometers. The peak beauty of

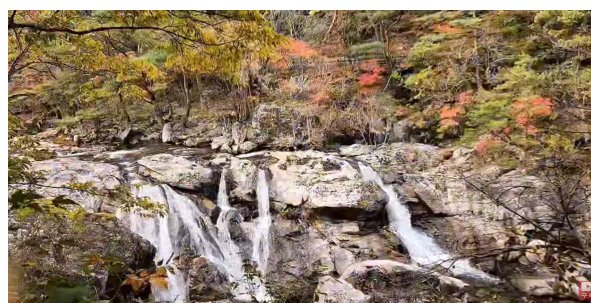


the autumn leaves flowed along the path and was reflected once more, upside down, in the water's surface, creating a road within the road. It felt as if this path whispered that it was not the end—that if you seek, another path awaits, urging you not to stop but to continue your search. As if gesturing not to sever ties with the world but to pursue an ideal utopia, a different paradise, the leaves drifted by.

Peach blossoms do not hold a monopoly on paradise's wonder. The fiery palette of autumn stands equal to the flowers of spring.

And so ended the Mujoo assembly, accompanied by

brilliantly colored autumn leaves and the road that lies beyond the road.



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