

ANZA KOREA

COMMUNITY, NETWORKING, CHARITIES

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ANZA Exclusive interview

H.E. Philip Turner
New Zealand Ambassador

Thursday 18th March H.E. Philip Turner, New Zealand Ambassador to Korea and ANZA co-patron and his partner, Hiroshi Ikeda answered to ANZA questions.

Your Excellency, you have been in Korea since early 2018. What were your first impressions of Korea when you first commenced the posting; and have your views/perceptions of Korea changed in the years since then?

Philip Turner - As you might know I came into the job from private sector. I was in Fonterra for 18 years having been a diplomat earlier. It was quite a change coming back from business to government after 18 years. The reason I was very excited to doing so was when this job came up in 2017; and I thought this is the most interesting part of the world you could have to be at that time. It was during "fire and fury" during escalation of tensions, missile testing- and that made it politically very interesting. We've spent over our careers a lot of



Back row left to right: Alexandra Busch, HE. Philip Turner, Hiroshi Ikeda, Henry Shin
Front row left to right: Yeseul Kim-Russel, Corinne Rivoallan

time both in both Japan and China; now coming to Korea seemed to me like completing a triangle. We were lucky enough to be in Japan at the time where Japan was a kind of top of the world in the early 90s. People writing books about Japan taking over as number 1 in the world, but it never happened! Then, we were in China during the Beijing Olympics, the Shanghai Expo the moment of China's big coming out period. And now coming to Korea in 2018, it felt like this is Korea's moment in the sun, when Korea's economy is running high and just this year became one of the top

ten economies in the world, standard of living is on par with New Zealand. Its soft power, it's become a power house around the world with Lee Sung-Jong, BTS and Black Pink; Korea is really riding high! It felt like to me that economically, politically, socially and culturally it's a fantastically interesting part of the world to be in at 2018. I was dead keen to come and it has not disappointed!

Hiroshi Ikeda - The minute I arrived here- it happened to be a really horrible pollution day and that was a sort of worry as I suffered from a lot of respiratory problems in China. I didn't want to have the same problems here.



That 2018 spring, April, was especially bad. I was a little bit worried but then- as the pollution was only seasonal it got better. Since I grew up in Japan, I felt like this (Korea) is very similar to my original country. I adjusted to the way people live here, the way I need to go and get around. I feel comfortable. Then I was always interested in history, that's why I was always interested to go to Gyeongju- that we soon went to. Another thing is, before coming I didn't know that Seoul got a very good access to day hiking. I have always liked hiking and I thought, this is a very good place, especially autumn colours when the air becomes very good.

Do both of you have any tips on experiences or "must see" spots in Korea you recommend for ANZA members?

PT - Hiroshi mentioned Gyeongju that we very love. We are both very keen on history. That's a fantastic place, we've been there a few times. We very like the Baekje ancient capital, unfortunately we were not able to visit the museum since COVID came, which was a pity. When museum re-opens, we will be back down there.



The obvious one, the DMZ, I've been there a lot, that's always fascinating. Of course, you can't visit at the moment, hopefully it will re-open to visitors again.

Hiking/tramping: we both like. Obviously, there are great places around Seoul and out of Seoul- Soraksan. Jirisan: that was amazing. We were delightfully surprised how impressive that was; and how the whole National Park down there is gorgeous and much less crowded.

HI - I would add Bukhansan, very near here, and unless people hate walking in the mountain it's a very nice place where you can experience even some rock and chain climbing, which is not too difficult. Yongpyong for skiing. Initially I thought everything is man-made snow, but it was better than I thought!

PT- Yongpyong is a great resort. The international ski festival that normally happens every year there is a great event. Ski races for all age groups, lots of skiing countries get together and have races and then a big party in the evening with awards. It's really fun! Even

then a big party in the evening with awards. It's really fun! Even around Seoul there is little area you can experience such as Iksangdong. It's amazing, you go there and it's like whoa! This tiny little alley, very atmospheric, a little bit gentrified, really a great atmosphere where you feel like you are in a different city. It's not in the guidebooks.



What similarities/differences have you observed between Korea and New Zealand culture?

PT - They are pretty different [laughs] ... The Korean-Kiwis step across both cultures. It's fascinating to watch how people like you manage that. For most New Zealanders, Korea is quite foreign, quite different. That's part of the fascination to come in to places like Korea- it's so different. It's crowded, industrial, very prosperous country with a completely different economic structure, a completely different history, background, religious heritage and so on. Completely different than New Zealand!



There are some similarities: we've been living in Japan for long time. In Japan as a foreigner, as a westerner you never feel to understand what people are really thinking. In Korea you always know what people are thinking. They are really upfront, frank and outspoken. Korean are world champion demonstrators. Not so strong now compared to ten or twenty years ago. These demonstrations are really amazing, huge numbers, demonstrating every weekend, there is always something going on. Korean are really forth right with their views- that's interesting for Kiwi's. The whole social complexity, the hierarchy of society is something I think New Zealanders struggle with. We find as Ambassador and partner, we get treated so well, we are totally privileged. We live in this bubble where people pay us way too much respect; and for Kiwi's that's hard. Conversely Koreans expect New Zealanders to respect their hierarchy and to pay respect to senior people, to older people, women to men.

HI - Actually, our ex-gardener, when I just went out for Korean Class - he used to come to the gate to bow.

PT- It's not only strange. Some aspects of New Zealand are quite hard to take, it feels like it's wrong. It just doesn't feel right. It's not right or wrong, it's different cultural approaches. I think that's challenging for Kiwis. Both in terms of understanding Koreans and fitting in here, because we have to do some of that to get along.

"The coffee shop phenomenon is curious. I never see a city with so many coffee shops, every hundred metres."

Conversely, when Koreans come to New Zealand- they are a bit shocked; that New Zealanders don't treat them with the respect they think they deserve.

HI - Compared to Japan, there are lots of similarities with Korea. I

don't really understand why and a little bit less restaurants? My interpretation is that it's something to do with Confucianism - that may happen.

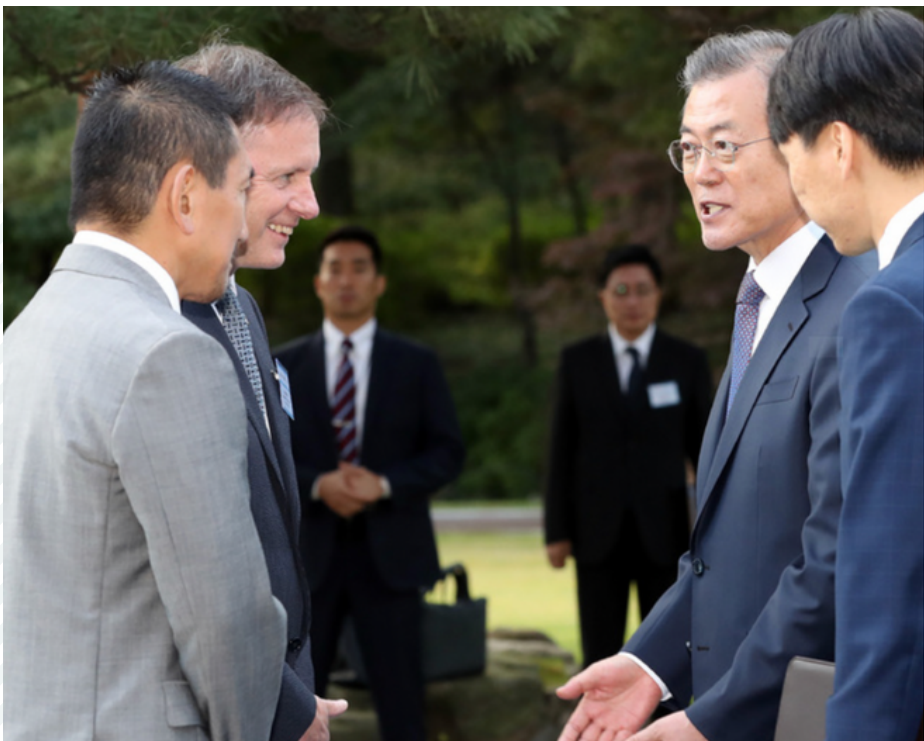
PT - The coffee shop phenomenon is curious. I never see a city with so many coffee shops, every hundred metres. Lot of independent ones and they are open at night. In New Zealand, coffee shops will stop working at 4 o'clock. Here, you can have Here, you can have coffee and cake at 10 o'clock at night, 24 hours!

HI- I think it goes against the reputation that probably stood 10 years ago; there are not many drinking places which are open. There are some, certainly, but not as many as I expected.



Koreans are so upfront? Compared with Kiwis - are Koreans more upfront? I don't think so! Coming from Japan I feel that most of things are very similar but then suddenly some bits and bits are different- which make me wonder why? For example, I don't know if this observation is correct or not: there are too many coffee shops

PT- You know in New Zealand you go to have dinner- you spend a couple of hours at a restaurant, then you might go to a bar or a lounge bar, or a cocktail bar or something. But not so much in Korea. Here, restaurants feel crowded and you have a short time at a restaurant; and you go to a coffee shop.



How do you both think we can encourage and support diversity in the community in Korea?

PT - This has actually become a bit of a theme for us, unexpectedly! When we first arrived, the issue arose as to how Hiroshi was to be treated by the foreign ministry. Eventually we persuaded them and they changed their policy to recognise Hiroshi as a same sex spouse for the first time in Korean history; so that was a big deal. The President in 2019 had this big garden party in the Blue House and invited all the diplomatic core, ambassadors and their spouses. So Hiroshi came along, and for the first time ever, the President was seen talking to and shaking hands with a same sex spouse diplomatic partner - a huge deal. So, we've had quite a lot of press attention about that. Along with Australia and lots of like-minded countries we have

participated in Pride events in Seoul and other cities, and that's created quite a bit of a profile. Obviously support for diversity is a key to and a critical part of New Zealand's values, society and our foreign policy. Indeed, promoting LGBT rights is one of our major human rights priorities. So, we are very happy to talk about that. New Zealand and Australia have great stories to tell now, although it has taken us some time to get there. That's creating a lot of interest here in Korea- they are still grappling with some pretty basic issues about equality, discrimination- not just LGBT folk- but women, minorities, foreign immigrants, refugees. There is a real job for New Zealand and Australia to explain why we think this stuff is important. The trick is to do in a way that is not directly critical of Korea. Korea has to find its own way and it doesn't have to be the way New Zealand and Australia

work. So, what we do in New Zealand is talk about our history, what happened, how did we get to where we are. Whether that's same sex marriage and partnerships, transgender in the military, indigenous rights of the Maori people and the Treaty of Waitangi. We tell the story of how our societies have evolved, where we got to and why we think our current values are important. Another sense in which, for me, Korea is changing- a point of significant social change right now. It's fascinating to watch and it's a great privilege to be here and watch at a time when this is happening. We can perhaps make a small contribution to the local debate by telling our own stories about how we've come to where we are in NZ.

Both of you have busy schedules- what are some ways you find time for each other and to relax?

HI - Anywhere we go he (Philip) likes parties [laughs] or inviting friends. many parties to me are relaxing but sometimes too much. Generally speaking, we have enough time over weekends since I used to be used to a more busy lifestyle- with people work often on weekends. I am pleased he (Philip) tried to keep weekend time for private. We think we have enough to relax. We sometimes go hiking with diplomatic colleagues on the weekend, that is relaxing and very nice to do.

PT - We do a lot of tramping on the weekends. I try and keep the weekend completely free of diplomatic events- it's not always possible but it's not too bad.

Actually, the Koreans, there is something about the culture; people work like crazy during the week. Koreans don't tend to socialize work wise on the weekends, so the weekend is relatively free. You get some big public events. So, we can just go tramping, or get together with friends, go to restaurants, we like going to the movies.

HI- I still prefer seeing movies in theatres, rather than on TV. There is a small theatre near our office, behind the history Museum where they constantly show Korean movies with English subtitles.

What do you miss most about New Zealand and what do you think is the biggest tourism Unique Selling Point or draw card for New Zealand and why?

HI- Pretty beaches with clean, clear water; being able to swim in the water [laughs].

PT - Fresh air, clean beaches, going in the outdoors. In New Zealand it's just a lot more relaxed. As a society, life is.... everything seems easier. You don't have 20 million people crammed into one corner of the country. Friends and family we miss of course. Fish and chips! Chinese takeaway [laughs]. Honestly, we don't even need to say a word. The NZ brand is so strong here it's incredible. In fact, my experience is: I walk in the room and people say, "Oh New Zealand!". It's got more so since COVID has really helped Australia and NZ. NZ has a really strong brand of being "Pure New Zealand", and it's powerfully held people think of nature, open spaces, unspoilt landscapes, ...

clean air, clean water, adventure outdoor activities, fresh food, good wine- all of that! We have nearly 40,000 Korean Immigrants in NZ, which is nearly 1% of the population! Nearly all of them moved to

lifestyle values, not just the scenery and beaches; the kind of multicultural diverse society that we created. We are trying to promote a more layered, richer image of NZ in addition to the obvious positive profile around the scenery and nature. It's not a hard sell.



NZ in the last 25 years. There is a strong positive image of NZ which is reinforced by this and there is so much traffic back and forth. So many people I know send their kids to be educated, or they have relatives living there, or people retire to live there because the lifestyle is fantastic, so that sells itself. My task as Ambassador is really to get beyond that clean, green beautiful lifestyle image and talk about other aspects of NZ like technology, for example. It's a high-tech place; you can do great business there, make movies, we do gaming, we sell automatic vehicles to Sejong City. We want to talk about the tech side of NZ, the diversity- the

COVID has reinforced that impression with the fact that NZ is one of the best countries in the world at managing COVID. Now, in addition to clean green, great for lifestyle, great place for educating your kids, great place to retire. I think people are actually now going -it's a really well run country, it's well governed, they controlled the virus. the government is popular. It's not just COVID, it's the way the government, particularly the Prime Minister responded to the Christchurch Terror Attacks; the way she reached out to the Muslim community. The White Island disaster in 2020. There has been a series of tragedies and disasters- she has responded really well.



I think that gives people a real sense of that it is not just a great place to live, it's also run really well. I think in 2021 when you look around, there are not too many places you would say that about. So, I find my job very easy.

Do you have a message for our ANZA members and the Kiwi community?

PT - It's a really tough time. We at the Embassy and everyone feels the challenge of carrying on with our lives within the constraints of COVID. We know it's very stressful for people.

You can't travel back to NZ very easily and you can't have your family come visit you here. That lack of personal contact with your family and friends back

"...Just be kind!
Look after each other. Reach out for each other, and work together."

home. The lack of easy travel. The fact that all our activities in Korea are also constrained. We can't go out and have parties and BBQ's. I know that takes a real toll on people and families, on relationships and individuals. We see it in the Embassy, and around the community. So, I think the message is, as the Prime Minister says, just be kind! Look after each other. Reach out for each other, and work together. I think that's where ANZA has a really important role. I think in these times of crisis- all the more important to have and nurture those personal networks and relationships as best we can.



**Public Notice from Australian and New Zealand Embassies
ANZAC Day and the Battle of Kapyong 70th Commemorations.**

Despite the continuing COVID-19 restrictions on large gatherings in the ROK, we are pleased to advise that planning is going ahead at this stage with events to mark both the 70th anniversary of the Battle of Kapyong (at Gapyeong - 23 April) and the ANZAC Day Dawn Service (at the National War Memorial, Seoul - 25 April). Unfortunately, given limitations on the size of public gatherings in Korea, the Australian and New Zealand Embassies will need to strictly limit numbers at both functions, and attendance will be by a small number of official invitations only.

We regret that we are not able to make these very special events open to the public as usual, but our priority, as at home in Australia and New Zealand, is always public health, and the need to comply closely with our local social distancing guidelines.

We appreciate your understanding and look forward to continuing to honour this important legacy, both through virtual engagements and, once COVID-restrictions ease, offline events

ANZA Korea Welcomes you!

Memberships

ANZA Korea welcomes all nationalities to come join our community.

Yearly membership is KRW50,000 and begins from 01 August.

Email us at registration@anzakorea.com

How to become a member in 3 steps

STEP 01 Head to our website
www.anzakorea.com
Click the "membership" link

STEP 02 Fill in your details
One membership (KRW50,000/year) covers one household

STEP 03 Transfer payment
ANZA Korea Bank Account Details
Bank: Standard Chartered (SC은행)
Account Number: 100-20-954772
Account Name: ANZA (주한호주뉴질랜드협회)

We also accept cash however, bank transfer is preferred. Unfortunately, credit card is not available as a payment option.

Join us at our next event!
For any questions please email registration@anzakorea.com