

Kim Dae-jung says, "I would make the same decision"

**Former President Kim pays his respects to Roh  
and criticizes the retreat from democracy  
and worsening inter-Korean relations under President Lee**



Former President Kim Dae-jung places a chrysanthemum in front of former President Roh Moo-hyun's picture at an incense burning place in Seoul Station on May 28.

Former President Kim Dae-jung walked with a cane to place a chrysanthemum in front of former President Roh Moo-hyun's picture at the memorial site that had been set up at Seoul Station on May 28. Former President Kim chose to visit the Seoul Station incense burning place where citizens have been paying their respects to the late president rather than the Seoul Museum of History incense burning place that has been visited by high-ranking politicians and business people.

The former president said, "After thinking about the disgrace, frustration, and sorrow the late president endured, I think that I also would have made the same decision." He revealed his feelings of heartbreak and said, "Faced with former President Roh's death, I have been feeling that half of me has collapsed."

After paying his respects to the late president, former President Kim held an informal gathering with the leaders of the opposition Democratic Party who have served as chief mourners. A close aide of Kim's described the atmosphere by saying,

"He seemed to lose his temper." According to the aide, former president Kim said, "The government has banned the use of Seoul's City Hall Plaza as a public mourning and memorial site. Furthermore, the government objected to my delivery of a memorial address at the (May 29) public funeral service."

Han Myung-suk, former Prime Minister in Roh's administration, had asked former President Kim to speak and he had accepted. Han had said to former President Kim, "Your memorial address would give some meaning to the late President, because both of you had participated in democratic movements under the authoritarian regime, and the late president continued on with your policies regarding improving democracy and working for peace on the Korean peninsula."

However, the current administration had made strong objections to the idea of Kim giving the memorial address suggesting that this would pose an issue of equity among the other former presidents.

Former President Kim criticized the current administration's method of governance, saying, "This administration has retreated so far from democracy that the gulf between the rich and poor has widened and inter-Koreans relation have escalated." He added, "Amid this, the people are expressing their sorrow regarding the death of former President Roh who had been a figure the people could count on."

Kim also criticized prosecutors, saying, "Prosecutors engaged in a sweeping investigation of Roh's wife, son, daughter, relatives, aides, and Roh himself. After more than twenty days after summoning the former president, the prosecutor still had not presented any concrete proof."

In concluding remarks, the former president suggested, "Korean people have to go forward in the areas of demanding democracy, a better economy, and a reconciliation of inter-Korea relations in line with the direction that the late president would have pursued."

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