



**PARTICIPANTS** are paired off for a round of speed dating during the matchmaking program in South Korea. Photographs by JEAN CHUNG For The Times

**COLUMN ONE**

## Buddhist monks assume a new role: Matchmaker

Amid South Korea's fertility crisis, religious leaders take a cue from reality TV to pair up singles and foster 'social cohesion'

BY MAX KIM  
REPORTING FROM GANGHWA ISLAND, SOUTH KOREA

Three monks, a horde of reporters and 20 singles looking for love walked into a Buddhist temple.

The singles sat on gray mats in the center of the temple's study hall, visibly tense because the two dozen reporters crammed in the back were causing a small scene.

An irritated cameraman snapped at a competitor: "Can you get out of my shot?"

The three monks of the Jogye order — South Korea's largest Buddhist sect, with around 12 million followers — looked on with placid smiles.

So began the third edition of "Naneun Jeollo" — or "To the temple" — a matchmaking event launched last year by the Korean Buddhist Founda-



**MYO-JANG**, president of the Korean Buddhist Foundation for Social Welfare, is shown at Jeondeung Temple, South Korea's oldest Buddhist monastery.

tion for Social Welfare to fulfill the religion's commitment to fostering "social cohesion."

One of the organizers reminded the participants of the weekend's stakes: nothing less than the future of the country.

"I'm sure all of you have noticed how that day-care center in your neighborhood has one day turned into a nursing home," he said, pulling up a computer slideshow titled "Aging Society."

It showed that over the last two decades the number of babies born each year had been halved and that by 2050 the elderly would make up roughly 40% of the total population, straining the country's welfare systems and deepening labor shortages.

The singles took in the figures with polite yet stony expressions.

"For the sake of the low birthrate," the presenter concluded in an upbeat [See *Matchmaking*, A4]

## Jailed students, a canceled ceremony and angry parents

A series of decisions by USC's president present the sternest test of her tenure.

BY MATT HAMILTON AND JAWED KALEEM

When USC trustees selected Carol Folt as their next president, they gave her one of the most challenging mandates in American higher education: Restore trust in a university diminished by scandals.

She replaced key administrators, brokered a \$1-billion settlement with alumnae victimized by a sexually abusive gynecologist, hired a new football coach and authorized the removal of the name of an antisemitic, eugenics-supporting former USC president from an iconic campus building. To dozens of Japanese American ex-students unjustly incarcerated during World War II, then later denied reentry to the university, Folt awarded honorary degrees.

"We are bringing some closure and perhaps heal-

ing," Folt told descendants of those former students at a 2022 gala for Asian American alumni, distilling two key themes of her five-year tenure.

But a cascade of decisions that Folt made this spring around USC's commencement and Israel-Hamas war-related protests have inflamed tensions and opened fresh wounds, presenting the most significant test of her tenure as university presidents around the country wrestle with similar dilemmas.

Citing unspecified safety threats, Folt rescinded pro-Palestinian valedictorian Asna Tabassum's speaking slot in USC's main commencement ceremony. Days later, amid a swell of outrage, Folt "released" director Jon M. Chu and other celebrities from receiving honorary degrees at the ceremony.

After students set up a tent encampment in support of Palestinians and demanded that USC divest from financial ties with Israel, Folt and her team called in the LAPD, and 93 people were arrested. Last week, [See Folt, A10]

## UCLA rescinded requests for more campus police

Days before violence erupted among protesters, the school had asked for backup.

BY NOAH GOLDBERG

Five days before pro-Israel counterprotesters attacked a pro-Palestinian camp at UCLA, the university asked other campuses for additional police, according to the head of the UC police officers union.

But the two requests — which would have provided UCLA with more officers as they dealt with the camp and a dueling area erected by pro-Israel activists — were quickly canceled, according to internal communications reviewed by The Times.

UCLA officials did not respond to a request for comment.

The requests for additional police resources add

to questions about why UCLA was underprepared when dozens swarmed the pro-Palestinian camp Tuesday night and Wednesday morning, attacking protesters who were occupying the space on the campus.

Law enforcement sources said there were only a handful of UCLA officers on duty at the time, and they were quickly overwhelmed. It would take hours for officers from the Los Angeles Police Department, the California Highway Patrol and other agencies to arrive and stop the violence.

UCLA's handling of the upheaval, the subject of an external review by the University of California, has been widely criticized.

Wade Stern, an officer at UC Riverside and the president of the Federated University Police Officers' Assn., told The Times that the mutual aid call would have allowed members of the UC Police Department's [See UC Police, A8]

## Group is feeling under siege in Huntington Beach

LGBTQ+ people say approval of Pride flag ban is latest sign of hostility in the city.

BY TYRONE BEASON

Huntington Beach radiates California cool. The best surfers in the world descend here each summer to compete on waves rolling in under its public pier. Convertibles zoom past towering palms along Pacific Coast Highway. Beachfront homeowners enjoy breathtaking views, and everybody seems to sport a hang-loose attitude.

But trans activist Kanan Durham says Surf City USA and Orange County in general have grown more and more unwelcoming — in some cases hostile — for

members of the LGBTQ+ community.

Durham, 32, joined other concerned Orange County residents to form the nonprofit group Pride at the Pier to push back against what they say is a rising tide of hate here that's emblematic of a trend seen across the country.

When Huntington Beach's conservative-majority City Council voted last year to ban the display of most flags on city property — including the rainbow flag, a global emblem of LGBTQ+ pride, unity and self-expression — members of the group took to the pier, waving Pride flags in protest.

Their act of defiance was met with a rebuke of sorts when voters approved a measure to write the ban into the City Charter.

[See LGBTQ+, A6]



**TRANS** activist Kanan Durham stands with a Pride flag outside City Hall in Huntington Beach, where its display is banned after a referendum.

### Lakers looking for a new coach

Team fires Ham days after elimination from playoffs. **SPORTS, B12**

### Will pot change win Biden votes?

Many support move to reclassify the drug. **PERSPECTIVES, A2**

### Kids remain on Skid Row

Children of migrants stay on streets despite policy. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

**Weather**  
Weak storm on tap. L.A. Basin: 69/53. **B6**

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