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# Korea Culture Minister reviews cultural promotion initiatives



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In an [article in \*The Korea Times\*](#), Culture, Sport and Tourism minister, Kim Jong-deok comments on the Culture Day initiative and soft power programmes to boost Korea's cultural branding abroad.

The last Wednesday of every month is very special in Korea. Royal palaces and national museums are open for free and moviegoers and theatergoers enjoy discounts. Libraries across the nation open until late and major sports games including baseball and soccer offer discounts as well. This is the "Culture Day," an ambitious project of the Ministry of Culture, Sports

and Tourism (MCST) to provide cultural welfare.

Culture, Sports and Tourism minister Kim Jong-deok picked the Culture Day as one of his focal projects.

The project planted itself in Korea, as people started to associate the last Wednesday with various cultural events. According to the ministry, the number of visitors to national cultural facilities increased 38 percent on the Culture Day, compared to the previous day in the first half of 2015.

However, Kim is not satisfied with the result yet. "It should be expanded more. It aims to make everyone feel and enjoy culture during everyday life. We are in talks with other ministries to broaden to Culture Week," Kim said.

The design expert, who took office in August 2014, oversees a wide range of tasks of culture, sports and tourism. The three might seem irrelevant, but Kim said they are in fact closely connected, as they are all related to leisure.

"Cultural enrichment is one of the priorities of the Park Geun-hye administration and the MCST takes the responsibility," the minister said.

"For example, German, American and Japanese automobiles each have its color, but Korean automobiles are functionally exceptional, but lack originality. The originality equals the value of the country. Without the cultural uniqueness, Korea cannot overcome the status of being a follower."

Kim emphasized that without having cultural uniqueness, it is difficult for Korea to take the lead even in terms of industry.

The cultural power comes from understanding what we have and that is one of the reasons why Kim puts in a great deal of effort in branding Korea. The MCST manages the creation of new national brand and government symbol system, which will be announced later this year.

"National brand is a comprehensive concept, not just a catchphrase or a slogan. It is something all Koreans can share, combining traditional and contemporary, tangible and intangible cultural assets of Korea," Kim said.

Kim hopes the unified national brand and government symbol system would contribute to social integration. "That is why we invite public participation. We are currently holding a contest asking what 'Koreanness' is and the contest is symbolic — the process of collecting and listening to everyone's opinion in co-creation is important."

**READ full article 'Culture will be power for new Korea'**

*Image: Culture, Sports and Tourism Minister Kim Jong-deok, fifth from left, poses for a photo with the winners of the "Korea, Our Stories" contest, which collected ideas for the government symbol, at the National Museum of Korean Contemporary History in Seoul, Aug. 7. Redesigning the national and governmental symbol system is one of the major projects of the ministry. / Courtesy of Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism*

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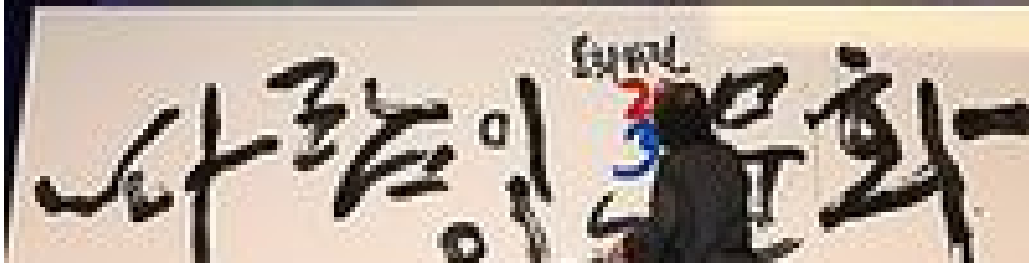
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