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THE GRANITE TOWER

THE KOREA UNIVERSITY ENGLISH MAGAZINE

60대 1기 수습기자 모집

👤 지원대상
3학기 이상 활동 가능한 고려대학교 재학생 (학년 무관)

📅 지원일정

2월 23일 ~ 3월 8일 지원서 제출	3월 17일 필기 시험	3월 24일 ~ 25일 개별 면접
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📌 지원방법
GT 홈페이지 www.thegrانيتower.com 에서
지원서를 다운 받아 작성 후
thegrانيتower@gmail.com 으로 제출



QR코드로 문의



지원문의: 대외협력부장 박수빈 010-8482-6248

THE GRANITE TOWER

March 2023

THE KOREA UNIVERSITY ENGLISH MAGAZINE

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MARCH

2023

VOL. 523

Winds of Change

COVER STORY

Korea's 2023
Education Reform

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THE GRANITE TOWER

Established on September 18, 1954, *The Granite Tower* (GT) is a monthly college journal supported by a staff of Korea University undergraduate students. The magazine is published during the spring and fall semesters and is distributed free of charge.

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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.

Designed and printed

by *NANOOM* communication (Tel. 02-333-7136).



EDITOR'S LETTER

Winds of Change

Whether a sweet summer breeze or a violent hurricane storm, each wind has its own unique strength or trajectory. Yet, despite the seemingly drastic differences of these winds, they share a common factor: they are forces that bring about *change* in our atmosphere. Applying this metaphor to current events, the March issue of *The Granite Tower* (GT) explores various "winds of change," from updates on campus life to momentous transitions in domestic and international politics.

In the spirit of a new school year, GT has interviewed the newly elected president of Korea University (KU), introducing his accomplishments and promises to the KU community. For our Voice on Campus article, we reached outside the usual student body and took the time to interview a few professors and their journey to KU. Our Cover Story takes a deep dive into the education reform of 2023, dissecting its significance and implications, which imply major changes for our society. Our Feature articles explain additional changes in our country, from the political corruptness of clemencies to major shifts in the medical field and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Meanwhile, on a more lighthearted note, the GT Spotlight section introduces our new reporters for the upcoming semester, each unique in their own way, while sharing the same passion for authenticity and critical thinking. Although new beginnings are never easy, they can be exciting opportunities for change. We hope that reading our March issue helps the "winds of change" blow your way, assisting you as you embark on a fresh new journey this semester.



By Yun Sunwoo

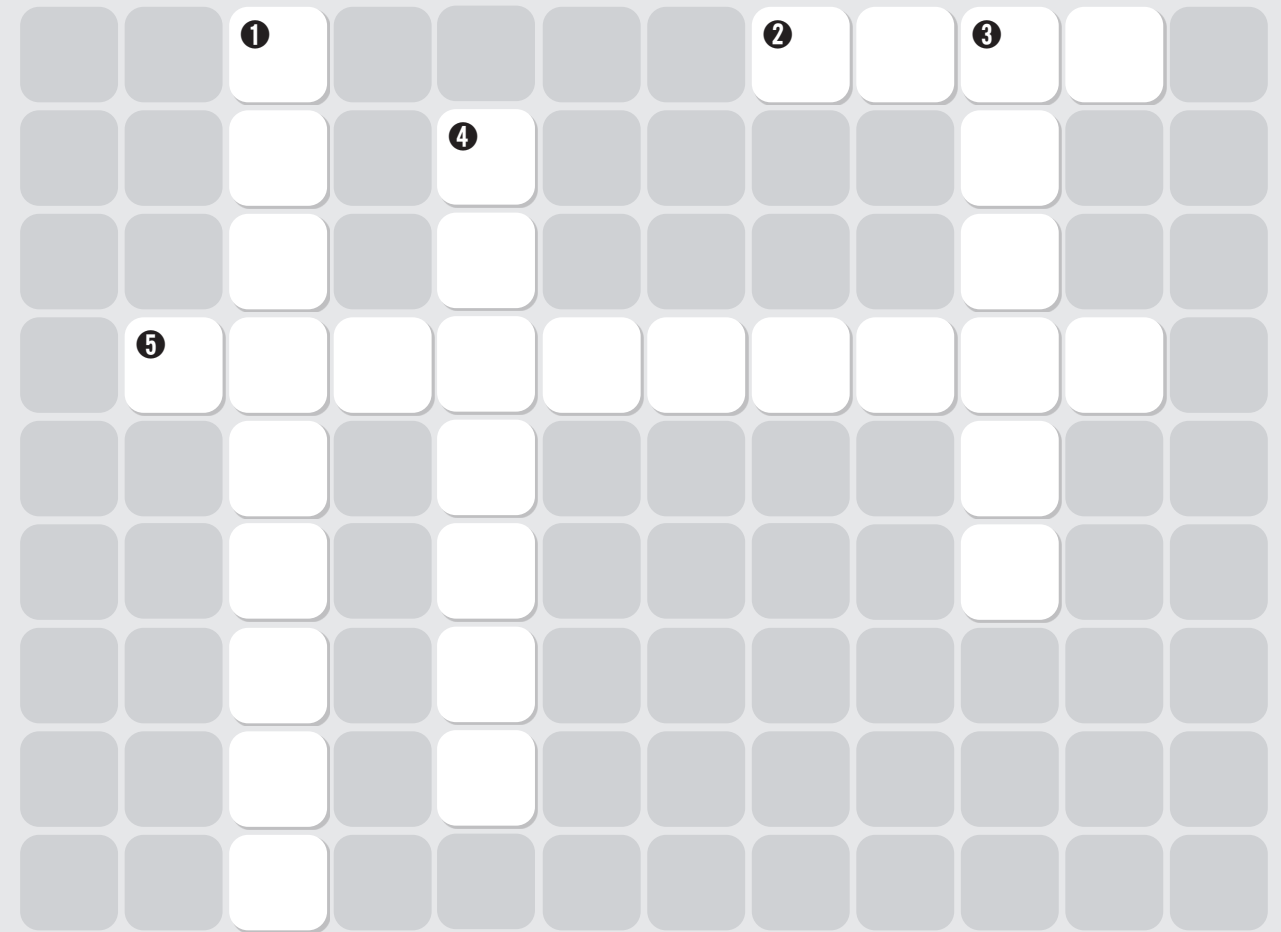
(chelseayun25@korea.ac.kr)

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

Crossword

HIT A WALL?

All presented words were retrieved from the headlines of articles in the March issue.



DOWN

- ❶ Not knowing what to do or believe; not completely certain. (pg. 40)
- ❸ Improvements to a law, social system, or institution. (pg. 24)
- ❹ Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, Jane Austen, Ernest Hemingway. (pg. 48)

ACROSS

- ❷ Very bad; very serious or extreme. (pg. 20)
- ❺ A statement that injures a third party's reputation. A legal offense. (pg. 38)

Send us a picture of your completed crossword through thegrانيتower@gmail.com or Instagram DMs @thegrانيتower to be selected for a special gift at the end of the month!

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Students meet Islam – KU Unveils New Middle East and Islam Center

By Giorgio Cioffi gio12060@korea.ac.kr

On February 1, Korea University (KU)'s Asiatic Research Institute (ARI) announced the opening of its first Center for Middle East and Islamic Studies (CMEIS). Professor Kim Jong-do, appointed as the first director, proudly foreshadowed a bright future for the institution as a long-awaited add to the school's research body. Aiming to become a leading pole in Eastern Asia, the center is expected to host numerous seminars, lectures and colloquiums, which will drastically expand the school's educational offer concerning Islam. KU, in fact, currently provides just a single General Education course titled "Understanding Islamic Culture" (GEFC105), whose purpose is to facilitate the correlation of Islam's rich history and culture to the dynamics of the modern world.

CMEIS was born due to the pressing realization that studies on this compelling region of the world cannot be further

postponed. The director of the Asiatic Research Institute, Professor Lee Jin-han, recalled Korea University (KU) President Kim Joon-yeop's (1982-1985) affinity for the issue and his interest towards the development of an Arabic department, as reiterated by The Korea Post. Director Kim anticipated that, although the center "is lacking in many aspects," it will be able to make its way through affirmed institutions and contribute to the investigation of several unanswered questions. 



PROVIDED BY THE KOREA POST

Director Lee and Director Kim hang up the center's signboard.

Retired Professor Leads Collaborative Donation for KU Students

By Park Jaewon jaewonpark02@korea.ac.kr


On January 19, 2023, Korea University (KU) hosted a commemorative ceremony redesignating room 223 of the College of Liberal Arts as the Kim Choon Mie Hall. The ceremony was held in honor of Professor Emeritus Kim Choon Mie (Department of Japanese Language and Literature) and twelve of her students who collectively donated 70 million KRW (Korean Won) to the school. The funds are to be dedicated towards constructing the new Humanities and Social Sciences Hall. Professor Kim expressed her joy in "helping to create an environment befitting the top-quality education that our renowned College of Liberal Arts provides," according to KU.

Professor Kim has been a KU professor for over 35 years, serving as the dean of her department and founding member of the Global Institute for Japanese Studies. Her most recent work of charity is reflective of her dedication towards teaching. "KU was more than



PROVIDED BY KOREA UNIVERSITY

A photo of the commemorative ceremony held at room 223 of the College of Liberal Arts.

just a career for [Professor Kim]; it was her whole life," said Professor Yu Jae-jin (Department of Japanese Language and Literature). As a former student of Professor Kim and contributor to this donation, Professor Yu stated her resolve to "continue the legacy left by our honorable and beloved professor." 


Inclusivity and Fast Food – The Turkish Side of Anam

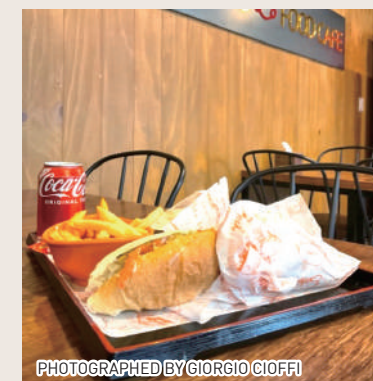
By Giorgio Cioffi gio12060@korea.ac.kr

When the monotony of daily classes feels too overwhelming, students love to look for amusing ways to spice up their lunch breaks. Anam has witnessed the opening of varied kinds of businesses through the years, but who would have thought to find authentically made Turkish and Azerbaijani food so close to campus?

Gold Kebab is Anam's latest gem where students of all cultures can comfortably have a quick snack without worrying about the type of meat used. In an interview with *The Granite Tower* (GT), Sokhib, a part-time worker of the store, explained that "many Muslim students often cannot leave the neighborhood" to enjoy Halal-friendly and tasty meals. For this reason, the Uzbek owner decided to come to the rescue by kick-starting his own activity in Anam.

The wide door of the venue opens to a comfortable space

with about a dozen seats immersed in an atmosphere of local tunes pleasantly playing in the background. Although it may be slightly small for a large gathering, it is the ideal place to grab a bite and meet a friend. If unsure, the safest and tastiest option for a first-time visitor is a "Turkish wrap," suggested Sokhib. "Essentially cheap and fast, but still very good." 



PHOTOGRAPHED BY GIORGIO CIOFFI

A picture of the interior.

KU Researchers Develop High-Sensitivity Harmful Indoor Gas Sensors

By Jung Haine hainejung@korea.ac.kr

A research team led by Professor Jeong Seong-Yong of the Institute for High Technology Materials and Devices developed high-sensitivity gas sensor design technology that can detect harmful airborne indoor gases. Material specifically targeted by this technology are aromatic hydrocarbons, which has proven to be damaging to respiratory or neurological health, namely being a cause for Sick House or Building Syndrome. They can be found in ubiquitous places such as house furniture or paint, but detection has long been difficult due to the compounds existing in very small concentrations, along with other gases that hinder accurate detection. The study was published in the international scientific journal "Nature Communications" on January 25, 2023.

The new technology is also believed to have positive implications for the future. Professor Jung told KU that

"managing indoor air quality is more important than anything, since people spend most of their time indoors," further adding that "since the developed sensor design technology is universally applicable to other different sensors, we expect it to be applied in various fields in air quality monitoring, mobile healthcare, and food freshness management in the future to make human life more convenient." 



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Lead author Professor Jeong Seong-Yong (left), Co-author Ph.D. student Moon Young Kook (right).

Introducing the Professors of KU!

By Yoon Sunho sunhoyoon@korea.ac.kr

The extensive role professors play in the lives of college students today extends beyond the realms of academia and education. This is no different at Korea University (KU), as they help to bridge the gap between mentorship and allow students to build meaningful connections on campus. As professors are an integral part of college life, it is crucial to gain insights into the far less discussed life of a professor. For the March issue of *The Granite Tower* (GT), GT's own winds of change blow as professors are featured for the first time in the *Voice on Campus* Section. A total of three professors were interviewed to find out more about their personal experiences as a professor, what inspired them in their career paths, what it has been like so far teaching in KU, and a word or phrase they think encapsulates KU best.

Professor Kim Bo-Hyun (Department of French Language and Literature)



PROVIDED BY PROFESSOR KIM BO-HYUN

It is hard to describe KU in one word, so I will go with a word combination and say "tiger-squirrel."

The symbol of the school is a tiger, but for me as a former KU student as well as for current KU students, the Squirrel Trail symbolizes KU best. I realized that I could satisfy my curiosity and find

convincing answers to the endless questions I had through reading. When I found out that this was the job that I could share the answers I found with my students and fellow colleagues, I was convinced that I could enjoy it even when I am old. There are many times when I feel rewarded; I am very happy when my students are passionate, when I find ideas or connections that at the end of the semester my classes were memorable and helpful. However, there are some inconveniences unlike the times when I was a student; I am now hesitant to eat alone at famous

restaurants near KU.

As for memorable incidents, quite a few students pop up in my mind, including those who frequently asked questions after class, those who wrote very good reports even though they did not speak up often in class, and even those who were deeply interested in social issues and were practical in their approach but did not get a good overall grade due to their attendance. Starting from this semester, I look forward to teaching face-to-face without masks on and feeling a closer bond with students.

Professor Beelee Chua (School of Electrical Engineering)



PROVIDED BY PROFESSOR BEELEE CHUA

I would describe KU as "a place of good memories," as it is full of fond memories that we can recall long after we leave.

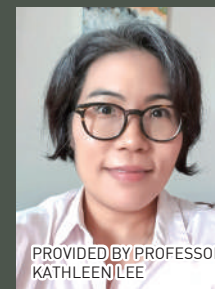
It was not exactly my plan to become a professor. I was a senior research engineer in a Silicon Valley biomedical start-up company. I came to Korea with my wife, who is Korean and also a professor at Ewha Womans University. She has always encouraged me to move into academia, and the School of

Electrical Engineering was very generous to allow me to join them back in 2013. Personally, I think being a professor comes with plenty of responsibilities, especially to the students. We have very privileged access to students because they are always observing and listening to us, both inside and outside of classrooms. Thus, I always feel that if someone's life becomes better or more bearable because of what I have said or shared, then it makes everything worthwhile.

It is always nice to receive teaching awards or have our research work featured in the press. But the most rewarding, warm, fuzzy, cozy feeling

has always come from students saying hi outside of the classroom - especially those who have already graduated long ago. They will drop an email, or send a contact request on LinkedIn, Instagram, or KakaoTalk, remembering something that I have said a long time ago. Recently, one of my former students stopped me on the streets of Kyoto just to say hello. It always feels good to know that they are moving on with their lives and found their niche in the world. It has been a very wonderful 10 years at KU, and I have met many wonderful professors, staff, and students. Going forward, I just hope that I can remember all the students' faces and names better.

Professor Kathleen Lee (Department of English Language and Literature)



PROVIDED BY PROFESSOR KATHLEEN LEE

I would use "unpredictable" to describe KU due to the many changes taking place.

As a student, I was fortunate to have taken

classes with amazing foreign language teachers from high school to university. They understood the struggles language learners face and created an engaging and instructive classroom atmosphere. Thankfully, I could combine my interest in linguistics and my desire to teach students in the ways my former teachers helped me, and I became a professor. It is rewarding when students tell me that

they can apply what they learned from me to their other classes and other areas of their life. I wish all students could see learning as meaningful even after the semester is over and after they graduate, and I would say I am moved when students become more autonomous and see each other as resources for learning instead of simply relying on the professor. **K**

Together to the Future: KU's New President Kim Dong-One

By Jung Haine hainejung@korea.ac.kr

Transform KU: Together to the Future." Professor Kim Dong-One (Business School) was elected as Korea University (KU)'s 21st president on December 22, 2022, with his term commencing at the same time as the 2023 spring semester. Both a KU alumni and seasoned leader, Professor Kim now plans to execute the pledges that demonstrate his prolific experience and knowledge in business and public relations, as well as direct practice in numerous leadership positions.

Last year, six different candidates were appointed by the Presidential Nominations Committee, and five public hearings were held for all candidates to propose and explain their pledges. Only three were chosen via a preliminary vote by the committee that consists of 30 school representatives from various divisions. Finally, Professor Kim's official appointment as the 21st president was confirmed by the Board of Directors of the KU Foundation. Professor Kim's proposals run the gamut of topics, with a central emphasis on resolving school finances and helping KU adapt to a contemporary landscape undergoing massive changes. Multiple public interests inevitably intersect, and understanding what to add or reduce is critical to meaningful progress.



Establishing a New University
Infrastructure

Professor Kim's expertise in administration and management guided his plans to see KU grow and adapt. The educational paradigm is changing, and universities must change, too. "As a business administration scholar who has studied labor-management relations, I think it is important that we establish a new management strategy for these turbulent times, to create a new model for how the organization of our university will survive and continue to thrive," Kim explained. He zeroed in on the particular issue of finance management, identifying that the problem can be attributed to the university's limited sources of revenue.

KU's traditional practice of overreliance on student tuition will soon become an unsustainable means to support the university. KU's current rate of financial dependence on tuition

is about 53 percent, quite high compared to advanced universities in the United States (U.S.) where tuition reliance rates are only 15 to 20 percent, according to Professor Kim. Sources besides tuition include donations, profitable businesses, research funds, and technology transfer start-ups, but KU has not been able to branch out to such sources yet.

Expanding attention to students of more various generations, increasing access to online learning, recruiting more foreign students, and increasing support for student businesses are ways that he anticipates will both diversify sources of revenue and increase school adaptability. Professor Kim also plans to enhance KU's affiliated institutions like the Institute of Foreign Language Studies, the University Museum and Press, as well as strengthen the autonomy of



PHOTOGRAPHED BY YUN SUNWOO
| KU's 21st president, Kim Dong-One.

independent colleges. "When organizations last a long time, bureaucracy is bound to become rooted. This leads to the establishment of all kinds of regulations used to ensure fairness, which eventually become large impediments to any college attempts to try something new," Kim said. By dismantling the conservative infrastructures of the past as such, Professor Kim envisions KU as an institution best adapted to modern times - versatile, liberal, and full of more potential towards excellence.



Student and Academic Affairs

Financial management is crucial to provide the groundwork for more opportunities and an overall better university experience for students and staff. "Once we secure other forms of revenue, the conflict between students and school headquarters regarding tuition fees will decrease, and if the school's finances improve, various research environments will improve significantly," Kim said.

Other policies that he plans to implement include student-designed online courses and the *Class Pairing* system, both of which reveal the

importance he finds in the integrative nature of problem-solving that is required in the modern world. In student-designed online courses, students will be able to practice more autonomy in studying that aligns with a broader interest as well as be given credit. "Problems in society are not confined [to just one discipline.] The coronavirus disease (COVID-19), for example, is related to business, economics, medicine, and bioengineering. So, I want to give students the opportunity to design their curriculums, for those who wish to study based on problems that include multiple academic disciplines," Kim said. Similarly, the class pairing system will allow students to major in two different fields, with different assigned professors who pair courses for them. Both policies would help facilitate a broader application and integration of classroom knowledge that tends to stay compartmentalized.

In addition, the *Bidding* system will help alleviate the strain of course registration. Course registration often feels like a war to many students, with many left dissatisfied with the results due to the competitive scramble for both popular elective courses as well as required courses. But under the bidding system, students will be able to assign a score to the courses they prioritize starting from an initial 1,000 points.



International KU

Professor Kim additionally plans to increase the number of English courses, making classes more accessible for students from abroad. He is open to more foreign students coming to study


at KU as well as making KU become a more international, inclusive college campus. "As we have experienced, some foreign students are not as well-prepared...and they have trouble keeping up in classes," Kim said. "I believe that we should now make more proactive efforts to recruit more qualified international students so that we could have more excellent students [and improve KU's standing.]"

“

I think that there are two pillars of the KU spirit – first, altruism...and second, *ho-yeon-ji-gi*...

I want to tell KU students to think big and aim high.

”

The love that Professor Kim holds for KU is evident. "I think that there are two pillars of the KU spirit - first, altruism, pursuing a greater cause for the nation and humanity, and second, *ho-yeon-ji-gi*, exhibiting generosity, thinking big, and not getting absorbed in narrow viewpoints," Kim said. "I want to tell KU students to think big and aim high." KU's 21st president Kim Dong-One will make the most of his efforts to ensure that members of the KU community are granted the right tools to thrive in optimal environments and realize the school's motto of "Liberty, Justice, Truth" to its fullest extent. 

Mental Health

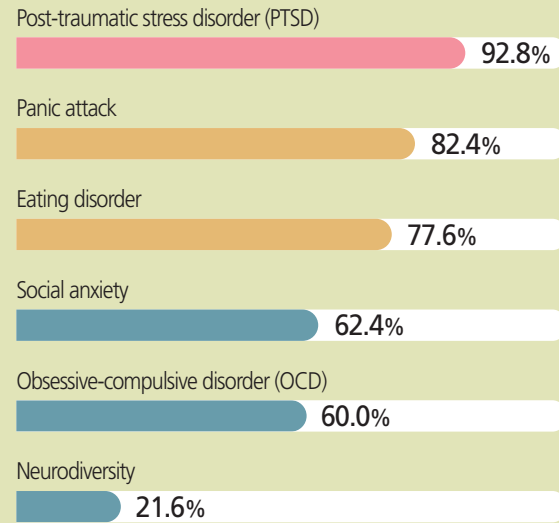
— How Much Do Students Know?



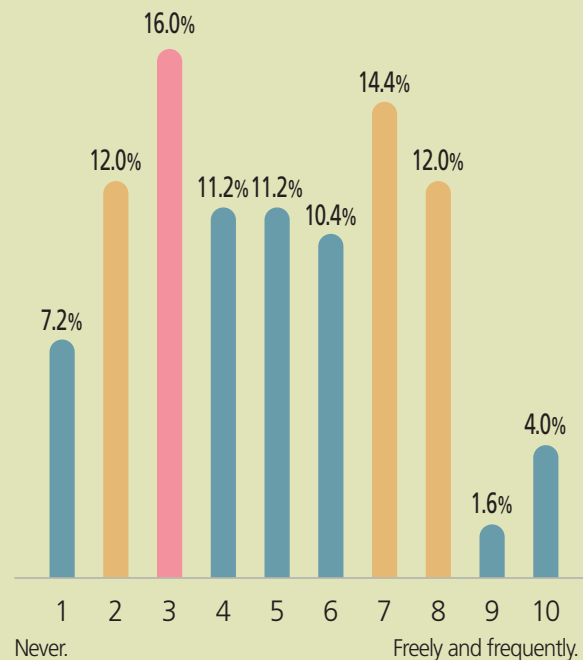
By Giorgio Cioffi gio12060@korea.ac.kr

Experiencing stress and anxiety is a frequent cause of concern for teenagers and college students. Adolescence and young adulthood are times of radical change due to the exposure to new surroundings, growing expectations from society, and pressuring ambitions. Regrettably, many face challenges to their mental health and have to find their way around them in solitude. This is because, despite its prevalence, mental discomfort remains a major taboo topic in numerous parts of the world. Yet, in recent years, Korea has started welcoming new viewpoints on similarly unspoken subjects, arguably through the influence of social media as a tool for cultural exchange. For this current issue, *The Granite Tower* (GT) conducted a survey among 125 students at Korea University (KU) to discover how social networks impacted their mental health awareness, and how much they know about it.

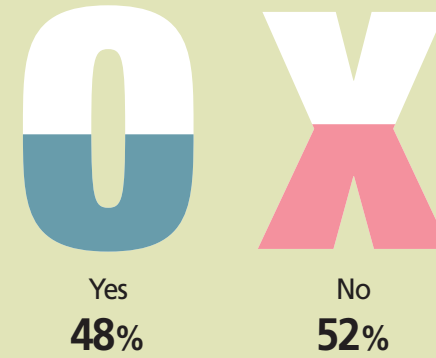
Q1. Select the terms you are familiar with from the following.



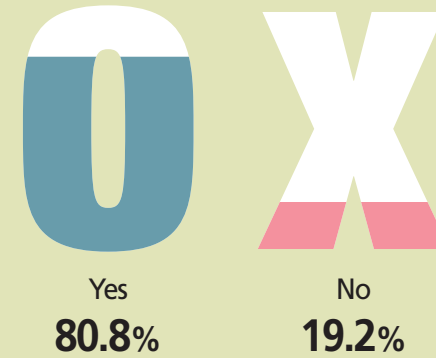
Q2. Rate on a scale of 1 to 10 how often you think close friends talk about suffering from any kind of mental distress or discomfort.



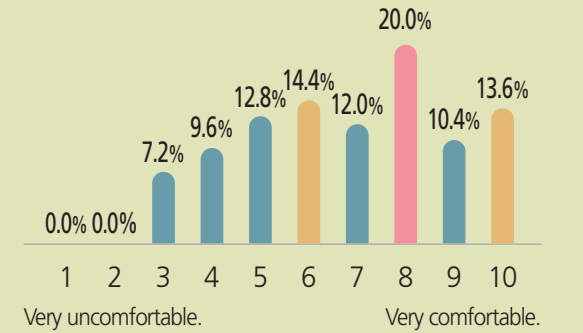
Q3. I have experienced severe anxiety or occasional intense panic attacks before.



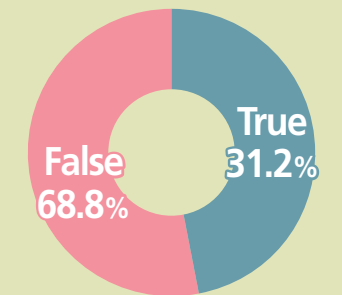
Q5. My parents would support my decision to meet a therapist.



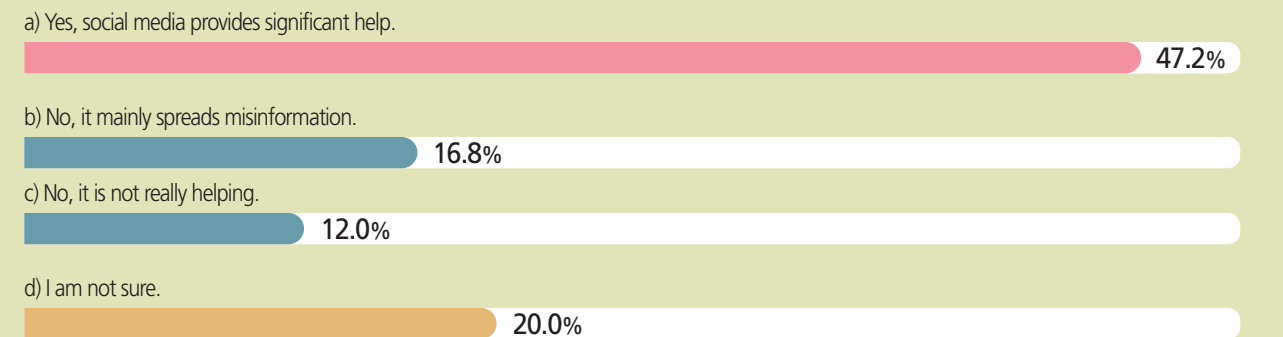
Q4. Rate the following statement on a scale of 1 to 10. "I would feel comfortable seeking professional advice."



Q6. I would rather look up my symptoms online instead of seeking professional counseling.



Q7. Select the answer that most closely reflects your opinion about the following statement. "Social media is helping young people come to realize the abuses they have faced or are still experiencing."



Discover English-Language Clubs and Organizations at KU!

By Son Jiho | json22@korea.ac.kr

The spring semester has just begun, and students are already looking for clubs to join. Although there are several clubs run in English, many of them still require Korean and due to language barriers, international students are not able to participate in them. Additionally, they face difficulty finding information on clubs they could apply to without speaking fluent Korean. As a result, many international students at Korea University (KU) find it challenging to get involved in school activities. However, there are some clubs without any language barriers that they can freely participate in, too.

A staggering 91.3 percent of KU students are local, so many of the clubs are understandably focused on Korean students and are offered in Korean. Unfortunately, this naturally limits the opportunity for non-Korean speakers to join clubs that trigger their interests. Also, their university life is restricted to activities offered in English, which are sparse, making it challenging to enjoy unique university club activities such as membership training (MT)s. Nevertheless, there are several clubs international students should keep an eye on, and the following are a few examples of such clubs.

The Granite Tower (GT) - Korea's First Collegiate English Newspaper

Founded in 1954, GT stands as Korea's oldest English collegiate newspaper. GT is fully student-led and aims to deliver hard-hitting, viral topics to its readers. To do this, reporters at GT conduct research and interviews about different topics and write articles that are published in monthly magazines. GT has strict deadlines in order to be on time for publication, so work may seem challenging. However, not only do the members earn scholarships, but they

also enhance their writing skills and gain a grasp of how the printing process occurs.

Furthermore, GT reporters participate in a variety of activities, such as covering the Annual Ko-Yon Games from press seats, conducting interviews with distinguished alumni, and experiencing friendly get-togethers with fellow reporters. The current editor-in-chief, Yun Sunwoo ('21, Business Administration) explains that GT does not simply look for the "best" writers, but rather writers with potential and grit. She adds that anyone with a passion for writing and a knack for creativity is welcome to join, and those who are interested in joining GT can check the GT Instagram page during the recruitment period (@thegrانيتower).

Release Your Thoughts at KUDC

Korea University Debate Club (KUDC) is an English debate club that is open to anyone who loves discussions and critical thinking. It is part of the Korea Inter-

varsity Debate Association (KIDA) which includes collegiate debate clubs across Korea. Members of KUDC participate in regional, national, and international debate tournaments to further polish their debate skills. Members gather in regular sessions every Tuesday and Thursday at 7:00 P.M. and conduct practice rounds of debates. On other occasions, upperclassmen with impressive debate records are invited to give lectures about strong and persuasive debate skills. Without a doubt, members of KUDC are given invaluable opportunities to enhance their skills to articulate their ideas in English.

Go Dabin ('21, International Studies), the leader of KUDC, says that the club consists of a wonderful atmosphere for those with a passion for the art of debate and welcomes anyone with dedication to enter the club. Students interested in KUDC can apply through a Google form found in *Everytime*, *Koreapas*, and their Instagram page (@kudc_official) during recruitment period. Selected applicants are then called for an online interview and accepted interviewees will be contacted and added to the group chat. Anyone who has a passion for debate and seeks improvements should submit their application fast!

Make Friends From All Around the World in LECA

The leader of the Language Exchange Communication Association (LECA), Kim Dongkyun ('20, Cyber Defense), describes that LECA is a club where students get an opportunity for language exchange. Students gather weekly, where international and Korean



PROVIDED BY LIM DONGYUN
| Members of LECA after a language exchange session.

students form groups to have dinner, picnics, or drink together. The club also goes on an MT every semester, where international students can fully enjoy a uniquely Korean experience with their fellow club mates. Through the activities, LECA forms an international environment for students to share different languages and cultures. Therefore, students who are open-minded, motivated to share their unique cultures, and down to spend some quality time with one another are suitable for joining this club. Students who are interested in joining should submit a form which can be found in LECA's Instagram bio @ku_leca.

Just KUZ - Publish a Zine


Just Korea University's Zine, or *Just KUZ*, is an up-and-coming club for students who enjoy creative writing. The club focuses on publishing a "zine," which is a short-form literary magazine including varying pieces, from literature to reviews to comics. Not only that, but *Just KUZ* also aims to promote student diversity and creativity with a global mindset; thus, international students would be a great addition to the club.

The editor-in-chief of *Just KUZ*, Naama Schoneveld ('20, Linguistics), welcomes anyone who wants a creative outlet and the urge to try new things



PROVIDED BY NAAMA BENAMY SCHONEVELD
| Logo of *Just KUZ*.

weekly. Students interested in *Just KUZ* can apply through an application form, which can be found in their Instagram bio @justkuzine. The initial application submission period is February 27 to March 15. This semester, *Just KUZ* is recruiting for various positions including design, writing, and editing the zine. However, regardless of position, all members attend the weekly meetings where the content is selected and edited before the issue is printed and distributed. On the publication day, all the pieces come together to create a complete zine under one theme. Further inquiries can be made through their official Instagram page.

Some international students find it difficult to take an active part in school life due to the limited clubs offered to them. Despite this, there still are great clubs in KU offered in English where students not only can enrich their university experiences but make valuable friends that last forever. Also, with the current trend, it is expected that there will be a wider range of clubs that international students could choose from in a few years. Therefore, students should not hesitate to enjoy their youth and create great connections through interesting, fun club activities at KU. 



PHOTOGRAPHED BY YUN SUNWOO

| Reporters and the Board of Editors of GT after an item meeting.

Meet the Reporters!



Naama Benamy Schoneveld, Senior Reporter

My name is Naama Benamy Schoneveld and I am a junior in the Linguistics department who is also double majoring in English Language and Literature. I have a fat orange cat named Batata and an affinity for books and art galleries. I am very passionate about languages and would like to eventually teach English in Korea based on the holistic approach. This semester I hope to write thought-provoking articles about topics and ideas not many people have been exposed to.



Jeon Hye Seo, Senior Reporter

Hello GT readers! My name is Jeon Hye Seo and I'm a junior in English Language and Literature major. I love learning languages and especially, I am interested in studying natural language processing, which is the reason why my secondary major is Computer Engineering! Thus, I hope to develop my coding skills this year! (and write wonderful GT articles for sure ;))



Jung Haine, Junior Reporter

Hi! My name is Haine, and I'm a sophomore majoring in media & communication. I'm passionate about learning, especially regarding the humanities and social sciences. Finding different ways to understand and dissect culture and phenomena is really fun. I love reading, writing, listening to, playing or discovering music, learning languages, noodles etc. I look forward to writing about diverse topics for the magazine and reporting KU news this semester!!



Park Jaewon, Junior Reporter

Hi! My name is Park Jaewon, and I'm an Economics major that loves social science and history. I also love poking my head into different events all around KU, so you'll often see me in GT's school news section :) My favorite pastimes are gaming, reading comics, and taking good, long naps. I joined GT out of my passion for writing and am very excited to contribute to the magazine. I strive to bring fresh and interesting content that our readers would enjoy!



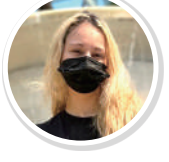
Yoon Sunho, Senior Reporter

Hi! My name is Sunho and I'm currently a sophomore majoring in English Language and Literature. My hobbies include reading and café hopping, and I also recently got into crocheting! This semester, I am really excited to join the Photography division, and I will give it my best to contribute to fun and interesting content in the upcoming GT issues!



Park Hyun Seo, Senior Reporter

Hi! My name is Park Hyun Seo and I am currently a senior reporter at GT. I'm majoring in International Studies. I love cats, spaghetti, and books:) I can't believe this is already my third semester at GT! I wish to live my life to the fullest this semester, writing more interesting articles and making fun memories.



Ekin Sevinc, Junior Reporter

Hi! My name is Ekin, a Linguistics student. Currently, I am a junior reporter at GT! My hobbies are oil painting, knitting, discovering new music, and dancing(trying to learn). Joining GT is one of the best decisions I have ever made because everyone is friendly and helpful. I hope more students will be interested in joining the GT family in the future! Let's have a fun and productive semester together~



Son Chaewan, Junior Reporter

Hi my name is Son Chaewan and I'm a junior reporter at GT. I'm currently a sophomore majoring in International Studies. Socializing and listening to music are what I love to do in my free time. My favorite song is "Stereo Hearts". You must listen to this song! I'm so excited to see my article published in GT magazine. I hope to contribute to future issues with great content!




Giorgio Cioffi, Junior Reporter

Hi! My name is Giorgio and I am majoring in Linguistics. Language is not only an essential part of my studies and my role in this magazine, but it is also one of my biggest interests. I love spending time learning foreign languages to connect with different people and understand them. This semester I hope to explore this topic in more articles and be able to share a little bit of my fascination for it.



Son Jiho, Junior Reporter

(I am on the right) Hi! My name is Jiho Son and I'm currently majoring in Food Bioscience and Technology. My hobbies are visiting various restaurants and trying out new foods. Also, I like music and occasionally write my lyrics and record them. This semester, I hope to write about underground artists and hidden albums which I believe deserve more attention. 

When Criminals Are No Longer Criminals

— Lee Myung Bak Receives Clemency

By Park Jaewon jaewonpark02@korea.ac.kr

An unexpected new year's gift fell upon 1,373 prisoners last year. On December 28, 2022, the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) announced a round of special year-end pardons for multiple politicians and former high-ranking government officials. One of the pardoned politicians was former President Lee Myung Bak, who was initially sentenced to 17 years in prison for bribery and embezzlement. Special amnesty proposals are not new within South Korea, but they inevitably become a topic of debate whenever they occur. Its overarching influence on domestic politics makes any amnesty proposal an indicative *wind of change* for Korean society.



The 2022 year-end special pardons were issued under the authority of President Yoon Seok-yul, involving a number of high-profile individuals whose involvement in politics stretches back nearly three administrations. The most notable figure is former President Lee, who was convicted of accumulating roughly 43.9 billion KRW (Korean Won)



PROVIDED BY BBC
Former president Lee Myung Bak was granted amnesty through the 2022 year-end special pardons.

worth of funds through bribery and embezzlement. The clemency effectively exempted him from his sentence and the eight billion KRW (Korean Won) fine that he was required to pay, reported the *British Broadcasting Corporation* (BBC). The pardons also included core members of the impeached ex-President Park Geun-hye administration and ex-Governor of South Gyeongsang Kim Kyung-soo, who was arrested for manipulating public opinion in favor of former President Moon Jae-in. These pardon recipients were sentenced after a long and chaotic court battle over the past decade, so news of their release has naturally provoked severe backlash from their respective opposing forces. Unfortunately, this controversy has been a significant part of Korean politics for quite a while, its roots being traced back decades ago.

Pardons: Why Do They Exist?

The Amnesty Act was established in 1948 as the second-ever law passed by the Constituent National Assembly, making it one of the oldest legislations of South Korea's government. Despite its rich history, the nature of the law is a controversial one. Professor Cha Jina (School of Law) states that the president's power to overrule judicial rulings greatly contrasts with South Korea's principles of democracy, or rule of law. "The protocol dates back to the age of monarchies when kings' orders trumped decisions by any other political instrument," remarks Professor Cha.

There are two main reasons special amnesty privileges exist under modern democracy. Firstly, amnesty grants can serve as a last-minute check for

potential legal errors and save wrongfully convicted individuals. Secondly, amnesties are claimed to be an effective tool at resolving delicate political or diplomatic issues. For instance, a nation may wish to pardon a foreign official or representative instead of pressing charges to avoid unnecessary international conflict. In either scenario, however, amnesties are meant to be exercised in very specific emergency cases.



PROVIDED BY MBC
Professor Chang Young-Soo.

The Reality of Political Pardons

Sadly, the reality in South Korea is that pardons are blatantly handed out by the thousands, specifically to white-collar criminals of power. Of the nearly 1,400 prisoners released on the 28th, only 24 were not convicted of political or election-related crimes. Professor Chang Young-Soo (School of Law) states that this pattern of presidential clemencies is clearly a misuse of the special amnesty privilege. He points to how other advanced democracies that recognize presidential amnesties exercise that power in the most reserved sense possible. France pardoned on average four to five people per administration, while Germany granted clemency to just four convicts in total. "The United States



PROVIDED BY KBS
Professor Cha Jina.

(U.S.) presidents have pardoned only a couple hundred a year, and even that is considered too much," commented Professor Chang. "Pardoning thousands to hundreds of thousands is unheard of."

The scope of South Korea's clemencies is also a point of concern, as its leniency towards authority figures may provoke agitation among the public. An often-quoted justification for granting amnesties to politicians is its role of uniting the public by holistically selecting people from different ideological groups and pardoning them in a show of good will. The official press release of the MOJ also dictates public unity as their main reason behind the pardons. Politically calculated acts of generosity to evoke public fellowship have existed in the past, such as the clemency granted to North Korean agent Kim Hyon-hui in 1989. But calculating this increased level of "unity" is a difficult process, meaning its justifications rely on a fuzzy and sometimes arbitrary metric.

This ambiguity in national unity is particularly harder to justify when compared to the tension that may arise from the people's sense of

disillusionment and anger as they witness the offenders being released. "When people are continuously exposed to these executive officials and public figures being pardoned for their crimes, even though no concerns were raised over the fairness or legitimacy of the ruling process, they may start to feel that the law is not as fair as they think," states Professor Cha. South Korea saw four out of their last eight presidents be convicted, sentenced, and pardoned for their crimes. When exceptions become the norm, people's expectations of the legal system could fade. The biggest threat that political pardons possess to South Korea is their potential to provoke distrust of the government and the democratic system.

Criticisms of the special amnesty protocols have prompted many to suggest new restrictions that block a president's ability to grant special pardons. However, Professor Chang notes that the law itself is not at fault. The role of the amnesty protocol is a limited but an important one and hindering its range of use is contradictory to the purpose of its existence. Instead, it should be the president's misuse of power that is scrutinized. "Rather than discussing the justness of the law, we should be assessing the people who abuse it," remarks Professor Chang. He argues that the fundamental solution to this repeated issue of clemency abuse is for people to be vigilant about the actions of the representatives that they have elected. Amnesty grants create ripples that stretch beyond the quarrels of party politics. It is why each one warrants the watch of the public's eye.



South Korea's Dire Shortage of Pediatric Specialists

By Yoon Sunho sunhoyoon@korea.ac.kr

Taking a number and waiting in line has become the norm in neighborhood pediatric clinics in South Korea as the country suffers from a lack of pediatricians. This shortage has troubled the nation for quite some time, and it is believed to be the result of Korea's rapidly declining birth rate. As a result, medical students are beginning to exclude pediatrics from their choices of majors, and interns are no longer applying for pediatric residencies out of fear that they will be out of jobs in days to come. It can be observed from this that low birth rates and the declining popularity of pediatrics are negatively affecting each other in a vicious cycle.

Medical students' application rate for pediatrics has been on a gradual decline over the years. According to the Korean Hospital Association and the Ministry of Health and Welfare (MOHW), the application rate across the nation was 101 percent in 2018, meaning that there were more applicants compared to the number of openings. However, it faced the most severe plunge across 26 medical specialties as application rates fell to 80 percent in 2019 and eventually dropping to 15.9 percent in 2023. Consequently, as

the situation worsens, major hospitals such as Gachon University Gil Hospital suspended pediatric hospitalization, while Gangnam Severance Hospital and Ewha Womans University Mokdong Hospital all either reduced or suspended night shifts as well as emergency room (ER) treatments for pediatric patients. In other words, it is getting increasingly difficult for children to receive the medical attention they need at local hospitals.

Delving into the Reasons

Against the backdrop of sharply declining birth rates in South Korea, the field of pediatrics in medical science is becoming less sought-after, with general demand gradually decreasing. In general, practitioners, pay doctors, resident doctors, and clinical professors at university hospitals are all in a dire crisis. According to the *Korea JoongAng Daily*, only 33 resident doctors signed up to

specialize in pediatrics across 64 hospitals nationwide in 2023, barely filling up 30 percent of the maximum capacity for the quota of 207 vacancies. It was also mentioned that Lim Hyun-taek, chairman of the Korean Pediatric Association (KPA), commented that "Medical students say they avoid pediatrics not because they do not like the department but because there is no future."

One difference that sets pediatricians apart from doctors in other majors is how they must handle young patients instead of adults. Professor Ryoo Eell (Gachon University, College of Medicine) mentions that acts of doing oral check-ups or using the stethoscope on children is especially challenging as children oftentimes are unable to fully articulate their pain verbally. However, pediatrics is a relatively underpaid medical field because doctors can only receive appointment fees, and all other additional fees are covered by



PROVIDED BY KOREA JOONGANG DAILY
Children's ER treatment is becoming less available.



PROVIDED BY PROFESSOR RYOO EELL

Professor Ryoo Eell

Korea's National Health Insurance Service (NHIS). Professor Ryoo says that the system does not provide doctors with any compensation for the time spent in answering various concerned parents' questions. He also adds that pediatrics is the only department that has faced a decrease in medical expenses, and average costs have dropped 24.7 percent over the last ten years. Hence, due to pediatrics' lack of tangible merits, doctors are gradually showing a preference for specializing in fields that are the *cash cows* of medicine, such as cosmetic surgery and dermatology.

It's Not Just Pediatrics

This shortage in specialists does not only exist in the field of pediatrics. Coined to be the "Major 5" of healthcare specialties, the vital care departments, namely internal medicine, surgery, obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics, and psychiatry are most directly related to saving human lives. However, these fields are currently facing a shortage of doctors as they are deemed to be more *burdensome* than other medical fields, hence viewed unfavorably by current medical students. Professor Ryoo raised an example that recently became well-known across news outlets of how a medical staff was slapped in the face when

explaining to a guardian. He says that this kind of treatment is not rare for all healthcare providers, including nurses, radiologists, and clinicians in all departments. He also stated that doctors in the fields of clinical practice that directly deal with life and death in Korea face more criminal lawsuits compared to in other countries, which is why young doctors are avoiding clinical care in general.

A shortage of doctors in these indispensable fields might lead to more patients not receiving the medical attention they deserve in time, and it may lead to unforeseen consequences. One such example would be the unfortunate death of a nurse at Asan Medical Center who suffered a cerebral hemorrhage during her shift. Even though Asan Medical Center is regarded as one of the largest general hospitals in Korea, she was not able to be treated or receive surgery immediately as there was no neurosurgeon available.

Embracing Changes

According to the *Korea JoongAng Daily*, the Korean Pediatric Society (KPS) called for financial support from the government to cover the costs of running more pediatric ERs and neonatal and pediatric intensive care units (ICUs), while also asking for a raise in inpatient costs. Subsequently, according to the *Korea Biomedical Review*, Cho Kyoo-hong, the Minister of the MOHW, recently announced that they are currently considering increasing the enrollment quota in medical schools. However, the idea of expanding the freshmen student body is facing backlash from the medical community as it may not be able to solve the root cause at hand.

Professor Ryoo added on to this, saying that the increase in quota may backfire as it seems to be overlooking the fact that it takes around 12 years for a doctor to be a properly trained specialist; in other words, the current problem faced in Korea's healthcare is not a lack of general practitioners but a lack of professionals specializing in fields such as emergency medicine. He hopes to bring to attention that because of the low fee-for-service in pediatrics, many specialized medical equipment used by pediatricians are old and outdated compared to other departments.

The dropping of crude birth rates, which have once again reached an all-time low of 4.5 births per 1000 people according to *Yonhap News Agency*, reveals that the various financial support schemes provided by the government are ineffective. Though the shrinking birth rates may be to blame for the *fall* of pediatrics, it also undoubtedly brings out concerns along the lines of "who would want to give birth in this condition where healthcare is not guaranteed for my child?" Therefore, there is an urgent need for the Korean government and relevant authorities to quickly embrace the undeniable *winds of change* in Korea regarding the specialization preferences of doctors, and eventually come up with relevant policies to help resolve the issue at hand.



PROVIDED BY YONHAP NEWS AGENCY

Long lines at a local children's hospital.

The Art and Knowledge of Generative AI



By Jung Haine | hainejung@korea.ac.kr

During 2022 and the years preceding, generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) has made significant strides in experimentation and development. Generative AI refers to the type of AI that generates images and texts by responding to a specific text prompt entered by a human user. This technology is entering a new domain of human activity, and is expected to be the force that causes many notable changes. These changes are projected to affect the work of creative professionals, artists, and knowledge workers in particular.

OpenAI, an AI research and deployment company that is a pioneer in the field of Generative AI, has had breakthrough developments such as the visual art generator DALL-E. In November 2022, the company released an open-source chatbot program called ChatGPT. ChatGPT can elucidate concepts in simple terms, write five-paragraph essays based on a prompt, and write poems and songs in a designated style. OpenAI is facing both criticism and anticipation from the public, from artists and academics' respective wariness of AI's appropriation of original artwork and potential threat to academic integrity, to the promising innovation and efficiency of a chatbot that could replace the search engine.

How a Generative AI Generates

Generative models are trained and systemized to learn by example via input data in order to imitate human judgment.

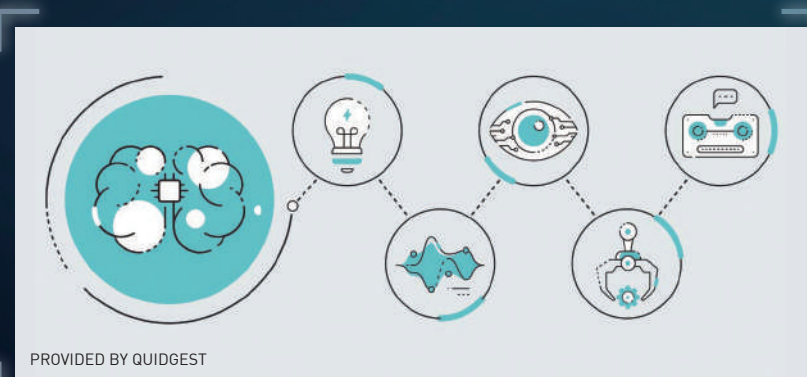
Whereas discriminative models, which learn to discriminate between different data instances, are used for identification, generative models take a more complex route to produce new data instances.

Professor Lee Sujin (Artificial Intelligence, Sejong University) explained that the basic model of generative AI in creating images called Generative Adversarial Network (GAN) consists of two networks, the Generator and the

Discriminator. The objective of the generative model (G) is to generate near-real fakes and the objective of the discriminant model (D) is to determine whether the sample is fake or real. The ultimate goal of GANs, including these two models, is to generate data close to the 'distribution of real data.'

Art Transcends the Artwork

Whether or not this discovery should be



PROVIDED BY QUIDGEST

AI imitates cognitive processes of the human.

viewed as a welcome revolution or a frightening infringement of creative human work, is dependent on the view one may have towards what makes the endeavor of art valuable. Due to machine learning, replication isn't necessarily at the crux of Generative AI, as it is unlike photography that directly replicates the image behind the lens. New media technologies revolutionized art in their own way, and AI technology will follow in its own.

Art transcends immediate sensory gratification, existing within human contexts; an identical pictorial structure does not guarantee the same artistic value. In the increasingly industrializing world of the 20th century and the subsequent burgeoning of replications, German philosopher and cultural critic Walter Benjamin coined the term *aura* to reflect how the specific time, cultural and social milieu makes each artwork truly valuable and particular. Another contextual value of art lies in the concurrent art scene, such as avant-garde art that breaks art traditions in innovative ways and defines new eras via new mediums, techniques, or concepts like Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain* (1917) that later inspired conceptual art of the 1960s.

AI art generators do not have the capacity to transcend the artwork, but only comply with human directions that help them do so. This in turn empowers humanity in this newfound method to deliver and express. "Technology plays a very big role in art," commented Professor Lee, adding that it helps humans go beyond the limits of their possibilities to feel and express. "Tools for expression, starting from the hand to the pencil and the brush, are now leading us to experience ranges of infinity with numbers 0 and 1." Art styles, such as oil painting, digital art, or



PROVIDED BY PROFESSOR LEE SUJIN

Professor Lee Sujin

watercolor, and distinctive styles of artists can be rearranged and reproduced, but curation of elements of the final work that gives it intention, context and social reverberations is the role of the human artist.

Professor Lee suggests that one impact of AI technology on art would be the emergence of a new movement, forming a new genre of art. Generative AI will not threaten visual art but rather, challenge and diversify its scene in new ways.

Knowledge Transcends Information

Current AI lacks the singular human existence and agency that fundamentally informs both the input and output of creative work. This applies to the core skills that ChatGPT or other text or information generators are capable of. The human capacity for knowledge generation is not archival; it can be impulsive whereas AI can only be logical, and it can be orderly whereas AI can only be nonsensical.

When employed as an information algorithm, ChatGPT will greatly accelerate information search and collection, proving to be a helpful tool for knowledge workers or students whose work requires

information gathering. But lines may be blurred between information and original thought. Verbal arguments or expressions are products of each person's personal experiences, social status, and repertoire of acquired frameworks of understanding both academic and practical, continuously bringing idiosyncrasy and novelty to constitute the different patchworks of discourse. Through language, certain truths are unveiled, newly produced, and come to acquire a new political, social, or cultural force. Generative AI utilizes the human reservoir of discourse to produce useful answers, but it cannot be a truly pioneering force.

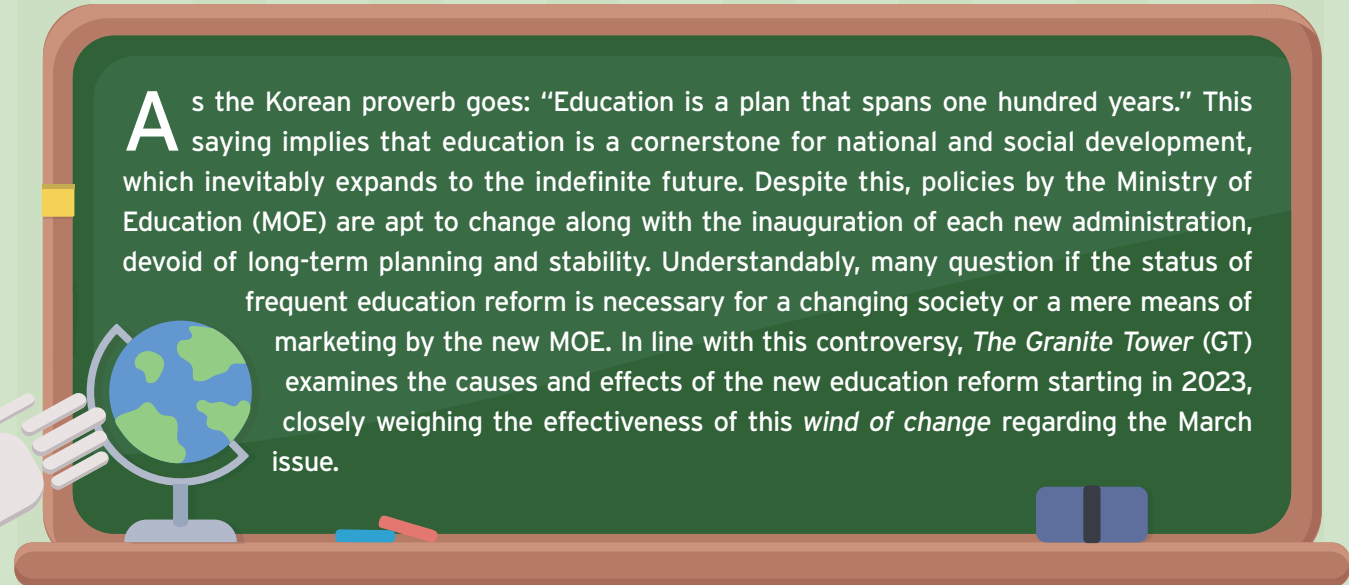
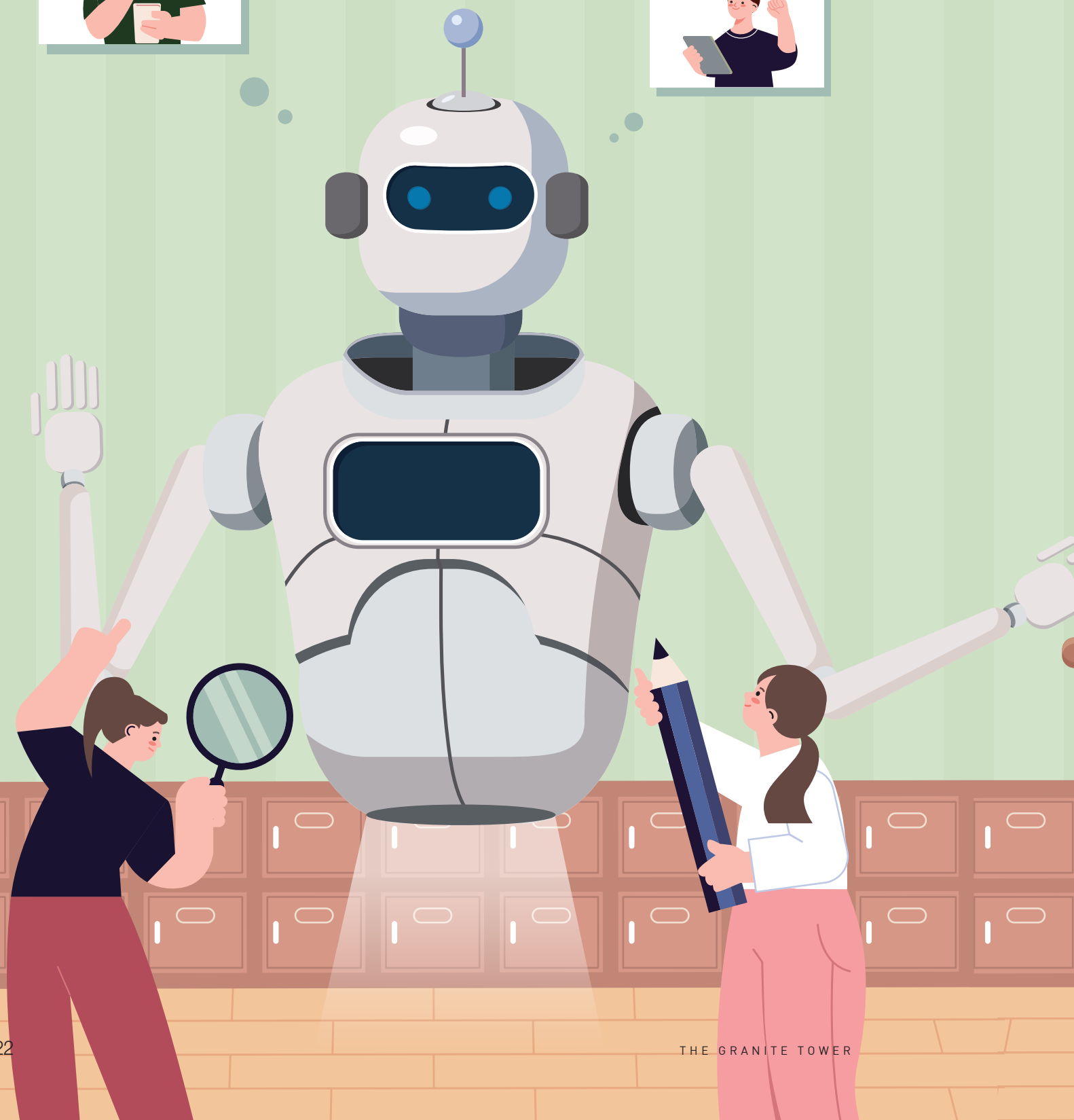
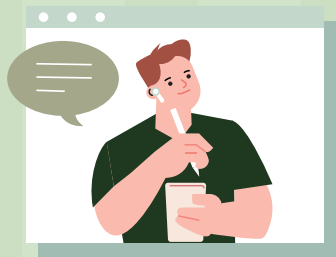
But that does not mean that ChatGPT is just another overhyped Silicon Valley ambition. As Professor Lee stated that AI techniques will "lead a paradigm shift in arts," they may also shift the paradigm of creativity and creation. Because knowledge as humans know it transcends information and formalities, language-generating AI will challenge those in education to reevaluate assigning and grading written reports and essays as a process that necessitates experience and connective learning. This may further challenge the boundaries of plagiarism, original thinking, and the human episteme.

Generative AI strongly showcases that human art and knowledge are both contextually formed and interacted with, requiring human intention and agency. The art and knowledge of generative AI is understood backwards, leaving more questions than answers about the legacy and future of human work. There will be even further advances in this new field in 2023, and deliberation, not fear or trivialization, is the required attitude for the advances of generative AI. **K**

Korea's 2023 Education Reform

By Jeon Hye Seo doupari@korea.ac.kr
By Son Chaewan makeitshine@korea.ac.kr

As the Korean proverb goes: "Education is a plan that spans one hundred years." This saying implies that education is a cornerstone for national and social development, which inevitably expands to the indefinite future. Despite this, policies by the Ministry of Education (MOE) are apt to change along with the inauguration of each new administration, devoid of long-term planning and stability. Understandably, many question if the status of frequent education reform is necessary for a changing society or a mere means of marketing by the new MOE. In line with this controversy, *The Granite Tower* (GT) examines the causes and effects of the new education reform starting in 2023, closely weighing the effectiveness of this *wind of change* regarding the March issue.





Hyundai Motor Group cooperates with KU

During a press conference on January 5, 2023, Lee Jun Ho, the Minister of Education, declared that “2023 would be the founding year for a qualified education reform.” Commencing the change with firm ambitions, the MOE released the 2023 schemes that accompany four major entities: students, families, local communities, and industries. Each section embarks on meticulous policies; for instance, in terms of local communities, the MOE promised to make school facilities available for public use. Some of these policies were experimentally implemented in model schools in 2022, and in 2023, President Yoon Suk Yeol’s administration is attempting to extend the reformations nationwide.

Changes at Korea University

This Korean education reform has brought both subtle and obvious changes to universities, particularly in regard to industry connections. The MOE has emphasized learner-

centered education with the aim to produce an educated population that can respond more flexibly to social changes. Korea University (KU) has not been an exception in experiencing the effects of this reform.

The first change in KU has been to establish a new department in the College of Engineering, the Department of Smart Mobility, which has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Hyundai Motor Company. It will operate as a specialized, student-orientated department that offers five-year joint bachelor’s and master’s degree programs. Full scholarships will be provided to all students for five years and, after graduation, they are guaranteed positions in research and development (R&D) teams at Hyundai Motor Company. Outstanding students will also be supported to go to doctoral programs abroad. According to the *Hyundai Motor Group Newsroom*, the President of Hyundai Motor Company Jang Jae-

hoon announced that he would provide unstinting support to educate globally renowned engineering leaders based on cooperation with KU.

Additionally, the School of Psychology signed an MOU with the Seoul Mental Health Welfare Center (SMHWC) on August 4, 2022. This MOU was signed to provide professional services that include programs for rehabilitating young people and improving mental health awareness. This cognitive rehabilitation program would provide support and treatment for young people experiencing psychosis for the first time, which is in line with the government’s education reform in terms of providing students with highly personalized education. According to a press release from KU, the Dean of the School of Psychology Choi Kee Hong stated that the Department of Psychology will be able to contribute to the promotion of mental health for local community members and support future talent as well.

KU School of Law also introduced a course called “Advanced Program for Data and Artificial Intelligence (AI) Law” in the fall semester of 2022. The development of information and communications technology (ICT), including the Internet of Things (IoT) and AI, has led to calls for significant changes to the legal system. Accordingly, KU Law School has started to run the Evolving Society

Evolving Law (ESEL) lecture, which is an open lecture on new legal issues in modern society. The Advanced Program for Data and AI Law course is part of the ESEL lecture, and it focuses on educating professionals on all legal issues related to data-driven digital transformation.

The 2023 Education Reform

The President Yoon administration has announced plans to introduce educational changes across the entire education spectrum, from preschools to lifelong education, with the goal to reshape student experiences, domestic education, local coexistence, and industries. One of the major policies for domestic education includes adopting *Neulbom* as an extracurricular activity for elementary schools. Similar to its dual meaning in Korean (“always spring” and “always nurturing”), this policy is designed to reduce the educational disparity between households. To guarantee the safety of the students from two-income families and enhance the quality of public education, children

will be able to stay at school until 8:00 P.M. on weekdays. These *Neulbom* schools will provide emotional support for children who would otherwise have to stay at home alone with no parental support. After selecting 200 model schools to implement the policy in January, the MOE declared its plans to establish it nationwide in 2025.

In terms of local and student-focused policies, the high school credit system (*Gogyehakjeom* in Korean) is anticipated to lead to a particularly significant change in education. This system, which was first promoted by former President Moon Jae-in in 2018, allows students to select the subjects they want and is required to take courses based on credits. Students will be able to take elective courses at different schools online and offline, and local universities and research institutes will be able to offer students a customized education rather than forcing them to take courses that do not match their interests.

The MOE insists that it is vital to

keep up with state-of-the-art ICT, stressing the particular importance of AI. With the emergence of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, computer skills have become necessary, and the MOE seems to be well aware of this requirement. To improve the digital adaptation skills of adolescents, digital tutors will be assigned to each school (apart from *Neulbom* schools). Introducing the tutors in digitally underprivileged locals initially, the MOE will host a software (SW) and AI camp. According to the MOE’s 2023 Education Reform report, they also promise to “support individual learning using information technology (IT) skills in order to enhance basic academic skills.”

Reasons for the Reform

Given the rapid changes facing Korean society, the government’s reform of public educational institutions and universities is not surprising. The most notable issue is the decrease in the number of elementary school students. According to a 2022 study by the Statistical Office, the number of

The Education Reform



Neulbom classes will be expanded.

elementary school students in 2026 is estimated to be about 2.2 million, a decrease of about 17.5 percent from 2.67 million in 2021. On October 31, 2022, the Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI) calculated the “Elementary School Downsizing Index” by predicting the number of enrolled students to see how many elementary schools will be at risk of closing or merging in 2025 compared to 2022. As a result, it was predicted that, by 2025, 1657 schools, or 26.3 percent of all elementary schools nationwide, would be in the high-risk group, i.e., likely to close or merge with another school if no measures are taken to attract students. But more importantly, when an elementary school is lost, it will cause serious harm to the surrounding community, gradually creating an inaccessible environment for the younger generation.

Thus, to solve the problem of the decreasing number of children, the government has tried to take a more

macroscopic approach, which has resulted in the expansion of *care education*. *Neulbom* classes will alleviate the burden of working parents by providing teachers who care for their students’ mental health issues. The classes will also strengthen protection measures for those who report school violence, creating a truly “caring” support system. Overall, the goal of the national government is to solve the low birth rate by providing educational welfare and creating a safer educational environment.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution has also undoubtedly influenced the proposed education reform. According to the World Economic Forum, AI will displace about 85 million jobs in 26 countries by 2025 but will create 97 million new jobs. Due to the rapid pace of digital transformation and the increase in demand for workers in related industries, the need to produce experts who understand and utilize AI

is rapidly increasing. According to Professor Kim Hyeoncheol (Department of Computer Science and Engineering), the knowledge and capacity to understand and design a new world in which everything is created on top of digital infrastructure is crucial for the development of good citizenship and reliable professionals. Thus, he emphasizes the need for AI and information education because they are the foundation for these skills and knowledge. Professor Kim believes that education on AI’s social impact and ethical issues is also needed so that people can be prepared for problems related to reliability, fairness, and safety.

In addition, the poor infrastructure in local areas is also a major factor that has encouraged the structural reform of universities. Although the number of students who feel the need to go to universities has decreased due to the increase in online schools and extended colleges, the reality of rampant insolvent universities in local areas should not be ignored. The decrease in the school-age population, the increase in the population density in the capital area, and poor university management, including cases of corruption, have led to a crisis for many local universities. At the first National Assembly Future Forum hosted by the National Assembly Futures Institute, Park Byeong-seok, speaker of the National Assembly, said that this crisis could lead to the



Professor Kim Hyeoncheol

disappearance of a region and, if local universities are closed, local culture would be at risk and the socio-economic divide between areas in Korea would be aggravated. The government’s policies in response to this, such as promoting financial investment to enhance the competitiveness of local universities, need to be effective.

Education Reform Sparking Controversy

Despite the government’s ambition for revolutionizing education, still, there are many doubtful. Since some of the policies seek to transform the entire education system, some resistance has arisen among students, teachers, and parents. For example, the newly introduced extracurricular activities have received backlash. According to the *Korean Economy*, many parents and students are concerned that keeping children at school until 8:00 P.M. in the *Neulbom* system could be child abuse. A parent surnamed Han stated that “My child feels stressed

and oppressed when staying late at school” because students have to spend most of their time inside small, enclosed classrooms. Teachers at schools offering extracurricular care are also worried about their welfare, given that they have to stay until late at night. Ko Na Yeun, who currently works as a caring school teacher at Yeomchang Elementary School, explained that “So far, changes in policies have required sacrifice on the teachers’ part rather than providing us with a systematic method to follow. I hope the government does not repeat this precedent.” Public discourse may be needed for the successful implementation of *Neulbom*, she added. Thus, upcoming education policies should also consider the practicality for meticulous application in the field.

In addition, the reduction in the number of required core subjects in the curriculum has received scrutiny. The newly proposed credit system in

high school, *Gogyehakjeom*, has reduced the importance of Korean, mathematics, and English, which are entitled as the core subjects in Korean education. As reported by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development’s (OECD) report “Education at a Glance,” at 34 percent, South Korea was below the OECD average (40 percent) in terms of the number of hours that the three core subjects are taught. In addition, voices from the education field should never be neglected for effective education reform. Some professors argue that core subjects need to be strengthened to promote creative talent because neglecting basic subjects is likely to lead to a decline in academic performance. In line with this, Hwawon Middle School teacher Moon Hyun Sun stated that “most teachers believe this credit system is an impetuous decision because problems such as asking students to decide their future too early and accelerating the competition between



Is it okay to keep children at school until night?

peers based on grading systems have not been resolved yet.”

Moreover, some question the quality of AI-based extracurricular activities that require a dramatic increase in the number of AI tutors. Although the MOE aims to dispatch AI tutors nationwide by 2025, it is believed that it will be nearly impossible to produce the needed number in time. During an interview with the *Seoul Economy*, Minister Lee also mentioned that “Teachers are not yet sufficiently trained to proficiently educate students about AI.” This is likely to encourage students to increasingly rely on private education, widening the educational gap between students. Teachers have expressed similar opinions to Minister Lee. Lee Jin Suk, head of *Miraejeongbo*, a company that offers computer-related

extracurricular activities, also stresses the lack of trained personnel among regular teachers. “When AI classes are conducted in the regular curriculum, the effectiveness may be questionable due to the lack of quality and the dependence on private education will only increase.” Thus, the decision to implement this system in four years may be too hasty to ensure quality AI education.

Overcoming the Flaws

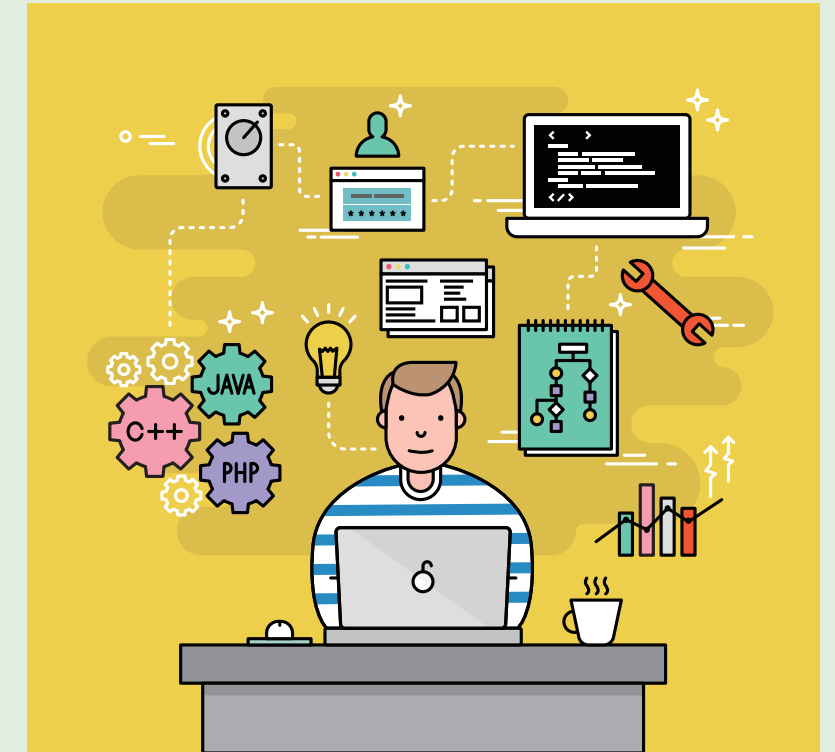
Moon stated that “Most students and teachers have been burdened by these changes because most of them are still pretty vague.” Then what should be done to overcome the drawbacks and maximize the advantages of this education reform? Most importantly, the education system should not be at the mercy of political ideology. In other words, the

education system should not get swept up in inter-party conflict. According to a 2020 study conducted by the Korea Institute of Curriculum and Evaluation, 78 percent of elementary and middle school teachers believed that the process of revising the national curriculum was “politically influenced.” Though it may be impossible to separate education from politics completely, politicians must reconsider whether the decisions they are making are truly for the students. Because schools should be a safe space for diversity and autonomy, education should escape the clutches of political restrictions.

There should also be greater awareness among teachers of their role in this reform. They should understand the potential changes in their roles and maintain an emotional connection with their students. Although AI may outperform human intelligence in the future, it will never outperform humans in terms of creativity, justice, or emotional intelligence. Teachers are essential in this respect in education, thus they must focus on guiding students by making emotional connections. Due to the development of information networks such as the Internet and smart devices, students are becoming active learners, and their motivation to study is considered a much more important factor in learning compared to the past. Accordingly, teachers have become guides for learning within the classroom rather


than just standing at the front and dictating information. Because their roles have changed, effort is needed to interpret and accept the new educational demands. Professor Kim believes that only human teachers will be able to comprehensively judge numerous situational contexts and fulfill the appropriate role of an educator. In other words, the ability to understand social contexts and make judgments about students will become more important.

Lastly, more investment is needed for the development of educational technology. In an interview with *Chosunilbo*, a parent raising an elementary school child in Gwangju said, “I had high expectations at first, but it was not easy to develop my child’s coding skills using only the classes held at school.” Education was not as detailed as expected in most schools where coding education was provided. Professor Kim believes that there will be a digital divide in the classroom between those who have received AI and information education and those who have not. This divide can later lead directly to a social and economic gap, eventually worsening the polarization of Korean society. Therefore, Professor Kim argues that the digital divide must be addressed at the national level and in public education so that all citizens can be educated equally. Big changes inevitably come at a cost. The government will have to invest more manpower and money to prepare a high-quality curriculum for each



school level. Facilities needed for AI education must be expanded across the nation before AI education can be fully established.

With the new education reform being officially announced in January 2023, halting this transformation of the education sector seems impossible. Education is a crucial component of a healthy country because it allows the public to analyze what is in front of them and learn from their mistakes. Because the younger generations are the future, their knowledge is what will drive social changes. Thus, the attention of the public is needed to ensure that the changes are positive, with students being put first. This includes the students of KU as well.

Although the entrance exams for KU students for 2023 have ended, close attention must be paid to the major changes occurring within the university. The government anticipates that this reform will improve the Korean education system and ensure that students can receive a high-quality education that keeps up with the changing times. 



PROVIDED BY KBS
| Lee Joo-ho, Minister of Education

Winds of Change



PHOTOGRAPHED BY YOON SUNHO

| Performance held by the Korea Cultural Heritage Foundation Arts Troupe on Seollal

Change is an inevitable part of who we are. It helps us to grow, stay motivated, and learn from our mistakes. Yet, because it is so prevalent in our everyday lives, it is easy to miss those precious moments of change in our lives. For the March issue, the Photo Division of *The Granite Tower* (GT) captured what "change" means for them, and the result is a combination of wonderfully eclectic moments of transformation.



PHOTOGRAPHED BY YOON SUNHO

| People queuing up to enter the Cheong Wa Dae Main Building



PHOTOGRAPHED BY YOON SUNHO

| The Blue House reception room, where the president and foreign guests meet



PHOTOGRAPHED BY YOON SUNHO

| The entrance of the presidential residence, Insumun, meaning those who walk through this gate live a long and blessed life

Yoon Sunho

For this month's photo essay, I remembered that Cheong Wa Dae, Korea's presidential office and residence for more than seven decades, opened its doors to the public for the first time in 74 years. Also known as the Blue House, it has become one of the newest attractions in Seoul since last year.

As I made my visit during the Lunar New Year holidays, I was lucky enough to stumble upon a Seollal-special traditional performance. Overall, inspired by the March issue's theme, I wanted to show Korea's own *winds of change* in the nation's history and presidency through pictures of the architecture unique to the Blue House. I also aimed to capture special moments of the enthralling performance put on by the Korea Cultural Heritage Foundation Arts Troupe at the heliport.



PHOTOGRAPHED BY JEON HYE SEO

| Chandelier Blessing Hopes for the Prayers



PHOTOGRAPHED BY JEON HYE SEO

| Early Bird Catches the Morning Sunlight



PHOTOGRAPHED BY JEON HYE SEO

| Last Spark of Light Before Going to Bed



PHOTOGRAPHED BY JEON HYE SEO

| Before Sunrise



PHOTOGRAPHED BY JEON HYE SEO

| A Great Place to Make Your Wish

Jeon Hye Seo

While preparing for this month's photo essay, I asked myself: what sparks the *winds of change* for a new aspiration? Traveling through various countries of Europe during vacation, I concluded that it is the hope of light that brings people to step forward and achieve their dreams. So, I traced symbols of light that followed my motto, "We are the change we have been waiting for." For Korea University (KU) students who wish to plan goals for the new semester or who are already failing some of their New Year resolutions, I hope these photos may inspire a restart for everyone with the wake of spring.

Naama Benamy Schoneveld

Much like Petite France or the ostriches on Nami Island, I too have been transplanted into a foreign place, sticking out like a sore thumb. But over the years, as I spend longer and longer in Seoul, I feel that the “winds of change” pushed me in the right direction. I learned from my father, an avid birdwatcher, that winds only allow birds to smoothly migrate somewhere new when blowing in the right direction, and I still feel lucky that similarly, my immigration to South Korea has also changed my life positively. For this photo essay, I explored the wind as I see it everywhere, from my own collarbones to the Korean countryside, as well as the changes it represents.



PHOTOGRAPHED BY NAAMA BENAMY SCHONEVELD

| Windy Nights in Glittery Seoul



PHOTOGRAPHED BY NAAMA BENAMY SCHONEVELD

| Just a Vinous Throated Parrotbill



PHOTOGRAPHED BY NAAMA BENAMY SCHONEVELD

| Butterflies Taking Flight



PHOTOGRAPHED BY NAAMA BENAMY SCHONEVELD

| Ostrich Without Borders

Number 1

Coding YouTuber in Korea

—JoCoding

By Son Jiho json22@korea.ac.kr

Coding is a valuable tool in today's world, yet it requires much time and effort to learn how to do it correctly. Jo Dong Keun ('11, Environmental Science and Ecological Engineering), a non-information-technology (IT) graduate, created the YouTube channel *JoCoding* in November 2018 and currently has over 484,000 subscribers. *JoCoding* mostly creates IT-related educational content, which involves coding, app programming, and Artificial Intelligence (AI). His videos are viewed by a wide range of demographics from elementary school students to adults as old as 60 years old. *JoCoding* is a Youtuber people should keep their eyes on, especially today when many job positions require basic knowledge of coding.



PHOTOGRAPHED BY NAAMA BENAMY SCHONEVELD

Portrait of Jo Dong Keun

About Jo Dong Keun

After entering Korea University (KU), Jo had always dreamt of starting his own business. To do so, he joined several clubs where he met many KU students and alumni with whom he was able to share and discuss his dream of founding a startup company. His most memorable clubs are KU's Weightlifting Club, Like Lion, and Insiders. In Like Lion, a programming club, Jo was able to make websites and app services through coding and to conduct several hackathon events. In Insiders, a start-up club, he was able to meet many people with unique ideas and successful people who are passionate with their work. During these club activities, he realized that programming was an important skill to know to accomplish his dreams, which is how he began his journey as a developer.

Yet surprisingly, Jo's first job was not related to coding. During the summer break of his senior year, Jo did an internship at CJ Cheil Jedang (CJ) as an office worker and was given an opportunity for a full-time position. However, he gave up the opportunity and returned to KU to continue his studies for coding. Eventually, Jo launched several apps and websites and worked with major corporations such as

LINE and LG CNS; in the process, he was able to further develop his coding skills. Currently, he runs his YouTube channel *JoCoding* and aims to share his skills and personal story to motivate and teach hesitant people about the basics of programming.

To gain more insight into the life and ideals of Jo's life, *The Granite Tower* (GT) conducted an interview with him.



PROVIDED BY JOCODINGYOUTUBE
Official Logo of JoCoding

GT In one of your videos, you mentioned that you gave up your full-time position in CJ. Is there any special reason for that?

Jo While participating in an internship with CJ, I was not satisfied with the office work I had to do in the company. Not only was there a lot of work to do, but I did not like the rigid working atmosphere formed within the company, as there was a strong hierarchy within the office. Furthermore, I felt very limited since I was doing the same task every day. Ultimately, when I looked into my own future in CJ, I thought that my ideals would not be fulfilled if I continued working there. So I gave up my regular job in CJ and challenged myself to start a start-up business.

GT Why did you decide to start a YouTube Channel?

Jo When I first started my channel, YouTube had many videos on learning how to program with Python or C Language. But videos on making and launching applications were hard to find. So I wanted to make informational

videos on how to make websites and applications. Also, I thought that my background as a non-coding-related graduate who became a successful developer launching several applications and getting hired in LG CNS, would give hope and motivation to those who wish to learn coding but are hesitant and overwhelmed by how difficult it looks.

For example, my most viral project was the "Animal-Face AI Test." This test matches your face with the most similar animal when you upload a picture of your face. At first this website was only launched in Korean, but as it gained fame, I translated it to many other languages including English and Spanish. In fact, it gained over 40 million views and even ranked first on Naver's real-time search list. I thought that sharing this kind of accomplishment would inspire many people to start coding, which contributes to why I do YouTube. Frankly, I get proud of myself whenever my friends or my viewers compliment

my videos, which is why I persist as a creator.

GT What were some difficulties you have faced since starting your YouTube Channel?

Jo I would say that reading rude comments is the biggest difficulty as a Youtuber. As I became more famous and my channel grew, there was an increase in hate comments. Many of them were out of pure jealousy, and although I knew that I should not pay them too much mind, they do occasionally mentally affect me. What is worse is that those hateful comments are not only directed toward me, but they also target guests in my videos or those who invite me to their channel. It is really embarrassing when this happens. Yet, all I could do is ban those users and delete their comments. This probably is a dilemma for all YouTubers and celebrities.

GT What inspires you to continue coding and developing, and what is your advice to anyone who wants to learn to code?

Jo I feel proud and rewarded when I see many people using my products. Especially when my "Animal-Face AI Test" went viral and was used by many international users, I noticed that I could affect not only Korea, but even the whole world through coding. Also, I like the fact that I can create products that did not exist before. For those who want to learn coding, it is getting easier these days. You can make your own application even if you do not major in Computer Science. So, for those who want to try coding but are intimidated by how hard it looks, please take courage, and give it a try. **K**

PHOTOGRAPHED BY NAAMA BENAMY SCHONEVELD
Jo Dong Keun Programming

Istanbul's Mayor Convicted Over Defamation Charges

By Ekin Sevinc 2021131641@korea.ac.kr

In December 2022, Turkey woke up to shocking news of Istanbul's mayor Ekrem Imamoglu being convicted for his remark against the officials from Turkey's Supreme Election Board (YSK). Imamoglu was sentenced to two years, seven months, and 15 days in prison. The possible imprisonment of Imamoglu frightened his followers due to the effects it might have on the upcoming elections. Adding to the confusion, a second court case against Imamoglu headlined the news with talks of adding a seven-year-long sentence on the grounds of "bid rigging." According to the indictment filed by the Buyukcekmece criminal court, which is the criminal court of a district in Istanbul, an alleged total of 250,086 Turkish Liras (TL) was lost due to fraud committed by the mayor and six former staff members. Imamoglu will have his first hearing on June 15.



PROVIDED BY DAILY SABAH
Istanbul Mayor Ekrem Imamoglu speaks during the official opening of a day care facility in Istanbul on December 2, 2022.

Ekrem Imamoglu, a former real estate developer and local politician, was first elected as the Mayor of Istanbul in 2019. Imamoglu easily connected to the country's demographics and constituencies, as he showed an appreciation for becoming the mayor of the most crowded city located on two continents, at the heart of history, economy, and culture, and has since then showed consistent concern for improving

the lives of Istanbul's citizens. To act upon his duty, Imamoglu stated on the official page of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, that his mission was "seeing humans as the focus of our services." Increasing economic and social opportunities for women, offering social work guidance for social support system users, and giving cash support for low-income families were included in Imamoglu's vision for the metropolitan

city. However, the sudden charges against him before the upcoming elections block his targeted plans from coming to life and reduce his chance of becoming a candidate for the 2023 elections. As the election period nears, the timing of the court decision paints an undemocratic image of the country in the eyes of the world.

AKP and CHP – Long Years of Conflict

Imamoglu's party, the Republican People's Party (CHP) and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's party, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) have been rivalling each other for many years.



PROVIDED BY REUTERS
President Erdogan during a parliament meeting in Ankara, Turkey January 18, 2023.

Among critics, Imamoglu's sentence was interpreted to hold a political goal of blocking the mayor from entering elections, as Imamoglu's recent popularity became a threat for the opposing party. Imamoglu's statement that made him face the court involved him calling those who cancelled the March 2019 elections "fools." After Imamoglu's statement, the court ruled that his remarks were targeted towards Supreme Election Council (YSK) members. According to Imamoglu, this remark was not targeted against YSK but was a response to the Minister of Interior, Suleyman Soylu, who is also a member of AKP, and he explained that he was using the same expression as Soylu.

The AKP has been Turkey's ruling party for more than twenty years. Their journey to becoming a leading party goes back to the multi-party period of Turkey after World War II. After the war ended, Turkey went back and forth between democratic and undemocratic transitions in politics. President Erdogan and his party's rise was a result of his mastering Turkey's tradition of civilian electoral politics and the AKP's involvement in reshaping the military system. AKP entered the scene of politics in 2001, and since then the party has endured polarization. The party's first coalition consisted of traditional center-right voters, Islam followers, and European Union supporters that favored AKP for the party's promise of actualizing democratic reform in Turkey.

Imamoglu's Perceived Threat to the AKP

President Erdogan's popularity flourished for two decades that were

marked by economic growth. However, in the last 10 years, Turkey's surging economic growth saw a decline. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19), moreover, started a severe economic recession that took a drastic toll on AKP's popularity.

Turkey's local elections in 2019 revealed that while President Erdogan's popularity dropped, the opposing candidate Imamoglu triumphed in a number of major cities like Ankara and Istanbul. The AKP's diminishing support was primarily related to socioeconomic problems such as Turkey's currency, the Turkish Lira (TL), losing its value, high unemployment rates, financial hardships, and a record inflation that reached a 25-year high in 2022.



What Will Happen Next?

The election will be in May 2023, and millions of Turkish citizens will be voting in both parliamentary and presidential elections. According to *The Washington Post*, "the outcome will shape geopolitical and economic calculations in Washington and Moscow, as well as capitals across Europe, the Middle East, Central Asia and Africa." Turkish citizens are also aware of the importance of the elections on the international front. The greatest concern is that the spectators are divided in two about the future fairness of elections, as Turkey's government controls most of the bureaucracy, judiciary, as well as various media outlets.

Imamoglu's verdict also raised other possibilities, with some even considering it an action that could possibly backfire on the government. According to



PROVIDED BY REUTERS
The CHP leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu and the other opposition party leaders pose with Ekrem Imamoglu.

Mehmet Barlas, a writer in *Sabah*, one of the most popular pro-government magazines in Turkey, the current situation is a "bizarre verdict that will have no consequences for Imamoglu whatsoever no matter how you look at it." Such a declaration signifies the increasingly polarized opinions concerning Imamoglu's imprisonment. According to the *British Broadcasting Corporation* (BBC), Imamoglu's conviction may result in the opposition's solidarity and their consequential win for the election.

The current deadline for the elections is in June but President Erdogan mentioned moving it up one month earlier to May, a month before Imamoglu's first hearing. Whether Imamoglu's verdict will be beneficial for the AKP's success in the election is open to discussion. However, it is undeniable that the AKP will face the most critical elections since 2002. The CHP and its alliances' candidate choice for the elections is crucial as Imamoglu's charges point to the current leader of CHP, Kemal Kilicdaroglu, as the presumed candidate. As the elections will mainly focus on prospects regarding inflation, it is highly likely that Turkey will enter a new period that may challenge the AKP's twenty-year-long dominance in power. **K**

Israel's New Government Opens the Door to an Uncertain Future in the Middle East

By Naama Benamy Schoneveld naama@korea.ac.kr

On December 29, 2022, a new government in Israel was sworn in. Benjamin Netanyahu, who had previously served as Prime Minister for a total of 15 years, successfully established a coalition of right-wing parties. Political analysts and Middle Eastern citizens have subsequently expressed concern that the region will be destabilized by the extremely religious right-wing agenda being introduced in Israel. In the past, Netanyahu formed a coalition with both central and right-wing parties, but his current policies and promises are significantly more extreme. Just days after being sworn in, the Prime Minister publicly renounced the United Nations (UN)'s decision to look into Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories and expressed his support for the expansion of settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

The political system under which Israel operates is based on control of the Israel parliament, known as Knesset, which requires a majority coalition of at least 61 Knesset members. However, this number has never been achieved by one party alone, and inter-parliamentary cooperation has always been required. In the past, Netanyahu, as head of the right-wing party *Likud*, worked with central and right-wing parties to create a coalition that would best support his party's agenda. Despite Netanyahu's track record, the most recent election painted a different picture, with the leading party partnering with major far-right religious parties to maintain a majority, leading to the current uncertain situation.

Israel's Shift to the Religious Right

Prior to Netanyahu's election, the



Portrait of Benjamin Netanyahu.

ruling party had been relatively unprecedented in its governing of the country. Rather than following one political ideology, there was an attempt to create a cross-party coalition with representation across the political spectrum. The coalition employed an unusual system for determining the Prime Minister. It allowed the two leaders of the most prominent parties in the coalition to take turns being Prime Minister, each intending on serving for

two consecutive years. This attempt, however, failed a little over a year into the first Prime Minister's term, when a left-wing party left the coalition, leaving them with only 60 members. The entire Knesset was then dissolved, and a new election was announced, leading to Netanyahu's most recent victory.

The four right-wing parties who allied with *Likud* are religious parties, meaning they hold the fundamental belief that the State of Israel has the right to ownership over the entirety of Israel and Palestine, as well as several other highly-contested areas within the region. As a result, these parties exert their political power in a highly biased manner, such as supporting Zionist settlers who seek to build property on lands under the control of the Palestinian authorities, along with other religion-based policies. Spokespeople

for the representatives have also stated that they will seek exemptions for military service for religious citizens, among other benefits.

As argued by political commentator Nadav Elimelech, the Knesset's shift to the far right may have been caused by the disintegration of the previous government, whose failure to govern likely disillusioned the Israeli voters. Elimelech points out that, despite hopes for a less politically divided future, citizens were left disappointed in the wake of the collapse of the government and turned back to a familiar party leader with experience in managing a coalition for its full term.

Changes in the Middle East

Due to the controversial manner in which Israel declared its independence, it has historically been "the black sheep" in the Middle East. As the only Jewish nation in the world and positioned near many Islamic nations, it is no surprise that conflict has arisen. However, Israel's reputation started to change when it sought to strengthen political ties with neighboring countries,

starting with peace agreements. Most recently, in 2020, Israel and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) signed a normalization agreement, leading to the UAE halting its boycott of Israel and investing billions of dollars in the country's economy.


As a result, Palestinian activists are worried about future conflict and the attention it would receive from social media. Journalist and activist Ahmed Shihab-Eldin pointed out that, if Israel continues to receive more support from powerhouses in the region, it could lead to Palestinians experiencing an increase in violence under the Israeli occupation. Social media awareness alone may not be able to help citizens facing a potential escalation in hostility in the region. Palestinian social media users have stated that the outcome of the election was predictable, but that the results could be much worse moving forward, describing an air of uncertainty and fear within the community.

Uncertain Future

Palestine still has allies in the Middle East, however, and awareness of the

Israeli occupation has reached many people worldwide, especially due to the rise in online activism in recent years spearheaded by younger users. Activists advocating for Palestine are once again attempting to call online attention to the region in hopes of keeping the situation calm in the face of the UN's decision to investigate the occupation and Netanyahu's term as Prime Minister.

Meanwhile, on the other end of the spectrum, Israeli media seems to be split on the issue. Some outlets have condemned Netanyahu's decision to partner with ultra-orthodox parties, while other outlets have hailed his victory as a return to "normal life" in Israel. Due to Israel's controversial nature, a media bubble has grown in the country over time, leaving little room for mainstream discussions regarding the legitimacy of Israel's control of Palestine. This bubble may now burst as many disillusioned citizens are fearing the consequences of the current government.

The situation in the region has once again shifted drastically, and the outcomes of these changes are yet to be seen. Already there has been retaliation on both sides, including a shooting in Jerusalem that has led to government officials suggesting the loosening of gun laws so that Israeli citizens will be able to "fight back." As a result, some claim that this government could be the one to bring the current chapter of the Israel-Palestine conflict to a close, one way or another, which would likely change the Middle East forever. As such, the most recent Israeli election may be one of the most important the country has ever seen, thus the country should be observed more closely in the coming years. 



Scenes from the Jerusalem Shooting.

Modern Slavery

— Inside the *Kafala* Migrant Labor System

By Giorgio Cioffi gio12060@korea.ac.kr

Three months after the end of the 2022 World Cup, media outrage about Qatar's infamous labor system has not yet hinted at fading out. The inflammatory accusations against the Gulf country deal with the plight of migrant workers and the perpetration of illicit practices that violate human rights. Coming under fire for the elevated number of workplace injuries and deaths of employees, Nasser Al Khater - chief executive of the event - commented to the *British Broadcasting Corporation* (BBC) News that "death is a natural part of life." What is the system that allows a country to develop at the expense of invisible lives? Is the world entirely devoid of slavery?

In the era of digital information, slavery may sound like an archaic term confined to history books. However, although the triangular slave trade is indeed a nightmare of the past, new forms of slavery are alive and well. In today's world, vulnerable workers are being trapped by modern tyrants to sustain the demands of an insatiable capitalism. As resources are unequally distributed, becoming enslaved is turning into an increasingly high risk for many financially unstable people - 49.6 million alone already suffer from this condition according to the International Labor Organization (ILO).

In this context, several Middle Eastern countries have recently

gained media attention for their controversial labor system, *Kafala*, which many have condemned as yet another means of incorporating slavery into our society.

A Radical Change

Historically, *Kafala* - an Islamic jurisprudence concept - was nothing more than a sponsorship system based on the Bedouin principle of hospitality. The purpose of its existence was to regulate the permanence of foreign visitors, for whom a local assumed liability and satisfied their needs. In other words, it was an effective way to discourage the entrance of dangerous individuals into the country. Although where the system is currently applied, the *kafil* - the citizen in charge of

the foreigner - is still theoretically required to vouch for them, in reality the practice has turned into a living nightmare. International critics have accused Gulf governments of taking advantage of *Kafala* laws to recruit and extort human capital, as the dependence on the *kafil* has seemingly escalated into a denial of basic human rights.

Several Middle Eastern countries are known for sharing a consensus on the Islamic sponsorship and have adopted similar strategies to maximize its productivity. Why do these countries insist on going against global disapproval so persistently? Firstly, it has to do with the abundant natural resources discovered on their soil and the local demographics. After the British handed back the Arabian peninsula to its own governments, a severe shortage of working hands hindered the

development of the economy and the newly born oil industry. Therefore, foreign migrants became an appealing source of labor to compensate for such shortcomings. Later, once large sums of money flooded into local companies, maintaining an abusive labor system guaranteed cheap manpower to build missing infrastructure. Workers forced to endure the scorching heat of the desert thus allowed Gulf countries to rebrand themselves into global hotspots in less than half a century.

Prisoners Under the Sun

One of the main concerns expressed by international organizations is the polarization of society fueled by the divisive nature of *Kafala*. According to a report published by the *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) exemplifies a paradoxical society where 10 percent of inhabitants are citizens leading a comfortable lifestyle, whereas the remaining portion is mostly made up of oppressed foreign workers with very few exceptions. While locals enjoy free health care, education, and multiple types of financial support, struggling foreigners - mostly construction



PROVIDED BY VOX NEWS

Migrant workers at a construction site in Doha, Qatar.



Professor Robert Rudolf

workers - lament all sorts of abuses. Most notably, salaries are reportedly missed or delayed, living facilities are kept in appalling conditions, and rescinding a contract is never a simple nor viable option.

On the surface, *Kafala* seems to be close to its downfall due to ubiquitous disdain. In reality, the solution to the issue is rooted in an impervious territory to conquer - the historical imprint of local business makers. In an interview with *The Granite Tower* (GT), Professor Robert Rudolf (Division of International Studies) emphasized that "the *Kafala* system constitutes a strong form of discrimination based on the national origin of workers, therefore reflecting high levels of racist attitudes and xenophobia." According to the publication *Harvard International Review*, xenophobic behavior in the Middle East derives from an intrinsic feeling of protectionism toward the natural wealth of indigenous citizens, as well as centuries of labor interactions with neighboring poor countries. Thus, immigrants from historically vulnerable countries have increasingly been correlated with unskilled labor.

Uncertain Steps

Following continuous mayhem surrounding the issue, some governments have finally made their first steps to meet foreign demands. While some - including the UAE - have shared the implementation of smaller-scale reforms, Qatar and Bahrain are among the first countries to claim the abolishment of the *Kafala* system altogether. Moreover, the state of Qatar has stood out as a particularly vocal party with some notable measures such as the raising of its minimum-wage, as well as the removal of the requirement to obtain an exit permit after a contract termination.

Nevertheless, organizations like *Amnesty International* have raised new concerns as - with the effect of the World Cup looming - *Kafala* may not be on people's minds so often anymore. It is hard to predict the outcome of this battle, particularly in a fast-paced society that lives by the dogma of *clickbait* information.

As long as key states are members of the United Nations (UN), the likelihood to eradicate *Kafala* remains low. The highest obstacle seems to be the economic advantage of citizens, which they are likely to hold on to tightly. Even so, it is important to observe that multiple signs of internal dissatisfaction have already emerged. Regardless of whether change will be partial or a complete overhaul of the system, it is clear that the numbers of tormented voices are rising rapidly, and there might not be much time left before the situation degenerates into uncontrollable mayhem. **K**

Down, Down They Go

— *The Hole*

By Park Jaewon | jaewonpark02@korea.ac.kr

When Oghi awoke to the blinding lights of the hospital ward, completely paralyzed and unable to speak, he never would have imagined that this would only be the start of his grim demise. Oghi's peaceful, ordinary life was destroyed within seconds by a run-of-the-mill accident, but the cuts ran deeper into his ugly secrets than Oghi would have liked. Award-winning author Pyun Hye-young's fourth novel, *The Hole*, is a psychological thriller with powerful and composed storytelling that engrosses the reader with Oghi's fear and helplessness as he confronts his foul past that has come back to haunt him.

Everyone loves a good horror story. Even those that detest being frightened can appreciate a well-formulated narrative that incites the most powerful and raw emotion of humankind. The *Harvard Business Review* noted that the appeal of horror stories stems from experiencing dangers that feel both distant and detachable. A bloody chase from a maniacal serial killer or a hoard of vicious zombies is entertaining because it is just barely out of touch with reality.

Psychological thrillers are a slightly different breed of horror, for they deviate from the conventions of using visible dangers. The narrative revolves around events that are closer to reality—an unfortunate car accident, for instance. Instead of introducing ghosts and monsters, psychological thrillers plant seeds of horror in the reader's mind; the dark and unsavory implications tucked between the lines fester until the unsettling feeling in one's stomach materializes into a looming shadow of dread that grows

solely out of the reader's imagination.

Fear Through Helplessness

The Hole's premise is an excellent example of such a narrative. Oghi is a successful, middle-aged man whose seemingly "perfect" life turns upside down when he and his wife get into a car accident. The accident kills his wife and leaves Oghi's limbs completely paralyzed, barring his left arm. The only person that he can rely on is his mother-in-law, who looks after Oghi while

grieving for the loss of her beloved daughter. The indecipherable remoteness of his mother-in-law permeates throughout the now gloomy and desolate townhouse that once was called home, while Oghi is left with nothing but his own thoughts and memories. The melancholy does not last long, however, as Oghi's mother-in-law starts digging a giant pit in the front garden after she reads her daughter's manuscript of "an open letter to someone." Paranoia seeps into Oghi as the truth about him and his wife is utterly exposed to the woman that clutches his fate in her very hands.

The overarching element of fear for *The Hole* is helplessness. Throughout the story, Oghi is unable to perform anything he desires. Not only can he not move or speak, but the negligence and disinterest of those around him make delivering his intentions even more difficult. The slow, gruesome process of Oghi being stripped of his own willpower provokes a strong repulsiveness, forcing one to imagine the vulnerability of surrendering two

fundamental human factors—autonomy and compassion.

As Power Flows

Another noteworthy theme within *The Hole* is the changing relationships of power and control for the characters. Before his accident, Oghi holds power and privilege in almost all aspects of his life. He wields full command over his physical and mental being. He possesses wealth and status as a successful full-time professor and is the sole breadwinner in his household. Oghi is not hesitant to use this privilege either; he exercises power over his career, not to mention his colleagues, students, and wife to suit his tastes.

The car accident becomes the turning point for Oghi's seemingly "unlimited" regime, as all autonomy that he possessed is upended in the blink of an eye. Each significant development throughout the story points to Oghi's detachment from power. His interactions with his hired caretaker exemplify his loss of bodily and mental grip, and his visits from his colleagues represent his social presence slipping away from him. Lastly, the final scene depicts Oghi's wife gaining the upper hand in their marriage as she solidifies Oghi's fate with her manuscript—her final act of retribution.

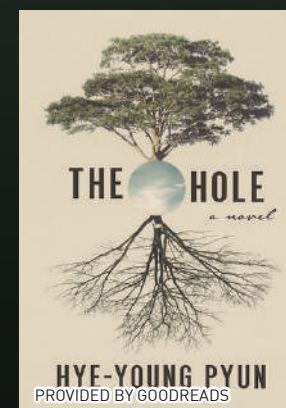
If Oghi was a powerless, harmless man that simply had to endure such tragedies, this thriller would have

made a much blander story. Yet, it is the camouflaged implications of causal abuse of power and the aftermath of its removal that manage to provide the story with more depth and nuance for individuals to interpret. This is made possible through Pyun's meticulous choice of narrative and tone, which ensures the reader does not stray from enjoying the journey of thrills without limiting the reader's experience to a mere single-track ride.

Despite Pyun's skillful use of words that expertly guide the reader through an emotionally tempestuous trip, their final impressions will invariably be different as they reach the end. Some might leave with fear in the wake of a horrifying ending; others may show disgust and resentment toward the protagonist; meanwhile, compassionate individuals may take pity on him instead. Despite the uneasy feeling Pyun leaves readers with, there is no doubt that this book would be a hit for those hoping to get their hands on the next great thriller. Daunting yet mesmerizing, *The Hole* is highly recommended for those who can appreciate a well-versed thriller. **K**

Book Information

Title: The Hole
Author: Pyun Hye-young
Publisher: Arcade Publishing
Publication Year: 2016
Pages: 197



| Cover of *The Hole*.

The Legacy of

Vivienne Westwood

By Ekin Sevinc 2021131641@korea.ac.kr

Fondly deemed as “the mother of punk,” Vivienne Westwood, British fashion designer and the symbol of avant-garde, passed away at age 81 on December 29, 2022. Westwood’s brand *Vivienne Westwood* embodied her persona as a “punk activist,” with the brand’s designs representing rebellion against oppression.

As a revolutionist in the world of design, some of the most outstanding pieces by Westwood include an orb pendant with the ring of Saturn, a genderless ‘Bondage Suit,’ a corset printed with a ‘Daphnis and Cloe’ painting, blue leather “mock-crock” platform shoes, and a wedding dress designed using the drawings of school children, all of which visualized the looks of the freedom warrior and environmentalist.



PROVIDED BY FRIEZE

| The Mother of Punk, Vivienne Westwood



| Westwood and McLaren's shop, "SEX"


Westwood’s openness to controversy is what set her brand *Vivienne Westwood* ahead of its time. As the economic turmoil of the 1970s came to an end, international couture turned towards ostentatious displays of wealth and luxury, shifting towards conservatism that focused on one-size tailoring. Westwood and her brand, closely associated with punk rock and its anti-establishment ideology, was a “rare surviving rebel,” as defined by *The Guardian*. Not only is the brand influential and symbolic, but it is also highly personal. Westwood’s private life is inextricably intertwined with her art as shown in the crafts of *Vivienne Westwood*. The kick-start of Westwood’s career and her punk craze designs came with her first collaboration with then ex-lover Malcolm McLaren, with the duo opening a small boutique called “Let It Rock” at 430 King’s Road, selling biker jackets and T-shirts.

Vivienne Westwood’s journey with “punk,” a powerful subculture for the marginalized, first started in the 70s. In 1974, Westwood and McLaren’s shop got revamped as “SEX” to fit the zeitgeist of the decade. The brash branding of the shop’s new logo in bold pink capital letters drew much attention from people

walking the streets of London, England. The shop was the catalyst to the couple’s bond and proper entry into punk culture. From then, the effects of punk in the couple’s life continued.

In the mid 70s, rock music started to lose its vitality and was later jolted out of the doldrums by the nihilistic and rebellious nature of punk music. When McLaren went to New York to promote his and Westwood’s boutique shop *SEX*, he got hooked on punk and decided to create his own band called “The Sex Pistols,” a group which would become a sensational representative for its usage of Westwood’s designs. The band’s style was all about the anti-traditional nature of punk: ripped clothes, safety pins, T-shirts embodied with naked figures, and “bondage pants.” The style of the Sex Pistols displayed Westwood’s outlook on punk, visually expressing the heretic lifestyle and eloquence of the anarchical.

As a brand, *Vivienne Westwood* identifies itself as an activist in the fashion industry. Westwood herself played a huge role in raising awareness of social issues such as climate change, nuclear disarmament and human rights through the designs and advertisements of the brand. As a pro-environment establishment, the brand focuses on its priority of promoting becoming “green” in the industry. However, the brand was also at the center of the industry that most promotes consumerism and environmental damage, showing an inherent contradiction.

Impact and significance cannot be overlooked when it comes to *Vivienne Westwood*. The brand carries Westwood’s vision, one that was a juxtaposition for bringing traditional elements and her own anarchic imagery to life. Her legacy is one to be admired, and she is regarded as one of the finest modern designers. *Vivienne Westwood*, her brand and memorial, remains a valuable role model for aspiring artists, with an unapologetic attitude that should always be cherished. 

Back to the Classics

— See How They Run

By Park Hyun Seo | hsmelinda5@korea.ac.kr

Murder mysteries never grow old. The movie *See How They Run* (2022) brings the audience back to the classic joys of whodunits, a genre of murder mystery, featuring Agatha Christie's well-known play *The Mousetrap*. The film is a full directorial debut for Tom George and unpacks a mysterious murder case that takes place in 1950s London. While complying with the conventional prototype of murder mysteries, *See How They Run* presents a witty, light-hearted adaptation with its aesthetics and humor.

See How They Run is based on a fictional story that revolves around the murder of an American film director in London's West End Theatre in 1953, on the night of the 100th performance of Agatha Christie's *The Mousetrap*. *The Mousetrap* is a classic whodunit play, also famously known as the world's 'longest-running' play since its release in 1952. The main plot of the film parallels that of the play, both sharing similar aspects in their main objectives and journey in solving a murder case. This comical connection creates a meticulous narrative in the film that tells two different stories that closely resemble each other. Moreover, *See How They Run* is a pleasant divergence from popular flashy blockbusters full of computer-generated imagery (CGI) and glamorous movie sets, going back to classical mysteries sprinkled with a tinge of wit and humor.

The Murder

The movie begins with a joyful night at

the West End Theatre in London, where people have gathered to celebrate the 100th performance of the hugely successful play, *The Mousetrap*. A Hollywood director Leo Köpernick, played by Adrien Brody, who plans to make a film adaptation of the play, has also attended the ceremony. But a few hours later, he is found brutally murdered. Soon after, Inspector Stoppard, played by Sam Rockwell, and Constable Stalker, played by Saoirse Ronan, are assigned to investigate the case and find the unknown assailant. The rather chaotic but compatible pair show surprisingly pleasant chemistry as they unravel the mystery.

Although the story starts off with a violent murder, the overall tone of the film is relatively light and funny. This juxtaposition creates a unique experience for viewers as they can follow the unpacking of a murder case with a good laugh here and there. There is always an unexpected joke at the most random moments along with ridiculous but hilarious characters that make it hard to

keep a straight face. *See How They Run* breaks through the common archetype of whodunits, showing that a murder mystery can still be good without being excessively serious or intimidating.

The Mystery

The audience can fully engage with the



Official poster for *See How They Run*



Inspector Stoppard & Constable Stalker

journey of the two police officers, becoming equally eager and puzzled as they try to figure out the case. The movie maintains a well-balanced tension so that viewers can find clues and come up with their own answers. Before the murderer is revealed, everyone related to the case is a possible suspect. Stoppard and Stalker continuously come up with new assumptions, unable to settle on a solid conclusion until the very end. Instead of directly revealing impossibly hidden clues as Sherlock Holmes might have done, the movie allows the audience to do it themselves. Utilizing red herrings and planting clues, the film effectively shows how a good mystery is crafted on screen.

Recently, the murder mystery genre has shown a resurgence in movie theaters. *Knives Out* (2019) successfully drew attention back to the seemingly outdated genre of mystery, with its sequel, *Glass Onion* released in 2022. Following this trend, the American mystery thriller *Bodies Bodies Bodies* (2022) once more marked the successful return of whodunnits. Murder mysteries had their golden age in the 20th century during the 1920s and 1930s, but had lately been considered old-fashioned and predictable. However, modern adaptations of

whodunnits have started to revitalize the genre, increasingly gaining popularity with audiences. *See How They Run* has again shed light upon the infinite potential of the murder mystery genre, suggesting its second golden age.

The Movie

See How They Run can easily be mistaken for one of Wes Anderson's films, sharing surprisingly similar characteristics in the cinematics with its symmetry and vibrant colors. The whole movie is aesthetically pleasing to watch with its vintage sets, costumes, and music that accurately encapsulate the Post-World War II 1950s vibe of London. Elegant hotels, glamorous parties, and luxurious theatres add to the authentic aesthetics of the film as the audience becomes completely immersed in the setting of the story.

Another defining aspect of the movie is how it provides meta-commentary on whodunit stories and films. One example of this is a playwright expressing his discontent with using flashbacks in his plays directly followed by a flashback in the real movie to show his whereabouts a few weeks ago.

Similarly, a scene showing the same playwright dissatisfied with using the conventional transition "three weeks later" is instantly followed by a "three weeks later" on the screen. Such brief moments of witty twists show how the movie is both conventional but unorthodox at the same time. The director also incorporates a variety of film techniques within the movie, such as breaking the fourth wall, surprising the audience with unexpected moments. Overall, the movie is quite colorful, both in its mise-en-scène and storyline.

For those who are tired of watching full-scale blockbusters or want to take a break from epic dramas, *See How They Run* is the perfect choice to have a good laugh. Lighthearted, witty, and funny, the movie presents the audience with a pleasant experience where they can wholeheartedly enjoy themselves. Whodunnits are no longer old or outdated. While going back to the classics, *See How They Run* suggests a new phase of murder mysteries. The movie opens the door to 21st century Conan Doyle and Agatha Christie, readying modern audiences for more classic murder mysteries. **K**

Film Information

Release date: September 9, 2022

Genre: Comedy mystery

Director: Tom George

Starring: Sam Rockwell, Saoirse Ronan, Adrien Brody, Ruth Wilson, Reece Shearsmith

Running time: 98 minutes

Playing with Shadows

— Vincent Bal's Whimsical Exhibition



PROVIDED BY VINCENT BAL

| Howl at the moon you must.

Bal calls himself a "Shadowologist," which can be taken to mean an expert in shadows. While the title itself is humorous, it is completely accurate. Bal is an expert at understanding shadows and wielding them to create wonderfully playful works of art. In his work "Howl at the moon you must," Bal uses the shadow cast by a Lego Yoda figure to create a silhouette of a wolf howling at the moon. With just a few lines of marker added to an otherwise unremarkable shadow, Bal transforms it into a full story, accompanied by his signature witty title. The effect is amusing, and Bal's unique storytelling appeals to people of all ages. *The Granite Tower* (GT) had the opportunity to speak to the artist about Shadowology, his journey to the Seoul exhibition, and the advice he would give to young artists.

The Story Behind the Exhibition

Upon first entering the gallery, visitors can see Bal's very first artwork involving shadows, signifying the exhibition's start and . He began creating shadow-based art six years ago and kept playing around with and expanding the idea until it became the body of work it is now. According to Bal, he is unable to plan the shadow drawings ahead of time, but they come to him through sparks of inspiration on a near-daily basis now. The exhibition narrows down his massive body of work into what he believes are some of its highlights. A powerful addition to the walk through the museum is the screening room showing Bal's 2020 short film *Sea Shadow*. The Dutch short tells the story of a young boy forced to stay

home and do his schoolwork before a shadow changes the course of his day. The resulting story of the young Shadowologist is a playful exploration of a childlike imagination and the prevalence of shadows.

During his in-person visit to the exhibition space, Bal was able to see people's reactions to his short film and other Shadowology works. The reactions of people gasping, laughing, and talking about his art were amazing, he says, especially following the period of social distancing in which social media was many people's only way of connecting with him and his work. In fact, he says his worst fear is opening a restaurant because "I can imagine sitting there as a cook every night and seeing the people walk by the window and not come in," so getting the opportunity to hold a solo exhibition overseas and have it be so well-attended by visitors was an honor and enormous relief for him.

The exhibition concludes with a section inspired by Korean products, such as soju bottles and hand fans. The shadows cast by the objects, coupled with Bal's drawings, bring Korean culture to life in a unique way, connecting the exhibition to the city it is held in. The care taken by both Bal and the organizers in translating the titles of the artwork and adapting material for Korean visitors only adds to its charm. There is no condescension in the pieces, and the whimsy of the space is sure to inspire visitors. As the artist himself says, everyone is capable of drawing, and it is also an activity that can be both fun and relaxing, which his exhibition perfectly demonstrates.



PROVIDED BY VINCENT BAL


| Artist Vincent Bal at His Studio.

Shadowology for All

Bal would be the first to humble himself and his achievements. He once said, "I think the sun is a much better artist than me." According to him, his artistic process is guided by shadows first and foremost. The title and final details of the drawing are all based on what the shadows provide for him. The point of Shadowology is not forcing anything, but rather letting the cards fall as they may, and allowing the imagination to do most of the work. Visitors are also invited to enjoy a hands-on experience of Bal's creative process through special stations at the end of the exhibition. Here, children and adults alike can experiment with various objects and shadows, creating artworks of their own that they can share later on Instagram, where Bal himself says he sees many of the pieces.

Bal's philosophy and desire for visitors to use their own imagination leave a mark. He says he reads posts people upload from the exhibition, including their original shadow art interpretations. The internet has played an integral role

in Bal's success, as highlighted by his Instagram page, where he has amassed over 900,000 followers, thus cultivating a large community of fellow Shadowologists. The enjoyment viewers derive from his work lends itself to the content's shareability, especially given that it is highly accessible even to those without a deep interest in art.

Anyone looking to spend an hour or two surrounded by shadows, imagination, and witty puns is more than welcome to explore *The Art of Shadow* and experience it for themselves. Likewise, those interested in Bal's life and work can find him on Instagram @vincent_bal, and people who want copies of his prints can find them both in the gift shop of the exhibition and through his Etsy shop "VincentBalDoodles." 



PHOTOGRAPHED BY NAAMA BENAMY SCHONEVELD

| The Hand Canyon by Vincent Bal.

Exhibition Information

Title: The Art of Shadow

Venue: Museum 209

Date: November 11, 2022, to April 23, 2023

Opening Hours: Tuesday to Sunday, 10:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M. (Final entry at 6:00 P.M.)

Ticket Price: 15,000 KRW for adults

The Problem with Poverty Pornography

A child with skinny arms and a protruding ribcage stares blankly into the camera. A tearful mother holds onto her emaciated baby. A homeless man searches for a place to spend the night. These images instantly evoke strong feelings of sympathy and even guilt; it is hard to resist dialing the number on the screen to make immediate donations. Poverty pornography is frequently used by charities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), encouraging individuals to help those who are desperately in need. However, while such tactics are craftily disguised as genuine altruism, they are simply another form of exploitation.



Poverty pornography refers to any type of exploitative imagery that features extreme examples of poverty. Such images are typically used to arouse strong emotional responses from its viewers, mostly to encourage donations or to raise awareness on a certain issue. Appeals to emotion are extremely effective as people tend to want to help those in need, being social animals with intricate feelings of sympathy. Accordingly, it is one of the easiest ways for charities to promote donations. The subjects of poverty pornography are usually those in Africa, suffering from extreme poverty and famine.

The most problematic aspect of poverty pornography is how it misrepresents poverty, creating fragmentary stereotypical images. The images used in advertisements do not show "what poverty is like"—they display "what poverty should look like." Therefore, rather than reflect the truth, poverty pornography aims to find "perfect" examples of poverty that stir particular emotional responses from the audience. Consequently, the public starts to lean toward the notion that Africa is simply defined by poverty and famine. The audience feels empathy, but also a sense of superiority at the same time, believing that Africa will always be wholly dependent on the assistance of wealthier countries such as their own.

Furthermore, although poverty pornography can increase donations, it does not necessarily contribute to actual change. Material assistance may provide temporary solutions but cannot solve the fundamental causes of poverty in the long run, which are deeply entrenched in the historical and economic structures of society. Poverty pornography can indeed yield pity and sympathy, but

intentionally lacks sufficient information that explains the reason for and depth of the problems they are seeking donations for. Therefore, individuals consuming content featuring one-dimensional aspects of poverty can only be passive recipients instead of true activists.

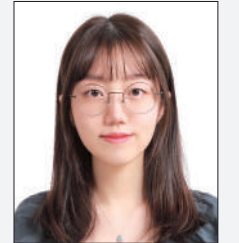
Another problem is that certain images used in poverty pornography are taken without the consent of the subjects. Some individuals are not even aware that they are being filmed and that their pictures and videos are aired through television worldwide. Advertisements encouraging donations seem to be helping those featured in them, but are in fact only exploiting the poverty of individuals for the sake of promotion. These images show no respect for the dignity of the individuals. Regardless of its ends, recording the most painful moments of life without consent and using it to objectify their vulnerability cannot be justified.

In the current globalized society, everyone is faced with heavier obligations and burdens as responsible global citizens. It is critical to be fully aware of issues that require worldwide attention and assistance, such as reducing poverty and resolving humanitarian crises. The misfortune and pains of others are not products that can be commodified or fetishized. What appears to be an act of pure kindness can also be a result of ignorance fueled by a privileged sense of superiority. Hence, simply being aware is not enough; one needs to see the bigger picture beyond the photos that simplify and distort the truth. It is not wealthy donors but altruistic reformers who can change the world. **K**

By Park Hyun Seo
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Is the Mart Open?

Koreans and anyone who has lived in South Korea for some time would probably be familiar with how "super supermarkets" (SSMs) close every other Sunday biweekly. It goes without saying that many have found themselves facing the disappointing "closed" sign at the entrance of nearby supermarkets, namely Homeplus, Emart, Lotte Mart, and Costco at least once. 11 years ago, it was made mandatory for SSMs to have fixed closing dates to boost sales at traditional markets and small shops. Although the mandated closing dates may have hindered some consumers' footsteps toward visiting major supermarket chains on that day, does it truly mean that they will take the trouble and head to a traditional market instead?



The start of this grocery shopping enigma dates back to 2012, when the Korean government took the matter into its own hands to maintain and nurture small businesses, which were being increasingly threatened by conglomerate-owned SSMs expanding their businesses. With the ultimate goal of "ensuring the efficient promotion and balanced development of the distribution industry," the National Assembly passed an amendment to the Distribution Industry Development Act to have fixed opening hours from 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 A.M. and imposed two mandatory closing days a month.

The closure of SSMs on every other Sunday is arguably in the best interests of the general public, as it acts as a safety net for local small businesses and traditional markets, successfully safeguarding many business owners' interests. It also provides SSM employees who are often overworked with a day off once every two weeks, protecting their health alongside their rights to rest and spend leisure time on a Sunday.

However, the question of whether this system is effective in influencing consumers to visit local shops is worth asking. According to *Statistics Korea*, the proportion held by small shops and traditional markets in overall retail sales dropped from 40.7 percent in 2012, the year when the amendment was enforced, to 32.2 percent in 2021. Additionally, the Federation of Korean Industries (FKI) mentioned in a January 2021 research report that only 8.3 percent of respondents said that they visited small neighborhood shops and traditional markets when SSMs were closed.

Moreover, consumers are shopping online more frequently due to its convenience. With the surge and development of online grocery shopping platforms such as Coupang and Market Kurly, fresh produce can easily be ordered and delivered to one's home at a specific time of one's choice. This increasing tendency to utilize electronic commerce (e-commerce) retailers has only been exacerbated by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, and data from *Statistics Korea* backs up this notion as sales increased more than 448 percent in 2020. As online market sales are gradually taking up a bigger share, offline shops are no longer in competition with one another as the retail market is disrupted by e-commerce giants; in other words, Korea's own version of "the Amazon effect is the new Wal-Mart effect" is taking place.

It is important to remember that the 11-year-old SSM shutdown rules were first introduced to protect the interests of small shop owners and traditional markets. Yet, in the long run, if SSMs were to gradually close business with the rise of e-commerce, social minorities such as the elderly, who struggle with the use of smartphones, may find it difficult to adjust to this new change. Even though it seems hard to abolish it completely, especially with SSM employees protesting for their rights to rest, it may be time for the government to consider revision and deregulation based on different neighborhood situations, all things considered. **K**

By Yoon Sunho
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Can Environmentalists Enjoy Skiing?

Winter holidays are often synonymous with singing along to the notes of Bubl 's hit "White Christmas" while picturing oneself at a cozy ski resort in the mountains. However, a dream-like experience of this kind is bound to be buried in the past if humans do not make an imminent choice. The Earth is at a historical turning point, and it is being foreshadowed in numerous ways - the future of skiing is just one of them. Modern society is once again serving as proof that shortsightedness and greed go hand in hand.



Skiing has always been a *must* during the holidays and an evergreen favorite to unwind and enjoy breathtaking panoramas. With over 100 million skiers on the slopes every year as reported by *Forbes*, ski villages and surrounding cities have become increasingly reliant on the tourism generated by this activity, and are therefore more subject to severe economic consequences if tourist presence is lacking. The pandemic that confined the world to their homes certainly had a detrimental impact on the industry, but this may not be its biggest problem. As Europe faced some of the highest January temperatures on record in 2023 according to *The Guardian*, ski resorts throughout the continent decided to interrupt the operation of their facilities much earlier than expected. *What was the reason?* Simply put, there was not enough snow to ski on.

A research team at the University of Basel, Switzerland, calculated that artificial snowmaking will be the main way of sustaining the skiing business until the end of the century, but it will come at an extremely high cost. To enable ski resort owners to keep their higher tracks open for at least 100 days, the water consumed by snowmaking machines will skyrocket to an increased 80 percent above the current average. However, if climate change continues to worsen even the aid of water will not be sufficient, as it will become a more and more precious resource. Keeping this industry alive in the future will become an increasingly vicious cycle of pollution and low performance until it eventually collapses. Skiing poses a threat to the environment, and it cannot be in the hands of humanity for much longer.

Indoor skiing seems to have become a new trend to face the adversity of a warm climate with notable facilities existing in the Middle East. The *Mall of the Emirates* houses the world's most discussed indoor ski slope at a temperature of negative four degrees Celsius all year round. According to the media outlet *Treehugger*, the average temperature difference between the inside and the exterior is about 32 degrees, suggesting an electricity consumption rate ranging between 525 and 915 Megawatt-hours (MWh) annually. To make matters worse, Dubai's electric energy is primarily a byproduct of natural gas, leading to astronomic values of carbon dioxide emissions. Therefore, it is evident that artificial winter sports are in sharp conflict with a greener future.

The world population and demand for skiing do not show any signs of slowing down. Although zero-impact skiing may still be far from the technological reach of this era, higher expenses could certainly facilitate the enactment of environmentally friendly practices to ski more responsibly. As the quantity of snow seems to be the biggest issue, limiting the number of visitors can surely help preserve the natural layer of snow on the mountains. Additionally, ski resort owners should learn about techniques such as forest health management and water conservation to embrace a more conscientious business strategy. There might be a possible world where skiing and safeguarding the planet are not mutually exclusive, but for now, urgent changes should be made.

By Giorgio Cioffi

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