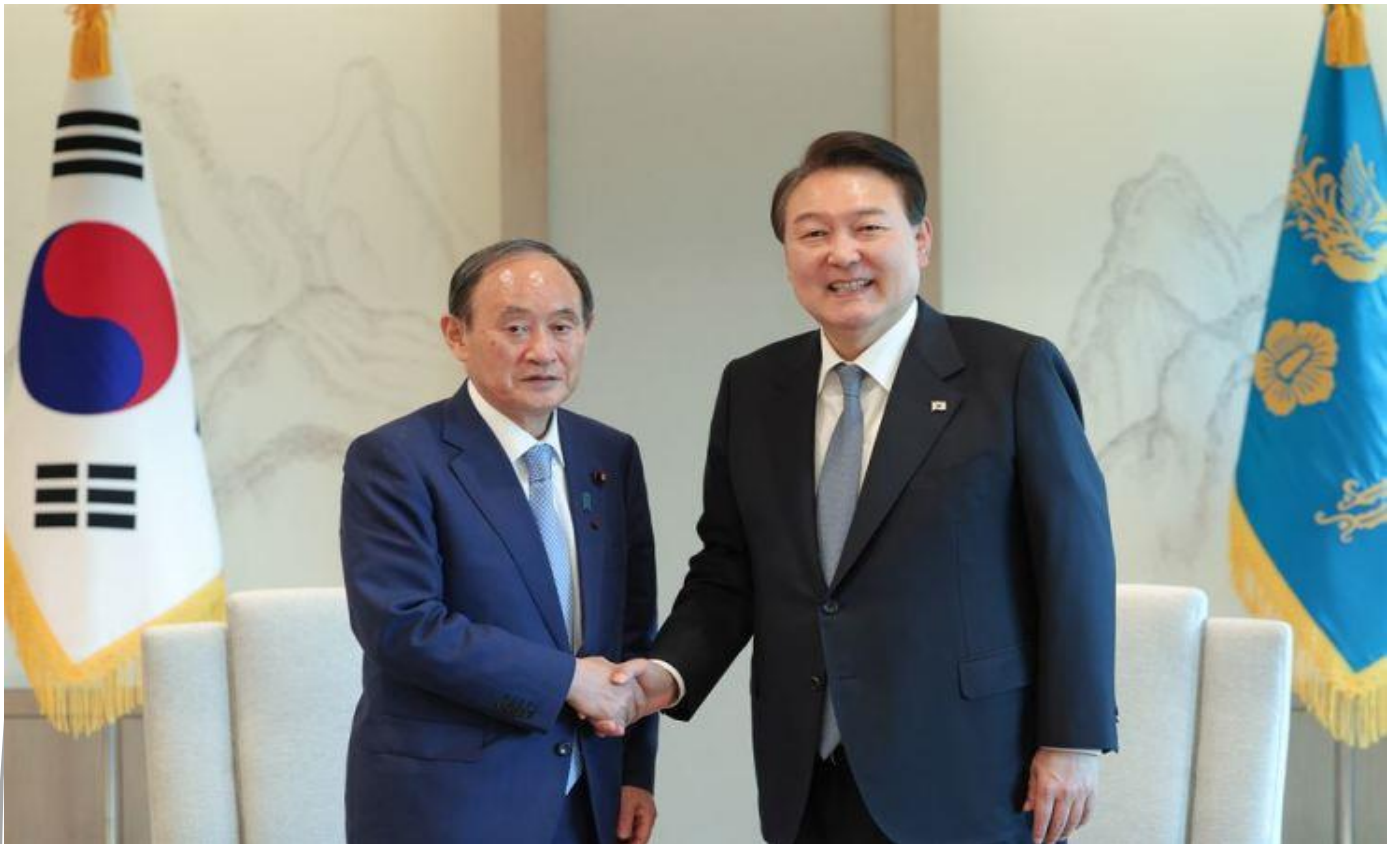




America-Eurasia Center

8/1/2023

## New Developments for South Korea

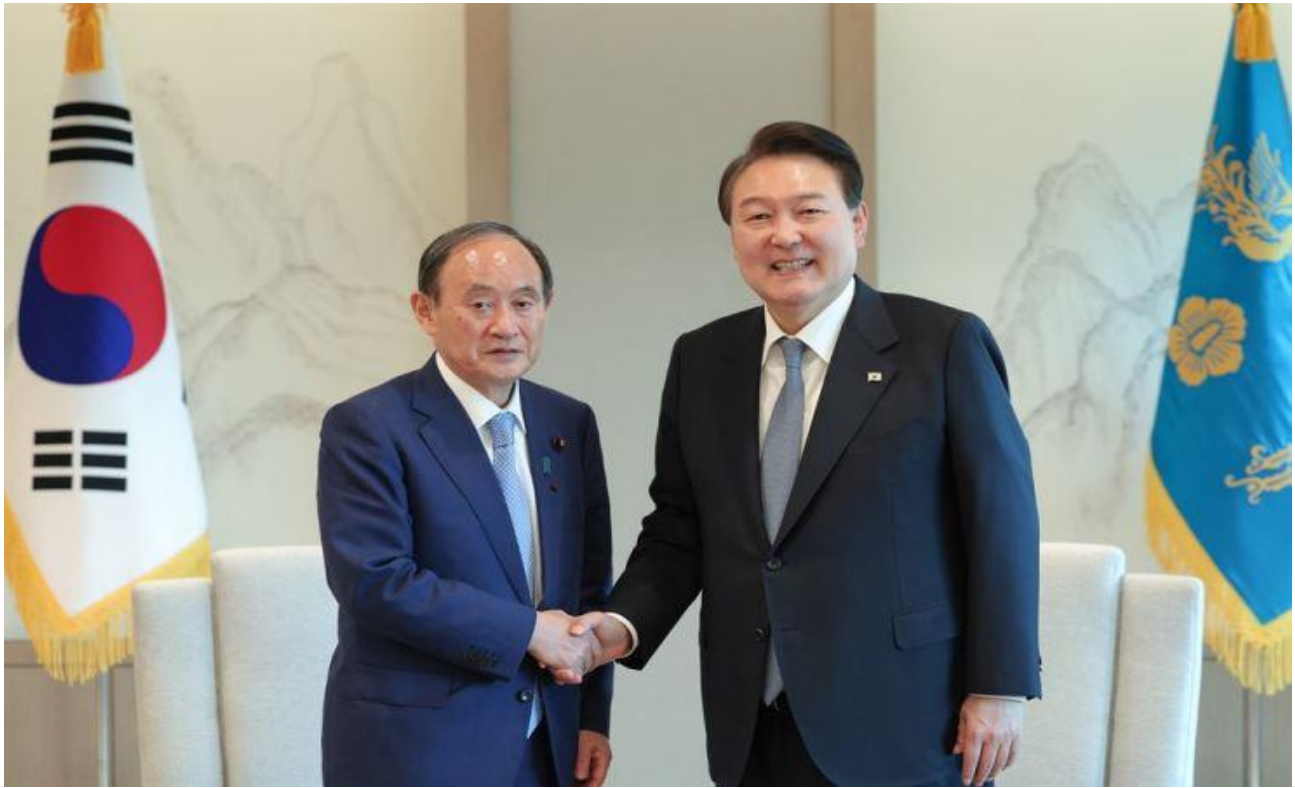


The Conference between former Prime Minister Suga Yoshihide and President Yoon Seok Yeol,  
Photo Credit: Office of the President of South Korea

**Daniel Bang**  
**US-Korea Program**  
**The America-Eurasia Center**  
[www.eurasiacenter.org](http://www.eurasiacenter.org)

**The America-Eurasia Business Coalition**  
[www.usebc.org](http://www.usebc.org)

# New Developments for South Korea



The Conference between former Prime Minister Suga Yoshihide and President Yoon Seok  
Photo Credit: Office of the President of South Korea

## Introduction

Suga Yoshihide, the former prime minister of Japan, visited Korea to have a conference with Yoon Seok Yeol, the current president of the Republic of Korea. The main point of the conference was to celebrate the recovery of the diplomatic relationship between Korea and Japan. The two countries had contentious politics for three years for historical reasons. The Empire of Japan colonized Korea in 1910 and exploited people until Japan relinquished Korea due to its loss of the Pacific War. Some Zaibatsu (Japanese conglomerates) helped the Empire of Japan during the Pacific War. The Zaibatsu participated in exploiting innocent Koreans during the Pacific War. The Supreme Court of Korea ruled that the Zaibatsu had to pay for the massive reparation to victims of the Pacific War in Korea in 2018. Japan responded to the Supreme Court of Korea's ruling on restricting the exportation of Japanese products. Korea broke GSOMIA (General Security of Military Information Agreement) by responding to the restriction of Japanese products. GSOMIA was the agreement Korea and Japan signed to share information about the North Korean military.

For historical reasons, the diplomatic relationship between Korea and Japan could have been worst. However, President Yoon Seok Yeol and Kishida Fumio, the current Prime Minister of Japan, had a conference and agreed to restore favorable relations between Korea and Japan in order to strengthen their alliance against North Korea. Even though there was no conversation that Japan had to apologize for accepting the colonialism of Japan, there was a compromise that Korea and

Japan had to work together to make allegiance. The conference resulted in differing attitudes about the outcome. One side favors the results that the Japanese government accepted at the conference. The other side argues that it was an achievement for the Korean government to restore a good relationship with Japan in its efforts to strengthen an alliance against North Korea and China.

Suga Yoshihide said it was important for Korea and Japan to unite with each other to pursue the same values and same national interests. Furthermore, the former prime minister Suga and President Yoon agreed to improve cooperation with America to strengthen an alliance against North Korea and Chinese military expansionism more effectively.

#### More Readings

- <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2023/03/30/national/yoon-fukushima-water-release/>
- <https://apnews.com/article/korea-japan-business-yoon-keidanren-b7aae049d1cf68d8b444b225b053b004>
- <https://time.com/collection/100-most-influential-people-2022/6177686/yoon-suk-yeol/>

#### Works Cited

<https://www.csis.org/analysis/meaning-gsomia-termination-escalation-japan-korea-dispute>  
<https://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20230531000852>  
[https://kreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2023/05/120\\_352093.html?utm\\_source=go](https://kreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2023/05/120_352093.html?utm_source=go)

## Change of Age System in Korea

People who read the article might think about the author's meaning when he says change the age system. How is measuring age in Korea different compared to other countries in the world? The answer is, "Yes, the system of measuring age in Korea is unique compared to other countries." In other countries, people grow old after their birthdays pass by one year. On the other hand, people in Korea get older after passing one year (12/31). Also, in Korea, each person is recognized as being one-year old as soon as they are born. Newborn babies are one-year old because they lived in their mother's wombs for ten months. Because of the different system, Koreans always struggled to explain their proper ages properly to foreigners.



Many politicians knew that the different system of measuring age in Korea was the problem. In 2021, Yoon Seok Yeol, presidential nominee of the People's Power Party, announced that he would implement the policy which abolishes the Korean system of measuring age and implements the system of measuring age that other countries use (Korean Herald). Many Koreans acknowledged that they needed to reform their system of measuring age. After President Yoon became president, the new government announced it would implement the international system of measuring age in Korea in June 2023. However, the Korean government made an exception this year for people who must take college entrance exams, enter seniors, join the military, and take the civil service exams.

### Works Cited

<https://blogs.loc.gov/law/2023/01/koreans-becoming-younger-unification-of-age-counting-systems/#:~:text=Under%20this%20system%2C%20everyone%20in,of%20their%20actual%20birth%20date.>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-63903771>

South Korean age system: <https://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20220118000739>



## *My Childhood and Journey of Making Tonkatsu in Different Ways*



By Daniel Bang, America-Eurasia Center's US-Korea Program

I remember back in the day, eating Tonkatsu at a restaurant during his childhood. Tonkatsu is Japanese-style foreign food that is popular in Korea. I was born and raised in a town where diverse people from foreign countries have immigrated and lived. I like foreign food, including Tonkatsu, because it has been exposed to foreign cultures and societies. Tonkatsu is so tasty. I have always favored savory and juicy Tonkatsu. Also, Tonkatsu is served with cabbages and rice which makes it a perfect lunch and dinner. That may be why I have gone to different Tonkatsu restaurants for a long time, even though I live in America, where many people do not even know what Tonkatsu is. Now, people reading the article might be wondering who made the tasty food, and people have to know the history of Japan if they want to know why the Japanese made Tonkatsu.

The Japanese could not eat meat in the past because of Buddhist influence. Emperor Tenmu, a deeply religious Buddhist emperor, announced that the Japanese Government forbade people from eating meat. In Buddhism, there is some theology that people must not take the life of animals. Because of the announcement, the Japanese could not eat animals like pigs, cows, and chickens. The historical case gave the Japanese to change their eating behaviors. People reading the article will realize that one of the most popular foods in Japan is sushi, and the historical case is why sushi is so prevalent in Japan. Many Japanese still needed protein for their life, and fish was one of the ways to gain protein during the ban on meat consumption. However, time passed, and the Japanese realized that it would be necessary for the populace to eat meat again.

Japan faced many obstacles in the 19th century after seeing how the West had destroyed China. The Japanese government thought it would be inevitable for them to modernize their country by following the culture, society, customs, political system, and many other things of the West. Emperor Meiji started to order Japanese Government to legalize eating meat, including pork. However, the Japanese, who were used to eating fish and non-meat, rejected eating meat. The Japanese Government, which wanted to help the Japanese eat meat, thought it was important for them to decrease the repulsion of eating meat. So, the Japanese government adapted the cutlet, which was a British food, for a new Japanese cuisine. Cutlets have a fried surface, and it was easy for people not to see the surface of the meat due to the fried surface. Japanese restaurants adapted cutlet to their ways. The restaurants added many potatoes to the pork and put rice and cabbage, which are common foods in East Asia.

People in Korea started to eat Tonkatsu due to European restaurants. Because of the restaurants, Tonkatsu became popular in Korea, and other non-European restaurants started to use Tonkatsu as their menu. However, many restaurants in Korea adopted Tonkatsu in Korean style. Korean-style Tonkatsu has a lot of Kimchi, traditional Korean food, and fermented bean soup. In the contemporary era, many restaurants put cheese, sweet potatoes, eggs, and other diverse ingredients. Tonkatsu became modified and readapted almost becoming a new part of the cuisine.

The history of Tonkatsu shows people how food is so diverse around the world and how one food becomes a distinctive style based on people's minds, cultures, society, and customs. As we celebrate diversity, we can learn lots of things.

