도산 안창호 선생님께,

안녕하세요, 도산 선생님.

You may not know me, but I know about you, sir. The sacrifices you made for our country Korea, the trustworthy, loyal, truthful, courageous, and patriotic spirit and example you set while leading and helping the first Korean Americans, the suffering you went through for our country Korea, but most importantly, your love for our country, Korea.

Your name was first heard by my ears when I was invited to attend a musical portraying your life's work, vision, and impact. As someone who was not educated at that time about my heritage, and my history as a Korean American, I went to the musical not knowing that what I was about to see would change my motivations, values, and visions, and ultimately spark a fire of passion in me. Me watching that musical was like watching your life unfold in front of my very own eyes. From how you started from a humble beginning in Korea, your involvement as a leader in the first Korean government when Japan brutally invaded Korea, your dedication to serving and helping fellow Koreans in any way you could, founding and building up a Korean American community in America, picking oranges one orange at a time as a means to send financial aid to other Korean patriots around the world, so that one day Korea would be unified, to still fighting for Korea's independence even through all the torture the Japanese put you through for fighting for your country, and still, your love for God, our country, Korea, and your fellow patriots never ceased to overfill, even to death. It was after this musical that I wanted to be someone like you in the future. A leader who helps others at all times, a motivated and purpose-driven individual who strives to be and do the best, and sacrifices for the good of my country as well as the well-being of others. I wanted to be and still am learning to be a leader who educates himself and is sincerely honest. Learning about you through this musical was the beginning of my journey to becoming a Korean patriot, like you.

My name is Elliott Yi, sir, and I am currently a 16-year-old, Korean-American boy who is also active in LA Korea town's very own Boy Scout Troop, Troop 777, which is sponsored by the 흥사단, the Korean organization you established in 1913. It's only been about 2 years since I first joined the Boy Scouts, but I've been through so many character and leadership-developing experiences, learned so much about my Korean heritage from individuals like my Scout Master, Mr. Shin, met so many extraordinary people, and made so many memories that I will always cherish and remember, that it feels like I've been in the scouts since I was a little boy. I thank God, my parents, and my scoutmaster Shin for guiding, helping, and teaching me to become a strong leader, but most importantly I thank you 도산 선생님, for creating the 흥사단, because without it supporting and sponsoring Troop 777, the opportunities, the education we get of our Korean-Americans, as well as the connection we have to our original roots in Korea, wouldn't be possible.

Also, speaking of the Boy Scouts, my troop and I went to Korea in July of this year for the 25th World Scout Jamboree in 새만금 and it was quite the experience. It had been 5 years since I had last gone to Korea, and you won't believe how advanced and innovative Korea has become. Korea has become the hotspot of trends, technology, and media; everyone wants to visit Korea, learn Korean, and especially eat Korean food. Food-wise, I mean who wouldn't right, sir? Nevertheless, despite all this success, convenience, and popularity that Korea has right now, I know as sure as you are that it wasn't always like this. The suffering and advocating for independence that you and other Korean patriots went through were what set the foundation for what kind of country Korea is today. Your efforts, dedication, and sacrifices were what now allow Koreans in Korea, as well as in America, to live the way we do now. You would be so happy, so overjoyed to see how well-off Korea has now become, but there is still a problem, sir. Even though there is peace and comfortability in living in Korea, our beloved country is still divided into two sides; the north and the south. Families are separated, brother fighting against brother, sister fighting against sister, Korea is not a united country yet.

While my troop and I were in Korea, we toured around Seoul for about a week with our Scoutmaster, Mr. Shin, as our tour guide. Mr. Shin is currently the Director of the organization you also founded, The YKA, the Young Korean Academy, and is also a Korean patriot who admires you and lives his life in a way that brings good change to society and works hard to educate the young generation of Korean Americans of their true heritage and trains them to become the leaders of tomorrow. I am learning so much from him and at times I feel your patriotic spirit speaking through Mr. Shin at times. Mr. Shin took my troop and me to numerous museums, exhibits, and places in Seoul that helped us learn more about what Korean patriots did and went through that allowed Korea to be Korea today, past events that have led Korea to be as it is right now, and experience the history that was never told to us as Koreans. We traversed many, many miles each day of our tour, transferring from subway to subway, bus to bus, and went to places such as the 서대문 Prison History Hall, the 도산 안창호 Memorial Hall, and the 흥사단 Headquarters in Seoul to name a few places. However, out of all the places that my troop and I went to, one location hit dead straight into my heart and it really hit me hard; The 서대문 Prison History Hall. The place that you and so many of Korea's patriots went to and suffered at the hands of the Japanese, just because you were Korean and were proud and loved your country. My troop and I ventured through the exhibits and actually explored and walked on the very ground of the torture camp where Koreans were tortured and killed by the Japanese. But there was this one exhibit, a room that contained all the pictures of the Koreans who were locked up, tortured, and killed in that prison camp. Hundreds of photos and names were plastered in this spacious room and as I looked at all the faces and names my heart sank as I noticed how young some of the people were. Kids as young as my youngest brother to kids as old as me were at this prison camp. It broke my heart to see how many Koreans, especially those who were only kids, were sent to this place of suffering. But what broke me the most was the audio that was played in the room that quoted something you said in the past, sir: "낙망은 청년의 죽음이요, 청년이 죽으면 민족이 죽는다". "Disappointment is the death of youth, and when a youth dies, the nation dies." This phrase was repeated the entire time I was in the room and it really got to me. Your words that youth like me are the future, that if the younger generation is not educated, passionate, and driven to help their country, it is the death of a nation, our

nation. As I saw all the lives that were lost on the walls in order for Koreans to live a free life today, your words really spoke to me.

It was from that point on that I dedicated my life, my resources, and my time to doing the best in all that I do today so that one day, Korea would be unified. That one day, Korea will become, one country, where all Koreans are able to live together as one people, one nation.

I wish to become like you, sir. A son, a brother, a friend, a patriot, and a leader who has the kind of passion, values, determination, sacrifice, and vision as you; to have the same young spirit of 도산. I hope that all the sacrifices and hard work to bring unification to Korea in the past as well as in the present will not go to waste, but that Korea will reunite one day. That one day I would be able to see Korea being unified as one country. The day will soon come when families will reunite, and I just wanted to let you know that your sacrifices, the blood, sweat, and tears of all the valiant Korean patriots, have not gone unseen nor ignored. The legacy and the spirit of the Koreans who sacrificed in the past, live in the lives of the new and younger generation of today, like myself. You will not be forgotten, sir. Korea will be unified.

On the night that I watched the 도산 musical, I remember this phrase that you once said and it opened the door to the beginning of a new journey, a new purpose. “나는 밥을 먹어도 대한의 독립을 위해 잠을자도 대한의 독립을 위해해왔다 이것은 내 목숨이 없어질때까지 변함이 없을것이다.”

“Even when I eat, I fight for Korea's independence, and even when I sleep, I fight for Korea's independence. This will not change until my life ends.”

Thank you so much for everything you did, sir. It is difficult to express the amount of admiration and overflowing gratitude I have for you and all the other Korean patriots. It is because of Korean Patriots like you that we are living the life we live today. Please watch over us and pray for us in heaven as we work to unify our beloved country Korea, one step at a time.

사랑합니다, 도산 선생님.

Elliott Yi 올림