



## “Never Again!”: What Japan should learn from the German President!

By Amy Lim



Last April, there was one person who knelt on the cold floor of the memorial to offer a moment of silence and apology, and he was surprisingly German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier. (Left Photo) “We Germans are aware of our responsibility, and we are aware of the duty the survivors and the dead have left to us,” the German president said. Meanwhile, On August 15th, a cross-party group of Japanese lawmakers visit to Tokyo’s Yasukuni shrine, which is regarded by its Asian neighbors as a reminder of Japan’s former militarism.

On April 19th, a memorial service was conducted at the Warsaw Ghetto Memorial Tower in Warsaw, Poland, to mark the 80th anniversary of the “Warsaw Ghetto Uprising” that took place against the deportation of Jews to detention camps. Despite the rainy weather, there was one person who knelt on the cold floor of the memorial to offer a moment of silence and apology, and he was surprisingly German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier. “We Germans are aware of our responsibility, and we are aware of the duty the survivors and the dead

have left to us,” the German president said in his speech, referring to Germany’s wrongdoings as a war criminal state.

Germany invaded Poland at the onset of World War II and established Jewish ghettos. Due to poor sanitation, disease outbreaks, inadequate food, and forced labor, many Jews experienced psychological and physical suffering in these camps. The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising took place in April 1942 as a result of the escalated extermination campaign. Nazi Germany used force to suppress the rebellion

at its beginning, killing approximately 13,000 Jews.

The German president became the first German head of state to attend a memorial service for the uprising. He bowed and apologized several times, calling each survivor of the Holocaust by name. “Never again racist fanaticism, never again unbridled nationalism, never again a barbaric war of aggression,” he said, emphasizing that “never again” is an important lesson to learn from history.

Apologizing for Germany’s past did not happen overnight. Germany acknowledges its status as a war criminal state, accepts its responsibility for the war at every opportunity, remembers the victims while striving not to forget them, and emphasizes human unity and world peace. German self-reflection is always a work in progress.

This German self-reflection makes us think

about the attitude of Japan, which is closer to us. The Japanese still refuse to acknowledge their past wrongdoings. They do not even acknowledge, let alone apologize for issues such as comfort women and forced labor during the Japanese occupation. Moreover, they are blatantly trying to turn a blind eye to the past and return to militarism.

Even at the Japan-Korea summit in May, Prime Minister Kishida limited his public apology to expressing his “heartbreak” over the forced conscription of Japanese citizens during the Japanese occupation. He did not apologize or reflect on Japan’s past errors. On August 15th, Korea’s Liberation Day, he even paid a tribute to Yasukuni Shrine.

Germany asks the world for forgiveness and strives to move forward, while Japan commits various crimes and refuses to acknowledge its history. Both countries have committed war crimes, yet there is a clear distinction in their attitudes toward recognition and reflection. We cannot remain tied to the past forever. However, without acknowledging the past, we cannot progress in the present. We must remember history, and look not only forward but also sideways and backward, so that the direction for our path can be clear.

“The terrible crimes that Germans committed here fill me with profound shame. But it also fills me with gratitude and humility to be able to participate in this commemoration, as the first German head of state to do so,” said Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier.

## Japan releases treated water from the Fukushima nuclear power plant into the Pacific



The treated water began discharging into the Pacific Ocean at Fukushima via an underground tunnel. More than a million tonnes of water stored at the nuclear plant will be discharged over the next 30 years.

By Shopia Choi

On August 24th, Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO), the operator of the devastated Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, began releasing treated radioactive water into the ocean. Japan stated that the first discharge of 7,800 tons began without any reported abnormalities so far. This action is supported by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and their statement contains an independent on-site analysis confirming tritium concentration below the

The March 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster, caused by a major 9.0 magnitude earthquake and a tsunami following it, was considered the most destructive nuclear accident from some scientists’ perspectives due to the release of the massive amount of water used to cool the nuclear reactors. The released water is filtered and diluted to remove most of the radioactive contaminants. However, it raises concerns about the potential radiological risks.

The shutdown of the Fukushima plant and its treated water release has been controversial regarding its impact on health and the environment. Greenpeace has said that the radiological risks have not been fully assessed. The

acceptable limit. Not taking into account the continued production of wastewater from the wrecked nuclear power plant, TEPCO plans to release 31,200 tons of treated water by the end of March 2024. Over 1 million metric tons of treated water is estimated to be discharged over the 30-year period.

biological impacts of Tritium, the only isotope unfiltered to be released with the water, have been “ignored” although it cannot penetrate human skin with its non-energetic radiation. Japan’s Environment Ministry said Fukushima seawater radioactivity level is below WHO limits, and it will continue the environmental monitoring process and will publish weekly test results.

Scientific organizations have insisted on the safety of the treated water, but the release has caused uproar among fisheries in Japan. Despite the approval from the UN’s nuclear watchdog, China immediately banned imports of Japanese seafood, and protests objecting to the discharge have been sparked in neighboring countries, including South Korea.

The protesters gathered in Seoul last weekend to call for immediate government action, and the South Korean Prime Minister responded that until the public concern has lessened, the bans on Fukushima fisheries and other products will continue to be upheld. However, the US has been less apprehensive: Matthew Miller, the US State Department spokesperson, said Washington is “satisfied with Japan’s safe, transparent, and science-based process.”

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# Messages and support for Sejong Youth from foreigners who love Korea

By Amy Lim



A performance by the Dajeong High School dance team (Left photo). Moses from Rwanda, the heart of Africa said, "He loves Korea so much that he came to Korea and is currently working in the IT industry."

The *Monday Times* has put together an ambitious program for the youth of Sejong City, who will be the global leaders of tomorrow. The first lecture of "Youth Abroad Speaks Korea," sponsored by Sejong City and arranged by The *Monday Times*, took place on August 25th at Namsejong Youth Center. Shin, In-ho, CEO of The *Monday Times*, who organized the event, said, "You see the world as much as you know. You know the world as much as you see it." With a moving statement, he expressed his hope that those who attended the event would become the core of Korea's future, and a performance by the Dajeong High School dance team began.

The speaker who opened the door for the

first lecture was Moses from Rwanda, the heart of Africa. He loves Korea so much that he came to Korea and is currently working in the IT industry. Let's take a look at what he had to say.

Moses is a healthy young man from Rwanda, Africa. His country, Rwanda, is famous for its mountain gorillas and has been voted the safest and cleanest country in Africa for women to travel to. However, Rwanda has a sad history. The history that Moses told us about was the 1994 Rwandan Genocide against the Tutsi. Rwanda, which had been ruled by Germany and Belgium for a long time, suffered from tribal discrimination after gaining independence from Belgium, and this tribal conflict led to a civil war in which 10% of the

population was slaughtered.

However, the nation was able to overcome the sorrow of the civil war and emerged as a very different "Rwanda," united as one people, thanks to efforts made by the people and the president to settle their differences and bridge tribal divisions and discrimination via reconciliation. Rwanda's new flag, created in 2001, includes blue, symbolizing love and peace, instead of the traditional red, to show what the country ultimately stands for. As the first African nation to create a smartphone known as the "Mara Phone," Moses said that Rwanda takes great pride in its IT capabilities and that the nation currently strives to be the IT capital of Africa.

Moses, a young Rwandan man, became well-known as a Korean-speaking African through the TV program *Welcome, First time in Korea?* and appeared in various other broadcast programs, introducing various aspects of Rwanda and serving as a link between Korea and Rwanda. He also worked at the Rwandan Embassy as a communication officer. However, when he first came to Korea, he was a bit overwhelmed. In Korea, there were M.T, O.T, clubs, and festivals at universities that he could never have imagined in Rwanda, and he experienced a lot of cultural differences. He was also surprised to learn that he had to organize his own class schedule. He also learned how to greet people in the Korean way and experienced

Korea as a country where people are used to asking each other's age.

"Dream and challenge yourself, and enjoy the process rather than the outcome," Moses told the youth, adding that he hopes to continue his broadcasting career and build bridges between Rwanda and Korea. The *Monday Times* supports both Moses' dreams and those of the youth in Sejong City.

Starting with Moses, the "Youth Abroad Speaks Korea" lectures will be held three more times (September 1st, October 21st and 28th). These lectures are designed to engage students. The youth, who are the future of Korea, will host the lectures and also take part in the discussions after each lecture, actively sharing their thoughts.

September 1st will feature Carla from Mexico, who has worked as a model and a movie star; on October 21st, Eva Lee from Russia, who appeared in the program *South Korean Foreigners*; and on October 28th, Camilla (Korean name: Han Haeng-wun), who is more active than Koreans in promoting Korean history. These young people are foreigners but are more Korean than Koreans. They love Korea more than anyone else. They are coming to Sejong City soon. Young people, please come and listen to their life stories and experiences on the spot. It will undoubtedly bring back memories for you as well as ones you didn't anticipate.

## The press, stop belated fussing and start fulfilling its role

By Lee Jong-dae (Editorial writer)



One of the crucial roles of the media is to act as a "watchdog" by monitoring and checking the actions of those in power. Most media scholars agree that the media's function is to supervise the government's governance and society. This watchdog analogy suggests that the media should not only monitor those in power, preventing abuse of delegated authority, but also scrutinize and criticize societal injustices and corruption. Consequently, the media must remain objective and neutral. It should not bow to the pressures of the ruling party, nor should it lose its direction by succumbing

to its own power.

However, the answer to whether our media are properly fulfilling this role is not entirely positive. If the media, including broadcasts and newspapers, had indeed performed their role and functions effectively, our society would not be suffering from severe social ailments, including safety indifference.

When various incidents and accidents occur, numerous media outlets scramble to find someone to blame and demand strong punishment. However, are these all solely the faults of administrative authorities? Certainly, those responsible must be held accountable and face consequences.

In fact, the responsibility to prevent these incidents and accidents does not lie solely with government officials. The media, too, must bear the intrinsic responsibility of monitoring societal injustices and corruption and fulfilling its role of overseeing and scrutinizing those in power. This duty becomes even more significant for major media outlets, as those media outlets, including public broadcasting and prominent newspapers, wield considerable influence in our society.

Consider the tragic Sewol Ferry disaster that still fills our hearts with sorrow. At the time of the accident, major broadcasting companies and newspapers only relayed the

misinformation provided by the education office, reassuring the public that everyone had been rescued. If only a prominent broadcasting company with helicopters had promptly flown to the scene to report firsthand, how different the outcome might have been! The same goes for the Itaewon accident. Looking back, I believe that if the media had proactively identified and warned about the hazardous areas where administrative efforts fell short, such tragedies could have been prevented.

Issues currently in the spotlight, such as the problem of "falling educational authority," "immense loss of life due to extreme rainfall," and so-called "boneless" apartments, which is the expression for the apartment with improperly placed steel reinforcements, compared to boneless fried chicken, raise the same question. Has the media fulfilled its role regarding this issue throughout various administrations? The media's responsibility should extend beyond post-crisis criticism, employing proactive and specific on-site criticism to prevent such incidents and accidents. If the media's essential function lies in shaping public opinion, it should prioritize the well-being and safety of human lives, adhering to clear and objective pre-emptive reporting.

The media needs to stop fussing about incidents belatedly without fulfilling its role and, instead, act as a genuine watchdog. By doing so, it can actively contribute to a better society and safeguard the interests and safety of the public.

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# Local government’s irresponsible projects cause budget waste



The replica of the turtle ship was constructed in 2010 by the city of Geoje for tourism purposes. However, approximately 60% of the ship, including the symbolically significant dragon head, was dismantled and turned into waste.

By Mun So-jeong

On the morning of July 11th, the dismantling process of a 1.6 billion-won replica of a historic “Turtle Ship” was carried out. Approximately 60% of the ship, including the symbolically significant dragon head, was dismantled and turned into waste.

The replica of the turtle ship was constructed in 2010 by the city of Geoje for tourism purposes. With a combination of national and provincial funds, they spent 1.6 billion won to recreate the 16th-century warship used during the Imjin War in 1592. However, it was revealed

that the manufacturing company violated the contract by using imported timber instead of domestically sourced pine. As a result, the head of the manufacturing company was arrested on fraud charges and even received a prison sentence.

Despite the annual maintenance cost of 150 million won, the wooden structure of the turtle ship severely corroded and twisted over time, and the hull decayed, leading to the suspension of passenger experiences due to safety concerns. As it was deemed difficult to recycle, several attempts to sell the turtle ship failed, prompting Geoje to decide to dismantle and dispose of it. The dismantling cost amounted to around 18 million won. The wooden parts of the replica will be used as firewood at a nearby thermal power plant, while the iron will be sold to scrap metal dealers.

Apart from the turtle ship’s fate as firewood, there are many instances of the public budget waste by local governments. Numerous tourism facilities, hastily initiated by local authorities, remain underutilized and abandoned.

Last May, Wonju City in Gangwon Province spent 5.4 billion won to purchase a theme tourist train, in an attempt to operate on the former Jungang Line. The city rashly bought the train even before the purchase of the abandoned railway. The purchase couldn’t be completed as the administrative procedures with the National Railroad Administration were not yet finalized. Consequently, the train, which cost 2.6 billion won to manufacture, is currently stored in a maintenance facility.

Another example is the “Three Kingdoms Similarity Theme Park” in Gunwi County, Gyeongsangbuk-do, which opened in July 2020 at a cost of 12.23 billion won but has been running at a deficit for three years. Similarly, the VR zone in Tongyeong, Gyeongsangnam-do is facing closure due to lack of visitors.

# South Korea ranks 3rd in the Henley Passport Index



By Jeon Ju-yeon

In the third quarter of 2023, South Korea secured the third spot in the “Henley Passport Index,” allowing its passport holders to visit a remarkable 189 countries without a visa. The Henley Passport Index, introduced in 2006 by Henley & Partners, a UK-based firm specializing in international exchanges, uses data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA) to quantify the number of countries where certain passport holders can easily enter without a visa, through visa-on-arrival or electronic visa methods. South Korea achieved a score of 189 points in the passport index.

In this quarter’s rankings, Japan, which had held the top position for the past five years, was pushed down to tie with South Korea for third place. Singapore claimed the sole top spot in the index with a score of 192 points. Spain and Italy tied for the second position with 190 points, while the third place, alongside South Korea and Japan, included Austria, Finland, France, Luxembourg, and Sweden, all with 189 points. On the other hand, countries ranking lower in the index included Afghanistan with 27 points, and Somalia and Yemen with 35 points each.

Dr. Christian H. Kaelin, chairman of Henley & Partners and the developer of the passport index, stated that a powerful passport not only defines the freedom of movement but also offers significant financial freedom concerning international investment and business-related matters. Additionally, Dr. Juerg Steffen, CEO of Henley & Partners, emphasized that visa policies can have a positive impact on a country’s passport power, enabling foreign investors to learn more about the country and stimulating their interest, making it an important tool.

Therefore, visa exemption policies for foreign visitors create complex networks of mutual relationships between countries, significantly influencing a nation’s diplomatic, socio-economic realities, and strategic goals. This will continue to evolve along with the ever-changing global landscape.

# Korean Jjimjilbang: Washington Post’s top pick for beating the heat

By Choi Dain

Amid the heatwave, the U.S. media outlet, The Washington Post, cited South Korea’s jjimjilbang, a Korean-style sauna, as the most effective way to beat the heat. The United States is currently experiencing heat waves with temperatures exceeding 31°C. The Washington Post published an article entitled “Six Ways to Beat the Heat under the theme of “Escaping the Heat” in the US. The article includes ‘Korean Spa and Bacon Ice Cream’ as part of its content.” The article suggested spending a day at a jjimjilbang as one of the methods to stay cool.



According to the article, visitors can enjoy a full day and night at a jjimjilbang for just \$40 (approximately 50,000 won). Guests can enjoy both hot and cold baths, as well as various dry saunas such as infrared rooms, salt rooms, and steam rooms. The article also mentioned, “For an additional fee, visitors can avail themselves of various beauty treatments, including full-body and facial massages.” It continued, “At the sauna’s restaurant, guests can relish Korean bulgogi, rice, and drinks.”

Particularly highlighted for summer vacation was the “cold room” in the jjimjilbang. The Washington Post’s reporter described it as “essentially a refrigerator for cooling down.” The reporter further explained, “Alternating between cold and warm baths can offer a refreshing experience and contribute to better sleep.” The article noted, “The benefits of a jjimjilbang extend beyond just temperature reduction,” and added, “Despite the provided clothing, disrobing also facilitates making new friends.” The report emphasized, “Undressing levels the playing field and encourages camaraderie,” concluding, “The Korean bathhouse experience provides an opportunity to escape the heat

while immersing oneself in another culture.”

The Washington Post’s other suggestions included relaxing in shaded areas, teaching children how to swim, refraining from excessive complaints about the heat, briefly placing one’s head in the freezer, relying on air conditioning, and making homemade ice cream.”

## Word Search By Kim So-young

This puzzle was created using the 105th edition of The Monday Times.

H	E	V	S	R	E	S	P	E	C	T	L	E	E
R	L	A	I	E	E	G	A	T	I	R	E	H	V
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정답보기

착한기초영어 회화

착한여행영어 회화

착한 업그레이드 된 기초영어 회화 첫걸음 (초중급용)

착한 여행영어 회화 (교재용)

영어의 실력이 올라간다

토마스와 앤더스의 착한 영어시리즈

★ 착한 팝송에서 배우는 영어회화 (QR코드로 음악 감상)

★ 착한 서비스영어 (비즈니스 영어)

★ 착한 여행영어 회화 (교재용)

★ 착한 업그레이드 된 기초영어 회화 첫걸음 (초중급용)

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## Special Interview

## Independence fighters and descendants, unrecognized and unacknowledged

By Yeon Kyung-han and Kim So-young



Mr. Kim Won-jin a former head of the branch expressed his concerns, referring to his own father's involvement in the Independence Movement. He personally endured a challenging and arduous life from a very young age.

On August 15th, 2023, commemorating the 78th anniversary of Korean Liberation Day, The *Monday Times* visited the Chungcheongbuk-do branch of the Heritage of Korean Independence (Kwangbokhoe). This organization was founded by Korean independence patriots and their descendants. Currently, it is led by Mr. Lee Jong-chan, the grandson of Woodang Yi Hoe-young, who serves as the president.

The Heritage of Korean Independence is a government-designated veterans' organization. During an interview, we had the opportunity to meet Mr. Jang Ki-young, head of Chungcheongbuk-do branch, former head of the branch Mr. Kim Won-jin, who is 86 years old, and Mr. Lee Jung-hee, director of the secretariat.

As soon as the interview began, Mr. Jang Ki-young mentioned, "South Korea fell into a pro-Japanese atmosphere, causing the national spirit to become hazy." In particular, he vividly recalled various hardships that South Korea endured during the Japanese colonial era and emphatically warned against the presence of pro-Japanese sentiments in Korean society.

Mr. Kim Won-jin a former head of the branch, also expressed his concerns, referring to his own father's involvement in the Independence Movement. He stated that Korean society must not continue down the same path as it is now. He continued, "My great-grandfather, Mr. Kim Chang-do, played a significant role in the March 1st Movement in 1919, gathering comrades in Pyongyang and participating in large-scale patriotic movements." He further explained that Mr. Kim Chang-do visited the Shinheung Military School to contribute to the nurturing of independence fighters as an assistant at the school. It was founded by leaders like Mr. Yi Dong-nyeong and Woodang Yi Hoe-young.

Mr. Kim Chang-do stated that he played a prominent role in the victorious battle of Bongo-dong, one of the significant battles for independence. Later he joined General Kim Jwa-jin's forces during the Battle of Cheongsan-ri, where he decisively defeated Japanese forces.

"He accompanied General Kim Jwa-jin to Heilongjiang Province, China, but before long, General Kim was assassinated by the Japanese military in Harbin. Soon after that, he returned to enroll in the 8th class of the Shinheung Military School. He took part in training independence fighters, enduring various hardships to achieve independence," Mr. Kim Won-jin continued. He later gained

substantial combat experience in the Soviet Union. However, due to conflicts with the Communist forces, Mr. Kim Chang-do moved from the Soviet Union to China. "Even there, he encountered several clashes with the Communist forces," he added.

During the post-liberation period, when the North Korean government requested Mr. Kim Chang-do's participation in establishing their government, he refused and subsequently endured unjust imprisonment for a month.

He then led their family of refugees southward. During this journey, even Mr. Kim Won-jin's grandmother, who had raised her children righteously, succumbed to typhus. Speaking with a trembling voice, he conveyed that the family's suffering was immeasurable, and they faced endless hardships.

Reflecting on these harsh realities, Mr. Lee Jung-hee, director of the secretariat, expressed deep sorrow, noting that the descendants of independence fighters have endured incredibly tough lives. "Unfortunately, most of them were unable to receive proper education or take care of their families due to their ancestors' dedication to the independence movement. They faced extreme difficulties not only in

obtaining a proper education but also in dire economic circumstances," he lamented.

In fact, Mr. Kim Won-jin mentioned that he personally endured a challenging and arduous life from a very young age, working as a shoeshiner, newspaper seller, and construction site laborer.

Director of the Secretariat, Lee Jung-hee mentioned, "Whenever confronted with such dire realities, I get the impression that the South Korean government might be turning a blind eye due to the complex domestic and international situations." She remarked, "If it had not been for the efforts and dedication of these individuals, there would be no present-day South Korea. The current misguided state of affairs, where their sacred dedications are politically exploited, must change. This is happening without extending significant benefits or even small considerations to the descendants of independence fighters."

Head of Chungbuk Branch Jang Ki-young stated that countless unrecognized independence fighters and their descendants still exist and he vowed to do his best to ensure they receive rightful compensation for their remaining lives.

## Men aged 25-49 in South Korea are uncomfortable with marriage

By Amy Lim

The phrase "the old bachelor," which previously referred to a man who did not get married when he was legally allowed to, is not something I can recall hearing in modern times. The social climate and attitude toward single individuals altered significantly due to young adults' lack of desire to get married. Even the more senior generations that used to inquire about marriage at holiday gatherings no longer do so in order to avoid being labeled as "boomers." We now live in a nation where the marriage age has been abolished and young people's attitudes toward marriage have changed.

A study published by Statistics Korea on July 11th, 2023, in honor of Population Day, found that 32.9% of women and 47.1% of men aged 25 to 49 are single. In other words, one in three women and one in two men are single. In the last 20 years, the rate of singleness, particularly among men, has doubled. In 2022, there were 192,000 marriages, which is more than 110,000 less than in 2015, when there were 303,000 marriages. The nation has one of the lowest fertility rates among OECD nations as a result of this move away from marriage. South Korea's fertility rate has been falling since it peaked in 2017 at 1.05. Nobody is certain where this downturn will stop.

What in our society, then, has made marriage less appealing? Mr. Jeon, an office worker from Guro-gu in Seoul who was born in 1986, stated, "I appreciate having my own time, and I don't like being constrained. He continued, "Marriage is burdensome due to



the assumption that males should be financially responsible. When I get married, I don't want to deal with the practical concerns of borrowing money and repaying debts.

There are two approaches to examining the drop in male marriage rates. The first is the shifting social view that marriage is a choice rather than a necessity. People rarely get married out because their elders push them. Today's generation prioritizes their own pleasure above all else. The second is the evaluation of the financial cost of marriage and the belief that they will lose out as a result. Men, when considering marriage, feel that they will lose out unless the couple has a joint income at the same time, and they are also burdened by the idea that a man should provide a home for them to live in. Economic drawbacks can also develop after the marriage itself.

For instance, newlyweds face challenges while applying for loans. For Didimdol Loan, which the government offers at a lower interest rate of 2 percent per year, a single individual must have an annual income of 60 million won or less, and a newlywed couple must have a combined annual income of 70 million won or less.

Additionally, if you're married but don't have kids, you might not get the house you want. Only one applicant per married couple may submit an application for apartment subscription system; however, if you're single, you may use separate subscription account from your spouse to improve your chances of winning.

Due to this, some married individuals who have put off registering their union may be able to boost their chances of winning by posing as single. In addition to these practical considerations, the perception of unhappiness in marriage occurring due to the duty of supporting a family has given rise to a social phenomenon known as "shunning," in which individuals delay or avoid getting married because they believe it will be detrimental to their personal happiness.

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# Pros and cons of “live for a month” in Johor Bahru

By Amy Lim



As the coronavirus period is coming to an end this summer, the Incheon International Airport is starting to bustle once again with parents booking trips for their kids to foreign countries. To experience a month-long vacation in another country, many Korean parents take their kids overseas for a month. Many of them fly to Malaysia to begin their “Johor Bahru month-long vacation.”

You can get a ton of information regarding the cost of living in Johor Bahru for a month, the channels and blogs of various language schools, and lodging options in Johor Bahru by searching “live in Johor Bahru for a month” on the Internet. The need for this information resulted from the fact that many Korean parents are thinking

about traveling to Johor Bahru to spend time with their kids during the summer. Compared to the United States or the United Kingdom, Johor Bahru, Malaysia, has a shorter flight time, and both English and Chinese are spoken there. Moreover, there are many things for kids to enjoy since Southeast Asia doesn’t have harsh winters.

Johor is Malaysia’s largest state and has the wealthiest local government. Singapore is heavily reliant on imports, and its proximity to its ports is advantageous for trade. A short search will show that the area has a reputation for providing a wide choice of international school alternatives in Asia. It is also developing as a new hub for global education in East Asia. There are various international schools: Marlborough International School, Raffles American School, and Stellar International School, all of which follow an American or a British educational model. To attract Korean students, these international schools have been promoting their numerous programs — including summer

camp and schooling during “school holidays” — through various study abroad offices and informational sessions.

After spending a lot of money on private education in South Korea and realizing that Changwon was too competitive, one of the parents, Mrs. Kim, who currently has three children aged 11, 9, and 6, at Tenby International School, one of the British Schools in Johor Bahru, made the decision to raise her children alone in Johor Bahru in June 2021. Because of the freedom to make friends from other nations, the expansive grounds, and the amenities, they decided to attend Tenby International School. The oldest, an active 11-year-old, even ran for class president. She had originally intended to stay for just three years, but she decided to extend her stay since she was having trouble adjusting to the Korean academic system. Now that two years have passed, she said she feels quite regretful that their father was not able to be there with them.

Parents who are unable to stay for an extended period, like Mrs. Kim, use their one-month vacation for their children to attend summer camps at international schools or academies. The cost of summer programs at international schools is, however, high. The cost of summer camps offered by international schools during the peak vacation season might reach one million won per month, and in some cases, one million won per week. People can spend up to 4 million won a month when considering the price of shuttles, lunches, and

extracurricular activities.

The two children, ages 10 and 6, of Gimpo resident Mrs. Lee, are spending the summer at Johor Bahru’s Marlboro International School. She expressed disappointment, saying, “I’m disappointed that there are fewer opportunities for my children to be exposed to English and the cost is not worth it. It irritates me that even after sending my kids away for two weeks, I can’t get comprehensive input on their activities. I had to believe in the experience because the school is a well-known international school in Johor Bahru.” She added that she didn’t feel like she was getting much for her money.

There is no correct solution. Before choosing a long-term residence or electing to live there for one month, it is crucial to comprehend your child’s personality and special interests. The attitude of “Jump off a cliff because your friend jumped” is particularly dangerous.



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# Koreans, Asians, North Americans? Truly, who are we?

By Jeong Jee-hwang (Teacher at Okcheon High School in Chungbuk)



When I suggest inviting a guest speaker from outside the school, I hope he or she will tear apart a hypocritic gossamer deeply rooted in our society and bring forth ideas that can lead us to approach foreigners or aliens residing in our community with a different perspective. With no more superiority, or inferiority or rude actions. Han Haeng-wun, the guest speaker truly opened a door and pointed out the discrepancy between people’s attitudes and ideas towards foreigners, allowing the students in the audience to develop a deeper sense of attachment and congeniality towards foreigners as fellow human beings. She is an exemplary global citizen, who, despite not being a native speaker, has mastered Korean and passionately devotes herself to Korean history. Moreover, Korea is not her own motherland. She gently emphasized the notions of love, respect, and emphatic understanding necessary for people in Korea and around the world. Her speech also gave me another chance to reflect on my country. I have come to realize that she, who has enabled us to think about such turning points, will play a very significant role in our society.



People and students in our community consume various multicultural products, from cosmetic and pharmaceutical items to mass media and to confectionery. Companies and video platforms also seek new and interesting business models around the world to cater to the ever-changing needs of consumers in Korea. Naturally, communities are familiar with multinational products and rarely question their purchase based on nationality. However, when it

comes to people from outside the country, they tend to segregate them affectively and view them as aliens. The students in my school have learned about multinational families and how to interact with them without any cultural bias. However, not many of the students have embraced them as fellow human beings. Rather, they simply refrain from discriminating against them because education in schools teaches them that it is a rude and unacceptable to do so. Therefore, it seems difficult for students to comprehend the essence of humanistic inclusiveness and exhibit desirable behavior towards multicultural families without conscious social mechanisms, in addition to the fear stemming from the prevailing social atmosphere.

I appreciate her speech and dedication to inspire my students to dare to explore their lives in school and beyond graduation, embracing their lives, whether they are ordeals or joys like true nectar. I believe that people are inherently good. That we are created to do good, I have learned from Han Haeng-wun.

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## The heartbreaking fire of Maui Island in Hawaii



By Julia Cho

*Julia Cho is a 29-year-old Korean-American currently working in the tech industry at Google in San Francisco, California. Stacey Koo is her mother living in Hawaii.*

The tragic wildfire on Maui Island is now considered one of the deadliest wildfires in modern U.S. history. A lot of mixed conflicting emotions, thoughts, and feelings swirl inside my head: sadness, grief, confusion, anger, despair. My family and I visited Maui last April, and it saddens me to think that some of the places we visited on the island have been completely burned down - they

**"The deadliest wildfires in modern U.S. history. A lot of mixed conflicting emotions, thoughts, and feelings swirl inside my head: sadness, grief, confusion, anger, despair."**

are all merely memories that I hold in my mind.

On one hand, it makes me question the country's efforts to address the climate crisis. On the other hand, I question whether this wildfire was truly unprecedented. Is there a connection between this wildfire and the climate crisis? Could we have prevented this from happening? If everything had been prepared well, would we have been able to evacuate the many lives that were lost? While it's frustrating that I cannot answer these questions, I do have faith that we can hopefully prevent more massive outbreaks like the recent one in Lahaina.

As a humane collective, I'd like others to show respect for the island during this time, allowing families to grieve for their beloved family and friends. Investors should ease off trying to "buy more land" during this "opportune time." I'd like tourists to stop visiting the island for the sake of "cheaper hotel rates" near Lahaina.

While the past cannot be fully repaired, I have faith that Maui will be able to stand stronger and more grounded in due time.

## Maui's tragic loss: Beauty consumed by fire

By Stacey Koo

Maui, also known as the "Island of the Valley," is the second largest of the Hawaiian Islands. World-famous beaches, the sacred Iao Valley, spectacular humpback whale migrations, breathtaking Haleakala sunrises and the historic town of Lahaina are all reasons to love this island.

The seaside town of Lahaina was once a whaling village that has transformed into a bustling commercial center. The huge banyan tree is also a source of pride for this place. It is really beautiful and a true beach paradise.

However, this small town Lahaina" lost everything in the forest fire. This time, there was such a massive fire on the island of Maui. The death toll exceeded 120 and the number of missing persons exceeded 1,000. A very terrible tragedy occurred. Unfortunately, the death toll is expected to rise even further.

Lahaina has become completely ruined, to the extent that I can't bear to watch the news. Because the fire spread rapidly, many elderly people couldn't escape from their homes. There were instances of people who died while hugging their families in their cars. Can you imagine how hot it must have been for a 93-year-old mother, 60-year-old daughter and granddaughter that they jumped into the ocean and stayed there for 5 hours? Many families and friends still remain uncontactable. How unbearable their pain would be for their families whom they can't contact?

It is a densely populated area, a historical city built between the sea and a volcano, with limited escape routes. The wildfire is classified as a natural disaster because it was caused by strong winds blowing in fierce flames. However, there are analyses suggesting that it was a man-made disaster.



Since this Maui fire started at the highest point in Lahaina, it is reasonable to assume that the number of deaths would have been significantly reduced if an immediate warning message had been sent to residents as soon as the fire began, even though the flames rapidly moved in an instant with strong winds. Furthermore, the fact that there are too many houses compared to the size of the village is also pointed out as a cause for the massive damage by the forest fire.

Maui Island...

Those who have lost their families and homes may have difficulties starting from the beginning again. They will have to endure deep heartache for a while. Nevertheless, I firmly believe that they will recover swiftly, thanks to the extensive support of their neighbors and community.

## Antarctic waters remain unfrozen, even during winter

By Yoon Da-nyeong



Winter sea ice in Antarctica has fallen to its lowest level since 1980. According to CNN, as of the middle of July, the extent of Antarctic winter sea ice has decreased by 2.6 million square meters, an area equivalent to Argentina, South America, compared to the average between 1981 and 2010.

Antarctic sea ice usually reaches its minimum extent around the end of February (when summer in the southern hemisphere ends) and then increases as it enters July to August (winter). However, this year, even though winter is passing, the extent of the sea ice has not increased.

According to media organizations, New Zealand scientists diagnosed at the New Zealand-Australia Antarctic Science Conference on July 28th that the amount of sea ice floating in Antarctic waters has significantly decreased. They stated that the situation is worse than previously expected. "This is an unusual figure that falls well outside the predictable range of statistics," added climate scientist Tim Naish of Victoria University in New Zealand.

There is also an analysis suggesting that a vicious cycle has been entered. Dr. Richard Levy, from the New Zealand Institute of Geological and Nuclear Science warned, "Sea ice plays an important role, which is cooling the earth by reflecting the sun's rays." Therefore, the earth is losing an important shield in combating climate change." The idea is that when the earth's surface is covered with white matter, such as ice or snow, the sun's rays are reflected back into space. "So, if the sea ice disappears, the earth will absorb more heat and become hotter, causing the ice sheets to melt," he predicted.

Scientists see reducing greenhouse gases as a critical solution. Professor Naish emphasized that what we can do now is to urgently and immediately reduce greenhouse gases.

Not only has the sea ice decreased, but recent climate extremes have also hit the world at the same time. In the United States, a record-breaking heat wave in the southwest, heavy rains in the northeast, and a powerful heat wave that exceeded the record highest temperature have continued in Europe. India is suffering from flood damage due to heavy monsoon (rainy season) rains that lasted for several days. Experts said that abnormal weather is becoming more extreme and frequent due to the effects of global warming, and that a "catastrophic crisis" may arise due to climate change.

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Book Review

Straight words invoke straightforward responses

••• Lee Seung-man's *Spirit of Independence* •••



By Min Byung-jun (Editorial Writer)

Does an era call for a hero, or does the hero lead the era? I don't want to discuss the outdated great man theory or perspective of history. In this age, celebrities and athletes are the subjects of hero worship, and I am well aware of it.

However, in the past, when the destiny of the nation was as fragile as a candle in the wind, heroes sensed the vulnerability of the era with sharp intuition, like poets. They carried the torch of patriotism high and led people with passion to safeguard the nation. Their patriotism and devoted actions truly stir the hearts of us, their descendants.

Indeed, during the late Joseon Dynasty, neighboring powers including Japan, cast covetous eyes upon the Korean Peninsula. However, the ruling class was not concerned about national security but rather focused solely on maintaining their own power. The populace, deprived of educational opportunities, remained unaware of the global currents. It was during such times that heroes emerged as pioneers. They accurately grasped the course of the era and tried to awaken the people, even though the public did not comprehend their lonely cries. Nevertheless, they did not give up and persevered. They believed that there would come a time when the people would comprehend those solitary shouts.

“Straight words are words.  
Straight words invoke  
straightforward/ responses.”  
(Excerpt from ‘Waterfall’ by Kim Soo-young)

Figures such as Lee Seung-man, Kim Gu, and Ahn Chang-ho were pioneers and heroes during these challenging times. While they shared an awareness of the nation's vulnerability, their approach to addressing the situation varied. Through diplomatic endeavors, direct armed struggles, or preparatory actions through education, they made dedicated efforts to break down the stronghold of Japanese imperialism and ultimately achieve independence. They were heroes of turbulent times, providing significant comfort to us in times of challenge and adversity.

Today, as we commemorate the 78th anniversary of Liberation Day, let's explore the “Spirit of Independence” of young Lee Seung-man, who navigated through one of the most tumultuous periods in our modern history.

During the time when Lee Seung-man was writing the *Spirit of Independence*, Korea was, quite literally, a “candle in front of the wind.” The fate of the Joseon Dynasty was rapidly declining, and Japan, China, Russia, and others were exerting control over our country. The ruling aristocracy was incompetent, corrupt, and absorbed in internal power struggles, remaining reliant on foreign

powers. The common people were impoverished, ignorant, and powerless. At that time, the Joseon Dynasty was essentially a fragile existence, nothing more than a name. The winds pushing national destiny were growing stronger, yet the government was helpless, and the flame of Joseon was fading away.

Lee Seung-man wrote this book when he was 29 years old. It was in the midst of his seventh year of imprisonment while his blood was still boiling. He risked his life to pen this book. The book is a historical testimony where he recorded the tumultuous international circumstances surrounding Korea over a decade starting from 1890. There are few books about that period's international situation in detail, particularly regarding the final decade of the Joseon Dynasty. This gives the book historical significance.

Lee Seung-man likened the situation in Joseon to a ship encountering a storm. He emphasized the necessity of collective effort to prevent the ship from sinking in times of crisis. If the ship were to sink, the nation would perish, resulting in the loss of all citizens. This simple explanation appealed to the people for their united spirit. This aspect holds a significant message for us today as we face numerous conflicts even in the midst of national crises.

What is astonishing in this book is how well Lee Seung-man explains the significance of democracy and the necessity for our country to transition into a democratic system. During that time, advocating such ideas was considered treason, a grave crime. He described advanced, civilized countries as practitioners of democracy and provided examples from various nations. Notably, he emphasized that democracy is only possible when individuals embrace the spirit of “independence” with self-reliance and responsibility in solving problems. Even when reading this assertion written 120 years ago, its validity

remains striking. Lee Seung-man's image as a pioneer stands out refreshingly.

In the concluding part of the book, Lee Seung-man argues for opening the nation to the outside world, conducting diplomacy effectively, and embracing advanced culture as a means to strengthen the nation. Later, he established Inha University and the Korea University of Foreign Studies, and founded the Korea Atomic Energy Research Institute to support this argument. Observing these accomplishments of his, Lee Seung-man was notably a great politician with a combined ability in theory and practice.

Does history repeat itself?

Today, our country is once again facing challenging circumstances. We are amidst an international scene of North Korea wielding nuclear weapons and missiles, power struggles between the United States and China, Russia's invasion of Ukraine while supporting North Korea, and global issues such as climate change, prolonged droughts, and massive floods reshaping the landscape. It's quite hard to mention everything.

An earnest hero, a hero for these turbulent times, is earnestly sought after. However, modern heroes are not the Superman of the past. We are in a new era where every individual has the potential to become a hero and collaboratively address challenges.

It has been said that history is an ongoing dialogue between the past and the present. We are well aware of our nation's strength, which has evolved over five thousand years of history, as we have overcome challenges from the past to the present. In the history of our ancestors, we can find the key to solving contemporary issues. Let us now revisit Lee Seung-man's *Spirit of Independence*. Let's respond to his straightforward words with even more straightforward words!

The 19th Jecheon International Music & Film Festival is held

By Sujan Ratna Shakya



The 19th Jecheon International Music & Film Festival, which is considered Asia's largest film and music festival, concluded with a grand closing ceremony on August 15th. The event took place at the Jecheon Cultural Center in the afternoon and was overseen by director Lee Moo-young and announcer Jeong Da-hee, who moderated the ceremony. The closing ceremony included a pre-performance session followed by an awards presentation.

In the Korean competition category, the short film award was bestowed upon *Bright Sound A* directed by Kim Eun-young. The award for the Korean competition featured film category award was granted to *Looking Four* directed by Kim Tae-hee, which had received production support from the festival the previous year.

The most prestigious award, the Grand Prize (Best Prize), which came with a cash reward of 20 million won, was claimed by *Little Richard: I Am Everything*, a documentary directed by Lisa Cortes from the USA. This film was part of the international competition category.

Additionally, *Dancing Queen from Today* in the international competition category, *Knock* in the feature film category of the Korean competition, and *Early Death*

*Project* in the short film category of the Korean competition received special mention from the judges.

Jecheon Mayor Kim Chang-kyu, who is also the chairman of the film festival, highlighted that the upcoming 20th-anniversary edition of the festival would further solidify its position as a mature international music and film event. Organizing Committee Chairman Lee Jang-ho officially concluded the festival while reflecting on its highlights, mentioning the opening film *Music Chapelle*, various films, music programs, and events that took place throughout the event.

During the closing ceremony, an eight-member band, featuring saxophonist Park Dong-joon who is active in Jecheon, delivered a pre-performance. The closing act was a unique performance where accordion player Jehee reimagined movie soundtracks into jazz renditions, collaborating with jazz pianist Kim Dae-gyu in an accordion and piano duo. Before the closure in commemoration of Liberation Day, a musical film titled *Hero* was screened, focusing on the final year of Dr. Ahn Jung-geun, a notable historical figure. The 7-day festival reached its peak on August 16th at 2:30 pm at the Jecheon Cultural Center with a free screening of the closing film, *Blue Giants*, a Japanese animation feature.

The festival, with the theme of Da Capo (Back to the beginning), screened 104 films from 29 countries since it started a decade ago. Alongside film screenings, various performance programs like “One Summer Night” were presented, and the event also featured related activities such as night markets and camping sites.

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