

## College-Student Essay Contest on North Korea

In Summer 2010, representatives of the Korea Times, the JK Foundation, the Hanns Seidel Foundation, and North Korean Review agreed to start our annual essay contest on North Korea, with \$4,000 for prize money and \$1,000 for expenses, for undereducated students enrolled in four-year colleges and universities in South Korea. The Korea Times announced the call for essays around January 10, 2011 and received a total of 17 essays by the end of February. A number of the editorial board members for North Korean Review reviewed them and selected the top three essays: “The Road to Reunification Begins in Gaeseong,” by Park Tae-jin of Sungkyunkwan University, “The First Step to Reunify: Involve the Young,” by Jepoi Ordaniel of Kyung Hee University; and “Getting Real about Reunification of the Two Koreas,” by Trae Douglas Turner of the University of Ulsan. These three essays appeared on the May 17, 2011 issue of The Korea Times. I wish to congregate each of these three essay-contest winners. There are a number of other essays that deserve awards, but unfortunately we had only enough money for the top three essays. Nevertheless, we really appreciate the efforts of every one of those who have submitted their essays. These three top essays and the call for essays appear at the end of this issue.

We think this essay contest is important for the future of Korea because college students are the future leaders of Korea. Apparently, there are a number of reasons for a huge gap in the opinions of college students (liberal) and the general public (conservative) on North Korean provocations. First, college students believe that politicians use North Korean issues for their short-term political gains. Second, they fear for their careers, as the risk of South Korean conflict with North Korea increases. Third, they believe that China will take over North Korea in the case of a sudden collapse of the North Korean regime. Many view Northeast Asia as poised more for international conflict than for international peace, because this region manifests the more general global North–South divide based on the divergence between market countries (the United States, Japan, and South Korea) and socialist or transitional countries (China, Russia, and North Korea). These young people question this widely held view, because the strategic role of North Korea in Northeast Asia will compel the U.S. and other Northeast Asian countries to work together on the Korean issue for their national security, energy supply, and economic welfare.

Many people have provided various kinds of support that have been critical to the successful completion of this project. We would like to express our thanks to Park Moo-jong, President of the *Korea Times* and Huh Chang-soo, Director of the JK Foundation for their approval of this essay contest. Our special thanks go to Kim Ji-soo of the *Korea Times* and Choi Chul-ki of the GS Group, who have made many valuable contributions to this project. Finally and importantly, a number of *North Korean Review* editorial board members deserve special acknowledgement for their review of the essays, dissemination of the call for essays, and copy editing of the selected essays: Semoon Chang, University of South Alabama, Alzo David-West, Aichi Prefectural University (Japan), Mikyoung Kim, Hiroshima City University (Japan), Eul-chul Lim, Kyungnam University (South Korea), SeungHyun Lee, National Assembly Research Service (South Korea), Myoung-

Kyu Park, Seoul National University (South Korea), Terence Roehrig, U.S. Naval War College, and Bernhard Seliger, Hanns Seidel Foundation (South Korea). Award ceremonies for essay-contest winners were held on Tuesday, May 17, 2011, between 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. at the Plaza Hotel in Seoul, Korea. Each winner received the promised prize stipend and plaque with logos for the *Korea Times*, the JK Foundation, the Hanns Seidel Foundation, and *North Korean Review*.



**North Korea Essay Contest:** Winners and sponsors of the first North Korea Essay Contest for collegians pose after the awards ceremony held at a Seoul hotel, Tuesday. The contest was co-hosted by JK Huh Foundation, The Korea Times, the Hanns Seidel Foundation Korea Office and the North Korean Review. From left are Bernhard Seliger, resident representative of the Hanns Seidel Foundation's Korea Office; Park Tae-jin, 24, winner of the Commendation Prize; Trae Douglas Turner, 25, winner of the Grand Prize; Park Moo-jong, president-publisher of The Korea Times; Jeffrey Sistoso, winner of the Commendation Prize; Kim Suk-hi, professor of finance at the University of Detroit Mercy and publisher of the North Korean Review; and Choi Chul-ki, executive vice president of the JK Huh Foundation.

/ Korea Times photo by Shim Hyun-chul