

# NEAR News

One Northeast Asia Region, One Community NEAR

2015. 3-4

## Vol. 61

Blossom Street, Shimane Prefecture, Japan

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The Association of  
Northeast Asia Regional  
Governments

# NEAR News

"NEAR News" was launched in 2005 to serve as a messenger between NEAR member regions and promote sharing of information. The bi-monthly magazine is published and distributed to NEAR members and other relevant organizations free of charge, containing information on NEAR activities, news from members, international issues, contributions and announcements (also available free at <http://www.neargov.org>). You can take part in creating NEAR News anytime by contributing articles and creative ideas (Contact the NEAR Secretariat).



## Vol. 61



## **NEAR is...**

a representative regional diplomacy cooperation and international organization by 78 regional governments (73 member regions and 5 observers) in 6 Northeast Asian countries, including South Korea, China, Japan, Russia, North Korea, and Mongolia.

Since the adoption of the NEAR Charter based on mutual prosperity, NEAR has carried out extensive exchange and cooperation projects in various fields ranging from economy and humanities exchange, education & cultural exchange, environment, disaster prevention, cross-border cooperation, science & technology, ocean & fisheries, tourism, mineral resources development & coordination, energy & climate change, women & children, bio-medical industry to agriculture.

Partnering with and promoting joint projects by strengthening the exchange with international organizations such as AER (The Assembly of European Regions), the largest independent network of regional authorities in Europe, and R-20 (Regions of Climate Action), NEAR takes the lead in building an international cooperative network communicating with the world beyond Northeast Asia.

## **NEAR is open to all.**

Any local government located in the Northeast Asian region sharing the founding purpose of NEAR can join us through the NEAR General Assembly.



The Association of  
Northeast Asia Regional  
Governments

## NEAR Activities

### The 10<sup>th</sup> NEAR Working-level Workshop Scheduled for May

The NEAR Working-level Workshop for officials in charge of NEAR affairs is scheduled for May 20-22 in Pohang City, Gyeongsangbuk-do Province.

The NEAR Secretariat's presentation on the 10<sup>th</sup> Working Committee, NEAR International Forum 2015, and membership expansion will be provided. In particular, activity report of the Secretariat 2015 will include effective management plan of Sub-Committees and NEAR Youth Internship Program. Also, member regions' presentations and its promotion, and a proposal to develop NEAR will be given along with discussion. The details will be announced to each member region and we ask for your interest and participation.

NEAR Working-level Workshop is held annually and this year is the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding. The number of participants so far amount to more than 750 people and it plays a great role to build networks and mutual exchange among working-level officials.



NEAR Working-level Workshop Meeting 2014

## Secretariat News

### Retirement of Secretary General Kim Jae-hyo



Retirement ceremony for Secretary General Kim Jae-hyo and Director General Lee Jong-hwan was held at the international training room of the Secretariat of the Association of Northeast Asia Regional Governments on December 31 2014.

Secretary General Kim put his efforts for 'One Northeast Asia Region, One Community' for three years and seven months. Also he contributed to raising the status of the Association by placing the Secretariat at the Gyeongsangbuk-do Province for a long term and by inviting three new members-Sejong Special Self-governing City, South Korea, Jilin Province, China, and Khakassia, Russia, and by signing partnership agreements with international organizations such as AER (Assembly of European Regions) and R20 (Regions of Climate Action) after he was appointed to the NEAR Secretariat in May 2011.

### Members of Izumo City Council Visited Pohang City

Seven members of Izumo City Council, headed by Tatano Tsuyoto, a member of Izumo City Council, and three staff of Izumo Chamber of Commerce and Industry visited Pohang City, Gyeongsangbuk-do Province on January 19-21 and discussed exchange and cooperation plan.

The delegates met with members of Pohang City Council, staff of the Pohang Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Pohang Institute of Local Community at POSCO International Center and discussed the cooperation plan between both cities.

They suggested making a place for comfortable and friendly relations between Korean and Japanese regional cities aside of central government's political issues by creating a symposium to jointly discuss and study the current issues of Pohang and Izumo City. As Izmo city is the birthplace of Japanese alcoholic drinks and Gwamegi is considered a local specialty in Pohang, they suggested holding a Local Products Expo.

Pohang and Izumo City had its first exchange in 2009 and continued exchange activities every year focusing on both city's City Halls, City Councils, and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry until 2012. Between 2013 and 2014, the exchange was stopped and this visit was the first official visit since then.

The NEAR Secretariat led by a public official seconded from Japan and Japan expert accompanied the delegates and provided them with an interpretation and guide during their visit to Pohang.



## Visit to ICLEI

The Secretariat Delegates headed by Director General Park Chag-ho of Planning and General Affairs Division visited ICLEI Korean office, located in Suwon on January 22. The purpose of the visit was to benchmark the case of membership fee system of ICLEI.

The delegates talked over the matter regarding ICLEI management with representatives, including Manager Park Yeon-hee of the ICLEI Korean office for over two hours and ICLEI introduced its organization. In addition, they discussed cooperation plan between ICLEI and NEAR in future.

ICLEI is an international organization, joined by more than 1,000 regional governments of 84 countries and works for strengthening regional government's policies and practical competence for sustainable development.

ICLEI World Secretariat is located in Bonn, Germany, and Northeast Asian Secretariat which held opening ceremony in October 2012, is located in Seoul taking charge of six cities, including Korea, China, Japan, Taiwan, Mongolia, and North Korea. The Korean office, launched by Suwon City in 2012, held opening ceremony in October.



## Participation in the Korean Association for Local Government Studies Conference and Visit to Other International Organizations

The Secretariat Delegates, including International Cooperation Team manager participated in the international academic seminar "The way to expand international exchange among regional governments," co-hosted by the Korean Association for Local Government Studies and Hokkaido University and held at Hokkaido University of Sapporo, Japan. The delegates attended the seminar to collect information to expand international exchange, benchmark other organizations' international events, and expand related networks and visited the World Winter Cities Association for Mayors (WWCAM) conference located in Sapporo, Japan to benchmark membership fee system and main business.

Meanwhile, the Korean Association for Local Government Studies was established in 1989 and joined by more than 1,000 members and 20 organizations. The Association holds academic events related to regional governments and system policy in various fields. The World Winter Cities Association for Mayors was founded in 1981 and joined by 20 cities from nine countries. The Association, an international organization, covers international exchange, information exchange, personnel exchange, and young people exchange among member cities and is registered in NGO status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the Department of Public Information (DPI).

# NEAR Member News

## Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region-China

### The 2<sup>nd</sup> China-Arab States Expo held in Yinchuan, Ningxia in September



The China-Arab States Expo, approved by the State Council of the People's Republic of China, is being co-hosted by the Ministry of Commerce of China, China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, and the government of

Ningxia Hui Autonomous of China. China-Arab States Expo was previously called China-Arab States Economic and Trade Forum, which had been jointly held for three times since 2010. The first China-Arab States Expo kicked off in 2013.

A total of 24 political figures, 253 ministerial level's executives, 104 representatives of the Embassies in China, 70 international organizations, 46 Chambers of Commerce and Industry, 6,200 representatives of large companies and financial institutions, and 37,000 sellers and buyers have been invited to the expo over the past five years.

Cooperative projects signed in various fields such as petrochemistry, light industry, finance, machine manufacturing, home electronic appliances, and car assembly amount to 636. The expo is a key platform for network with senior officials of China and related nations, policy exchange, economic cooperation, and humanities exchange.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> China-Arab States Expo is scheduled for September in Yinchuan, Ningxia. The expo will include conferences, matchings, and International Halal Food Expo with the topic of economy and trade related to co-formation of new Silk Road Economic Belt, IT, agriculture, and humanities. Jordan has been invited as the guest country and will lead a variety of events in the field of economy and trade, investment, tourism, and culture with China.

## Fukui Prefecture -Japan

### Peru Festival held

Fukui Prefecture of Japan and Republic of Peru established a friendly relation at the APEC Energy Ministerial Meeting held in 2010. The Peru Ambassador to Japan visited Fukui Prefecture six times and established 'Fukui Prefecture-Peru Friendly Association' along with providing lectures, and signed an academic agreement at the university conducting academic exchange as well as private exchange.

The Peru festival was held on February 22 at the Fukui International Exchange Center sponsored by the embassy to expand mutual understanding on different culture, including food culture and history and exchange.

The festival consisted of a lecture by Ambassador of Peru, an exhibit to introduce Peru's history and culture, and Peru food and folk dress exhibit. The festival is expected to be a stepping stone to increase understanding and interest in Peru cultures and promote widespread exchange.



Peru Festival 2014

## Ishikawa Prefecture-Japan

### Ishikawa Prefecture Food Culture Meeting held

'Ishikawa Prefecture Food Culture Meeting' was held in October 2014 in Singapore, a hub of transportation and information in Southeast Asia and with rising interest in Japanese food, and attended by Governor Masanori Tanimoto of Ishikawa Prefecture.

Also, the meeting was joined by leaders who have great influences,



Ishikawa Prefecture Food Culture Meeting

including top chefs of famous hotels and restaurants in Singapore, buyers, tourism businessmen, and staff of governments and economy.

Food using food resources and seasonings of Ishikawa and well-matched Ishikawa alcoholic beverages are provided to participants in traditional craft bowls such as Wajima-nuri and Kutani-Yaki helping them raise their concern in Japanese culture. Along with food, singing and dancing and traditional performances composed of pipe and chordophones were provided and it promoted the attraction for food culture of Ishikawa.

When the Hokuriku Shinkansen line starts operations on March 14, it would be possible to get to Tokyo and Kanazawa within two hours and 28 minutes. Ishikawa will promote itself through a variety of activities and strive to expand enterprises' market within the prefecture to Southeast Asia and attract Southeast Asian travelers.

## Gyeongsangbuk-do Province - South Korea

### Leap for Water Industry Meca through World Water Forum



Gyeongsangbuk-do Province celebrated D-100 of World Water Forum of Daegu-Gyeongbuk 2015 on January 2 2015.

Gyeongsangbuk-do supervised overall preparation for accommodation, transportation, and food and put a lot of hard work to establish detailed programs according to each course and to attract many participants to the forum.

The World Water Forum consists of four Processes (the Political Process, Regional Process, Thematic Process, and Science & Technology Process) and 400 session events. There are also cultural events and tour.

Gyeongsangbuk-do focuses on successfully hosting a large international event in non-metropolitan area and taking the opportunity to activate regional economy, balanced development, and water industry. According to this, several events such as undergraduate student's waterway expedition, World Water Forum's professional baseball naming day, water story concert, and water themed experience center are planned to attract participation of many people to the World Water Forum announcing the value of water and raising water awareness.

Governor Kim Kwan-yong of Gyeongsangbuk-do Province stated that "We have discussed a way for cooperation with leaders and enterprises in water industry with hard work until now," adding that "we will strive to lead successful World Water Forum to promote Gyeongsangbuk-do Province and enhance its brand value as a catalyst for water industry."

※ The details are included in the Feature Report of this month.

## Jeju Special Self-Governing Province-South Korea

### Jeju Fire Festival Voted as 'the Outstanding Festival of Cultural Tourism Festivals 2015'

The Jeju Fire Festival was selected as one of the outstanding festivals of cultural tourism festivals by the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism in 2015. The Jeju Fire Festival was selected as the Up-and-Coming Festival by the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism in 2006 and it was meaningful to be selected as the outstanding festival by the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism this year.

The Jeju Fire Festival originated from 'banggae,' the old pastoral culture that sets fire on a range field to control pests in the old grass of mountainous grasslands in order to graze animals.

The 18<sup>th</sup> Jeju Fire Festival is scheduled for March 5-8 for four days in Seabyeol Orum and the festival will provide hopes to the Jeju residents, tourists, and moreover, people of the world with the topic "the hope of fire spreads all over the world." The highlight to put Orum fire is held in Saturday for the convenience of tourists.

Meanwhile, 44 cultural tourism festivals 2015 were selected divided among four categories: 2 Premier Festivals, 9 Top Festivals, 10 Outstanding Festivals, and 23 Up-and-Coming Festivals. Also, Jeju Dodu Oraemul Festival was selected as the Up-and-Coming Festival. The selected festivals will be given support fund and overseas promotion and marketing through Korea Tourism Organization.

## Republic of Kamchatka -Russia

### Beringia Race, a traditional dog sled race of Kamchatka Held



The Beringia race, a traditional dog sled race is held in Kamchatka. Beringia race keeps the tradition for over 20 years and a minority of native living in Kamchatka has inherited the tradition.

The first Beringia race was held in January 1990, and in the 2<sup>nd</sup> race, the length of the Beringia-91 race (1,980 kilometers) was entered in the Guinness Book of World Records as the world's longest distances traveled with sled dog teams. Since 2010, as the Beringia race has the status of an official festival of Kamchatka Territory, it is organized by Sports and Youth Policy Division of Kamchatka Territory government and formally registered.

The Beringia started in humanitarian efforts to carry school supplies, books, and sports equipment in excess of 100 kilograms every year, using dog sled to north nomadic town. People carry dog sled from all over the regions of Kamchaka to participate in a large dog sled race. As there is no paved road in Far north, it takes over a week for some teams to reach the venue for the race. Over the past few years, Dyulin, led by children is held before Beringia race and Governor of Kamchatka awards the first prize to the child who won the race and the child is awarded a dog as an additional prize.

The festival is held for several days this year (February 28~March 7); the dog sled race is scheduled for February 28 at biathlon, located in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky and participants practice to attend main dog sled race at the Esso town on March 1. After the main event, the dog sled race is scheduled for March 7 at the Esso town and is scheduled for March 8 at the Ossor town. Meanwhile, before the festival held, 'children christmas dog sled race' was held on January 6 and participated by children of many regions.

## Republic of Buryatia- Russia

### Buryatia's Tourism Expo, 'Buryatia Tourism and Rest' Expo to be held



The 12<sup>th</sup> Buryatia Tourism and Rest Expo is scheduled for April 17-18 with seminars, round tables, tourism enterprise's presentation, and familiarization tour.


The Buryatia Tourism and Rest Expo, Buryatia's tourism expo, is one of the important events in Buryatia to show potential for development of Buryatia, a promising tourist area, along with promotion of regional tourism in Buryatia and around Baikal.

Buryatia Tourism and Rest Expo organized business table such as conferences, negotiation, opinion sharing, and suggestions; information offering regarding tourism market around Baikal; arrangement for an opportunity including building long-term cooperative relations with regional tourism businessmen and travel agencies, and presentation and masterclasses to share outstanding travel agency's experience in order to increase tourism service during the expo. The expo has been held 11 times and has become a professional tourism forum in Baikal. The expo has been participated by more than 100 tourism-related organizations such as recreational facilities, hotels, public organizations, restaurants, museums, and camp for children; staff of Irkutsk, Republic of Buryatia, Republic of Tuva in Russia, and staff of Japan, Poland, China, and Mongolia. Last year, more than 7,000 visitors visited the expo.

## Schedule of NEAR Member

### March

2015.3

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Region : Henan Province, China</li> <li>Event : <b>2015 Worship Ceremony of the Hometown of the Yellow Emperor</b></li> <li>When : March</li> <li>Where : Xinzheng City</li> <li>Contact : Zhengzhou Government</li> <li>T. +86-0371-67448741</li> <li>F. +86-0371-67448741</li> <li>Website: <a href="http://www.zhengzhou.gov.cn">http://www.zhengzhou.gov.cn</a></li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Region : Hyogo Prefecture, Japan</li> <li>Event : <b>The 13<sup>th</sup> Sub-Committee on Disaster Prevention</b></li> <li>When : March 9~12</li> <li>Where : Kobe City, Hyogo Prefecture</li> <li>Contact : Disaster Prevention and Planning Division of Hyogo Prefecture</li> <li>T. +81-78-362-9870</li> <li>F. +81-78-362-9914</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Region : Krasnoyarsk Territory, Russia</li> <li>Event : <b>Medical Forum 'Yenisei Medical'</b></li> <li>When : March 10~12</li> <li>Where : Krasnoyarsk City</li> <li>Contact : <a href="http://www.krasfair.ru">www.krasfair.ru</a></li> <li>T. +7 (391) 22-88-611</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Region : Tottori Prefecture, Japan</li> <li>Event : <b>Tottori Marathon 2015</b></li> <li>When : March 15</li> <li>Where : Tottori Prefecture</li> <li>Contact : Sports Division of Tottori Prefecture</li> <li>T.+81-857-26-7918</li> <li>F.+81-857-26-8307</li> </ul>		

### April

2015.4

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Region : Henan Province, China</li> <li>Event : <b>The 9<sup>th</sup> China Henan International Investment &amp; Trade Fair</b></li> <li>When : April</li> <li>Where : Zhengzhou Convention Center</li> <li>Contact : Foreign Affairs Office of Henan Province</li> <li>T. +86-0371-65688841</li> <li>F. +86-0371-65688841</li> <li>E-mail: <a href="mailto:faohn05@126.com">faohn05@126.com</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Region : Altai Territory, Russia</li> <li>Event : <b>International Tourism Forum &lt;Visit Altai&gt;</b></li> <li>When : April</li> <li>Where : Belakuriha City</li> <li>Contact : Tourism and Resort Development Division of Altai Territory</li> <li>T/F. +7-3852-20-10-31</li> <li><a href="mailto:priem@altur22.ru">priem@altur22.ru</a></li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Region : Gyeongsangbuk-do Province, South Korea</li> <li>Event : <b>The 7<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum 2015</b></li> <li>When : April 12~17</li> <li>Where : Daegu EXCO</li> <li>Contact : Daegu-Gyeongbuk World Water Forum Organizing Committee</li> <li>T. +82-2-6009-9442</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Region : Shandong Province, China</li> <li>Event : <b>The 16<sup>th</sup> China International Vegetable Science and Technology Fair</b></li> <li>When : April 20~ May 30</li> <li>Where : Shouguang City, Weifang</li> <li>Contact : T. +86-536-5678212</li> </ul>	

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
4	5	6	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Region : Jeju Special Self-Governing Province, South Korea</li> <li>• Event : <b>The 2<sup>nd</sup> International Electric Vehicle Expo</b></li> <li>• When : March 6~15</li> <li>• Where : Jeju Island</li> <li>• Contact : Energy Industry Division of Jeju Special Self-Governing Province (International Electric Vehicle Expo Organizing Committee) T. 064-710-6908</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Region : Daegu Metropolitan City, South Korea</li> <li>• Event : <b>PREVIEW IN DAEGU 2015</b></li> <li>• When : March 11~13</li> <li>• Where : Daegu EXCO</li> </ul>	 <p>2015 SPRING / SUMMER INTERNATIONAL TEXTILE FAIR <b>PREVIEW IN DAEGU</b> March 11 (Wed) - 13 (Fri), 2015 exco www.previewis.com</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Region : Niigata Prefecture, Japan</li> <li>• Event : <b>Niigata Sake Fair</b></li> <li>• When : March 14~15</li> <li>• Where : Niigata City</li> <li>• Contact : Niigata Sake Brewer's Association TEL. +81-25-229-1218 FAX. +81-25-229-1220</li> </ul>
18		20	21
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Region : Irkutsk Region, Russia</li> <li>• Event : <b>Baikal Tour Expo</b></li> <li>• When : March 25~27</li> <li>• Where : Irkutsk City</li> <li>• Contact : Tourism Division of Irkutsk Government</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Region : Busan Metropolitan City, South Korea</li> <li>• Event : <b>The 11<sup>th</sup> Urban Agriculture Exhibition in Busan</b></li> <li>• When : March 26~29</li> <li>• Where : BEXCO</li> <li>• Contact : Agricultural Technology Center</li> </ul>		
25	26	27	28
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Region : Daegu Metropolitan City, South Korea</li> <li>• Event : <b>12<sup>th</sup> International Green Energy Expo &amp; Conference 2015</b></li> <li>• When : April 1~3</li> <li>• Where : Daegu EXCO</li> <li>• Contact : Green Energy Expo Secretariat T. +82-53-601-5371 <a href="http://www.energyexpo.co.kr/kor/">http://www.energyexpo.co.kr/kor/</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Region : Shandong Province, China</li> <li>• Event : <b>2015 Yellow River Estuary (Dongying) International Marathon</b></li> <li>• When : April 2</li> <li>• Where : Sinsaegi Square, Dongying City</li> <li>• Contact : T. +86-546-8928016</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Region : Krasnoyarsk Territory, Russia</li> <li>• Event : <b>Siberian Jewelry Expo</b></li> <li>• When : April 2~5</li> <li>• Where : Krasnoyarsk City</li> <li>• Contact : <a href="http://www.krasfair.ru">www.krasfair.ru</a> T. +7 (391) 22-88-611</li> </ul>	
8	9	10	11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Region : Krasnoyarsk Territory, Russia</li> <li>• Event : <b>Siberian GEO Forum</b></li> <li>• When : April 15~17</li> <li>• Where : Krasnoyarsk City</li> <li>• Contact : <a href="http://www.krasfair.ru">www.krasfair.ru</a> T. +7 (391) 22-88-611</li> </ul>			
15	16	17	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Region : Toyama Prefecture, Japan</li> <li>• Event : <b>Toyama General Manufacturing Industry Trade Fair 2015</b></li> <li>• When : April 23~25</li> <li>• Where : Techno hall of Toyama City</li> <li>• Contact : Executive Committee of Toyama General Manufacturing Industry Trade Fair 2015 T. +82-76-431-2015</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Region : Republic of Buryatia, Russia</li> <li>• Event : <b>Buryatia Tourism and Rest Expo 2015</b></li> <li>• When : April 17~18</li> <li>• Where : Ulan-Ude City</li> </ul>	 <p>8th YACHT &amp; BOAT KOREA 2015 APRIL 30 - MAY 3, 2015 CHANGWON CECO</p>
22	23	24	

## The 2<sup>nd</sup> NEAR Youth Essay Contest

### Overview

The NEAR Secretariat held the 2<sup>nd</sup> NEAR Youth Essay Contest to promote exchange and cooperation among member regions aimed at the youths of member regions (aged 14-18). With the topics regarding Northeast Asia, a total of 46 essays, including six from China, four from Japan, nine from South Korea, five from Mongolia, and 22 from Russia, were submitted. A Grand Prize and five Excellence Prizes were awarded.

### The 2<sup>nd</sup> NEAR Youth Essay Contest | Excellence Prize (China)

## A Field full of Tea Scent - Northeast Asia through Tea Culture



**Zhang Yuan**  
Third Grade, Tianjin No. 20  
Middle and High School

There is a connecting link between different cultural phenomena that share similar social and cultural backgrounds. Tea is a good example of this. Despite tea originated in Meng Ding, Sichuan, China, Northeast Asia is famous for the delicate scent and the pure taste of its teas.

Before drinking the tea, our fingers stop at caressing the warmth and delicacy of the teapot. The sophistication of Chinese teapots is world-renowned. The scent of Yixing's teapots dates back a thousand years and the design of Japanese and Korean ones includes Song Dynasty's styles and motives. From simple decoration to more general and ostentatious designs, these teapots represent the traditional and elegant beauty. The Russian teapots are made of metal, which reminds people that Russia is abundant in metal mineral resources. Mongolians tend to drink tea with plenty of milk, which makes their teapots rough and simple, reflecting their wild nature. These teapots represent the heterogeneous culture of the area, mirroring the convergence of its multiple cultural backgrounds. Therefore, tea culture is deeply embedded in Northeast Asian regions and has experienced remarkable changes through the years.

Sitting in a teahouse with my eyes closed, I find myself absorbed in deep thoughts. The scent grazes the tip of my nose and the sweet and fine aroma of a hot cup of tea lingers in the room's atmosphere. The Chinese nation always took great pride and pleasure in enjoying their and other cultural achievements from old times. Therefore, tea culture spread across every nation in Northeast Asia.

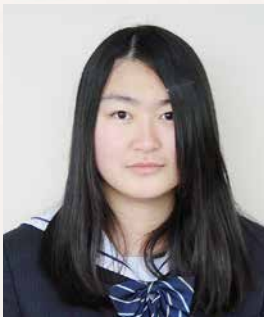
Tea leaves have always been considered an invaluable treasure in this exotic land, proving to be crucial in developing the economy and trade of every nation in Northeast Asia. Furthermore, they lead the trade between the ancient nations of the region, where tea culture represents the friendship bonds that exist between nations belonging to that part of the world, from ancient times until now.

In short, the scent of tea is present in every area and region of Northeast Asia. I expect that the soul of tea's scent will only get widely spread in the future, becoming an evidence of economic and trade success and the mastering skills that this land possesses on the matter, reflected on how foreign students flood the whole area. There is no place absent of the scent of tea. As a matter of fact, tea is deeply embedded in the history, economy, culture, and social life of Northeast Asia, being represented in multiple of our objects. Its origin traces back to ancient times and, one suspects, it will always be with us.

History evolves and the world changes. Even though everything decays with the pass of time, the scent of tea remains. Although time goes by and life styles evolve and vary, the soul of tea scent will be eternal, connecting a lasting friendship among all nations in Northeast Asia.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> NEAR Youth Essay Contest | Excellence Prize (Japan)

## A Worthy Experience: Learning from Cultural Exchanges with Korean Middle and High School Students



**Mishima Aoi**  
Second Grade, Izumo Nishi  
High School of Shimane  
Prefecture

Last summer, I participated in an exchange hosted by Shimane Prefecture. Despite Korea being a neighbor country, the closest to Japan, I felt uneasy about whether I would be able to get along with the Korean students due to ‘the issue of the Korean comfort women’ and ‘compensation issue after war.’ But after we met, I knew my fears were unfounded. Sitting side by side on the bus, I had the feeling that it would be difficult to break the ice with them, but they soon started a conversation. It surprised me that one of them spoke fluent Japanese. Her name was Choi Min-ji and was one year junior than me. Compared to me, who could not speak fluent Korean, she spoke fluent Japanese, which shocked me pleasantly. We soon became close enough, making easier than I expected talking about our favorite artists, cartoons, birthdays, and family members.

The first part of the meeting was devoted to cleaning part of Hiroge beach. It showed the current situation of Japanese’s seaside issue with trash coming mainly from South Korea and China, accounting for the 70 percent of all Japan’s trash. The Korean students seemed they wanted to apologize on behalf of the Korean government for the policies they carry on this particular area. I would like that this gesture was connected to the ‘campaign to ban illegal waste into the sea’ in Korea. The next part of the meeting involved making ‘Izumo Soba,’ which is a specialty of Izumo City. I explained to the Korean students how to prepare soba, and they all seemed to understand and enjoy my indications. The final result turned to be delicious. Next on the schedule -the main and the last event- was arranged at Izumo City’s International Exchange Center. It was there where the Korean students exhibited different performances including singing, dancing, and taekwondo.

We also painted a picture to have exhibited at Izumo City’s Candle Night (Candle Festival), which will be held on August 17. The picture’s theme was ‘Friendship Bonds between Korea and Japan.’ In a nutshell, it was a very joyful and memorable meeting. Before departing, we made an exchange of presents. I gave a Japanese puzzle to my partner Choi Min-ji, and she seemed to be very pleased with it.

All in all, the meeting was very informative and productive. Despite the cold war between Korea and Japan, we young people were able to engage in a very pleasant exchange and enjoyed our time together. Having in mind the difficult political situation that Korea and Japan and China and Japan are going through at the moment, exchanges between young people could be a stepping-stone to encourage the relaxation of tensions between our respective countries. I acknowledge the good points of other parties instead of merely criticizing them.

These cultural exchanges might become a starting point for some sort of positive change. I hope young people and new generations contribute and make an effort to keep them happening.



2015

대구·경북 세계물포럼

Daegu & Gyeongbuk,  
Rep. of Korea

# The World Water Forum 2015

The World Water Forum 2015 will take place from April 12 to 17. The forum will be attended by stakeholders related to water such as water experts, policymakers, NGOs, members of the press, and business leaders under the slogan “Water for Our Future.” In 1997, the first forum was attended by more than 500 people from 63 countries, but the 7<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum is expected to be participated by 350,000 people from 170 countries. Meanwhile, the World Water Forum, the largest international water-related event, is organized every three years by the World Water Council (WWC) to discuss solutions for all water related issues on World Water Day (March 22, every year) and Water EXPO will be held to draw political declaration to realize it.

## Background of Hosting the World Water Forum

The World Water Forum seems unfamiliar, but the assignment to address global water challenges emerged as the world issue of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The World Water Council (WWC), consisting of water-related organizations, governments, and international organizations was founded in 1996 to provide a forum for global water issues. In 1997, the year following its foundation, WWC created the World Water Forum so that interest groups from all over the world may gather together and jointly discuss water issues.

## History of the World Water Forum

The World Water Forum has developed as a great place to discuss water issues for the last 18 years. The forum which has been held six times is continued in a new way to change core value of the 6 forums under the joint goal to address world water issues. The 6<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum showed its effort to address global water issues by collecting more than 1,000 water related solutions with ‘Time for Solution.’

## The 7<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum

Compared to previous forums which have shown a lot of solutions, there were many water-related issues which were unsolved. The 7<sup>th</sup> forum will be held with the key value “practice”. The World Water Forum consists of four Processes (the Thematic Process, Regional Process, Political Process, Science & Technology Process) and citizen’s forum, water expo & fair.

First, The Thematic Process is a core process of the World Water Forum, where participants discuss a wide range of themes, share information, and promote implementation through political process before the forum. The Political Process facilitates discussions among ministers, parliamentarians, and local & regional authorities in order to raise awareness about global water challenges as well as call for political will of governments, policy makers, etc.. Third, the Regional Process provides a place for



Handing over the Forum's flag  
in Marseille, France in 2013



Nakdong River International Water Week 2014

participants to discuss solutions related to water issues among neighboring countries while highlighting region-specific issues. Adding to these three Processes, the Science & Technology Process has been newly introduced to the 7<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum. It aims to encourage the exchange of latest technologies and information and bridging the gap between developed and developing nations.

Program	Details
<b>Water Showcase</b>	A contest to identify the most creative implementation cases via online
<b>World Water Challenge</b>	A science and technology process to discover water challenging issues that the world is facing and find solutions based on science and technology
<b>Daegu-Gyeongbuk Water Prize</b>	To prize the most creative implementation cases through these programs at the 7 <sup>th</sup> World Water Forum's closing ceremony

“World Water Forum Expo & Fair,” an exhibition which is related to water, will be held in EXCO, Daegu. The Expo & Fair is a place to introduce water related policy and the latest technology of each country and provide a chance to build a network and expand business cooperative relations sharing the current situation of international water industry. In addition, there will be a variety of participating events through various programs such as water themed movie festival and concert for participants.



Hosting Cities of the Water Forum

#### Posters



1997 Marrakech, Morocco



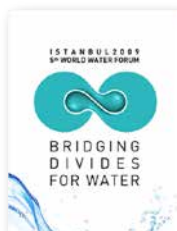
2000 The Hague, the Netherlands



2003 Kyoto, Shiga and Osaka, Japan



2006 Mexico City, Mexico



2007 Istanbul, Turkey



2012 Marseille, France



# Completing a One-year Job

## at the NEAR Secretariat

Public officials seconded from foreign countries (China, Mongolia, and Russia) completed their job at the NEAR Secretariat from March 2014 for a year and the time to get back is getting close.

NEAR Secretariat held various events, such as NEAR Working-level Workshop in spring, NEAR International Forum in summer, and the 10<sup>th</sup> NEAR General Assembly in fall 2014. Public Officials seconded to the Secretariat who played an important role in every event were interviewed.

### Shandong Province, China | Qi Hongzheng

Q1 You always walk to work. Would you say a few words before leaving the Secretariat?



A year seems to have passed in the twinkling of an eye like a tree sparrow sitting in a tree. Looking back, it's too bad I'm already late to do something new in Korea.

Reading my diary brings back memories in daily life in Korea. A lot of experience in Korea such as preparing for the Working-level Workshop in Daegu, General Assembly in Jeollanam-do Province, International Forum in Khabarovsk, and exploring Gyeongju's

history and culture will forever be missed. While working at the Secretariat, I was able to build up my experience regarding large international events and learn through it. Even though I majored in Korean language at the college, living in Korea gave me a chance to learn more about Korean language. Moreover, working at the Secretariat would be the most beautiful memory in my life as NEAR directors and coworkers gave me warm care and support.

It is regrettable that I am leaving, but I feel joy and thank for a year. I could learn to give up and relax in the noisy places realizing precious things.

Lastly, I would like to express my gratitude to all of you who have been with me as well as many people who met in the street for a year.

### Khuvsgul Aimag, Mongolia | Batsuuri Undrakh

Q1 A year has passed since you worked at the Secretariat. What was the most impressive thing while working at the Secretariat?



A year has passed since I arrived at the Incheon International Airport with expectations and worries to work at the NEAR Secretariat, located in Pohang City, South Korea in spring 2014. Looking back, Pohang City was a peaceful and stable and the Secretariat staff whom I worked with were so kind that I could quickly adjust to new surroundings. In addition, I had a meaningful time to learn new things every day.

It was a little difficult that I was not able to speak Korean and didn't know much about Korean culture, but I became accustomed to Korean language and learned about Korean history, culture, and life by visiting many places in Korea over the weekend in person and for a business. The most impressive trip was visit to Jeju Island with Anna, one of my coworkers from Russia and Familiarization tour to Incheon Sondo.

I will never forget Korean people who kindly led us during the Jeju Island trip along with tangerine farm colored with orange, beautiful island scenery, development view of Songdo New Town, and Pohang beach which I want to frequently visit.

Q2 There were many people who came from different countries at the NEAR Secretariat. How was the work at the Secretariat?

Working at the Secretariat gave me a chance to make friends with the Secretariat staff seconded from foreign countries, including Russia, China, Japan, and South Korea and to learn their way in which they work, culture,

and way of thinking. I feel really great about my contributing to the NEAR's activities by gathering useful information and data from Mongolian members and supporting website. I cared little for Northeast Asia with little knowledge of it. But, working at the Secretariat had my knowledge on Northeast Asia expanded by being involved in many activities such as participation in the events, translation of a wide range of materials, and collection of data. My experience and knowledge at the Secretariat will be helpful for my future work.

### Q3 Would you say a few words to Secretariat Staff?

I would like to express my gratitude to Secretariat's staff who supported me and Mongolian coworkers who helped me ease the work of the Secretariat and hope all goes well.

### Irkutsk Region, Russia | Anna Laman

### Q1 A year has passed since you worked at the Secretariat. What was the most impressive thing while working at the Secretariat?

Since seconded to the NEAR Secretariat for a year, I have experienced a wide range of events. The most memorable thing was to visit Khabarovsk, Russia a couple of times to discuss co-hosting of the NEAR International Forum. I was able to build precious experience preparing such a large scale international event. For example, it was very informative to know that public officials from China, Japan, South Korea, and Mongolia have their own distinctive rules and procedures to go overseas and there are contradictory regions in Northeast Asia while translating speakers' presentation papers for the forum. Also, I could learn expert's views about joint issues in Northeast Asia. In particular, despite language limit with the Secretariat staff, they became a close cooperative partner enough to understand what is needed for each other. Working at NEAR gave me gifts such as expert knowledge on Northeast Asia, new friends, and useful network.



### Q2 Would you tell me about the most exciting experience during your stay in Korea

The reason I chose to work at the Secretariat was to study constructive area for cooperation between Irkutsk and Korea. For this, I visited many places in Korea. As Korea is developed in transportation infrastructure, it was easy for me to visit anywhere in Korea. The most impressive and interesting place that I have visited in Korea was Song-do of Incheon, Jeju Island, and Unmunsa. Visiting Song-do gave me a chance to see Korean growing business through dynamic Free Economic Zone such as international enterprises, offices, business centers, exhibition halls, and state-of-the-art educational institutions. Trip to Jeju Island was quiet short but it gave me unforgettable memory by visiting parks, tangerine gardens, main museums, and traditional markets. Lastly, I was attracted by beautiful sceneries surrounding the Unmunsa, the largest Buddhist educational institution which preserves the 1,000-year-old tradition in Korea.

### Q3 Would you say a few words to Secretariat Staff?

I would like to express my gratitude to the Secretariat staff including NEAR Secretary General Kim Jae-hyo who helped me settle down in Korea. In particular, I would like to give my thanks to Choi Ju-hwa, Russia Expert. She who has great sense of humor and Russian soul is my good company as well as coworker.

As Irkutsk is a Chair region of NEAR, we would build close relations with the Secretariat after leaving Korea. Honorable NEAR member regions! I will wait for you in Irkutsk where the Working Committee is held in 2015 and General Assembly in 2016.

# The Association of Northeast Asia Regional Governments



The Association of Northeast Asia Regional Governments

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