



## Underground waste separation facilities lead to large-scale fires



Recently, many high-rise buildings have installed waste separation facilities in their underground parking lots. However, these waste separation facilities in the basements of large buildings can become a breeding ground for large-scale fires.

By Shin In-ho and Ju Hyo-deok

Recently, large-scale accidents have been occurring frequently. Previous incidents like the sinking of the Sewol ferry and the Itaewon tragedy, as well as recent ones like the collapse of the Gungpyeong Underground Road, weigh heavily on our minds. Unfortunately, many cases reveal that these large-scale accidents often involve human errors.

According to safety experts, it is possible to significantly reduce the occurrence of large-scale casualties by inspecting sites prone to major accidents beforehand. Following this, *The Monday Times* has prepared a special feature in collaboration with experts to examine

aspects of our daily lives that could potentially lead to major accidents in our society, with the aim of preventing such incidents in advance.

First, we examined the waste separation facilities located in the basements of large buildings. Recently, many high-rise buildings have installed waste separation facilities in their underground parking lots due to space constraints or for aesthetic reasons.

However, these waste separation facilities in the basements of large buildings can become a breeding ground for large-scale fires. Experts have diagnosed that if flammable materials are thrown into the waste separation areas where paper and plastic are stored, it can quickly lead to a fire, which can easily spread to nearby

vehicles and then onto the entire building. Park Kyung-hwan, the president of the Korea Fire Protection Association said, "if a fire occurs in these waste separation facilities, it can easily spread to nearby vehicles, and when these vehicles are completely engulfed, the chemicals produced can easily move throughout the entire building, leading to significant loss of life."

Fires originating in basements pose a significant problem due to inadequate air circulation, preventing toxic gases from escaping easily. This issue can lead to large-scale damage. Moreover, the detection and initial response to basement fires are naturally delayed compared to when the fire occurs above ground. Sensitive facilities related to the overall safety of buildings, such as elevator motors, drainage systems, and transformers, can quickly become paralyzed due to rapidly spreading fires. As a result, there is a high probability of the fire spreading throughout the entire building, leading to a large-scale fire.

Such large-scale fires are unfortunately quite common. Examples include the Jecheon Sports Center fire, the Daejeon Hyundai Premium Outlet basement parking lot fire, and the Busan Haeundae-gu hotel basement parking lot fire, all of which are representative cases of accidents that occurred in basements.

The results of a survey conducted in Sejong City by *The Monday Times* revealed that most apartment complexes had outdoor waste separation facilities. In contrast, studio apartments and collective buildings, where offices are densely located, had these facilities installed in the basement along with parking lots.

Unfortunately, the authorities responsible for these facilities overlooked this situation.

They were not properly aware that parking facilities were being used without permits as waste separation areas, and even requests about relocating them outdoors were being ignored, using the excuse that suitable locations for relocation could not be found.

The representative of Sejong Knowledge Industry Center, Kim Ju-hyun, met with city officials several times this year to discuss relocating the waste separation facilities outdoors. However, these efforts proved to be in vain, as the only response received was that they couldn't find a suitable location.

Even the fire department, responsible for diagnosing and supervising fire risks, was not found to be putting active efforts into accident prevention. While they were aware of the dangers, they excluded underground waste separation facilities from inspection targets, citing that they didn't violate existing fire regulations and were not explicitly mentioned in the regulations.

In response to this, Lee Hyun-jeong, the chairman of the Sejong City Council's Industrial Construction Committee, stated, "While this issue has been primarily considered in terms of the location of waste separation facilities, I empathize with the dangers and severity from the perspective of citizen safety and fire risks. In the future, we will propose relevant legislation, regulations, and ordinances to actively seek legal solutions."

Certainly, it is impossible to prevent all accidents in advance. However, it is wiser to conduct thorough assessments and take proactive administrative measures to handle the situation before major accidents occur, rather than engaging in disputes over responsibility after the massive accidents.

## South Korea and Japan's joint evacuation efforts: The future of bilateral cooperation



A transport aircraft from the South Korean Air Force evacuated 163 South Koreans, 45 Japanese with 6 foreign family members, and 6 Singaporeans on Saturday, October 14th. One week later, the Japanese government flew 18 South Koreans along with 60 Japanese citizens in Japan Air Self-Defense Force transport aircraft.

By Sophia Choi

Israel-Hamas military conflict continues into a war with no signs of a decrease in hostilities. The Israeli army announced an evacuation order for Israelis to leave northern Gaza, and the United Nations warned of potentially devastating humanitarian consequences. Following Israel's order of a total siege of the Gaza Strip, leaders of other countries found a shared purpose in evacuating civilians. South Korea and Japan, two major US allies in East

Asia, helped evacuate the members of their respective nations last week. The arrival of war shocked the world, and the unlawful acts of aggression have been condemned, leading to international humanitarian support for both sides. To manage the interconnected uncertainties of the war, the international community needs to work together, and South Korea and Japan set an example by mutually helping their civilians flee.

According to the South Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a transport aircraft from the South Korean Air Force evacuated 163 South Koreans, 45 Japanese with 6 foreign family members, and 6 Singaporeans on Saturday, October 14th. South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol had previously

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ordered the government to prepare safety measures thoroughly for Korean residents and travelers in Israel amid the dramatic escalation of the armed conflict between Hamas and Israel.

On October 7th, the Hamas militant group launched a surprise land, air, and sea attack on Israel, and over 30 foreign nationals are reportedly included among thousands of the dead, wounded, and hostages. The

arrival of war shocked the world, and the unlawful acts of aggression have been condemned, leading to international humanitarian support for both sides. To manage the interconnected uncertainties of the war, the international community needs to work together, and South Korea and Japan set an example by mutually helping their civilians flee.

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ordered the government to prepare safety measures thoroughly for Korean residents and travelers in Israel amid the dramatic escalation of the armed conflict between Hamas and Israel. One week later, on October 21st, the Japanese government flew 18 South Koreans along with 60 Japanese citizens and 5 foreign family members in Japan Air Self-Defense Force transport aircraft. Returning the favor to the South Korean government, Japan offered 20 seats for South Koreans in their aircraft in advance. "Japan sincerely thanks South Korea for providing aid to Japanese citizens," Japanese Foreign Affairs Minister Yoko Kamikawa showed gratitude to her South Korean counterpart, Park Jin.

As of Sunday, South Korea and Japan confirmed their mutual cooperation in evacuating their citizens, and the joint action between the two neighboring countries continued with the first trilateral aerial exercise of the US, South Korea, and Japan. The US allies also offered multi-million dollars worth of humanitarian assistance to Gaza, but the US and the UN were still negotiating over details about providing aid to Gaza through the southern border with Egypt.



## Special Interview

# “Obstacles are lessons to learn and find the solutions”

••• Dr. Kanya. Barndt, President of Thepsatri Rajabhat University •••

By Yu Cheol and Choi Eun-young



“Unsuccessful people see problems whereas successful people see the solutions. No matter how hard the problem you have to deal with, you will get through as long as you’re still breathing. Things in the world keep changing, so we have to actively learn and adjust ourselves properly.”



Dr.Kanya Barndt is the president of Thepsatri Rajabhat University in Thailand. She currently serves as the Chair of the International Strategy Committee of The Rajabhat University Network (RUN).

**Q: President, welcome. We’re glad to have you in South Korea. First, please introduce yourself.**

**A:** Hello, Sawatdee Kha, my name is Dr. Kanya Barndt. I’m President of Thepsatri Rajabhat University (TRU) in Thailand. I have one year of experience teaching in a primary school, 10 years teaching in 2 secondary schools, 6 years working as an educational supervisor, 19 years teaching at TRU. My expertise includes teaching English as a foreign language, planning and local development. I currently serve as Chair of the International Strategy Committee of Rajabhat University Network (RUN) and also hold the position of Vice Chair within RUN.

**Q: Our readers may not be familiar with TRU. Could you please introduce your University?**

**A:** TRU is one of 38 Rajabhat Universities located in Lop Buri province in the upper central region of Thailand. TRU’s major missions comprise producing quality graduates, developing local community and promoting local Thai culture and wisdom. We have six faculties including Education, Humanities & Sciences, Management Sciences, Sciences & Technology, Industrial Technology and Information Technology and 37 undergraduate and graduate Programs. TRU’ service areas cover three provinces, Lop Buri, Sing Buri and Saraburi.

**Q: You are the CEO managing TRU. What are your key priorities in university management?**

**A:** The people, materials, money and administration system are the keys for managing our university. I therefore place an emphasis on people development because they are the most crucial factor who drive the university to accomplish the goals. We conduct an annual plan and five year strategic plan regularly as

well as providing the material supporting the university services. We apply good governance working with all stakeholders both inside and outside university.

**Q: While you are visiting South Korea, I think that you are also considering academic and cultural exchanges with South Korea or universities in South Korea or something like that. What are your thoughts on this?**

**A:** TRU signed an MOU with the Hankook Life Science Institute and 21st Century Foundation and have done some activities together. We do hope to work with universities or schools in South Korea so we can do some exchanges to promote our student and staff potential. If possible, I would like to have academic and cultural exchanges with South Korean universities in the future.

**Q: Could you please tell us about the education system in Thailand, particularly in terms of primary and secondary schools? What is the school system like, and what areas of education are emphasized?**

**A:** In primary schools in Thailand, there are 6 grades, 1-6 (Pratom Suksa 1-6) as well as secondary schools which include 6 grades (Mattayom Suksa 1-6). The Basic Education in Thailand is Grade 1-9. The eight core subjects (1. Thai Language, 2. Math, 3. Science, 4. Social Study, Religion & Culture, 5. Foreign Language / English, 6. Art, 7. Physical Education, and 8. Occupation & Technology) are required in all grades in every school.

**Q: It’s likely that South Korean youth might not be very familiar with Thailand. Could you share some information about Thailand, including its geography, climate, cultural, and other aspects?**

**A:** Thailand is one of the most popular countries located in South East Asia with more than 70 million people. There are 77

provinces and the capital city is Bangkok. The weather in Thailand is hot and humid. Bangkok, Chaingmai, Phuket, Khao Samui, and Pattaya are very famous for tourists.

**Q: In both South Korea and Thailand, there are many UNESCO World Heritage Sites. With the emphasis on sustainable development education these days, there is also much discussion about cultural heritage. Could you tell us about Thailand’s cultural heritage, including which sites are recognized as UNESCO World Heritage Sites and how they are managed?**

**A:** There are many world heritage sites in Thailand, for example, Ayutthaya Historical Park in the central region, Sukhothai Historical Park and Sri Thep Historical Park in the North. Dong Phrayayen-Khao Yai Forest Complex, Nakhorn Ratchasima and Huai Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuary in U-Thai Thani are natural wild forests with a massive variety of animals and plants.

**Q: From what I understand, Lop Buri, where TRU is located, is famous for its monkeys. Could you share stories related to the Lop Buri monkeys, and also discuss the cultural heritage of the Lop Buri region?**

**A:** It has been believed that the monkeys in Lop Buri belong to the gods in this area and they have been living here for a long time. So, if anyone tries to get rid of the monkeys, they may be miserable or unlucky. Lop Buri is immensely rich in local culture and tribes such as King Narai the Great Festival, an annual event where most people wear Thai traditional costumes in February and the monkey’s buffet in November. King Narai Palace, Prang Sam Yod Pagoda, Pasak Dam and Sunflower Field are well known here.

**Q: Now I would like to ask you about your personal background. Could you tell us about**

**your school years? How was your school life?**

**A:** I graduated with my bachelor and master degree majoring in English from Mahasarakham University in Thailand. I received my doctoral degree from the College of Education Sam Houston State University in the U.S.A.

**Q: Please share your life motto, philosophy, and worldview.**

**A:** Obstacles are lessons to learn and find the solutions. Do not use problems as excuses not to do things. Unsuccessful people see problems whereas successful people see the solutions. No matter how hard the problem you have to deal with, you will get through as long as you’re still breathing. Things in the world keep changing, so we have to actively learn and adjust ourselves properly.

**Q: President, could you also discuss your plans for the future, both in terms of managing TRU and in your personal life?**

**A:** TRU needs to develop short courses or none-degree programs for lifelong learning for people in the local community to both serve and earn an income for supporting the university itself. We plan to be a Smart University and Learning Center for the local community. Additionally, we do need to make money from the university assets and academic services.

**Q: Finally, what advice do you have for young people to be responsible global citizens?**

**A:** To be smart in this changing world, you all should learn both the past and the present situations and prepare for the future. Harmonize or balance the old and the new so that you won’t be dragged into the sick society.

In the borderless world, we all come from different places with diverse cultures and histories. Therefore, it is crucial for us to learn, understand, and respect each other in order to live together happily.

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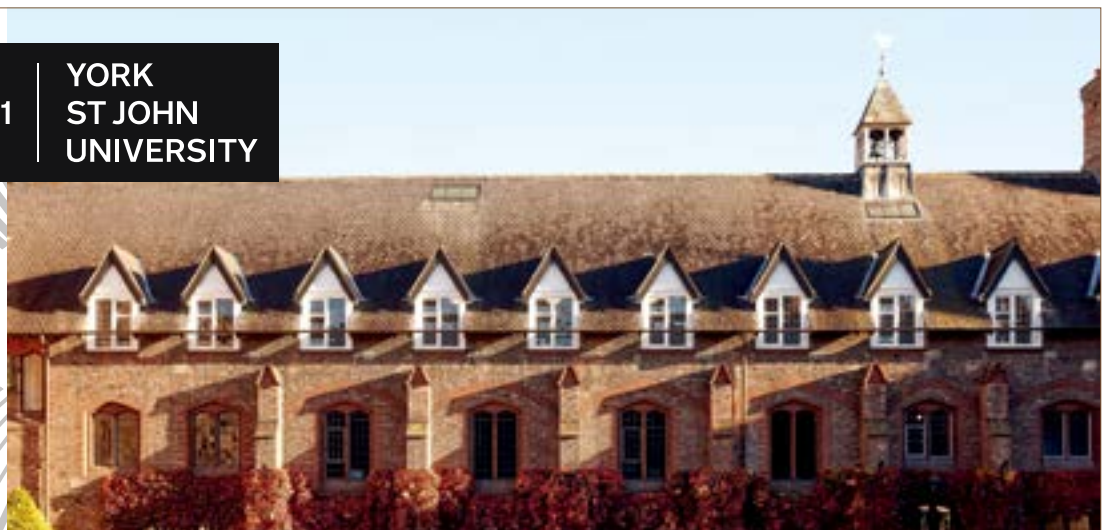
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# Expanding medical school capacity can no longer be put off



Patients sometimes pass away in ambulances after being transported to different hospitals because there aren't enough doctors available to operate on emergency patients right away. Also, finding a pediatric clinic has become increasingly difficult.

By Amy Lim

There is a constant debate about the shortage of essential medical personnel, as people wait in line at dawn for their children's pediatric appointments, and patients pass away in ambulances after being transported to different hospitals because there aren't enough doctors available to operate on emergency patients right away. In the midst of this controversy, the government has announced that it will systematically solve this problem by expanding the number of medical schools.

The government's policy aims to increase the scarce supply of doctors to reduce the widening healthcare gap between urban and rural areas, recruit doctors to currently unpopular specialties such as obstetrics

and gynecology, pediatrics, and emergency medicine, and secure the medical workforce needed for the ultra-low birthrate and ultra-long life expectancy that South Korea is currently facing.

Obstetrics and gynecology, and pediatrics are facing a crisis in the face of ultra-low birth rates. The situation could be even worse than it is now, with people needing to give birth but not having a doctor, having to travel to a place with a doctor, or having to wait in line at a hospital with sick children. On the other hand, the elderly population is growing every year, with 9.5 million people aged 65 and over, or 18.4% of the total population.

By 2025, when more than half of the population born between 1955 and 1963, known as the baby boomers, will be elderly, the proportion will increase to 20.6%, making Korea an ultra-elderly society. As the elderly population increases, the need for expanded medical services is growing. However, there is an absolute shortage of doctors. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) health statistics, the number of doctors in Korea is only 2.6 per 1,000 people. This is the second lowest number among all OECD member countries, after Mexico.

The key to making this work is convincing the medical community. The medical community argues that simply expanding the number of medical schools will not increase the number of essential medical personnel or solve the problem of rural medical personnel imbalance.

In fact, it is for this reason that the number of lawyers has increased and lawyers complain that it is harder for them to make a living than before. However, from the public's point of view, the increase in the number of lawyers has made it possible to receive quality legal services at a reasonable price. Still, most people pay a lot of money for lawyers and doctors, but they do it for the sake of their health. It is clear that more doctors will help people get the medical care they need. If a profession is scarce and necessary, it should be expanded, and eventually it will be.

# Chungbuk gifted students visit the UK and Sweden



24 gifted students selected from the Chungbuk Gifted Education Institute went on an overseas exploration project under the slogan "The Center of the World, Chungbuk's Future is Ours" for 8 nights and 10 days.

By Lee Ji-hyun

A total of 24 gifted students selected from the Chungbuk Gifted Education Institute and gifted classes, along with six teachers, went on an overseas exploration project under the slogan "The Center of the World, Chungbuk's Future is Ours" for 8 nights and 10 days. They departed on October 2nd for the United Kingdom (UK) and Sweden.

During their trip, they visited schools and institutions in the UK and Sweden and carried out team projects. These gifted students are among the 1,745 students who have received gifted education from 129 classes.

This project aims to enable gifted students selected from various fields such as mathematics, science, integration, invention, and arts to cooperate by performing a variety of team projects linked to their classes and communicate with overseas students. It is meaningful in nurturing them to grow as core leaders of the future with dreams and hopes.

In addition, they visited a Korean school in the UK, introducing Korean culture and fostering global leadership through various lessons and exchanged activities with overseas Korean students.

Geum Yerin, a student from Yeongsin Middle School participating in the overseas exploration project, said, "I have looked forward to this overseas exploration to delve deeper into what I have learned in gifted classes. I promise to carry out the team projects well with my teachers and friends."

Yun Gun-young, Superintendent of Education, expressed his hope, saying, "Through the Nobel Project, I hope that students who will lead the future can directly learn about the Nobel Prize by visiting various institutions, carrying out projects in teams, and growing as global leaders."

# AI autonomous patrol robot guards the O-shaped Bridge

By Song Eun-soo



Sejong City has announced the deployment of an artificial intelligence (AI) autonomous patrol robot called "SPOT" for ensuring the safety of citizens using the O-shaped Bridge. This is the first time the local government has utilized SPOT for security patrols.

SPOT, developed by Boston Dynamics in the United States, is a world-class AI-based patrol robot equipped with autonomous driving capabilities to detect and avoid obstacles, as well as remote operation and automatic charging features.

In private sectors within the country, SPOT has been used for tasks such as workforce management, patrolling hazardous areas, and inspecting facilities. On the other hand, this is the first time of its deployment for security patrols at a municipal level.

The arranged SPOT will perform functions based on AI, including providing guidance related to O-shaped Bridge operations, conducting autonomous 24/7 patrols, and using closed circuit television (CCTV) to detect incidents such as falls and fires. Especially, the city will monitor the footage obtained through SPOT at the Urban Integrated Information Center and collaborate with relevant agencies, including emergency (112 and 119), to jointly respond to various accidents and crimes.

During the Sejong festival, robots will patrol the festival grounds, providing entertainments such as dancing and operating photo zones. The autonomous driving robot functionality will also be illustrated, showcasing the image of smart city Sejong.

The initiative is part of Sejong's National Pilot City project, which has been underway since 2020 with the support of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, and Transport. The project emphasizes smart innovations in citizens' lives, healthcare, public safety, and other public sectors.

Mayor Choi Min-ho asserted, "With the integration of cutting-edge technologies such as AI and 5G communication services into robots,

smartification is rapidly advancing, and the scope of applications is expanding. We will continue to do our best to enhance citizen safety using cutting edge technologies"

# Word Search By Kim So-young

This puzzle was created using the 108th edition of The Monday Times.

H	C	I	R	T	N	E	C	C	E	E	I	S	P
A	C	T	O	T	E	N	S	I	O	N	G	E	Z
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P	S	T	U	N	A	R	H	S	A	S	C	L	
I	V	I	O	U	A	F	R	E	E	Z	E	A	R

area	stun	launch	tension	surpass
toll	angel	forget	release	celebrate
surge	haven	electric	discharge	eccentric
peace	post	acrtic	freeze	activist




Word Search 정답을 11월 19일까지 아래로 보내 주시면 추첨하여 소정의 상품을 보내 드리겠습니다. (정답 11월20일 본사 홈페이지 게시)


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착한 업그레이드 된 기초영어 회화 첫걸음 (초중급용)



착한 여행영어 회화 (교재용)



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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착한 팝송에서 배우는 영어회화 (QR코드로 음악 감상)



## Reading in autumn: A Journey to find myself



If there is a way for us to rediscover awe and mystery in life, it is by rejuvenating our life stories. As autumn ripens, how about embarking on a journey to explore your own hidden stories, which reside somewhere in your memories?

By Lee Han-jin (Professor, Cheongju National University of Education)



Professor Lee Han-jin has worked in elementary schools for over 15 years and he is currently devoted to educating future elementary school teachers at a university. He earned a Ph.D. with research on "the ethics of the Other" by Emmanuel Levinas and focuses on educational approaches aimed at resolving ethical issues in Korean society. He is particularly engrossed in "philosophizing" to explore the meaning of life, closely integrated with moral and civic education at the school level, and he is also dedicated to enhancing writing education. – ED.

It's the midst of distinct autumn. The crisp, cool air that we feel in the morning and evening awakens our dulled senses. Despite the chill in the air, it seems that our hearts, in turn, gently open. Autumn is often referred to as the season of reading. Reading is a form of studying, and therefore, autumn is also the season for studying. It's the perfect time to study ourselves.

"High sky and plump horses (天高馬肥)" is an idiomatic expression representing the abundance of autumn, but what should be plump during this season is our hearts. Are you feeling enriched through your studies? From what I see, our hearts are still in a state of poverty. Considering the amount of time we spend sitting at our desks, we should probably be the richest minds in the world. However, the reason we remain emotionally poor is that we engage in a form of studying that is not studying.

Some people describe our school days as a battle against time. They mean that we must endure "unpleasant studying" in order to achieve our desired goals and make career choices. Such a style of studying is more about efficiently storing information rather than seeking a deeper understanding driven by the urgency of life's demands. Unfortunately, the educational

methods that revolve around entrance exams make our lives tiresome. Regrettably, those who participate in such a style of studying are foolishly practicing the art of losing themselves. It's as if the key to winning in the competition for the entrance exam is to see who can lose

themselves the most. It's a sad reality.

With smartphones being a part of our daily lives, we've become more accustomed to disposable information. Stories that are consumed, in the state already scheduled for deletion, have become mere fleeting memories, even within our own minds. Writings shared by the links of friends are in the same situation. Information about the best places to eat are quickly replaced by newer ones. This cycle accelerates even more. However, a meeting with a friend at a certain restaurant creates a story and becomes a good memory. It's not just about what we ate at a restaurant, but the entire experience started with our impressions of the friend and the stories unfolded throughout the meal are naturally remembered. Having teokbokki and chatting together with friends become an irreplaceable, unique event, something that won't come again, a story that exists only in that moment.

We have become accustomed to time measured by the movement of the second hand on a clock. This concept of time flows continuously, independent of meetings with others existing in nature. There is nothing else in it. Anything but the ticking of the second hand and the silence of darkness isn't present there. As narrative beings, we must sense time in the

space within which we inhabit, and also live the time in which that experience is reflected. However, the "college entrance exam clock" is just stopped or frozen time for students. The clock keeps them in a state of tension. Stories cannot find their place when moments of relaxation are not allowed.

In what way are you studying? Are you accumulating information, or are you building narratives? South Korean philosopher Han Byung-Chul, who lives in Germany, diagnoses our contemporary daily life since the modern era as a "narrative crisis." He claims that a consumerist lifestyle in an excess of information is suffocating "narratives." Information can never be connected to stories. I am concerned that we might end up living a life with information but no stories. This results in a hollow life without any substance. Information can never evoke admiration and wonder. According to the philosopher Han Byung-Chul, those who cannot write their own story lives as if they have forgotten their existence, losing their aura.

If there is a way for us to rediscover awe and mystery in life, it is by rejuvenating our life stories. As autumn ripens, how about embarking on a journey to explore your own hidden stories, which reside somewhere in your memories?

## Three ideal times for reading

By Min Byung-jun (Editorial Writer)



From morning till evening, the shadows of trees stretch long, and in the night, we observe the thickening mist. As the seasons change, the nights grow longer. Autumn is commonly known as the season of "High sky and plump horses (天高馬肥)," a season for reading. With high sky and plump horses, it is a season that delights our hearts with the beauty of nature and the abundance of the harvest. Autumn provides plentiful food, and with reduced agricultural work and temperate weather, making it an ideal season for reading, as well as for travel and sports.

In fact, the concept of "High sky and plump horses" came from the fear of nomadic tribes in the past that would raid villages in the countryside with their well-fed horses during the autumn, pillaging winter supplies. It has evolved over time. Today, autumn has become a season suitable for reading, travel, and sports. It is indeed an intriguing transformation.

Now, the mountains covered in autumn leaves of the vibrant hues will witness numerous tourists. In the face of the breathtaking spectrum of autumn foliage that nature unfolds, people often find themselves at a loss for words to express their admiration. Here, as the saying goes, "The more you know, the more you see," the more we read, the richer our emotions become.

"遠水連天碧" Distant waters merge with the azure sky.  
 "霜楓向日紅" Frost-kissed maple leaves turn red towards the sun.  
 (From Yi Yul-gok's Hwaseogyeong 花石亭)

When we compare the depth of emotion between those who understand the significance of these verses and those who do not, the necessity of reading becomes abundantly clear.

From ancient times, our ancestors referred to the "Three Ideal Times for Reading (讀書三餘, dogseosamyeo)," which indicate three generous periods favorable for reading. These times are winter as the season, night as the time of day, and rainy weather as the weather condition. They represent the ideal conditions for reading, characterized by a relaxed state of mind and leisurely time. As the nights grow longer, the current season is indeed a suitable time for reading.

Let us examine the state of reading in our country. According to the "2021 National Reading Habits Survey" released by the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, the comprehensive reading rate over the past year (from September 2020 to August 2021) was 47.5%, which is an 8.2% decrease from the 55.7% reported in the 2019 survey. Surprisingly, 52.5% of adults don't read a single book in a year.

Furthermore, based on the 2017 data from the OECD on monthly per capita adult reading quantities, the United States averaged 6.6 books, Japan 6.1 books, and France 5.9 books, with Germany, the UK, and other countries ranking higher. South Korea, with only 0.8 books, ranks at the very bottom worldwide in 166th place. While gender differences in reading rates are minimal, the reading rate is higher among younger individuals, but significantly drops as age increases, indicating a serious issue.

Our country has achieved "The Miracle of Han River," and recognition on the global stage through its high educational standards and intensive knowledge acquisition. However, scholars argue that it is time to change the country's paradigm of development. The thinking that once allowed us to catch up with advanced cultures should be replaced with "creative thinking" to create new cultures. We need to explore how to ask questions, rather than seek answers.

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# Seoul Africa Festival 2023: A spectacular celebration of African culture in the heart of Seoul

By Maronko Moise (Special Reporter)



Maronko Moise, the founder of joyfillia.com, is originally from Rwanda but has been living in South Korea for almost 8 years now. He used to work for the Rwandan Embassy in Korea and currently works in the entertainment industry, including modeling and Korean TV. He also runs a YouTube channel called "Moses In Korea," dedicated to helping foreign students who want to study in South Korea. – ED.

On October 21st, the Han River riverside of Banpo, Seoul, became a vibrant stage for the Seoul Africa Festival 2023, an extraordinary event that brought the captivating essence of African culture to the heart of Seoul. This immersive festival, set against the breathtaking backdrop of the river, offered an unforgettable experience to people of all ages and backgrounds.

As the sun set over the Banpo Hangang River, the Seoul Africa Festival 2023 unfolded in all its glory, presenting a mesmerizing showcase of African culture. From the moment attendees arrived, they were greeted by the rhythmic beats of traditional African drums, setting the tone for a day filled with wonder and excitement.

The festival's performances were nothing short of breathtaking. Dynamic dances and mesmerizing cultural showcases transported



the audience to distant lands, evoking the vibrant spirit of Africa. Attendees swayed to the melodies of African music, their spirits lifted by the infectious energy of the performers.

A definite highlight of the festival was the much-anticipated program, "Africa's Got Talent." Six remarkably talented teams, representing the diversity and talent of the African continent, competed passionately for recognition and coveted awards. The audience was enthralled as these gifted performers brought their skills to the stage, creating a captivating atmosphere that left everyone spellbound.

Adding a touch of glamour to the festivities was a sensational fashion show hosted by African Designs. Striking models elegantly showcased the latest African fashion trends, leaving fashion enthusiasts and trendsetters in awe. The fusion of traditional African attire with modern designs was a testament to the evolving and dynamic nature of African fashion.

Distinguished guests graced the festival with their presence, including ambassadors from various African countries and representatives from leading companies such as Kia Motors, one of the festival's main sponsors. Their participation underscored the festival's importance as a platform for cultural exchange and collaboration between Korea and Africa.

The festival's diverse booths offered attendees the chance to delve deeper into African culture. From savoring delectable African cuisine and traditional beverages to experiencing ancient practices and witnessing mesmerizing dance performances, there was something to captivate every visitor. Environmental initiatives related to Africa also took center stage, shedding light on the importance of sustainability and global cooperation.

Ambassador Carlos Victor Bounou, representing Gabon and the dean of the African Group of Ambassadors, expressed his enthusiasm, stating, "We are thrilled to witness the Seoul Africa Festival 2023 as it fosters cultural understanding and appreciation between Korea and Africa. Events like these serve as bridges, connecting our nations in meaningful ways."

## The feast of Sotdae



By Lee Jong-dae (Editorial Writer)

A sotdae is a traditional religious architecture in Korea. It represents a guardian deity. It is a structure with a bird-shaped sculpture made of wood or stone on a long pole or stone. It means to pray for the peace and prosperity of the village. – ED.

The master gazed at the earth from his workshop. He also gazed at the gifts the sky had bestowed upon the earth. There were stumps of some trees, rotten roots of oak trees, twisted pine trees, upright camellias, robust paulownias, and tender-skinned zelkovas. These trees were being born again. Some of them clung together like old friends, their bond so strong it seemed they would never fall apart. Sometimes, two became one, and three became one.

The workshop was covered in dust, as though it had been splattered with mud. Wearing work clothes, the master diligently performed his labor of sanding, hoping for the ascension of a crane. His hands moved tirelessly, and his body followed suit. He didn't even notice the sweat pouring down his face. At times, he chiseled and carved, repeating the same

tasks. Unknowingly, the master was accumulating the holiness bestowed upon him by God.

The trees covered in dirt and dust patiently waited for a decade, coming to life at the master's touch. Like an expectant mother enduring the pains of childbirth, the master waited only for the crane to soar. Amidst thousands and millions of strokes for sanding, the master also became a crane. During this process, he clasped his hands for his child, prayed for his grandchild, and evolved into a saint. At times, the bird even became a cross.

Finally, as the finishing touches of lacquer were applied, he offered another heartfelt prayer, asking for the bird to touch the sky. As soon as he opened his eyes, the crane spread its wings and snuggled in the embrace of the heavenly God in the clear azure sky.

People were moved as they beheld the displayed artwork. They felt the essence of life, breathed it in, and carried the pain of its creation in their hearts. They whispered about the soul engraved within the work. It was more of an elevation of "waiting" than a "sotdae."

The master gave a name to his creation.

It was called "Baegindang" (百忍堂), and sometimes, it was referred to as the "Feast of Sotdae." Some of his children was named "Dream," while others named it "Faith, Hope, Love."

The artwork that held a special place in his heart was "Waiting." This work was crafted using pine and camellia wood.

A sotdae carried the master's philosophy within it. It contained the essence of the journey of his life he had walked for thirty long years. It was a continuation of trials, suffering, and pain. However, a sotdae, wearing the garment bestowed by God, awaited only its ascension.

At last, the sotdae breathed a straight breath to ascend to the sky. There, the master breathed his last life and soul into it.

Finally, with his eyes closed towards the cross, the master saw the crane soaring high in the blue sky.

## Americans falls in love with Korean soul food, Kimbap

By Cheon Gu-whan



The Korean small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) called Allgot, which produces Kimbap, achieved a huge success by supplying frozen Kimbap to the large American discount retailer, Trader Joe's. Trader Joe's, with approximately 560 locations in the United States, frequently sells Korean products now.

Just a few years ago, Kimbap was not a familiar food to Americans. It was seen as a foreign dish wrapped in a strange ingredient called "seaweed," and had an unusual, to Americans, savory scent of sesame oil. However, in recent times, a U.S. influencer posted a video of herself eating frozen Kimbap on TikTok, and it quickly gained popularity.

There are several factors contributing to the fame of this frozen Kimbap. It is reported that the Hallyu wave, which started with K-pop, has extended to other areas such as dramas, movies, beauty, and food. As Koreans are perceived to maintain their youthful appearance and healthy bodies due to their nutritious food, Kimbap has also become a point of interest. Additionally, this frozen Kimbap gained rapid popularity, especially among vegans, as it incorporates yubu (fried tofu) instead of meat, aligning with the perception of being a healthy and delicious option.

Price is also making a significant contribution to the sales. The Kimbap sold in Korean markets ranges from \$7 to \$12 (approximately 8,000 to 15,000 Korean won). In regular restaurants, the price can exceed \$15, and when considering tips, you may need to pay more than 20,000 Korean won for a single roll of Kimbap. In contrast, the frozen Kimbap sold at Trader Joe's is priced at \$3.99, not only making it an affordable option but also offering the advantage of long-term storage for buyers.

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# Philanthropist Chuck Feeney, who gave away all of his fortune while living, dies aged 92



Billionaire philanthropist Charles F. "Chuck" Feeney spent almost half of his life giving it away under his philanthropic motto of "Giving while living."

By Choi Mun-young

Billionaire philanthropist Charles F. "Chuck" Feeney, who became penniless after giving away nearly all of his wealth, died at the age of 92 in his small San Francisco apartment on Monday, Oct. 9th. In 1960, the entrepreneur co-founded Duty Free Shoppers (DSF) with a fellow Cornell alumnus, Robert Miller, and amassed a fortune but spent almost half of his life giving it away under his philanthropic motto of "Giving while living." By the time he died this week, he had eventually donated over \$8 billion across continents, achieving his goal. "It's much more fun to give while you are alive than to give when you are dead," he said.

Feeney was one of the biggest philanthropists of our time, but he was "the billionaire who wasn't" in many ways. Born during the Great Depression, the Irish-American businessman with a working-class background embodied the American dream but gave up his billionaire lifestyle and lived frugally. He made billions of dollars selling luxury duty-free goods at international airports but flew millions of miles in economy class carrying a plastic bag, and wearing a \$10 Casio watch.

Feeney had lived over 30 years without a car or home, living in a small rental described to have "the austerity of a freshman dorm room." Feeney was unknown to the public and dubbed the James Bond of philanthropy with his secretive donations. He anonymously helped fund more than 1,000 buildings through his foundation, The Atlantic Philanthropies, which was dissolved in 2020 after finishing distributing all of his fortune.

Chuck Feeney attended Cornell University with support from the GI Bill after serving in the Korean War. The GI Bill is formally known as the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, was a law that provided a range of benefits for some of the returning World War II veterans. He became the "third founder" and "the most generous donor" of his alma mater due to the extent of his donations. He was recognized for his contributions to healthcare, education systems, human rights groups, and peacebuilding. Dedicating his wealth to philanthropic causes inspired other major donors, such as Bill Gates and Warren Buffett, whom he told to donate rapidly during their lifetimes. "Chuck's been a model for us all. If you have the right heroes in life, you're 90% of the way home. Chuck Feeney is a good hero to have," Buffett said.

## Ig Nobel Prize-winning Korean Scientist Develops "Smart Toilet" for Diagnosing Diseases

By Chae Su-min



A Korean scientist who developed a smart toilet that diagnoses diseases by taking pictures of urine and feces received the Ig Nobel Prize last September. Harvard University's scientific humor magazine *Annals of Improbable Research* (AIR) hosted the 33rd annual Ig Nobel Prize ceremony on Friday. The prize was awarded to 10 fields including chemistry and geology, literature, mechanical engineering, and public health. Among them, Dr. Park Seung-min of Stanford University Medical School, a Korean in the field of public health, was selected as the winner.

The toilet he invented takes pictures of urine and feces using a built-in camera and analyzes them. It can detect signs of cancer or irritable bowel syndrome from feces and check whether urine contains glucose or red blood cells. Also, like fingerprints, the shape of the anus is different for each person, which makes it possible to observe long-term follow-up even when several people use the same toilet. Dr. Park received attention in 2020 when he announced a smart toilet for disease diagnosis in *Nature Biomedical Engineering*. It was said that it was possible to diagnose more than 10 kinds of diseases by taking and analyzing feces with a camera built in the toilet. He said, "It is an important health indicator to check the status of bowel movements at the hospital, but most of them depend on the patient's incomplete memory," he said. "With a smart toilet, the state of the excrement is automatically organized into data without requiring additional records or confirmation." In addition to early detection of diseases, hospitals can also be helped with diagnosis based on accurate records.

In fact, this smart toilet turned on the blue light when the power was connected. Inside was a downward camera. A sensor attached to the top of the toilet detects that a person is sitting on the toilet, and the camera takes an internal picture every 0.5 seconds until the person wakes up. This photo is analyzed with artificial intelligence (AI) to record the amount of stool, color, and time spent looking at the stool, and analyze the abnormality.

There were many negative reactions to his research. Dr. Park said, "There were professors who were disgusted to see pictures of naked bowel movements, and there were many accusations that the camera did not know where to take them." "The most difficult thing is that the camera does not change its perception even if it emphasizes that it never takes anything other than bowel movements." As for the reason for continuing his research on smart toilets, he said it is because he believes that Precision Health, which prevents diseases by checking their usual health conditions, is more important than having and treating them. This is the theory of his advisor, Sanjeev Sam Gambhieri, a professor of radiology at Stanford University School of Medicine, who died in 2020.

## Daniel Novoa Asin, Ecuador's youngest president-elect

By Choi Da-in

Due to the early resignation of Ecuador's current president, who is on the verge of impeachment, a political newcomer in his 30s was elected in the first presidential election in Ecuador's history in South America. He is Daniel Novoa Asin (35) of the National Action for Democracy, and is expected to be the youngest among the current world leaders when he takes office.

According to the Ecuadorian Election Commission on the 15th (local time), Daniel Novoa Asin of the National Democratic Action (ADN) defeated Luisa González of the Civil Revolution Movement (RC) in the final round of Ecuador's presidential election. With 96.33 percent of the vote counted, Novoa led González (47.91 percent) with 52.09 percent of the vote. Novoa, who finished second in the first round of voting in August, overturned in the final.

When the election was confirmed, he wrote on social media X (formerly Twitter), "We made history today," adding, "The Ecuadorian people chose a new Ecuador and a safe and job-based country."

Born in November 1987 and aged 35, Novoa was named Ecuador's youngest president, breaking the record of former President Jaime Roldos Aguilera, who took office in 1979 at age 38. He is also expected to be the youngest incumbent president in the world. According to the Pew Research Center, the world's youngest leader is Chilean President Gabriel Boric, who is 37 years old, with Novoa 21 months younger than Boric.

Novoa is the son of former lawmaker Alvaro Novoa, known as the "banana tycoon," and was a former "gold spoon" businessman. He entered politics in earnest when he was elected



Daniel Novoa Asin (35), Ecuador's youngest president-elect

to the National Assembly in 2021, and in about two years, he became the highest-ranking politician. His major pledges include fostering young people, attracting foreign investment and militarizing major ports to block drug trafficking. "His calm and non-aggressive attitude has become popular with voters aged 18-29, which accounts for one-third of the electorate," the Guardian said. The local media classifies him as a center-right person.

Though not yet an official record, he is expected to become the world's youngest president when he takes office. Earlier in April, the Pew Research Center, a U.S. research agency, introduced the world's youngest leader as Chilean President Gabriel Boric (37), who was younger than Boric (born in February 1986)

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# What I wanted to share with my young audience

By Kamilah Dreux



*Kamilah Dreux is a Singer and historical researcher currently living in Korea. She is very passionate about Korean music about Music and Korean history. She is currently going to Korea university graduate school for a degree in Korean historical studies with the focus on the Korean independence movement. She's also doing music and various entertainment shows in Korea as well. – ED.*

Today I got the opportunity to talk with the youth of Sejong city. It was a wonderful experience in which we talked about our dreams and how we can achieve them. It was my second time giving a lecture to a group of aspiring young people and I honestly enjoyed every minute of it. All of the kids were very attentive and intelligent, which made the experience much more fun. In the talks, we discussed the importance of going for our dreams but enjoying the process more than the destination. Personally I think that it's important to instill confidence in our youth to chase their dreams while also showing them the beauty and hardships in the process as well. In the lecture I talked about my dream and some of the struggles I went through to make steps toward them. As a teenager, I struggled with thinking that everything needed to go exactly according to the plan. That dictated how I moved through life and how I organized my goals. However, as I got older, I realized that there is a certain beauty in the unknown and the journey itself is as much of the reward as the

achievement of the goal is. That changed my perspective on how I should plan out my life and addressed the problems that came up when trying to achieve some of my dreams. I learned to appreciate the hard moments as much as the happy ones. I really wanted to teach the students that they deserve to have the confidence and happiness that goes along with chasing after their dreams. Even though anything is possible, it doesn't mean the road there is always going to be smooth. But that doesn't mean it's impossible, either. It just means it's hard, which is okay. Confidence is something that can help us achieve our dreams and our goals because it pushes us to see past the struggles we may face in the process. I feel like I learned a lot preparing for the lecture, and also talking to them and bouncing ideas back-and-forth. Preparing for the lecture also gave me a good opportunity to reflect on my own life and choices, and really, learn lessons from myself and recall mistakes. I wanted to use my knowledge to not only help the youth avoid certain mistakes, but to also help them understand that mistakes are normal and that they're OK. No one is perfect and it is our flaws and our good points that make us into full people. One of my biggest regrets is that I used to blame myself for my mistakes and got mad at myself, instead of forgiving myself and learning from them. Though the young audience may have taken anything from the lecture I gave, I hope it's the fact that I love and support them. I hope they love and support themselves in a huge and abundant way. Life is a continuous learning process and it's OK to take things one step at a time.

# Han Haeng-wun's lecture on "how to pursue our dreams"

By Jeon Ju-yeon & Park Sun-min (Dodam Middle School in Sejong City, student reporters)



On October 21st, a special lecture program titled "Young People Overseas Speak Korea" was held at the Goun Youth Center, featuring the guest speaker Kamilah Dreux, who is also known as Han Haeng-wun. It was hosted by The Monday Times and the Goun Youth Center in cooperation with Sejong City. At this lecture, which started with the performance of Taekwon-do student practitioners performed, Ms. Han Haeng-wun shared her wonderful touching story to the audience. Ms. Han, who is from America, used to work for VANK (Voluntary Agency Network of Korea). In the lecture, she talked about how she got interested in Korea and Korean history and how she decided to come to Korea to achieve her goal.

According to her, when she was little, she got a chance to hear many stories about the Korean independence movement from her grandmother. Intrigued by her grandmother's stories, she wanted to learn more about Korea and Korean history. She started to learn Korean on her own since her middle school days. The more she studied about independence of Korea, the more she became interested about fighters for independence. She told us that she had spent her time studying alone because most of her American friends weren't familiar with Korea at that time. However, being alone gave her more time to think about her dream a lot more. She decided to major Korean, but unfortunately, in the US, there weren't many colleges that had a Korean department. Therefore, she decided to come to Korea. It was amazing how hard she worked to achieve her goal of studying in-depth information about Korea. Listening to her lecture, the audience was able to feel her passion about what she has been doing. Most people don't exactly know what job they want to have in the future but they know that they want to do something they truly love and enjoy. She told the audience that her favorite idiom is "Disaster rolls over and becomes blessing." The audience was touched at her story on how she tried to realize her dream.

# Discovering strengths through self-analysis: a faster path to success

By Jo Yun-jin (CEO, KnJ Smart Management Research Institute)



Japanese economist and journalist Makino Yo has written a book with the title, Warren Buffett's *Investment Principles*. In his book, Buffett is introduced as a legendary figure who became a millionaire beginning with just \$10,000. So, how did Buffett manage to gather such wealth? In response to this question, Makino Yo emphasizes his investment principles, asserting that it was due to his beliefs. Buffett's fundamental belief was "I invest in people." Who would you like to invest in? In most cases, we would want to invest in our children. Therefore, parents, particularly parents filled with expectations and hopes for their children, spare no effort to raise them as they see fit. In extreme cases, parents may break the law to gain the advantages they believe their children need. As people commonly talk, the more wealth individuals have, like conglomerate leaders, they tend to exhibit this inclination. Similarly, famous figures, including politicians, may display a strong propensity in this regard. This may be because they are driven by the desire that their own children must become, at a minimum, "better" than themselves, even if it means resorting to illegal activities. However, do such methods genuinely benefit their children? In the field of marketing, there is a theory known as SWOT analysis. In brief, SWOT analysis involves analyzing the surrounding environment, identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and then developing strategies accordingly. The essential principle of SWOT analysis is enhancing strengths, addressing weaknesses, coping with

threats, and seizing opportunities. This theory can be used to secure educational opportunities by rapid self-analysis. However, in reality, when guiding students at universities, it is often found that they know very little about themselves. College entrance exams may be responsible for it. Focusing solely on exam-oriented education, students neglect self-analysis of themselves, and seek for universities and departments solely based on their test scores. I once introduced the "Self Leadership in Practice" course and instructed my students. The results were quite a resounding success. I learned that the sooner self-analysis is conducted, the more powerful driving force it can be for a child's growth. Therefore, it is essential to identify a child's strengths and weaknesses as early as possible, nurture their strengths, and supplement their weaknesses, thus creating opportunities for success. Then, how can parents identify their children's strengths and weaknesses? The answer is simple, but not necessarily easy to put into practice. It involves letting go of the desire to make a child better than their parents. Instead of just asking your child to attend English and math academies, consider sending your child to art classes, take piano lessons, or participate in various kinds of camps. Experiential education through self-analysis is crucial. This form of education should be encouraged to expand into thinking through questions and eventually lead to the development of leadership skills. This is what parents and educators should do focus on for the future next generation. Discover strengths like and talents, overcome threats, and seize opportunities! Especially when children are young, expose them to a variety of experiences. Minimize potential threats as much as possible.



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