

# THE U C SCRIBE

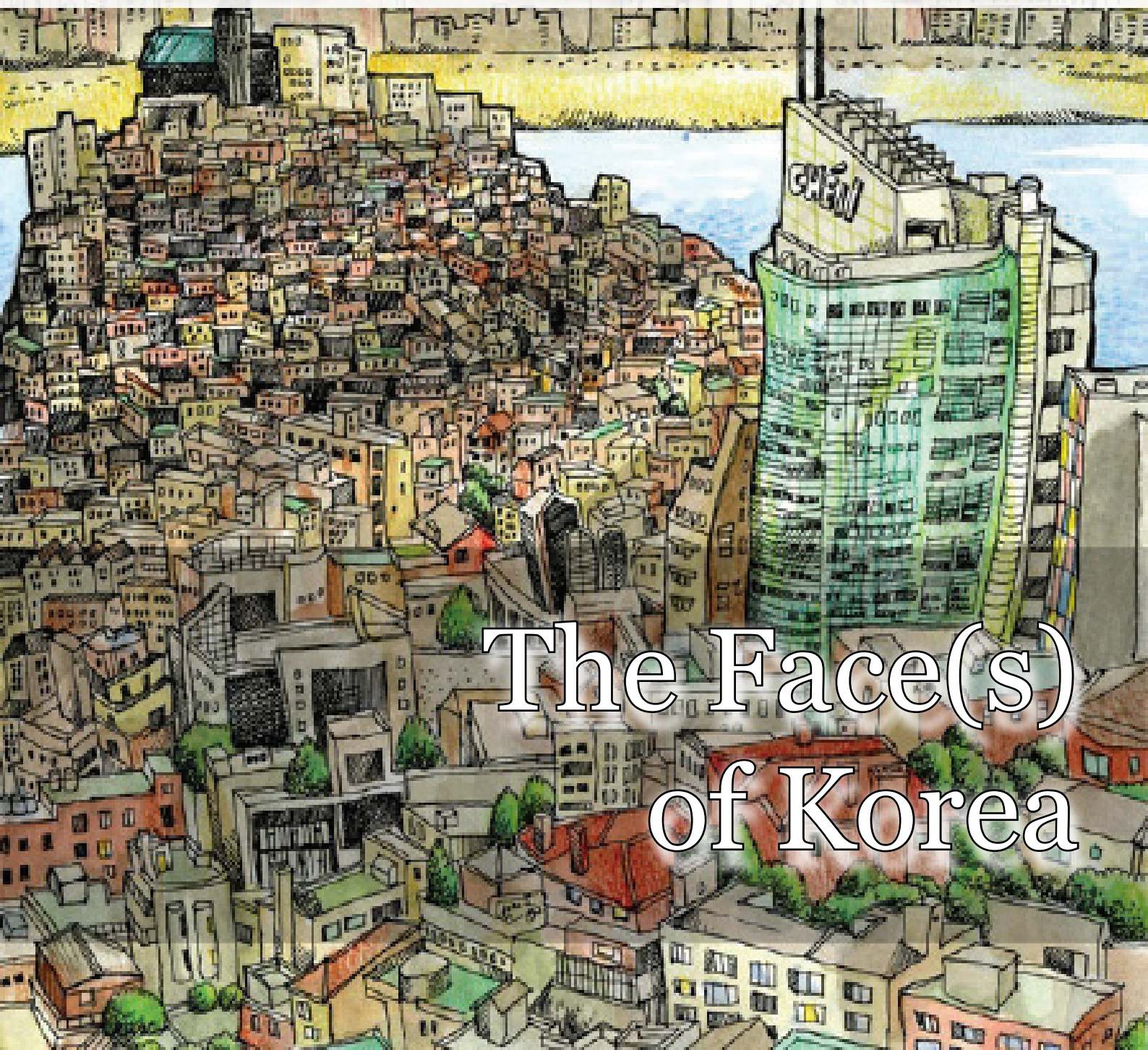
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STUDENT-ORGANIZED OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF YONSEI, UNDERWOOD INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE

THE PROFUNDITY  
of *VIDEOGAMES*

SOUTH KOREAN *National Identity*  
and *Foreign Policy*

The Art of  
*WASTE DISPOSAL*



## The Face(s) of Korea

# LETTER FROM THE DEAN

## “The Major Doesn’t Matter”

One of UIC’s greatest differences from most Korean universities is that we pride ourselves on the fact that it is your college—UIC—that matters, not your major. We select students into divisions or fields, and allow you freedom of choice both to select a major and then to change that major. Perhaps I am speaking to the converted, or perhaps you are wondering why I didn’t stop you in the halls just before sophomore year, when you declared your major, to persuade you of this point, but ... what does your major mean, at UIC? Certainly it means ... that you’ve studied a few more courses in a particular field than in another one. It means that you may have spent more time in classes with, and perhaps in student clubs with, students in that major. But I would guess, when you graduate from UIC, that you identify yourselves first as a UIC student, and second as part of a particular major. This is, of course, not true in other departments at Yonsei. I would guess that most Psychology students, for example, identify themselves with their department first, and with the “College of Liberal Arts” second.

I visited NYU-Abu Dhabi in February to see how that newish university was implementing liberal arts, in English, in the context of the Middle East, where an emphasis on professional training is just as important as it often is in Korea. While there, I visited a sample class for prospective freshmen taught by an English department professor. A prospective engineer asked the professor “What do you do with a literature degree?” and the professor answered, “Anything you want,” and spent the next 15 minutes explaining what that “anything” might mean. She explained that “anything” was possible for a literature major because of the skills in writing, reading, and analysis that a literature degree teaches, that “anything” was possible because professional schools like law school sought out the fundamental thinking skills inculcated by a liberal arts education, that “anything” was possible because literature graduates had such a deep understanding of human nature and culture that they could work in advertising and marketing and media and human resources and anything else. I don’t think that that engineering student will ever ask that question again.

I liked the literature professor’s answer, because, of course, I am a literature professor myself, but also because the belief that a liberal arts education comes first, and the major comes second, is central to UIC’s liberal arts philosophy. I believe that the track record of employment, careers, and graduate schools that UIC alumni enter into, and the limited correlation between their majors and their future paths, testifies to this philosophy. Just this spring, the Human Resources Director at a major consulting firm told me, very clearly, that the major doesn’t matter. Certainly you should select a major with care, and choose a field that you find most stimulating, but as a UIC student, and a UIC graduate, it will be the traits of critical thinking, of reasoning, of problem-solving, that will determine your career employment, success, and satisfaction.

Best wishes for the fall semester!



Park Hyung-ji, Ph.D.  
Dean  
Underwood International College





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The year 2014 has been, for lack of a better word, momentous. It's safe to say that a lot has happened in Korea, both sensational and gut-wrenching. The most significant event this year that shook Korea to its core was undoubtedly the Sewol ferry accident, which lifted the ugly lid on the dark underbelly of Korean society - rampant political corruption and distasteful media coverage of the aftermath, among others. While the *The UIC Scribe* was unable to cover the accident due to lack of information at the time, it got me to think about the other catastrophes and triumphs that have affected Korean society in the past year. But how does one determine which elements constitute the notion of Korean society? Just like the individual cannot be defined by one facet of his or her character, no one phenomena can truly encapsulate a nation or its people's identity. As such, I wanted to make my last edition about the myriad faces of Korea, so to speak, that we present to the world and that which in turn shape us as citizens and a people. To highlight a few of the topics at hand: continuing upon her theme of critically analyzing issues related to North Korea, Jaeyoung examines the slim possibility of the reunification of the Korean peninsula following President Park's speech in Dresden (pg. 18). From a domestic standpoint, Da-eun's piece on the pressing issue of youth unemployment in Korea will undoubtedly strike a chord with many of our readers overwrought with trepidation over their uncertain future in a highly competitive job market (pg. 36). Of course, along with the unscrupulous and reprehensible face of Korea is the hope and incomparable beauty that this urban milieu can also offer. Valentine's article on the municipal government's successful initiative to curb the high suicide rate sheds light on some of the good that has come out of our leadership (pg. 41), while Pham provides insight on the numerous art exhibitions coming into town (pg. 87).

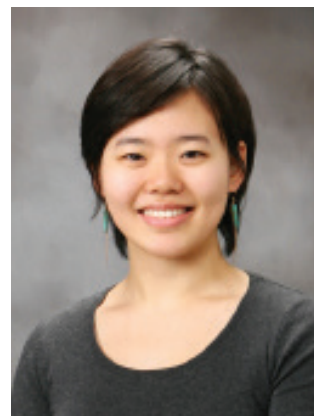
Those balking at the highly Korea-centric nature of the articles in this edition can rest assured that we also have a wide and fascinating range of opinion articles, from Diep's humorous analysis of the marketing strategies deftly employed by firms that guide our behavior as consumers (pg. 58) to Jiyoung's meticulous research into the effect babies' names have on their future social and economic status (pg. 71). Needless to say, as much as Korean society has been turned upside down, we cannot overlook the changes that have taken place in UIC as well. To begin with, I had the privilege of interviewing Professor Tomoko Seto, whose extensive background in modern Japanese history will unquestionably pique the interest of many eager UIC students (pg. 5). UIC Student Ambassadors also shared with us one of their exciting, novel endeavors - "Project Bridge," a cultural exchange program in which students from the United States were invited to come learn more about Korean culture (pg. 7).

At the risk of sounding overly cliched, it seems just like yesterday that I became editor-in-chief of *The UIC Scribe*. It therefore comes as somewhat of a shock that the time has already come to hand off the reins to my esteemed colleague, Amie Song. Albeit short, my stint as editor-in-chief has been both an incredible journey and thoroughly enriching experience. But now it is time to bid adieu to my role, and while goodbyes were, and have never quite been my strong suit, I look forward to seeing *The UIC Scribe* continue to grow and thrive with a new leader at the helm.

Warm Regards,



Yoon Ha-yon  
Editor-in-Chief



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## UIC NEWS

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Welcome Interview: Professor Tomoko Seto           | 5  |
| Introducing Korea: Bridging Cultures               | 7  |
| Snippets from Songdo: YIC, UIC's Second Home       | 10 |
| UIC Student Ambassadors: An Evening in "Spotlight" | 15 |

## CURRENT AFFAIRS

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Reunification of the Two Koreas: A "Bonanza"?                                 | 18 |
| The Perfect Storm: How the Information Leak of 2014 Was Inevitable            | 22 |
| 2014 World Cup and Korean Nationalism   | 27 |
| Kidnap for Ransom: Are Korean Companies Protecting Their Employees?           | 31 |
| Jobless Equals Hopeless?: Youth Unemployment in Korea                         | 36 |
| "Bridge of Life" Discourages Suicide Attempts by Lighting up Messages of Hope | 41 |
| South Korean National Identity and Foreign Policy                             | 44 |

## OPINION

|  |    |
|--|----|
| A Not-So Happily Ever After: Celebrities Under Public Scrutiny                                   | 49 |
| Korea's Elitist Culture and Educational System   | 53 |
| A Trip to the Supermarket: And How One's Wallet Is Drained by Psychological Marketing Strategies | 58 |
| Lessons from Harry Potter: A Key to Understanding Society and the Individual                     | 64 |
| The Art of Waste Disposal  | 67 |
| The Beginning of Identity: The Effects Children's Names Have on Their Economic and Social Status | 71 |
| The Profundity of Videogames   | 76 |

## CULTURE

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Summer Must List                             | 79 |
| Spring/Summer Exhibitions in Seoul: A Review | 87 |

|               |    |
|---------------|----|
| FINAL REMARKS | 91 |
|---------------|----|







# Welcome Interview: Professor Tomoko Seto

By Yoon Ha-yon

**Please give us a brief self-introduction (i.e. where you are from, your educational background, hobbies, etc.)**

I was born and raised in Tokyo. I earned a BA in Asian studies and history in 2004 and an MA in history in 2006, both from the City College of the City University of New York. I received my PhD in modern Japanese history from the Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations at the University of Chicago in 2014. My doctoral dissertation is about how the early socialist/anarchist movement interacted with popular culture and media in early twentieth-century Tokyo. I am interested in cultural aspects of social movements. I have been a student of hot yoga (Bikram) for ten years and also recently started practicing sanshin, a traditional Okinawan musical instrument.

**How did you first find out about UIC, and what made you decide to come here?**

I heard about UIC through a job posting in an English language mailing list. I decided to come here primarily because I had been interested in teaching Japanese history in English outside the United States.

**Have you had any prior teaching experience? If so, how does it compare to your experience so far at UIC?**

I taught Japanese history at the University of Chicago. My teaching experience at UIC has inspired me to rethink the politics of Japanese history written in English whose target audience is European-American.

## What were your first impressions of your students? Have they changed through interacting with them?

I initially found that many students were very quiet and shy. As the semester has gone on, however, some of them have actively demonstrated that they have a lot to say about what they are learning in class, especially in light of their diverse life experiences.

## Do you have a personal teaching philosophy? What do you think are the most important qualities of an intellectually stimulating classroom environment?

My teaching philosophy is to provide students with opportunities to challenge their own assumptions. The most important qualities in class are intellectually sophisticated discussion and inspirational source materials for students to ponder problems of history from multiple perspectives in relation to issues surrounding us today.

## What courses are you currently teaching or planning to teach in the future?

I am currently teaching two courses: Social Movements in Modern Japan and Gender in Modern Japanese History.

## Can you recommend a few books to UIC students?

Norma Field, *In the Realm of a Dying Emperor* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1991)

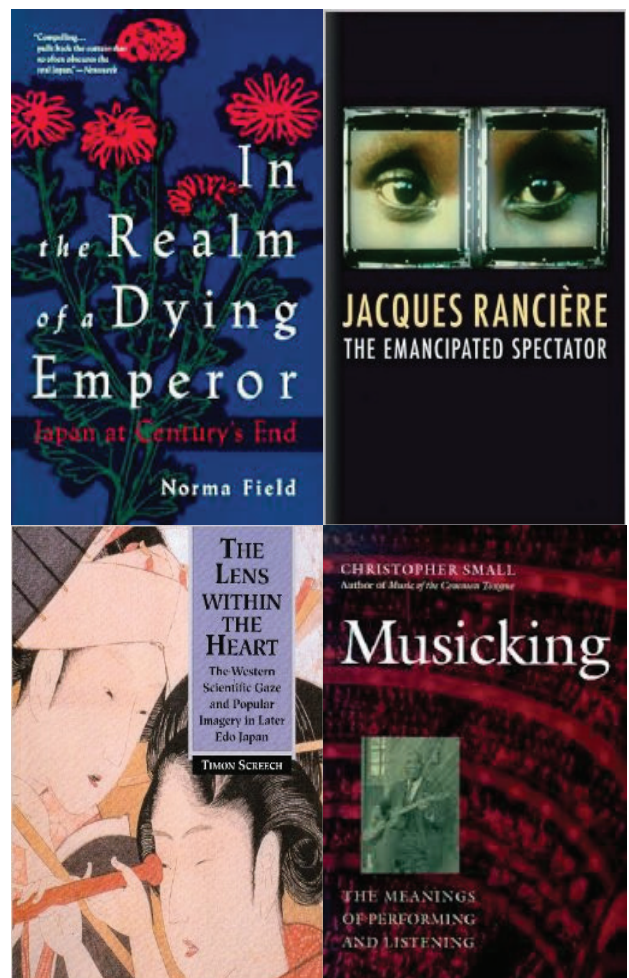
Jacques Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator* (London: Verso, 2009)

Timon Screech, *The Lens Within the Heart: The Western Scientific Gaze and Popular Imagery in Later Edo Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002)

Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening* (Hanover, NH : University Press of New England, 1998)

## Finally, do you have any last words of advice to UIC students?

Take advantage of this unique learning environment and try to be original and critical thinkers. ■





# INTRODUCING KOREA

## Bridging Cultures

By Amalia Wisam, Oh Hye-in, and Yung Hian Ng



“Welcome,” Professor Michael Kim’s voice echoed in the room full of bright young faces, and he launched into an impressive introduction of Yonsei University and the beginnings of Underwood International College (UIC). This year, 23 high school students from Los Angeles and New York came under the auspices of Project Bridge to learn more about Korean culture, and they made UIC their first stop in Korea. Professor Kim’s deliberate delivery drew acknowledging nods and engaged smiles from the high school students when he explained the deep history and touching impact Korea’s beloved missionary, Horace G. Underwood, had on the mission and goal that were now manifested in UIC. He gripped and he won over the audience’s attention with not only grand stories but also of honest truths when he answered their questions.

One by one, the UIC Student Ambassadors then shared their expertise and experiences of college up on stage. We came down glowing with pride, knowing that we had enlightened these high school students with incomparably priceless knowledge that only we possessed and that would change their lives forever (or so we hoped). Previously, they hadn’t even known Korea had an international college. They hadn’t even known that there were so many Koreans who spoke fluent English or that there were actually international stu-

dents from around the globe who came to Korea to learn in English.

Now, they not only knew that UIC was one of Korea's finest international colleges,



but they were also included in the exclusive dreams of UIC climbing up in status to the heights of an Ivy League. They were aware now that not only were there many Koreans fluent in English, but that these fluent English-speaking Koreans were also the top-tiers of the nation, and that it was UIC that had made it possible for them to gather into one place and provide them opportunities that would change their futures as well as the world's. These high school students' eyes were opened to the possibilities and implications that UIC held, and were made to rethink their simply planned futures in light of UIC instigating plausible changes in the current circulation of the

world.

After a flourishing finish to our presentation of UIC, we filed out for the campus tour after a five-minute break given to the visiting students and

teachers. Walking from New Millennium Hall down to Yeonhui Hall, the students were fascinated by the architecture of the building. "It doesn't feel like we're in Korea! The buildings look just like universities in the States," some of them exclaimed. They also grabbed the opportunity to take photos in front of the building and at the flight of stairs with the beautiful greenery and spring

flowers in the background. We then continued walking down towards the renowned Underwood statue for a group photo.

Next stop was the amphitheatre, where we explained that it is the main venue for big events such as the annual AKARAKA. As we were looking around, we noticed that a few of them had huge grins on their faces. To our surprise, the students had prepared a dance performance! In less than a few minutes, they took their spots on stage and were striking different poses as the viral "Bar Bar Bar" by K-pop group, Crayon Pop came up. We could see their enthusiasm as they were smiling throughout the minute-and-a-half performance and enjoying themselves tremendously. Even their teachers had bright smiles as they recorded their performance. We gave the students' synchronized "crab dance" a well-deserved round of applause for the effort and time they had spent practicing for the lovely surprise performance.







After making their “debut” on the Yonsei University stage, we made our way back to New Millennium Hall for lunch. Over bowls of steaming hot bulgogi and plates of delicious kimchi fried rice, we talked about various topics ranging from life in Korea, our home countries, and even places to buy 10,000 won bags in Seoul! Learning that they rushed to Sinchon to meet us upon arrival in the Incheon airport that morning after a 13-hour flight, we were very touched by their enthusiasm and active participation in the programme that we had planned for them. Many of them had never been to Korea and did not know much about Korea before joining the programme, and their adventurous spirit and inquisitiveness reminded us to take up opportunities to try out new things and visit new places amidst our busy study schedules.

All too soon, it was time to say goodbye. Exchanging Facebook accounts, gifts, hugs, and promises to keep in contact, we greatly appreciated the chance to meet new friends from abroad. Looking at the smiles on the young faces, we were glad to have welcomed them with an enjoyable morning in Seoul, and we hope that we can see them around in Korea again, hopefully in the classrooms of New Millennium Hall. ■

*\*All photos provided by the UIC Office*

# Snippets from Songdo

# **YIC: UIC's**

# **Second Home**

By Song Da-woon (Amie)  
and Lee Se-woong (Sam)

Since 2011, UIC students have had the opportunity of spending their freshman year in a residential college at Yonsei International Campus (YIC). Though many were skeptical and perhaps unwilling at first, life at YIC has gradually become one of the most cherished memories for most UIC students.







During its early years, Songdo as a city was relatively unknown. Neither the neighborhood nor the Yonsei campus had developed enough to impose a lasting impression on anybody, let alone the incoming UIC students. In 2011, YIC was fairly limited in size, consisting of three dormitories and three academic buildings containing both classrooms and offices. Students inhabited dormitory A, while facilities such as the Student Council room and Woori Bank occupied dormitories B and C. In addition, students were divided into three “houses,” Allen, Avison, and Underwood, each being the namesake of a founding figure of Yonsei University.

The UIC freshmen of 2011 had no choice but to set out and find ways of enjoying their freshman year. The task was far from easy due to the small number of restaurants and bars near campus, which at the time was especially low compared to the number of such establishments in Sinchon. Fortunately, they soon discovered the perfect places to eat, drink, and create memories, and knowledge of such places was passed down to the next batch of freshmen.

Thanks to their upperclassmen, students entering in 2012 had an easier time adjusting to life in Songdo. They were able to experience life as no other Korean freshman ever had, witnessing firsthand the expansion of YIC, the construction of a shopping mall, and the rapid development of Songdo as a whole. The seemingly deserted campus and surrounding neighborhoods constituted UIC’s own little world, relishing an atmosphere blooming with familial relationships and invaluable memories.

2013 saw a few but dramatic changes. In addition to those who were already living on campus such as UIC and College of Pharmacy, all Yonsei freshmen, except those enrolled in the College of Music and College of Sciences in Education, were required to spend one semester in YIC. The original plan had required all freshmen, except for those who were excluded due to lack of facilities, to move onto campus. However, because of delays in construction and lack of space, it became impossible for the entire Yonsei freshmen population to move in, causing the plan



to be changed. Consequently, it was decided that half of the freshmen would live at YIC for only one semester while the other half remained in Sinchon, and the two would switch in the second semester. Therefore, the number of students at YIC increased to approximately only 2,000 (half the number of freshmen) per semester. In addition to dormitory A, dormitories B and C were finally filled with students, and the campus was teeming with more people than ever. The UIC freshmen of 2013 therefore experienced a slightly different Songdo life from that of previous classes, but they were nevertheless able to create and cherish fond memories of their time living and studying there.

By the end of the 2013 academic year, YIC had grown significantly. With further de-

velopment, however, came greater change. Classes of UIC students admitted between 2011 and 2013 would recall YIC as being quite different from what it has become today. This year, several modifications were made to YIC that would further distance it from “good old Songdo,” which is the name used by those who knew firsthand what YIC and Songdo were like in the past. One of the most striking changes at YIC is that except for those of certain departments such as the College of Sciences in Education, are required to reside at YIC for two semesters. Because of this drastic increase in the number of students, which now ranges up to 4,000 per academic year, Songdo Dormitory Complex 2 has been constructed, which consists of four new dormitories: D, E, F, and G. Instead of dormitory A, where all

past UIC freshmen resided, dormitory G is now home for most UIC students. Moreover, whereas there were previously only three houses, there are now twelve—including Aristotle and Allen, two houses which most UIC students reside in—divided among the seven mega-dorm structures. Furthermore, along with the number of students, that of RAs (Residential Assistants) and RHCs (Residential Hall Coordinators) have risen as well to 178 and 30, respectively.

Because of these changes, the atmosphere at YIC has improved remarkably. The campus has noticeably bloomed into a state-of-the-art facility flaunting six academic buildings, two study houses, and seven dormitory buildings. The impressive stance of Underwood Memorial Library,



which is now fully operational with a growing collection of books and other forms of media, is enough to make any student in Korea jealous. A fairly wide variety of affordable food is now available in four cafeterias, while delicious snacks are offered at eight mini-restaurants. Like previous UIC students, the freshmen of 2014 are quickly realizing the plethora of opportunities open to them as students at YIC, such as having an entire year to bond with friends, reinforce relationships, and utilize networks that are not available in Sinchon. With all the tremendous improvements made across campus, the pursuit of these opportunities will be greatly enhanced and facilitated.

The large increase in students has understandably called forth stricter measures for safety and security. For instance, the penalty point system is now more seriously implemented. In 2012, penalty points were virtually a concept only on paper, enforced only when absolutely necessary. In 2013, the system was enforced without question upon those who violated the rules stated in the code of conduct. However, it was still considered to be in its trial-run stages. Students who exceeded the maximum 16 points did not face severe disciplinary action, despite being at risk of suspension from the dorms. This year, while some of the penal-

ties have become more lenient as a result of prolonged negotiations and complaints from students, observation of the rules remains tightly enforced. For example, RHCs set out frequently to catch students not wearing lanyards containing their student ID cards. Although such means of regulation may appear excessive and, in the words of many freshmen, “irritating,” the increased number of students in the dorms has made matters concerning the safety and security of its residents more crucial than ever. For this reason, YIC has taken measures to tighten and enhance campus security.

Unfortunately, not all changes at YIC have been perfectly executed. Although

*Photo credit to Lee Se-woong (Sam)*





construction of the new dormitories was completed around January 2014, a variety of facilities and some important elements of the infrastructure were not ready by the move-in date. Only one restaurant was fully operational in the new dormitories, and the convenience store, along with the recreational facilities, was completed during the first week of classes. A large source of dissatisfaction is the lack of available YIC Wi-Fi networks in the new dormitories. While the improved sound-proofing of the new dormitory rooms have made them quieter, it has also made them somewhat impermeable to Wi-Fi signals. Since no YIC Wi-Fi networks were implemented as a result, residents who wish to have Wi-Fi access inside their dormitory room must install their own wireless routers, which is in stark contrast to the first dormitory building where Wi-Fi was widely and readily avail-

able. Another problem is the flawed network service for mobile phones, for which a speedy fix has been promised. In early March, U+ and SKT users were getting either no signal or a “full signal” with unstable connections. Furthermore, the large increase in the number of resident students has caused two more serious problems. First, transportation between the Sinchon and Songdo campus, which has been an ongoing problem for YIC, has become even more inconvenient due to high competition for seats on the inter-campus shuttle bus as well as the M6724 bus, an express bus that connects the two campuses. Second, there is now a shortage of classes. For instance, only a few sophomore-level classes are offered in Songdo, and enrollment in certain Holistic Education courses has become much more competitive. The Yonsei administration has promised to resolve these and other issues,

and students can only hope for a prompt resolution.

In just three short years, the small and peaceful YIC has transformed into an enormous and robust university campus with the dramatic expansion in the number of buildings, facilities, and residents. The transformation has been so drastic that it is difficult to recall what YIC used to be like, especially for previous generations of UIC freshmen. What remains, however, is that no student will forget the precious and once-in-a-lifetime memories and experiences that he or she obtained while residing at YIC. Whatever additions and modifications are made, and despite any inevitable imperfections in future growth, one thing is for certain: YIC is, and always will be, a wonderful start to one’s fleeting and memorable student life at Yonsei University. ■

# UIC Student Ambassadors: An Evening in “Spotlight”

By Park Sae-bin



*Student Ambassadors at “Spotlight 2014”.*

The doors of NMH111 were wide open to welcome faculty, staff and fellow students of UIC on the evening of May 29th, 2014. The UIC Student Ambassadors, smartly dressed in blue, black and white, commenced the second annual event of “Spotlight”.

The UIC Student Ambassadors (also known as SAM) is an organization comprised of some of the most dedicated, “internationally-minded students,” who strive to promote UIC far beyond the borders of Korea. Since its establishment in October 2011, the organization has conducted campus tours for visiting stu-

dents from Jeju International School and high schools in the U.S. (brought together by Project Bridge), as well as participated in recruitment trips to Southeast Asia alongside PR professors. Ambassadors, both individually and collaboratively, have also curated numerous public relations projects on various social networking platforms, such as Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. SAM’s ever expanding online presence has been key not only in maintaining contact with those already met, but also for reaching out to curious international students with limited access to UIC.

With the addition of new projects each semester, it became necessary for SAM to record the progress of ongoing projects, and provide new ambassadors with a sense of direction and belonging. The annual report that served this purpose was actualized into an event called “Spotlight.” “Spotlight” is held at the end of the spring semester, gathering all active student ambassadors to present statistics and samples of their respective projects. In May 2013, the presentation delivered by the first league of ambassadors was met by much enthusiasm and support from the





*Vionna and Taylor preparing the audience for the “selfie” experiment.*

audience. The success of the inaugural event inspired SAM to continue the presentation as an annual affair. “Spotlight” now serves as an update regarding SAM’s yearly progress, as well as an expression of appreciation to the highly supportive UIC faculty and staff.

The opening of “Spotlight 2014” introduced the vision of SAM along with statistics illustrating the sharp increase in the number of international students in UIC between the years 2012 and 2013. Whereas the preceding years saw little over ten international freshmen, the noted time period admitted more than thirty. As of 2013, the international student population totalled up to 178. The significant rise in international student entries following 2012 corresponded to the enhanced online profile of UIC and increased activities of SAM since 2011. In fact, simply typing in the words “international college Korea” on the Google search bar leads to results where the official UIC website is listed first. Performing the same search on YouTube features a video titled “My Dorm Room at Yonsei University (Songdo International Campus)” by Taylor Herman, who was chairman of SAM during fall 2013 and remains an active ambassador today.

After the brief account on the growing size of UIC’s international student population, this year’s fourteen student ambassadors were ready to share the details of their PR projects.

Early in the presentation were familiar projects showcased in the previous year, including Amalia Wisam and Thanh Vu’s “Woori UIC” and Taylor Herman’s personal channel on YouTube. Both channels have received more than 25,000 views and continue to gain subscribers. Amalia Wisam, current vice chairman of SAM, shared the changes that have been implemented in the “Woori UIC” channel: “We decided to vlog (video blog), sharing snippets of our daily lives in hopes of ‘showing’ answers to some of the e-mails and comments inquiring about student life- which we noticed have escalated especially over the past year. Though not as polished as the informational videos on our channel, these short clips have allowed us to upload and interact with our viewers more frequently.”

Some of the newest additions to SAM’s PR projects have exhibited equally high levels of success, particularly due to the new ambassadors ensuring plenty of preparation and revision before the launch. Many of the new PR projects were built upon the “FAQ for UIC SAM,” a guide pairing facts and figures to the most commonly asked questions, in order to aid current and future ambassadors as they work online through social media and offline during visiting or recruitment trips. The “compilation will help every one of us to be well-prepared to answer possible questions that prospective students may ask about UIC,” explained Gabin Park, developer of the “FAQ

for UIC SAM.” The UIC blog, initiated by Linh Nguyen, Hyein Oh, and Trang Tran, elaborated on the information contained in the guide, and also addressed larger issues about the application process and settling down in Korea. Pierre Zipagan’s photography blog displayed beautiful images to offer a visual storytelling of everyday UIC and Korea, whilst Xu Chen and Iris Zhang’s Weibo (China’s most popular micro-blogging site) catered to the extensive Chinese community.

Amongst the multiple projects, the highlight of the evening was the presentation of UIC Instagram. Vionna Wijaya, who undertook the existing Instagram account, stressed the importance of utilizing the power of connectivity and immediacy of social media to promote UIC: “The hashtag function conveniently allows people to stumble upon the UIC account, merely by searching words as simple as ‘Korea.’” The presenter asked all ambassadors and members of the audience to participate in a quick “selfie” (self-portrait photograph) experiment, for which Taylor Herman responsively brought out her smartphone to capture a “selfie” and uploaded it to the UIC Instagram account. At the end of the presentation, the upload was revealed to have more than twenty likes with approximately half being immediate responses. The results of the experiment clearly demonstrated how the simplicity of Instagram was capable of instantly boosting the visibility of UIC worldwide.

The closure of the second annual event of “Spotlight” marks the beginning of yet another chapter of productiveness and creativity. Reflecting on each of the projects, we are positive that direct communication between prospective international students and students currently enrolled at UIC will only continue to improve, and further diversify UIC’s student population. We look forward to the new PR projects that SAM has to offer at “Spotlight 2015.” ■



*\*Photos provided by the UIC Office and Yung Hian Ng*



presstv.ir/

# REUNIFICATION OF THE TWO KOREAS: A 'BONANZA'?

By Yun Jae-young

On March 28, South Korea's President Park Geun-hye gave a speech at the Dresden University of Technology in Germany, where she revealed her plans for the reunification of the two Koreas to the international community. Drawing upon past similarities between Germany and Korea – two countries that were partitioned between rival powers during the Cold War but have taken separate paths today – she emphasised looking to Germany as a role model for how unification should be achieved on the Korean peninsula.

Indeed, according to *Bloomberg*, the choice of location for President Park's speech was significant in that Dresden, located near the Czech border, was formerly a part of East Germany. In 1989, mass protests in Dresden against East Germany's communist government helped bring down the "Iron Curtain" dividing West and East

Germany, eventually leading to the reunification of Germany in 1990. In this sense, choosing to deliver her speech in Dresden was perhaps an illustration of President Park's intent that one day in the near future, the two Koreas will also be able to achieve unification, just as Germany did.

In her Dresden speech, President Park outlined three main approaches in paving the way for the reunification of Korea. The first drew upon "the concerns of everyday people," focusing on humanitarian issues in North Korea, as well as family reunions between North and South. Referring to how East and West Germany allowed families split by the border to meet regularly, President Park identified this as a necessary measure for the two Koreas in the process of building trust. She also announced the intention of the South Korean government to work closely with the United Nations and other international organisations to provide health care for pregnant women and children in the North, which would help nourish impoverished younger generations and ultimately help them play an active role as citizens in a unified Korea.

Secondly, President Park outlined the importance of building infrastructure such as multi-farming complexes in the North that could benefit a unified Korea. Emphasising the economic benefits that reunification could bring, President Park proposed cooperative efforts to stimulate agriculture in the North, which is "suffering from backward production and deforestation." This would, in effect, utilise the abundant natural resources of the North and the advanced technology of the South.

The third and final issue was that of cultural interaction and exchange. Decades of division on the Korean peninsula under different governments have led to many differences in way of life between North and South Koreans. In order to diminish these differences, President Park proposed the establishment of an "inter-Korean exchange and cooperation office" that would





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others, he points to the decreasing enthusiasm in the South surrounding the reunification of Korea, especially among the younger generation.

One possible explanation for the differing perspectives on reunification could be the economic cost of bringing the two Koreas together. If the unification of Korea is achieved in the near future, younger generations are well aware that they will be the ones who will bear the economic burden, largely in the form of taxes. In the same survey, 17.4% of the South Korean population said that they had absolutely no desire to pay additional taxes for the unification of Korea, and even among those who were willing to do so, 37.7% were willing to pay no more than 100,000 won per year. Thus, there is concern that voting taxpayers in the South would not be willing to make the needed financial sacrifices to revitalise the North Korean economy and equalise economic and living standards on the peninsula. This concern is understandable. During the past sixty years of division, economic differences between North and South Korea have widened immeasurably. South Korea has a per capita GDP of \$34,777 whilst North Korea, according to its most recent 2011 estimate, has a per capita GDP of \$1,800, ranking it one of the poorest countries in the world. That being said, however, North Korea is not a completely infant economy that needs to be started up from scratch. Under Japanese colonial rule, North Korea was a site of heavy investment by the Japanese, who set up a fer-

oversee active interaction between the two Koreas, which would include – but not be limited to – “exchanges in historical research and preservation, culture and the arts, and sports – all of which could promote genuine people-to-people contact.”

Reactions to President Park’s optimistic ideals with regards to the reunification of Korea have been mixed. This is not surprising, given the large number of issues that need to be resolved if a genuine and peaceful reunification is to be achieved on the peninsula. One is the attitude of young South Koreans concerning unification. According to a recent survey conducted by the Asan Institute for Policy Studies, though some 63.5% of the South Korean population said that unification should be achieved, numbers differed greatly by generation. 70.6% of people in their fifties and 61.2% of people in their sixties expressed positive feelings towards reunification; however, the number dropped significantly for young adults in their twenties, with only 39.8% agreeing to this view. Given the younger generation’s reluctant attitudes towards unification, why exactly is President Park so keen for it to be realised? Her approach to unification differs greatly to that of past conservative leaders, whose attitudes have been lukewarm at best. Former president Lee Myung-bak in particular strained the North-South relationship with his hardline stance. For President Park, however, it seems as though recent events on the Korean peninsula have given her an opportunity to call for reunification. Following the execution of Kim Jong-un’s uncle, Jang Sung-taek, in December last year, rumours emerged that the political situation of the North was much more unstable than previously thought and, given this instability, President Park has declared that South Korea must be prepared for whatever might happen on the other side of the 38th parallel. Yet, as argued by Kim Myong-sik of *The Korea Herald*, “[t]hat the collapse of the North Korean regime looks closer does not mean that the unification of the Korean Peninsula is at hand.” Like many

tiliser company which grew to be one of the biggest in Asia at the time. Even after the end of the Korean War, North Korea witnessed economic expansion as the state imposed and directed a centrally planned economy, which made full use of its labour and assistance from other communist countries. Additionally, North Korea is, relative to South Korea, abundant in natural resources and cheap labour. If the North is willing to cooperate with the South – as suggested by President Park in her Dresden speech – it has enormous potential in terms of economic growth and expansion.

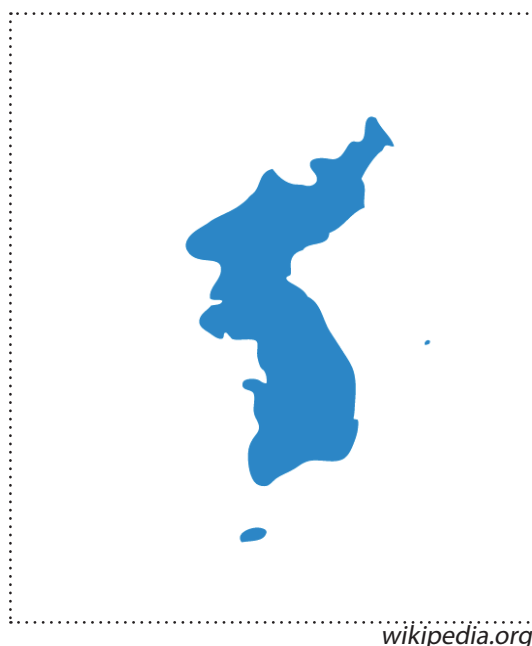
It appears, then, as though President Park's referral to the unification of Korea as a "bonanza" is largely framed within an economic perspective. In a word, ambitions to stimulate the economy underlie her motives of seeing a unified Korea. Matthew Winkler and Sam

Kim of Bloomberg claim that the actions being undertaken by the South Korean president with regards to unification are based on "a presidential agenda that began with an initiative to strengthen productivity and growth in South Korea's economy". According to the Wall Street Journal, some have estimated that the natural resources available in the North could amount to \$10 trillion in value, which would greatly benefit not only Koreans, but also the world economy as a whole. At present, China is the only country that has been granted access to these resources; the unification of Korea would allow other countries to also benefit from them. With this in mind, perhaps Park is justified in her desire to see a unified Korea, at least from a (global) economic viewpoint.

Despite the general consensus of agreement with President Park's proposals, however,

some remain sceptical of the feasibility of their implementation. Indeed, unification cannot be achieved without willing cooperation on North Korea's part. Although President Park is working to ease tensions on the Korean peninsula and trying to remain diplomatic by, for example, choosing not to mention the North's provocations in public press conferences, the North is yet to react positively to the olive branch that has been offered. Rather, the North Korean newspaper *Rodong Sinmun* (Workers' Newspaper) responded by rejecting President Park's proposals, calling her a "cold-blooded animal" who "jabbars like a little girl." Most recently and controversially, satellite images have shown that nuclear activity has increased at a site in Punggye-ri, with rumours of an imminent fourth nuclear test once high-level decisions are made from the North Korean government. In the wake of such negative reactions from Park's northern counterparts, it seems likely that the atmosphere on the peninsula will turn cold once again.

The issue of denuclearisation, then, is one Korea will have to deal with during the process of unification. The international community's strong opposition to North Korea's development of nuclear weapons is already well-known, and obstinacy from the latter could impede unification altogether. The US, as Korea's main ally,



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## Ambitions to stimulate the economy underlie her motives of seeing a unified Korea.

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has spoken out strongly against North Korea's continued development of nuclear weapons. During his visit to Korea on 25th April, President Barack Obama said that the most important thing regarding North Korea was denuclearisation, claiming that if North Korea really is genuine about opening up more talks, the issue of denuclearisation must be laid out as an agenda on the table. He also noted the great extent of influence China could wield in pressurizing North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons, and declared that it should act accordingly in order to pacify its communist ally. In the same press conference, President Park echoed President Obama's words by saying that without talks of denuclearisation, all efforts towards communication would lose momentum and eventually become meaningless, urging China to take a firmer attitude to show that they will not tolerate any further nuclear developments. The issue of denuclearisation is already a matter of conflict, and will inevitably have to be addressed during a possible reunification of the two Koreas. How well this issue will be tack-

led lies in the hands of President Park, whose foreign policy and decisions regarding unification will determine the direction and nature of unification. To quote President Obama, “we are not going to find a magic bullet” that will solve all these problems at once, and the two Koreas, as well as other members of the international community, should work together in order to bring about a peaceful reunification for both Korea and the world.

Whether President Park's speech at Dresden will act as a seed in the process of reunification or is just wishful thinking remains to be seen. South Koreans are in every way justified in wanting to see their country unified with the North for a better and stronger Korea. However, it must be remembered that many issues still remain to be resolved, and how well these issues are handled will ultimately determine whether unification, if achieved, will really be a “bonanza” for the two Koreas. After all, unprepared unification might be worse than no unification at all. ■



*"We regret to inform you that your personal information has been leaked. These are the necessary procedures you can take to ensure that..."*

The dreaded message above, which first appeared on a few credit card websites, soon spread like wildfire. People stared at their electronic devices in shock as it was announced that there had been an information leak in the system. Names, e-mail addresses, bank account numbers, resident-registration numbers, residential addresses, and phone numbers were taken out of a supposedly safe security system. This data was ready to be sold to the highest bidder, which put people at risk of voice phishing and identity theft. Information that should

have remained private had become public. However, this incident was no accident. It was a storm that had been brewing over the years, with deregulation, a lack of security, and increased benefits of obtaining such information collecting like black clouds. It finally erupted in 2014 and created the biggest personal information leak in Korean history.

The most well known incident began on January 19, when state regulators announced that personal information pertaining to the holders of 104 million credit cards issued by KB Financial Group Inc., Nonghyup Financial Group Inc., and Lotte Group had been stolen. The culprit was an engineer from the Korea Credit Bureau (KCB), a personal credit rat-

ings firm, who had been stealing the information from May of 2012 to December of 2013 while working as a temporary consultant for these companies. Although he was eventually apprehended, the damage was already done. According to *Business Insider*, financial regulators "confirmed the total number of affected users as at least 20 million, in a country of 50 million."

Executives of each company's credit card branch handed in their resignation letters to accept responsibility for causing one of the biggest single leaks of personal information in Korea. The Financial Services Commission (FSC), Korea's government regulatory authority, quickly rushed to reassure the public. Although personal



# The Perfect Storm

## How the Information Leak of 2014 was Inevitable

By Lim Jee-soo

information had been leaked, it had not been distributed. The companies vowed to compensate their customers if any financial losses were incurred, as well as to replace any credit cards on request.

In turn, these events began an investigation that revealed a series of similar information leaks that rattled the nation and spread throughout its financial infrastructure. In February, the FSC found Prudential Life Insurance guilty of allowing an outside auditor access to the company's intranet for eight months in 2012. *The Korea Times* reported that the company had failed to notice that the auditor "looked into the personal information of 51 customers over 66 times without their [Prudential Life Insurance] consent." KB Life Insurance was found to be using customer data from KB Financial Group Inc. to recruit new customers and create more than 60,000 new insurance contracts from July of 2011 to August of 2012, while in return getting paid 9.4 billion won in

commissions.

One month later, KT's customers became the next victims of a leak of personal information, with a group of hackers successfully stealing the personal information of 9.8 million clients. It was announced that the Incheon Metropolitan Police Agency had arrested three suspects for hacking into KT's website and stealing around 12 million pieces of personal data over the course of a year. The telecom company was informed that it would be given a light penalty of a 100 million won fine for carelessness, and then refused to compensate its customers unless they could present physical proof of damages due to the event.

The month of April was also filled with news about information leaks. According to *The Korea Herald*, the Financial Supervisory Service (FSS), Korea's integrated financial regulator that works under the FSC, confirmed that the personal information of an additional 50,000 clients had been

leaked from Citibank Korea and Standard Chartered Bank Korea. This brought the total number of victims of leaked information up to 190,000, in addition to the original number of clients affected in last year's leak. This was the first case of 2014 with actual financial damages, as over 2,000 Citibank clients were found to have been victims of voice phishing tactics. Soon after, it was announced that 100,000 customers with cards issued by Shinhan, KB Kookmin, NH Nonghyup and Kwangju Bank had their personal information accessed by hackers, who also withdrew cash advances amounting to 102 million won from various credit cards.

With so much personal information hacked and leaked in such large-scale operations, one begins to wonder how such exploits were possible. It cannot just be the increased skills of hackers and their technology that has created this crisis of privacy. In fact, both the

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In fact, both the government and the card companies themselves must share the blame with hackers, the former for its weak penalties and regulations, and the latter for its lack of security.

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government and the card companies themselves must share the blame with hackers, the former for its weak penalties and regulations, and the latter for its lack of security. Although each party has played a role in the collapse of the security of private information, the ultimate responsibility lies with the corporations and their careless attitude towards the trust of their customers. This was reflected by a statement made to *Chosun Biz* by Shin Jae-yoon, head of the Financial Services Commissions, in which he said, “The CEO [of each company] must take full responsibility for hacking activities, now and in the future.” There is also the lucrative nature of such information leaks, which is spurred by the growing proliferation of credit cards in every day use. With the combination of corporate carelessness and monetary potential it was only inevitable for such a perfect storm

to descend on Korea.

To begin, it is imperative to understand why the number of credit card companies being targeted is on the rise. As reported by *The Global Post*, South Korea has the highest credit card usage in the world, with 129.7 transactions per capita in 2011. The Korean government has fostered this trend since the Asian IMF crisis of the late 1990s, when it tried to bolster household consumption by urging people to buy on credit. To curb corruption, the government also began promoting the use of credit cards because they make it easier to track monetary transactions. This push, aided by the proliferation of credit card services in public transportation and the service industry, has helped Korea become one of the biggest credit card economies in the world.

Thus it comes as no sur-

prise that credit card companies hold the personal information of a large percentage of the population. To obtain a credit card, people must give credit card companies their personal information, including their resident-registration number and income status. Naturally, credit card companies have become the target of hackers and thieves. However, the nature of information theft is changing as well. Although the targeted companies installed various firewalls and antivirus solutions to combat any hacking attempts, they failed to address internal threats in an effective way. This lack of strong security measures against the dangers of internal information theft has made such companies all the more appealing to people both outside and inside the business with malicious intentions.

As organizations that have been given the respon-



sibility and privilege of holding valuable and confidential data on their customers, credit card companies have been failing miserably. The KB, Nonghyup and Lotte scandal, which leaked the information of 104 million credit cards, was successfully undertaken by one man with a single USB. While acting as a consultant for the three firms as an employee of the KCB, the man managed to copy all the information he needed onto his flash drive during his consultation hours at the corporations' headquarters without them discovering the breach. Since employees were allowed to carry corporate data with them on their phones and on their online accounts, the limited security measures that were in place did not flag this consultant's actions as being suspicious.

This, however, does not mean that companies are

safe from external attacks either. *The Korea Herald's* report of the Shinhan card leak revealed that hackers were able to successfully enter the storage server of OK Cashbag, a point-of-sale (POS) company, to obtain personal information that included passwords, usernames, contact information, and credit card numbers. Although companies that use the POS system had been ordered to install security programs by the FSS, it was revealed that less than half of all POS devices had such security software in place. Companies that failed to follow basic and necessary security procedures, whether for the sake of convenience or cutting down on operational costs, have incentivized hackers to steal personal information. This lack of surveillance is not only an issue caused by the carelessness of the companies; it is also a product of the gov-

ernment's lack of action.

When it was announced that KT had suffered a leak of personal information of close to 10 million service users, the government did nothing but state that the company would be fined up to 100 million won. This was met with public outrage and people demanded that KT be dealt a heavier punishment, especially as KT had been the subject of numerous information leaks in the past, most recently in 2012. However, the government has done nothing and stands by the pre-existing telecom laws that protect the telecom companies. According to a government official who spoke to *The Korea Times*, "The country's telecom law does not acknowledge that data leakage is a financial



sets.” The law also dictates that only a fine can be given unless the company used its customers’ information to make a profit, which would lead to a business suspension.

This effectively frees KT, as well as any telecom company in the future, from any and all responsibilities due to their own carelessness. It has no real incentive to increase costs to implement stricter security measures, unless it begins losing customers en masse. This is unlikely to

no financial fallout, the moral violations must be taken into consideration as companies have broken the compact of trust that the companies have with their customers.

That is the fundamental issue of this situation. Through the government’s lack of regulations and companies’ carelessness, the customers’ right to privacy through data protection has been violated. When people agree to a service, they are trading their information for a guarantee

the government’s and financial service industry’s security policies be revised. Harsher penalties and stricter inspections need to be implemented. Companies need to put their customers before their profits, focusing more on increasing security than cutting costs. It is impossible to catch hackers or insider thieves before they penetrate a system, but it is imperative for companies to make an effort to preemptively shut them down by implementing firewalls and internal security measures.

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When people agree to a service, they are trading their information for a guarantee that such data will be kept confidential and secure.

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happen as KT is the second largest telecom company in Korea. Considering the fact that customers have to pay exorbitant fees if they break their phone contracts early, many don’t have a choice but to stay with KT. The light slap on the wrists companies receive is not enough to cover the potential damages that customers may incur, especially since this breaches the customers’ expectation that their information will remain confidential. Even if there is

that such data will be kept confidential and secure. Now that the flaws behind the system have been revealed, that fundamental level of trust has been broken. Consumers are forced to live in a world of fear, where every swipe of their card, every signature on a document, and every form filled out could lead to another breach of their rights.

As people are concerned about more leaks in the future, it is imperative that both

The storm has already struck and left devastation in its wake, but it isn’t too late to start building reinforced walls and shelters for what’s still left to come. Without the necessary changes, the people of Korea will be able to do nothing but watch as the next wave of destruction descends upon them. ■

# 2014 World Cup and Korean Nationalism

By Kim Min-jeong



With the coming of the 2014 World Cup, Koreans brace themselves to cheer for the Korean national soccer team. The World Cup starts off on June 13, and takes place until July 14 in Brazil. This short time span of a month will be a time when Koreans will not only enjoy the games, but also cheer enthusiastically for the victory of the Korean national soccer team. Through such sports events, Korean nationalism can be witnessed clearly. However, before Koreans enjoy these exciting games, they should reflect back on the relationship between the history of Korean nationalism and the history of sportsmanship in Korea in order to understand their patriotic support for the games. To understand how Koreans

are closely interrelated with sports games, one needs to look back to the 1988 Seoul Olympics and the 2002 World Cup, which both took place in Korea.

First of all, Korean nationalism is closely linked to sports in Korea. Therefore, one needs reflect on the history of the origins of nationalism. In the past and even today, Korea is situated between two influential countries, Japan and China. After the Sino-Japanese War in 1895, nationalistic thought was developed by disengaging from Korea's traditional orientation towards China. Korea was named the Great Han Empire in 1897 and adopted its national flag. There were also nationalist movements such as the Aeguk kyemong undong (the Patriotic Enlightenment Movement). This movement to gain a sense of Korean identity continued from 1895 to 1910, until Japan annexed Korea. However, national identity continued to be strengthened even after annexation, and although Korea no longer had a Korean government, or a national title, they asserted their independence through their national identity. It was this time when Sin Ch'aeho's ethnic definition of the nation as minjok (people) – that Tan'gun is the founder



of Korean minjok – was established. This concept of national identity still persists today as we refer to Koreans as han minjok (one nation).

Even with their national identity, however, Koreans were not able to win independence by themselves through the March 1st Movement. Rather, Korea was granted independence from Japan. This failure and the “granting” of freedom by Japan left Koreans with a history of shame. Korea only became free from Japan in 1945, when Japan surrendered to the Allied Forces. This shame was hoped to be overcome through recognition from other states and Korea’s joining with the advanced countries. This history of colonialism and a past of shame were to be overcome with achievements in sports events.

This wish to erase the shame of the past was clearly shown in the 1988 Summer Olympics. Chun Doo-hwan, the president of South Korea from 1980 to 1988, aimed for Korea to join advanced countries and put pressure on Korean athletes to win medals. However, due to this eagerness, the Korean public behaved in a disgraceful way. For instance, during a boxing match between a Korean fighter and a Bulgarian fighter, the Korean boxer was disquali-

fied for his dangerous attack. However, with strong nationalistic feeling, Koreans did not accept the outcome and were outraged, with even the Korean coach going as far to punch the referee. This shocking act by the coaches emerged from their wish for Korean athletes to win matches. In the days that followed, the referee fled back to his own country, frightened by the sudden attack from the coaches. The actions of the coaches can be explained through the belief that Korean athletes represented Korea, and to be subjected to unfair judgement by the referee was an unfair treatment towards the Korean nation itself.

Another incident occurred a few days later during the final match between the Korean boxer, Park Si Hun, and the American boxer, Roy Jones. From this match, if Korea received one more gold medal, it would be placed fourth on the overall rankings in the Olympics. Therefore, the stage had a tense atmosphere and Koreans filled the stage, cheering for Park Si Hun. Even before the match, Roy Jones was expected to win the match with his overwhelming skills. However, the winner of this match was Park Si Hun, and this outcome created controversy in other countries that Korea “stole” the gold medal from Roy Jones. Korean’s nationalistic pride and desire





to win matches created a lot of debate overseas and damaged Korea's reputation. In this past incident, Korea was more intent on gaining national glory through a gold medal than thinking of the athlete's happiness. It was a time when Koreans believed that the athletes carried a duty for national glory. In an interview from a few years ago, Park Si Hun expressed his feeling that he knew it was wrong of him to take the gold medal, but the crowd was cheering for him and he could do nothing. He had to suffer emotionally but to Koreans, he was a hero. This clouded view that the achievement of the South Korean national athletes was the collective achievement of the nation of Korea led to what happened.

However, Korea is not always fervent in its desire for nationalist glory to continue down this detrimental path for Korea's image. As Korea began to be acknowledged by other countries as an economically developed country, Koreans were more willing to enjoy the games with sports spirit. Korea began to accept defeat and react more reasonably. This is clearly shown in the 2002 World Cup. Even though Koreans were still passionate towards the sports games, they no longer expressed hatred or reacted violently towards a bad result. Koreans learned to accept the result and see for themselves from the perspective of the whole world. In 2002, Koreans were not only enthusiastic about hosting

the World Cup for the first time, but also about the Korean national soccer team winning for the first time after five consecutive World Cups without a single win. The South Korean national soccer team made it to the semi-finals, defeating strong teams such as Portugal, Italy, and Spain, which was an astounding accomplishment. This success was accompanied by the fervent support of Koreans who expressed their pride as Koreans. Koreans are unique citizens in that Korean nationalism is so closely related to and revealed through sports. For instance, Koreans displayed their Korean pride by gathering outside and cheering together. According to Kwon Mee-yoo from the Korean Times, "In 2002, more than 400,000 people flocked to Seoul Plaza to watch soccer games together and support the Korean team." The number of Koreans cheering was overwhelming and could not be compared to other countries. This cheering was not just for the South Korean national soccer team, but for their pride in being a Korean. Koreans are nationalistic in their fervent support of sports games. This is shown through how every Korean wears a red t-shirt to express the solidarity and uniformity of one nation. During the World Cup, it is customary to wear red T-shirts and sing nationalist songs and shout to show support. These are called the Red Devils (Bulgeun Ahgma) T-shirts and people are easily sighted walking around in these t-shirts. For those who



wish to experience the spirit of a Korean, wear these shirts to cheer alongside other Koreans. Whether one is a foreigner or an ethnic Korean, wearing the same t-shirt unites the people as one. To purchase these kinds of t-shirts with “Be the Reds”, one can buy it in Home Plus or online. Another way to enjoy the games in Korea is to learn one of the most popular chants, which is Daehan Minguk! (Republic of Korea!) followed by claps.

Twelve years have passed since the 2002 World Cup, and Koreans will still cheer for the South Korean national soccer team to win and bring glory to Korea once again. The shouting and wearing of the red t-shirts are also to be expected in the 2014 World Cup. Korea is a country with patriotic citizens who once believed that through sports, the Korean

nation could be glorified and accepted in the global world. However, as Korea walked towards globalization, Koreans could bring glory to their country through various ways, such as through technological and medical advancements. Sport games today are not used as a way to prove Korea’s acceptance among the world powers but a way to enjoy the feeling of nationalism that Korea is one nation, portrayed through the singing of songs and the wearing of the same clothes.

In order to cheer for 2014 World Cup in Korea, one must know the schedule of events. In this 2014 World Cup, the South Korean national soccer team is in Group H and is to face teams from Russia, Algeria, and Belgium on June 18, June 23, and June 27 respectively. Be sure to remember these dates and cheer

for the national team. During the World Cup, the Seoul Plaza will be open on the days that the Korean team will play, such as on June 18, 23 and 27. Enjoy the games by coming out to the plaza to experience the Korean spirit. However, Koreans should remember the history of 1988 Olympics, which is a reminder that the winning of a game is not everything. From this, Koreans learned that winning brings glory to Korea but the result itself does not bring glory. It is Koreans’ sense of nationalism to support the athletes regardless of their result is what is important. Koreans now freely have fun with the games, not focusing so much on the results. The summer of 2014 will be filled with cheering and shouting from Koreans who will wholeheartedly enjoy the soccer with sports spirit. ■

| GROUP A |     | GROUP B |     | GROUP C |     | GROUP D |     |
|---------|-----|---------|-----|---------|-----|---------|-----|
| Team    | Pts | Team    | Pts | Team    | Pts | Team    | Pts |
| BRA     | 0   | ESP     | 0   | COL     | 0   | URU     | 0   |
| CRO     | 0   | NED     | 0   | GRE     | 0   | CRC     | 0   |
| MEX     | 0   | CHI     | 0   | CIV     | 0   | ENG     | 0   |
| CMR     | 0   | AUS     | 0   | JPN     | 0   | ITA     | 0   |
| GROUP E |     | GROUP F |     | GROUP G |     | GROUP H |     |
| Team    | Pts | Team    | Pts | Team    | Pts | Team    | Pts |
| SUI     | 0   | ARG     | 0   | GER     | 0   | BEL     | 0   |
| ECU     | 0   | BIH     | 0   | POR     | 0   | ALG     | 0   |
| FRA     | 0   | IRN     | 0   | GHA     | 0   | RUS     | 0   |
| HON     | 0   | NGA     | 0   | USA     | 0   | KOR     | 0   |

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# **KIDNAP FOR RANSOM: ARE KOREAN COMPANIES PROTECTING THEIR EMPLOYEES?**

By Christina Lee

Have you ever wondered what would happen if you were kidnapped overseas? As a student, the probability of getting kidnapped is quite low, but the likelihood increases exponentially when you are a business employee. Since 2005, the number of business-related kidnappings has increased by 300%, and this percentage continues to escalate. Kidnapping for ransom is an infamously common operation that targets high-ranking business employees in order to extort confidential information and large sums of money from the employee's company. The only way for the hostage to be returned safely would be when the affiliated company pays the culprits a ransom that can go up to \$11 million (approx. 11.4 billion KRW) or higher.

Such was the fate of Han Seok-woo, head of the Libya unit for the Korea Trade Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA). In January 2014, Han, 39, was kidnapped by armed men, and KOTRA was in dire need of local and international intervention. Besides basic news coverage of the incident and a brief account of Han's safety, there was little to no detail of the reason behind the

kidnapping. According to Al Jazeera and a few Libyan local sources, a small militia group in Tripoli responsible for the majority of kidnappings in Libya was behind Han's abduction. Some Libyan sources have even claimed that the kidnappers were members of Al-Qaeda, which is not entirely implausible given that groups associated with the terrorist organization have reportedly accumulated approximately \$105 million between 2012 and 2013 from kidnappings alone. Al Qaeda groups in the Arabian Peninsula and the Islamic Maghreb in Northern Africa can easily make a total of approximately \$25 million in a span of just two years.

In order to sever all funding towards Al Qaeda, the United Nations Se-

curity Council reiterated a resolution from 2001 declaring that states should try to avoid paying kidnap ransoms. In a January 2014 meeting, the UNSC "called on Member States to encourage private sector partners to adopt or to follow relevant guidelines and good practices for preventing and responding to terrorist kidnappings without paying ransoms." Despite these international laws, kidnappers continue their lucrative game, while more and more employees are at risk of becoming a victim.

According to *Havocscope*, the top ten kidnap-for-ransom countries in 2013 include Mexico, India, Nigeria, Pakistan and Venezuela. In Africa and the Middle East, Afghanistan has an annual

“ He was captured for about three to four days, and by the second day he said that he thought he was going to die. He believed that it was game-over if nothing happened in the first two days. ”

rate of 950 kidnappings, while marine piracy-driven Somalia has an annual rate of 24 vessels and 400 hostages. Worldwide, the yearly ransom payments made to kidnappers is a whopping \$1.5 billion. In the midst of political instability and looming terrorist movements claiming the status quo, the risk of being kidnapped is dangerously high. Marked with social and political unrest since the overthrow and death of dictator Muammar Gaddafi in 2011, Libya is susceptible to armed groups contesting for more money and power.

Thanks to Libyan security forces and neighboring states experienced in solving kidnapping incidents, Han was freed and returned to the South Korean embassy. There was no mention of whether or not any ransom was paid. However, this incident suggests the possibility of future kidnappings. Although Han was the first Korean to be kidnapped in this North African region, how do we know he will be the last?

*The Korea Times* announced in 2013 that there have been about “ten robbery cases on South Korean residents.” Four out of five incidents are not reported and this year alone, there have been nine kidnapping incidents in Libya, of which one businessman was shot and another is still missing. Given the fact that Northern Africa is one of the most politically unstable regions in the world, it comes as a surprise that Han seemed underprepared with respect to personal security measures. Would it have been too offensive to assume that he could have been kidnapped given the current state of affairs? More importantly, how do companies deal with the possibility

of kidnap for ransom? Will they just rely on the help of the local government? Do companies even have security strategies, or regulate the safety of overseas employees?

During the Arab Spring, Samsung and other companies evacuated employees out of Egypt and Syria. They also prevent employees from working in blacklisted countries. However, despite Libya being a dangerous place for foreigners at the time, Han was still working in the region.

Heekyung Gil, a senior Business Management major at Yonsei University, was working at KOTRA at the time of Han’s kidnapping. “I was in a team of eleven interns, and [Han] was in charge of the emerging market and Middle East department,” Gil said. “At the time, he was working in [Libya], and when we heard that he was kidnapped...it was really unbelievable, especially because he was the head of our department.”

Gil remembers that Han returned to Korea immediately after he was found. When asked if he came back to the company, she denied it. “He didn’t completely quit, but he didn’t go back to Libya,” she said. “And in late February, I heard that he was spending time with his family in Korea. From what I know, he hasn’t returned to work yet and is still here with his family.”

Han’s kidnapping was the first to happen in KOTRA, and the company’s lack of preparation and foresight for possible conflict may have been the key error in this incident. While KOTRA employees still do not undergo any specific training before working overseas, Gil recalls that there



has been a policy change since the kidnapping. “The change in regulation stated that information regarding an overseas region must be updated every six months,” said Gil. “I don’t know if anything else changed because my internship ended at that time, but the headquarters must now update information on potential harmful groups, and must regularly contact the regional offices to share safety information. They should also research information on which groups attack whom and why—whether it’s just for money, political or religious reasons...”

In hindsight, Gil admits her confusion as to why and how the company failed to act quickly. “The department dealing with less-safe regions was not prepared for what was to happen,” said Gil. “When Han was kidnapped, we still couldn’t figure out the specifics of the incident, or who could have kidnapped him. The department failed to acknowledge the differences of each region. They just generally assumed the Middle East to be dangerous, without going into the specifics and distinctive traits of each country and community. Like outsiders, the department simply told [Han] to be careful [before he left].”

Despite ten other employ-

ees working in the region with Han, “[Overseas employees] had to research on their own for personal knowledge and safety,” said Gil.

While the media did not mention the specifics of Han’s release, KOTRA employees were relieved to receive news confirming his safe return. “I didn’t hear anything explicitly, but everyone in the company just assumed that the [ransom] was paid,” Gil said. “[Han] wrote an email to all the employees thanking [us] for staying with him. He was captured for about three to four days, and by the second day he said that he thought he was going to die. He believed that it was game-over if nothing happened in the first two days. Han worked in the region for more than five years, and because he also witnessed these incidents, he said he was very frightened and lost hope.”

One frightening aspect of this kidnapping was that Han was not a tourist, but a regional expert who has worked in Libya for more than five years. What made him so susceptible that particular day was his car, which identified him as an important person, as either a member of the embassy or an overseas employee. “When the car passed by,” said Gil, “the kidnappers were able to see that he was an important

figure from Korea, and just took the car as a whole.”

Kidnap for ransom is not only profitable for kidnappers, but also for international insurance and consulting companies that have dealt with hundreds of kidnap-for-ransom cases. About 50-75% of the world’s best companies have kidnapping and ransom insurance (K&R), for which companies usually pay an annual average of \$4,000 per employee. American International Group (AIG) is a prime player in the kidnap for ransom insurance major league. If kidnapping is a business, then insurance companies can have the upper hand by analyzing their behavior and concluding with the intended negotiation. The AIG homepage states, “we understand behavior and reactions of kidnappers and how these can largely be anticipated and guarded against. This insight and understanding lies at the heart of the protection we provide, against kidnapping for ransom, wrongful detention and in extortion scenarios.”

While these insurance policies are effective and unmistakably life-saving when needed, they often encourage more kidnappings, as companies with ransom insurance

end up paying higher ransoms than those without it. The World Bank, in line with the UN Security Council, filed a report in 2003, criticizing ransom insurance policies. Nevertheless, the World Bank and experts recommend the technique of disruptive negotiation, which aims at forestalling ransom payment, in order to allow more time to work with authorities, and also to avoid satisfying kidnappers with a speedy ransom payment.

Whether or not companies have ransom insurance, security policies, or personal employee training, kidnapping for ransom seems to be an inevitable crime even under the strictest measures. Employers should be honest with their employees working abroad, and inform them of the actual risks of working in a certain country. While Han was not forced to work in Libya, his company nevertheless failed to communicate the dangers involved in working in that country during that time, which perhaps contributed to an inaccurate sense of security. Working abroad should not be at the cost of compromising personal safety, and any decision to work abroad should be one that is adequately informed of the possible dangers involved. It is in a company's interest to educate its overseas workers on the possible dangers of working in a particular country and the various precautions that they can implement in order to avoid those dangers. ■

## EXPERT TIPS WHEN WORKING ABROAD

Christopher Voss was the FBI's lead international negotiator from 2003 to 2007, and has worked on more than 150 kidnappings in Iraq, the Gaza Strip, Colombia and the Philippines. He is now the head of the consulting firm Black Swan Group, and a professor at Georgetown University's McDonough School of Business (source: *red24*).

- Run—kidnappers do not shoot or run after someone who escapes.
- Don't attract too much attention to yourself. Avoid posting anything on social media especially of whereabouts and plans.
- Change up your schedule. Businessmen have a tendency to be punctual to everything, but experts advise that it's safer to be ahead or behind schedule to tip off potential kidnappers—it'll ruin their plan.
- Buy the anti-kidnap application Executrac software, which will turn your phone into a GPS tracker with an emergency panic button.
- Have your company invest in anti-kidnapping training led by top security companies.
- Avoid taking cabs in non-official taxi stands  
Keep your passport safe and know the location of your embassy.

(Source: *International Business Law Advisor* and *The New York Times*)

# Jobless Equals Hopeless? Youth Unemployment in Korea

By Shin Da-eun

## YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT RATE HIGHER THAN IN 1997

Korea's high rate of youth unemployment has been hotly debated for the last decade. According to the National Statistical Office, the employment rate for teenagers and young adults (ages 15-29) dipped to 39.7% in 2013, which is even lower than the rate of 40% recorded by the IMF in 1997 during the Asian Financial Crisis. The youth unemployment rate also rose to 9.9% in March and is expected to rise even more.

Unemployed youths have been designated as a new social class by Korean society, with new terms emerging to describe them. These include "NEET Tribe" (Not in Education, Employment or Training) for young people who refuse to work and "Freiter Tribe" (Free arBEIT) for those who get by on part time jobs. Sadly, researchers do not expect the youth labor market to improve in the short term. So what is happening in Korea's youth labor market and how can one understand this

phenomenon of high unemployment? There are two main approaches used by scholars to comprehend the issue of youth unemployment: an economic analysis focusing on the law of supply and demand and a sociological interpretation that draws upon the historical background to make sense of today's youth unemployment trend.

## ECONOMIC INTERPRETATION: "MISMATCH" BETWEEN JOBS AND LABORERS

Before discussing the reasons for today's youth unemployment trend, it is necessary to explain the normal process one follows in seeking employment. According to Lloyd G. Reynolds' article "Labour Economics and Labour Relations," there is generally a meeting point in the job market, one where a job seeker and a company meet as the most appropriate partners. In other words, there is generally a right company for a job seeker to "partner" with. Therefore to find their "partner,"





job seekers undertake a job search in which they consider the salary and benefits offered by a particular company, as well as its working environment and (long-term) stability. By comparing their qualifications and expectations to the actual benefits offered by various companies, job seekers determine which jobs to apply for. At the same time, businesses follow a similar process in searching for applicants with the proper qualifications and determining who best fits their needs. When the process functions smoothly, a position is filled when a company and a job seeker decide that their expectation match.

However, when this process fails, experts say that there is a “mismatch” in the job market. Generally, mismatches fall into one of two categories:

the partners are unable to find each other, or job seekers refuse to apply for a suitable position, often because they feel it is below them. In the first case, the job seekers and businesses cannot find each other because the former do not have sufficient information about the appropriate job openings. Even though there are many good small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) who can satisfy job seekers’ expectations and needs, many SMEs are not adept at using the media or internet to advertise their job openings. These companies are thus less likely to be known by job seekers and therefore are easily overlooked. To remedy this lack of visibility, the government and universities frequently hold job fairs featuring competitive SMEs, or they create online databases for potential job seekers, exposing them to employment opportu-

nities offered by SMEs. These efforts are designed to enable job seekers to find their “partners” more easily, while raising their awareness of the jobs that are available outside of a few major corporations, such as Samsung or Hyundai.

In the second case, however, when an applicant refuses to consider a company as his or her workplace, the problem is more complex. When the job seeker seeks a position better than what any company is willing to offer him or her, there is a “mismatch” in expectations. The result is that job seekers remain unemployed because they refuse to consider all available jobs—even those for which they are well-suited—leaving many jobs unfilled and creating a large waste of human resources. For example, currently there are many SMEs looking



You used to say I can do whatever I want in college,  
after high school

Only one thing I wanted to do was to go to college  
I don't wanna be a parasite only making poo.

You used to say “boys be ambitious,” but not until twenty-four.

Now I am twenty-four, what the hell should I do?

Friends, should I follow the same path as you,  
getting jobs and studying abroad?

Mom, how insane this world really is,

How insane this world really is,

How insane this world really is, I sometimes forget.

*GoAchim Rock Band,  
“A Farewell Song for Graduates,”  
Yonsei Career Exploration Project, 2007*



for workers; but while there are many college graduates looking for jobs, many do not seek employment with SMEs because they perceive these jobs to require longer working hours, while offering lower wages and, potentially, a poor working environment. Several scholars have suggested that the tendency for young job seekers to avoid finding employment in SMEs, especially the manufacturing sector, can be attributed to “Academic Inflation,” which relates to the growing percentage of young Koreans that have attained an undergraduate degree or higher, a trend which began in the 1990s.

Academic Inflation refers to the social phenomenon in which there are more college trained applicants than jobs they deem suitable for themselves and their qualifications. In 2012, the country recorded a college entrance rate of 71%, which is 2.5 times higher than in the 1990s and much higher than the average rate for OECD nations of 56%. With the ever-increasing number of college graduates, there are more and more job seekers expecting their “partner” job to be knowledge-based, physically undemanding and more highly-paid than one at an SME. This fact, combined with social prejudices against jobs at SMEs, where the work is perceived to be more physically demanding and lower paying than in large corporations, means that job seekers frequently do not even consider these

positions. According to Chohan Hye-jeong, Yonsei Professor of Anthropology, “Korean society has emphasized college education and college degrees since the 1970s industrial era, and the atmosphere still remains. Most teenagers decide to go to college without considering this expectation mismatch, and the degree has become a minimum requirement for most jobs.” Socially and economically, this is a big waste of human resources, for the oversupply of college-educated young adults results not only in a waste of potential labor in other areas, such as manufacturing, but also in terms of the years and money many have spent on college.

To address this problem, some researchers suggest reducing the number of universities, while narrowing the wage gap between college graduates and non-college graduates, to decrease the demand for a college degree. Such a move would reduce the number of college graduates expecting high-paying jobs in large corporations such as Samsung or LG, or else the benefits and job stability of state-owned enterprises. On the other hand, another approach to solving the economic mismatch in the job market comes from the viewpoint of reconstructing supply. Oh Sang-jun, representative of DREAMER’S EDUCATION COMPANY, argued in a symposium sponsored by Maeil Newspaper that the government should systematically and financially support SMEs by

providing academic classes and expert training programs for their employees, so that these smaller businesses can strengthen their employees’ motivation and loyalty. In other words, if the government provides such incentives to new employees at SMEs, these smaller companies will be better able to compete with larger corporations for new employees, attracting competent job applicants who want to develop their potential with a smaller company.

Others argue that government support of companies in the service industry would be helpful in terms of alleviating mismatches in the labor market, because, according to research done in January by the National Statistical Office, young adults prefer service jobs in software, education, tourism or banking over manufacturing jobs. In the Maeil symposium, a manager from the Ministry of Employment and Labor, Lee Sang-bok, suggested that by relaxing regulations in the service industry, many more jobs could be created in this sector for young workers. “Relaxing regulations is very important in improving the working environment of small businesses,” said Lee. He continued: “Hundreds of small businesses are located in industrial complexes, where amenities such as coffee shops, accommodations and gyms are not allowed. If these regulations are released, the situation would become much better.”

## SOCIOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION: THE HISTORICAL VIEW

While the solutions to youth unemployment may seem straightforward from a theoretical perspective, the reality of the youth labor market is much more complex. According to a survey by Statistics Korea, there were a million job seekers searching for work in April 2014, and if the statistics include potential young job seekers, such as those from FRIETER and NEET tribes, the number increases to around 3 million. The youth unemployment rate has risen almost 1.3% from 2012 to 2013. Here at Yonsei, the overwhelming pressure of getting a job after graduation is felt throughout the campus, so much so that since 2009 participation in career programs and internships among freshmen and sophomores has become greater than that of club activities. On the other hand, seven manufacturing sectors – three in mechanics (precision instruments, general machine instruments, transportation machinery), along with displays, textiles, electronics and the steel industry – had 29,800

jobs unfilled in 2013, according to the Korea Employment Information Service. According to President Park's policy briefing on July 8, 2013, since 1997, there have been nearly 250 thousand jobs with SMEs that go unfilled every year, while currently there are 300 thousand youth job seekers that remained unemployed, out of the 3 million that comprise the entire Korean labor market. This prolonged situation indicates that the youth unemployment issue is not simply due to an economic mismatch between supply and demand, but also due to systemic and structural problems, such as Korea's standardized educational system and growth-centered society.

In her book *Kids Refusing School, Society Refusing Kids*, Professor Chohan picks up on the structural causes of today's youth unemployment phenomenon. These are: Korea's standardized high school education system and its obsession with economic growth. Since the 1970s, Korean teenagers have studied in a standardized educational system that promotes competition with their peers; young adults are accustomed to being ranked according to their test results, and

thus they continuously strive for a higher rank. The result of this, according to Professor Chohan, is that young adults are not well-equipped to handle real-life variables and obstacles. They are not used to managing and constructing their lives and careers independently of their parents. Therefore, many young job seekers end up pursuing high-paying jobs or sitting for the bar exam to position themselves for work in the legal profession, without any specific self-motivation or concrete career goals. As there are far fewer jobs like this than applicants, the competition for a relatively small number of coveted positions is intense in Korea, as this is a society that has been obsessed with economic growth since the start of the "Miracle on the Han River" in the 1960s. This suggests that a significant part of the problem is sociological, and not simply an issue of supply and demand.

## THE YOUNG IN KOREA ARE STILL SUFFERING

The rising youth unemployment rate reveals a number of consequences that Korea's competition-centered society has created over the last thirty years. Faced with this situation, it does not seem as though there are any easy or ready-made solutions, nor does it seem that any one theory can provide all the answers. Then, what should we, young adults and future job seekers, do? Nowadays, the advice provided by scholars, which is being implemented by the government, is largely limited to the economic mismatch theory, which amounts to relocating the equilibrium point in the market by either lowering the expectations of job seekers or providing government support for SMEs by loosening regulations or providing and through financial and technological





*Bloomberg.com*

aid. President Park's "Creative Economy" policy, which started in November 2013, is an example of supporting SMEs in order to create more quality jobs for young job seekers. While government policies such as this can be effective, they are often slow to make an impact, and thus it seems that additional actions are necessary.

The approach to solving the youth unemployment problem should consist of more than the attempt to rectify economic mismatch through lowering expectations, while creating more job opportunities and/or providing better information about the job market. Structural issues, like Korea's growth-obsessed atmosphere, its standardized educational system, and the parental pressure which distorts their chil-

dren's job expectations, also need to be addressed in order to reduce labor market mismatches.

While young adults today face a difficult job market, it seems clear that they must, at the very least, learn to have more realistic expectations. Students have to prepare themselves for the realities of the job market while they are still in college, which means tailoring their studies to fit the job market that will exist when they graduate. This also means negotiating the disparity between their parents' expectations and the reality of the job market. Recently, some young job seekers have started to look for work elsewhere than in mega-corporations, which may be a good sign, at least in the short term. For this would mean that students

are beginning to manage their own futures.

However, if the structural problems mentioned above are not adequately dealt with, the youth unemployment problem will never be solved. As members of society, students have the capacity to act to change the structural problems themselves, such as through social action aimed at reshaping public opinions on youth unemployment. However modest such steps might be, we, as future job seekers, owe it to ourselves to confront these structural realities and actively participate in solving the youth unemployment problem, both in the short term and long term. ■

South Korea has the highest suicide rate out of 34 members in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Committing suicide is now the most common cause of death for people under 40. For nine years, South Korea has maintained its indisputable reputation, earning the nickname of “Suicide Republic.” The suicide rate has hit a record of 28.4 per 100,000 people per year, which is more than 2.3 times higher than the average suicide rate of all OECD countries. According to the Korean National Statistical Office (KNSO), the statistic has increased by 101.8% over the last ten years. Another KNSO study shows 9.1% of students under the age of 15 answered that they have felt at least one serious suicidal impulse over the last year. As a result of various societal pressure and problems, a lot of Koreans choose to commit suicide as a form of escape. Although in recent years bridges along the Han River have become a hotspot of death for desperate individuals, the Mapo Bridge is attempting to change that way of thinking.

# **“Bridge of Life” Discourages Suicide Attempts by Lighting Up Messages of Hope**

By Lee Seo-yeon (Valentine)



There is due reason for this revision as well. Among the 31 bridges connecting Southern and Northern Seoul, the Mapo Bridge, connecting Yeouido on the South bank with Mapo to the North, is most notorious for having the highest number of suicides. Experts say that this phenomenon is due to the bridge's location near the area with a dense concentration of financial companies and its easy accessibility to passengers. Those suffering from working at financial companies of the highest pressure and those who lost their share or investment are very easily attracted to the Mapo Bridge. Between 2003 and 2011, 1,090 people jumped off this bridge, accounting for 17 percent of the total suicides along the Han River which gave Mapo bridge the nickname "the Bridge of Death."

In September of 2012, the Seoul Metropolitan Government decided to reform this bridge in an effort to prevent more suicides. It teamed up with Samsung Life Insurance and Cheil Worldwide to launch a "Bridge of Life" campaign. A group of engineers, psychologists and suicide prevention specialists were assembled for this project. Their plan was not simply to install a high fence or bar-

rier. Instead, the team focused on transforming the bridge into an interactive space and creating an atmosphere that tried to communicate with pedestrians through messages of encouragement.

The end result which can be seen today is a bridge that lights up with hopeful messages on the guardrails when footsteps are detected by the motion sensors installed on the bridge. The messages on the bridge are intended to make people feel happy, remind them of their joyful memories, and give them hope and inspiration. The phrases include "How are you today?", "I love you," "Let's walk together," "You look worried. Is there something on you mind?", "I know it's been hard for you," "For your kids," "Tomorrow's sun will rise," "Go see the person you miss," "How would you like to be remembered as a father?", "The best is yet to come." These messages of love and caring are expressed in colloquial terms so as to impart a feeling of immediacy and closeness; as if one were talking to and being consoled by a family member or friend. There are also pictures, paintings, and statues that young artists and students have contributed to the project. In the Image Zone, you can see photos of happy children, smiling faces, and laughing families, displayed to remind people of their most precious moments in life. A brass







statue, named “One More Time,” depicting two friends consoling each other adorns the center of the bridge.

Fortunately, the efforts seem to be paying off. According to the Seoul Metropolitan Government, suicides rates from the bridge have dropped since the changes were made. Reports confirm that 85 out of 93 people attempting to jump off the bridge were dissuaded by the messages on the bridge or rescued before jumping off, and only 8 people actually plunged into the Han River in 2013. This is a 47 percent decrease from the 2012 statistics.

The main reason for this positive swing seems to derive from improvements to the emergency service system and a sea-change in civic consciousness that the “Bridge of Life” campaign has spawned. Emergency service teams can now rescue suicide attempters more quickly and efficiently thanks to SOS Lifeline, motion sensors, and surveillance cameras that the government has installed on the bridge. Moreover, the number of citizens who save people from committing suicide by reporting the potential jumpers is continually growing.

The construction of the Bridge of Life has been credited with increasing the awareness of this social problem. The Mapo Bridge has indeed been transformed from the Bridge of Death to Bridge of Life.

Redefined as a “healing” spot, the bridge has now become a popular destination not only for people who are going through hard times, but also for people worn out from their daily lives. For its influence on people and society, the campaign won a number of awards including the Grand award at the Clio awards and the London International Awards in 2013, which is one of the most well-renowned advertising awards. In light of this success, the Seoul Metropolitan Government is planning to expand the project to the nearby Hangang Bridge as well.

Troubles and hardships can bog anyone down, but we should always remember that we are not alone in our trials. Taking a moment or even longer to recharge is a crucial part of moving forward as well. Take a walk with your friends on the Bridge of Life and admire the starry night-scape of Seoul. Reminiscence about happy memories and make new ones – life is wonderful, and sometimes, we all need a reminder. ■

# South Korean National Identity and Foreign Policy

By Wee Wei Lin Allyssa

South Korean President Park Geun-hye finally met her Japanese counterpart, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, at The Hague Summit Meeting in March—more than a year after she assumed office in February 2013.

Citing alleged Japanese attempts to rewrite historical events, notably the “comfort women” issue, Park has refused to hold a bilateral summit with Abe. In fact, she dismissed the role of high-level talks with the Japanese leader. Quoted by *The Diplomat*, Park instead defined relations with Japan as “a problem that needs to be solved with the Korean people.” If it was not clear before, the first female president of South Korea has certainly clarified how domestic sentiments influence the country’s foreign policy. Public opinion in South Korea is, in turn, closely related to the na-

tional identity of the country.

While one might expect an individual’s priorities to vary depending on the mix of his or her affiliations, the South Korean people have generally demonstrated near-unanimity in their opinion on foreign relations with their traditional rival, Japan. The causes of tension between Japan and R.O.K. are well-known, but a common theme persists in the list of issues straining South Korean-Japanese ties. From factual disagreements over past events to conflicting claims over territories, an acute divergence in interpretations of history from both sides characterizes the nature and outcome of each bilateral dispute.

In particular, much debate has revolved around Japan’s repentance—or lack thereof—for its war-

time wrongdoings. While Japan believes that it has adequately addressed its historical acts, the general South Korean population thinks otherwise. A 2013 survey conducted by the *PEW Research Center* revealed that 98% of South Korean respondents do not feel that Japan has sufficiently apologized for its military actions in the 1930s and 1940s. Additionally, in a survey jointly organized by *Asia Today* and *Realmeter* in South Korea, 91.6% responded that Japan must re-apologize—sincerely—for what it did during the colonial period.

Such a degree of consensus on international affairs points to a common interpretation of national priorities and interests. This, however, is possible only if there exists a popular national identity with which

the South Korean people firmly align themselves, and from the standpoint of which they assess the world. In other words, South Koreans share a deep, collective understanding of who they are and what their nation stands for. This, in turn, shapes how they perceive themselves vis-à-vis other nationalities.

In this regard, the country's remarkable modernization and growing global prominence in various sectors have become qualities by which the people of R.O.K. distinguish themselves from the rest of the world. Indeed, ranging from leading technological innovations to successes at international sport-

ing events, South Koreans are recognized for their fervent displays of national pride in their country's achievements. Yet, Andrew Kim, a professor at Princeton University, argues that these accomplishments constitute *gukmin* (civil) identity, which is only one of two elements in the construction of the South Korean identity. While *gukmin* identity emphasizes the tangible successes of the state, "primordial elements are emphasized in *minjok* (ethnic) identity, which appeals to the consanguineous membership in the Korean nation." *Minjok* identity thus explains the importance with which South Koreans regard "blood purity" and the great pride that

they express in their ethnic homogeneity.

The national identity of South Korea, according to Kim, is a product of the configuration between these civic and ethnic elements. This construct, however, is subject to change and Kim believes a shift will soon be driven by the younger generation of the South Korean society. With little to no recollection of the country's past, and having enjoyed the benefits of democratization and economic affluence, younger South Koreans may look past the narrative of ethnic distinctions and recognize greater affinity with Japan, a fellow capitalist democracy similarly concerned with



[JapanTimes.co.jp](http://JapanTimes.co.jp)



“ With little to no recollection of the country’s past, and having enjoyed the benefits of democratization and economic affluence, younger South Koreans may look past the narrative of ethnic distinctions and recognize greater affinity with Japan[...]

”

matters of human rights. As such, the Princeton University professor expects a relative rise of *gukmin* mentality against the narrower *minjok* notions in South Korea’s approach to their ties with Japan which would blunt their differences and promote bilateral reconciliation.

Contrary to Kim’s prediction in 2011, however, relations between the two countries have since deteriorated with Japan’s plans of constitutional revisions that include an attempt to restore its rights to a standing army. Additionally, the announcement of Abe’s decision to review the Kono Statement of 1993 caused great alarm and anger in South Korea. The Japanese prime minister’s controversial visit to the Yasukuni Shrine

only served to deepen South Korean concerns over its neighbor’s intentions.

While it has to be acknowledged that the growing discord between the two allies in recent years was primarily a result of Abe’s political maneuvers, South Korea’s response to these incidents also indicates an enduring sensitivity to matters concerning their shared history even amongst South Koreans who are not directly familiar with the era. Indeed, a 2013 survey of Koreans conducted by *Seoul Shinmun* revealed that a greater percentage of respondents in their twenties (42.8%) identify the problem of history as the most pressing issue in Japan-R.O.K. relations. However, only 36.6% of respondents in their six-

ties—who have first-hand experience of Japan’s past wrongs—think the same way. This runs contrary to expectations of changes in generational attitudes given the preponderance of younger South Koreans who are further removed from the legacy of Japanese colonial rule.

In explaining how tensions over history have not diminished with time, Shin Gi-wook of The Walter H. Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center highlights, among others, the importance of education in transmitting to later generations historical memories that can come to shape a population’s sense of its shared identity. His research on history textbooks of both countries found that “Japan occupies a quarter of

the coverage of [Korea's] modern history" in South Korean textbooks. Comparing this with how only four percent of the wartime historical account in Japanese textbooks is devoted to Korea, Korea's experiences with imperial Japan seem to feature very prominently in the memories of the people of R.O.K.

Thus, what remains central to how South Koreans conceive themselves seems to be their common past with their neighbor—a conceptual building block of *minjok* identity. Indeed, Kim points out that *minjok* identity does not derive its influence solely from its emphasis on a shared ancestry. Instead, as the core basis upon which the Korean people were united against foreign rule in the 20th century, *minjok* identity is strongly tied with

the narrative of collective ethnic Korean struggles against Japanese colonial control. Therefore, the solidarity of the people of South Korea that is fostered by *minjok* elements is achieved through reinforcing its division, in particular, with its Japanese neighbor.

Scott Snyder, senior fellow for Korean studies at the Council on Foreign Relations, and Brad Glosserman of the Pacific Forum Center for Strategic and International Studies believe that, "[a]s a result of having been subjugated to Japanese rule, South Korean identity has long been measured against and framed in opposition to Japan." The contradictory conceptions of national identity between the two countries then shape opposing perceptions

on bilateral issues, thereby pushing both parties into conflict. Snyder and Glosserman illustrate the effect of this fundamental Japan-R.O.K. split with the opening of a memorial hall in China commemorating Ahn Jung-geun, a Korean independence activist who assassinated Hirobumi Ito, then-colonial governor of Korea. While the South Koreans applauded the celebration of their "freedom fighter," the Japanese denounced the project. To them, this same man deemed a hero on the Korean peninsula was a terrorist who had killed their first prime minister. The controversy that followed reflects the conflicting foundational views upon which the respective identities of the countries involved are constructed.

If *minjok* identity prevails in the South Korean national construct, political differences with Japan will be difficult to overcome as any compromise on the part of R.O.K., particularly over historical controversies, would undermine South Korea's fundamental conception of itself. Put in this light, national policies formulated based on ethnic notions of national identity seem likely to impede, if not preclude South Korean-Japanese reconciliation.

“ Shared values and concerns suggest that South Korean-Japanese ties are not exclusively characterized by opposition. ”

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The general belief is that peaceful and harmonious Japan-R.O.K. relations would be mutually beneficial for the two neighbors. Distrust and other political differences, however, have limited joint economic gains by hampering bilateral free trade agreement (FTA) negotiations. Furthermore, the threat of North Korea to regional security provides a compelling reason for the two countries to go beyond mere institutional alliance and closely coordinate their policies to strengthen defense strategies against a common enemy. Yet, the leaders of the two countries would not have met in March if U.S. President Barack Obama had not personally arranged for the trilateral security summit in The Hague. Moreover, the prevailing domestic resentment towards Japan factors largely in President Park Geun-hye's reluctance to negotiate with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. In fact, the apparent salience of *min-jok* identity appears to have superseded other concerns and now serves as the basis upon which the country's Japan policy is formulated.

It is thus apparent that historically-rooted national identity and concerns remain at the forefront of the minds of South Koreans.

Therefore, the question of history will continue to take center stage in the political arena, particularly in their disputes with Japan. While South Koreans have their reasons for perceiving Japanese colonial involvement on the Korean peninsula the way they do, this view of history when applied to foreign affairs is not conducive to Japan-R.O.K. cooperation. Significantly, as long as South Koreans identify their essence as a nation in terms of its historical animosity with its neighbor, it is unlikely that political solutions will be the key to resolving the problems of South Korean-Japanese relations.

In dwelling upon historical factors that set the two countries apart, South Korea has ruled out all avenues of political cooperation with Japan. In other words, South Koreans as a whole have neglected their commonalities with their neighbor in their approach to bilateral issues. This is in spite of the relevance of these common qualities to South Korean identity as determined by its present circumstances. Both modern, affluent democracies today, R.O.K. and Japan share internationally-celebrated attributes—encompassed in the former's *gukmin* iden-

tity—and have similar worries as countries threatened by North Korea's nuclear development program. Nonetheless, this affinity is entirely overlooked when President Park, prompted by popular public opinion, refuses opportunities for progress in other such current bilateral issues as joint security owing to disputes over the past.

Without, foremost, a willingness from both parties involved to dialogue, there would be little prospect of conflict resolution and neither country benefits from this stalemate. Shared values and concerns suggest that South Korean-Japanese ties are not exclusively characterized by opposition. Furthermore, given the potential returns from closer trade ties and, especially, the common threat to the north of R.O.K., there is certainly a great cause for rapprochement between the neighbors. While there is no doubt that the history of a country should be remembered and commemorated, differences of the past need not—and one might suggest, should not—get in the way of efforts to jointly secure the future. ■



# A NOT-SO HAPPILY EVER AFTER: CELEBRITIES UNDER PUBLIC SCRUTINY

By Sally Shin



Ariel sacrificing her voice in return for legs and a chance at true love; Anna running in front of Hans's sword to protect her sister Elsa; Prince Naveen attempting to marry another girl to help accomplish his true love's dreams. All these Disney princes and princesses depict role-model personalities that shine light on positive qualities like selflessness, humility, and bravery.

However, they are all just characters from fairy tales, and most likely the makers and directors of these films incorporated moral and positive values into these stories, given that their target audience is children. It is actually scientifically proven that children are prone to being influenced by television content due to sheer hours of exposure to it. This being said, these char-



acters are, in a way, role models for today's youth, teaching them the concepts of courage and sacrifice.

Unlike these Disney heroes and heroines, however, we live in the real world as human beings. Compared to fairy tales, reality obviously does not always end in happy endings, and certainly not everyone in the real world has perfect role-model qualities. The problem with society today is that we expect celebrities to be the princes and princesses of our society. Media scrutiny on every aspect of their lives pressures celebrities to retain their flawless reputation of being cute, funny, classy, or even humanitarian, as in Ian Somerhalder's case. Through this perpetual harassment of personal space, the public has unknowingly pushed celebrities into a situation where they are expected to become the princes and princesses of our lives, and somehow, celebrities have – willingly or

unwillingly – assumed this position of being the role models of our society. We constantly forget the fact that celebrities are also human, and that the beauty of being human is the imperfections that make us who we are.

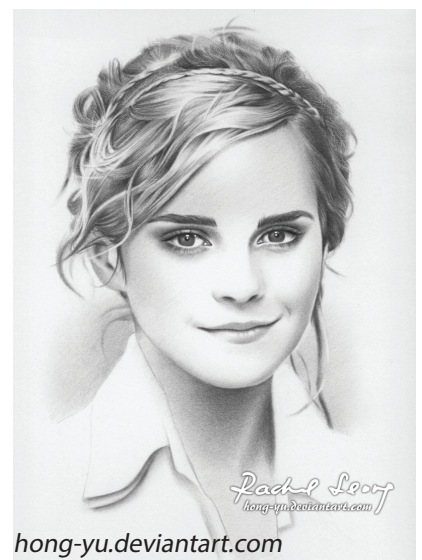
By idolizing celebrities, we also anticipate and analyze everything they say and do, unconsciously taking for granted their existence and using them to represent a culture, an ideal, or even a na-



tion. For example, online forums automatically link Justin Bieber to Canada, whereas Britney Spears is linked to the United States. Just like how we view political figures like Presidents Barack Obama and Vladimir Putin, we are in the understanding that what they do and say represent the nation with which they are associated, and we even presume they will act in ways that will benefit the country and its people. This viewpoint is glaringly problematic

as we need to come to terms with the fact that celebrities are not politicians, whose job it is to represent their countries. They are merely human beings like us, who have the right to act on their own free will. At the end of the day, some would argue that their publicity of establishing humanitarian or environmental institutions and attending charities and benefit concerts is only advantageous to their own image. Image, which is vital to celebrities as it plays a major role in supporting themselves socially and financially, must be maintained at all costs.

The recent suicide of fashion designer L'wren Scott shines light on the societal and peer pressures celebrities face in every aspect of their lives. According to the *New York Times*, L'wren Scott, aged 49 at the time of her death, was renowned in the realm of fashion and known for being witty and extremely driven. Her widely



publicized, decade-long relationship with Mick Jagger transformed her into a popular topic as she received an overabundance of media attention. She was committed to what she did, and she was also the embodiment of class and glamour. However, in addition to all these qualities that defined her as the perfect role model, she was also more than six million dollars in debt. While some may think that an individual who was described by her peers to be bold and persistent would bite her lip and face her problems, Scott's sky-high ego and self-consciousness, fostered by all the attention, transformed her mindset into finding the easier the way out: exiting this world with the impeccable image she desperately needed to uphold rather than to live with a tainted reputation. Even Mick Jagger released a statement published by CNN that he was "still struggling to understand how [his] lover and best friend could end her life in this tragic way". No matter what kind of personality she supposedly embodied according to the media and thus the public, she possessed a morphed sense of what was acceptable and what was not when encountering a problem. In her head, the world worked differently than it did if she were an average human being without the public pushing her against the wall. Ultimately, Scott was unable to think normally because her circumstances, laden with the crushing burden inflicted upon her, were so abnormal.

Metaphorically, we are all involved in the largest yet most overlooked massacre in the world. Celebrities are literally dehumanized by our incessant expectations and stalking. This systematic massacre has been a vicious cycle in modern societies, especially due to the inception of technology and mass

communication. What is evident here is genocide against, in a sense, a cultural group called 'celebrities'. We concern ourselves with the mass decimation of Jews during World War II and the persecution of the Baha'is in the modern day, yet we discount the countless lives that are slipping away due to our oppression. It can be argued that this is the price one must pay for fame and glamour; however, the aggressive prying of the paparazzi for gossip and scandals prevents celebrities from having any privacy at all.

So what? How does this issue even relate to our lives? The cliché saying 'what goes around comes around' comes into play here because these suicides, in turn, affect our society by sending us powerful messages, especially to today's youth. Children and teenagers who look up to these celebrities as their role models watch these self-afflicted deaths and arrive at the understanding that life is inconsequential compared to protecting one's image.

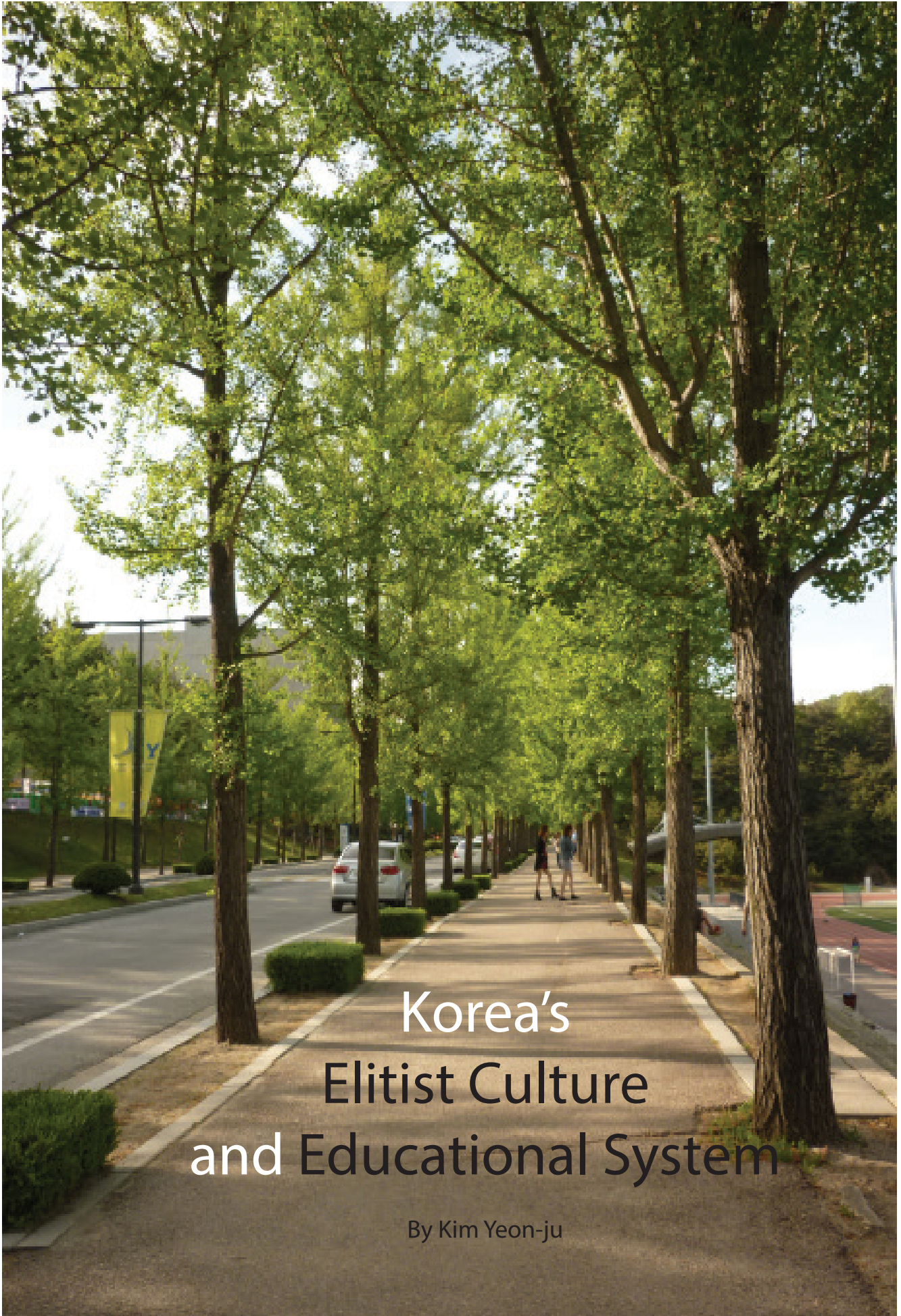
Celebrities have such a strong connection to today's youth not only on this immediate topic but also on aspects like physical appearance, similar aspirations, and pure fandom. As stated by *The Telegraph*, "the top choice for individuals teenagers looked up to most was family members, followed by other popular figures including teachers, police, GPs and sports coaches". *Psychology Today* further suggests the intensity of celebrity influence, as 60 per cent of 200 undergraduates polled at a certain university "admitted that an idol had influenced their attitudes and personal values, including their work ethic and views on morality". Take for example Justin Bieber again, who was arrested for driving under the influence with an expired license. Despite his egregious



actions, his fans tweeted messages as depicted on *USA Today* like “Although I think his decisions are stupid at times, I’m still going to be here for him, that isn’t changing” and “I just want to hug Justin and tell him that everything’s gonna be alright and that we’ll always be there for him no matter what”. Due to their excessive attachment to these stars, the youth of our communities overlook their flaws, at the same time unconsciously justifying this kind of behavior in their heads.

Imagine what kind of future these children will lead with this life philosophy; imagine what kind of message we are allowing the youth to accept and incorporate into their own lives. In order to address this latter complication, we have to confront the former to better the entire system. Each solution begins with small steps at a time, and likewise this situation must be dealt with in the same way. ■





# Korea's Elitist Culture and Educational System

By Kim Yeon-ju

Korea is known for its particularly rigid educational system, while its students have the reputation of being well-disciplined perfectionists. Korean students have an incredibly demanding schedule between the ages of fifteen and eighteen. High school students spend the majority of their waking hours studying; the work starts at school early in the morning and, on average, continues until eleven in the evening. Students usually finish school around four or five o'clock, and then most have classes at private institutions, called hagwons, from six to nine; afterwards, they might spend an additional two hours studying, finishing up around eleven in the evening or later. These after-school institutions are often expensive, with the cost and prestige of a hagwon depending on the neighborhood it is located in. At the same time, there are different types of high schools: ones specializing, for instance, in foreign languages or science and regular, general high schools, which the majority of students attend. The specialized ones are harder to get into, and thus the competition can be extreme. In high school, each student is ranked according to her or his average score on the in-class examinations. Therefore, the competition remains intense, as one's ranking relative to her or his classmates is what ultimately matters, especially in terms of university admissions. Because of the emphasis placed upon class rankings, there can be a lack of solidarity or trust amongst the students. They keep in mind that what matters in the end are their class ranking and the total points they get on the national examination. And once stu-

dents get to college, even those lucky enough to be admitted to an elite university, they must compete against each other for grades in order to improve their chances of obtaining a desirable job after graduation, considering they will be competing against applicants from similar academic backgrounds.

Once a student reaches middle school, attending a hagwon is practically mandatory if he or she wishes to get into an elite university. Korean students finish school quite early in the afternoon, so most then head straight to their hagwons to enhance their knowledge of school subjects in order to excel on their exams at school. Hagwons also provide supplementary education for students to improve their scores on the national exam in subjects that are not sufficiently covered in the school's curriculum. Ultimately, the goal is to make students ready for the university entrance examination and the subsequent admissions interviews. Naturally, students are expected to study at home as well. Consequently, the pressure is omnipresent and intense. While many students start going to hagwons in elementary school, the heavy schedule and the obsession about grades really starts in middle school, when students are focused on getting into a specialized high school. The pressure continues in high



school, as their efforts are dedicated towards gaining admission to the best university possible. Hence, most students endure this life for about six years. The number of years a student spends in hagwons depends on a family's financial situation and the child's academic performance. The mindset really becomes elitist in middle school, where most Korean students work to get into a specialized high school; and once these successful students begin high school, all their efforts are directed towards being accepted to an elite university. Because students from a non-specialized high school, or from one outside of Seoul, are aware that the possibility of getting into an elite university is quite low, their goal is often to get into a university ranked right below the elite ones. For in Korea, college admission is considered as the make-or-break point of one's life, as the university one is admitted to largely determines the career opportunities that will be avail-

able, while Korean society judges one based on the university one graduates from.

Clearly, universities in Korea are a very big deal, and only a few are considered elite. Traditionally, the three top schools have been called the "SKY" universities, after the first letters of the three schools: Seoul National University, Korea University and Yonsei University (although today KAIST and POSCO are consistently ranked as the top two in the country). As the acronym indicates, these universities are represented as being almost unreachable, and only the best students, with the highest academic performance in high school gain admission. It is extremely hard to get into these universities even for a student from a specialized high school, let alone for one from a regular high school.



*Photo credit to Van Tran*

Therefore, the road narrows as middle school ends. Certain high-achieving students are selected for specialized high schools, while the rest go to regular high schools, placing the latter at a disadvantage in terms of being admitted to a SKY university. In either case, almost all of a family's resources and attention are focused upon their children's education. When the time comes to seek employment after graduation, the university that one graduates from is a crucial factor, and the same goes for graduate schools. Not only do companies look at an applicant's university, but they also pay close attention to one's academic performance. Because the best companies prefer employees from institutions with a good reputation, the fierce competition persists when a student enters an elite university, because they must continue to prove themselves academically by earning superior grades.

Because of such elitist prejudices, the job market can seem quite unfair, with applicants largely evaluated on the university they graduated from. In fact, Korean society as a whole seems to be built on the concept of elitism, meaning that being an individual and thinking outside the box are not encouraged. In this sense, society itself sometimes seems to be ruled by those who have had the privilege of following the "elite track." Of course, having this privilege hardly means that they have had an easy time achieving success; even though they have had more opportunities available to them than someone from a less advantaged background, they still have worked incredibly hard. Nevertheless, the best high schools and hagwons are expensive and generally located in more affluent areas, meaning that they are not accessible to everyone, especially those from an economically-disadvantaged background. Despite the government's efforts to make the Korean education system more egalitarian, the fact remains that the combination of a specialized high school and the best hagwons is the most effective way to get into an elite university, and subsequently get a desirable job. And this is patently unfair: not everyone has the privilege of being born into a wealthy and supporting

environment; not everyone gets the same chance to show what they are capable of.

The point is not that an elitist system is inherently awful, but Korea ought to have a more meritocratic elitism, one that is actually based on an individual's intellectual capacities and achievements—and not simply on the numerical results of standardized examinations, which only represent one part of an individual's intelligence and abilities. However, the Korean academic system does not give students room to think for themselves or to experience new things. Instead, students are encouraged to follow the crowd and discouraged from developing personal opinions or cultivating their curiosity, often leading to a lack of self-confidence and initiative. Students in Korea are manufactured such that they lack autonomy and critical thinking skills. The drastic economic growth that Korea has experienced over the past thirty years has also significantly contributed to the value Koreans place on university education,





especially on an education from an elite institution. The problem with this elitist system is not only that it is unfair, but also that it is not actually the best way to teach and raise children. The mindset within academic institutions and the workplace must be changed.

During the past three decades, the Korean government has tried to improve its educational system by creating policies that provide more opportunities to a larger number of students. Even though the government has failed to eliminate hagwons, the issue of excessive dependence upon them is currently being discussed within the Ministry of Education, which is led by Seo Nam-soo, an appointee of President Park Geun-hye. The ministry has been working on installing a more accessible system, giving students from less privileged backgrounds an equal opportunity to succeed. One of the biggest achievements has been their collaboration with the Educational Broadcasting System (EBS), which has been broadcasting educational lectures by talented educators so that students from disadvantaged backgrounds can learn and study along with the television programs instead of having to go to a hagwon. However, these attempts to increase chances for students from diverse backgrounds to succeed contain the risk of instilling an even more elitist mindset among most Koreans. This

system has been present for so long that students and their families are essentially trapped, considering that the majority accepts and follows the rules of the system. And, obviously, it is quite risky for a student to forego intense after-school sessions and countless hours of studying because, in the end, students are still mostly evaluated on their test scores. A recent study conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) shows that Korean children are the unhappiest in the world. While the educational system cannot be blamed entirely for this, it does have a considerable impact upon a child's happiness. Korean parents want their children to succeed in life and rise to the top of society, which is why they push them so hard at a young age. But considering the lack of creative and critical skills that they develop along the way, one cannot help but wonder: Are they working too hard?

From middle school to the "real world," Koreans seem to have an inherent drive that pushes them to want the best and only the best. This mentality should be a positive trait; however, it seems to have been utilized wrongly and perhaps excessively, in the sense that the ability to work this hard has been directed into developing quantitative skills instead of developing creative and critical thinking skills, which are indispensable for innovation. More importantly, there seems to be

a lack of humanity in this system. Many important issues regarding education have been neglected, especially the question of what types of values this society should have. Everything has become a competition, one which starts during the first year of middle school.

Is it worth working so hard to get into a SKY university and eventually attain a job at Samsung? Yes. But the problem is not whether or not one should work this hard to succeed, but that one must accept an intensely competitive lifestyle from a young age simply to have the opportunity to get into such a university. The government has been trying to create a new environment within the Korean educational system by encouraging universities to select their potential students not only based on their grades, but also, for instance, on their managerial skills and critical reasoning aptitude. However, government intervention is not enough to change the mindset of most Koreans. Educators and powerful influential figures should affirm the value of diversity and emphasize that there is more than one valid path in education and in life. Moreover, they should stress the importance of embracing differences and, more importantly, of rediscovering society's human sensibility, which has often been buried amid the rush to succeed. ■



# A TRIP TO THE SUPERMARKET: And How One's Wallet Is Drained By Psychological Marketing Strategies

By Nguyen Thi Ngoc Diep



One beautiful weekend, Ms. Megabuy traveled to the supermarket, carrying a shopping list consisting of only fruits, milk and detergent, confident that she would stick to her budget by buying only what she needed. Unexpectedly, she ended up spending more than two hours wandering in the mart and buying a whole trolley full of unnecessary goods. What had just happened? Ms. Megabuy comforted herself that at least she had chosen to shop in a supermarket, where the prices were reliable and there was no aggressive seller to fool her. She had therefore made decisions by herself. Or had she? It was time for Ms. Megabuy to look back on her actions.

# 1. Location!

## Location! Location!

As Ms. Megabuy wanted some fruits, she first tried to find the fruit section, which happened to be located rather close to the entrance. The green, fresh environment relaxed her, inspiring her to linger and not leave the supermarket in a hurry. Also, when moving on to search for milk and detergent, like most other customers, Ms. Megabuy walked down the main row and wandered through the aisles.

Indeed, researchers like Dr. Paul Harrison from Deakin University, Australia have pointed out that location has a great influence on supermarket shoppers' behaviors. Ms. Megabuy's story is a vivid example, because the location of the produce section is chosen to encourage customers to stay longer in the mart and hence possibly buy more goods. Besides deliberately arranging the entrance that way, marketers also pay close attention to the aisles, where most products are displayed. Specifically, they place targeted products at both ends of the aisles rather than in the center. This is so that while customers are searching for what they actually need, they can also encounter and be attracted to those items, which of course would be conspicuously decorated and advertised. The aisles are made narrow; hence shoppers spend more time moving along the aisles and buy more. Moreover, in many American stores, the most expensive goods are often put at eye-level, whereas the cheap ones are close to the floor. That's why companies usually need to pay a fee to have their products placed at eye-level.

Location matters.

In another research, the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) has shown that malls increase their sales by displaying targeted products on lower floors and more attractive items such as toys on upper floors. While shopping with their children, many parents travel to the highest floor as their children wish, sometimes even just to have a look at the newest toys. Although they may not actually purchase any, while passing floor after floor to reach the toy stores, customers must go through other (usually targeted) sections such as clothes, cosmetics, and car accessories, where the expected transactions are made. In other words, the trip to the "bait" products increases customers' "face-time" with other items and hence may attract them and increase sales.

## 2. Which One Is Better?

Back to Ms. Megabuy. Craving apples, she observed the different fruits displayed: Western Australian apples for \$3.99 each package of three, Eastern Australian for \$4.99 and New Zealand for \$7.99. After thinking, she decided to go for the one with the middle price, the Eastern Australian apples.

Interestingly, statistics show that when offered several choices, many people also choose the product with the middle price. According to behavioral economist Dan Ariely's book *Predictably Irrational*, which consists of research on a variety of American consumers, this is because "[h]umans rarely choose things in absolute terms. [They] don't have an internal value meter that tells how

much things are worth. Rather, [they] focus on the relative advantage of one thing over another, and estimate value accordingly"(2). Indeed, people are tempted to compare and contrast everything, such as wages, appearance, lovers, houses, and holiday destinations. When it comes to shopping, they evaluate the price, quality, and quantity of one product by comparing it to others. Since shoppers are often uncertain about what to select, they usually go for the product with the middle price,

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which they consider the safest. “Safest” here means not too cheap, which most shoppers see as a sign of poor quality, but at the same time not too expensive so that people do not feel like the product is overpriced. This is why customers are never left with merely one choice. Rather, availability of many items at different prices - with the price of the targeted items set as the median - allows customers to feel comfortable comparing those prices so that they unconsciously pick what marketers want them to pick.

As Ms. Megabuy walked around, she happily picked a cookie box costing \$2.55 over one costing \$3.55. Yet, when later asked to choose between two digital cameras with the same functions but costing \$210 and \$213, she shrugged her shoulders and told the clerk that either one was fine. Why, unlike in the first situation, didn’t she easily go for the cheaper one to save three dollars, which is even larger than the one dollar she saved from buying the cookie box costing \$2.55? According

to Dr. Robert Cialdini’s book *Influence, The Psychology of Persuasion*, here, again, “the contrast principle does not go unexploited” (10). Only this time, instead of paying attention to prices of different items, Ms. Megabuy contrasted the proportion saved with the actual price. Specifically, \$1 is relatively large compared to \$3.55 (almost 30%), whereas \$3 is rather minor compared to \$213 (about 1.4%). Nevertheless, by giving up three dollars which actually could have been saved, Ms. Megabuy—as do many other customers—has made, in economists’ words, an irrational decision.

Today, there are an endless number of choices available in the market. However, people are so busy that they have no time to check the nutrition section labeled on the back of every product, let alone actually calculate and compare the prices. Therefore, most of the time, they merely follow their instinct and impression to make decisions. Unfortunately, that habit has been exploited by marketing experts.

### 3. Wait a Minute, It's FREE!

Take a look at the two advertisements below: Which offer would you choose?



Surprising as it may be, Ms. Megabuy was not the only one to fall for the magic word, “free.” She hadn’t planned to buy pizza that day, but only because it was “free,” she ended up bringing two pizzas home. Although the two offers seem to be the same, economist Dan Ariely has shown that most people are more attracted by the big fat word “free.” One reason is that “free” implies no transaction and hence no cost at all. When people spend money on any good, they are giving up the opportunity to spend such amount, no matter how little it may be, on other goods. This, in economists’ words, is “opportunity cost”. For instance, the money Ms. Megabuy spent on her pizzas could have been used to buy other products, such as juice and stationery, or merely saved for a larger transaction in

the future, like a trip to a foreign country. Another reason is that all goods, regardless of quality or cost, are subject to breakage and defect; because of this, when people have to spend money on something, there is always a fear of making the wrong decisions. In other words, every transaction has its downside and usually gives buyers a sense of loss and uncertainty. That is why “free” is so tempting, as it makes people forget about the loss that they are naturally afraid of. It gives the impression that the offer is much better than it may be, consequently increasing sales, though the products are not actually “free.”

“Free” is also marked on goods to attract people in other ways. Often, many people watching their weight are

more attracted by dairy products advertised as “fat-free” instead of, for instance, “skim milk” or “low-fat butter.” The same tendency can be seen in some others who are drawn to “cholesterol-free” snacks. Moreover, fashion brands sometimes distribute free coupons, in order to attract customers and enhance their competitiveness, which in turn can increase sales to make up for the potential revenue that is given up. Indeed, Dr. Ariely has commented in his book “Want to draw a crowd? Make something free. Want to sell more products? Make part of the purchases free”(62).

So the next time Ms. Megabuy goes shopping, she should be more alert with any product that is advertised to be free.

## 4. So, What About It?

Shopping has never been easy, especially when marketers and researchers are more than eager to fool customers. Those mischievous marketing magicians are not that magical after all, as what

they've done is merely apply their knowledge about human behavior to make people deceive themselves. Awareness of such marketing strategies will hopefully allow customers like Ms. Megabuy to identify any tricks and be more rational when shopping, whether for items as trivial as a cereal box or as valuable as a new car. ■

“ Shopping has **never been easy**, especially when marketers and researchers are **more than eager** to fool customers. ”

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# Lessons from Harry Potter: A Key to Understanding Society and the Individual

By Jang Hye-sun



twitcover.com

According to *Entertainment Weekly*, the post-9/11 generation's "ideas about war, about leadership, about the dangers of consolidation of power and of dictatorship, about the importance of dissent, and about heroism and sacrifice, have been shaped at least in part by Rowling (author of the *Harry Potter* series)." Indeed, young-adult fiction novels are gaining popularity in society, with the actors of their Hollywood productions rising to immediate stardom. In fact, the young-adult fiction industry now has great influence on the public, especially with young adults. Moreover, the novels reflect the world of the post-9/11 generation, sometimes giving life lessons to its readers, sometimes reflecting their desires, and at times dealing with political and "mature" themes that one might not expect from literature written expressly for a younger audience. Therefore, a close observation of these novels can help us understand the young adult demographic.

In their book on young-adult literature, *From Hinton to Hamlet: Building Bridges between Young Adult Literature and the Classics*, Herz and Gallo

categorize the *Harry Potter* series as the "Sacrificial Redeemer". The protagonist Harry struggles to fight off evil and even sacrifices himself in the process. In essence, he is a hero. However, unlike traditional heroes with superpowers who do not flinch at the sight of adversity, Harry is an ordinary boy who suffers from the typical fears of a teenager. Though he may have magical abilities, they do not give him much of an advantage in a world full of magical beings. In the end, Harry defeats evil with his ability to love and with the help of his companions. Through Harry's struggles and the friendships he builds throughout the series, Rowling presents a coming-of-age novel with life advice for teenage readers: to value your friends and not to compromise your moral ideals in the face of adversity.

As implied by the quote from *Entertainment Weekly*, there exists a darker aspect of the *Harry Potter* series: allusions to ethnic supremacy and intolerance. In an interview with John Granger – whom *TIME* magazine describes as the "Dean of *Harry Potter* scholars" – J.

K. Rowling explains that she wanted Harry to leave our world, yet find exactly the same problems about purity and superiority in another. In the series, characters without magical ancestry are often victims of bullying by those who call themselves the “pure bloods”. In the last book, those magical blood supremacists even orchestrate an ethnic cleansing of those who are not of magical origin. Although Rowling originally wrote the story on the basis of Nazis and anti-Semitism, the story is a reminder of the intolerance against those who are different, which still exists today. This reflects the recent rise of more powerful anti-immigration groups such as the Golden Dawn in Greece or examples of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Herzegovina or Rwanda.

However, the problem is that while Rowling’s message of tolerance is certainly laudable, the message that the entire series conveys might not correspond to her intentions. Throughout the series, Rowling unknowingly implies that there does exist a natural aristocracy within the magical society: that there are people who are gifted with magical abilities and those who are not. Rowling’s portrayal of society might be perceived as one that acknowledges the superiority of a certain race by birth. In other words, Rowling has reproduced another world of ethnic discrimination in which the boundary between races is even more austere. This undoubtedly stirs up confusion for its young readers who would do anything to live in the “awesome” world of Harry Potter but is not sure whether or not they would be ostracized as well.

Similar to how the “dark aspects” of the *Harry Potter* series are depicted by the contemporary social issues, the dark story of *The Hunger Games* is contemporary, with a hint of an allusion to modern history. In the series, the author

portrays a totalitarian society in which teenagers are forced to kill each other on national television. The winners of the so-called “Games” are extolled as heroes and are provided with a lifetime of wealth and comfort. In the series, the media shows teenage violence as a warning to those against the regime. These issues reflect the times in history when the media was mostly used as a tool for government propaganda. Not only that but author Suzanne Collins implies that the first book of *The Hunger Games* is a satirical portrayal of “showbiz culture and hypocritical politicians” during the times of the Iraq War, as represented by the overdramatic prettying-up of the contestants of the games and the delight of capitol citizens at the death of innocent teens.

However, since they portray these social issues in an overly violent fashion, *The Hunger Games* series is often criticized for being too “scary” or “violent” for the younger audience. According to *TIME* film critic Mary Pols, “it’s not necessary or appropriate to take your eight year-old to see a movie where teenagers kill each other as part of a punishing sporting event sponsored by a cruel, morally corrupt futuristic society.” Indeed the film is often challenged for its raw portrayal of society forcing young-adults to fight to the death and the debate about whether to allow one’s kids to see this movie is still on.

While *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games* put a certain emphasis on the social issues of the modern world, another popular fiction series, the *Twilight* saga, is focused more on personal desires, especially those of women. The series reproduces the gender politics of “chivalric romance”, which traces back to the medieval stories of distressed damsels and knights. Due to this general atmosphere within the series, the demographic numbers at Vulture, an online website of *New York* magazine, reveal that 80% of the *Twilight* audience is female. The story centers on a female protagonist who falls in love with a dashing vampire, Edward,



wikipedia.org



dragoart.com

who does everything for his girlfriend. In other words, he is the 21st century version of a knight in shining armor. The popularity of the series is an indicator of how 'Cinderella stories' are still relevant to the minds of young females in the present day. In a world where women are repeatedly encouraged to stand up for their rights and be active, the story of a man who does everything for her does have its appeals. The fact that this conventional genre of fiction is still gaining popularity illuminates the dual desires of the female population.

However, like the *Harry Potter* series, the series has received criticism from both the male and female community. While a story that centers on romance is not a pleasure in itself for males, the criticism is that the books set unrealistic ideal standards for men to live up to. From the female community, the main character's passive attitude throughout the series has caused the most outrage. The extreme passivity is most evident in the second book of the series, in which the main character's boyfriend leaves her for a certain period of time and she is unable to do anything except wallow and sulk. Hence, the series has been criticized for going against the feminist principles that women have fought so hard to achieve. In fact, as Stephen King has commented, "*Harry Potter* is all about confronting fears, finning inner strength, and doing what is right in the face of adversity. *Twilight* is about getting a boyfriend." In this aspect, the *Twilight* series is perceived as mass culture literature that is more conventional compared to the recent

young-adult fiction trend of the story reflecting social issues as well as personal ones.

By looking at a story about an ordinary boy who matures as he defeats his troubles, teenagers who are struggling with their own problems can relate to the story and feel encouraged to fight off their own struggles. By reading a book about racial discrimination and the mutated forms of media, people can look back on how much of that is applicable to their own society and address the problem. Even the ones that do not really provide an opportunity to look back on the widespread social issues provide an insight into the nature of gender relations and the individuals. With this trend under observation, we can obtain guidelines and motivations for the readers as well as at look at the way at the way the public is being represented. Therefore, it is important to look into and keep in mind that there is a reason that these novels keep on gaining popularity.

However, we must be aware of the fact that though there are many useful guidelines portrayed in the novels, not everything can be put to good use. The young adult audience must realize that they could be influenced in a certain way without their knowing it and harness the ability to receive other views in a critical way. At the same time, the authors of the novels should bear in mind that while they should undoubtedly reflect the world, the main audience are young adults. Thus the general message and ambiance must be formed with this main demographic in consideration. ■



# The Art of Waste Disposal

By Moon So-yea



*Blog.korea.net*

“How do I throw away my trash? Is this recyclable?” These were questions I often found myself asking during my first couple months in Korea. To many foreigners (like myself, an American) who are not used to strict waste disposal policies, this may sound absurd.

In a geographically small but densely populated country like Korea, such regulations are actually quite logical and necessary. Here, waste disposal and recycling is a serious subject, and one needs to be aware of how to do it correctly, as recycling and separating trash is mandatory. Any violators can be subject to fines or even worse, a loud and rapid Korean lecture from your apartment building’s security ajusshi.

One thing I noticed when I first arrived in Korea was the lack of trash cans in the streets. At the same time, there were stacks of paper

cups and chopsticks thrown on random street corners and on top of full government-issued garbage bags. Sure, there are trash cans in subway stations and other public areas; however, they are sometimes not that easy to find. Initially, I thought to myself: how illogical – surely the government realizes that not having enough trash bins increases the amount of litter?

Later on, I became aware of the “pay-as-you-throw” (PAYT) policy in Korea. PAYT is an innovative system of waste management that treats household garbage disposal as if it were another monthly utility. The logic behind this policy is straightforward: the more you waste, the more you pay. Waste Watch, an arm of the environmentalist organization Keep Britain Tidy, explains that in Korea this disposal fee is “charged according to the quantity of waste set out for collection, measured by volume, weight,



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size or number of containers, or a combination of these.” The concept itself is both reasonable and practical, since it gives people a financial incentive to throw away less non-recyclable materials and food waste.

This is when I realized that increasing the number of public wastebaskets on the streets and in other public locations would lead to people simply throwing away their garbage in these bins, rather than purchasing designated garbage bags and taking responsibility for their own waste. They would get to throw away as much trash as they wanted, without having to worry about disposal fees. As it is, many Koreans seek to avoid these fees by throwing their refuse in the street. Nevertheless, the government seems willing to tolerate some napkins and cups on the ground as a side effect of the PAYT system. While litter could potentially become a major issue in the future if it is not addressed, the system has resulted in a reduction of the overall amount of waste produced.

In fact, PAYT, also known as “variable charging,” has proven to be successful in most of the communities in which the policy is enforced. In 1995, the Korean government imposed a waste disposal fee based on

volume. This policy proved to be effective, as it caused a 26% reduction in the amount of waste per person. According to WasteMET Asia, a site that provides waste management-related information, the average citizen who produced 1.33 kilograms of waste per day in 1994 produced only .99 kilograms in 2006. Furthermore, the amount of recycled items increased by 213% during the same period.

One central aspect of the Korean waste disposal system is the separation of biodegradable materials—food waste or compost—from non-perishable items. Households collect the remains of their meals and place them in an official eumshikmul sseuraegi (literally “food trash”) bag, or else dispose of them in a community biodegradable waste bin within the apartment complex. I must admit, though, that there are times when I simply throw my leftovers in with the ilban sseuraegi (“general trash”) without bothering to open the lid of the food waste bin because, well, the stench can be eye- or nose-opening. However, most of us would concur that the welfare of the environment is a bigger priority than one’s olfactory comfort. In addition, one must note that food waste does not include indigestible materials, such as egg shells, animal

bones, tea bags, fruit seeds, etc. These items must be disposed of as general waste. Although such distinctions make the intricate procedure of waste disposal even more complicated, the reason for differentiation is quite sensible: 92% of food waste is made into compost or fed to livestock, according to WasteMET.

According to Korea4Expats, a site that provides information on Korea to non-Koreans, non-food items that do not belong in the general waste bin include glass, metals, PET (polyethylene terephthalate) bottles, plastics, cotton clothing, and paper. In apartment complexes, recycling centers are open on certain days of the week, if not every day (depending on the neighborhood). These centers have distinct containers for each type of recyclable item. However, in most public areas, there are just two bins: one marked *ilban sseuraegi* and another marked *jaehwal yongpum* (“recyclable materials”). In this case, garbage collectors themselves will separate the items by category. Moreover, according to Korea4Expats, discarding large items such as furniture comes with fees that range from 2,000 to 8,000 won per item, depending on the size. In order to dispose of household garbage and recyclable materials properly (and legally), residents of each district must purchase government-issued garbage bags, which can vary in volume from 3 to 100 liters, depending on the district. Initially, one could be slightly taken aback by the prices of these plastic bags, which range from 200 to 4,000 won each, but this is one of the ways in which the government dis-

courages excessive garbage disposal. Not only does the PAYT system cause people to stop and think about how much waste they are actually producing, it also reduces excessive consumption. The sad truth is that in many developed countries such as Korea, people consume a great deal, much more than they need to. And much of what they buy eventually ends up in a landfill. There is no doubt that consumerism has been important to the development of Korea’s booming economy; however, it is important to keep in mind that producing excessive waste will eventually have an undermining effect on the nation. Strict waste disposal laws thus encourage people to eliminate one source of unnecessary garbage – excessive purchases of goods. Overall, the fact that recycling and separating waste are mandatory by law means that individuals must take more responsibility for their own waste and contribute to the well-being of the society.

Despite these efforts to regulate waste management, Korea still produces garbage at a rapid rate, and it is uncertain whether the nation will be able to continue handling such amounts in the future. In a country as small as this one, landfill space is not abundant, and it is diminishing quickly. Therefore, the government has taken further measures to cut down on waste: the cost of food waste is no longer based on volume, but on weight. When food waste is measured by volume, people are required to fill up a garbage bag; however, when it is measured by weight, people have to weigh the food waste (using designated machines placed near residential



*KoreaTimes.co.kr*



areas) before disposing of it. This causes people to become more conscious of exactly how much food waste they are throwing away. The heavier it is, the more you pay. According to the South Korean Ministry of Environment, the disposal of biodegradable material costs the nation around 800 billion won a year. Food waste comprises 28% of total waste, as measured by Envico, the Korea Environment and Resources Corporation. Within households, leftovers from meals make up 30% of food waste, while untouched food (including spoiled food) makes up 5%. The rest is comprised of waste from the cooking process. In restaurants, on the other hand, 68%

comes from leftover banchan (side dishes) and uneaten food. Consequently, the new policy also applies to restaurants and other businesses, discouraging them from producing excessive food waste by charging fees. Restaurant owners, in turn, have now begun to charge customers a certain amount of money – in addition to the price of the meal – for uneaten food.

South Korea continues to set an example for countries across Asia facing a similar situation: not much space and a large population. Other nations are implementing similar policies to reduce landfill-bound garbage, become more environmentally friendly, and

avoid polluting the earth we all share. For instance, the majority of citizens in Hong Kong live in residential buildings that are over 10 stories high, according to CityLab, an international online newspaper. Trash is usually thrown down garbage chutes, so residents can dispose of as much garbage as they please. Therefore, the government of Hong Kong is also planning to implement PAYT policies in order to control waste levels. Countries in all parts of the world should consider such PAYT strategies for the good of the environment and, ultimately, for the sake of humanity. ■



[greencompanyeffect.com](http://greencompanyeffect.com)



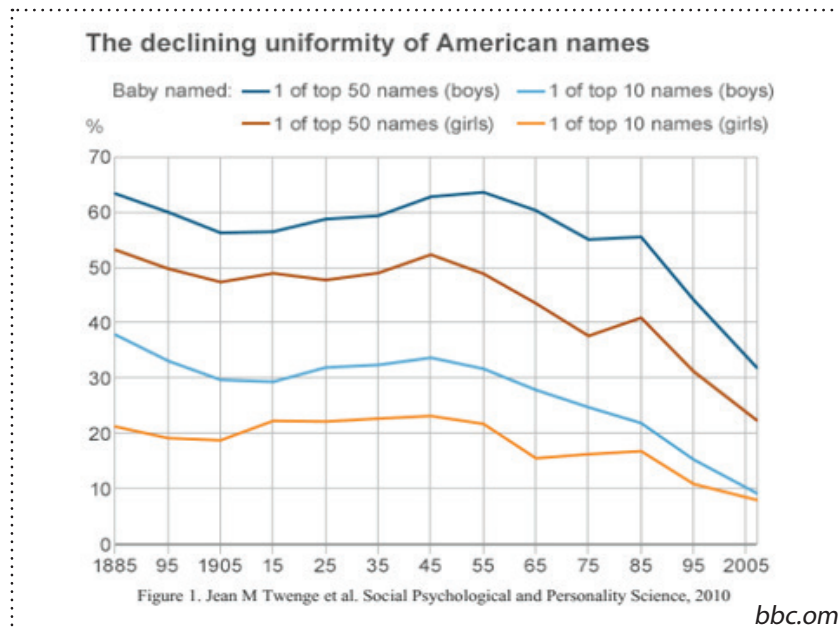
## THE BEGINNING OF IDENTITY: The Effects Children’s Names Have on Their Economic and Social Status

By Hwang Ji-young

Nowadays, parents are searching for unusual and unique names for their children. An example would be the name of Kim Kardashian’s recently named child, “North West”, which strays from the common norm for names. We no longer follow the traditions of the 18th century when common names were often used. With the surge of the Internet and advancements of search engines, parents have easier access to searching and avoiding common

names, helping them designate their child with a unique name. Also, a new market has emerged for services offering to help parents choose uncommon names. Such services often provide a list of names ranked by popularity, so that parents looking for a unique or relatively uncommon name can know what names to pass up. BabyCenter is an example of one of the companies contributing to the growth of the baby name market.

Choosing a baby’s name has become a matter of choice rather than tradition, providing us with more information about the parents doing the selecting, such as their personality, social status, and race. A study led by Jean M Twenge shows a declining trend in the uniformity of American names. In 1955, uniformity in American names was at its peak, but since 1965 this uniformity has seen a steep rate of decline. Therefore, several important questions arise re-



guarding this recent trend in choosing unique baby names. Do names make a difference? If so, then in what sense exactly do names make a difference, and to what degree?

David Figlio, an economist and professor at Northwestern University, researched the effect of names on children. He analyzed children with linguistically low-status names (names, such as Alexzander, often given by parents who haven't finished high school, or who come from a lower socio-economic household), and discovered that teachers treated children with low-status names differently. Teachers were more likely to refer such children to special education programs and were less likely to consider them as gifted. These children performed poorer on tests and doing worse in school over time. The child's name appeared to affect his educational experience, and thus his overall future economic and social prospects. A similar study was done by Richard Zweigenhaft, a psychologist at Guilford College, on boys with extraordinary names. The research showed that such boys had a higher tendency of dropping out of school and being socially ostracized later

on in life.

However, Conley, a sociologist at New York University, found something contrary to the idea that children with unusual and extraordinary names do poorly. He stated that children with unusual names actually benefit from name-related experiences by learning to control their emotions or their impulses, which can be a great skill for success. Children with unusual names are given the opportunity to become more patient and less impulsive when facing degrading comments about their names.

Another study conducted by Figlio, published in *Education Finance and Policy* (2006), suggested that boys with feminine names were most likely to develop behavioral problems and to misbehave when they reached puberty. Through data collected from schools in Florida, he demonstrated that the problems increased when there were girls with the same name in the same year. According to Figlio, boys with the same feminine name as a female classmate were often teased and bullied by their peers, as well as suffered con-



fusion about their own gender identity, all of which contributed to a heightened self-consciousness. The same result was found with girls who were given masculine names. The study concluded that children whose names did not match their biological sex were more likely to exhibit poor behavior.

A study from 2003, “Are Emily and Greg More Employable Than Lakisha and Jamal?”, shows an interesting correlation between names and employment rate. For the field experiment, Marianne Bertrand and Sendhil Mullainathan sent 5,000 CVs to job advertisements listed in Chicago and Boston newspapers. The CVs were the same, but half were given names commonly associated with Caucasians (“Emily” and “Greg”), while the other half were given names commonly associated with African Americans (“Lakisha” and “Jamal”). The callback rate from employers was 50% higher for those CVs of the first group, despite the fact that the company’s federal contractors and employers boasted their affirmative action and equal opportunities in admission. Of particular interest is that African-American applicants with traditionally Caucasian names were just as successful as Caucasian applicants in re-

ceiving an interview request based on their CVs. The study concluded that racial discrimination, conscious or not, tends to be directed at people’s first names, thereby affecting the rate of employment for both women and men.

Gregory Clark, an economist and author of the book “The Son Also Rises: Surnames and the History of Social Mobility”, similarly concluded that names also affect the chances of being accepted into a prestigious university. Although his research primarily focused on family names, it also examined the probability of people with certain first names entering University of Oxford between 2008 and 2013. According to the figure below, applicants with the name “Eleanor” were more likely to attend Oxford, while those with the name “Shane” were far below on the charts. According to Clark, there’s really no evidence to show that the names themselves, rather than other factors, were significant causal contributors underpinning the discrepancies. However, the correlation between popular names and social class, which suggests that a person’s name may have some bearing on his opportunities and goals, might very well be a fairly recent phenomenon. Clark changed the

| Names at Oxford University 2008-13 |                                     |                  |                                     |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Top ten names                      |                                     | Bottom ten names |                                     |
| Name                               | Relative chance of attending Oxford | Name             | Relative chance of attending Oxford |
| Eleanor                            | 3.69                                | Stacey           | 0.06                                |
| Peter                              | 3.54                                | Connor           | 0.06                                |
| Simon                              | 3.33                                | Bradley          | 0.07                                |
| Anna                               | 3.14                                | Reece            | 0.06                                |
| Katherine                          | 3.07                                | Danny            | 0.04                                |
| Elizabeth                          | 3.01                                | Kayleigh         | 0.04                                |
| Richard                            | 2.90                                | Jade             | 0.03                                |
| Catherine                          | 2.87                                | Paige            | 0.02                                |
| John                               | 2.82                                | Shannon          | 0.02                                |
| Stephen                            | 2.81                                | Shane            | 0                                   |

stephentall.org

Figure 2. Gregory Clark et al Surnames: A New Source for the History of Social Mobility



[Pinterest.com](https://www.pinterest.com)

scope of his research, this time looking at students attending Oxford and Cambridge in the early 19th Century, and noticed a weaker correlation between names and university attendance. The results of Clark's study appear to indicate that, unlike in the nineteenth century, names have become social signifiers in current society.

Figlio conducted another study in which the relation between names and career paths was examined. He found that, compared to girls with androgynous names, those with feminine names were more likely to move away from math and science and focus on the humanities and linguistics. One particular case involved two sisters, one having an androgynous name and the other a feminine one. Congruent with the findings of the overall study, the one sister ended up pursuing a career path in the math and sciences, whereas the other in the humanities and linguistics, despite the fact that both showed a high aptitude in math. Although their parents could have treated the two sisters differently on the basis of their names, thereby influ-

encing the career path of each, such a possibility does not by itself attenuate the study's finding on the correlation between feminine and genderless names, on the one hand, and the future career paths of those who bear those names. How the one affects the other is one thing, but that the one affects the other is another. The results of the study appear to show a strong indication of the latter: there is a significant correlation between a person's name and his or her future.

Charles Horton Cooley has proposed the concept of the "looking-glass self", which states that our identity and self-concept is partly a reflection of the way we are treated by other people. From this concept arises the idea that a person's name affects the way that person is viewed by others, and carries the potential for enhancing his or her social interactions. Given the influence that teachers and employers have on an individual's personality, behavior, and success later in life, the results of the studies carried out by David Figlio and by Marianne Bertrand and Sendhil Mullainathan appear to provide further support for the "looking-glass self" concept.

However, this doesn't mean that our chances of success always depend on the reactions of other people. In the field of psychology, the notion of implicit egotism refers to the positive feel-

ings we have about ourselves. When we associate positive feelings with our names, the chances of finding success increases, which appears to demonstrate the importance of self-identification. According to *Moniker Maladies* (2007), people's fondness for the initials of their names could get in the way of success. Leif Nelson and Joseph Simmons, the authors of *Moniker Maladies*, analyzed baseball strikeouts and found that hitters with the initial K had a higher strikeout rate (K denotes a strike-out in baseball). They also found that graduate students with the initials C and D tended towards having a lower grade point average than students with A and B initials.

Even though there appears to be various negative consequences associated with certain names, parents ought not refrain from naming a child whatever they want. While names may have an effect on the experiences and prospects of an individual throughout his or her life, the context in which the name is used matters considerably as well. Figlio states, "Despite the fact I find very strong evidence that names have consequences for kids, I think parents should give their kids the names that they love. [They should] just be prepared to advocate for their kids. [They should also] [s]tand up to the people who are treating them dif-

ferently and make sure their kids know that their name is wonderful and special." As long as people find support and encouragement from others, especially from their parents, no matter how uncommon or gender-mismatched his or her name appears to be, they will be able to achieve success throughout their lives. The degree to which an individual's name will affect the individual's experiences ultimately lies on context. An individual's given name marks the starting point in the development of his or her identity as a person. Although it is typically not a matter of choice for the individual what name he or she has, the subsequent development of an individual's life is largely a matter of the choices he or she makes. In that sense, life is more than just a nominal matter. Instead, it is a set of complicated decision-making processes that determines the prospects of our lives. ■







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## THE PROFUNDITY OF VIDEOGAMES

By Baek Jun-kyu

When I was a kid, I think I was more drawn to games than any other medium because of the stories they told. Oh sure, I was an avid reader and moviegoer too, but videogames offered something special, something unique to itself: an interactive narrative. For the first time, I would be in charge; I would be playing the character, I would be living the story. I don't think I knew it then, but I was thrilled by the new realm of possibility videogames represented. On the other hand, I was frustrated that none of my friends seemed to understand this, as they were too focused on just deriving amusement from games. Since then, I've accepted entertainment as

a legitimate reason to enjoy games, but it still peeves me when people claim that videogames can be nothing more than just, as game developer Hideo Kojima puts it, a “service”.

While fun certainly is an important aspect of games, videogames can force us to confront profound philosophical or moral questions. The best games do this in a way that is unique to the medium: actively involving players in their narratives. This process—otherwise known as “gameplay”—exposes the player to the game's messages, inspiring or disquieting him/her as competently as any book, film, or song, as the following examples will

illustrate.

*Missile Command* is an arcade game released in 1980 during the Cold War, when the threat of total nuclear destruction was still very much a possibility. The gameplay of *Missile Command* is simple: there are six cities you must protect from a never-ending hail of missiles. You possess three military installations that fire a limited supply of surface-to-air counter-missiles; they themselves can be destroyed from the incoming barrage. You must defend yourself from the wild-firing missiles for as long as you can until you invariably lose all six of your cities. The game's message is as elegant as its game-

play, which is made even more brilliant when you realize that these two elements work hand-in-hand. The game teaches you the primary lesson of nuclear war: you cannot win. Despite your best efforts, your bases will be ruined, your cities will be destroyed. The only difference you can make is how much extra time you are able to buy before the inevitable outcome. In the end, you are left staring at a blank screen with the words GAME OVER written over it—an apropos statement about the nature of nuclear war.

The game illustrates that the outcome of nuclear war is as horrifying as it is inevitable. During the game you may be forced to make difficult decisions, like whether you should defend all of your cities or focus on protecting your military bases. The former expands your concerns and tax your resources considerably; the latter risks the safety of your cities. These decisions raise enormous moral questions. If you try to secure all your cities and bases at once, you risk exposing both. If your bases are destroyed, how can you protect your cities? And yet, how can you justify abandoning civilians while attending to your military interests? Should you abandon a few innocent cities in favor of concentrating your efforts on the more easily defended ones? By the end of the game, you may feel perturbed by your own decisions. You may even gain some respect for the people who have to make similar decisions in real life.

Though *Missile Command* is an excellent game on its own, it still only represents the bare minimum of its medium's potential. Videogames have matured significantly since 1980, and not just from a technological standpoint. They have learned to weave gameplay and story together with more complexity than before, resulting in narrative-driven experiences rather than the simplistic, set-driven ones found in older games. This modern convention improves how effectively videogames can express themselves to their players, and has the added benefit of being more palatable to audiences for being narratives rather than disjointed, singular set pieces.

Released in 2011 by independent developer Supergiant Games, *Bastion* is an action role-playing game that exemplifies the concept of the modern, narrative-driven game. You assume the role of a silent protagonist known as “the Kid”, navigating a world that was mysteriously shattered overnight, the majority of its population killed off by the same cataclysmic event. As the Kid you try to repair the world by powering the titular Bastion with energy “cores” found across the increasingly hostile continent. Along the way you befriend three other survivors, forming a core group of characters that makes it easy for the game to focus its plot.

(Spoiler warning) Eventually, one of the Kid's companions betrays the Kid by rallying another group survivors against him and sabotaging the Bastion. The companion's betrayal is explained later, and his actions become excusable when the truth comes to light. Near the game's end, the companion is blamed by his new comrades for the mounting casualties and is ultimately attacked by them. It is at this point when you, as the Kid, discover his unconscious body and are given a choice: leave the companion to his fate and charge through the enemy lines with a powerful new weapon, or carry the companion on your back and try to make it to the exit.

When I played *Bastion*, I sympathized with the companion and chose the latter option. Immediately I was deprived of my ability to fight and was forced to walk across a long hallway, my





joystiq.com

health bar fast receding as enemy fire poured down on me. I was about to quit and start over out of disgust when the barrage suddenly halted. The pixelated avatars of my enemies seemed to be staring at me as I walked, unarmed and defenseless, for the sake of a man who had so betrayed me so utterly. The tension was briefly interrupted by one enemy who resumed fire, only to be swiftly knocked out by his own leader. I traveled the rest of the gauntlet unmolested, my enemies watching in silent appreciation. What needs to be understood is that the scene occurred entirely within gameplay. In other words, there was no cinematic or text or dialogue; the player's control was never taken away, and all the actions were organically created by the gameplay animations and mechanics used throughout the entire game. A thousand words of story had been told in a few gestures. (End spoilers)

The game ends soon after, but not before asking you to make another in-game decision. Regardless of which decision you make, *Bastion's* narrative makes the message of the game clear: it is better to live a future with close company than to relive an unhappy and decadent past. The choice of whether or not to save the companion, though mostly unrelated to the ending of the game, is reflected in this message. If you save him, you affirm that we all deserve second chances. If you leave him to die, you resign us to reliving our pasts.

Admittedly, there are videogames that do not fit into the mold advanced by this article. Games like *World of Warcraft* and *Call of Duty* reinforce the stereotype of the basement-dwelling troglodyte gamer and are often considered time-wasting distractions or even blamed for promoting violent adolescent behavior. While these accusations aren't necessarily true, one must remember that the videogame is still relatively young, and as such immature handling of the medium is bound to occur one way or another. Even other "respectable" media are not innocent from creating works of "lesser" reputes—works, for example, such as *Fifty Shades of Grey*, *The Expendables*, and Rebecca Black's "Friday".

Games have years to go before they can achieve the kind of excellence, or indeed the widespread acceptance, that music, paintings, books or even movies currently enjoy, but they are still far undeserving of the negative image they are often associated with. The fact that videogames, even in their relative infancy, can produce gems such as *Missile Command* and *Bastion* is in my opinion a testament to their potential as an expressive medium. One can only hope that in the future, more people will turn to videogames in appreciation of their ability to express something truly profound. ■



# Summer Must List

*'The Must List' is a joint effort made by our editors, writers, and layout designers alike to connect with our readers on a more personal level. Under this edition's theme of 'Must-Haves,' we have compiled our suggestions of places to go, books to read, films to watch, and dishes to sample, all the hopes of making this coming summer, with the accompanying heat surge and humidity, a little less tedious for our readers.*

## SONG DA-WOON (AMIE): FAN

Summer in Korea is always difficult to endure. When late June approaches, Koreans know to expect and prepare for two things: the scorching heat that refuses to diminish, and air so humid that it emulates a jjimjilbang. The only way to survive would seem to be to stay in a room that is constantly air-conditioned. But as appealing as it may seem, one cannot stay indoors for two entire months. What does one do when facing the dreaded weather firsthand then? Always carry a fan! A useful item used for many centuries ago, a folding fan is a must-have during the summer in Korea. Although it may not be nearly as cool as an air conditioner, every whiff of a fan is like paradise when standing under the blistering sun. Folding fans can be bought at a very cheap price and are available at all convenience stores. Are you wondering how on earth you will withstand this upcoming summer? Acquire a folding fan and you have nothing to worry about.

## ALLYSSA WEE: RAIN BOOTS

As summer approaches, we think about beaches, tanning, and just generally having fun under the sun. Summer in Korea, though, has its own fair share of rain and even the occasional flood, which calls for a waterproof must-have: rain boots. Wearing rain boots on a rainy day makes trudging through muddy puddles easier – and maybe even a bit of fun! Their non-slip soles can prevent you from taking a fall too. Besides, gone are the days of dull, ugly rain boots. Today, they come in different designs and colors and have become popular fashion items. While the annual rainy season may put a damper on our sunny outdoor plans, with rain boots on, we can still soak up lots of summer fun!



ecouterre.com

## CHRISTINA LEE: GRADUAL TANNING LO- TION

Why is tanning such a rarity in Korea? While skin-whitening products dominate the stands, I have not once seen a tanning salon, oil, nor tanning lotion. Granted, the tendency towards fair porcelain skin has its own perks as one becomes more meticulous and prudent with his or her skincare routine—and which Korean doesn't want to have "fair" skin? But being tan should no longer be associated with farming, the peasantry, or being unhealthy. Tanning lotion, however, is a summer necessity. Having a healthy bronzed glow is always attractive, and tanning lotion helps the skin look naturally blessed without the fuss of probable sunburn or pungent oils.



collegefashion.net

## TRAN THANH VAN: SUNCREAM

What do you think when you say "summer?" You may think of "humid," "rain," "fun," but I am sure there is one word that no one will ever miss: SUNSHINE. Regardless of the temperature, sunlight is at its strongest capac-

## SHIN DA-EUN: HAND SANITIZER

In the hot summer, it is not really easy to keep free from the germs and bacteria that prosper in the heat and humidity. According to a public hygiene experiment done by Oregon State University, the danger of bacterial infection increases by 17% when the temperature rises to 10 degree Celcius, while the attack rate of disease caused by bacterial infection is 46% higher than winter. To prevent bacterial infection in the summer, washing your hands frequently is very critical. However, it is also annoying. Isn't there an easier, faster way to maintain personal hygiene? Can't we keep our health without going in and out of the bathroom? The solution to these questions is hand sanitizer. Hand sanitizer is an alternative to hand washing with soap and water. You dab the sanitizer on your palm and then rub it into your hands. The alcohol in the sanitizer kills germs on your hands and then evaporates. Keep in mind, though, that it is not as effective as traditional soap and water. Nevertheless, hand sanitizer is able to reduce the bacteria count on your hands when hand washing is unavailable.



Homedecor.com

ity during the summer. Thus, it is obviously unwise if you do not protect yourself properly before going out. Suncream is what you need to prevent your skin from being burnt. What is most frequently recommended is a SPF15 or SPF30 product. Even more important than this indication is the way you apply sun cream. It is better to

apply the cream onto your skin around half an hour before going out so it has enough time to absorb into your skin. Moreover, if the sun is too strong, you should never expose your bare skin even though you already use sun cream. Be careful and be happy!



## DIEP NGUYEN: LEMON

Summer is nearly here, along with its heat and humidity. How are you prepared to cope with such weather? Lying on the beach with a glass of coconut water may sound great, but for those who are stuck in Seoul, there is a surprisingly simple solution to escape from the heat: lemons! Start with lemon ice cream to refresh yourself - a glass of iced lemonade or lemon soda will do just as well - then go for a piece of lemon tart or cookies. I'm sure you will feel much better afterward! Indeed, with Vitamin C, a refreshing smell and a typical sour taste, lemon can “reboot” your brain and set the mood for any summer activity. For those who can't stand the sudden rain of summer and have a possibility of catching a cold, a cup of hot lemon honey tea might be just the thing to come to your rescue.



## KIM MIN-JEONG: PATBINGSU (KOREAN SHAVED ICE DESSERT)

Patbingsu is a must-try dessert in Korea. It is a concoction of shaved ice with a number of toppings such as red bean paste, chopped fruits, syrup, condensed milk, rice cakes, jelly, or ice cream. The toppings vary depending on the store. If made at home, said toppings may also depend on one's preferences. Patbingsu is easy to make at home as long as you have the right ingredients at hand. Today, there are a variety of bingsus (ice dessert) offered in stores depending on what the major ingredient is. In patbingsu, the red bean paste is the main ingredient. However, variations of bingsu, such as fruit bingsu, and green tea bingsu, and so on, are also offered. When it is hot in summer and you cannot escape to beaches, have patbingsu to cool down. When you also feel exhausted under the blazing sun, enjoy this delicious dessert to brighten your mood.

## CHA DONG-MIN (DANIELLA): ICED COFFEE

Nothing gives you a better boost of energy on an exhaustingly hot summer's day than a cup of iced Americano -- a rich espresso mixed with water and chilled with ice cubes. Feel the heat melt as you take a sip of perfectly roasted, brewed, and chilled Americano from your skinny straw. Have it sweet or have it bitter. Add a shot of milk and make it an iced Flat White if you wish. More importantly, have it served in a glass cup, instead of a disposable one, if you care to think about the environment. While other coffee beverages like Frappuccinos and Mocha lattes are drenched in cream, caramel, and syrup, and thus highly likely to be detrimental to your waistline, you'll be glad to hear that Americanos are low in calories (around 15 for a Starbucks Grande-sized one). So stay both cool and caffeinated this summer and drink a glass of iced Americano!



## YOON HA-YON: GELATO



ocfoodies.com

## LEE SEO-YEON (VALENTINE): HWACHAE

Imagine how refreshing a cold, fizzy drink poured into a whole bowl of fresh fruit salad must taste. That is what you'll get when you sample Korea's own traditional drink Hwachae. Hwachae is a traditional Korean drink that Koreans in the past made with fruits and edible flowers in honey water. Since then, the common recipe has changed and has been modified from the original. Today, Sprite and fruits are used instead of honey water and additional flowers. Regardless, hwachae still maintains its position as one of the favorite summer refreshments of Koreans. Most commonly added fruits are fresh seasonal fruits including watermelons, peaches, apples, grapes, oranges, kiwis, and blueberries. Of course, it is not against any rule to add more fruits. The result is a delicious treat that is very simple and easy to make at home. You should definitely try making your own hwachae. A sweet, icy bowl of hwachae will blow the heat away on a hot sunny day.

"I scream, you scream, we all scream for ice cream!" So the famous lyric goes. Ice cream: more than just the sum of its parts, more than just a food. Yet something even more exquisite than ice cream exists. How is that possible, you say? Well, let me introduce you to ice cream's more refined, yet still delicious cousin: gelato. Considered interchangeable with ice cream, gelato actually originates from Italy, the land of oven-baked pizza, pasta, and unscrupulous sex. It is made with milk, cream, sugar, and flavoring such as s fresh fruit and nut purees. These five simple ingredients come together and produce an explosive cosmos of flavors that are unique to gelato. Unlike ice cream, which has a legal minimum of ten percent fat, gelato contains a greater proportion of whole milk to cream, and is denser, elevating its creaminess to new heights. Gourmands and finicky eaters can rest assured, as gelato is sold in a wide variety of flavors, ranging from the pedestrian--chocolate--to the audacious--black licorice. So, go forth, and as the Italians would say, *buon appetito!*



Allthatfood.blogspot.kr

## LIM JEE-SOO: RUNNING SHOES

The chill in our bones has been pushed out by the fragrant smell of flowers and freshly mown grass. What better way to celebrate the coming of warmer weather than to grab a pair of sneakers and go out for a run? As the most accessible and inexpensive form of exercise out there - because let's be real, who here doesn't have at least one pair of running shoes? - running is the perfect way to stay healthy. Why confine yourself to the turning tracks of a treadmill that takes you nowhere when it's warm enough to just go outside and follow where your feet take you? According to The New York Times, running outside burns more calories, is more enjoyable and thus keeps you motivated to exercise more frequently than its indoors alternative. So grab some sunscreen, a bottle of water and your favorite running shoes, and get going!

## HWANG JI-YOUNG: AVIATOR SUNGLASSES

Did you know that aviator sunglasses were originally designed by Ray Ban? They were designed primarily to protect pilots from headaches and altitude sickness caused by the sun during World War II. They became very popular after Tom Cruise and Val Kilmer sported them in Top Gun. Aviator sunglasses are a must-have for the summer. They not only protect your eyes from the sun, but they also boost your self-confidence by covering up any imperfections observed by another person. Also, viewing a person through dark lenses gives a blurring effect that beautifies the other. Ultimately, this reflexive beautification promotes a general sense of well-being.

## BAEK JUN-KYU: SUMMER SHORTS

Summer is no time for long pants. The sun is hot and unforgiving during this time of year, and one would have to be a die-hard fashion fanatic or an utterly oblivious soul, to insist upon wearing one's tightest and longest pants. Either case presents a regrettable decision, especially when the solution is so simple and so obvious. Shorts are the last word on summer fashion. A definite must-have for any summer citizen, these pants offer a level of comfort unmatched by its long-legged contemporaries at no sacrifice to your self-esteem and social integrity. Sweat-free and extremely breezy, shorts are a perfect fit for your summer-related pursuits. Just keep in mind that these clothes are only meant for casual wear; they'll look fabulous on you at the beach, but try to explain that to your boss when you show up wearing one at your company's annual general meeting.



collegefashion.net

## JANG HYE-SUN: SUMMER HAT

As the blazing sun causes beads of sweat to trickle down your face, the sense of longing for that must-have summer item grows ever stronger. This is where the summer hat comes in! A “boater” is one of the most traditional forms of summer hats. In essence, it is a straw hat with a ribbon tied around the crown. First introduced as casual summer hats in the late 19th and early 20th century England, boaters were very popular for boating or sailing, thus its name. Nowadays, summer hats have taken on a more diverse range of designs. While traditional small straw hats are still timeless classics, wide-brimmed floppy summer hats are gaining popularity among women, especially for summer vacations on the beach. For men, the trend of hats has changed from round formal hats to a more casual form of caps. Why don't you have a look around the shops to see which type of hat will fit your taste?

## PHAM THI THU THUY: FLIP-FLOPS

Now that summer has arrived, the time has come to adorn yourself with a colorful pair of flip-flops. One can have several pairs for different purposes, such as going to school or hanging out with friends. Flip-flops are a must, especially on the beach, not only for the sake of being trendy but also in terms of practicality. No one really wants to sit on the side due to impractical footwear while their friends are jumping into the inviting blue waters of the summer ocean, and everyone hopes to be able to wash off the sand easily from their shoes. Available in a diversity of shapes, this simple item is a surprisingly diverse fashion item in its shape and usage: feminine but not sexualized, sportive but not too tomboyish, and arguably most importantly, convenient and comfortable. What else can you wish of your summer footwear?



## SALLY SHIN: UMBRELLA

Three words of wisdom from someone who learned the lesson the hard way: carry an umbrella. The monsoon season in Korea, which lasts from as early as mid-June to late August, does not have to be a pain in the neck with the right preparations. Procuring an umbrella is quite easy in Korea; they are available in almost all convenience stores, as well as popular chain stores such as Artbox and Accessorize in various sizes and designs. Apart from the function of keeping one's clothes dry, an umbrella will allow for meeting new people and perhaps the other half by offering sanctuary to cute guys and girls who have ultimately broken the number one summer rule of carrying around an umbrella. Thus, when the heavens begin to weep, the time has come to dash to the nearest outlet to purchase the key to happiness.



## MOON SO-YEA: WATER BOTTLE

Going to the beach? Traveling across the globe? Staying home in bed? Regardless of where you are or what you are doing, your body needs its H<sub>2</sub>O. As is common knowledge, the average person needs to drink 8-12 glasses of water a day, especially in the heat of summer. You could purchase disposable bottled water every day, but that is not too helpful to either the environment or your wallet. Investing in a BPA-free, eco-friendly reusable water bottle is a far better solution. The one shown in the picture even has a filter that attracts impurities with its electromagnet, leaving your dihydrogen monoxide free of unwanted tastes. For people (like myself) who are super sensitive about funky-tasting water, this bottle is perfect. There is a plethora of different types of bottles out there, made of plastic, glass, and stainless steel. Take your pick and stay hydrated!

## LEE SE-WOONG (SAM): BICYCLES

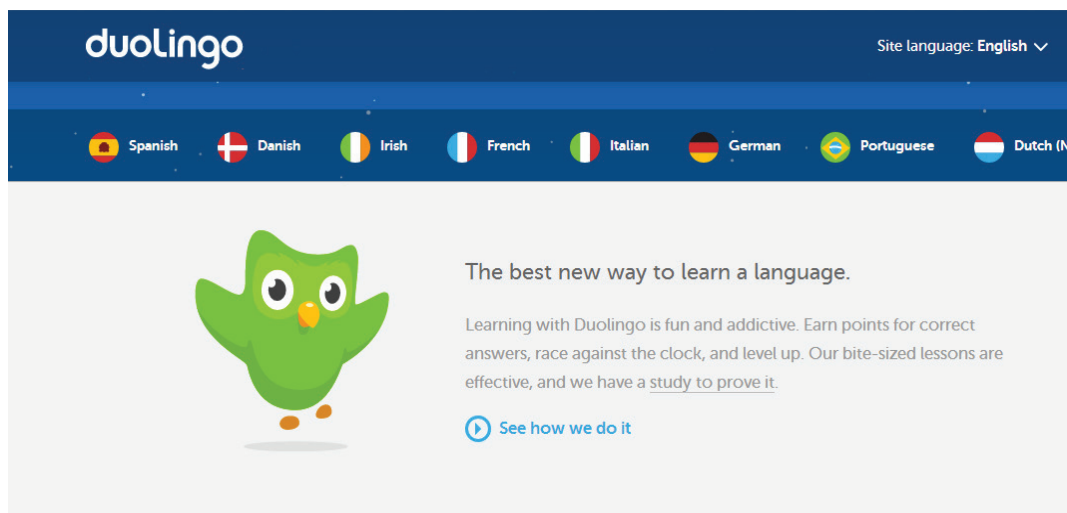
Since their invention in the 19th century, bicycles have enjoyed immense popularity. For good reason, too! For some, bicycles provide day-to-day transportation, while for others, they are a source of joy and recreation. Even more people enjoy the fitness that riding a bicycle grants. There are many types of bikes to suit every kind of rider. Mountain bikes for the daring, touring for the adventurous, cruisers for the cozy, and fixies for the hip. Seoul offers an impressive 70km stretch of bike paths along and near the Han River, making weekend rides with friends a blast. Bicycles are available for rent at many places throughout Seoul. Even better, good quality bicycles can be had for a good price from those leaving the country. Nothing is better than having the warm summer breeze brush through your hair as you cruise around after a hard day.



## KIM YEON-JU: DUOLINGO

It is almost summer break; everyone has finally the time for themselves and the time to learn a new language or improve one's proficiency in one. For those with such aspirations, Duolingo is the perfect application: it is fun, and free of charge. This application offers courses in Spanish, French, Italian, German and Portuguese. You can choose your language and start the numerous games and activities to im-

prove your initial skills. Activities consist of associating images with words, audio records, and basic grammar and conjugation. Duolingo is a great way to spend time and practice a new language wherever and whenever you want. Moreover, it is also very convenient and practical in the sense that it really helps you get the basics of all the aspects in a language within a short time. Therefore, it is perfect to use before going abroad for vacation. Even within a short time I was able to notice the improvements I had made in the language I chose. Duolingo is stimulating yet not tiring and can be useful for everyone.



duolingo.com

## YUN JAE-YOUNG: SUMMER PLAYLIST

If you're looking for ways to make your summer even more vibrant and enjoyable this year, then music should definitely be on your to-do list.

You can create a playlist for every occasion depending on your musical tastes: calming classical music might transport you to a relaxing getaway by the beach, while upbeat, lively pop songs can be perfect for a fun road trip

with your friends. At the right place and with the right people, the right music can make your day that extra little bit more special. A personal favourite of mine is Labrinth's Let the Sun Shine – as you can probably tell by the title, it's a perfect feel-good song for the summer.

When you're feeling down because of the oppressive humidity or the monsoon rain, I can guarantee that listening to your favourite songs on your playlist will lift your mood and make you feel full of energy. ■

For the past few years, the Seoul government and artists have made great efforts to transform this metropolitan city into an Asian art hub to rival Hong Kong and Tokyo. Spring/Summer 2014 is another chapter of this long term plan with a number of exhibitions blossoming in town. This year, many artists lean toward exploring the experimental and abstract elements in an individual human's life.

# Spring/Summer Exhibitions in Seoul - A Review

By Pham Thi Thu Thuy



## \* Seoul Museum of Contemporary Art (MMCA):

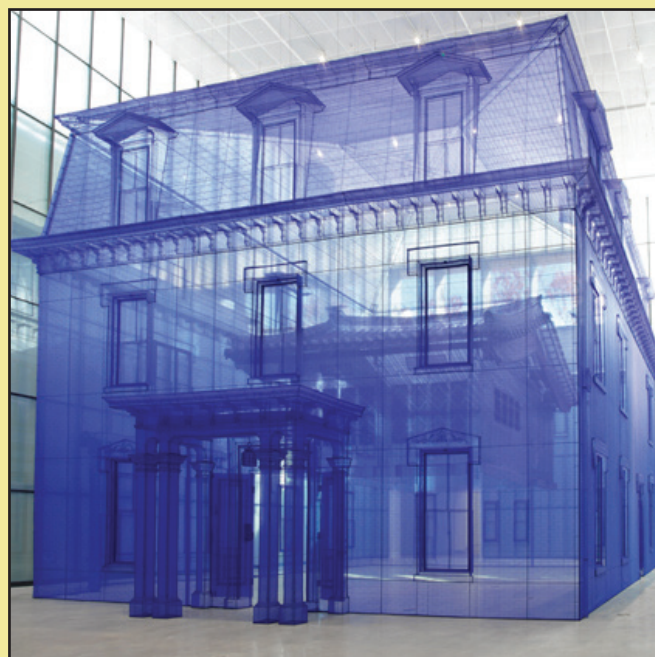
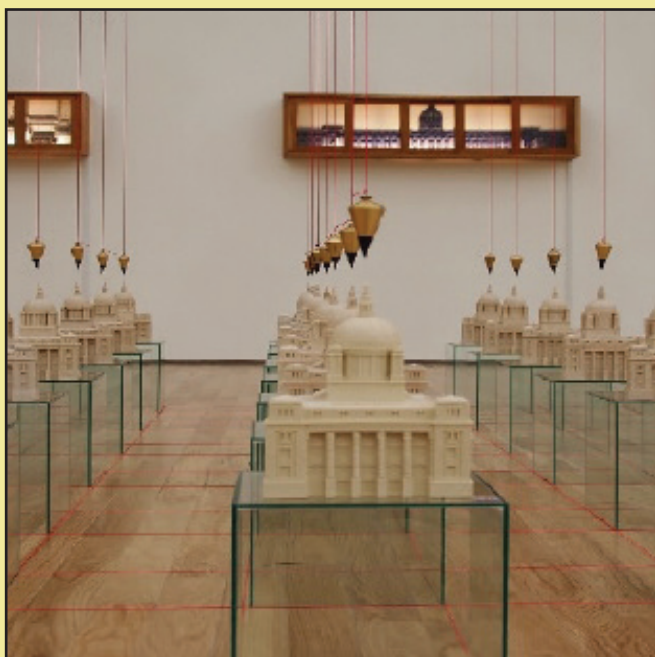
The highlight of the Seoul MMCA this spring is the *Zeitgeist Korea* exhibition. Visitors can survey the landscape of contemporary Korean art through the artwork of 39 artists. Many artists chosen for this showcase portrayed fleeting, transient moments of life. Quite often viewers can observe microscopic aspects of this universe sometimes magnified to the point of overwhelming grandeur. Certain pieces demonstrate a mechanical treatment of the subject matter, where the dissection, enlargement, and reproduction of an original image are frequently observed techniques. These are technical attempts to break down the ef-

fects of time on human society, as well as man's perception of time. Also, throughout the exhibit, the human body is often depicted in a physically contorted, pained or filthy and uncovered state – perhaps a reflection of how contemporary artists view the alienated and exploited modern man in a capitalist society.

Leaving *Zeitgeist* behind to venture into the next section of the Seoul MMCA, visitors will be stunned by the impressive installation 'Home Within Home Within Home' by Suh Do-ho. Made entirely out of transparent, monochrome cloth without using a steel frame to hold it upright, the artwork is a 3-D architectural blueprint in architecture brought to life. It is a replica of the artist's actual house in Rhode Island and his family's traditional-style Korean house in Seoul, which hangs in the middle of the former. The larger than life representation (12 meters

in height, 15 meters in width) is a bold, emotional symbol of childhood and home. As Suh said, "I think home is something that you carry along with your life" (Art21.org). Another interesting aspect of this installation is the way that this artist plays with optical principles.

First, the delicate fabric allows a see-through quality to all the spatial volumes. Second, the structure's interior is completely void of any decoration and furniture. These two factors make viewers focus entirely on the borderline of shapes, or the outline of this structure. This way, the artist suggests that he only preserved the very essence of an existence that was his house. Suh has created for his work a dreamy, surreal atmosphere that fits well with the themes of memory and bygone beauty.



## \* Art Sonje

### Center:

Located in the famous Anguk-dong area, the Art Sonje Center is a perfect spring destination. Visitors can both enjoy the small art galleries there and later, leisurely walk to the lovely coffee shops in the area.

Most of the artwork is interactive, which means that viewers are either invited to directly participate in producing the artistic effects, or at least make an effort to engage with the artwork.

The engagement with the artwork is therefore intensified, as visitors experience more than they would just through the sense of sight. The exhibition shuts out the hectic outside world, forces you out of your comfort zone, and directs your attention to one aspect of life that tends to be neglected by our busy everyday activities, such as the sound of insects moving in the middle of a quiet summer night, or the etiquette of holding a proper conversation with strangers. When walking out of the building, you may be momentarily stunned when you automatically pick up the clanking sound of dishes from a restaurant nearby, the laughter echoing from a random café, or the smile on an old woman's face as she walks past you. All of a sudden, your senses are open to how this ongoing life expresses itself.

Art spaces in Seoul demonstrate another very meaningful side of this city besides shopping malls and K-pop, a side that offers equally valuable lessons about Korea. Even without knowledge of Korean history or social issues, the creativity on display is still inspiring. All of the venues have seasonal and permanent exhibitions on year-round, with information available in English, Korean, and other languages online. Once again, through a serious investment in art, Seoul proves itself a hub of innovation.

## \* Dongdaemun Design Plaza (DDP):

Recently opened in March 2014, this project marked a substantial investment over the last six years from both the government and the merchants of the traditional Dongdaemun Market. With aesthetic principles oriented toward a futuristic style, the DDP, a new landmark in Seoul, provides a bold contrast to the older neighborhood around it.

The building itself is a masterpiece of technology and architecture. The outer cover consists entirely of shining metal plates that have been molded into pliable joint curves. Its surface is dotted with decorative holes, like polka dots patterned

on garments, which enable natural lighting and ventilation. The building is supported by an impressive column structure created by melded unpainted blocks of casted cement. The elegant and minimalist design transforms the dull grey of metal and cement into a visionary splendor.

Inside the building, in contrast, is a colorful world. Dedicated to the design of everyday objects, the DDP is the hall of fame for the latest and smartest achievements in design. This is not so much a playground for big global names, but recognition of the young designers of Korea. Indeed, its function as a design museum aside, the fabulous view of the DDP once the evening lights come on is a visual spectacle. ■





# ***FINAL REMARKS***

## THANK YOU TO OUR REVISING PROFESSORS! :

*Prof. Christian Blood  
Prof. Jen Hui Bon Hoa  
Prof. Jesse Sloane  
Prof. Joseph Hwang  
Prof. Laavanyan Michael Ratnapalan  
Prof. Neeraja Sankaran  
Prof. Krys Lee  
Prof. Howard Kahm*

## UIC Essay Prize, Spring 2014

The UIC Scribe wishes to congratulate  
the winners of this semester's UIC Essay Prize:

### Best Paper by a UIC Freshman

Bae Sang-hee: *"African Participation in the Transatlantic Slave Trade"*

### Science, Technology, and Culture

Christina Lee: *"The Beginner's Guide to Overcoming the Clash of Religion, Media, and Science: A Day in the Life of a Farmer in India"*

### Literature

Kim Yoon-ha: *"Men in Disguise and the Anxiety of Misidentification in Shakespeare's Plays"*

### History

Kim Jung-hyun: *"The Status of Women in Song Neo-Confucianism: A Status of Oppression?"*



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UNDERWOOD INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE (UIC) is an all-English college within Yonsei University, a private university based in Seoul, South Korea. UIC freshmen take classes at Songdo (a city nearby Seoul). UIC aims to bring together students from diverse and multinational backgrounds, providing them with a liberal arts program that rivals top universities worldwide. The first class was admitted in the spring semester of 2006.

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*THE UIC SCRIBE* was also founded in 2006 as the official student newsletter organized by UIC students. It continues into its seventh year. (For inquiries and articles, e-mail us at [scribe.uic@gmail.com](mailto:scribe.uic@gmail.com).)

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