

MOVING OUT FROM THE SHADOWS

A commentary on the South Korean- Australian Relationship in the Year Of Friendship, marking the 50th Anniversary of the Commencement of Diplomatic Relationships

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Matt Jones has exercised all care in undertaking the preparation of this paper to provide reliable analysis and believes the material it presents is accurate.

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Friends, these are the human stories from days of courage and mateship, and of the deep friendship with the Korean people.¹

Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard, addressing veterans in Seoul at the Kapyong Memorial Dinner held on 24 April 2011

Introduction: A Relationship Built On A Strong Legacy

Australia and South Korea have enjoyed a relationship built on a strong legacy of support in times of need. This history extends back over 120 years, initially marked by Christian missionaries arriving in Busan.² The early history was never easy, and many missionaries lost their lives in Korea never to return to Australia due to illness.

Shortly after the commencement of hostilities between South Korea and North Korea in 1950, Australia joined the United Nations force to fight for the freedom of democratic rule in South Korea.

In the years that followed as South Korea moved toward a more stable expression of democracy, diplomatic relationships were established with Australia in 1961. Today, South Korea is Australia's third biggest export market and fourth biggest trading partner. Many South Korean companies are today household brand names among Australian consumers. South Korean students make up a large proportion of foreign students who are studying in Australia, and many other young South Koreans enjoy a working holiday in Australia for a year at a time.

2011 marks the Year of Friendship, declared between the two countries to mark the 50th anniversary of the commencement of diplomatic relationships. Despite this friendship between the two countries, knowledge of each other remains somewhat of a mystery, as if the friendship had yet to reach its full potential. This paper asks why is it only now in this year of friendship, especially after the sacrifice many Australians have made inside South Korea, does the friendship just seem to be moving 'out from the shadows'?

Overshadowed or In The Shadows?

The metaphor used to express the friendship in this paper, to say that it is "only now moving out from the shadows", might be a point of contention for some to consider. Let this analysis begin exploring what context this metaphor refers through five brief observations.

Firstly, this is not to say that the friendship is clouded in darkness. On the contrary, it more recognises that the friendship is growing and offers much potential for a rich future. At the same time, there is much each country has yet to understand about the other.

Secondly, neither is this to say that the friendship is overshadowed by another country in Asia. The focus China has been receiving in Australia over the last five years is without question significant. Last year at the Australian Davos Connection *Future Summit*, the discussions about the broader question of Asia rarely extended past the relationship with China. This is a commonplace

¹ Gillard, J, Speech to dinner for Korean War veterans delivered by Prime Minister Julia Gillard, 24 April 2011 <http://www.pm.gov.au/press-office/speech-dinner-korean-war-veterans-seoul> , 17 May 2011

² Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Republic of Korea country Brief*, http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/rok/brief_index.html, 17 May 2011

occurrence at both conferences and in the media when examining Australia's engagement with Asia. A strong relationship with China is not to the detriment of a relationship with Korea. There is not a rational link between the strength of the relationship between Australia and China, and how this might affect a relationship with South Korea which falls short of its potential. It is possible for the relationship Australia has with China to be strong while also developing a richer friendship with South Korea.

Thirdly, more so this reflects what might be best described as 'poor cultural literacy' among some Australians when understanding Asia. Asia itself is full of diversity shown across language, culture, food and history. To understand South Korea, Australians must first deconstruct the distinct cultural and national identities within Asia to appreciate them for their own unique strengths.

Fourthly, unpacking exactly why South Korean culture is poorly understood inside Australia is required to shed more light on how to this important bilateral relationship can be improved. There is much more to this relationship to be understood, and this is an opportunity to be embraced head-on especially in this Year of Friendship.

Fifthly, it would be fair to observe that most Australians fail to recognise South Korea for its uniqueness. South Korea is a country with a engaging history stretching back over 1300 years, whose culture has withstood pressures of imperialism from Japan at different times since the late 16th century. Why is it that many Australians who live so close to Asia see the region defined as indistinctly 'Asian'? An understanding of South Korea that is limited to a knowledge of kim-chi alone, as is anecdotally the case with many Australians, is shallow and insufficient. The hanbok and traditional dance often demonstrate 'Korean culture' at cultural exchange evenings. While these do communicate what is quintessentially Korean, it is a mistake for this to be the extent of deepening a sense of cultural literacy. Costume, dance and foods are distinctly unique to Korea, as much as Korean architecture is distinct in its design and philosophy to a Japanese or Chinese structure. Understanding how this shapes Korean thinking is as important as an appreciation of these cultural symbols themselves.

The Focal Point Is A Forgotten War

Rightly or wrongly, when Australian-South Korean friendship is discussed a key focal point is the Korean War. A victory over Japan in 1945 allowed Australian troops stationed close by in Japan to quickly deploy supporting the United Nations force. The contribution Australian personnel made, especially those serving after the truce in 1953, went largely unrecognised by the Australian Government for many years. This recognition was subsequently more recently addressed by an Australian Government Review in 2005. "Korean War veterans from this period have been concerned about their level of recognition for some time and it is appropriate that this service be given the fullest consideration," the then Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence, De-Anne Kelly said in 2005.³

Deployment of aerial missions in ground attack roles flown by 77 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force marked the first non-United States United Nations forces engaged against the North Korean enemy at the beginning of this conflict. Showing perseverance and courage, heavy Australian

³ Media Release from the Honourable De-Anne Kelly BE MP, *Review of Korean Medal Entitlements*, 16 March 2005 <http://www.defence.gov.au/medals/Content/+060%20Reviews%20and%20Reports/Korea/Appendix2.pdf>, 17 May 2011

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aircraft losses were suffered against the superior enemy MiG-15 fighters resulting in the death of many Australian pilots during the early years of the war.

The Royal Australian Navy supported naval and land operations providing convoy protection, mobility, information gathering, communications and gunfire support. The roles fulfilled by the Royal Australian Navy, like the nature of the war itself, are now largely forgotten. The first exchange against the enemy involving a Royal Australian Navy ship occurred on 1 August 1950 when HMAS Bataan was attacked by North Korean shore batteries whilst patrolling near the Haeju Gulf, northwest of Inchon. HMAS Bataan returned fire and silenced four of the enemy guns.⁴ Australian frigates performed a wide variety of tasks including operations within the Han River estuary in support of United Nations operations.

Australia's contribution to the Korean War is better known for the involvement from the Australian Army. Initially, this involved the 3rd Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment. Two other Australian battalions would later serve in Korea. Australian troops during the course of the war would advance north of Pyongyang to fight at Chongju, and later engage in heavy fighting against Chinese troops in several notable actions as well as less well known patrolling activity in close contact with the enemy. The 3rd Battalion stood in defence at Gapyeong (Kapyong) against overwhelming odds from a courageous attack from determined Chinese forces seeking to retake Seoul in the 1951 Spring Offensive. Their actions, along with American and Commonwealth Forces nearby and also around Imjin River saw the defeat of the Chinese advance which led to protracted trench warfare up until the truce in 1953. During the final two days of the conflict prior to the truce, Australian forces were committed to ferocious fighting to retain the integrity of the border which defines the present day South Korea at the battle for 'The Hook' fought by the Australian 2nd Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment.

The sacrifice made by Australians fighting in Korea ought to be remembered, and should claim a fitting legacy to be acknowledged by future generations. Much of Australia's involvement in the Korean War has become encapsulated to an understanding of 'The Battle of Kapyong', creating a contemporary screed narrative which is light on detail.

Even the language used to describe the Korean War points to its forgotten nature, sometimes referred to as 'The Forgotten War': "It's been dubbed the forgotten battle of the forgotten war, but Prime Minister Julia Gillard wants that to change"⁵, was how The Age newspaper reported a recent visit by the Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard on 24 April 2011 to South Korea for the 60th anniversary of fighting at Gapyeong.

The veterans are now aging, with an average age of just over 80 years. More needs to be done to ensure the conflict does not become truly the Forgotten War. But should the depth of Australian and South Korean friendship be measured in commitment from wartime experience as a defining feature, especially if this in itself is poorly remembered?

⁴ Royal Australian Navy, *RAN in the Korean War*, http://www.navy.gov.au/RAN_in_The_Korean_War, 17 May 2011

⁵ *Gillard Remembers the Forgotten*, The Age newspaper, 24 April 2011, <http://www.theage.com.au/national/gillard-remembers-the-forgotten-20110424-1dsqs.html>, 17 May 2011

Strengthened Diplomatic Ties and Strong Trade

The visit to South Korea by Julia Gillard in April 2011 was in itself commendable and significant in terms of strengthening the friendship between the two countries. She was the first Australian Prime Minister to visit South Korea on Anzac Day, and as such gave due recognition to those who had fought.

There is much worth noting in the diplomatic ties which bind Australia and South Korea. Diplomatic ties create a good platform upon which to build a deeper friendship of political, trade, security and more informal people-to-people links outside of an institutional setting. Julia Gillard's visit to South Korea follows her attendance at the November 2010 G20 Summit held in Seoul where a personal relationship was established on a professional level with the President of the Republic of Korea (South Korea), Lee Myung-bak.

During her visit to South Korea in April 2011, along with Lee Myung-bak, the leaders together agreed that negotiations on an Australia-Korea Free Trade Agreement were now in their final stage and they reaffirmed their joint goal to conclude the negotiations toward the end of 2011.⁶

Julia Gillard qualified this during a doorstep interview at the small village of Gapyeong on 24 April 2011: "Our partnership with Korea is an important one. They are an important economic partner for us, our third biggest export market, our fourth biggest trading partner. And we want to add to that economic partnership with a Free Trade Agreement, which would be good for Australia and good for Korea. It would be particularly good for Australian agricultural exports. So I will be talking to President Lee tomorrow about getting on with that Free Trade Agreement, and moving it towards a conclusion."⁷

In celebration of the South Korea-Australia Year of Friendship, the two leaders expressed the hope that 2011 would serve as a new benchmark to bring the two countries and peoples even closer together through numerous cultural events and exchange programs.⁸

While meeting in Seoul on 25 April 2011, the two leaders agreed that the South Korea-Australia partnership had developed over the last 50 years into a broad-based partnership including significant commercial ties, strong security cooperation and wide-ranging people-to-people links. They renewed their commitment to further strengthen this partnership in the next 50 years on the basis of shared values, mutual respect and genuine friendship.⁹

The two leaders welcomed the revitalisation of the Korea-Australia Young Political Leaders Exchange Program, designed to deepen cooperation between the two countries' legislative bodies.

⁶ *S. Korean, Australian leaders vow to conclude free trade negotiations this year*, China Daily, 25 April 2011, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/xinhua/2011-04-25/content_2414538.html , 17 May 2011

⁷ Prime Minister of Australia Press Office, Transcript of doorstep interview, Kapyong, 24 April 2011, <http://www.pm.gov.au/press-office/transcript-doorstop-interview-gapyeong> , 17 May 2011

⁸ Prime Minister of Australia Press Office, Joint press statement with the President of the Republic of Korea, 25 April 2011, <http://www.pm.gov.au/press-office/joint-press-statement-president-republic-korea> , 17 May 2011

⁹ Na Jeong-ju, Leaders of Korea, Australia agree to conclude FTA talks this year, The Korea Times, 25 April 2011, http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2011/05/113_85830.html , 17 May 2011

They encouraged further bilateral exchanges between parliamentary leaders, including the Chairman of the Korean National Assembly and the Speaker of the Australian Parliament.¹⁰

Such visits by politicians are often symbolic in nature. The close personal friendship displayed publicly between Julia Gillard and Lee Myung-bak demonstrated the real and robust friendship enjoyed at the highest political levels. This bodes well for developing this friendship beyond simply matters of an economic exchange. Concluding 2011 with the signing of a Free Trade Agreement between Australia and South Korea would be a strong indication of how this friendship is deepening. Notwithstanding the closeness of this diplomatic political exchange, the substance of friendship remains in reality a matter for everyday Australians and South Koreans alike.

Trade is not a substitute for friendship. Trade will certainly strengthen relationships. A robust relationship where both parties have mutual respect and understanding for the other will always improve trade and diplomatic relationships. The true foundation for friendship must also ensure a high standard of cultural literacy is developed.

Cultural Awareness

The solidarity expressed in sentiment between the two leaders is evidence of close bilateral arrangements. Trade between both Australia and South Korea is strong and continues to grow.

Julia Gillard provided this summary during a question from journalists while in Korea: “Look, I think it is a very personally warm relationship. I’ve had the opportunity to meet with President Lee and a number of a circumstances including here over a period of time during the G20 so I believe that our relationship has a degree of personal warmth to it. I think you saw that on display and I think there is a lot of personal warmth between our peoples as well, so it is not just a question of me and President Lee having a good friendship but I think with our veterans who have travelled here, you’ve probably seen with your own eyes over the last few days, exhibitions of the real fondness with which Australians view the Korean people and the return of that fondness and thanks for the role we played here during the Korean War, having played proudly some part in the creation of what is a wonderful and vibrant country and a great democracy.”

Despite strong economic and diplomatic ties between South Korea and Australians, evidence can be found that a poor awareness exists of each others overall social and business culture by each country. In July 2010 South Korea’s Ambassador to Australia, His Excellency Dr Kim Woo-sang, argued this relationship was not as strong as it could be stating: “It is unfortunate that not many Australians seem to know about Korea. They know Korea either as a still-developing country or as a divided poor country living with the North Korea nuclear threat”.¹¹ While the quoted newspaper article was not readily available at the time of writing this paper, this is a sentiment shared commonly among many Koreans living in and visiting Australia. This is anecdotally reflected in the lower proportion of Australians visiting South Korea and the very small number of Australian students studying in South Korea.

Has the friendship changed so dramatically in the space of less than a year that there should be such distinction between the statements from Julia Gillard and Kim Woo-sang? The two statements are

¹⁰ Office of the President of The Republic of Korea, Joint Press Statement, 25 April 2011, <http://www.korea.net/detail.do?guid=54648> , 17 May 2011

¹¹ Quoted source Unknown, July 2010
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not mutually exclusive, and there is in fact no dissonance created by these two views. The differences in emphasis is best explained by limitations in cultural awareness between the two countries. Improving the cultural literacy between Australia and South Korea is seen as the necessary action to move out of the shadows towards taking this friendship to a richer potential that it deserves to enjoy.

A Deep Friendship?

What is meant by ‘deep friendship’ in the words of Julia Gillard during an address she gave to veterans at a dinner on 24 April 2011 to remember the fighting at Gapyeong?

“Friends, these are the human stories from days of courage and mateship, and of the deep friendship with the Korean people.¹²”

In the week that followed after Julia Gillard’s statement in Seoul, selected Australian Korean War veterans had gathered at the Korean Society of Sydney located in the Sydney suburb of Croydon Park for the ‘Ambassador for Peace Medal’ to be presented to a number of these veterans by a visiting retired General from Korea. The event was professionally conducted, and the pride from both the Korean contingent and the Australian veterans evident to everyone attending. Throughout the evening, despite the warmth of hospitality expressed, there was a disconnect experienced between the two cultures due to language. The whole evening was conducted almost entirely in Korean, which had the effect of leaving the Australian veterans feeling slightly alienated. This was not intentional, and neither was it a new occurrence. Asking the veterans if it had always been this way, they replied it was just how the relationship was with their fellow Korean veterans. This doesn’t weaken the friendship by any measure. Language is an important basis for communication to express the nature of this relationship. Addressing the shortfall in cultural literacy identified by Kim Woo-sang is made possible by developing a more robust base for communication.

Language in this case will always be a challenge. Structurally the languages of English and Korean differ in grammar, let alone having a completely distinctive origin. While learning the language might help, this is not necessarily a pragmatic solution to this problem. The issue is not about teaching veterans Korean, but more so equipping an emerging generation of new leaders with a basic understanding of each others language. Few Korean teachers can be found in Australia, and in the modern lifestyle where time is precious to undertake such training is often not possible from the outset.

Language does not diminish the ‘deep friendship’ to which Julia Gillard refers. It does provide some immediate ways of bringing this relationship into the light. Australians working with Koreans ought to take time to learn a very basic vocabulary of Korean pleasantries which might consist of no more than ten words. Koreans speaking with an Australian audience should preface the conversation with some introductory remarks in English to outline the nature of the event, especially if a translation service is unavailable.

Language is an enabler for a deep friendship. Despite challenges in this regard, evidence can be readily found of a deep friendship outside of economic, political and diplomatic exchange. Three

¹² Gillard, J, Speech to dinner for Korean War veterans delivered by Prime Minister Julia Gillard, 24 April 2011 <http://www.pm.gov.au/press-office/speech-dinner-korean-war-veterans-seoul>, 17 May 2011
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noteworthy examples are provided in the following paragraphs where small yet important contributions are taking place that connect people in different ways to make a difference.

St Andrew's Public School. St Andrew's Public School is located near the outer-suburbs of Sydney near Minto in the suburb of St Andrews. The Principal, Ms Kerry Sweeney, continued her school's observance of an Anzac Day Ceremony this year on 2 May 2011 attended by all the school's students and staff. What made this service remarkable was their ongoing focus of remembering the Korean War as has been the case in previous years, and not only in 2011 to mark the anniversary of Gapyeong. The school has developed a focus on learning about Korea for a number of years, with many of the students learning Korean as a second language. It is intriguing to try to understand why this relationship has developed with Korea and this school as few of the students are Korean themselves as the school is located in a typically diverse and culturally mixed suburb representative of Australia without a strong presence of a local Korean community.

This year, the same as in past years, Korean and Australian veterans were invited to attend the ceremony as VIP guests. Both Korean and Australian veterans sat alongside one another in front of the student body proudly displaying their service medals, themselves symbolic of the friendship between the two countries. Students conducted the service professionally, reading out different parts of the Anzac narrative. Following the service, a luncheon was provided for the veterans to allow some time to mix with staff, and later selected students gathered in the Assembly Hall to hear from Mr Mick Kohlhoff, himself a veteran of the Korean War and President of the Korea War Veterans Association of New South Wales. Taking the friendship beyond language training is important, as this school is demonstrating. This school's initiative provides a rich educational context for the students to understand contemporary history and importantly also a meaningful basis for cultural exchange with Korea.

Mrs Olwyn Green, OAM. Mrs Olwyn Green OAM, lost her husband, Lieutenant Colonel Charlie Green, DSO, after he died from wounds in November 1950 following the battle for Chongju where he served as the Commanding Officer of the 3rd Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment during the Korean War. For many people, Olwyn Green is a beacon of inspiration providing a connection with events that took place many years before diplomatic relationships were established between South Korea and Australia. She is a stalwart representative of how real the relationship with Korea actually is, and how it continues and develops across time. Understanding the relationship with Korea, like any friendship, is not to be pigeonholed into solely 'economic', 'veteran', or 'new generation' categories. It is important to recognise the breath of this friendship across time, and how it supports those in need in ways that might not be immediately apparent.

Korean Cultural Centre. The Korean Cultural Centre recently opened in Sydney as the first Korean Cultural Office providing an interface between expression of a contemporary aesthetic from Korea. Raising public awareness on Korean culture is the beginning of a more active cultural exchange between Australia and South Korea. The Korean Cultural Centre is an exciting proposition providing access to the modern day face of Korea to show Australians a different side of the culture that might otherwise be understood. Friendly staff engage with visitors guiding them through the purpose built art gallery and speaking in perfect English. This is the sign of a new direction that the friendship between Australia and South Korea is taking as it steps more into the light and expands to its full potential.

Real stories are worth remembering. These three vignettes show the diversity of friendship across different parts of society, from people of completely different backgrounds. Understanding a 'deep friendship' with Korea must extend beyond a paradigm of economic, political and diplomatic exchange. Other stories like these, small in scale as they might be, should be found and celebrated.

Education

Following the commemoration of the Gapyeong anniversary, some veterans called for aspects of the Korean War to be introduced into the Australian school education curriculum. What ought to be taught, and how is this likely to improve the cultural understanding between the two countries?

Korean War veteran Wilfred Charles Hall who had fought at Gapyeong agreed not enough Australians knew about Australia's engagement in Korea. Speaking from Gapyeong on 24 April 2011 after the memorial service had been conducted, he said: "They don't know anything about the whole bloody war. The education system doesn't teach it. It's an embarrassing situation."¹³

As important as the facts of the Korean War might be, introducing it into the school curriculum on its own is not likely to end its identity as The Forgotten War. Would a brief discussion of the Korean War only serve to create an enhanced national myth to explain the conflict shrouded in ideology of the division of North and South Korea?

Education does need to present a factual analysis of historical events. Language, already discussed in this paper, is also important. These are ingredients of a stronger cultural literacy which ought to be the focused endstate for the design of any suggested amendments to the Australian school education curriculum.

Perhaps it would be better to lend more focus to a better understanding of regionalisation of East Asia, and how this is shaping the forces of globalisation that have been at work since the end of the Twentieth Century. It is understanding Korea in this context that is what is most important for the next generation of leaders. To understand this context is to understand the historical distinction between countries in Asia, as well as what makes each culture unique. Through this understanding, the reasons for improved economic, political and security arrangements with countries like South Korea can be understood, along with the imperative for stronger friendship.

Regionalisation of East Asia

China's economic rise and its soon to be realised maritime fleet capability is evidence of a real global 'power shift' as the world enters what might be remembered as the Asian Decade. South Korea plays a significant role in the rise of North East Asia in its own right, but also providing a hub for access into East Asia through the development of a number of 'Free Economic Zones' across South Korea stretching from Incheon to Busan. Education and the ability to take advantage of innovation through a high level of cultural literacy will position nations to take advantage of this new decade. In light of this trend, for Australia to not understand the diversity of culture across Asia is a mistake. Failing to understand Korean culture as unique will be to the detriment of a relationship between Australia and South Korea based on friendship measured in economic, political, security, diplomatic and person-to-person dimensions.

¹³ *Gillard Remembers the Forgotten*, The Age newspaper, 24 April 2011, <http://www.theage.com.au/national/gillard-remembers-the-forgotten-20110424-1dsqs.html>, 17 May 2011

Many events in Asia are symbolic in nature, but sew the seeds of building a strong future together. Expo 2012 to be held in the South Korean city of Yeosu across three months and presents an opportunity for reframing the relationship enjoyed between Australia and South Korea. The Expo should be regarded as a three-month long networking event. It isn't so much what takes place at the Expo, but rather the conversations and contacts that are made are what is important.

Clash of Culture

Understanding the symbols of culture is important. More so is understanding how these influence the thinking of Koreans and Australians distinctly. Korean thinking is shaped by an authentic sentiment of sincerity, which most likely has its roots in the earnestness of a Confucianist construct. This contrasts with an Australian informality which is grounded on an ill-defined concept of 'mateship', along with a tacit conformity that exists often narrowly within accepted cultural norms.

A 'clash of cultures' emerges built on the tension between earnestness and informality. In actual fact, both Australians and Koreans operate congruently from a perspective of sincerity and a desire to understand 'the other'. This tension is amplified in how each culture attempts to make sense of 'the other'. Presenting this premise simplistically, Australians will often look to see how conformity into their own secular world will occur. Conversely, Korean thinking is often dogmatic around a strongly homogenous identity creating a self-protective distance from 'The Foreigner'.

The values inside which Koreans operate that place emphasis on family and the respect of elders within an honorific social construct are not alien to an Australian way of thinking. Although different, the relaxed and sometimes laconic directness that defines interaction between Australians is not unknown among Koreans. Differences between Australians and Koreans ought to be explored and understood. The Korean Cultural Centre is a good conduit for this dialogue as it presents Korean culture using humour to explain a complex way of thinking. Australian humour, commonplace in mainstream entertainment, provides much the same vehicle.

Cultural Literacy

Cultural diplomacy is a concept describing the use and transfer of cultural ideas between different group to achieve rapport and understanding. Cultural diplomacy is an example of what has been described as 'soft power' by the author Joseph Nye in 1990 to explain the exchange of culture, values, and ideas. The Korean Cultural Centre is a perfect example of cultural diplomacy at work.

Prior to 'exercising' cultural diplomacy, a deeper level of cultural literacy is required. Without an enhanced cultural literacy, cultural diplomacy might otherwise be seen as achieving your own agenda through guile alone and no regard for truly understanding the other. Both Korea and Australia share a rich tradition across literature, film and art. Both countries share a passion for competitive sport. We owe it to each other in this Year of Friendship to learn more about each other and share in these rich definitions of our own culture because of the sacrifices made in the past.

Moving Out From The Shadow; Stepping Into The Light

A single meeting over dinner is not sufficient to build a strong friendship between two people. Why should this be any different between Australia and South Korea? Friendships take time and commitment. The example set by Julia Gillard and Lee Myung-bak is worth following by Australians and Koreans alike in this Year of Friendship. The legacy of this year can be truly a deep friendship to strengthen the strategic and trade relationships which already make our association a close bond.

It is time to move out from the shadows. Let us face up to the great potential and opportunities of this friendship and step into the light together as good friends.

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Matt Jones is Executive Director of Social Alchemy which he founded in 2006 as a think tank focused on change management to build stronger social capital. www.socialalchemy.com.au

Matt is widely respected for his skills at building networks globally, along with his ability to get and analyse information. He is regarded by many as a strategic thinker and pathfinder.

Matt served as an Australian Army Officer, graduating from the Royal Military College, Duntroon. He had operational service in East Timor.

Matt's military experience included deployment on border protection duties where he assisted the successful interception and returning of SIEV 14 (Suspected Illegal Entry Vessel). As Desk Officer within the Land Component Joint Operations Command, Matt was responsible to stand-up then manage the Australian Army response to the 2004 Aceh tsunami relief effort. Matt's career included service with the Parachute Battalion Group as part of the Australian Army's Rapid Deployment Force. Matt was detached outside of Australia on several occasions including postings to Malaysia, Singapore and the United States.

During his military service, Matt completed a Bachelor of Arts (International Relations and Security Studies) and a Masters of Business Administration.

In 2004, Matt received a prestigious Churchill Fellowship to undertake research through UK and USA to examine successful models of social enterprise (conducted in 2005)

In 2008, Matt was presented with a Leadership Award from the then Australian Governor General, Major General Michael Jeffery, AC, AO, CVO, MC and Australian prime minister, the Honorable Kevin Rudd MP, at the Australian Davos Connection Future Summit.

Matt commenced a Vincent Fairfax Fellowship at the beginning of 2009. The Vincent Fairfax Fellowship is awarded to selected Australian leaders to increase their capacity for ethical deliberation in order to contribute to a better society.

As part of the Vincent Fairfax Fellowship, Matt recently spent three months in Korea examining an ethical question: 'should business have a role in changing a relationship with North Korea?'

In March 2010, Matt attended by invitation a Vietnamese Government sponsored regional conference examining 'Cultural Diplomacy' held in Hanoi. In May 2010, Matt attended by invitation the Korean World Forum hosted out of the European Union Parliament in Brussels.

Matt visited China in 2007 by invitation of Zhejiang University to examine the development of social entrepreneurship and social innovation within the region.

Matt has a passion for social entrepreneurship and how this can strengthen corporate responsibility to benefit a healthy society in a peaceful world. He has been a regular delegate at the Skoll World Forum of Social Entrepreneurship held at Oxford University since 2005.

During February and March 2011, Matt has been engaged to examine the feasibility for developing a national approach eco-tourism in Papua New Guinea.