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COVER STORY

South Korea's Inadequate Protection of Female Victims of Violence

FEATURE

- 16 Proposed and Opposed — South Korea's Anti-Discrimination Law
- 18 Conflict and Consequences — The Feud Over Minimum Wage Changes
- 20 Penetrating the Penitentiaries

THE GRANITE TOWER

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JOINING GT. If you are a Korea University freshman or a sophomore, you are eligible to apply for reporter status at *The Granite Tower*. All members of *The Granite Tower* must complete three semesters at the magazine before they can receive their certificate of service. *The Granite Tower* recruits new reporters twice each spring and fall semester.

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EDITOR'S LETTER

Clean Slate

The idiom "starting with a clean slate" reflects the idea of breaking free from the mistakes of the past in order to achieve a fresh start. However, we often let our past errors define us through the ways in which we think, behave, and interact. This eventually traps us in a vicious cycle of self-doubt, taking us beyond the point where we cannot start with a clean slate on our own. To break free from this cycle of negativity, help from an unbiased observer becomes necessary.

Whis this intent in mind, the September issue of *The Granite Tower* (GT) aims to step in as a third party in discussing profound matters that range from the problems of a single individual to those of global phenomena. The Cover Story of this issue seeks to discuss the tragic death of a female sergeant in the Korean air force that took place in May. This article sheds a critical light on South Korea's inadequate protection for its female victims of violence and touches on the entrenched culture of concealment still prevalent within the nation. The Feature section also covers various social issues including South Korea's enactment of its anti-discrimination law, the dispute on the prospective rise of minimum wage in 2022, and the rights of inmates in Korean correctional facilities.

Even under the common theme, however, readers will notice the varying approaches that GT reporters took on the idea of a *clean slate*. Some articles may offer insight on putting the past behind for a new beginning, while other articles demand confronting past mistakes in order to seek a guiding hand for future improvements. All in all, GT hopes to invite its readers into the discussion and analysis of the ongoing issues of modern society.



By Choi Minji

(qdana511@korea.ac.kr)

Editor-in-Chief, *The Granite Tower* (GT)

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KU Hosts Korean Political Science Association

By Goh Jinoo | siewierszczyna@korea.ac.kr

On August 18, the 2021 World Congress for Korean Politics and Society was hosted at Korea University (KU). Centering around the main theme of “Challenging the Crisis: A Korean Way in the Historical Transformation,” the congress focused on various topics on how South Korea should balance its diplomatic standing.

KU President Chung Jin Taek started the opening ceremony, stating the need for “pursuit of new knowledge” in the face of “backlash against globalization.” Oh Se-hoon, the mayor of Seoul, Lee In-young, the Minister of Unification, and Yeom Jae-ho, former KU president also participated in the opening ceremony.

The opening ceremony was followed by a plenary panel on the subject of “Peace in the Korean Peninsula and a New International Order in North-east Asia,” where members of the panel presented their views and assessments on various topics, such as how the Biden administration’s Indo-Pacific



PHOTOGRAPHED BY JIEYEOWON.

| The Plenary Panel in Session

policy compares to that of the Trump administration in relations to Korea. [K](#)

KU Professor Elected as NAS Senior Member

By Goh Jinoo | siewierszczyna@korea.ac.kr

The National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Korea (NAS) announced on July 9 that they have elected Korea University’s (KU) Professor Emeritus Kim In-hwan as one of its new senior members. This means that the NAS now considers Professor Emeritus Kim as a permanent member in the organization, following a strict electoral process involving multiple qualified candidates.

Professor Emeritus Kim’s long history of academic prowess proves that his new position was not for naught, with his works such as *The Principles of Criticism* and *Linguistics and Literature* being some of the most significant pieces in the fields of Korean linguistics and literature. His latest oeuvre, *The New History of Korean Literature*, in particular, has been lauded as a centerpiece for solidifying the identity of Korean literature throughout history.

Furthermore, Professor Emeritus Kim has gone through



PROVIDED BY KU

| Professor Emeritus Kim In-hwan

multiple influential positions besides his previous position at KU. After graduating from KU with a doctorate in Korean Language and Literature, he went on to serve as the president of both the Korean Society of Literary Education and the Society of Korean Language and Literature. [K](#)

KU College of Engineering Featured on an Acclaimed Science Journal

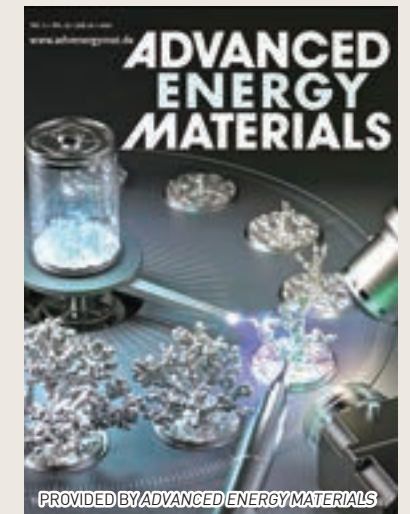
By Goh Jinoo | siewierszczyna@korea.ac.kr

Advanced Energy Materials, a globally acclaimed science journal, published a special issue on July 22 featuring Korea University’s (KU) College of Engineering. Being featured on *Advanced Energy Materials* makes the accomplishment of the College of Engineering extremely impressive considering that it is one of the most influential journals in energy-related research and materials science.

The College of Engineering has been focusing on the research and development of green energy for the last decade amidst rising interests in eco-friendliness. *Advanced Energy Materials* discussed 12 of the College of Engineering’s best papers, including works related to the development of eco-friendly energy sources such as high-efficiency lithium-based batteries, super-capacitors, perovskite solar cells, and more.

Professor Kang Yong-mook (Department of Materials Science and Engineering), who served as the guest editor for the July 22

issue of *Advanced Energy Materials*, showed his joy on how this feature “may showcase the College of Engineering’s capability in future energetics.” He further expressed himself on the possibility that it may also “help introduce aspiring researchers into the field of energetics.” [K](#)



PROVIDED BY ADVANCED ENERGY MATERIALS

| Cover of the July 22 Issue of *Advanced Energy Materials*

KU’s Development of Automatic Vaccine Extraction Technology

By Kim Seo Hyun | jamie0511@korea.ac.kr

On July 30, Korea University’s (KU) Guro Hospital and Osong Medical Innovation Foundation (KBIO) developed an “automatic vaccine extraction technology,” according to KU Guro Hospital, that can automatically distribute the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) vaccine to syringes according to the appropriate quantity.

Currently, the COVID-19 vaccine can be injected five to 10 times per bottle. Therefore, the medical team had to distribute an appropriate amount of vaccine to each syringe through repetitive work. Such manual work caused a total of 426 cases of misinoculation by July 16. However, the developed technology will allow even inexperienced medical staff to accurately distribute vaccines to syringes, and reduce the fatigue of the medical team. Furthermore, it is expected to maximize the number of vaccinations

by minimizing residual vaccine.

Professor Cho Geum Joon of obstetrics and gynecology at Guro Hospital appreciated the active support of KBIO for materializing the technology, which contrasts with previous cases where ideas could not be implemented and disappeared. He also stated that he will make continuous efforts to strengthen the competitiveness of the domestic medical device industry through various cooperative research. [K](#)



PROVIDED BY HANKOOKILBO

| Automatic Vaccine Extraction Technology

Surviving Internal Quicksand

— Ways to Defeat Mental Deterioration

By Jie Yeowon jessi2001@korea.ac.kr

A clean state of mind is looked upon as the ideal condition to tackle life's journeys. Nevertheless, achieving this mental state does not always prove easy. Especially with the demanding and overwhelming aspects of college life, students inevitably face burnouts and slumps. Ultimately, it is through one's personal experiences that one acquires the know-how to overcome bouts of emotional deterioration. In hopes to gain insight into the different methods of prevailing self-defeating mindsets, *The Granite Tower* (GT) interviewed students at Korea University (KU) about the trials and tribulations of setting these inner demons to rest.

👉 Han Jiwon ('19, Life Sciences)

I normally experience slumps when I follow the same routine for an extended period of time and when my day-to-day life becomes repetitive. Adhering to unchanging lifestyles can make life feel dull and purposeless, and when I catch myself trapped in this condition, I realize that I am in a slump. The first thing I do in this situation is to think and reflect. I start pondering on the specifics of what might have caused this monotony. Then, I think of small things that can change up my day. These *tweaks* include small, mundane activities I had not done for a long time: going out to a nice café, taking a stroll, or baking. I venture into experiences I normally overlook that can lift my mood. Participating in new activities makes me feel excited and spontaneous, and it helps me realize that there is much more to life that I can seamlessly incorporate into my daily routine.

👉 Kim Tae-Yoon ('21, Business Administration)

People tend to focus more on their weaknesses than on their merits. This is inevitable because the moments in life where we feel incompetent leave a stronger imprint in our minds. During my busiest year of high school, I used to always blame myself for not being good enough and capable of fulfilling my responsibilities. I was in a ditch of self-doubt. Yet, I found myself slowly grappling my way out of this hole by listening to the people around me. I began to ask my friends whether they considered me to be a good friend and why they thought so. Although they seemed reluctant to answer at first, their responses eventually restored my self-esteem and confidence. Hearing about my strengths from a third-person perspective allowed me to look at myself from a new angle. Therefore, I believe the bonds you build with others are precious gems to your mental well-being. If you find that your bustling life is eating away at your mental health, blocking you from moving on with life, I suggest you take a break and look around to listen to the people around you as I did. You will probably learn that you are much more than you make yourself to be.

👉 Lee Chaewon ('18, French Language & Literature)

I once went through an identity-related slump when I realized I knew very little about who I was. Everyone else seemed confident and decisive about themselves and their dreams, but I felt as if I had no clear aspirations or unique assets. To break away from this mental deadlock, I delved into various club activities, extra-curricular projects, and new hobbies to figure out what I enjoy and excel in. Luckily, I was able to discover what truly intrigued me, and even met a group of diverse people along the way. In retrospect, I do not recommend acting out based on comparisons you make between yourself and other people. Personally, it was only when I focused more on *myself* than I did on *others* that I could overcome this toxic mindset. If you find yourself in a slump like mine, remember that individuals, as different as they are, have their distinct strengths and pace in dealing with life. It is never too late to undertake new challenges and ultimately figure out where the path of your future lies.

👉 Kim Suhyoung ('20, Division of International Studies)

Regardless of my determination to remain consistent and grounded, I often feel the urge to start over, fresh and clean. Yet, it is not always easy to acquire this refreshed mindset and attitude with all the habits and traits that you have developed, continuously trying to creep back to you. This conflict between your inclination to seek change and embedded tendencies is what I consider as a slump. Initially, I attempted to situate my mind in a *now or never* position to at least force myself to work for a new beginning. Being tormented by the past will not get me anywhere if I do not make a change *now*. However, this method tends to make you a bit harsh on yourself. So recently, I began to engage with others and listen to their unique wisdom to gain intuition about my current struggles. This helps me view myself in a much more objective light. Especially in situations where I overcomplicate things, novel input from conversing with my friends opens me up to new and more simple perspectives I can use to tackle my problems. I would have been trapped and stuck in the clutter of my thoughts otherwise. **K**

Establishing a One-Stop Platform for the Systematic Study of Korea

— The Division of Global Korean Studies

PHOTOGRAPHED BY YOON SEOK JUN
Dean Lee Jae-Seung

By Choi Minji qdana511@korea.ac.kr

By Kang Yun Yeong dramatizationpersonality@korea.ac.kr

After several years of rigorous preparation, Korea University's (KU) soon-to-be-established College of International Studies is proud to present a new, specialized degree program for Korea-centric social sciences. The new division, the Division of Global Korean Studies (GKS), will open in the spring semester of 2022. This ambitious program is geared towards both international and Korean students who are interested in studying Korea's economy, politics, diplomacy, and developmental agenda.

Over the years, both the number of international students coming to Korea to study and the demand for Korean studies have increased rapidly. Lee Jae-Seung, Dean of the Graduate School of International Studies and the Division of International Studies (DIS), explains how KU recognized the need for a new approach to the provision of Korean studies that will best address this increasing demand. With the new GKS program expected to play a central role, the DIS will be transformed into the College of International Studies in 2022, a primary goal of the division since its establishment in 2002. Here, KU expects to offer both inbound and outbound global education within one institutional framework.



GKS and the Purpose of its Establishment

The Dean proudly argues that GKS will be the foundation for building a “stable Korean studies platform for international students,” all the while providing a “pioneering global platform for Korean students.” Open to both Korean and international students, admissions will mainly target international students, but there will be a quota for enthusiastic Korean nationals. The Dean also states that GKS will function as a one-stop platform for systematic Korean studies. International students will be able to engage in Korean studies catered to their needs and Korean students will have a chance to study Korea from a global perspective.

Unlike most existing Korean studies majors at other universities that mainly focus on the study of humanities, GKS will also offer social science-oriented Korean

studies so that students can successfully apply their major on their professional career. This innovative Korean studies curriculum will allow GKS students to stand out and prove their competence in the job market after graduation.

Furthermore, GKS will become a hub for international interactions and the integration of local and international students. There is no other place at KU that is as multi-cultural as the International Studies Hall. GKS is expected to be a very comfortable and optimized multi-cultural setting, playing an important role in bringing students of different nationalities and cultural backgrounds together with the common goal of delving deeply into Korean studies. The new major also plans to provide inbound students with non-academic programs such as in-person counseling and a buddy system to help them adapt to a foreign country. “Korea into the World. The World into Korea” is the slogan that the Dean hopes to emulate with the successful launch of GKS next year.




Plans for an Extensive GKS Curriculum

The Dean states that “Korea has become a central pillar of the world economy, culture, and diplomacy. Korean studies programs thus need to view Korea from a global perspective.” Realizing the need for a new approach to Korean studies, GKS has decided to offer an extensive curriculum in both English and Korean. Students will be able to make their choice of language freely based on their language proficiency, mixing and matching languages as they desire.

Students in GKS will be able to take

social science electives, including economics, commerce, business, and politics. In addition to regular lectures, GKS will provide supplementary sessions—such as Readings and Seminars for Korean studies—that will help further improve the students' knowledge and understanding of Korea. Furthermore, those majoring in GKS at KU will be given individual guidance with programs specifically catered to their academic goals.

With the extensive curriculum and various extra-curricular opportunities planned for GKS, KU looks forward to developing leaders in Korean studies who will work on the global stage. The Dean adds, “GKS will prove its significance by functioning as ‘a flagship of Korean studies at the global level.’” To achieve this vision, a new batch of faculty members from a diverse range of disciplines specializing in Korean studies will join the division. The faculty of GKS will be structured to maximize the resources at KU.

The Dean expresses great enthusiasm about the GKS students who will arrive for the 2022 spring semester. He is certain that incoming students will exhibit three outstanding traits: passion, challenge, and leadership. “GKS students should be passionate about their field of study, challenge themselves in preparation for the global stage, and through their innate passion and challenging spirit, become ‘ambassadors’ for Korean studies on an international scale.” These three simple words symbolize the Dean's high hopes for the incoming freshmen in the Division of GKS, the highly anticipated new major in the College of International Studies. 

Revival of Blogs:

The Rising Importance of Recording Oneself

By Kwon Keun Young callyme@korea.ac.kr

What are some ways of recording meaningful moments of life? Recently, blogs have gone viral among people in their 20s and 30s, also known as the Millennials and the Z generation (MZ generation), as a means of logging daily activities and thoughts. Previously, the blogging community was dominated by power bloggers, those who operate blogs mainly for information delivery and publicity. On the other hand, recent bloggers aim to keep records of their reminiscences or expose creativity by producing fine pieces of writings. Likewise, blogs have become a *playground* for the MZ generation, including many students at Korea University (KU), and adapted into forms of online diary and space of creation.

Before blogs became widely known in Korea, they had low accessibility due to the complex installation process. According to *Dailian*, Korea's online newspaper, Cyworld's creation of miniblogs demolished this barrier by enabling people to freely use and decorate the platform. A few years later, as blogs became more available to the public, major companies such as Naver and Daum also launched their own unique blog services.

 Blogging Habit Leads to Self-Improvement

Naver's Lifelog.Blog campaign promotes the habit of recording the honest self, free from others' opinions and perspectives. The campaign presents four episodes of distinct virtual characters to emphasize the importance of recording. Each episode shows how blogs can help build stories, brands,

careers, as well as fanboy and fangirl power. Likewise, blogging is more than just uploading posts, but a process of recognizing and building one's own *life story*.

Besides the platform's function of recording everyday life, Brunch, a novel blog system of Korea's alternative platform company Kakao, promotes creation of sophisticated essays, short stories, and columns. The platform aims to foster authors, empowering its users to perform creative activities and express innovative ideas. Correspondingly, the diversification of blog platforms fosters



| Naver's Lifelog.Blog Campaign

people to vitalize their life through different writing activities, from everyday records to imaginative artworks.

In comparison with other social network platforms, one of the leading strengths of blogs is the *mutual neighbor system*. Bloggers can upload private posts that are only open to their mutual friends, which provides privacy and comfort. Hence, fully disclosed posts on any blog may only show the tip of an iceberg. Such functions and characteristics of a blog induce the MZ generation to adopt habits of recording precious memories.

Blogs provide opportunities for the MZ generation to start with a clean slate, helping them organize complex thoughts, reflect on the past, and plan for the future. Sharing information, collecting data of one's successes and failures, and simply recording daily life

ultimately promote self-improvement. All in all, the accumulation of day-to-day records portrays the authentic *me*. Every click on the *write* button has become a step towards enriching one's life.

 Into the Records of KU Students

Three KU students currently using blogs—Kim Dong Ju ('20, Health Policy and Management), An Seonghui ('16, History), and Kim Doo Young ('17, Business Administration)—shared their honest stories as *life-loggers*.

GT What was your motivation to start a blog?

Kim Dong Ju: As I entered my 20s, there have been many changes in my daily life, experiences, and personal values. Blogging seemed to be the most convenient and appropriate method of recording these transitions.

An Seonghui: I was inspired by my friend's words that blogging is fun, especially when it is done with close friends.

Kim Doo Young: I started my blog in middle school to share game-related information to the public. Then for a while, I quit blogging to focus on studying. After entering KU, I decided to resume using the platform to keep personal records of my everyday life.

GT What do you record on your blog? Feel free to describe your blog considering its diverse features, such as types of writing, production of contents, and homepage designs.

Kim Dong Ju: I promised myself to upload honest records of momentary experiences and feelings. There are



times when I write about profound topics, but I mainly note ordinary life stories, such as spotting a rainbow or eating delicious food. Although my writings are inconsistent, it seemed meaningful to keep track of my personal values that are constantly changing. I also upload photos taken with my phone and film camera.

An Seonghui: I post thoughts and experiences that are worth keeping. My posts consist of various topics including movie reviews, memorable phrases from books, photos taken with my cell phone and film camera, photos taken before emptying my possessions, and thoughts that suddenly come to mind. Last year, I received a peppermint pot from my friend and wrote a plant diary. If one asks what the unique feature of my blog is, I'll say it is that there are pieces of the ordinary and weird me.


Kim Doo Young: Since each post has its distinct purpose and is open to a different scope of audiences, my blog is a mixture of diverse materials. Public posts are mainly informative writings, such as reviews of products and restaurants. For posts only open to

mutual friends, I record my personal thoughts and activities.

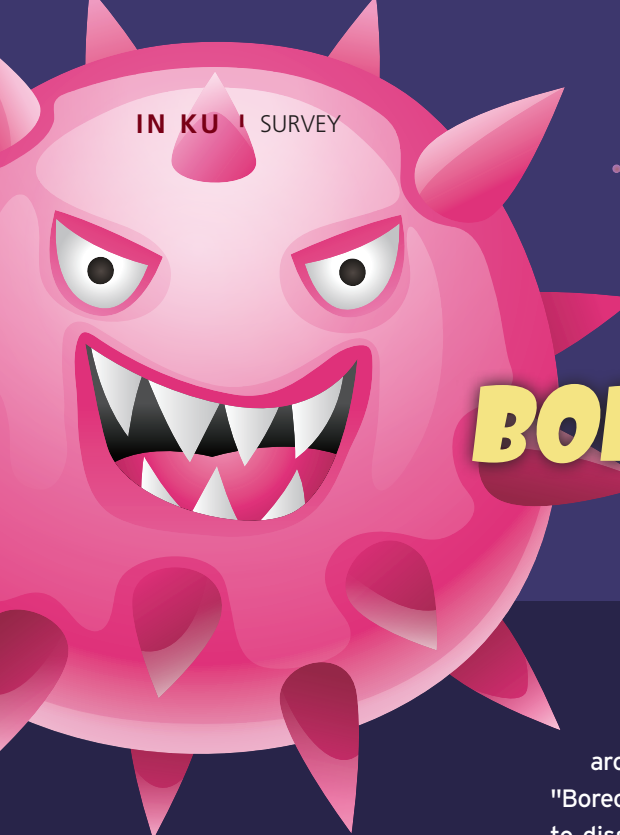
GT Are you willing to continue using a blog?

Kim Dong Ju: I intend to continue blogging because being able to express myself through writing seems as important as being able to read. As I improve my writing skills, I hope to handle more books, columns, and newspapers, and someday deliver my own insightful articles and implications.

An Seonghui: For now, I plan on using it for one or two more years since other groundbreaking digital platforms may emerge. Regardless of which website it is though, I wish to pursue recording the pieces of my life, and I look forward to an entertaining lifestyle.

Kim Doo Young: I think I will continue blogging for the rest of my life. As an undergraduate, most of my posts have been about college life and extracurricular activities. I still have not decided what to record after graduating, but I consider using different blog channels such as Kakao's Brunch and Tistory, depending on the writing genres. 

BEWARE OF THE BOREOUT MONSTER!



By Jung Anna annajung227@korea.ac.kr

Overwork, an unbalanced life, and stress are the side-effects of experiencing burnout. However, when everything seems meaningless and unimportant, the *boreout* monster is always lurking around. According to Professor Lotta Harju at Emlyon Business School, "Boreout is chronic boredom." It sometimes leads to slacking off, but mainly to dissatisfaction and eventually even poor mental health. In light of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), the transfer to online settings has aggravated the imbalance between work and life. To discover the cause and effect of *boreouts* at an individual and societal level, *The Granite Tower* (GT) asked 121 Korea University (KU) students to share their experiences.

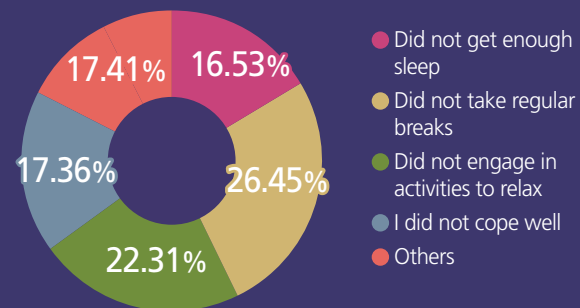
Different from Burnouts

Both *boreouts* and *burnouts* are detrimental to individuals' physical and mental health. *Boreouts* result in a lack of interest in general situations, whereas *burnouts* lead to excessive and prolonged stress. [K](#)

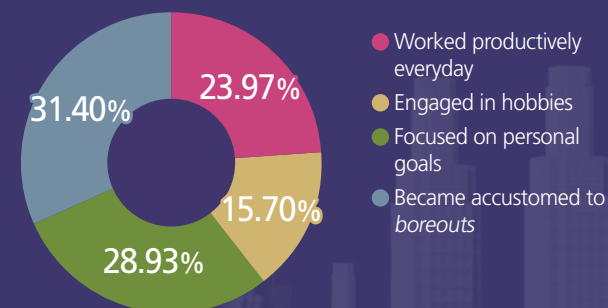
Q1. Did you experience *boreouts* during the first semester of 2021?



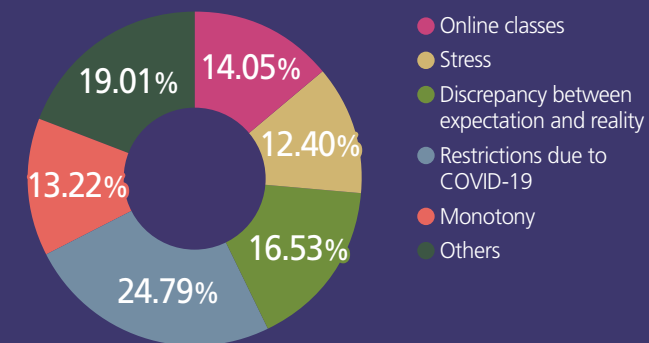
Q2-1. If you did, what do you think was the reason?



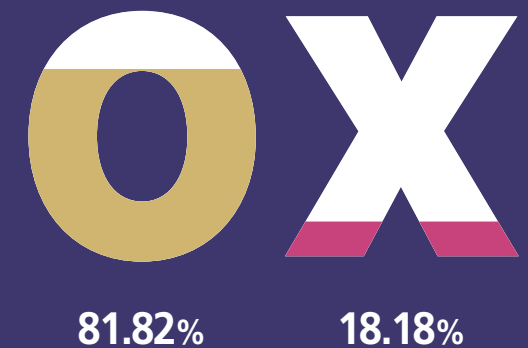
Q2-1. If you did not, why do you think you were the exception?



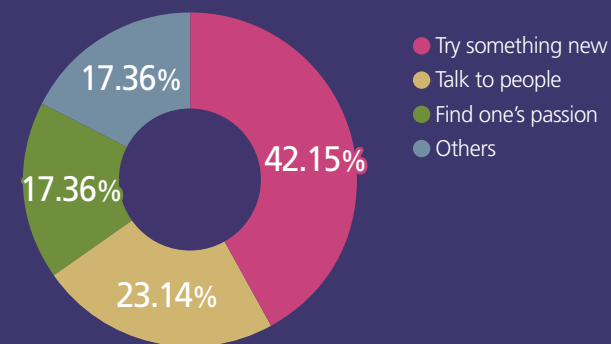
Q3. What was the cause of your *boreout*?



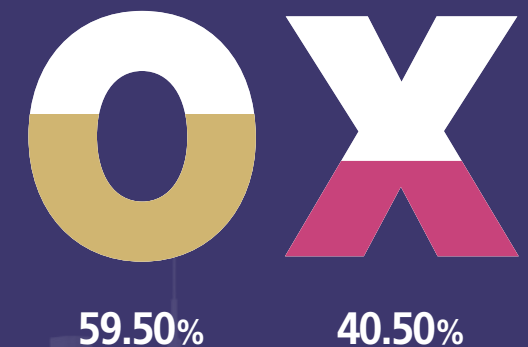
Q4. Did the COVID-19 majorly influence your *boreouts*?

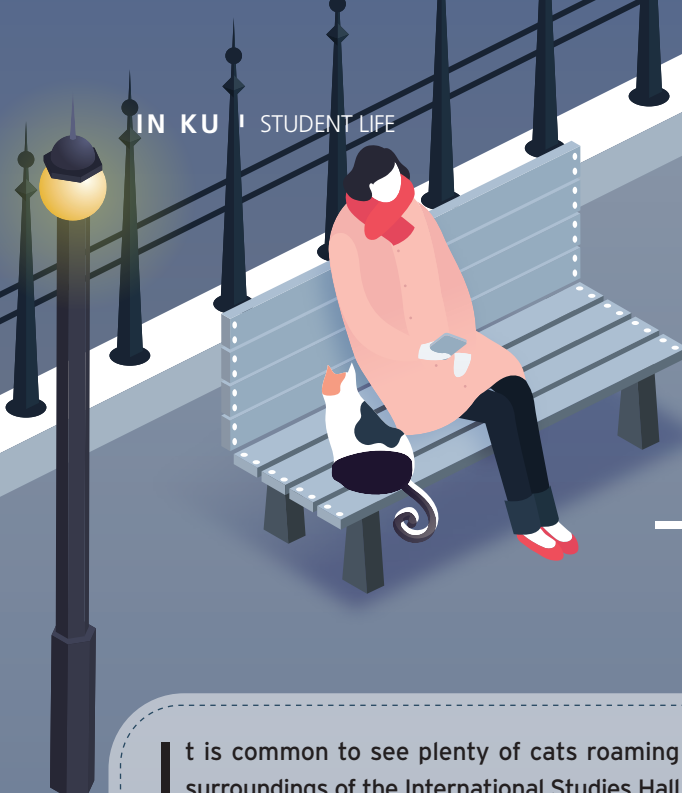


Q5. If your friends are experiencing *boreouts*, what would you advise them to do?



Q6. Do you expect to experience *boreouts* this semester? (O/X)





Taking Care of Feline Visitors

— Korea University Cat Shelter

By Oh Ji Su | jjol@korea.ac.kr

It is common to see plenty of cats roaming around Korea University's (KU) campus. Especially near the surroundings of the International Studies Hall or People's Square, it is easy to spot some of the cats resting or prowling around. Cats of different breeds reside on campus, using the area as both their shelter and playground. All with their own names, the cats are currently regarded as companion animals of the KU campus. As the presence of these cats became more prominent, the club KU Cat Shelter was created to protect these new residents.

Since the club's creation in 2015, KU Cat Shelter has endeavored to create a positive environment for both the school cats and the students on campus. One of their main activities consists of providing shelters, food, and water to the cats. Not only do they provide the basics for their survival, but practice Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR), which is the act of trapping stray cats and taking them to the veterinary hospital where they receive treatments. After the

treatment, they are returned to the campus. The club also searches for temporary homes that can look after the cats.

In doing all these activities, the club faces monetary burdens. They raise money for their cause through donations and membership fees, and the funds raised are mostly utilized to provide the cats with food, shelter, and TNR. To show transparency and gain support from donors, KU Cat Shelter uploads card news at the end of the semester with the transactional records on their social media. Other than direct donations, the club also makes their own goods inspired by the cats roaming around the KU campus. These goods are mostly for temporary events and consist of cat-related stickers and profile pictures. The pictures of these goods, their prices, and the events carried out

by the club can be found on their social media accounts.

An event carried out recently was a fund-raising activity, *Peulnyangyi*, for street cats where KU Cat Shelter collaborated with rapper Lee Young Ji and other university clubs around the country. In this campaign, five cats were chosen through a cat contest from different universities. Lee Young Ji and other illustrators made drawings of the

winning cats and the gains earned from selling these drawing were donated to clubs caring for campus cats. These events directly benefit school clubs monetarily as well as spread awareness of street cats and the predicament they are in.

Another defining aspect of KU Cat Shelter is that their social media accounts are well developed, allowing for a deeper connection between cats and students. Through these accounts - mainly Instagram (@ku_catshelter), Facebook (@koreauvcat), and *Everytime* - KU Cat Shelter not only uploads pictures of the cats, announcements, and club events, but also allows students to directly contact the club whenever they see a cat on campus demonstrating signs of illness or injury. Moreover, its social media accounts help the club get assistance from interested students whenever they urgently need help in cases such as getting volunteers who can provide temporary residence.

Although one can help the cats without joining the club, caring for the cats directly, as a member of the club may offer a new experience, especially for cat lovers. Anyone that is a member of KU can apply; however, the applicant should be able to participate for two consecutive semesters. Moreover, they should show interest towards the cats and be willing to assume responsibility for them. Unlike most other clubs, KU Cat Shelter recruits separately according to the small teams within the club. There are a total of five teams in charge of the different aspects of the club: the council, finances, human resources, social media, and design. The club recruits a specific number of

people for each team through applications and interviews.

In order to gain more insight about KU Cat Shelter, *The Granite Tower* (GT) interviewed a member of the club's SNS team, Park Gi Ryang ('20, Korean History).



PROVIDED BY PARK GI RYANG

| Park Gi Ryang

GT: What was the main reason for you to join the KU Cat Shelter?

Park: To be honest, the biggest reason why I applied was because I wanted to see the cats. Last year, I learned that cats live on university campus through one named "Ppotto" on *Everytime*. After that, I got to know about "Buzzi," a cute and lovely cat that also lives on campus! I wanted to meet them, but because I was a freshman, I did not know where they were. So, to interact directly with the cats, I decided to join KU Cat Shelter.

GT: When do you feel most proud in your participation as a KU Cat Shelter member?

Park: Whenever other members send pictures of the cats receiving treatment from professionals, I feel most proud about my contribution. Recently, in a TNR, a cat named "Phantom" that members have been struggling to catch for years, was

finally caught, causing a festive atmosphere within the club.

GT: What is KU Cat Shelter's vision and plans for the next semester?

Park: KU Cat Shelter is an animal rights volunteer club that works to promote the coprosperity of the cats within the KU campus. Currently, we are discussing ways to raise social awareness of the street cats' situation by forming a network with animal rights clubs of Konkuk University, Kyunghee University, and Hanyang University. In terms of activities next semester, we will decide based on the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) situation. However, we will probably focus on providing food, TNR, and trapping cats for treatment.

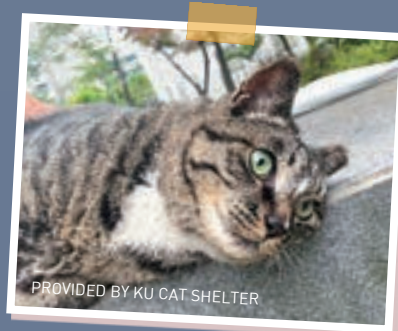
GT: Do you have any last words to share?

Park: Some may believe that the club is simply composed of cat lovers, but as I mentioned before, KU Cat Shelter is a club that promotes the coprosperity of cats and students within the university. Also, I would like to express my gratitude to the hard-working members of KU Cat Shelter! I also hope that all the cat friends living on campus will stay healthy and happy! **K**



PROVIDED BY KU CAT SHELTER

| KU Cat Shelter Logo



PROVIDED BY KU CAT SHELTER

| Cat Buzzi



PROVIDED BY KU CAT SHELTER

| Cat Ppotto

Proposed and Opposed

— South Korea's Anti-Discrimination Law

By Park Soo Hyun soohyunpark24@korea.ac.kr

Beyond the grave, the words of Nelson Mandela resonate: “No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.” Recently, the passing of an anti-discrimination law stirred up debate among citizens. The new law forbids discrimination on employment, nationality, gender, disability, or sexual orientation.

Framework of the Law

The Ministry of Justice (MOJ) of South Korea drafted the anti-discrimination law in 2006 with the intention of complementing the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), prohibiting the discrimination of gender and other basis. In the same year, the NHRC of South Korea led by Chairperson Choi Young-ae, proposed the anti-discrimination law. However, the MOJ dropped the proposal on November 2, 2007 due to pressures from huge businesses and Christian groups. This was followed by several attempts of proposing the law but was repealed as parliaments expired or withdrew due to oppositions. It was in the middle of 2021 that Lee Sang-min of the Democratic Party, along with 24 representatives, proposed an equality law.

Professor Park Chunwoong (Department of Sociology, Jeonbuk National University) stated that one of the advantages of passing this law is that legal sanctions against

discriminatory and hateful acts can be implemented, which can serve as a basis for gradual change in society. According to Professor Park, the Anti-discrimination Act (Proposition on Equality Bill) proposed by 21 ruling party lawmakers in 2021 considers situations that represent discrimination, including discriminatory and hateful incitement.

If discrimination or hate persists, legal consequences will follow. For instance, under the Croatia Anti-discrimination Act of 2008, Article 6 states that the court shall take into consideration the circumstances when determining the amount of compensation for non-proprietary damage and when deciding about the fine for misdemeanors defined by this Act. Therefore, the new law can reclassify actions that were not recognized as discrimination in the past, thus protecting social minorities and granting them the right to be full and active members of society. In this sense, the passing of the Anti-discrimination Act signals the beginning of a free and equal society. Furthermore, social

discussions that follow this law can be used as evidence of a more mature form of democracy in Korea, and thus have a positive impact on international relations.

Proponents of the Law

Since 2007, many anti-discrimination bills have been proposed, only to be met with continuous resistance from religious organizations and conservative politicians. However, over time, these proposals have slowly gained the support of the public. In addition, the anti-discrimination bill is also supported by political figures from the Democratic



PROVIDED BY
PROFESSOR PARK CHUNWOONG

| Professor Park Chunwoong

Party of Korea (DPK) such as the former Justice Minister Choo Mi-ae, lawmakers Park Yong-jin and Yang Seung-jo, the Gyeonggi Governor Lee Jae-myung, and the People Power Party (PPP) Chairman Lee Jun-seok.

The NHRC released the “2020 National Awareness Survey on Discrimination (NASD),” which showed that around 88.5 percent of the respondents agreed with the Anti-discrimination Act. Moreover, the international community has encouraged Korea to pass the law, which would provide security and hope to those who are being discriminated against in terms of their gender, race, age, sexual preference, or disability. This is considered to be a critical move in guaranteeing equal rights for all as required by global standards and guidelines.

Moving on, prejudice can come in various criteria. For example, the anti-discrimination law can help people who are discriminated against at work, including women who are not given as many opportunities as their male counterparts. The law can assist them in purchasing and utilizing products and services, provide them with educational and vocational opportunities, and support them in other areas of their lives where they experience prejudice. The anti-discrimination law seeks to punish these forms of discrimination. According to NHRC Chairperson Choi Young-ae, those who are found guilty will face three years of imprisonment or a penalty of 30 million won.

Concerns that the bill is being pushed



PROVIDED BY HANKYOREH

| Protests against Anti-Discrimination Law

only for the sake of legalizing same-sex marriage may continue. However, as Professor Park mentioned, it is necessary to be patient and supportive even if tangible results do not appear immediately. In order to pass the law, there should be exhaustive social discussion regarding the potential repercussions for the lives of people in society. Starting from the President, additional efforts must be made to protect human rights and encourage deliberation on this proposal and other proposed bills to put an end to all types of discrimination.

Finally, according to Professor Park, the passage of the Anti-discrimination Act is not the end of the matter, but a milestone in a continuing process. The passage of this law can open doors to debate about what behavior is discriminatory or inappropriate. For example, it is currently widely accepted in society that inappropriate physical contact and words of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment, and that this is wrong and deserves legal punishment.

However, in the 1990s, the ground for punishment of sexual harassment was not clear, and it was only at the end of the 1990s that the perception that sexual harassment can be punished by law began to emerge. This occurred due to cases filed by women who were sexually abused physically and verbally, including being filmed with hidden cameras. It will take a long time, but the idea that discrimination on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, race, national origin, region, class, and disability is wrong can be established with the passing of this law.

As stated in Mandela's quote, people are not born hating others. However, by focusing on the weaknesses and divergent preferences of others, some people learn to discriminate, thinking that they are better than others. If people can learn intolerance, then there is also the possibility of learning to love others by overlooking their flaws and understanding and accepting others despite their differences. This proposed bill aims to achieve this even if it comes with a price. **K**

Conflict and Consequences

— The Feud Over Minimum Wage Changes

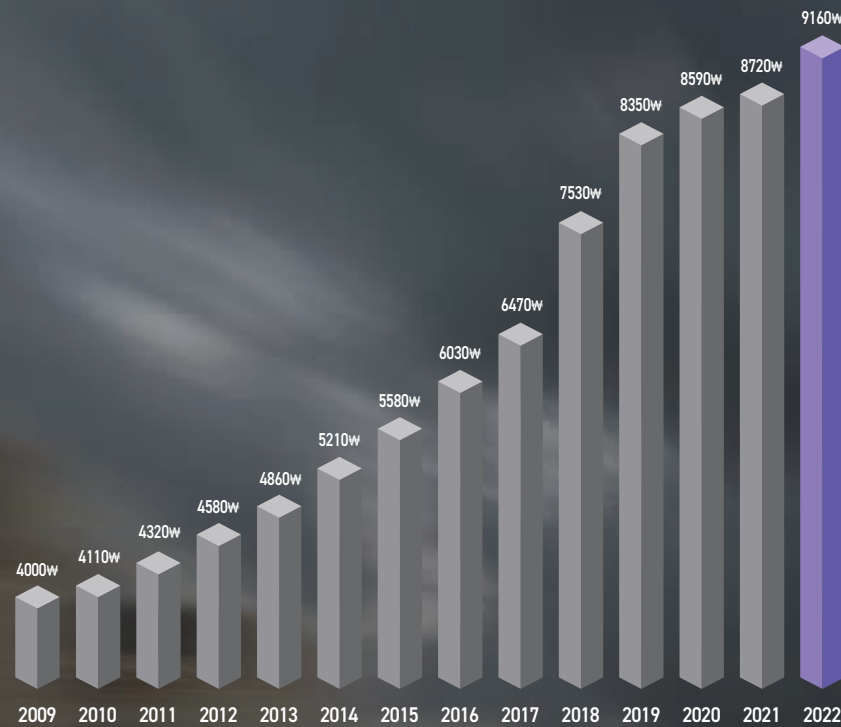
By Goh Jinoo siewierszczyzna@korea.ac.kr

While the minimum wage has always been a sore issue in the employer-employee relationship, the latest announcement from the government has once again fed fuel to the fire that is the debate on working environments. On July 12, the Blue House stated the minimum wage for 2022 will be set at 9,160 Korean won, a 440 won increase compared to the minimum wage in 2021, which nearly amounts to a five percent increase. Some argue that this increase is well-deserved, while others state that the increase is one step closer towards suffocating smaller businesses. Thus, although 2022 is still yet to come, the fiscal prospects of the year are already ablaze in discussion.

Stipends and Settlements

A minimum wage, in its most basic state, is defined as the lowest remuneration that employees are to be paid for their labor. Originally instituted as a method to prevent employers from abusing their workers with inhumane pay rates, the modern minimum wage has evolved. While its original meaning of a social standard indicating the smallest amount of payment needed for basic human life remains, it also stands as a point of leverage between employers and their respective laborers.

South Korea, since the institution of its first minimum wage laws in 1988, has seen the standard increase every single year, although the amount by which it was raised varied year to year. The decision on how much the minimum wage should be increased has always been a matter of conflict for both the employer and the employee,



PROVIDED BY THE MINIMUM WAGE COMMISSION

Graph Showcasing Minimum Wage Increases from 2009-2021

which has led to a long-standing feud between the Federation of Korean Trade Unions (FKTU) and various employer bodies over the ages.

The road leading up to the settlement on the 2022 minimum wage was less smooth than usual. Both parties involved in the debate agree on one thing – that the final minimum wage is not to their liking. On one side of the equation, the FKTU has called the new minimum wage a “sub-par solution to improving the quality of the average laborer’s life,” while several employers’ members argued that the final result was “hard to find fair and logical.”

Changes and Consequences

Professor Kim Seik (Department of Economics) explains the situation by first elaborating on the specific ramifications of the increase for three different groups of workers. “The first group,” Professor Kim describes, “will experience a wage increase. This group is further divided into two subgroups where one can either be receiving a wage below the new minimum wage, and the other, where one’s wage is *already higher* than the new standard but is dependent on a salary step system, where one’s pay is increased incrementally according to experience. The latter is the case the labor unions are in favour of, because most of the corporations that are beheld to a certain extent to their labor unions – public enterprises, government subdivisions, and larger conglomerates – are run on a salary step system.

“The second and third groups are where an individual’s income can either not change, or become zero due to their dismissal,” continues Professor

Kim, “and while the former is merely a case of someone being unaffected by the change, the latter is related to companies having to lay off some of their employees.” Professor Kim ties this in with how increasing the minimum wage affects both employer and employee. On the employers’ side, they have the option of either accepting the income loss due to higher salaries and closing or firing employees due to fiscal pressure. The employees on the other hand are handed either a method to deal with inflation – higher wages – or a layoff. This directly leads to the decrease of open jobs for lower income laborers, essentially polarizing the workforce.

The conflict seems to have been exacerbated further by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) that has been wreaking havoc on the lives of many small business owners. The recent increase to level four restrictions on social distancing has resulted in many businesses losing customers, and subsequently, a drastic drop in profit. The wages that the owners must pay their workers have not decreased, however, meaning that the only option left to them is to tighten their belts and hold on until the end of the pandemic.

Thus, news that the minimum wage is to be increased in 2022 was not taken well by many of these business owners already hanging from a twig on the edge of their metaphorical cliff. Professor Kim takes a different approach towards the issue, however. He states that “it is clear COVID-19 has had no noticeable effect on the decision of the new minimum wage,

considering how large the increase was.”

This ties in with how the solution to the situation seems to lie. The primary effort on adjusting society to fit the new minimum wage must be focused on cushioning the impact that businesses must face – relaxing credit card taxes, providing more employment taxation benefits, and arranging temporary government handouts are all valid examples of doing so. A simultaneous movement, however, needs to be made towards utilizing the situation as a backdrop towards instituting further workforce reforms to consider the requests of the employees too.

Thus, the matter of importance here is balance. While raising the minimum wage has been an annual issue, it has always entailed more than its fair share of conflict, along with a variety of different issues not limited to the fiscal status of the country, but also the political divide between employers and employees that is slowly looming beyond the horizon as a constant problem. The constant fight has brewed into something entirely different to the point that dealing with the problem requires what one could consider a political manoeuvre rather than an economic one. This removes us to the point of balance; uttermost care is necessary when deciding such matters, and whether that has been the case this year, we have but to wait to find out. **K**

Penetrating the Penitentiaries

By Ryu Jiin jiinryu@korea.ac.kr

“There are 35 prison guards to 4,000 prisoners in the prison that I’m heading to, and that bothers me, that worries me because who is there to protect the prisoners? Who is there to protect the guards? Who is there to protect me?” Journalist Rafael Rowe bluntly shares his fear in *Inside the World’s Toughest Prisons* before entering a poorly managed prison in Paraguay to become a prisoner himself. Showing the reality of each prison candidly, the Netflix documentary series is not only appealing to irrationality, but also how such system affects individuals and the society. The same concern penetrates the South Korean public as issues such as whether the Korean inmate policy is effectively practicing correction of offenders have emerged.

Prisons thus far have not been at the center of public discussion. However, situations have changed when certain unreasonable treatments of the inmates caught the public’s attention. According to a report by *Kyongbuk Daily* in June, Sangju Prison, which is regarded as one of the most up-to-date prisons in Korea, faced issues with its water purification facility. This resulted in reduction of capacity and restricted water supply and severely damaged basic inmate rights.

Meanwhile, controversies over

so-called *hotel prisons* have been causing public outrage since last year in Korea. Jeonju Prison, located in Jeollabuk-do, has announced that it installed *karaoke* facilities inside its *healing space*. This discourse has been ongoing with recent events that put inmate rights and the efficiency of prison management under evaluation. Korea needs to reexamine its current state of corrections and how it affects the society with examples from countries that are practicing better solutions.

The Korean Prison Status Quo

The purpose of prisons lies in punishment and rehabilitation. However, recently, government policies regarding imprisonment have shifted the focus to the latter. In fact, a detailed description promoting treatment programs such vocational training, medical care, and psychotherapy is uploaded on the official website of Ministry of Justice (MOJ). However, unlike how the government promotes, prisons still inflict severe violation against human rights, with overcrowding being one of them.

On recent visits to the nationwide correctional facilities made in the course of July by Park Bum Kye, the Minister of Justice, he emphasized the importance of solving overpopulation in the union. According to *News1*, the ratio of inmates compared to the capacity of correctional facilities in Korea is at 115.8 percent, which is much higher than that of Organisation for Economic Co-operation



Prison Scene Behind the Fences

and Development (OECD) countries. The issues have been imminent as hygienic conditions surfaced with the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in the cells.

Despite the debates on the excessive human rights of the inmates, what actually happens inside the prisons is not what an ordinary person can think of from the outside. Inside the prisons, the basic claims of the minorities, such as the people with disabilities and sexual minorities, are at most risk. For instance, according to a report by *Kyunghyang Newspaper*, inmates with hearing impairment have trouble accessing their basic necessities because they are restricted to medical aid. With the situation being at such a stage, the problem not only involves violating standard rights, but also establishes discrimination.

Direction of Correctional Facilities

When dealing with human rights and the treatment of the inmates, discussion on efficiency is inevitable. However, there is no direct correlation between the environment of prisons and the effectiveness in disciplinary functions. According to Professor Song Hyojong (Department of Sociology), there is no empirical research that supports the claim that improving the environment of prisons hinders the function of them. Professor Song states that such claims in fact, have some connection to underlying sentiments for using taxpayer money into improving the environment for the prisoners.

As explained, the debate on the effectiveness of upgrading the quality of

life of the prisoners has no link supported by research, although the social sentiment toward the prisoners urging for vengeance might be affected by the change. Improving prison conditions does not directly interfere with the foundational purpose of the prisons, which is the restriction on human freedom. Rather, improving prison conditions and reinforcing the rehabilitation function will assure that both the prisoners and the citizens have a secure life outside of the walls.

This is because the harsher the society is on criminals, the higher the crime rate is, according to Professor Song. As the society that disparages the human rights of criminals is more likely to deprecate the others’ human rights, interpersonal crimes are generally more likely to occur and vice versa. Therefore, inmate rights have a relationship with the general attitude towards human rights throughout the society. Considerations on inmate rights is not excessive or unnecessary but crucial not just for the inmates themselves but for the society where all will coexist after the prisoners’ rehabilitation.

Prisons in the Scandinavian nations have caught attention with their hotel-like exterior and their new perspective on inmate treatment. According to the *Atlantic*, officers in Nordic prisons are known for providing a role in both security and rehabilitation, which creates a stark contrast to Korean prisons. Nordic prisons focus on the community and the life afterwards for the inmates. The inmates actively engage with the community both inside and outside the prison. For instance, according to the *Atlantic*, inmates go outside the fences

for work or study each day at an *open* prison located in Suomenlinna, Finland. They are also able to connect with their family through a monitored system. Also, according to *BBC*, recidivism in Norway has fallen from 20% after two years since the change unlike the United Kingdom (UK) which has a rate of 50% after a year.

With these examples as a general guideline for the direction of correctional facilities in Korea, policies to improve the condition of the inmates should be implemented, especially in relation to their families. “Policies for the inmates to maintain their relationship with their families and to free them from social stigma has to be implemented based on empirical studies,” comments Professor Song, highlighting the importance of protecting inmate rights. For them to readjust to the society after they serve the sentence, it is imperative for the government to help them maintain connection with what awaits them outside of the prison cells.

The enclosed nature of prisons and correctional facilities allows systemic neglect of inmates’ human rights; if anything, it could actually trigger the public’s attention. Although the current measures such as installing *karaoke* may seem superficial since they only provide temporary solutions and distract the deep-rooted problems of correctional facilities, the direction of the corrections in Korea is still clear. The inmates might be released with a record stained with their crimes, but their minds can come out with a clean slate with the help of the government and the society to achieve a new life outside of prison. **K**



South Korea's Inadequate Protection of Female Victims of Violence

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By Jang Hae Gyeong hanna020718@korea.ac.kr

On May 22, a female sergeant in the Republic of Korea Air Force (ROKAF) 20th Fighter Wing was found dead in an apparent suicide. The sergeant had registered her marriage the day before her suicide, which left many puzzled as to why she chose to end her life. It was brought to light that she was the victim of sexual abuse, with the perpetrator being a fellow sergeant. The military's attempt to strategically cover up the truth by reporting the death as accidental exposed its tendency to conceal and cover up information, which are two unfortunate characteristics of Korean culture.

Korean society is deeply rooted in Confucianism, which places importance on group harmony, respect for authority and elders, family, and tradition. However, with the rapid economic development following the Korean War, Korea started to put emphasis on visible accomplishments such as income and social standing. During this time, men were the breadwinners, with women being responsible for household chores and child-rearing.

This clear division of labor laid the foundation for gender stereotypes, labeling women as frail and voiceless. The tragic death of Sergeant Lee is one of many cases that highlight Korea's inadequate support for female victims of violence, while the military's choice to conceal the truth by preventing Sergeant Lee's voice from being heard reflects the tendency for many organizations in Korea to hide information that may be seen in a negative light.

A Culture of Concealment and Confinement

Institutionalized discrimination against women is most commonly seen in the workplace, where the glass ceiling and unfair policies lead to unequal opportunities for men and women. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), as of 2020, Korea ranked 30th of the 36 members for its female employment rate in the

working population (i.e., those aged 15 to 64 years) at 56.7 percent, which was 14 percent lower than its neighboring country Japan. In contrast, Korea's employment rate for men was ranked 18th. The numbers point towards a disparity in hiring preferences and indicate the systematic suppression of women within Korean culture.

The importance of outside appearances and visible results in Korea has created this disparity. The unhealthy trend to try to make things look better than what they actually are leads to the concealment of the truth. One organization that particularly reflects this reality is the military. According to Professor Kim Soohan (Department of Sociology), "The military is the best representation of a bureaucracy, with authorities that restrict and conceal information. Because it is mandatory for Korean men to serve in the military, they are used to this rather occlusive organization structure. This structure is then implemented in the workplace, which then affects Korean society as a whole." This trend was brought to light when Sergeant Lee chose to end her life, upheaving Korea's tendency of hiding and concealing what may create a negative image.

Sergeant Lee's Tragic Death

Before her suicide, Sergeant Lee was known to be a highly assiduous



Professor Kim Soohan

and diligent worker among her colleagues. However, her industrious attitude toward her work was damaged on March 2 when her coworker Sergeant Jang called her to a dinner meeting. On the way home, Jang sexually harassed Lee, and she reported this to her superiors. However, they took no action to protect Lee from Jang but rather urged them to reach a settlement. Due to the base's inadequate response, Lee resorted to filing a report to the military police, but to her dismay, the investigation was constantly postponed.

The incompetency of both the military and police caused immense psychological distress for Lee, leading her to take a petition leave from March 4 to May 2. However, this did not resolve the issue. After her leave, she returned to work, but she was not given the chance to start with a clean slate as she had hoped. According to *The Korea Herald*, Sergeant Lee was granted permission to transfer to a

different unit, but those in her new unit treated her differently because they assumed that she was *problematic*.

This psychological pressure and stress that Lee experienced can be defined as a form of secondary assault. It differs from traditional assault in the sense that it is not physical, but it was a definite factor in her death. Indeed, mental abuse can be as destructive as physical abuse. According to the study *Emotional Abuse in Intimate Relationships: The Role of Gender and Age* by the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI), "For emotional abuse, prevalence

rates averaged around 80 percent; 40 percent of women and 32 percent of men reported expressive aggression, and 41 percent of women and 43 percent of men reported coercive control." Although the results may not be as easy to observe as physical assault, this invisible abuse can leave permanent marks that change the victim's thought process.

The military's inadequate response is indicative of its inattentiveness to the abuse that happens on military bases. In fact, crimes ranging from physical abuse to sexual harassment occur more frequently than reported because

the Korean military's strict rank-based hierarchy facilitates a concealment culture. Combined with Korea's tolerance for aggression and the celebration of visible accomplishments, the military hierarchy makes it a place that is feared by many young Koreans who must enlist for their mandatory military service.

Air Force's Attempt to Conceal the Truth

In line with the tendency toward secrecy in the military, the Air Force initially tried to keep the case quiet. However, allegations of deliberate



PROVIDED BY KYUNGHYANGSHINMUN

Sergeant Lee's Funeral

cover-ups were made against the military by the Military Human Rights Korea (MHRK). On June 30, during a press conference, MHRK released a long list of evidence supporting their allegations. As reported by *Yonhap News*, MHRK stated that the four reports compiled by the Air Force between May 22 and 23, following Sergeant Lee's death, clearly revealed that the military "falsely reported and tried to conceal the incident."

In the first report drafted on May 22, the Air Force ruled Sergeant Lee's death to be an accident and did not mention anywhere that sexual harassment and abuse had taken place. However, in the second report, there was a detailed account of what had happened to Lee, and it explicitly stated that the cause of the sergeant's death was sexual harassment by Sergeant Jang. The third report included accounts of

the reaction of Lee's family, going into detail about how the family wanted the military and police to conduct a thorough investigation and impose appropriate punishments on the perpetrator and those who allowed it to happen or attempted to cover it up.

The final report was crucial to illustrating the cover-up by the military. Unlike the previous two reports, the fourth report failed to state that Sergeant Lee's death was due to Jang's sexual harassment and left out information on what Lee's family wanted. The Air Force made it appear as if the family did not want any additional investigation, with the report merely describing the family's grief. This report clearly shows that the military tried to deliberately halt the investigation and turn the situation around in order to prevent the case from spiraling out of control.

This evidence helped reinvigorate the investigation into Sergeant Lee's accusations. Before her death, the investigation into the accusations of sexual harassment was slow. Although she filed reports and her superiors were made aware of her situation, an investigation was not launched immediately. This was noted by *The Korea Herald*, which stated that "the Air Force prosecution first investigated the suspect on May 31, after the death of the victim and 55 days after the military police sent the case to the prosecution on April 7." However, the allegations by the MHRK and the publicization of Lee's story have accelerated the investigation process.

Even after the Defense Ministry's prosecution and investigation teams raided the Air Force on June 4 and seized documents that revealed its attempt to conceal evidence, it was not until June 25 that an investigation was officially opened on the military police. This was due to its delayed response to the sexual abuse report filed by Lee and its lack of immediate corrective actions.

With the military police out of the investigation process, 22 people have been booked on the investigation list as of June 9. According to *Chosun Business*, the Defense Ministry reported that "10 people have been put on trial and 16 will be referred to the

disciplinary committee." Sergeant Jang was arrested on June 2. During the investigation, Jang admitted his wrongdoings and the Defense Ministry emphasized that it would do its best to continue to identify others involved in Lee's case.

As the interest surrounding Sergeant Lee's case increased, similar cases on other bases have surfaced. This has led to a number of reinvestigations and the discovery of large volumes of illegal sexual material possessed by those in the military. As reported by *Nate News*, during a reinvestigation of a case back in May in the ROKAF 19th Fighter Wing, forensic analysis of a suspect's USB and smartphone revealed sexual content filmed with hidden cameras. Numerous female officers from different military bases were secretly filmed, which were saved and distributed.

This illustrates that Lee's case is not a one-off scandal. In fact, sexual harassment in the military has been a long-standing problem. Korea has lost a total of three female officers working in the military - an army officer in 2013, a navy officer in 2017, and Sergeant Lee in 2021. One similarity between all three cases is that the military initially attempted to cover up what had happened. In addition, the investigations in all three cases were extremely slow and *self-investigated*, which allowed the military to make the cases seem



Korea's Crime Victims Support Association Website

less severe and give their male officers a way to avoid a government trial.

Turning a Blind Eye Toward Female Victims

Korea's inability to protect female victims is also highlighted by the poor performance of the Crime Victim Support Center, a non-profit private organization operating under the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) with the aim of protecting and supporting the victims of crime. Although its main purpose is to provide counseling for victims with psychological and physical damage, the organization has not fully upheld its purpose.

On May 21, the victim of year-long abuse by her ex-boyfriend was coldly ignored by the Crime Victim Support Center despite her repeated calls for help. The victim, who was in her 20s, had experienced serious abuse at the hands of her former partner, including stabbing, choking, and

harsh beatings. Although the perpetrator was arrested by the police on charges of special injury, the victim was afraid of retaliation and made the decision to reach out for the center's help. However, the center did not respond with even a check-up call. With no professional help, the victim had no choice but to address the matter instituting legal proceedings herself.

According to *KBS*, Ko Hong-ja, the director of the Jeju Women's Counseling Center, stated that "the fact that the victim called to get help indicates that she was really desperate. It should not end with a one-time call, but it is important to go through multiple check-ups to make sure the victim is indeed safe." The MOJ reported the agency's failure to perform its duties to the Human Rights Rescue Department, but the center merely announced that it would acknowledge its mistakes and improve.

There are several reasons for the Crime Victim Support Center's poor



The Military Police

response. The center was created with the passing of the Crime Victim Protection Act on December 1, 2005, but the legislation cannot hold the center accountable for its lack of results because the Act cannot legally punish the center for poor practices. In addition, there have been problems due to poor budgeting and insufficient staffing.

It should also be noted that recognizing the state's responsibility for the victims of crime is a relatively recent development. This is because investigations and punishments for crime have garnered more attention than the consequences for victims in Korean society. Therefore, the management of affiliated ministries has not been well-organized because, even though the care for victims is more strongly emphasized by the public, the seriousness of the issue is not often recognized and the related laws are still weak.

Future for Women

According to Professor Yi Sohoon (Department of Sociology, Kyungpook National University), "What the sergeant's case tells us is the need to mainstream the Gender-based Violence (GBV) counter measures beyond overarching and abstract principles. The prevention of GBV must be



PROVIDED BY HANKOOKILBO

Women in the Korean Military

specifically built into all measures and laws in realistic ways. I'm talking about rules related to promotion and human resources, safety, facility maintenance, and so on. If there are any rules that promote or condone GBV, or pose obstacles in seeking redress for GBV victims, they have to be revised."

Professor Yi argued the importance of institutional change in the Korean military organization. She mentioned, "What resulted in the sergeant's death was not only the casual acceptance of GBV and the culture that condones such acts in the military, but also the inadequate response of the military administration." She especially emphasized on the need for institutions that can contribute to the change of this social atmosphere of closed organization.

Sergeant Lee's tragic death and the problems associated with the Crime Victim Support Center are

just two of the many examples of a poor infrastructure for preventing violence against women in Korea. To overcome these problems, the MOJ currently operates multiple crime victim support systems through related agencies. There are four different types of support system, each designated with specific tasks to help victims overcome the results of physical and psychological violence. These systems include counseling and medical treatment of victims damaged by violent crimes such as murder, robbery, arson, sexual assault, and injury.

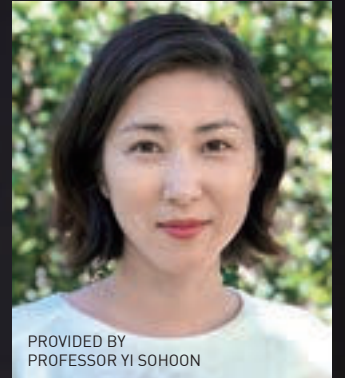
This superficially systematic division of tasks may be effective to a certain extent, but it raises the possibility of responsibility shifting. Without extensive communication and a clear division of roles, organizations may find themselves putting the blame on others in order to defend themselves against possible repercussions. According to a 2009 study by the Korea Women's

Policy Institute, despite the expansion of support services by various institutions, related institutions have overlapping roles, resulting in poor service quality for victims of sexual violence. To skillfully run these organizations, the clear-cut division of roles must be preconditioned, and the role of higher authorities in evaluating and supervising the work of affiliated organizations must be clearly defined.

As illustrated by the Crime Victim Support Center case, support for the victim's personal protection and recovery is insufficient. Although the importance of the center is clear, the allocated budget is too low for it to operate effectively. To improve and strengthen these support measures, increased investment in these centers is extremely important. With a higher budget, support centers will be able to assist victims more fundamentally.

In addition to greater funding for support centers, the perception of victimized females and its tendency to conceal flaws among the Korean public must change. A similarity of the Sergeant Lee and the Crime Victim Support Center cases is that higher-level organizations took no measures to help the victims. Rather than being on the side of the victim, they resorted to covering up the incidents and did not listen to what the female victims had to say.

This reflects the characteristics of Korean society, where the victim's psychological health is not paid much attention. Thus, it is necessary to create a social atmosphere in which people can protest the lack of fairness inherent to strict hierarchies. This is because active participation of citizens in society can lead to legislative changes. It will not be easy to reform the long-standing social



PROVIDED BY PROFESSOR YI SOHOON

Professor Yi Sohoon

hierarchy immediately. However, no matter how the legal system is structured, the problem of victims' rights will not be solved unless the attitudes of the public change.

The inadequate support for female victims of crime is a topic that has recently started to be re-examined in Korea. To prevent cases like Sergeant Lee's suicide from recurring, Korean society needs to recognize the need for transparency and the need for change. This will ultimately lead to concrete legislative action, thus preventing crimes from occurring in the future. The secrecy and restrictions inherent to hierarchies, such as in the military, must be prevented; to do so, the root causes of structural vulnerability found on current management toward problem needs to be uncovered and related guidelines should be established. This is essential in that it will lead to the development of criminal prosecution for society as a whole, not only for women. **K**



PROVIDED BY NATE NEWS

Female Soldier in Need of Help

Clean Slate

—A Foundation for *Change*



PHOTOGRAPHED BY JIE YEOWON

| Symbiosis between Crops and Prospective Buildings

All people have a specific moment they desperately wish to remove from their memory. It may be a heartbreaking story, or rather a ludicrous scene. Thus, entering a clean slate is like accepting change within oneself. For the September issue, the Photo Division team reinterpreted the meaning of clean slate and expressed it through pictures of nature, figures, and objects.

Yeowon Jie

A few days before social distancing measures were raised in the greater Seoul area, I headed back to my hometown in Suwon to spend some quality time with my family. Yet, *quality time* has its limits, and I soon found myself acting as the substitute homemaker, pacing back and forth in the sweltering heat, running errands. Despite the arduousness of it all, I took this as an opportunity to enjoy the peaceful and humble ambiance of my neighborhood. Contrary to my expectations, I was surprised to be greeted with the exact opposite. The overwhelming sound of construction and traffic flooded the once tranquil roadsides filled with the occasional trills of children's laughter. The local food markets had all been replaced with lines of convenience stores while independent coffee shops switched out for corporate chain stores.



PHOTOGRAPHED BY JIE YEOWON

| A Rusty Wagon Met with the Lights of Downtown Onlookers

Nevertheless, my block still maintained a touch of familiarity. I still saw the stalks of corn and rows of sesame leaves planted by the stubborn elderly couple who refused to sell their land for reconstruction. The *jungle* that consumed the outdoor parking lot and the stream flowing beneath it were all still intact. I was confronted with the bittersweet aspect of *change* within my locality. I was in the presence of an evolving community with metropolitan potential, patched with the remnants of the traditional, organic past untouched by urbanization.



PHOTOGRAPHED BY JIE YEOWON

| Two Women Walking between a Field and a Moss-Covered Parking Lot



PHOTOGRAPHED BY JIE YEOWON

| A Moderately Busy Street

Ryu Jiin

Seasons, love, and friendship are some of the perfect examples to describe the opposite of eternity. They all come and go, and Buddhism teaching tells us that nothing is permanent. *Gae-unsa Temple*, which demonstrates a vivid contrast to the modern day Anam-dong, is estimated to have been built in 1396. This highlights the changes that have been made with the passing of time. The artwork-like scenery utterly comforts the visitors, and diverse shades of lanterns in the temple indicate the teaching of multiformity of human beings in each stage of life.



| A Modern Construction Near an Antique Temple



| Buddhist Sanctums from the Entrance

Humans, too, draw strokes of colorful moments in their lives through changes just as the temple is filled with variant pigments. Some may say that change can sometimes be quite intimidating since the ultimate shift of a human's life is death. However, perhaps that is the essence of change: the forever cycle of life and death. Thanatophobia, the fear of death, also penetrated me often, but I overcame every such moment flashing back on the times I perish. I am not the same I was 10 years ago and that is not something to be afraid of. Where obsession fades lies true liberty. In change, I see beauty, and fear no more.



| Vibrant Lanterns



| A Shrine for Prayers



| A View of Modern Day Anam from Gae-unsa Temple



PHOTOGRAPHED BY OH JI SU

| Hibiscus, Representing South Korea and Its Nationality



PHOTOGRAPHED BY OH JI SU

| The Haven for Children, and a Sign of Innocence

In this photo essay, I captured the unchangeable in the unavoidable flow of life. Although all people have different concepts of what they deem unchangeable within themselves since they all have different experiences, I attempted to capture some of the generic notions or aspects that can be found in my surroundings. Therefore, these photos might not resonate with every single person. Another aspect about this photo essay is that it focuses on the positive concept such as love, innocence, and origins, rather than negative ones such as greed.



PHOTOGRAPHED BY OH JI SU

| Busy Street, Ever-Moving Society

Oh Ji Su

“Change” is an inevitable part of life that comes with new experiences and events. Be it positive or negative, it is a sign of gradual growth that molds people into who they are as they take a step further from the innocent past into adulthood. As experiences build up, the shield of ignorance fades and new challenges appear. Change applies to everyone and everything around. However, there is always a part of the self that remains within the person. It is the defining aspect that separates one from others, making one unique. The residue of this innocence strengthens as change fails to influence, making this an unchangeable, defining trait.



PHOTOGRAPHED BY OH JI SU

| An Attempt to Conserve the Footprint of the Past



PHOTOGRAPHED BY OH JI SU

| Unchanging Love of Family

Speaking from Her Heart

— Announcer Kang Dasom

By Jung Anna annajung227@korea.ac.kr

Kang Dasom ('10, Law) talks of her experiences as a former undergraduate law student at Korea University (KU) and an announcer at Korea's broadcasting company, *MBC*. Not only does she mention the delights of achieving her dreams, but she also points out all the barriers she had to overcome to become the self-confident, determined person she is today. To her, being an announcer is the same as being an advocate, a listener, and a counselor. In sum, announcer Kang Dasom understands and embraces these roles and continues to speak directly from her heart.

... About Kang Dasom

Since 2010, Kang Dasom has been an announcer at *MBC*. From a young age, she hoped to become a powerful speaker who comforts and warms the hearts of her audience. To fulfill her dream, she received her high school diploma from Daewon Foreign Language High School and studied law as an undergraduate student at KU. Her television appearances include *Tempting TV* and *True Story Expedition* where she stars as the host. Besides her television appearances, she is active as a radio personality, a drama actor, and a social media influencer.

PROVIDED BY KANG DASOM.
| MBC Announcer Kang Dasom



GT What does KU mean to you?

Kang KU holds a very special place in my heart. I worked my hardest there and was also able to make many wonderful memories. I formed meaningful friendships and memories with my friends. These days, especially amidst the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), I miss the times when I used to devote all my energy and effort into the annual Ko-Yon Games and Ipselenti – Jiya Hamsung.

GT What motivated you to become an announcer?

Kang When I was young, I enjoyed listening to the radio. I was particularly interested in the announcers that hosted night radio shows. I would listen to their calm and understanding voices, reading out the various stories that people sent them. When delivered by the announcers, even the most ordinary stories sounded delightful and unique. Inspired by the announcers on the radio, I made a promise to myself to become an inspirational individual and hoped to be like them when I grew up.

GT From your days attending KU, what activities did you do to help achieve your dreams of being a professional announcer?

Kang I did not participate in any club activities directly related to becoming an announcer during my time at KU. However, I believe that my experiences contributed overall to getting me involved in the broadcasting business. I was a part of a music club called Soulmate and a publishing club called the KU Jurisdiction Editing Committee. In addition, I was active in studying civil law, commercial law, and economic law, and participated in a

Mock Fair Trade Commission Competition.

Interacting and collaborating with professionals from multiple fields is crucial for announcers. It allows us to gain insightful knowledge and valuable experiences, which helps us build character. Thanks to the experiences I had during my time at KU, I was able to grow a broader perspective and greater insight into my career. These perspectives still benefit me and help broaden my horizons.

GT What were some of the challenges you faced? What did you do to overcome them?

Kang Personally, I think finding the perfect tone is the most challenging part of my job. Before I became an *MBC* announcer, I would often have a recorder by my side and ask for my friends' permission to record our conversations. Afterwards, I would listen repeatedly to the recordings, paying attention to how my voice sounded. Being an announcer is about constant self improvement. It is like coming face-to-face with my rawest and most imperfect self, and trying to make it palatable. Sometimes I felt so embarrassed about my mistakes that I wished I could just crawl into a hole. However, I tried my best to cope with the nerve-racking situations I was put into during my training as an announcer. Looking back, I think my consistency in keeping to my dreams helped me the most.


Furthermore, I did not get accepted to *MBC* on my first try. In some cases when I applied to other broadcasting agencies, I usually went all the way to the third round of the application process before

being rejected. I have often been rejected in the final round as well. Every time I faced rejection, it felt as if my surroundings were completely freezing up and entrapping me inside. However, I kept telling myself that unless I was going to give up completely, I should accept these rejections as part of the process. Looking back on what I have been through, I am grateful for everything including these rejections, and I feel as if they shaped me to be the best person I can be.

GT Where do you see yourself in five years' time?

Kang I do not have a solid goal yet. I just hope to become a great role model for my juniors as my seniors were to me. Also, I aim to continue challenging myself and fighting for what I feel most passionate about.

GT Please share a word of advice for KU students who wish to take up a career in the broadcasting business.

Kang Nowadays, there are multiple platforms in which we can showcase our talents and launch our careers. Most important of all is finding and presenting our own charm to the audience. There may already be people who are well-aware of what their charm is. However, I am sure that there are some who do not know or are uncertain. Although it is obvious, I recommend KU students to read a wide range of books, watch performances, go travelling, and spend quality time with others. These experiences are fruitful and meaningful and help build one's character and present one's best self. Moreover, I believe experiences can open up new possibilities and opportunities, both in academic and personal matters. 

Big Tech Regulation

— Monopoly and Balance

By Goh Jinoo siewierszczyzna@korea.ac.kr

On July 9, the White House announced a new executive order heavily restricting the monopolization practices of Big Tech. Big Tech, a shorthand term for five largest American technology companies (Apple, Google, Facebook, Amazon, and Microsoft), has been a crucial centerpiece in both the American and the global economy, but also a thorn in the side of Washington's legal ties. President Joe Biden has taken a risk by opting to push forwards a new set of regulations, which may prove to be a successful countermeasure against corporate monopolization. Nevertheless, his decision failed to escape criticism from both sides of the fence.



What Looms Beyond Big Tech's Horizon?

"Today President Biden is taking decisive action to reduce the trend of corporate consolidation, increase competition, and deliver concrete benefits to America's consumers, workers, farmers, and small businesses," reads the White House briefing. This move, while certainly not welcomed by many, is not completely out of left field either. It merely amounts to being the latest tactical manoeuvre in Washington's struggle against the astronomic growth and market monopolization of Big Tech.

Professor Lee Hwang (School of Law) explains how the rapid paradigm change led by the Fourth Industrial

Revolution has allowed Big Tech to monopolize the market, while the American legal system was left stranded with no appropriate measures to counter them. "While the traditionally anti-monopoly Democratic Party has attempted to take action since the presidential election earlier this year, many still disagree with the policy," explains Professor Lee, quoting certain critics who have expressed their worries about how "such laws could demoralize innovation and go directly against consumer interests."

The White House gives assurances that on the average American citizens' side of the equation, the executive order is supposed to bring about multiple benefits such as a raise in wages and the empowerment of



PROVIDED BY
PROFESSOR LEE HWANG

Professor Lee Hwang

smaller businesses. However, as can be deduced from the scale of the backlash that it has faced, there may be more to the order than what the White House is willing to disclose.

One of the issues that Big Tech has with the new order is how it utilizes its authority over the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). Earlier in June,

President Biden had confirmed Lina Khan, a renowned critic of Amazon, as the new chairwoman of the FTC, much to the tech giant's chagrin. In hindsight, many consider this to be a precursor to the White House's current efforts to influence the FTC into pressuring Big Tech, in which the FTC was encouraged to take steps towards preventing Big Tech from collecting consumer information. To companies like Amazon which heavily rely on leveraging consumer information for their business tactics, such restrictions can cause significant damage. While Amazon has responded by calling for Khan to step down, they have yet to show any tangible counteractions.



Across the Pacific

However, the United States (U.S.) was not the first country to introduce such regulations. The People's Republic of China (PRC) is famed for keeping its tech companies – BATX, short for Baidu, Alibaba, Tencent and Xiaomi – strictly in line, wielding its anti-monopolization laws as a whip. This is to no real surprise though, considering how the PRC has long held that its economy is run under the principle of a Socialist Market Economy (SME). The SME system is heavily based on state ownership of enterprises, and while it does allow private economic ventures, the limits of what one individual can do with such ventures are very much set in stone.

The recent disappearance of former Alibaba chairman Jack Ma is a remarkable example of how rigorous such restrictions are. After Ma expressed his distaste towards the Chinese

economic system in a public forum in 2020, he disappeared for almost three months, while Alibaba was hit by a massive 18 billion yuan fine after being accused of using illegal market monopolization methods. While the State Administration for Market Regulation (SAMR) stated that Alibaba was charged for "infringing on the businesses of merchants," foreign critics suspect that Ma and Alibaba were merely used as an example to show what happens when individuals cross the boundaries that the government has set.

Compared to the U.S., the Chinese government seems to have different goals in mind. The typical Chinese mindset of "The Greater Good" in comparison to the American individualist attitude seems to apply to corporate matters too, with the government placing an emphasis on curtailing individual companies in the present to prevent further complications in the future.



Back in Korea

Anti-monopolization regulations are far from an overseas-exclusive issue, with South Korea also having seen more than its fair share of conglomerate domination. Naver, for example, has an iron grip on the Korean search engine market, while communications giant Kakao has all but taken over as a domestic standard for online texting. Yet Korea's set of regulations preventing such market domination are wanting at best, possibly due to the government's remnant laissez-faire attitude from the Miracle of the Han River age when economic growth far outweighed fair

market practices in priority.

Professor Lee thus suggests that Korea needs its own, unique set of regulations that fit the country's specific dilemmas instead of modelling them after the U.S. or the PRC. "South Korea's corporations have grown successfully by dominating domestic markets before expanding globally against American platforms," he notes, "and this, while a rare case internationally, is crucial to maintaining innovation and sustainable growth of the Korean economy." While Professor Lee does note that the infringement of certain rights of downstream transaction partners or consumers is apparent in Korea, he still deduces that the government should thus consider Korea's unique circumstances when introducing changes to the regulations that the Korean Fair Trade Commission (FTC) has already set in place.

Whilst both the U.S. and the PRC have sufficient countermeasures in the case of policy failure, Korea is not blessed with such fallback options. The fact that the nation is going through an unprecedentedly arduous phase caused by a nose-diving economy combined with a global pandemic further amplifies the notion that attempting to implement drastic anti-corporate measures amidst such a fiscal disaster may worsen the catastrophic situation in Korea. Furthermore, the situation in Korea is not exactly what one would call a "clean slate." What the new American regulations remind us of, however, is that no matter where in the process the starting point is, the need for balance is always crucial. **K**



Freeing Britney

— The Conservatorship Battle



By Hwang Mina 20221130868@korea.ac.kr

“All I want is to own my money, for this to end, and for my boyfriend to drive me in his fucking car.” On June 23, pop icon Britney Spears detailed her experiences under a legal arrangement that granted her father control over her finances and her personal decisions. From being forced to take medication to being prevented from removing her intrauterine device (IUD), Spears’s shocking testimony has shed light on the dark underbelly of conservatorships, or guardianships. With Spears’s case, many hope that the publicity afforded to it will spark change within the guardianship system.



PROVIDED BY THE NEW YORKER

Britney Spears in Her Youth

In 1999, Britney Spears released her debut album *Baby One More Time*, which was met with instant success. Thrusting the then 17-year-old singer under the spotlight, the media was relentless, following her every move for the next seven years. The world watched as her mental health crumbled; embroiled in a fierce custody battle, Spears shaved her head, attacked a paparazzo’s car with an umbrella, and was ultimately placed in an involuntary psychiatric hold in 2008. That same year, Spears’s estranged father Jamie Spears filed for an emergency, then-temporary conservatorship which would span the next decade of her life.

Today, disability rights activists and fans are using social media to spread awareness about the guardianship, pointing out the inconsistencies within it—as someone who has worked tirelessly during the conservatorship and has choreographed all of her own dances, they argue, Spears seems more than capable enough to live her own life. They are actively fighting for her freedom through the Free Britney movement, which gained

significant traction with the release of the New York Times Documentary *Framing Britney Spears*.



Spears and Disability Rights

In June of this year, Spears finally spoke out about the guardianship, confirming her fans’ suspicions of abuse. Prevented from taking phone calls and surveilled for 24 hours, she felt “traumatized.” While harrowing, however, Spears’s story of abuse is not new—she is one of the many adults who are stripped of self-determination and agency in conservatorships, which happens when the court gives special powers to an adult, or organization, to manage the finances and take care of another adult. Typically reserved for those who cannot take care of themselves, conservatees are often elderly adults, those with mental illnesses, or those with intellectual disabilities.

Though rather lightly instituted and historically overused, guardianships should be regarded as a powerful intervention. As Professor Robert Dinerstein (Washington

College of Law, American University) remarks, it “should not be used unless it is really needed, and even if it is needed, it should be limited through limited guardianship, where the only decisions an individual is not able to make are those that they demonstrate they cannot make.” This is because it is extremely difficult to reverse a conservatorship. More importantly, it removes decision-making authority from the person and gives it to the conservator—who acts in the person’s place—assuming benevolence. And conservators are not always benevolent.

Spears’s father, for one, seems to have a significant interest in keeping the pop star under the legal arrangement—he has raked in an impressive 2.4 million dollars as co-conservator according to *Forbes*. This conflict of interest has raised questions as to whether her father has her best interests at heart in the guardianship, which the pop star herself did not realize she could petition to end until recently. This, according to Professor Dinerstein, is “not uncommon as the person who is influencing you unduly is the person who controls access to you.”

However, even when conservatorships work as they ideally should, they neglect a very important part of life: adulthood. In this new stage of life, one makes decisions on one’s own, learning to live with the

consequences. With disabled adults, this should be no different. However, as Professor Dinerstein points out, guardianships often stem from the “assumptions people make out of ignorance about what they think people with disabilities actually can decide.” Furthermore, while well-meaning, they are instituted out of a paternalistic need to protect the person. Such a need disallows for the dignity of risk—the idea that people should be able to take reasonable risks in making their own choices.



Supported Decision-making

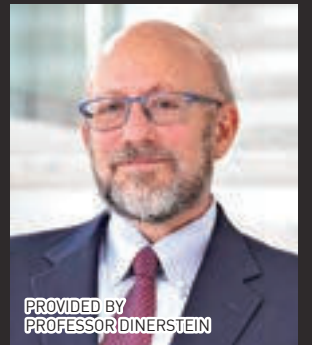
With so many eyes on Spears, many have shifted their focus from guardianships to explore other alternatives—namely supported decision-making. This is when the individual elects a circle of people whom he or she trusts to help make decisions, instead of having the court do so. The value of supported decision-making lies in its informality—it is not permanent. Moreover, the person retains decision-making authority, deciding whether or not to take their supporters’ advice.

This alternative has received a huge boost from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD)—Article 12 of which calls for equal recognition of persons before the law. Conservatorships violate this article in



PROVIDED BY YAHOO

Free Britney Protest



PROVIDED BY PROFESSOR DINERSTEIN

Professor Dinerstein.

principle, which is why the UNCPRD has encouraged nations to replace them with supported decision-making. Influenced by the UNCPRD, Korea has reformed its guardianship system.

As of 2013, limited guardianship and specific guardianship (in which an individual only needs assistance for a specified period of time or occasion) were introduced in Korea, and the choice of guardians was extended from family members to lawyers and social workers. While the UN Committee of the same name has acknowledged these changes, it has criticized the nation for not transitioning to supported decision-making.

In this way, Korea and the United States (U.S.) clearly have their work cut out for them. Currently, Senators Elizabeth Warren and Bob Casey are fighting for legislation that would require information about conservatorships, which are often cloaked in secrecy. Disability rights activists are pushing for their abolition. With the world watching as Spears passionately speaks out, her case will hopefully spark conversations at the federal level about the dangers of conservatorships. As Spears says, she—as well as any disabled person—“deserve[s] to have the same rights as anybody does, by having a child, a family...and more so.” **K**

The World Needs the Buzz

— Save the Bees!



By Lim Yury yurylim01@korea.ac.kr

Most people are understandably afraid of bees. From its anxiety-triggering buzz to the potentially fatal reaction to its sting, there are a myriad of reasons for people to be frightened by the sheer sight of the creature. However, what a lot of people fail to recognize is the crucial role of bees in maintaining a healthy ecosystem, which begins with pollinating flowers so that fruits and vegetables can grow. With the goal of restoring the diminishing number of bees, campaigns such as *Save the Bees* are taking initiatives to help create a safer environment for the tiny yet important workers.

The *Save the Bees* campaign is a decade-long project taken up by many environmental organizations such as *Greenpeace USA* and *Wildlife Trusts*. Launched in 2009, the campaign primarily gained momentum when people started to acknowledge the importance of bees in the human food chain. Although the goal of *Save the Bees* may seem quite simple - "saving the bees" - a realistic, clear-cut solution to the continuous decline of the bee population does not yet exist. This is because a variety of factors undermine the well-being of these creatures, including pesticides, viruses, climate change, habitat loss, and more. Yet, the wide range of

possible factors all point to one central cause: human activity.

Ironically enough, the decline of bees has a direct impact on humans' daily lives as well. According to the charity *Bug Life*, "A third of all food we eat relies on [bees]," which means "fruits like strawberries, apples, and pears could become extinct within 25 years" without bees. Moreover, the benefits that bees bring to humans are not limited to pollination. For instance, the applications of beeswax range from beauty products and candles to furniture wax and food preservatives. In essence, large numbers of daily essentials that humans enjoy today heavily rely on bees.



Complex Regulations are Needed

The list of solutions that can possibly help save bees is endless. One of the main ways the government can help is by regulating use of certain pesticides. Studies from the environmental organization *Xerxes Society for Invertebrate Conservation* have shown that pesticides called neonicotinoids are highly toxic to honeybees and can even make them "more susceptible to parasites and viruses." The persistence of this insecticide adds to its damaging effects as a single spray can get in as far as the roots and the water supply, which continuously poison pollinators.

With increasing public attention on saving bees, governments around the world have begun setting restrictions on the use of neonicotinoids. The most representative case is Massachusetts, which became the first state in the United States (U.S.) to categorize neonicotinoids as "restricted-use products" and set a goal to remove them from all retail store shelves starting this March. In response to similar regulations, apiarists who once used neonicotinoids have complained about the lack of alternative products that are as convenient as the current ones. However, bee farmers need to think beyond the price tag and consider the detrimental effects that neonicotinoids can have on the environment, and the government should encourage this by providing the proper incentives.

However, Professor Jung Chuleui (Plant Medicals, Andong National University) warns that the method of restricting certain pesticides may not necessarily be suitable for South Korea. This is because pesticide poisoning of domestic honeybees occurs from April to May, which is the blossoming season, and from July to August, or the rice pest control period. Thus, it would be more efficient to classify each type of pesticide based on season and set up a comprehensive management program that target specific plants, instead of entirely banning the use of specific pesticides. Professor Jung also emphasizes the importance of evaluating each pesticide's toxicity and accurately labeling them before they are available for public use.



PROVIDED BY
PROFESSOR JUNG CHULEUI

| Professor Jung Chuleui




Local Bees Crying for Help

Korea is not exempt from the bee crisis. According to the Ministry for Food, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MIFAFF), the number of beehives has drastically decreased from 420,000 in 2010 to between 30,000 and 100,000 as of 2020. It is predicted that local honeybees may be completely extinct by 2035 at this rate. The main culprit behind the sudden drop in the bee population is Sacbrood virus (SBV), a deadly virus that affects honeybee larvae, which prevailed in 2010 and killed 90 percent of native honeybees. Despite governmental measures such as seeding honey plants in the national forest, the bees still struggle to return to their normal state.

One critical flaw in Korea's beekeeping industry is the poor living condition of honeybees. Professor Jung states that most bees are raised in extremely concentrated hives and highlights how "Korea has the highest density of beehives per unit area in the world." He attributes this phenomenon to apiarists attempting to expand from honey production by targeting niche markets such as honeycomb and royal

jelly, a honeybee secretion, both of which require bees to be tightly packed. However, such an environment makes bees more vulnerable to infectious diseases, which may bring about disastrous outcomes like the outbreak of SBV infection in 2010.

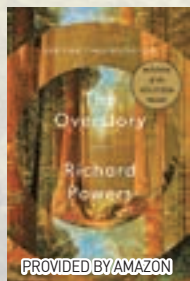
The first step to saving Korea's honeybees is providing a healthier environment for them. Professor Jung explains that identifying honey plants that fit local characteristics and disseminating them accordingly is the most basic prerequisite. By doing so, honeybee territories would expand across the country, which would solve the underlying issue of the local beekeeping industry. He also emphasizes the need for citizens to recognize the importance of honeybees, in addition to beekeepers and specialized institutions, to create a society that aims to protect these animals altogether. At the same time, it is crucial for the government to set clear guidelines for nonprofessionals who wish to participate in beekeeping for the safety of the public.

Bees can be terrifying. At the same time, bees are incredibly important to the survival of wild animals and plants as well as the supply of many fruits, vegetables, and even the cotton that humans use every day. The continuous decline of the worldwide bee population is an urgent warning for people to start paying attention to these pint-sized insects. With the combined efforts of governments, research organizations, and regular citizens, the world can only pray to have its little busy workers back in stock. 

Back to the Roots

— *The Overstory*

By Oh Ji Su jjol@korea.ac.kr



| *The Overstory*
Book Cover

“People aren’t the apex species they think they are. Other creatures - bigger, smaller, slower, faster, older, younger, more powerful - call the shots, make the air, and eat sunlight. Without them, nothing.” As this quote suggests, have you ever thought in a perspective that is not that human? Or have you been so blinded by selfishness and greed that you have ignored your surroundings? This question pervades the central idea of *The Overstory* by Richard Powers, who attempts to put nature in a new light through his novel.

Richard Powers is an American writer well-known for writing books related to the effects of modern technology. He has received several awards throughout the years and has published a total of 12 novels, the last being *The Overstory*, which received the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction as well as the William Bean Howells Medal. According to *The Guardian*, his work was inspired by the documentary *Redwood Summer of 1990*, “when guerrilla groups mobilized against the logging of California’s giant sequoias.” The story follows a similar plot to the documentary, where the author emphasizes the mysticity of trees and nature, presenting readers with nine different scenarios about why nature should be protected.

The novel is separated into two sections. The first is composed of nine short stories, each with different characters and plot, while the second is composed of three main chapters that depict how these characters meet and commence their journey for a common goal of protecting forests. This structure allows the reader to have an extensive background regarding the origins of each character’s decision, allowing for a deeper connection between the characters and the readers. To portray such a narrative, the author utilizes a third person point-of-view, where the characters share their own perspective of the world as they uncover Earth’s mysteries, giving them a unique persona overall. However, although this structure allows for a thorough dive into *The Overstory*, it still garners mild criticism in its method of literary portrayal.

Despite the author’s attempt to portray a thorough novel, the descriptive nature of it creates a long and dragging narrative, which is emphasized especially in the author’s description of trees. This not only causes

boredom for some readers, but makes it seem unnecessary to the overall plot as it becomes repetitive since there are only a few ways to describe trees. This narrative does indeed send the message of the grandness of the trees; however, it can only be viewed as filler when it is overly repeated. The fact that the novel has too many characters also distracts the reader because it makes it hard to keep track of the names as the plot progresses.

One of the central ideas of the novel is the disparity between humans and nature. As mentioned previously, the first half is composed of nine short stories where the author introduces the nine main characters. Each of these chapters demonstrate how the character’s thoughts and values transform after going through a life-changing experience, which ultimately molds them to pursue the common goal of preserving trees. Through this inspiring journey, the author urges the readers to think about the rights of trees. Not only that, but he also calls upon the injustices that these entities face due to their powerlessness, especially in front of capitalism. He writes, “Each will be monetized until all trees grow in straight lines, three people own all seven continents, and every large organism is bred to be slaughtered.”

Powers, however, creates a unique narrative when delivering his ideas. Instead of focusing on humanity, the author describes trees as somewhat mystical entities that have a life form, making *The Overstory* a galvanizing novel. For instance, he writes, “We found that trees could communicate, over the air and through their roots. Common sense hooted us down. We found that trees take care of each other.” Nevertheless, this mysticity is a double



| Richard Powers, Author of *The Overstory*

edge sword as it makes the plot too fantastic. Although this is a fictional novel, the intention of the author is to create awareness about the importance of nature in our lives and ultimately promote the preservation of it. In other words, although the depiction of trees in the novel does send the message that saving them is an important task, the overbearing fantastic events make the interpretation seem like a religious portrayal rather than as the story’s moral.

The Overstory is a must-read novel that gives readers another perspective regarding trees and nature, making them ponder upon the current relationship between humans and nature. Although the structure might be somewhat confusing and dragging, the characters are interesting and unique, allowing for diverse content and interpretation. In other words, the ideas delivered make the book worth a read, especially since it brings to the forefront an ongoing environmental issue that has been a huge challenge throughout the years. **K**

Book Information

Title: *The Overstory*
Author: Richard Powers
Publisher: W. W. Norton & Company
Publication Year: 2018
Pages: 612

The Power of Ambiguity

— The Korean Dance Crew, Ambiguous Dance Company



By Kwon Keun Young callyme@korea.ac.kr

On May 7, an eye-catching hologram of eight dancers appeared in the “Higher Power” live performance video, a new single released by the famous British rock band Coldplay. Few weeks later, the song’s official dance video featured the Korean dance crew, Ambiguous Dance Company, also known as the 21st century goblins. In the video, members of the Ambiguous Dance Company stood out as front dancers, demonstrating their endeavor, individuality, and talent without hesitation. Each member exhibited passion and competence in dancing, hence communicating with the public through imposing moves.

Ambiguous Dance Company is a Korean dance team composed of eight members, including choreographer Kim Bo-ram. Paradoxically, the word *ambiguous* in the team’s name originated from the members’ confidence in reaching for their goals, according to *Noblesse*, South Korea’s high-end lifestyle magazine. To free themselves from restrictions of distinguishing dance genres, they decided to call themselves *ambiguous*. The greatness of these unfettered souls has recently gained public interest through their collaboration with Korea Tourism Organization and other well-known artists, such as Leenalchi and Coldplay.

The dance crew’s originality was what captured Coldplay’s attention prior to their collaboration. According to Kim’s interview with *The Dong-A Ilbo*, Chris Martin, a member of Coldplay, hoped to feature the dancers as the leading role of the music video, also leaving the choreography entirely on their ideas. As his desire, the crew’s originality in “Higher Power” quickly induced public interest.

The dancers’ unrestricted, spontaneous moves in the music video produce a sense of breaking free from the repetitive, stifling daily routines. Instead of trying to accurately dance to planned movements, members of the



Members of the Ambiguous Dance Company

Ambiguous Dance Company improvise their dance moves, following along the music’s natural flow and vividly expressing the joy of freedom. Their lively, energetic steps indicate *freedom* itself, evoking enjoyment among the viewers and encouraging them to follow the motions. Furthermore, in alignment with Coldplay’s intention to awaken an individuals’ capacity, or *higher power*, vibrant moves of the dancers successfully impose powerful and passionate sensations to the music video.

Moreover, using places around Seoul as its stage, Ambiguous Dance Company’s creative choreography accentuates the beauty of Korea and contributes to tourism promotion. Dancing in classical market alleys highlights Korea’s traditional aspects, while the glittering city lights scattered behind each member display the modern features of urban areas. Despite the absence of fancy stage equipment, each member’s dance performance reflects great synergy between the *people* and the *setting*. Extraordinary combinations of various designs and colors of clothing also boost the futuristic sense of Coldplay’s music, as well as imprint the dance company’s performance in the audience’s minds. As a



Members of the Ambiguous Dance Company Dancing



Part of the “Higher Power” choreography

result, the capability of dancing without the constraints on setting and clothing not only contributes to the uniqueness of the music video, but also indicates the strength of *ambiguity*, one of the biggest features of the dance crew.

As seen in recent projects, Ambiguous Dance Company’s ingenuity emerges from distinct interpretation of dancing. Members of the crew believe music can be the most beautiful and honest language, or a *communication tool*, in human society. Dancing accompanies one’s freedom of expressing emotions, thoughts, and ultimately one’s identity. According to Kim’s interview with *Noblesse*, the first step to dancing is to play an exciting song and simply move your body along with it. As Kim points out, great performance does not require sophisticated techniques or

professional training sessions. Instead, naturally falling into the rhythms of the music is what dancing really is.

Ambiguous Dance Company’s journey continues even during the pandemic situation. On September 1, they performed “Fever” at the 2021 *Dancers Unison Festival* in the Seongnam Art Center Opera House. Performance “Fever” exhibits exciting and elegant choreography to the sounds of *taebyeongso sinawi*, a folk instrumental ensemble played with a wind instrument, and *taryeong*, a musical tune developed during the Joseon Dynasty. The crew members will also perform at their *Spirit Mix* concert in November to show the audience that dancing is the most primitive yet honest tool of communication. 📌



See Yourself Through the Eyes of *Frank*

By Jie Yeowon jessi2001@korea.ac.kr

"I say, tell everyone everything. Why cover anything up, right?" This may seem ironic coming from a man who wears a paper-mâché head to conceal his face for 24 hours a day. That is exactly what Lenny Abrahamson's 2014 film *Frank* is: ironic – yet in the best way possible. By utilizing irony, *Frank* succeeds in establishing a sense of outlandishness unique among typical musical comedies. At first glance, many may see *Frank* as nothing more than an abstract, quirky movie. Nonetheless, it becomes clear upon viewing the film that *Frank* is as moving, witty, and thought-provoking as it is eccentric and recondite.

Frank follows the footsteps of Jon, an aspiring songwriter, who seems dissatisfied with his life where his musical potential fails to be recognized. Luckily, Jon catches a break from his dull lifestyle when he gets scouted by Frank, the lead singer of an experimental music group named The Soronprfbs. Jon accompanies the band, as their keyboardist, on a year-long workshop in a remote cabin to record their debut album. After Jon's secretly uploaded videos of the band's recording sessions go viral on social media, the band is

invited to perform at the music festival South by Southwest. This dream is soon interrupted by escalating disagreements regarding the band's vision alongside the members' eventual mental deterioration.

 **Unorthodox Would Be an Understatement**

It is not often that viewers see a film's main protagonist completely covered neck-up for the near entirety of the film's running time. This is because wearing a prop entails the risk of prohibiting an

actor's expressions rather than encouraging them. In this sense, Abrahamson made a venturesome decision that solely relied on the actor's creative taste and skills to deliver the essence of Frank effectively. Fortunately, Abrahamson's leap of faith was one worth taking as actor Michael Fassbender proved to possess exquisite ingenuity in verbal and physical articulacy in his performance as Frank. Fassbender's body language succeeds in conveying the mystery and coldness of Frank's initial appearance, while also portraying his utter clumsiness as the film progresses. Fassbender's ability to accommodate for Frank's *facial muteness* is what ultimately leads to Frank's magnetism as a character.


In addition to Frank's essential appearance, the unconventional nature of the film truly shines through its musical production. Considering how *Frank* is categorized as a musical comedy, it is surprising how vexing the musical performances are throughout the film.



PROVIDED BY THE CORNELL DAILY SUN

Frank (Michael Fassbender) and Jon (Domhnall Gleeson) in *Frank*

Nothing about *Frank* is mainstream, including its music. At times, Abrahamson even provides satire into the enigmatic, unchained nature of avant-garde music, poking fun at the cult-like features of Frank's workshop. Nevertheless, the way in which the film depicts the band's unfiltered passion leaves the audience drawn towards this baffling musical experience instead of being repelled by it.

 **Dark... Dark Comedy**

The overall lightness and sense of indifference the characters embody may not accurately represent the substantive material the film encompasses. For example, one of the main themes repeated throughout *Frank* is mental illness. The black humor that defines the comedic tone of *Frank* is made clear within the first few minutes of the film when Jon gets his first opportunity to perform on stage as Frank's keyboardist. He highlights his qualifications to the band manager while they witness the former keyboardist attempting to drown himself

on a beach. Taken at face value, the scene sounds depressing and chaotic. Yet, the cinematography that emphasizes the band members' nonchalance and Jon's utter self-centeredness seems to nullify the severity of the event – almost making it nonsensically hysterical. The comicality the band members are instilled with allows the audience to familiarize themselves with characters who would otherwise be outcast as mavericks.

Jon's introduction scene, in particular, provides an interesting perspective on why *Frank* is so compelling and hilarious to its audience. The film's silent, yet effective banter lies in how it limits comedy rather than letting the hilarity loose; nothing seems outwardly or intentionally funny in *Frank*. Unlike most comedic films, there is no separate punch line or resolution to the jokes delivered throughout the film. This is due to the complete lack of awareness of the characters regarding their comical and charismatic presence. Frank, Jon, and the rest of the band members, despite all

being beguiling characters, do not realize the amusing context of their actions.

Genuinely realizing the comedic value of *Frank* without depreciating the characters is not an easy task. Like many classic tragedies, *Frank* turns deep-rooted trauma and mental instabilities into entertainment. Thus, appreciating *Frank*'s comedy assumes that viewers empathize with the painfully awkward and incomprehensible features of its characters. The initial resemblance between the audience and the band members further develops when viewers are challenged with the characters' problematic aspects, as the band encounters sudden fame. The band members' apprehensive, selfish ways of dealing with conflict are painful to watch, not simply because the audience feels pity for them, but because the audience relates to these pitiful moments as well. The humility that *Frank*'s characters are imbued with allows the audience to not only identify the flaws present within the film but also themselves.

Frank offers a wonderful cinematic experience that goes beyond the narrative of a musical comedy and reaches the depths of a poignant dramatic film. *Frank*'s aesthetic, behavioral peculiarities, as off-putting as they seem, accentuate how successful the film is in delivering a story that seems unconventional, yet so distinctly relatable and enticing. Thus, the question of what lingers within the paper-mâché head of Frank is not an inquiry directed towards revealing the identity of the film's main protagonist, but rather the audience: what *they* feel about him, what *they* want from him, and ultimately, what *they* see in him. **K**

Film Information

Release Date: May 2, 2014 (UK)

Director: Lenny Abrahamson

Cast: Domhnall Gleeson, Michael Fassbender, Maggie Gyllenhaal

Running Time: 96 minutes

Genre: Comedy, Musical Drama



Frank (2014) Film Poster

Warm Ray of Light Embracing the World

— YOSIGO Photo Exhibition

By Kim Seo Hyun | jamie0511@korea.ac.kr

The *YOSIGO Photo Exhibition*, held in *Ground Seesaw*, Seochon is the first individual exhibition for photographer Yosigo to take place in Korea. The exhibition displays photos of Yosigo's encounters from all over the world, from European resorts surrounding the blue Mediterranean Sea to Miami, Dubai, and Budapest. The *YOSIGO Photo Exhibition* hopes to soothe the frustration caused by not being able to travel during the prolonged coronavirus disease (COVID-19) period, with the audience invited to take a journey through the photos taken from Yosigo's perspective.

Photographer Yosigo, whose real name is Jose Javier Serrano, takes his professional name from the Spanish word *Yo Sigo*, which means "I walk." This name reflects his philosophy of moving forward regardless of failure and frustration and is in line with the purpose of the exhibition. Yosigo, who is the most popular artist in Spain, has numerous global followers on his social media accounts and has received glowing profiles in international magazines such as *Kinfolk*, *Vitra*, and *Jack Daniel*.

This exhibition provides an opportunity to appreciate the various aesthetic elements in Yosigo's photos by staging them in unique ways. For example, the photos from Dubai are displayed with sand on the floor, and the beach photos from Miami are presented inside the

water of a swimming pool. The idea of distributing photo cards to visitors so that they can take pictures with them is also groundbreaking. Unlike other photo exhibitions where visitors are banned from taking photos, the *YOSIGO Photo Exhibition* invites visitors into the photos and allows visitors to retain their memories for a longer time.

Architecture

The exhibition divides Yosigo's work into three sections of architecture, documentaries, and landscapes, that include fine-grained work focusing on light to large-scale work conducted in cities around the world. In the Light & Shade theme within the architecture section, photos related to light are displayed. Being the main source of Yosigo's inspiration, light generates warm

colors and temperatures for architecture. Because the brightness and saturation of buildings change depending on the angle of the light throughout the day, he focuses on the intense natural light and shadows.



PHOTOGRAPHED BY KIM SEO HYUN

| Architecture



| Night Sceneries in Japan

The Symmetry & Geometry theme neatly captures Yosigo's taste by utilizing symmetrical composition and geometric elements. In the interview footage on display, Yosigo gives credit to the architects for his photographs and calls for more attention to be paid to them rather than focusing only on architecture. His affection for the subject of photography itself demonstrates his sincerity as a photographer.

Documentaries

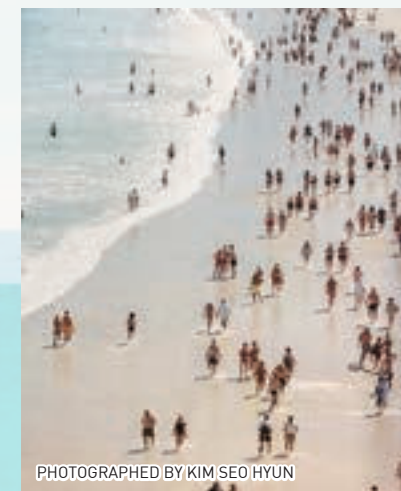
The documentary section captures Yosigo's experience in the locations where he took his photographs. The frame of each photo describes the time, atmosphere, and special impressions of the artist at the moment the photo was taken. Thus, the visitors can feel as if they are directly witnessing the situation in his photographs.

The photographs from Budapest, the place that Yosigo claims is the best suited to his taste, vividly express the clear colors of hot springs and the people who enjoy them, which are reminiscent of gods in heaven. He also focuses on

capturing the atmosphere of the night in Japan by taking photos of the night scenery and characters. According to Yosigo, this was the first time for him to photograph a target he has not taken interest in. This new strategy of taking photographs is recommended for those who are feeling tired of photography; it may provoke the same excitement and joy that they experienced the first time they took photographs.

Landscape


In the third section, the relationship between beautiful natural scenery and tourists is reinterpreted by Yosigo. His artistic values are most clearly visible in backgrounds featuring beaches and the ocean because he was born and raised in San Sebastian, a coastal city located in Spain. In the Mediterranean Nostalgia theme, he captures the coexistence of liveliness and silence by photographing people who are bathing in the sea from a bird's eye view. Through his photos, the audience can experience San Sebastian's unique culture of loneliness and nostalgia.



PHOTOGRAPHED BY KIM SEO HYUN

| *Animal Turista*

The most remarkable aspect of the Tourism Landscape theme is the concept of *Animal Turista*, which depicts tourists obsessed with taking photos rather than appreciating the landscape. Yosigo criticizes tourists who are only interested in posting pictures on social media to show off rather than enjoying the scenery. Therefore, he captures the landscape in a way that minimizes the presence of people, through which he highlights the importance and weight of the location and integrates tourists as a part of the landscape. Yosigo's central message has great implications in modern society where the true meaning of tourism is lost.

In essence, the exhibition is not just about holidays and relaxation; it also embraces generosity in a series of photos of various nooks and crannies from around the world with a warm ray of light shed on them. The exhibition is recommended for anyone who hopes to escape from the lethargy and frustration caused by COVID-19. Looking at the vibrant images of people swimming in emerald-colored seas can allow the audience to forget their daily trials for a moment and perhaps reboot their life with a clean slate. 

Exhibition Information

Title: YOSIGO Photo Exhibition
Venue: Ground Seesaw, Seochon
Date: from June 23 to December 5
Opening Hours: 10:00A.M. to 7:00P.M.
Ticket Price: 15,000 won for adults/
 10,000 won for teenagers

The Youngest Blue House Secretary Ever Appointed

On June 21, The Blue House appointed a college student in her 20s as a senior official handling youth policy. This unprecedented appointment sparked controversy on a national scale. The newly appointed youth secretary Park Sung Min is 15 years younger than her predecessor Kim Kwang Jin and is currently the only high ranking official in her 20s. The controversy has not yet subsided, with some claiming that Park's appointment is inappropriate, while others support her qualifications as secretary.



Secretary Park transferred from Kangnam University to Korea University (KU) in 2019, where she is currently in her final year of study. She took an active role as a member of the Democratic Party of Korea (DPK) despite her relatively young age; as a result, she was selected as a steering member of the National University Student Council and also served as a youth spokesperson. She was subsequently selected as the supreme representative of the DPK by its leader Lee Nak Yeon in August, 2020. Within a year, she was designated as the youth secretary, raising doubts about the fairness of the appointment process and her ability as a secretary. However, these criticisms may represent a hypersensitive reaction and lead to undesirable consequences for the future prospect of the political community.

The most controversial aspect of Secretary Park's appointment is her young age. However, former youth secretary Kim Kwang Jin was 40 years old and was criticized for being too old for the role. Given this criticism, selecting a younger person as youth secretary is desirable, and this appointment signals the start of a transition period that will see members of the younger generation enter politics. Furthermore, because it is supposed to represent society, the National Assembly should reflect the population demographics as much as possible. Yet only 3.7 percent of current South Korean lawmakers are under the age of 40. As such, the underrepresentation of the younger generation remains a serious problem. Given this reality, the nomination of Secretary Park is meaningful in that it can be seen as the starting point for greater youth involvement in politics.

In addition, questions about her ability to serve as a youth representative have been raised because her experience in relevant areas is rather limited compared with her time in the

DPK. However, in fact, she spared no criticism of her own party on the issue of the military service leave of Choo Mi Ae's son and the publication of Cho Kook's book. She did not make biased arguments for a particular position and tried to approach the problem fairly. Moreover, she spoke for the youth on several important topics, delivering quick and bold responses to gender issues as a female and denouncing the unfair recruitment of youth talent.

"The appointment of a young and inexperienced student" has been controversial, but this decision was within the president's authority, and Secretary Park has not exhibited any ethical failures. Therefore, it is important to understand the underlying reasons for the criticism of the appointment. In fact, this is not a matter of fairness but rather reflects a problem for members of the younger generation who have been deprived of opportunities due to the harsh realities of a shrinking society. The most serious problem is that excessive competition for jobs has led many younger people to be sensitive about the success of others.

To overcome this, the society desperately needs a fundamental change in overall social values along with efforts to cultivate an attitude of tolerance towards others and harmonious coexistence. The ruling party should also sincerely address youth problems from the perspective of those members of society who are impacted by them, while Secretary Park should canvass opinions from a range of individuals. The public should also shift its attention from Secretary Park's age to her future actions and whether they are for the benefit of the younger generations. **K**

By Kim Seo Hyun
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South Korean Citizens Express Doubts on Nationality Amendment Law

The amendment of the Nationality Act proposed by the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) has caused controversy, with more than 300,000 individuals signing an appeal in opposition to the revision. The MOJ introduced the Nationality Law Amendment Bill in April, explaining that this revision would make it simpler for foreign children who are permanently living in Korea to gain Korean citizenship. The controversy over this legislation stems from doubts that the government may be favoring Chinese nationals.



The MOJ's plans to revise the Nationality Law Amendment Bill for the children of foreigners who have lived in Korea for several years have caused outrage among Korean citizens. The MOJ believes that this amendment will solve the problems of declining birth rate and aging society. This is evidenced by the census data on the fertility rate and death rate which shows that children who will be granted a citizenship will secure a growth in the future by increasing South Korea's working populace. This is because the amendment allows children who have been born and lived in Korea for some time or whose parents have been residents in Korea for generations to gain Korean citizenship.

With this, Koreans feel threatened by the idea of the government granting Korean citizenship to foreigners. Many opponents presume that this amendment is a scheme to give advantages regarding social welfare and healthcare to Chinese residents in Korea. However, others argue that the amendment is reasonable considering the number of years that the parents of foreign children have spent in Korea.

The concerns of Koreans are understandable because out of the 3,930 people who are eligible for citizenship, 3,725 of them come from Chinese lineage which means that there are more of them awaiting Korean citizenship. Moreover, the claims by some Chinese that kimchi and hanbok belong to China only add to the anti-Chinese flame. However, the opposition made on this law is not just based on anti-Chinese sentiment or China's cultural appropriation but because of potential loopholes and the consequent adverse effect it can have on Korean society. One of these loopholes is that the law might favor the Chinese by granting them the same benefits given to Korean nationals and another is the possibility of the foreigners

discarding the citizenship once they are required to fulfill military service.

To address this growing apprehension, the Korean government must work with the MOJ and the media to appease the angry citizens and help them truly understand the intentions of the amendment. This can be done by persuading the people on why the amendment is necessary for the future of South Korea. In addition, the government should make sure that foreigners who are considering on obtaining a citizenship to abide by their obligations.

Without appropriate and timely discussion of the issue, there is no way to get the public onside. Solutions to overcome the opposition to the amendment, such as denying claims of favoritism toward China, securing labor pool growth, and establishing stability, may not be foolproof. The government should learn to listen to its citizens through public hearings and hold public debates, listening to both sides of the argument to determine whether to bestow the same benefits enjoyed by the Korean nationals to foreigners obtaining Korean citizenship. Some of the benefits that are granted to Korean nationals are the availability of credit and mortgages as well as voting power.

Koreans' concern is on foreigners enjoying these benefits once they are given Korean citizenship. Although it may not be clear what the government's purpose is, as a democratic nation, people have the right to protest to the government or its lawmaking bodies, especially when they feel threatened. Thus, revisions like these must not be passed hastily but should be well-thought-out and consider all of the possible outcomes once they are passed into law. **K**

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Shut Down Korea's Shutdown Law

Criticisms regarding Korea's notorious Shutdown Law have been inflamed by the changes in Minecraft's account system, a game rated suitable for children over the age of 10. With the denial in access to the popular game, an online petition against the law has garnered over 100,000 signatures. Established in 2011, the law was a rather sad attempt to curb the nation's high Internet addiction rates, setting a curfew on game time. It is understandable why the law has been met with widespread backlash, as it hardly gets to the root of the problem and is implemented on rather arbitrary lines.



The Youth Protection Revision Act, otherwise known as the Shutdown Law or the Cinderella Law, prohibits children under the age of 16 from playing online PC games from 12:00 A.M. to 6:00 A.M. This curfew was brought about by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family out of concerns that children were sleeping less due to such games. In addition to the curfew, the ministry has restricted all games from companies such as X-box Live or PlayStation Network to those who are 19 years-old and older.

10 years ago, the response to the law was heavily antagonistic, with many questioning why only the gaming sector was regulated in the face of Internet addiction. That sentiment still holds today, with many now pushing for the abolition of the law due to the most recent controversy involving Minecraft. As of this year, the game requires users to sign in through their Xbox Live accounts. This account system change, of course, means that Korean players under the age of 19 are excluded from the game (despite meeting the age requirements), which has exacerbated opposition to the law.


With such inconsistencies within the Cinderella Law, the only way forward for the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family does indeed seem to be the abolition of the law, starting off a clean slate. Though borne out of good intentions, the Shutdown Law only targets online games—not console games or mobile phone games. This limited scope appears discriminatory to the public and can only lead to a slippery slope of more bans, as exemplified in how the ministry tried to expand the law to include mobile games but failed to get enough support.

More than this, however, the Shutdown Law does not seem to tackle the nation's problem of Internet addiction in any

sort of meaningful way. Just because games are not allowed to be played during a designated time does not necessarily mean that gaming time will decrease—children can still play during the day. Indeed, they have adapted to the law, finding loopholes. According to *The Korea Herald*, they have used their parents' accounts to sign in and get past age restrictions, which simply goes to show the ineffectiveness of such a law.

Thus, the government must turn to alternatives, instead of resorting to bans. While Internet addiction is most commonly seen in young individuals aged 14 and below, it impacts all nonetheless. In this way, the government should create policies with a broader scope and target, including Internet service providers in monitoring such policies in the future.

According to Professor Rando Kim (Professor of Consumer Studies, Seoul National University), change begins in the classroom. Consumer education programs should be offered to teach students about appropriate internet usage. Teenagers, for example, turn to the web to combat feelings of loneliness and isolation. Thus, educational programs dedicated to teaching that such sources only further those feelings and inform students of the alternatives would be beneficial in tackling Internet addiction.

Therefore, as this controversy has exposed, the Shutdown Law can be rather unfair, unproductive, and contradictory, which is why it must be shut down. Indeed, moving forward, the government must implement laws with due consideration, instead of drafting them up hastily. Only then shall Korea see meaningful changes in its Internet addiction rates, promoting healthier Internet-surfing habits. 

By Hwang Mina

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WE LISTEN

The Granite Tower (GT) values your opinion. Send us detailed feedback on GT's September 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 or [@thegrانيتower](https://www.instagram.com/thegrانيتower) on Instagram.

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