

# THE GRANITE TOWER

THE KOREA UNIVERSITY ENGLISH MAGAZINE

MAY  
2020  
VOL. 501



**KOREA**  
UNIVERSITY



*INFINITY PLUS ONE*

## COVER STORY

**Unprecedented Socio-economic  
Crisis Sweeping the World**

—Under the Plunging of Oil Prices and COVID-19

## FEATURE

- 16 Investors Taste a Bitter Tang Due to LIME's Financial Fraud
- 18 Struggle to Make Safer School Zones for Children
- 20 The Need for Common Ground in the Korean Mobility Industry

# THE GRANITE TOWER

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**EDITORIAL OFFICE** *The Granite Tower*, 145, Anam-ro, Seongbuk-gu, Seoul, Korea (02481)

**TELEPHONE NUMBER** 02-3290-1685 / 82-2-3290-1685  
**E-MAIL** thegranitetower@gmail.com  
**WEBSITE** http://www.thegranitetower.com  
**UNIVERSITY SWITCHBOARD** 02-3290-1114 / 82-2-3290-1114

**PUBLISHER**  
 Chung Jin Taek

**FACULTY EDITOR**  
 Kim Dong-Uk

**ENGLISH ADVISERS**  
 Alex Vos, Gil Coombe, Michael Blackwood

**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**  
 Kim Sun Min

**SPECIAL EDITORS**  
 Kim Na Yoon, Kweon Ji Hyun, Lee Kyung Yeon

**SENIOR REPORTERS**  
 Jun Uhnjin, Lee Eun Seo, Nam Hye Bin, Park Min Ha

**JUNIOR REPORTERS**  
 Kie Hae Seung, Kweon Seo-young, Lee Donghyun, Nam Eun Seo

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## EDITOR'S LETTER

### Infinity Plus One

Intuitively, *infinity plus one* would be infinity. Mathematically, the same phrase poses many different possibilities and complications. There are many types of infinities in mathematics, all of them possessing bizarre possibilities. The concept of infinity is loaded enough as it is, but if one were to add one to infinity, it would open doors to many more paradigms.

To some, infinity is not a number—thus, infinity plus one may not exist. To others, infinity is interpreted as never-ending, making a “plus one” meaningless. The May issue of *The Granite Tower* (GT) reflects this multi-dimensional concept in its articles. With the on-going pandemic crisis, GT attempts to report news topics surrounding the disease—this includes related issues but also covers subjects that are aside from the spread of the virus.

This being said, the Cover Story of this edition encompasses the economic difficulties that ensued from the spread of the pandemic. Our reporters attempt to analyze the stability of the global economy and what is at the core of the problems behind the plunge. Our Feature stories cover domestic issues that have more to do with the problems with the legal system in Korea.

GT hopes that this edition will be able to present readers with our reporter’s “plus one” to their writing and, as always, our team wishes for our readers to stay safe in a time like this.



By Kim Sun Min  
 (smkim18@korea.ac.kr)  
 Editor-in-Chief, *The Granite Tower* (GT)

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# Continued Efforts to Publicize a KU Student's Death in the Military

By Kie Hae Seung hayleyyy1215@korea.ac.kr

On March 21, a video regarding the suicide of Korea University (KU) student Choi Hyun-jin ('16, English Language and Literature) during military service was uploaded onto the KU Department of English Language and Literature Emergency Committee's Facebook page.

The aforementioned Committee affiliated Choi Hyun-jin's Death Publicization Task Force (TF) preceded this video with a campus wall poster in December, 2019. The poster stated that Choi's death in November, 2018 at the Republic of Korea Air Force (ROKAF) 20th Fighter Wing was due to excessive bullying perpetrated by his military superiors.

In the video, Choi's mother shared information about the ongoing investigation into her son's death. One of the two officers cited as Choi's abusers was sentenced to a fine of two million won, and the other was deemed innocent; the former is currently



Choi's mother remarking about military investigations' lack of credibility appealing in court-martial.

Furthermore, the TF added a message urging the public to share the post and raise interest about the questionable circumstances of Choi's suicide. K

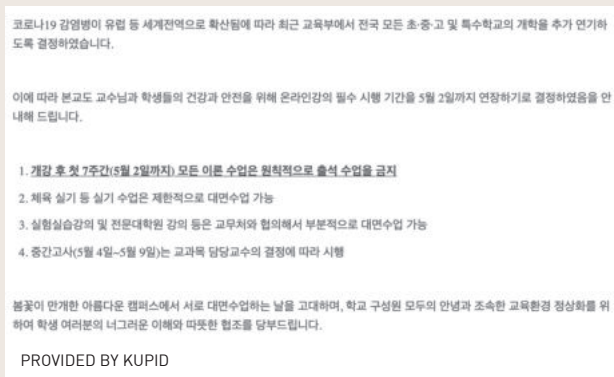
# Online Classes to be Continued

By Jun Uhnjin uhnjin@korea.ac.kr

On March 31, the Office of Academic Affairs at Korea University (KU) announced to extend the online class period to May 2. The announcement was made on the KU Portal to Information Depository (KUPID).

Due to the continued concerns regarding the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak, KU has decided to prohibit classes from being held offline. However, there are exceptions to classes which involve practical activities, such as science experiments or physical education. The mid-term examination is to be arranged according to the decisions of each course's professor.

As of April 6, all school buildings are restricted from entry until May 3, unless carrying an access card. Furthermore, the entrance date for KU dormitories is scheduled on April 29. However, students who have visited foreign countries within the past 14 days are strictly prohibited. Other students who wish to enter the dormitories must submit a self-recorded paper stating their body



Announcement regarding the extension of online classes

temperature and bodily symptoms during the 14 days prior to the entering date.

The announcement ended with a note asking for earnest cooperation of KU students. K

# "Special Lecture in Buddhism" in Controversy for Reusing Recorded Lectures

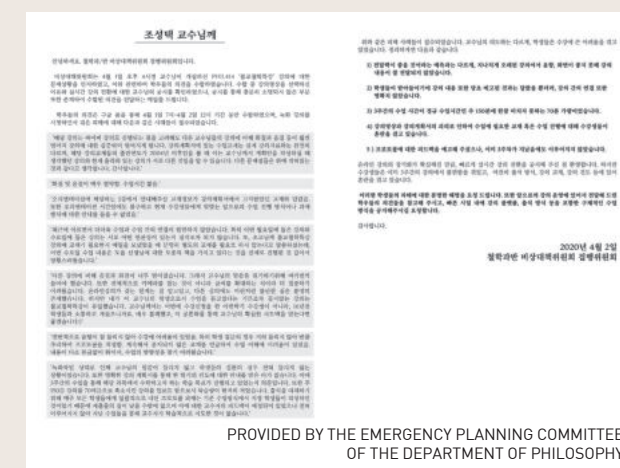
By Nam Eun Seo eunseo0222@korea.ac.kr

Korea University (KU) Professor Cho Sung Taek (Department of Philosophy) has become the center of controversy at KU after being accused of running the major course "Special Lecture in Buddhism" this semester by reusing his lectures that were filmed in 2004 for commercial use.

According to a Koreapas post written by a student taking the course, the content provided during the past three weeks was "noticeably different from the course objectives provided in the syllabus." The student further added that "providing lectures that are being sold in the market for 39,000 won as a major course" was "a violation of the educational rights of students."

In response to the ensuing controversy, on April 2, the Emergency Planning Committee of the Department of Philosophy claimed that an email containing students' opinions regarding the course was sent to Professor Cho. In his reply, Professor Cho apologized and stated to arrange real-time lectures starting from April 6.

As KU is entering its fourth week of online classes, more



The Emergency Planning Committee of the Department of Philosophy's email to Professor Cho

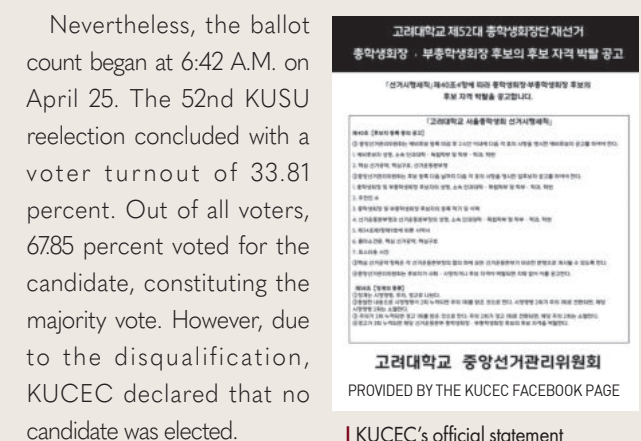
communication needs to be facilitated between students and faculty in order to fully protect students' rights to education. K

# KU Left Without a Student Union

By Kie Hae Seung hayleyyy1215@korea.ac.kr

On April 25, the Korea University Central Election Commission (KUCEC) announced that the *Sisun* campaign team, represented by candidates Ha Ji Woong ('14, Business Administration) and Cho Yong Joon ('17, Business Administration), has been disqualified due to the accumulation of three warnings. *Sisun* being the sole candidate running for the 52nd KU Student Union (KUSU) reelection, no student union was elected ultimately.

As a result of several KUCEC meetings on April 24, a warning was given to *Sisun*. This was due to violations of electioneering bylaws such as campaigning to general students to encourage a higher voter turnout. With two prior warnings, *Sisun* had accumulated three warnings and its candidate pair was disqualified in accordance with KUCEC's bylaws.



KUCEC's official statement

With no further changes, the KU student body will function without a student union. K

# Unravelling Memories of the Past

By Jun Uhnjin | uhnjin@korea.ac.kr

"To infinity and beyond!" This is a phrase Buzz Lightyear repeatedly uses in the film *Toy Story* (1995). In the film, Buzz, along with another character Woody, are both important toys to a boy named Andy. As Andy grows into a young adult, the two toys stand by him throughout his childhood. Similar to Buzz and Woody, every one of us must have a precious item in our hearts that captures memories of our childhood. *The Granite Tower* (GT) interviewed students of Korea University (KU) about the memories associated with their special childhood item.



## Lee Myungho ('19, Business Administration)

The most special item of my childhood is a blanket that I used since I was a newborn baby. This blanket was particularly unique in that each side was made of different material. One side felt like a typical soft blanket, and the other was much lighter and cooler. I would cover myself with it even during the hot summer days.

When I was little, I had a hard time falling asleep, but this blanket helped me feel comfortable — this is why it is a precious item for me.

Since I took the blanket everywhere with me — when eating meals, watching the television, or playing computer games — it soon began to fray. However, with the help of my grandmother, I was able to mend it and keep it intact to this day. Recently, after entering KU and sleeping alone for the first time, I felt so lonely that I could not easily fall asleep. A few days later, my parents sent me the blanket, and I was able to sleep soundly with it next to me.

This blanket was a present from my aunt, who passed away when I was a child. As the blanket reminds me of not only my childhood but also my aunt, it is a very meaningful item. I want to thank my aunt for giving me this special present. I miss her very much.

## Lee Juhyeon ('20, English Language and Literature)

When I think of a special childhood item, a doll my mother made me comes to my mind. My little sister and I were each given one as a present. The dolls looked like an actual baby girl, with remarkably realistic hair. Along with the dolls, my mother also created several pieces of clothing for them. I would get into small fights with my sister about choosing the clothes that matched each season for the dolls.

One time, I was playing with my sister's doll and accidentally pulled out all of its hair. I remember being scolded for my actions. Unfortunately, the doll has remained bald for almost 15 years now. My doll has blackened and is displayed in my room at the moment, but it is indeed a precious item which captures my dear memories from childhood.

## Kim Soo Jin ('18, Education)

When I was an elementary school student, I received an album where I could store pictures and tickets as a present from my friend. It was small — around the size of a postcard — with pink polka dots on its cover. Ever since I had this album, I loved to print out pictures with my family and friends to put them in it. Pictures of my elementary school friends at birthday parties or picnics are all delicately placed inside.

At first, I only collected printed pictures but soon I began to collect tickets from performances in the album as well. One of the most memorable tickets is from the *Cirque du Soleil: Quidam* held in Seoul. My family and I went to see this performance when I was 14 years old, which was when I had recently moved from Busan to Seoul. It was mesmerizing to see how various artists came together to present their extraordinary talents on stage. The performance led me to make a hobby of watching performances. I continued to enjoy watching plays and musicals throughout the years, and this became the driving force behind my decision to join KU's Musical Theater Club.

Today, the album is filled with pictures and tickets that capture my memories from childhood to recent days. As an album which stayed with me since I was little, I am proud to say that it is a collection of my special life memories. I wish to store more pictures and tickets that mark precious moments in this album in the future.

## Park Sooyeon ('16, Materials Science and Engineering)

One of the rare memories I have of South Korea before leaving to live abroad is receiving an Anpanman plush toy when I was four years old. It was a prize from a local pizza place in front of my apartment. I do not remember the exact area or the apartment, but I vividly recall the moment of holding the toy, feeling excited, and looking at my family members smiling at me. I carried it around lovingly all day long.

As I moved abroad at such an early age, I do not know popular cartoon characters in South Korea that well. However, thanks to this toy, Anpanman is the one character that I clearly remember from my childhood. Unfortunately, the toy disappeared at some point and is not with me now, although it is the only item that I remember among the things I brought with me when moving.

The reason this plush toy holds a special place in my heart is that it reminds me of the day I received it and its warming atmosphere. As I grew older, it became more and more difficult to spend time with my family, which is perhaps the reason why this plush toy became one of the most valuable memories of my childhood. 📖





PROVIDED BY PROFESSOR  
HAN CHANG-SOO

Professor Han Chang-soo  
of Korea University (KU).

# Stretchable Devices to Lead Future Technology

By Park Min Ha parkminha@korea.ac.kr

We have seen many incredible inventions and ideas come true with continuous technological innovations. The smartphones and electric cars we consider to be so common today were also once part of our imaginations of a fascinating future. This time, stretchable displays and devices are the ones projected to be as conventional as smartphones in the near future. Korea University's (KU) Professor Han Chang-Soo (School of Mechanical Engineering) and his research team have recently announced the key technology that could be used in all applications of stretchable displays.


Professor Han and his team have collectively worked together in successfully creating the key technology behind stretchable devices. The authors and researchers consist of professors and researchers from various backgrounds such as Son Yeong-jun, Professor Bae Jin-woo, and Lee Ho-Jung. The team had been studying human tactile senses, which all have stretchable properties, when they decided to study the materials used for stretchable devices.

Stretchable devices are an advanced form of \*flexible devices\* that can mold to non-linear surfaces. Stretchable devices are more advanced in that they can be further stretched yet still function well. "The first of the stretchable devices were stretchable conductors, like coiled telephone wires in the 19th century," explains Professor Han. "As micro-nano scale and material handling techniques evolved, more inventions such as stretchable electrodes, electronic skin, and implantable devices are being made."

For stretchable devices, the materials that make them are most important. Because these devices aim for long-term use, they should maintain their shape for a long time and not be distorted by changes in temperature or humidity. Flexible devices were usually produced with hydrogel, a gel-type material with "more than 10 times more liquid in a polymer network." However, as the water in the gel evaporates, it becomes less durable. Professor Han's technology uses non-volatile ion gels to address its shortcomings for stretchable devices.

Before settling on these materials, Professor Han had been facing trouble with experiments on other tactile materials. "I was almost at the point of giving up on this field of research." The team eventually followed through with a new material and shortly reached successful results. Professor Han shares that he was happy to see the looks of fulfillment on everyone's faces after the continued rounds of failure.

There are many papers and patents related to stretchable devices, but no products have been commercialized yet. "We expect commercialization to be five to ten years from now on," hopes Professor Han. Stretchable devices are projected to be more portable, space-use developed and more human-friendly in the future, through electronic devices like televisions and cell phones, as well as health monitoring and medical implant devices.

Professor Han's team is currently developing a stretchable touch panel using ion gel while also continuing their studies on stretchable electronic skin. "As I always pursue new things, there were times where I just lingered on the ideation stage for a long time," recalls Professor Han. "I expect to face more of these challenges in the future, but I will continue to strive for better research outcomes." 

# Skin Scuba and Club Association in Stalemate Over Club Room

By Kie Hae Seung hayleyyy1215@korea.ac.kr

"This behavior damages the trust and broad democratic principle within the student society." This quote is from the Korea University Club Association (KUCA): one of the two conflicting sides — the other being the KU Skin Scuba Diving Team (hereafter Skin Scuba) — behind Skin Scuba's allegedly unauthorized occupation of a club room, still ongoing after more than five months. For those who wish to know more, *The Granite Tower* (GT) attempts to provide a summary of the situation as well as what will happen next.

On November 7, 2019, the agenda regarding the expulsion of Skin Scuba from central club status was passed during KUCA's Club Representative Meeting. Despite the decision, disagreement between KUCA and Skin Scuba about the legitimacy of the expulsion followed. Since then, Skin Scuba has occupied their club room in the Student Union Building — a privilege only central clubs have — despite continuous requests on KUCA's part to vacate it. GT confirmed Skin Scuba's occupation has continued at least until April 8.


Although five months have passed, Skin Scuba has not yet defended their actions through an official channel; it can only be presumed that Skin Scuba's club room occupation is a means of protesting their expulsion. Several reasons seem plausible for their refusal to accept the expulsion. As pointed out within KUCA's meeting log, being left without a club room due to a change in status may be challenging to Skin Scuba, a club which requires owning and

storing equipment.

However, the position Skin Scuba holds as a club within not only KU's student community but also alumni society may be a more probable reason. From its establishment in 1968 to recently, Skin Scuba has always been a central club and carries on a long history. Moreover, Skin Scuba's alumni make enthusiastic contributions in many aspects; some alumni provide free diving lessons while others provide financial support. Therefore, it may not be far-fetched to suggest that Skin Scuba's hesitation to surrender partly lies in its affiliation with more than just student members as well as their noteworthy history.

By early March, KUCA had sent an official note to the KU Alumni Association (KUAA) in order to request cooperation and publicize the controversy by way of the Student Affairs Department. Additionally, they attached a campus poster calling for Skin Scuba's immediate evacuation of the

club room. As stated in the campus poster, KUCA is taking steps to put an end to the situation. "Although delayed due to the coronavirus pandemic, KUCA is in cooperation with the school administration to involve law enforcement in the vacating of the club room." The 37th president of KUCA, Woo Jung Min ('18, School of Civil, Environmental and Architectural Engineering), commented, "It is unfortunate that the situation couldn't be resolved autonomously between students. However, school cooperation has become necessary, especially since the club room is legally a possession of KU."

Concluding this controversy as soon as possible will benefit all parties; KUCA can resume all their normal duties and Skin Scuba can continue to be a KU club with a history to be proud of, regardless of their change in status. Hopefully a resolution to this conflict will be achieved in the near future for the healthy continuation of autonomous student activity. 

# Personal Information Leakage Right Under Our Noses

By Kweon Seo-young kb071531@korea.ac.kr

One can never know if their personal information on the internet is stored safely. In the 21st century, the importance and value of information are increasing and, at the same time, personal data are being more exposed to abuse and misuse on the internet. It is often believed that celebrities are the only targets of personal information abuse. However, a recent incident that happened on campus proves otherwise.

Park, an employee working in the Global Service Center of the International Department at Korea University (KU) sent private and inappropriate messages to numerous Chinese female students through Kakao Talk, some of them saying "I want to be friends with you," or "I fell in love with you at first sight." It has been revealed that Park, who first came to work on March 16 on behalf of an employee on maternity leave, had contacted the students by using their personal information he had obtained while working since his first day of employment.

### How KU Dealt With the Incident

Students who received the text messages informed this bizarre incident to the Korea University International Student Assistance (KUISA) and the Chinese Student Association. Soon afterwards, KUISA reported the problematic situation to the school authorities and later confirmed that

there were around 40 victims. Recognizing the problem, KU took steps to cancel his recruitment, stating that they sent a letter of notifying Park about the termination of his contract and that all of his rights as a faculty member had been suspended.

The Global Service Center filed a complaint to the Seoul Seongbuk Police Station against Park on the charges of violating the school's privacy law. Soon, on March 23, the Seongbuk Police station announced that the crime had been confirmed and the investigation on the specific scope and route of the leakage of the victims' personal information had started. The Digital Information Service Center cooperated closely with the police in an attempt to speed up the investigation by providing and analyzing Park's computer activity records.

The incident has also become a big issue among students. On March 19, screenshots of the text messages were

uploaded on the internet community Everytime. The same post was also posted on another online school community, Koreapas, but it was soon deleted.

The Global Service Center and the school communication team emphasized that it is now important to speak up about the situation transparently and actively with all students who may potentially be exposed to the same risk. In addition, when faced with a similar problem, one should immediately inform the school in order to prevent further damage, resolve the situation, and

alleviate any psychological damage that the problem may have caused.

### How This Happened

According to a Korea University Weekly interview conducted with Choi Chul-ho, the deputy director of KU Information Infrastructure, KU received the Information Protection Management System (ISMS) Certification in June 2019, following the Information and Communication Network Act. ISMS evaluates whether the information protection management system complies with the certification criteria, which means that KU has a high reputation in terms of information security. ISMS, which aims to prevent infringement of personal information through abnormal route, could not keep the faculty member with authority from conducting a deviation. Hence, the problem was not on the system itself, but rather on one individual's misconduct and lack of respect towards other people's privacy. This indicates that while the school was able to manage the cyber system's safety and defense to a certain extent, they

relatively failed to educate the faculty members about the awareness of personal information and privacy. Therefore, when recruiting new members of the staff, they should focus on conducting more intensified education programs on ethical behavior, especially information privacy.

### The Biggest Problem of All

However, there is still a more fundamental and serious problem left. This incident, a leakage and misuse of personal information and misuse is not the first of its kind. In fact, similar crimes have occurred several times in Korea. A police officer contacting a civilian Police Test (CSAT) supervisor courting a student by using her personal information and more cases have been witnessed. The problem is that these crimes are, in many cases not prosecuted properly—court rulings concluded that they are not guilty or only receiving light punishment.

According to the current Privacy Act, if the manager who handles private

information for task purpose misuse the information they are punished, but there is no legal basis for punishment if a person under the direction of the manager conducts the crime. The Personal Information Protection Commission (PIPC) Advisory Counsel Kim Borami mentioned during an interview with SBS News, "It is first and foremost priority to make an explicit provision to punish those who have access to personal information and use it differently from the original purpose described in the Privacy Act," pointing out the need for institutional improvement.

This incident in KU does not only end with causing discomfort to the victims, but also gives a sense of anxiety and fear to all the students attending the school whose personal information is stored in the school computer system. It is clearly undesirable for such incidents to occur in the school, but it would be more meaningful if this becomes an opportunity to recognize the current societal problem and try to make institutional improvements to prevent the recurrence of such incidents. K

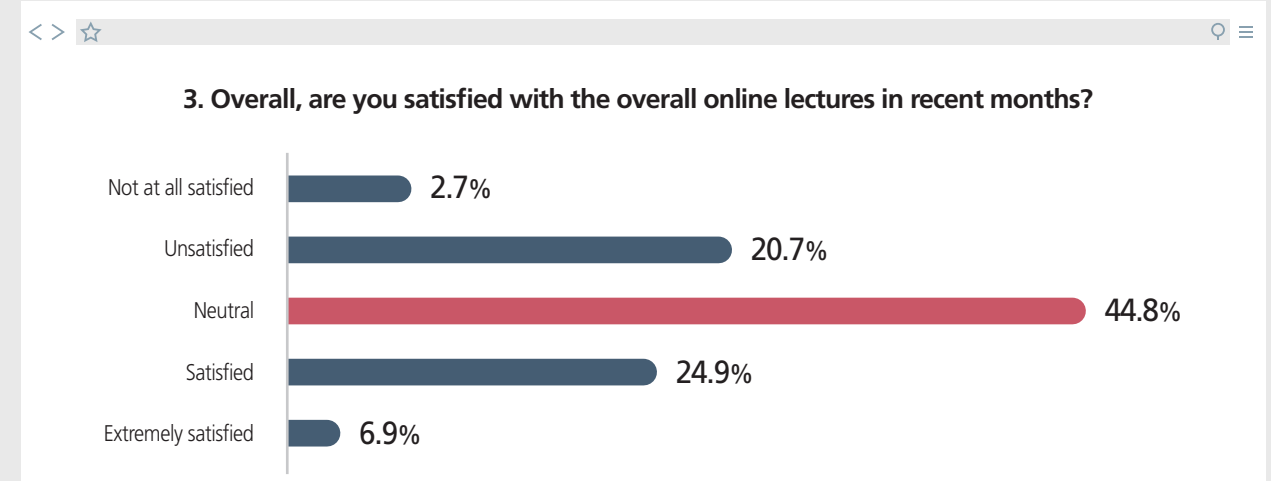
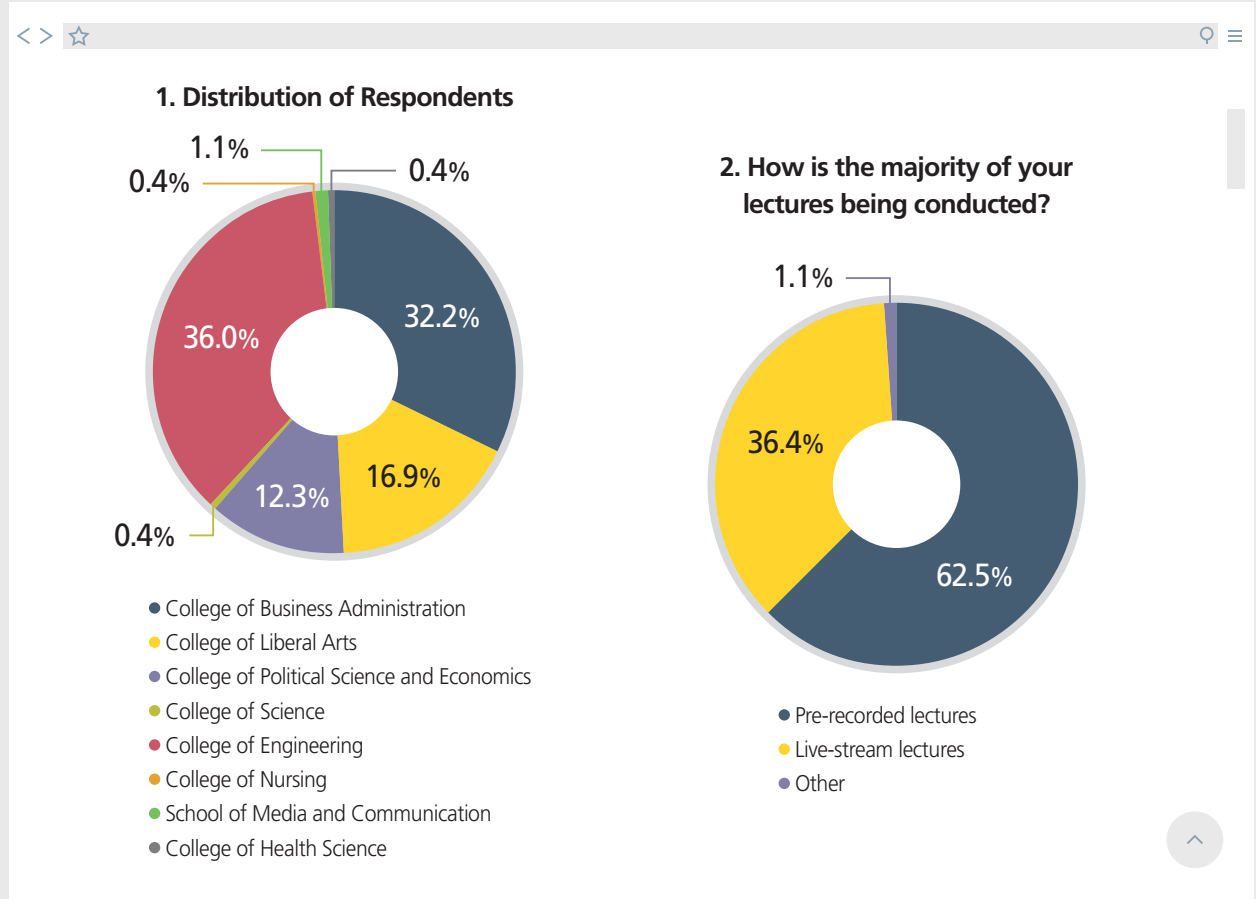


Personal information leakage incident in KU

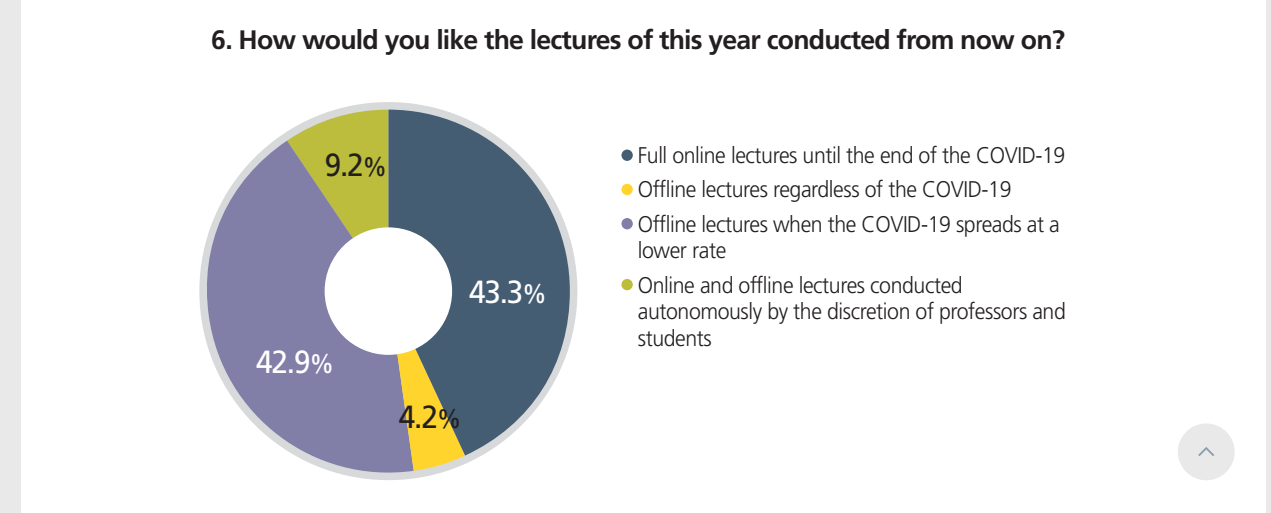
# Are You Enjoying Your Online Lectures?

By Kweon Seo-young kb071531@korea.ac.kr

Much of school life has been affected due to the sudden and fierce threat that the COVID-19 poses, and the biggest change is in the way classes are being conducted. For most of the students, online lectures must have been unfamiliar and awkward, but some also think they are more convenient and somehow necessary. In addition, some students have also encountered and experienced interesting and embarrassing incidents during their online lectures. *The Granite Tower* (GT) asked Korea University (KU) students about their own opinions and experiences regarding their online lectures.



- 4. What do you think is the biggest advantage of online lectures?**
- a. Saves time and costs of commuting from home to school (32.2%)
  - b. Helps to concentrate well (1.1%)
  - c. Prevents mass infection of COVID-19 (40.6%)**
  - d. (In the case of a pre-recorded lecture) Can take classes more comfortably at any time. (16.9%)
  - e. (In the case of a pre-recorded lecture) Can adjust the speed or progress of the lecture as desired. (8.8%)
- 5. What do you think is the biggest disadvantage of online lectures?**
- a. Poor delivery due to the poor sound and video quality (12.6%)
  - b. Low concentration and interest during the class (46%)**
  - c. Cannot make clear confirmation of the attendance (11.9%)
  - d. More assignments given (9.2%)
  - e. Difficult to communicate with the professor (11.9%)
  - f. Delaying of listening to lectures (8.4%)





# Enjoy Learning English with AFKN Listener's Club (ALC)

By Park Min Ha | parkminha@korea.ac.kr

Learning and perfecting one's English-speaking abilities have always been a never-ending task for many South Koreans. Korea University (KU) has a long and proud history of its own traditional English-learning clubs that are still popular among students today. AKFN Listener's Club (ALC) is one student organization that not only provides such a learning opportunity for students, but also motivates them to better their abilities and reach advanced goals by participating in weekly study sessions and even preparing them for other students.

ALC conducts various English-learning programs for students who are willing to get more familiar with conversational English. The club first started in 1973 as a study group that gathered people to learn English by listening to American Forces Korea Network (AFKN), a broadcasting channel operated by the United States Armed Forces' American Forces Radio and Television Service. Due to such history, there are now many branches of ALC operating throughout various universities in South Korea. ALC operated as a union of three universities (Korea University, Yonsei University, and Ewha Womans University) from 1974 to 1975, but it began operating as individual branches from 1976 onwards.

## Regular Sessions at Korea University

ALC has regular study sessions every Wednesday. The club divides its members into two study groups: a speaking-centered group and a listening-centered group. The speaking-centered group opens debates about simple yet important topics in society. Sometimes they also discuss such issues through presentations. The listening-centered group listens to short video clips, such as news broadcasts or English educational programs, and talks about them together. For members who want additional learning opportunities, they are able to team up to practice their speaking skills through separate speaking studies every Friday.

Starting from last semester, ALC

members have also formed another study session for the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) test. This was a rather new type of session implemented in ALC, as many students started to get worried about employment opportunities and procedures. There is no set time or date for these session; members simply gather sporadically but help each other and work rigorously to increase their scores. This extra study group allows students to enjoy club activities and prepare for their future within the same organization.

## Making Lasting Connections

After each session, the team members head off to dinner and occasionally drink as well. This is usually

where they discuss their study groups' progress and build friendly relationships with each other in a more casual setting. ALC members also have a club room for members to relax and socialize in. There are other events such as Snack Day, Homecoming Day, touring Kyeongbok Palace in Hanboks in the summer, and Halloween parties in the fall to keep the members energetic in between their regular study sessions.

Members even have reunions and friendly outings during the holidays. The president of ALC, Nam Yun Mi recalled "going to the screening of the film 'The King's Letters' during last year's summer holidays." The film was directed by a club alumnus, so the members, at the time, had gone to congratulate him with other senior members. Nam shares that the group enjoyed dinner afterwards and shared their thoughts about the movie. New members will also be given such opportunities to meet new alumni and share memorable times during the semester and the holidays.

## Sessions with Yonsei University

ALC conducts conjoined English studying sessions with Yonsei University every month to foster collaboration as well as a sense of friendly competition between the two universities' club members. The two clubs also attend the universities' annual events as well, such as the annual Ko-Yeon games, cheering events, and even Korea University's Ipselenti Jiya—Hamsung. After getting to know each other through these rather formal gatherings,

all students go on membership training (MT) together to discuss their ideas about upcoming events.

Yonsei University's AKFN Listener's Club members are mostly international or exchange students, unlike the member composition of KU's ALC. Thus, such conjoined sessions allow members of KU's ALC to enhance their English-speaking skills naturally by getting to know each other through English-only conversations. Nam shared, "During a Halloween party with Yonsei University's ALC last year, an international student won a costume competition dressed up as a ghost bride. We gave him a bottle of tequila as a prize but ended up drinking it altogether." Such events demonstrate the organizations' well-maintained friendly relationship.

## Becoming a Member of ALC

ALC has currently delayed their regular sessions and MT because of the unusual circumstances brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. The regular sessions will soon be prepared online. "It is unfortunate that we will not be able to carry on with the many activities we have prepared, but the health of our members always comes first," explained Nam. "We are looking forward to seeing some new faces when school starts again, when hopefully everyone is healthy and ready to participate."

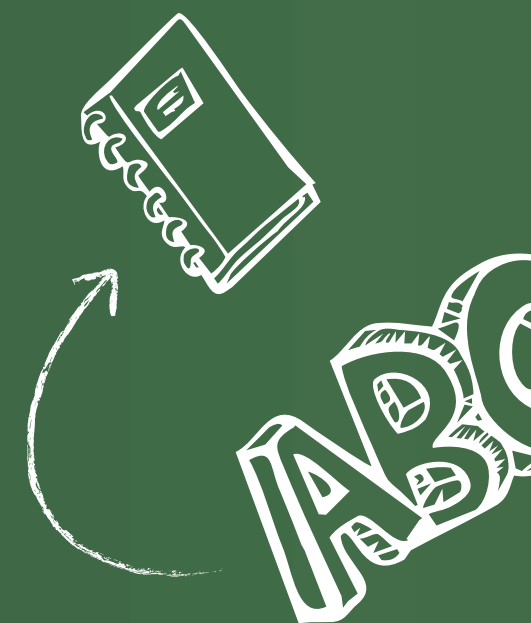
AKFN Listener's Club welcomes all students who want to practice speaking English freely and enjoy extracurricular



PROVIDED BY NAM YUN MI

KU ALC President Nam Yun Mi

activities away from regular university courses. Nam hopes to create a comfortable atmosphere for members to participate freely in enhancing their skills. ALC's recruitment starts in the beginning of the March and September semesters each year. They collect a semester fee from applicants and start off their one-semester-long journey of studying English. **K**







# Investors Taste a Bitter Tang Due to LIME's Financial Fraud

By Kie Hae Seung hayleyy1215@korea.ac.kr

Imagine someone cheated you out of a trillion won. That's what LIME Asset Management (hereafter LIME) did to its investors. LIME first came to light in July 2019 upon an investigation by the prosecution for unfair transactions. Since then, the scope of investigation into the fiasco unofficially deemed the "LIME situation" has widened to include other allegations such as stock price manipulation and even misuse of connections with the Cheong Wa Dae and the Financial Supervisory Service (FSS). A quick glance at Korea's financial history would show that this is not the first time hedge funds have caused issues.

Hedge funds — small scale funds with few regulations on where and how to invest — can be very tempting to both investors and asset management firms; high returns, although preceded by high risk, is very tempting. For this reason, LIME wholeheartedly jumped on the hedge fund bandwagon and grew to handle a whopping five trillion won by the first half of 2019.

## Never Meant to Last

Although it may seem precarious to those who do not enthusiastically participate in the financial sphere, the structure of LIME's fund management itself was not technically problematic. The decline of LIME is often attributed to contributing investments from numerous "child" funds into just four

"mother" funds and taking advantage of the Total Return Swap (TRS), which uses investors' money as collateral to take out loans from securities firms. The success of the child-mother fund relationship relies heavily on the asset management's few investment choices. Additionally, TRS allows the management to maneuver more money than was invested, making it so that in the case of severe loss, investors may not collect even their original investment amount.

It cannot be denied that these two tactics have dangerous components because of their high-risk property. However, regulations exist so that only competent candidates can invest; hedge funds can only be invested in by professionals at institutions or "qualified individuals" whose income, estate, or investment amount exceeds the minimum. Therefore, although



PROVIDED BY CHOSUNBIZ

LIME executives apologizing during a fund redemption meeting



PROVIDED BY PROFESSOR  
BINH KI BEOM

Professor Binh Ki Beom

hedge funds and its management tactics may have issues, it is definitely not illegal. What was critical to LIME's failure was not from its management structure and protocol, but the way it was *actually managed*.

LIME's funds turned out to be associated with several illegal acts. Out of LIME's four main funds, the Trade Finance Fund consisted of 600 billion won, of which 240 billion was invested money and the rest TRS-loaned. 40 percent of it was invested into a hedge fund of the International Investment Group (IIG), an American firm. When IIG was accused of having run a Ponzi scheme, the United States (U.S.)'s Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) froze IIG's assets in 2019, freezing a bulk of LIME investors' money as well. It is currently suspected that around that time, LIME began to internally use investors' money to buy off others' funds to generate returns, running a Ponzi-like operation themselves.

Signs of LIME's failure that eventually set off an alarm with investors were redemption restrictions. Twice in October 2019, LIME was forced to set restrictions on redemptions to funds worth 850 billion won, leading investors to question

the safety of their investments. From then on, the LIME situation snowballed. Even more financial frauds, such as giving incorrect information about return rates to investors and changing a fund's investment target without notice, were revealed.

Finally, when a recording was uncovered of an insider stating that a former Cheong Wa Dae executive official and current FSS employee was working with LIME to slow down investigations, the LIME situation garnered even more attention because of the possibility that its issues stem not only in the economic sphere, but also the political.


## Dealing With the Aftermath

Unlike the high hopes investors had when putting their money towards LIME, the outlook for investors' reimbursement possibilities is dismal. LIME has announced that it will start redeeming in May for Pluto FI D-1 and Thetis 2, two of LIME's four mother funds. The redemption rate for the former is 33 percent and the latter 45.4 percent. 68.4 billion won has been cut from the formerly predicted redemption amount due to TRS, which compels LIME to pay back securities firms prior to investors. The Trade Finance Fund is predicted to have a loss rate of 100 percent, although inspection results into this fund are yet to be released.

Individuals and institutions are proceeding with legal responses to the LIME situation. Many victims who have been deceived by LIME are filing lawsuits against institutions that sold

the LIME funds, such as Shinhan Investment Corporation and Woori Bank, on the grounds of misselling. However, because misselling — misinforming or omitting information during financial consumers' purchase — is difficult and tedious to prove, it is more likely that LIME, rather than the vendors, will be penalized first by the prosecution and FSS according to the results of investigations.

When thoroughly examined, the crux of the LIME situation is that many investors without the financial capacity to deal with the aftermath of LIME's tampering of assets have been impacted. Professor Binh Ki Beom (Economics, Myongji University) commented, "A desirable direction in which hedge fund management regulations should change is actually to ultimately eliminate it. However, the bar needs to be raised regarding what it takes to be a qualified individual or be classified and treated as a hedge fund. This in turn will allow a free flow of hedge funds and at the same time, protect financial consumers."

LIME's deeds were undeniably shocking; nonetheless, the fact that it feels like déjà vu cannot be denied. All in all, it seems hedge fund regulations are certainly in need of adjustment for it to function in a healthy and beneficial way in which it was intended. As this unwelcome occurrence implicitly but clearly instructs, the results of the investigations this time around will need to be scrutinized so that related financial laws can be reformed. 



# Struggle to Make Safer School Zones for Children

By Lee Eun Seo ohhenkwo68@korea.ac.kr

Kim Min Sik, a nine-year-old boy, lost his life while he was crossing the road in front of Onyang Middle School, located in Asan, Chungnam Province. His parents said Kim was an extremely cautious boy, but he was hit by a speeding car. His four-year-old brother Kim Min Hoo survived because of his brother's protection, but because he saw his older brother's death, he is now suffering from trauma. Kim's parents were angry that there was no established system for the regulation of speeding and decided to fight to ensure that stricter laws were enforced.

Kim's parents demanded that the National Assembly revise the traffic laws. They believed Kim would not have died if there had been stricter safety mechanisms in place. Therefore, they insisted that every school zone in Korea have speed cameras and traffic lights installed and that additional punishment be imposed on drivers who commit a driving offense in these areas. The so-called "Min Sik Act" was initially proposed by Kang Hoon Sik, a member of the Democratic Party of Korea, on November 7, 2019. The National Assembly debated it, and the government announced the passing of the law on December 10, 2019, with it coming into force starting March 25.

The revised Traffic Safety Act for Children reflected Min Sik's parents' requests. If drivers are involved in a car accident that leads to the death of a child under the age of 13, they will be sentenced to prison for three years to life. If a child is injured, the driver can be imprisoned for up to 15 years or pay a fine of 5 to 30 million won. This punishment extent applies to all the accidents of children in the school zone, no matter it occurred accidentally or not.

However, right after the law came into force, a 14-year-old boy was injured in a school zone. Although this incident did not fall under the Min Sik Act because the boy was older than 13, whether the act was flawed or not became a hot topic because of this. If the boy had been under the age of 13, according to the

Min Sik Act, the driver would have had to pay a hefty fine even though the driver obeyed the speed limit. After the black box video of the accident became public, some people questioned whether the law is right.

### 30 Rough Journey to Pass the Bill

Although the bill is now passed and



| Min Sik Act Poster

in force, the process was not smooth. Because the Liberty Korea Party was filibustering to prevent the passage of an election law at that time, the assembly delayed the passage of the Min Sik Act. Several parents who had lost a child in a car accident protested, demanding that the party stop exploiting the act as a political trading card. In response to this, South Korean President Moon Jae In asserted, "Politicians should not use this law as a part of their negotiation strategy and should not worsen the situation."

Several news articles and television programs informed the public about the tragedy that befell the Kim family. As public opinion regarding traffic law reformation began to gain volume, the National Assembly was pressured to pass the Min Sik Act immediately. According to a news article posted in *The Hangeoreh* by Professor Hong Seung Soo (Sookmyung Women's University), although the Min Sik Act was successfully passed, there were problems with the process. Because the bill passed the assembly's plenary session in such a short amount of time, it is uncertain whether the articles of the act were evaluated thoroughly enough. Professor Hong said that the law should have focused more on including articles to prevent accidents.

### 30 Limitation of the New Law

Some people uploaded another national petition just a day after the

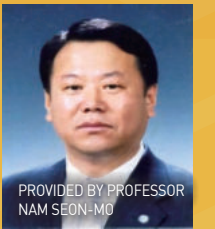
law was passed, requesting a revision of the act because of the article regarding additional punishment. The Min Sik Act punishes drivers who are involved in accidents with imprisonment for three years. Some pointed out that these drivers would be punished more strictly than those convicted of rape or assault. Others pointed out that this may be violating the principle of minimal infringement found in the Korean constitution.

Professor Ha Tae-Hoon (School of Law) agreed that the act possibly violates the Korean constitution. "In some respects, the amendment has an effect of preventing crime. However, the article dictating additional punishment is against the principle of minimal infringement." He gave an example of other Korean laws, such as homicide, wherein the criminal is sentenced to five or more years in prison. Compared to such laws, the Min Sik Act might be punishing the driver to an excessive extent. The amendment aims to punish drivers who cause the death of children — intentionally or accidentally — with more than three years of imprisonment.

Professor Ha insisted that parking enforcement policies and heftier speeding fines would be more useful in reducing the number of accidents in school zones. "Numerous school zone accidents occur when a child crosses the road from between parked cars. In this case, it is difficult for drivers to notice the child and



| Professor Ha Tae-Hoon



| Professor Nam Seon-mo

stop the car." He also argued that strengthening criminal punishment is only a post-control method, which is not sufficient to prevent accidents.

Professor Nam Seon-mo (Law, Semyung University) also agreed that the Min Sik Act might violate the principle of minimal infringement. He suggested several alternative methods to protect children in school zones: installing fences along the footpath, prohibiting cars from entering school zones during the school commuting times, and controlling parking and stopping in school zones. These would be much more useful for reducing the number of car accidents. However, Professor Nam was against expanding the installation of surveillance cameras since they were not cost-effective.

The recent amendment to road traffic laws seems to protect children by strengthening punishment for school zone accidents. However, public opinion is divided, and two different national petitions with opposing requests have been posted. The National Assembly should re-evaluate the amendment both to protect children in school zones and to punish drivers who violate traffic laws to an appropriate extent. K

# The Need for Common Ground in the Korean Mobility Industry

By Nam Eun Seo eunseo0222@korea.ac.kr

Even the most groundbreaking innovations are powerless without the appropriate legal foundations to support them. On March 6, the National Assembly passed the revised Passenger Transport Service Act in an attempt to settle the conflict between the existing taxi industry and the rising ride-hailing service—Tada. Left with no legal basis to operate on, Tada announced their decision to “indefinitely terminate” their services shortly after. Amidst the controversy surrounding the revised bill, questions remain as to whether it will succeed in establishing common ground in the turbulent mobility industry.

The taxi business in Korea has long been fighting against startup mobility services, and the most recent conflict in the mobility industry is the taxi business’ bitter legal feud with Tada. Tada, a Korean ride-hailing service founded in 2018 by Value Creators & Company (VCNC), operates a business similar to that of traditional taxis by allowing customers to rent vehicles that come with a driver employed by Tada. Despite its initial success, Tada could not escape the vehement opposition from the existing taxi industry.

## Legal Loophole Triggers Major Feud

The biggest problem, according to the taxi industry, was that Tada essentially was operating like a normal taxi business by taking advantage of a legal loophole in the Passenger Transport Service Act. According to

Article 34 of the act, it is possible to provide drivers as a service if one rents a passenger van bigger than an eleven-seater. Based on this article, Tada only operates eleven-seater passenger vans. To this, the taxi industry pointed out that Tada vehicles often use the eleven-seater vans to provide service to individual passengers instead of groups, which they claim allows Tada drivers to operate just like a normal taxi without having to buy a taxi license.

In January, 2019, 12,000 taxi drivers held a mass protest in front of the National Assembly to express their opposition towards Tada. In February of the same year, the Seoul Taxi Association sued Lee Jae Woong, the Chief Executive Officer of Socar, who is also the founder of Tada. The government and the National Assembly deemed Tada an expediency

and created a revised version of the Passenger Transport Service Act. Although Tada was found innocent in its first trial, on March 6, the National Assembly passed the revised Passenger Transport Service Act, taking away the legal basis for Tada’s operation and essentially crippling the business. On March 11, Tada announced their decision to “indefinitely terminate” their service beginning from April 10.

## Not a “Tada Ban Law”

The revised bill is more commonly known as the *Tada ban law*, considering that the controversy around Tada’s legality was the driving force behind the passing of the bill. Much of the media coverage stemming from the bill also focused on its staggering blow on the popular ride-hailing service. However, Professor Kang Kyungwoo

(Transportation and Logistics Engineering, Hanyang University) offered a different perspective, calling the nickname *Tada ban law* a “distortion.” “The bill, rather than a ‘Tada ban law,’ is a law that simply requires a new way of operating mobility services,” said Professor Kang. “The crux of the matter is that ride-hailing services now have to buy a taxi license in order to operate, just like other normal taxis.”

Those in favor of the revised bill claim that the revised Passenger Transportation Service Act was much needed in order to restore fairness in the Korean mobility industry. Many agree with the Prosecution’s argument that Tada is an “illegal call taxi” and that despite its claim of being an innovation, its operation method was almost identical to that of a normal taxi. In addition, supporters of the revised bill claim that it has opened doors for various startup businesses in the mobility sector by offering a clear legal guideline for them to operate upon. The Minister of Transport, Kim Hyun Mi, also defended the bill by claiming that it is a “mobility vitalization law that provides the appropriate legal foundations for new mobility services.”

## An Obstacle in the Mobility Industry?

Even so, the revised bill has problems of its own, as is the case with most legislations. The main argument against the revised bill is that it is not future-oriented enough and acts as an obstacle to innovations in the Korean



PROVIDED BY PROFESSOR KANG KYUNGWOO

Professor Kang Kyungwoo

mobility industry. The bill has also been accused of discouraging new startup businesses in the mobility sector. In regards to the concerns as to whether startup businesses will have a place in the over-saturated taxi industry, Professor Kang said, “Regardless of how innovative a startup mobility business is, it cannot operate without taxi licenses, which are limited in number, not to mention expensive. That makes Korean mobility services unappealing, with little hopes of exporting them; it is doubtful that investors will want to invest in startup mobility services anymore,” he added.

The new bill has given rise to new legal complications as well. The revised Passenger Transport Service Act goes directly against the legislations regarding autonomous vehicles announced by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport in April, 2019. While it is illegal for Tada to operate as an autonomous car rental service according to the new bill, it is legal according to the aforementioned legislations regarding autonomous vehicles. One cannot ignore the unemployment the new bill will cause either. If Tada follows through with its announcement to “indefinitely

terminate” all services in compliance with the bill, more than 10,000 Tada drivers will lose their jobs.

## The Road to Coexistence

Notwithstanding the debate around the validity of the revised bill, questions remain as to whether the new law will finally find a way for the taxi industry and mobility services to coexist. Unfortunately, according to Professor Kang, the revised bill has only scratched the surface of the problem. “The devil is in the details,” said Professor Kang, regarding the prospect of finding common ground between the two sides. “The revised bill was a quick fix designed to settle the confusion surrounding Tada’s legality. Now that the enforcement ordinance has been announced, the details of the bill must be worked out to bring forth a win-win situation,” he said.

Professor Kang also emphasized the need for a “quick and fair process” when working out the details of the bill. “The government must provide a promising guarantee with regards to the availability of taxi licenses,” he said. “Secondly, the financial contributions regarding new mobility services must be increased as well.” Whether the new law will finally put an end to the seemingly endless feud between the taxi industry and mobility services remains unclear. There is no doubt the new law puts the Korean mobility industry in uncharted waters, but what seems more important is how the story unfolds henceforth. **K**

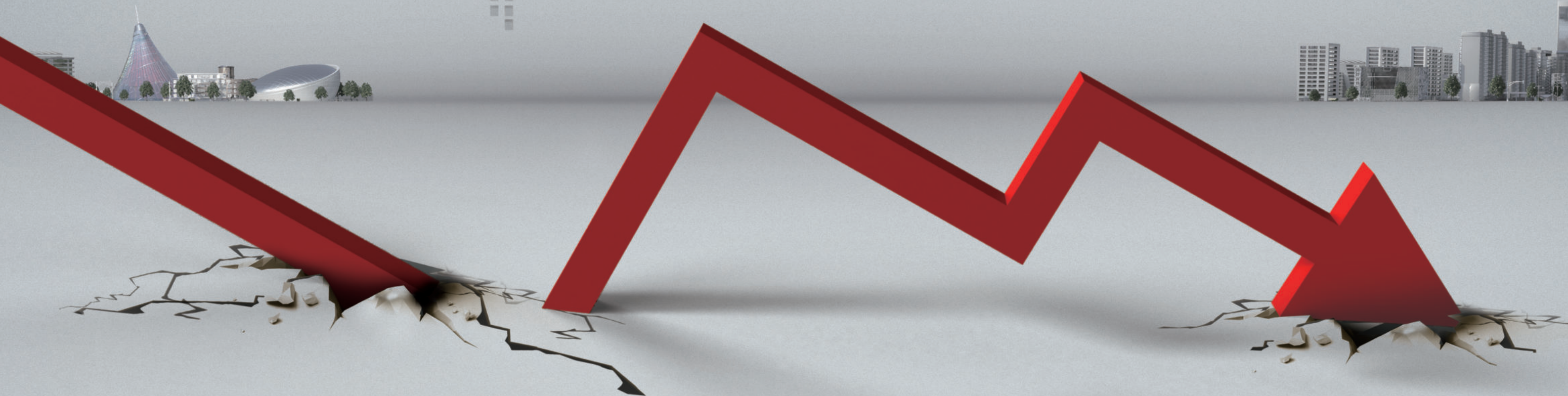
# Unprecedented Socio-economic Crisis Sweeping the World

— Under the Plunging of Oil Prices and COVID-19

By Lee Donghyun [real0822@korea.ac.kr](mailto:real0822@korea.ac.kr)

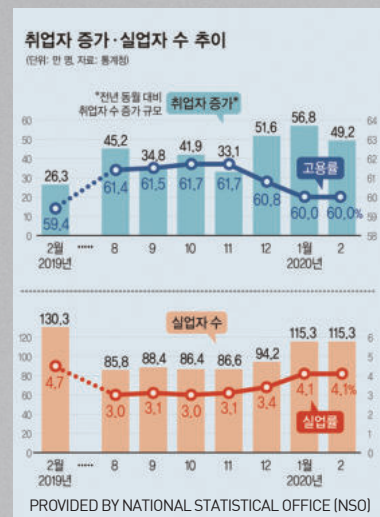
By Nam Hye Bin [hyebin@korea.ac.kr](mailto:hyebin@korea.ac.kr)

Along with the prolonged pandemic of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), the global economy is leaving people in anxiety. Following the plunging of international oil prices, there is a continuing economic downturn caused by COVID-19 — the weakening of consumer confidence, shutdowns of a plethora of large-scale factories, and the forced temporary leave of laborers. There surely is a need to take a closer look at the current socio-economic condition around the world, and devise means by which to stabilize the precarious economy in order to stop the negative ripple effects spreading.



The world is going through a massive economic recession due to plunging oil prices, as well as the COVID-19 crisis. To cope with the overall depressed social-economic conditions, the seven most powerful economies, including Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom (UK), and the United States (U.S.), all under the name of Group of Seven (G7), decided to hold a video teleconference. On March 16, the leaders of G7 participated in the teleconference, and discussed the currency, feasible financial actions, and the supporting issues of small businesses and laborers.

Though they held such a conference, some members of the G7 are being harshly criticized for putting their whole country into an



The progress of unemployment rate and employment rate.

enormous economic mess through unsatisfactory and sometimes inadequate reactions to the current COVID-19 crisis. Their inadequacy led to massive infection, and the ruinous infection resulted in a huge withering throughout the economy. The clumsy response to the crisis in the largest economies made it necessary for people to examine and analyze the current economic conditions and policies within and between countries.

**Socio-economic Crisis with the Steep Decline of Oil Prices**

One of the causes of the current global economic recession is the plunge in international oil prices. West Texas crude for April delivery closed at 20.37 U.S. dollars — the lowest level in 18 years. This downward trend can produce a variety of results, but before we look at the results, it is necessary to understand the background of what caused oil prices to fall so much.

There are two major grounds for this, and the first one is the decrease in demand for oil. Factories shutting down for a while, and restrictions of movements of consumers caused the tremendous decrease. The fact that China, the second largest consumer of petroleum products, showing a large decrease in their demand for

oil was highly influential. Another reason is the failure of negotiation in the discussion on the production cut of oil. On March 6, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and other oil-producing countries that are not in OPEC gathered in Austria to find a middle ground concerning the decrease of oil production. However, Russia did not agree with the proposal, and accordingly, the oil price has faced a steep decline. Hence, the current drop of oil price is a combination of reduction of demand and increase of supply.

COVID-19 has not only influenced the world economy indirectly through the fall in oil prices, but itself has literally struck a blow to the world's economy. The main cause behind this economic blow is the drop in demand caused by weak consumer sentiment. For instance, movement between regions within Korea has significantly decreased as local consumers have made efforts to prevent COVID-19 infection by refraining from using multiple facilities. According to the Korea Railroad Corporation (KRC), the number of Korea Train Express (KTX) passengers in February decreased by 50 percent compared to the previous month.

In this unprecedented period of

economic turmoil caused by an infectious disease, government intervention is needed in various fields. Cooperation with professional organizations such as Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP) is needed. Also, some experts argue that it is necessary to reinforce the power of small and medium-size enterprises. Key or value-added components of products should be produced and exported by Korean small enterprises at a higher rate than before, to localize the whole process. High dependency on foreign businesses is even poisonous to the domestic economy in an international economic crisis.

**An Economic Panic Demolished the Stock Market**

In the period of crisis, economically wealthy countries should be trustworthy, supporting other weak countries to overcome the crisis caused by the virus. G7 countries, however, failed to become a focal point for overcoming the crisis of COVID-19. The measures that G7 countries had implemented were truly ineffective since these countries led the world economy to cool down, and eventually crumble.

As the virus infected all continents beyond Asia, the World

Health Organization (WHO) officially declared a pandemic, and the U.S. President Donald Trump even implemented the unprecedented counteraction of a 30-day ban on the U.S. travel from Europe. While financial markets around the world are reeling from economic shock, the relations constructed among nations are being destroyed. After President Trump's announcement, the world stock market fluctuated. On March 13, Nasdaq and Standard & Poor's 500 (S&P500) lost 9.5 percent and 9.4 percent respectively, and the well-known stock markets started to collapse consecutively. On the same day, Financial Times Stock Exchange 100 (FTSE100) had its worst day since "Black Monday" in October 1987. These situations in the world stock markets made each country establish economic countermeasures. Three of the largest central banks in the West concentrated their finance in response to ease the economic shock caused by COVID-19, but it did not have much effect. The stock market continued to fall.

South Korea also experienced the collapse of its stock market as shown in the numerical value of Korea Stock Market Price Index (KOSPI). The worldwide economic shock swept KOSPI and it plunged to 1457.64 on March 19. This was an unprecedented collapse of KOSPI



The progress of the international oil prices

since it exceeded the value of 1400 on January 4, 2006. This crisis shows that through COVID-19, the economy of South Korea in 2020 returned to the economy of 2006 within two months. In other words, through these worldwide downfalls of stock market price, the economic crisis due to COVID-19 is more severe than the Subprime Mortgage Crisis that happened in 2008.

**Movement of Investors during COVID-19 Crisis**

Market watchers may wonder what about the news regarding COVID-19 is scaring investors—it is the strong countermeasures of the U.S. and European countries against COVID-19. Another factor that affected investors' movement is a consistent downtrend of major companies' stock price. As the downturn from COVID-19

continues, more investors are opening new security accounts or activating dormant accounts to seize opportunities for low-cost purchases.

Most of the active investors during the period of crisis are novice investors in their 50s and 60s, who jump into investments through recommendations or online information. According to the Korea Financial Investment Association on Wednesday, the number of stock trading accounts increased from 29,356,620 to 30,046,623 within two months. Furthermore, the number of new accounts at two large security firms increased by more than 320,000 in the first two months of this year. The increase of stock trading accounts means that many investors are currently participating in stock investments, seeking the rebound of stock prices.

Experts showed concern about novice investors who get investment information through internet communications or YouTube videos. Experts advise that people need to take caution with the increasing number of illegal transactions that require money in return for recommending promising items on the internet. John Lee, a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Meritz Asset Management, said, "Just because

we are losing a lot of indexes, we do not want to make short-term investments in theme stocks." He added, "We recommend people to find blue-chip companies with better fundamentals than unverified information and invest in long-term basis.



### Domestic Employment and Labor Condition

One essential aspect with regard to a country's economic condition is the issue of employment. Though there are differences for each field of industry, there are worries about the falling employment rate due to enormous shutdowns of factories, large businesses, restaurants, and entertainment districts. Moreover, the delay of open recruitments is putting young applicants into a state of depression. However, these worries seem to be at variance with the statistics on the employment situation in Korea provided by the National Statistical Office (NSO). Based on the statistic presented on March 11, the number of people employed in February increased by 492,000 over that of February 2019. Moreover, there is a continuous increase of about 300,000 for the last seven months.

Nonetheless, whether this statistic reflects the actual condition of the labor market accurately or not, there still exist negative

perspectives. The first point is about people on a temporary leave of absence. Working people who cannot work because of various reasons such as disease, accident, or labor disputes are called "people who are temporarily laid off." Within the statistic of the NSO, these people are classified as *the employed*, which made the employment index look better on the surface. However, technically, people who are temporarily laid off include a lot of people who were forced to be laid off from their job, and among them, there are people who have problems with the instability of their own employment.

The condition is well shown in the allowances for job seekers by the Ministry of Labor (MOL). The number of people who applied for the allowances in March is 156,000. Given that the allowances are given to people who are joining the employment insurance and about half of all the employees are not joining the insurance, it is estimated that many more job seekers would exist than appeared in the statistical data.

Under these circumstances, on March 30, the Ministry of Labor (MOL) officially presented solutions including subsistence support for vulnerable people and the formation of an employment safety net. As for the people who are

temporarily laid off, it was announced that more subsidies would be provided to the employers to reinforce the employees' life support. Also, it is promised that MOL will reinforce support for people in search of jobs and provide direct livelihood support. As for Japan, a special measure was presented on March 13 that the government would aid the business suspension allowance — half for large companies and two thirds for small enterprises. There needs to be specific guidelines or figures as well in Korea, to actually support the forced instability of employees' lives.



### Severe Populism vs. Inevitable Support

*Basic income* is defined as systematic support that provides a certain amount of money to all people without conditions. The intention of this support contains the idea that the government should guarantee people a life befitting a human being. The arguments regarding *disaster-related basic income* have been aroused with the spread of COVID-19 and the downturn of economic conditions. The aim itself is positive in that it is trying to help people get through such economic hardships, but there are worrying perspectives as well doubting the effectiveness of the



PROVIDED BY YONHAP NEWS  
| Controversies over disaster-related basic income

system and the affordability of the finances.

One of the hot arguments regarding the *disaster-related basic income* is whether it would work as a real emergency prescription, or if it is a typical example of populism, a political approach appealing to the public who believe that they are relatively alienated in political fields compared to elite groups. People who support the former side make a point that paying people money would increase the withered demand for purchases, which would result in the overall circulation of money. On the other hand, people on the latter side cast doubts precisely on this *circulation* point, and state it is hard to expect people to spend more money if they are paid around 100,000 won because fewer purchases and demands are basically due to the fear of going outside, rather than lack of money.

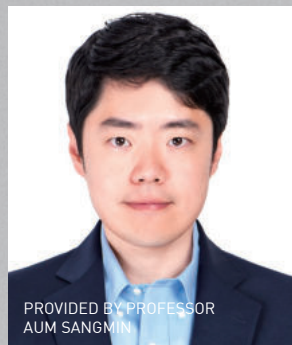
As for foreign countries, Singapore, Japan, Australia and others are implementing the system. In Singapore, all citizens over the age of 21 get basic incomes in accordance with their incomes or properties. National finance, public's needs and viewpoints, and efficiency could be all different from country to country. In Korea, after severe arguments, every local government is providing their own system and standard for *disaster-related basic income*, and whether this would actually be helpful is something to continuously look at. Further, considering that the COVID-19 situation may be prolonged for an even longer period of time than expected, there would also be voices for more basic incomes. Thus, there needs to be the recognition that this system is temporary and other various methods and systems should be devised to stabilize the situation.



### Economic Situation in Foreign Countries

The economic situation abroad is much more serious than the situation in South Korea, mainly because other countries shut down their borders and regulate their people from moving around. The domestic market in South Korea did not collapse because the government did not consider blockading the country. In addition, the delivery business managed to sustain the economy in South Korea. Compared to South Korea, delivery service in foreign countries is not well-developed. People in foreign countries usually visit stores to buy food or groceries rather than ordering those goods through delivery. However, as COVID-19 spread all over the world, people controlled themselves from going outside, which led people to use social infrastructure less.

According to the Washington Post (WP), small business owners



PROVIDED BY PROFESSOR  
AUM SANGMIN

Professor Aum Sangmin (Economics,  
Myongji University)

are suffering from the cancellation of cultural and sports events in the U.S. and the vacancy of office buildings due to the COVID-19 infection. The sales of small businesses like coffee shops and restaurants in Washington DC decreased by 40 percent as office workers stay at home due to the crisis. The same crisis is happening in Europe. With many small businesses now closed in Germany, the government is concerned about self-employed businesses that will face a number of layoffs and bankruptcies since store owners cannot pay rent without income.

Developing countries, such as India, are undergoing the hardest situation, because the social infrastructures that they had established are meager compared to other wealthy countries. Economic experts view the situation in India with concern. As COVID-19 is unwieldable in India, Narendra Damodardas Modi, the prime minister of India, announced a state blockade, which included the regulation of factories. This was viewed as a mistake by many. India is a country where many international companies constructed their factories. However, as all factories are closed, workers in those factories temporarily lost their job without getting paid. Making things worse, millions of day laborers lost the

chance to work in construction sites or factories. As such, the unemployment rate rapidly increased.

On the other hand, unemployment rates can recover after countries overcome the crisis. What is more critical during the COVID-19 crisis is the serious malaise among people around the world due to tensed economy. People's distrust their governments can stimulate the economic situation, even after the crisis gets relieved. It is important for each country's government to develop the temporary policy or regulation that can satisfy the people's expectation, so that people can come together to overcome the crisis.



### Situation During the Great Depression, Similar but Different

A similar economic situation happened during the Great Recession of 2008. The Great Recession is also called the Subprime Mortgage Crisis, which means that the crisis was due to the collapse of real estate prices. Enormous financial companies like Bear Stearns, American International Group (AIG), and Lehman Brothers Holdings collapsed as people, who borrowed money to buy real estate, could not

repay the debt to these companies. Some experts worry that the Great Recession was still ongoing even after 2015, because the economic prosperity was reduced compared to the economy before the crisis in 2008. In order to prevent another possible mortgage crisis in the future, the U.S. government passed the *Dodd-Frank Financial Reform Act* on July 21, 2010. According to Professor Aum Sangmin (Economics, Myongji University), the goal of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act of 2010 was to increase financial stability to ensure that no more "bank run" would repeat in the future.

The economic crisis due to COVID-19 is similar to the crisis of 2008 in the aspect of the collapse of the stock market. However, the current crisis seems much more serious. The 2008 financial crisis was often called a "unknown" crisis, which means even experts could not realize the risk of cutting-edge derivative financial products. It was very similar to the current situation wherein the virus, which has no exact characteristics and path of infection, is rapidly spreading. The difference is that the current crisis is "untouchable" in addition to "unknown." If *Dodd-Frank Financial Reform Act* was to stabilize the financial market in a hurry so that the crisis could not shift to the real

sector, the first priority in the present is by far dealing with the infection. In a cool-headed perspective, the response of economic policy makers, including the government and the central bank, is nothing but a supplementary act, without directly handing the crisis.



### Prospects for South Korea's Economy During and After the Crisis

Due to the current crisis, South Korea's economy will face a complex situation. If President Moon Jae-in's government pursues a prompt response, it will not only lead to confusion over its previous policy stance, but also lead to confusion among people in the country. The interest rate is a typical example. Since the government was launched in 2017, it has repeatedly expressed its willingness to stabilize the real estate market by pouring out the real estate measures through 19 consecutive and different policies. With instability in all areas of the economy, including the financial market, exports, and domestic demand, the government and the central bank should agonize between the primary or innovative measure.

Professor Aum added that the measure that the government

should take immediately is to support businesses so that they do not go bankrupt due to decreased demand, and to maintain a contractual relationship with employees. In addition, various financial policies such as expanding loan guarantees to self-employed businesses, should also be considered. The most important thing here is the content rather than its size. The policy of easing inequality and inclusive growth of all people in society is also the way to success in responding to the imminent crisis.

In this intense period of socio-economic crisis, everything seems to be in chaos and the flatline situation makes people feel more and more depressed. As trite a remark as it may sound, it is always the efforts with hopes of every party including the government, organizations, and the public that will end the crisis and depression in the end. As covered above, there exist a lot of controversies on various issues now, but it is always true that a decision cannot fully satisfy everyone's needs. With a careful look at each matter from various angles, rational and plausible supports should be given by the government. Then, through close observations of the results and people's reactions, complements should be made to build up better systems and supports. **K**

# If you share sunshine with me, that is happiness.

An Infinite Universe!



PHOTOGRAPHED BY NAM HYE BIN

By The Granite Tower Photo Division



PHOTOGRAPHED BY NAM HYE BIN

Shimmering colors of sunshine, unfurling leaves, and lush greenery altogether give us the feeling of May. Along with the scenic attractions, the sharing of love and gratitude by people add to the delights of the season. Why not share lovely emotions with living creatures around you and make connections. It will ripen your world of emotions and further that of living creatures you love.

"Perhaps one reason we are fascinated by cats is because such a small animal can contain so much independence, dignity, and freedom of spirit."

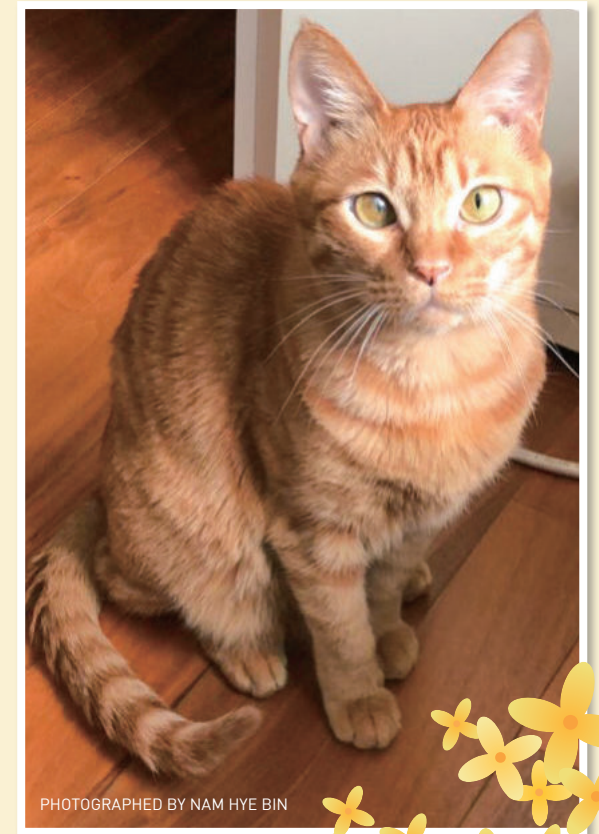
- Lloyd Alexander -



PHOTOGRAPHED BY NAM HYE BIN



PHOTOGRAPHED BY NAM HYE BIN



PHOTOGRAPHED BY NAM HYE BIN





PHOTOGRAPHED BY KWEON SEO YOUNG

In this tough period of social distancing, it is easy to feel blue all the time. What about making a space of your own and trying new things that you have never done before. Also, enjoying indoor activities with a few people you love would provide you with an opportunity for cementing relationships and making it even more fruitful.



PHOTOGRAPHED BY KWEON SEO YOUNG



PHOTOGRAPHED BY KWEON SEO YOUNG

The true secret of happiness lies in taking a genuine interest in all the details of daily life-William Morris-



PHOTOGRAPHED BY KWEON SEO YOUNG

We do not remember days, we remember moments. – All the Bright Places (2020)



PHOTOGRAPHED BY KWEON SEO YOUNG

# Colorful English With Podo World's Kim Ye Jin

By Park Min Ha parkminha@korea.ac.kr

Kim Ye Jin ('18, Business Administration) is the creator of the YouTube channel *Podo World*. *Podo World* is an English educational channel that aims to help children have a friendly first encounter with English through interactive activities. Kim works with Lee Hyo Lim ('00, Seoul National University) and Jeon Min Pyo ('18, Korea University) well as Korea University's (KU) CJ Creator Library (CCL) to create her videos. Kim hopes to further expand her channel to inspire and educate children all over the world.

## Interview with Kim Ye Jin

**GT: When and how was *Podo World* established? Please be as specific as possible.**

Kim Ye Jin: Our channel *Podo World* officially launched on March 6, but our ideas for the channel date back to around November of 2019. All of us were actually attracted to the YouTube platform for a long time. Min Pyo had dreamt of creating a vlog channel, Hyo Lim had passion and talent for film and editing, and I had been interested in younger level English education. I guess our areas of interest naturally combined to become *Podo World*.

**GT: Is there a reason why you chose to become a YouTube creator in a new field rather than in your own major?**

Kim Ye Jin: Before starting *Podo World*, I was a weekend teacher at an

English kindergarten and had been for three years. I even devoted my holidays to creating curriculums and working in similar areas; naturally, I began to realize the importance of the related productions. I wondered how I could incorporate such experiences with my major and started working on the idea of *Podo World*.

Collecting ideas to create educational materials is rather easy because of the endlessly accessible online resources about phonics and grammar. However, it is always up to the teacher to turn it into a digestible activity-based class to teach children. I realized this was an opportunity to create a teaching manual for teachers, or even a manual for parents of home-schooled children. To take it one step further, the material could be used by parents who want more English exposure for their children in a nontraditional, educational and fun way.



PROVIDED BY KIM YE JIN  
| Podo World's Kim Ye Jin

**GT: Who has what role in the production of the content uploaded to *Podo World*?**

Kim Ye Jin: I am responsible for the ideation of the theme and plot of the videos. After I write up the script, Hyo Lim uses it to visualize the filming structure and completes the storyboard. At the filming site at CCL, I act, and Min Pyo films. Then Hyo Lim edits our raw clips and Min Pyo finalizes the finished video. We work and communicate through Dropbox.

**GT: Tell us about any interesting episodes during the planning and production process of *Podo World*.**

Kim Ye Jin: We usually film at CCL, but it had closed due to the recent COVID-19 outbreak. So we reserved and used an outside studio instead to shoot one of our videos. We did not know at the time we made the reservation, but when we arrived, it turned out to be a studio where many celebrities visited to shoot commercials and music videos. But there we were, not knowing how to use the lights and microphones, and not even having an SD card on us. The owner looked a bit surprised, to say the least. He later showed up with coffee to find me wearing a rabbit headband, jumping up and down to film an unusual English video. He looked surprised from the beginning to the end of the shoot. This definitely lasted as a funny episode for us.

**GT: How do you plan to manage your channel in the future?**

Kim Ye Jin: I plan to run *Podo World* even after I graduate. I think that accumulating a lot of videos and raising the channel's awareness is an important process to move on to the next stage, so, in the meantime, we will be diligently filming, editing, and

running our channel all while managing our school classes. We all agreed to shoot every other Friday and set our schedules accordingly. We film in Week 1 and upload our video on the Friday of Week 2. Other than that, we are proceeding with the editing and scripting procedure on our own free times.

**GT: Have you had access to any of KU's or other organizations' support programs for student creators?**

Kim Ye Jin: We would not have been able to even start this channel if it were not for CCL's help. CCL offers free rental for its studios as well as for its cameras, SD cards, lighting, and wireless microphones. We are able to choose the studio type according to the scenario, make reservations in advance, and of course use them to film. Other than CCL's operational help, we work independently on our remaining tasks. COVID-19 has delayed the opening of the CCL studio indefinitely; however, in the meantime, we are dealing with it by using an external studio.


We also received a lot of theoretical and practical help from a course called Campus CEO, which Min Pyo and I took together. It was very

meaningful to learn about the various facilities that schools provide to students. We are especially thankful for Professor Shim Kyung-soo's advice.

**GT: Do you have any advice for readers who also want to be YouTube creators?**

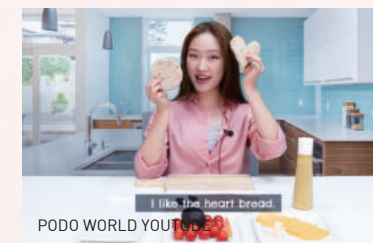
Kim Ye Jin: We run a small channel with only four videos so far, but it still feels very rewarding to be producing our original content. If you actively make use of CCL and start-up classes provided by KU, I am sure you will be able to get a lot of help. Being a creator takes a lot of work and it can be especially difficult to pursue as a student, so it may be good idea to use your spare time during the semester and on the weekends.

**GT: Please share any remaining comments you have.**

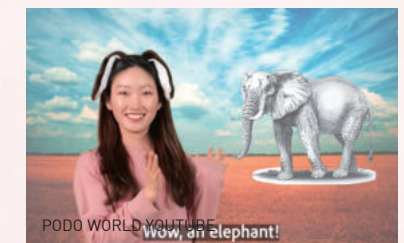
Kim Ye Jin: As I started the channel, I became curious about many aspects such as the complicated trademark registrations. I knew that other facilities and universities such as KU are providing support regarding these procedures, but it was hard to get information. I hope there is more information available so that students can approach it more comfortably and have access to more support in the future. 



| Podo World Water Doodle Activity



| Podo World Let's Make a Sandwich



| Podo World Animal Quiz Video

# EARN IT Act Wavering Between Positive and Negative Infinity

By Kweon Seo-young kb071531@korea.ac.kr

A society in which all the messages sent online are censored by the government is no longer just an image of a Big Brother society. This reality is gradually starting to unfold in the United States (U.S.) due to the Eliminating Abusive and Rampant Neglect of Interactive Technologies (EARN IT) Act. What started as a way to prevent further child sexual abuse material from going public in company-run websites is becoming a threat to the users' private online information.

On March 5, after several revisions, the EARN IT Act was officially introduced in the Senate by Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Lindsey Graham and U.S. senators including Richard Blumenthal. The proposal was first made in order to strip technology companies that partake in online child sexual exploitation of the immunity they were granted by default under Section 230 of the Communication Decency Act (CDA). If the EARN IT Act gets passed, posting content regarding child sexual exploitation on public websites will be considered a violation of "best practices" that companies would have to adhere to get immunity, which will cost the founders of the website their lawful protection, leading to bankruptcy. In addition, text and platform encryption will no longer be allowed since it hinders the aim to prevent and prosecute child

exploitation crimes.

## 🔒 The Background of the Act's Implementation

In 1996, Section 230 of the CDA, which states that "interactive computer services mostly cannot be liable for what the users say and do on the platform," was passed, allowing unstrained publication and exchange of information and bringing innovation to online platforms. However as the time went by, people gradually started to realize that the dangers of Section 230 outweighed the benefits. Currently, Section 230 protects the website providers from being accountable for illegal content posted by their users, but with this bill, their immunity is being threatened. This led to the legislation of the Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act (FOSTA) and Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act (SESTA) in 2018, which

initially intended to put an end to sex trafficking by punishing the providers if users were found to be posting any content that elicits prostitution or sex trafficking.

Now, the EARN IT Act is next in line, targeting online Child Sex Abuse Material (CSAM). To be more specific,



PROVIDED BY GETTY IMAGES  
Cosponsor of EARN IT Act Senator Lindsey Graham

the process is planned to have three steps. First, a committee of 19 members is to be created in order to redefine the "best practices" and once they are set in stone, they will have to be approved by the attorney general along with two other agencies, the secretary of homeland security and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) chairman. The final step is approval by the Congress, which is when the "best practices" become effective immediately. Then the companies that violate these standards will have to "earn" liability protection.

In this way, the EARN IT Act emerges as a strong and effective stimulant to the technology industry to pay more attention to online CSAM, which makes it easier for the government to regulate the contents posted on the websites and potentially prevent human trafficking, especially child sexual abuse. According to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC), they had received more than 16.9 million reports containing over 69 million contents related to CSAM in 2019. As online CSAM becomes more violent and frequent, the EARN IT act clearly brings awareness to internet service providers which could reduce and prevent online CSAM.

## 🔒 A Flaw in the New System

Despite the advantages, there are also many who vehemently oppose the act. If the government gains an access to users' online text messages and private information online, it will

also gain the power to use it against the users, which might lead to a serious constitutional problem, violation of the people's freedom and rights. Professor Ji Sung-wook (Law, Sungkyunkwan University) mentioned the drawbacks of the system, saying "There is possibility of violence toward freedom to speak by fundamentally eradicating online communication and also might lead to mass leakage of personal information, which can even cause negative influence on development of relevant industries."

In addition to this, there are several limits to the EARN IT Act when it comes to effectiveness. According to the Stanford Law School Center for Internet and Society (CIS), the threat of losing Section 230 immunity would only be a threat for major companies such as Twitter and Facebook, not for dark web sites that are devoted to posting and spreading CSAM, not to mention they are not even candidates of Section 230.

Moreover, CSAM traders who decide to stay on the platforms conducting "best practices" will still be able to encrypt their CSAM before sending it through the platform, even if the platform itself does not have end-to-end encryption functionality. In other words, the EARN IT Act only prevents the platform providers from offering end-to-end encryption, while CSAM traders are cunningly encrypting the file outside of the platform. Likewise, there are concerns that the implementation of the EARN

IT Act would cause adverse effects, making the actions of CSAM traders even harder to track since they can still encrypt their own files. Furthermore, if CSAM-devoted dark web sites shift themselves into big, legitimate-looking site for a moment, it would be difficult to detected under the EARN IT Act.

## 🔒 What Effect Will the Act Have?

As the bill let Section 230 of the CDA to permit companies to *earn* their liability regarding the CSAM, it publicizes and emphasizes the problem of sexual exploitation of children, which had been growing in the abyss for a long time. Furthermore, as mentioned by the U.S. House Committee on the Judiciary, companies will have to certify their reliability by complying with the "best practices" or they can choose to have other practices based on similar principles, eventually establishing a safe and stable harbor for liability. It is, however, a double-edged sword with both benefits and costs that can be problematic in terms of privacy and freedom.

Online sex trafficking is not only a problem of overseas, but also becoming a serious issue in Korea. "More strict and rigid prosecutions for sexual abuse toward children are needed, apart from those for adults, since the distinction is currently not clear and there are flaws to be enhanced regarding the weighing of an offense," said Professor Ji Sung-woo, emphasizing the significance of relevant law revision and careful contemplation. **K**

# North Korea's Military Actions Amid International Chaos

By Lee Eun Seo [ohhenkwo68@korea.ac.kr](mailto:ohhenkwo68@korea.ac.kr)

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, North Korea launched missiles on nine separate occasions in March. During a time of international solidarity to combat the virus, North Korea's actions stand in stark contrast. Moreover, their recent actions go against their resolution with the United Nations (UN) Security Council to denuclearize. The peaceful relationship between North and South Korea thus seems difficult to maintain. Because international peace has been threatened, foreign countries, including the United States (U.S.), have condemned North Korea's military action.



PROVIDED BY YONHAP NEWS  
I North Korean Missile Launched

Since the beginning of March, North Korea has launched several missiles. The tension on the Korean Peninsula seemed to ease in 2018 and 2019, when inter-Korean and North Korea-United States summits were held. North Korea promised to make efforts to denuclearize at this time; however, it seems that they have broken that promise. On March 2 and 9, North Korea launched a KN-25, which is a supersized Short-Range Ballistic Missile (SRBM).

Their provocations did not stop. On March 21, North Korea also launched KN-23 twice, from Seonchon to the East Sea. This time, North Korean leader Kim

Jung Un observed the demonstration. Kim said, "Our new weapons invented recently will allow our party to innovate the state's defense strategies." North Korea launched other missiles on March 29 and April 14.

## Conjecture about North Korea's Intentions

Professor Kim Ki Ho (Graduate School of Political Science, Kyonggi University) insisted that the purpose of North Korea's recent actions is to test whether they can launch a preemptive attack on South Korea. The most notable feature of the latest missile launch was its low altitude. According to Professor Kim, North Korea has attempted to lower their missile's trajectory to evade radar detection. Furthermore, it seems that North Korea is trying to neutralize Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) or Patriot Advanced Capacity-3 (PAC-3) — anti-ballistic missile defense systems

established by the United States Forces Korea (USFK).

According to Professor Nam Sung-wook (North and South Economic Research Institute), the intentions behind the provocations are "to test their new weapons and draw the world's attention." Professor Nam also pointed out that lowering the missile's maneuvering altitude enables higher accuracy. North Korea is upgrading its weapons so that it is more difficult for South Korea to counterattack. However, Professor Nam said, "The attack was made at a low-level — provocative enough to attract the U.S.'s attention, but not too provocative to raise tensions."

The missile launch has critical political implications. Although the range of the missiles were targeting South Korea, North Korea intended to send a message on a global scale. Professor Nam raised another possible intention behind the launch: "North Korea



PROVIDED BY PROFESSOR KIM KI HO  
I Professor Kim Ki Ho

created a fictional enemy to encourage their people to conform to authority. Showing a new weapon's capacity is a very effective tool to soothe the public fear of COVID-19 within North Korea and to turn the attention to the outside world."

## Upgrading its Weapons

The missiles fired on March 2, 9, and 29 were Multi-Rocket Launching System (MLRS) missiles, which North Korea has continuously tested and refined since 2018. The most significant advantage of these weapons is their capability to be fired continuously. Professor Kim said North Korea is looking to reduce the interval between launches. According to Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff, the launch interval for the SRBM launched on March 2 was only 20 seconds.

The missile launched on March 21 was a KN-23, part of the North Korean Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS). This new weapon maneuvers irregularly, making South Korea even more challenging to launch a counterattack. However, the U.S. website *38 North* noted that KN-23's diameter (700–850 mm) is likely to be large enough — although it cannot be measured



PHOTOGRAPHED BY KWEON SEO-YOUNG  
I Professor Nam Sung-wook

precisely — to accommodate a 600-mm nuclear explosive device.

## UN Security Council Condemnation

During the UN Security Council meeting on March 31, European countries—Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Poland, and the United Kingdom (UK)—labeled North Korea's actions as *provocative*, and stated they were "deeply concerned by the repeated testing of missiles." With China and Russia requesting the lifting of sanctions, the UN Security Council could not adopt a unified statement sanctioning North Korea in March. However, international society is keeping an eye on this issue. On April 17, a report from the UN Security Council Sanctions Committee on North Korea showed that North Korea went against the resolutions.


The U.S. did not take direct actions to sanction North Korea during March and early April; however, according to Professor Nam, they are "watching" the situation. According to *Yonhap News*, "the U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo asked the G7 nations to 'stay committed to applying diplomatic and economic pressure' over the North's nuclear and ballistic missile programs while calling on them to return to talks." After his remark,

North Korea expressed great displeasure, claiming his statements were "ludicrous," and said they had lost interest in resuming their talks with the U.S.

## Possible Dissolution of a Peaceful Relationship

Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff stated on March 29, "North Korea's military action during the world's struggle with COVID-19 was very unreasonable." The South Korean administration is currently responding to North Korea very cautiously but is paying strong attention to their actions. The Blue House is aware of what has happened but has not called a meeting of the National Security Council (NSC) until April 16.

Professor Kim insisted that the recent attack was a "huge threat" to South Korea. He pointed out that 17 separate North Korean provocations have occurred since 2017 and they have violated UN Security Council resolutions. He also believed that the current administration is not delivered an appropriately firm response. Professor Kim argued, "Although South and North Korea should cooperate in some cases, the government should also pressure North Korea to halt their missile launches."

"If North Korea's provocation continues, peacebuilding between North and South Korea will become a challenging task," said Professor Nam. Indeed, North Korea seems to have resumed weapons testing and are criticizing other countries that protest their actions. South Korea should make a breakthrough to rebuild peace on the Korean Peninsula and resolve this endless issue. 

# Enough Blood Spilled – Hopes for a Lasting Ceasefire

By Nam Eun Seo [eunseo0222@korea.ac.kr](mailto:eunseo0222@korea.ac.kr)

To say that the Syrian Civil War is one of the worst humanitarian catastrophes to be witnessed in the 21st century is not an understatement. In the past decade, the Syrian Civil War has given rise to millions of refugees and countless casualties. The most recent ceasefire deal in Idlib between Russia and Turkey seems to have brought a momentary peace in Syria's last opposition enclave. However, whether it will bring about lasting peace remains to be seen.

On March 6, Turkey and Russia announced a ceasefire in the Syrian region of Idlib, the opposition fighters' last enclave in Syria. The announcement was preceded by a nearly six-hour-long peace talk between the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow. This is the fourth ceasefire to take place since 2018 between the two countries. However, accusations of ceasefire violations and previous unsuccessful ceasefire cases make it unclear as to whether the somewhat peaceful conditions will hold.

The ceasefire deal will largely halt the warfare in Idlib—the biggest cause of conflict between Turkey and Russia in recent years. The terms of the deal include establishing a security corridor six kilometers to the north and south of the M4 highway, a key east-west roadway that effectively reconnects the major cities under the Syrian regime's control. There have been numerous attempts from the Syrian government

and rebel forces alike at taking over the areas surrounding the M4. Turkey and Russia also agreed to conduct joint patrols in this area, starting from March 15.

## ⊕ A Nine-Year Long Catastrophe

The Syrian Civil War, which began almost nine years ago, was triggered by a string of pro-democracy demonstrations that erupted in March, 2011, inspired by the "Arab Spring" in neighboring Middle Eastern countries. The Syrian government's use of force to crack down on the demonstrations soon led to mass protests demanding the Syrian president Bashar Hafez al-Assad's resignation, with said protests soon turning violent. The ensuing bloodshed eventually escalated into a full-scale civil war that has killed more than 370,000 people and produced millions of refugees. The Syrian Civil War has more often than not turned into a proxy war between the world's superpowers, with Russia supporting the

government forces and Turkey backing the rebel forces.

Russia and Turkey had reached a ceasefire deal in September, 2018, but the government forces resumed their attack when Al-Qaeda began rising as a major force in opposition, all in the name of dislodging a terrorist organization. Since late 2019, the government forces have engaged in direct combat with Turkish armed forces in the process of driving back the rebel forces. The death of a Turkish soldier during this combat prompted the Turkish forces to launch a counterattack, Operation Spring Shield, on February 27. However, the operation ended on March 6 with yet another ceasefire deal in Idlib announced by the two countries.

## ⊕ Tug of War Surrounding Idlib

Assad's attempt at reclaiming the province of Idlib began last spring. The violence in Idlib has been dramatically

escalating since, displacing more than one million civilians. This ceasefire deal, however, gives rise to hopes that the recently intensified conflict in Idlib will begin to subside. "We do not always agree in matters regarding the situation in Syria," said President Putin in his comments regarding the ceasefire. "However, in times of crisis, we have always succeeded at reaching common ground thanks to the high quality of the relationship between the two countries," he added.

Nevertheless, while the deal is a win for the Syrian government forces and Russia, it is a rather significant loss for the rebel forces and Turkey. The ceasefire agreement essentially forces Turkey to acknowledge Assad's territorial gain in Idlib, including the strategic M4 highway. Idlib being the last opposition-held province in Syria, Assad's territory gain is all the more unfavorable to rebel forces. After the ceasefire deal was reached, President Erdogan implied his discontent in what seemed like a warning. He said, "Turkey retains the

right to respond to the Syrian government forces' actions with its own power."

President Erdogan's apparent warning is not the only thing that casts a shadow on this new ceasefire deal; the deal has already been questioned to have ulterior motives, much like most of the previous ceasefire deals. Several Turkish media outlets even claimed that the Syrian government forces had violated the terms of the agreement merely 30 minutes into the ceasefire. According to *Al-Masdar News*, on March 19, Turkish authorities announced that two Turkish soldiers had been killed in the city of Idlib, without providing details of the circumstances of their deaths.

## ⊕ The New Gaza Strip?

Currently, the biggest issue surrounding the future of the ceasefire deal is the fate of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), an Islamist extremist group dominating nearly all

of the region in Idlib. Although HTS has long since branched off from Al-Qaeda, both the United Nations and the United States have classified HTS a terrorist organization. Both Russia and the Syrian government forces have been pressing on the need for firm military action to dismantle HTS. Turkey, on the other hand, has displayed a more passive attitude towards dismantling the terrorist organization as the process may result in civilian casualties, which Idlib has seen enough of.

Meanwhile, a new scenario regarding the situation in Idlib suggests that it may become the new Gaza Strip. According to the *Financial Times*, Mevlut Cavusoglu, Turkey's Minister of Foreign Affairs, pointed out on March 22 that Idlib was becoming the "new Gaza." Currently, nearly two million civilians are stranded in a 1000-square-kilometer strip of land which is under the control of the terrorist group HTS. To those who are familiar with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the situation in Idlib seems hauntingly reminiscent to that of Gaza, which is also under the thumb of the fundamentalist militant organization, Hamas.

Too much blood has been spilled in the nine-year long Syrian Civil War. Although the new ceasefire deal between Russia and Turkey gives some hope for peace, it is doubtful whether the shaky deal is enough to halt the violence and prevent the emergence of a second Gaza. However, after almost a decade of bloodshed, it seems time for countries to stop the battle of nerves and bring forth peace that will last. **K**



PROVIDED BY VOX

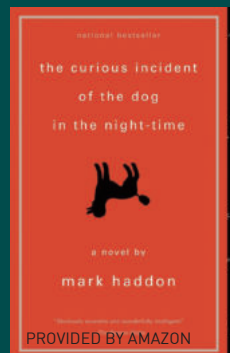
Erdogan and Putin in Moscow

# EMBRACING DISORDER IN AN ALREADY CHAOTIC WORLD



By Nam Eun Seo eunseo0222@korea.ac.kr

"I think prime numbers are like life. They are very logical but you could never work out the rules, even if you spent all your time thinking about them." *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* (2003) follows the journey of Christopher Boone as he tries to find order and stability in a world that is all too overwhelming to those who do not fit in. Through a bold and heartwarming approach, Mark Haddon illustrates the story of a boy who breaks through his own limits by facing a chaotic world head-on.



The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time (2003)  
PROVIDED BY AMAZON

Haddon is an English novelist and illustrator. Born and raised in England, he graduated from Oxford University before undertaking a variety of jobs, including working with children and adults with mental and physical disabilities. He is best known for his novel *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*, which received immense critical acclaim – including the 2003 Whitbread Book of the Year – and has various successful play adaptations.

*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* tells the story of Christopher, who is implied to have Asperger's syndrome. Although he knows all the countries of the world and their capitals as well as every prime number up to 7,057,

Christopher has little understanding of human interactions and emotions. The story takes off when the sudden, unexplained death of a neighbor's dog disrupts his carefully constructed world of patterns and order, forcing him to step out of his comfort zone and into the real world.

What sets this novel apart from others is Haddon's bold approach towards dealing with sensitive topics. He successfully manages to deal with issues such as mental illness and trauma in a way that is both brutally honest and heartwarming at the same time. While it may be difficult, and even controversial, for authors to deal with topics such as Asperger's syndrome, Haddon shows a surprisingly insightful understanding and portrayal of the psychology of a child on the spectrum. Haddon attempts to tell readers that although facing harsh realities in life may hurt, being true to oneself and one's imperfections can be a liberating experience.

Another aspect that makes *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* one-of-a-kind is the unconventional format of the book that helps illustrate how the protagonist sees the world. For instance,

the novel adopts a somewhat disorganized narrative that shifts back and forth along with Christopher's chaotic train of thought. Another aspect of the novel's format that reflects his peculiarities as an autistic child is the numbering of chapters. Christopher's obsessive preference for prime numbers leads him to number his chapters in sequential primes, so that the novel begins from chapter 2 and ends with chapter 233.

This unique and thought-provoking novel will open up the readers' eyes to a new perspective of life. With all its eccentricities, the novel tells stories of trauma, love, and liberation – and may help readers take the first steps in their own journey to self-discovery. To any reader who is willing to delve into Haddon's masterful storytelling, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* will prove to be worth the read. **K**

## Book Information

Title: *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*  
Author: Mark Haddon  
Publisher: Jonathan Cape  
Publication Year: 2003  
Pages: 274

# A Sophisticated Voyage of Self-Discovery

By Nam Hye Bin hyebin@korea.ac.kr

"Look up at the sun, I know I have begun a whole different world, another life." The lyrics from the song, "North Face" by Odie is representative of his album, *Analogue* (2018). On his album, he creates a nostalgic world based on his own sincere experiences, in which his listeners will find the very basic attributes or the kismet of the human experience to deeply empathize with. *Analogue* prompts you to look deep inside the crevices of your mind and to fall under the spell of musician Odie.

In *Analogue*, the debut album by 21-year-old Canadian Odie, he talks about his life, particularly over the last three years. Odie is known as an experimental artist who embraces a broad range of music styles, including contemporary rhythm and blues (R&B) and hip-hop. In an interview with *Earmilk*, Odie explains why he named the album the way he did. "The process of making it felt timeless and nostalgic for me. I look up to a lot of artists from the 70s and 80s too." As he mentioned, most of the songs on the album exude a sentimental mood. What is attractive about the album is that it sublimates this nostalgic mood into a trendy package through the delicate mixing of musical instruments, rhythm, and Odie's mellow voice.

The song "Bliss City" which opens the album is captivating with its dreamy and appealing tune, befitting its name. The tone gradually dissolves into his low voice, pushing his listeners to go on a journey to the world he has created. The beginning of this journey, "North Face" touches upon the love of a man missing a woman. The lyrics, which touch upon people visiting and leaving him, encapsulate the essence of

relationships or the inevitable feeling of loneliness in human beings.

The following track, "Story," goes one step further toward the inner self. There are times when people feel like they are stuck in a situation and cannot get out of it. He captures this moment and further emphasizes the importance of making a story of your own. One essential point when creating your own story would be *faith*, which is discussed in the song, "Faith." His message then moves to a more existential and essential level. In the song "Little Lies," he asks the question: What if all this was a little lie? Then he continues, "Only then would you realize?" These questions softly mix into the harmonious guitar melody and drum sounds, to provide a private space to think about the meaning of life.

Faith easily collapses in the face of suffering. Odie says demons lounge in his bed and all his pain sinks to the floor. These descriptions of emotional suffering are both realistic and metaphorical, which amplifies the sincerity of his songs and maximizes the overall pleasure of the album. At the



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Cover image of *Analogue*

end of the suffering, he talks about solace. In the track "Noise," he finally reaches a point where he realizes that his solace, his story, and his destiny is *music*. In the end, he condenses the album into his desire to give people faith, solace, and peace through his music and messages.

By truthfully showing his thoughts, his motifs, and even himself through his album, Odie is on his way towards his story. Though the album tracks his individual self-discovery, common emotions are still shared, as well as the unique inspiration coming from the precise compositions of the songs. If you are going through a harsh time in your life, then enjoy *Analogue*. You may get the pleasurable comfort you need. **K**

# Another Me, Another Earth

By Jun Uhnjin uhnjin@korea.ac.kr

"In this case, there is another you out there," a firm voice elucidates calmly, as the main protagonist, Rhoda Williams, walks to the edge of the pier gazing at the mirrored Earth in the sky. In the film *Another Earth* (2011), the Earth is not simply another inhabitable planet situated in outer space, but a parallel world with the same people and environment as the Earth we are living on. Throughout the film, such ideas of a duplicate Earth unravel with a morally complicated story, expanding the limits of our imagination.



Having been selected as one of the top independent films of 2011 at the 83rd National Board of Review Awards, *Another Earth* is a low-budget independent film which bases its dramatic story on science-fiction. The film is unique in that the director, Mike Cahill, participated in all aspects of creating the film, including directing, producing, writing, and editing. In addition, Brit Marling, who

plays the main role of Rhoda, actively engaged in the production and writing process as well. Such collaborative involvement allows the film to convey the emotions of the characters in a condensed, yet structured manner.

## The Emergence of the Second Earth

*Another Earth* begins with a 17-year-old Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) student named Rhoda crashing into another car while driving under the influence and looking out the window to see the second Earth. Although Rhoda is not hurt, John Burroughs, the driver of the other car, loses his wife and son in the accident. Rhoda, being underage, serves four years in prison and returns to society. At this time, the second Earth has come closer and more communication has been facilitated between the two planets.

When explaining the existence of a duplicate Earth in the sky, the film adopts the *parallel theory*. The *parallel theory* in the film maintains that the two planets are completely identical, including their terrestrial mass, physical environment, and people. In particular, such an element of parallelism is illustrated in a scene where a news reporter contacts the other Earth. As she communicates, a voice replies back which sounds surprisingly identical to her own voice. The reporter asks several personal questions, including her birthdate, hometown, and childhood memories, and the answers contain information describing her own identity. The communication brings light to the characters of the possibility of a parallel world.

However, the two Earths do not remain identical eternally. The film introduces another theory to the story — the *broken mirror theory*. This theory suggests that once the



Rhoda hesitating to speak the truth to John

two planets discover one another, the parallelism begins to break down, resembling a broken mirror. Such an unexpected variable causes differences to develop between the Earths, changing the course of the story in the film.

## The Dilemma between Confessing and Fleeing

After Rhoda returns home, she feels the need to genuinely apologize to John, as she irrevocably took John's family from him. However, after she walks up to the doorsteps of John's home, she suddenly loses her courage and tells the lie that she came to offer a free trial of home cleaning service. John, who has never been informed of who the perpetrator of the accident is, accepts her into his house to receive the service. Rhoda soon becomes a regular visitor to John's house as a hired housekeeper, and the two form an intimate relationship.

However, as Rhoda and John fall into a romantic relationship, Rhoda's inner conflict reaches its peak. On one hand, she wishes to confess her past, but on the other hand, she feels as if she is fulfilling the happiness of

John — deluding herself that she has obtained redemption. At this moment, Rhoda also wins a ticket to go to the second Earth, which acts as her psychological and physical refuge.

Eventually, she decides to speak the truth and gives the ticket to John, because there is a possibility of his family being alive on the second Earth, according to the *broken mirror theory*. However, the process which leads Rhoda to such a conclusion is not simple, as she displays the pain caused by this psychological dilemma continuously throughout the movie.

## A Unique Unfolding of the Story

As a low-budget film, *Another Earth* utilizes a unique method when illustrating the presence of the second Earth. In the beginning, the other Earth is portrayed as a star illuminating blue rays. By incorporating images of other planets such as Jupiter provided by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the film produces a mystical and astronomical sentiment.

Further into the film, the planet approaches closer and its image becomes clearer. At this point, it is portrayed as if it were the moon, floating in the sky. In scenes where the sky does not appear, its presence is only depicted indirectly through the characters' actions without any use of special computer graphics (CG) or visual effects. For instance,

when Rhoda and John discuss the possibility of another self on the second Earth, the presence of the planet is implied as the two use a telescope. In this way, the film continues to concentrate on the characters rather than the shocking existence of the duplicated Earth itself.

In an interview with *Complex*, an American media platform, Cahill states, "The science fiction just allows us to get another perspective on our interior world. So taking the character's internal personality and making another physical replica of the character brings us closer to understanding her emotionally." In making this comment, Cahill emphasizes his intention in utilizing the science fiction aspect in order to focus more on the emotional aspects of the character.

*Another Earth* is a film that delicately balances the elements of science fiction and drama. The complexity of the geographical environment and the characters' relationship in the film provides an unconventional angle to understand psychological dilemmas. By expanding our cosmos, *Another Earth* delves into the core of human emotion. **K**

### Film Information

Title: *Another Earth*  
Running Time: 92 minutes  
Released Date: July 22, 2011 (U.S.)  
Director: Mike Cahill  
Cast: Brit Marling, William Mapother



The film poster of *Another Earth*

# Looking at the Political World Through an Artistic Prism

By Kie Hae Seung hayleyy1215@korea.ac.kr

**S***ae-ilkkun*, which literally translates to “new worker,” is a Korean word that has come to have a number of connotations throughout its abundant usage in politics; candidacies, new promises, and self-proclaimed dedication to the public are just some of the examples. In accordance with its name, the exhibition *Saeilkkun 1948-2020* deals with discourse surrounding elections, politics, and democracy in Korea. Through displays of historical artifacts and youthful art, this exhibition undoubtedly makes the audience reflect upon what democracy means to them, and what *they* mean to democracy.

Officially translated as *The Better Man 1948-2020 Pick Your Representative for the National Assembly*, it seems this exhibition was curated in a timely manner to correspond with the general election with a clear intention: to refresh the abstract idea of democracy in the public’s mind. Historically significant artifacts from previous elections, provided by the National Election Commission (NEC), are juxtaposed with art pieces in four different politics-related themes by 21 contemporary Korean artists across several floors.

When viewed alongside ballot boxes and campaign posters, uniquely expressed political perspectives on subjects such as the act of casting a vote and repetitive campaign slogans start to take form within the audience’s mind. It may not be a stretch to say that the

exhibition was created with the hope that it will impact the audience’s political ideals concretely enough for it to transition into action.

## Looking Back, Moving Forward

One could argue that politics exist to bring about change, and democracy to do so fairly. Some looked into the past to prove a point. For example, *69 Promises* by Ahn Kyuchul is a collection of monochrome paintings created from 69 presidential candidacy campaign posters. What is significant, however, is that all the posters were stripped down to the main slogan. Because all the bells and whistles have been removed, it leads one’s eyes to contemplate the always idealistic campaign phrases intended to captivate voters and compare them to the injustice-ridden society. Smartly

emphasizing the gap between candidates’ utopian pledges and the often-disappointing post-election reality, the artist urges the audience to look behind the alluring cloud of campaign tactics.

Instead of looking back into the past, some expressed desires to realize a more inclusive future by means of democracy. *Korean Dream*, an installation of sculptures by Haneyl Choi, embodies the yet-to-be achieved moments of minority group members’ election wins. The installation *How Do Animals Vote* of Edongshi’s *Animal Party Manifesto* reaches further into the future; veganism and zoo abolishment may sound familiar but voting rights for animals is an idea probably unheard of to most. Six voting booths, only one of which is for humans and the rest for

various-sized animals, stand side by side in this work. Viewers subsequently realize the great extent to which human choices affect animals and how animals cannot influence their own future. In a broader sense, the piece pushes viewers to shift their paradigm from one that is human-centered to one that includes all the agents of this world.

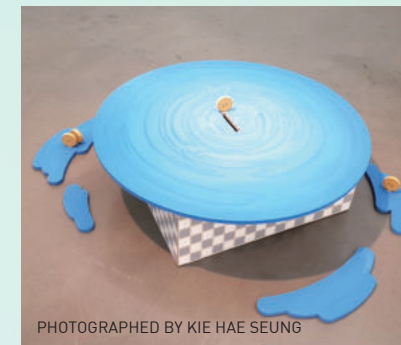
## Participation is the Answer

Democracy at times seems daunting to newcomers to politics, but when disassembled, it all comes down to voting and making your voice count for the sake of the nation’s future. Perhaps with the general election so close to the time of curation, *The Better Man* creators thought it would be better to focus on the facet of democratic politics central to this event: elections. Various pieces were stationed to promote voting. For example, exhibition-goers are each given a ballot to cast into the *Weekly Vote*, which is held with new social, political, or general issues every week. Another piece, however, is equipped with a particularly convincing metaphor.



PHOTOGRAPHED BY KIE HAE SEUNG

| *Korean Dream* by Haneyl Choi



PHOTOGRAPHED BY KIE HAE SEUNG  
| *Getting rounded, getting rounded* by Mijung Lee

Mijung Lee’s *Getting rounded, getting rounded* spots both the visual and semantic similarity between the act of voting and the act of wishing by creating a ballot-box-like sculpture in the image of water and a tossed-in pebble. Lee makes a connection between casting a vote for a better future and the tradition of wishing by accentuating the commotion in the still water.

On a final note, *The Better Man* focuses on the emergency of listening. *The Listener’s Chair* is a piece by Kyungwoo Chun which focuses on the present reality. At first, the piece just looks like chairs placed in a circular shape. However, when informed, the audience realizes that *The Listener’s Chair* is a participatory artwork in which an audience member sits on a chair of their choosing and listens on a device to a unique three-minute story of someone’s life.

Presenting metaphors about wishing and playing back somebody’s words alike, such pieces try again and again to stress the importance of participation in a democratic country. Political participation is not necessarily complicated or difficult. Whether it be voting in a local election or listening to a

minority member’s recollection of the discrimination they faced, it all lies in the realm of political participation, the move we make to invoke change within a democratic political structure.

Korea is often cited as a representative case of a country successfully enforcing democracy, which many Koreans are proud of. However, it can be easy to forget how hard-earned and valuable the right to participate politically in a democratic country is amid everyday struggles. By the time we enroll in university, most Korea University (KU) students become eligible to vote. Although whether one vote could really change the course of a nation is something we are constantly doubtful of, we will never really know unless all votes are cast. So, yes, it may be cheesy, and it may be corny, but it really is up to you, the one with the vote, to perhaps tweak the direction of change for a hopefully better tomorrow. **K**



## Exhibition Information

Title: *The Better Man 1948-2020: Pick Your Representative for the National Assembly*  
Venue: Ilmin Museum of Art, PRESSEUM  
Date: From March 24 to June 21  
Opening Hours: From 11:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M.  
(Closed on Mondays)  
Price: Free of charge



# A New Road Taken for Online Comments

In 2018, an Internet user with the nickname Druking underwent investigation for having illegally influenced public opinion by rigging comments on Internet news articles. Through a special prosecution, it was revealed that the organization behind Druking used Macro Keys in the online comment sections in order to manipulate public opinion. In response to such malicious actions, South Korea's largest search engine platform Naver announced an extensive reconstruction of their online comment system.



From March 19, Naver is implementing a new online comment system which aims to eradicate malicious commenting and strengthen its role as a healthy online agora. One of the major changes to the system is the disclosure of users' nicknames and comment histories. Once a user adds a comment to an online news article, anyone is able to click on the user to check the aforementioned information.

The change in online comment policy of Naver follows the current shift in online communities. A similar policy was previously implemented and maintained by Daum, another popular web portal in South Korea. However, as Naver is currently handling the majority of web searches in the country, the change is forecasted to heavily influence the domestic users as well as readers of Internet news. Yoo Bong Seok, the executive director of Naver's media platform, stated, "Naver will take the responsibility as a provider of the platform and endeavor to facilitate the positive features of online comments."

On April 3, *Hankook Ilbo*, a South Korean daily newspaper, reported that the daily average number of comments on Naver news articles decreased by about 20 percent during the first two weeks of the reform, compared to the previous two weeks. The daily average number of users uploading comments was reduced from 222,682 to 200,296 as well. The decrease of comments indicated that comments are now being uploaded more cautiously. At the same time, concerns arguing that the system is restricting free opinion surfaced as well.

From a long-term perspective, the reform is forecasted

to bring a positive change to the online discourse culture. The accessibility to users' profile information and comment history can result in the strengthening of individual online identities. Despite the weakening of online anonymity, a more careful and responsible attitude toward writing comments will be adopted — creating a more transparent online environment.

Furthermore, malicious comments and possibilities of rigging, which could manipulate public opinion, are expected to be prevented. According to *Yonhap News*, the comment history of users allowed other users to inspect the veracity of the comments' contents. For instance, cases where a single user wrote several comments each identifying him or herself with different identities, ranging from a South Korean university student to an accountant in Australia, were detected. In this way, the change of online comment system provided evidence for users to evaluate the credibility of comments.

As the reliance on online media is escalating in contemporary society, the influence of public opinion developed online now plays a critical role in social and political issues. Although the online community is an open space acknowledging different ideas and viewpoints, comments with a malevolent purpose should be prevented from interfering with the public community. Indeed, the recent reform of online commenting will be an invaluable step for creating a more healthy and mature online community. **K**

By Jun Uhnjin  
uhnjin@korea.ac.kr



# Adjusting to International Standards: Does It Have to Be Done Now?

Due to COVID-19, the South Korean government has encouraged people to practice social distancing to prevent further spread of the virus. As a result, the Ministry of Education (MOE) delayed the commencement of the 2020 academic year. At this time, Kim Gyeong Soo, the Governor of Gyeongnam Province, suggested adopting a new education system in which the academic year begins in September. Meanwhile, with the pandemic not calming down, schools commenced online classes from the second week of April, and reformation of the system became practically impossible.



Not all students and parents are supportive of the current policy to start the semester online. A national petition to delay the start of the new semester to September was posted on March 22. The petition claimed that adopting the *Fall-Spring Bi-semester System (FBS)* at this time would be much more convenient for anyone pursuing international transfers. Indeed, more than 70 percent of the schools worldwide begin their new academic year in September. Furthermore, among the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) member countries, only South Korea, Japan, and Australia do not start their academic year in September.

The new system would indeed break the unnecessary barrier for transfers. South Korea can benefit from changing its education system to meet international standards by adopting FBS. If the start of the semester was the same as most other countries, the transfer process would be more convenient. More Korean students would be able to study abroad, and more international students would come into Korea. Moreover, adopting the FBS would resolve the problem of the awkwardly placed spring vacation, and students would also have an extended summer vacation.

However, this is not the first time the FBS has been proposed. First suggested in 1997, the MOE has attempted to adopt the FBS several times, but they have had to give up due to overwhelming costs. According to a report by the Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI), "Implementation Plan for the Fall-Spring Bi-semester System

(2015)," reforming the academic year to start in September would cost about 10 trillion won.

Adopting the FBS is not a simple matter. The whole academic schedule would have to be adjusted to the new system, including the College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT). Implementing the system would cause considerable confusion because the MOE can neither force every student to stay in their current academic year for six more months nor allow every student to pass on to their next grade six months earlier. In either case, the MOE would have to introduce a new curriculum for the entire student population which would be very costly. Moreover, the university application period would have to be reformed accordingly, and even the job recruiting schedules could be affected.

The adoption of the FBS would introduce a more convenient transferring system and attract more international students to come to Korea to study. However, the MOE cannot guarantee that these anticipated positive effects of the FBS would exceed or compensate for the immense cost of the reform. The proposal for changing the start of the semester would lead to reforming other academic schedules. Therefore, maintaining the current system and seeking alternative methods to make the international transfer system easier would be a more practical and efficient plan. **K**

By Lee Eun Seo  
ohhenkwo68@korea.ac.kr





# Looking Back to Make a “Plus One”

On March 26, the Ministry of Food and Drug Safety (MFDS) announced that a new policy will be implemented, which is to eliminate carbonated drinks within a 200-meter radius of schools. Although the intentions behind this policy are good, many people in Korean society did not welcome it. Much like this, more and more policies regarding children’s health are being established nowadays. Despite the fact that several of these policies do not achieve their original objective, new policies continually emerge. As a result, there is an ongoing debate about whether these policies for regulating foods and drugs for children’s health are essential.



Of course, these policies are needed; children’s health should be protected by the law, because they are more likely to be exposed to the dangers that foods and drugs may deliver. Foods that contain genetically modified organisms (GMO) and are high in calories can sometimes be fatal to the relatively vulnerable immune system of children. In modern society, it is easier for people to gain access to GMO food and junk food because these products are widely sold. This means that children are prone to reach for these foods, which elevates the gravity of the situation.


According to the MFDS, the eating habits of children most likely carry forward to adulthood. Children nowadays have gotten used to the taste and comfort that junk food and GMO food deliver. This is a big problem because the risk of lifestyle diseases increases as children consume unhealthy food. The research performed by the MFDS states that, in modern society, one out of five adults have lifestyle diseases due to the fact that the food people consume is mostly high in calories and genetically modified.

On the other hand, policies enforced by the government cannot perfectly regulate the eating habits of children, mainly because the policies cannot fix the fundamental matter. In other words, the policies are put into place without considering the reality of the situation. No matter how many policies regulating food consumption are established, there is a limit to monitoring every individual in society. Children are more likely to eat the foods that are easy to obtain from their

surroundings, causing policies to lose the efficacy.

Furthermore, the policies face the biggest obstacle, that is the right of people to choose. Regulating the eating habits of people would also mean that the government is eliminating people’s will of choosing the food that they want to eat. Blocking children’s and adults’ right to eat the food that they prefer can be viewed as an inhumane policy, which may bring about the opposite effect intended by the policy by stimulating consumer sentiment.

Without a doubt, in order to reduce the risk of lifestyle diseases, policies that regulate children’s eating habits are needed. It is also the duty of the government to make laws and regulations to ensure the well-being of the people in each society. Nevertheless, the policies should be more effective in order to handle the fundamental issue at hand, and there is a need for these policies to be accepted by people in the society as amiable. Not only making a strict regulation, but also producing public campaign advertisements, encouraging people to reduce their consumption of GMO foods and junk foods, can generate great change among people.

Until now, the MFDS continually and inattentively applied regulating policies regarding children’s health, without recognizing the minimal effect that the policies have on society. It is time for the ministry to progress further by adding a “plus one” to their policies. 

By Lee Donghyun  
real0822@korea.ac.kr



# WE LISTEN

*The Granite Tower (GT)* values your opinion. Send us detailed feedback on GT’s May issue—anything from what you liked or disliked reading to what you would like to see more of in our upcoming issues. Contact us at [thegrانيتower@gmail.com](mailto:thegrانيتower@gmail.com).

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