

《英语新闻：韩国归还425具中国志愿军遗骸》

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ROK to return Chinese war dead

The Republic of Korea began to exhume the remains of Chinese soldiers killed during the Korean War (1950-53) on Friday, one day after its defense ministry agreed to return 425 sets of remains.

ROK President Park Geun-hye offered to return the remains during a visit to China in June. The move is seen as a symbolic gesture of friendship, observers said.

The excavations, which began early on Friday morning, will take several months as it takes time to wash and dry the remains and place them in coffins, ROK military officials told Yonhap News Agency.

Time is also needed to clean relics such as pens, uniforms, stamps and badges.

"The military will return the remains and relics of the Chinese bodies that have been unearthed so far to their homeland as soon as possible," the ministry said.

"The two sides agreed to repatriate the bodies on the agreed-upon schedule on humanitarian grounds. ... The agreement will become a new milestone for relations between the two nations," a senior ROK ministry official was quoted by Yonhap as saying.

On Thursday, the Chinese Ministry of Civil Affairs said in an online statement that the two sides will actively push for more cooperation with regard to the return of the remains.

According to the ROK defense ministry, there are currently 367 Chinese bodies and 735 DPRK bodies buried in the Paju cemetery, just south of the demilitarized zone that separates the ROK and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Shen Zhihua, an expert in Korean Peninsula history at East China Normal University, said: "Both China and the ROK are showing a humanitarian spirit in this case. It indicates that the two 'former enemies' value peace and stability in the Korean Peninsula and East Asia nowadays."

People should learn lessons from the painful past and try to build friendships, he added.

Li Bingliang, another expert on the history of the Korean War, said most of the soldiers killed were young.

The Chinese soldiers fought alongside the DPRK to resist US-led United Nations troops in 1950. Tens of thousands of Chinese soldiers died in the war.

