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# K-Book Trends

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Promotion Agency of Korea

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TOPIC

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## 2019 Seoul International Book Fair - Arrival

**The country's biggest book festival, a celebration of people who make, write and read books**

Written by Choi Ha-Yeong

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From June 19 to 23, the 2019 Seoul International Book Fair (SIBF) was held at Seoul's COEX. Themes for 2017 and 2018 had been 'transformation' and 'expansion' respectively, and this year's book fair had the theme 'arrival'. The theme 'arrival' for SIBF was given in reference to prospects for books to come, and those for the world beyond books. Visitors to the 2019 SIBF were invited to learn about the 'arrival' of South Korea's publishing industry and the country's society beyond their 'transformation' and 'expansion'.





Official posters for the 2019 Seoul International Book Fair

## South Korea's biggest book festival; South Korea and the world meet through books

The Seoul International Book Fair is likely the only venue where publishers and authors who love books and readers of books can all convene in one location. In the biggest event for the festival to date, this year's SIBF had more than 60,000 visitors register before opening day, reflecting the popularity of the festival and books in South Korea. This year's guest country of honor was Hungary, which is celebrating its 30th anniversary of diplomatic ties with South Korea this year. A booth introducing Hungarian books as well as the country's culture was installed at the festival this year. In addition to Hungary, 41 countries including the United States, France, the United Kingdom and Japan, and 431 publishers (313 South Korean, 118 non-Korean) participated in the book fair. The 2019 SIBF had had a variety of interesting programs for book



lovers to enjoy, and in line with the theme 'arrival', there were many attempts to connect books with other non-book items. Inside the book fair venue were all sorts of different booths and books that drew people's attention. Also, throughout the entire book fair were diverse programs for visitors to experience, as well as seminars and conferences where authors and other famous people came and discussed issues related to books.



Scenes from the 2019 SIBF



## Diverse speakers at the Seoul International Book Fair

Of all the programs the book fair had to offer this year, lectures that were based on the keyword 'arrival' drew the most attention. Talks were given by Man Booker Prize winner Han Kang, South Korean actor Jung Woo-sung, physicist Kim Sang-wook, philosopher and this year's SIBF honorary spokesperson Kim Hyung-suk and television producer Lee Wook-jung who is known for several food documentaries.

Among the five speakers, Lee opened a cooking studio at the book fair called 'Open Kitchen' where visitors were able to admire cookbooks featuring ingredients and recipes from around the world. A cooking demonstration was also held, with the audience invited to try samples. Lee later gave a lecture on cooking and books. Actor Jung Woo-sung introduced his latest book called, *If You Could See the Things I Saw* (WonderBox) at a program called "Summer, First Book". The program was new to the fair, introducing new releases to the world. Visitors to the program were able to meet ten authors including Jung and authors Jang Gang-myung, Kim Sang-geun and Lee Jin-woo, who were there to discuss their latest books.





Actor Jung Woo-sung signing autographs (left), Lee Wook-jung holding an open kitchen lecture (right)

At the 2019 Seoul International Book Fair were also many authors who wished to meet readers. At a program called "Meeting Authors", authors like Kim I-hwan, Ahn Hee-yeon and Lim Kyung-sun were invited to speak with readers about various stories and topics under themes like "SF novels", "new gender sensitivity", "the arrival of a new reading culture", "why we love picture books" and "an author's author". Visitors to the book fair were also able to experience writers' stories through special editions of books. The "Limited Edition" program launched in 2017 publishes special books with new themes every year to commemorate the book fair. This year, stories with the theme 'taste' from authors like Lee Hae-rim, Lee Yong-jae and Oh Eun were all collected and tied into one special edition book called *The Memory of Taste* featured at the book fair.

## Conferences Share Diverse Publishing Issues

Books are like mirrors that reflect our society and thus give us numerous themes to discuss. At the 2019 SIBF, there were many conferences to discuss books and publishing issues. Among these conferences was one called "E-publishing Seminar and Conference" that identified e-publishing as the latest publishing business foray. Discussions were held with the themes "ways for publishers, libraries to co-exist in a future e-book eco-system", "the arrival of a new e-publishing business", "the attack of Netflix, fixed book price policies challenged", and "how to create audio content as fun as Netflix". The landscape of electronic publishing is constantly changing, and different forms of e-publishing are frequently emerging as technology develops. For those who had an existing interest in e-publishing, the conferences and seminars offered a rare opportunity for them to listen to the latest on the industry and what issues it currently faces.



Scenes from 'Global Issue Conference' (left) and 'Global Market Day' (right)  
© 2019 Seoul International Book Fair



Speakers from various countries outside South Korea also took part in conferences at the book fair. One called the "Global Issue Conference" addressed many international issues having to do with books. At the "Global Market Day" program, participants discussed various book festivals in countries around the world and the current status of publishing markets there. Fourteen directors for various book festivals in Asia, Africa, Central and South America and Europe convened at the SIBF to introduce their respective international book fairs and talk about regional publishing industries. Also, at the "Connected Cooperation Program", conferences were held to share the latest stories on the cultural publishing industry. Many discussions took place at the book fair this year among professionals in the global publishing industry, addressing everything from future industry models for publishing to translating Korean literature.

### **More books, more booths**

As this year's Seoul International Book Fair was the biggest of its kind ever, there were many book culture programs held here and there at booths throughout the festival. Roughly 170 programs were available for visitors including lectures, meet and greets with authors, hands-on programs, autograph events and book concerts. Below are some of the more intriguing programs that were on display at this year's SIBF.

One of these was a booth for regional South Korean bookstores

only called "Book # (Sharp)" created by the Korea Federation of Bookstores Association. The "Book #" booth had a section introducing regional bookstores in South Korea called "Knowing Bookstores" and another corner featuring performances called "Enjoying Bookstores". A third section called "Playing Bookstores" depended heavily on the participation of visitors. At "Enjoying Bookstores", one-person performances were held by those like picture book writers to the delight of passersby.



Booths created by the Korea Federation of Bookstores Association (left) and the Publication Industry Promotion Agency of Korea (right)

There were also booths that aimed to deliver useful information for publishing industry professionals and to recommend Korean books based on their excellence. The Publication Industry Promotion Agency of Korea (KPIPA) hosted several different programs at its booth like "Publishing Links Exports", "Strategic Preliminary Course to Train Global Publishing Professionals", "Survival Tactics for Neighborhood Bookstores", and "The Struggles of Independent Publishers". Particularly on the opening day of the SIBF, the booth held the sixth annual awards event for South Korea's e-publishing

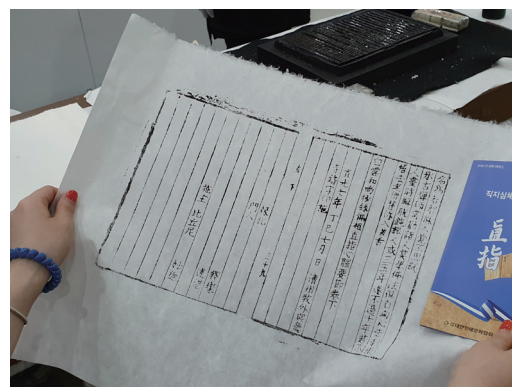


industry. Actor Bong Tae-gyu's *Our Family is Quite Serious* (Gilbut) took home the top prize.

Aside from these, many other participants of the book fair showed off their uniqueness and individual colors through their booths. Publisher BookGoodCome had a pop-up card-making program that was popular among children while at the booth for Gozknock ENT, known for thriller novels, K-thriller authors could be seen signing autographs, making it a must-visit location for scary book lovers. Book21, a publishing company that aspires to become a leader in content that breaks down barriers, made a VR/AR station available at its booth with Chinese character content for the duration of the book fair, creating a space for visitors to enjoy books through means beyond reading.



A booth for Asian independent publishers



Sungsimdang (left) and a promotion booth for Jikji, a Buddhist document (right)

In addition to these, many other programs were open to the public, like an experience tour for children and young adults, and the "Freedom of Publishing" seminar, which shed light on the current meaning of securing publishing freedom after looking back on the history of global publishing oppression. A booth for independent publishers from six Asian countries like South Korea, Japan and China was also at the book fair and renowned bakery chain Sungsimdang even had a booth for both books and pastries, touting themselves as a baked goods company that also creates books. Book-related goods could be purchased several of events while a unique promotion booth for Jikji, the oldest book printed using movable metal type in the world also drew many visitors. The 2019 SIBF ended on a high note after receiving much attention from book lovers. Hopes are rising for next year's SIBF, what stories it will tell, and what events it will have for readers.

Click to access the Seoul International Book Fair's website: <http://sibf.or.kr/>



SPECIAL PROJECT

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## Essays that touch the heart

Readers tired of their hectic lives take comfort in warm words

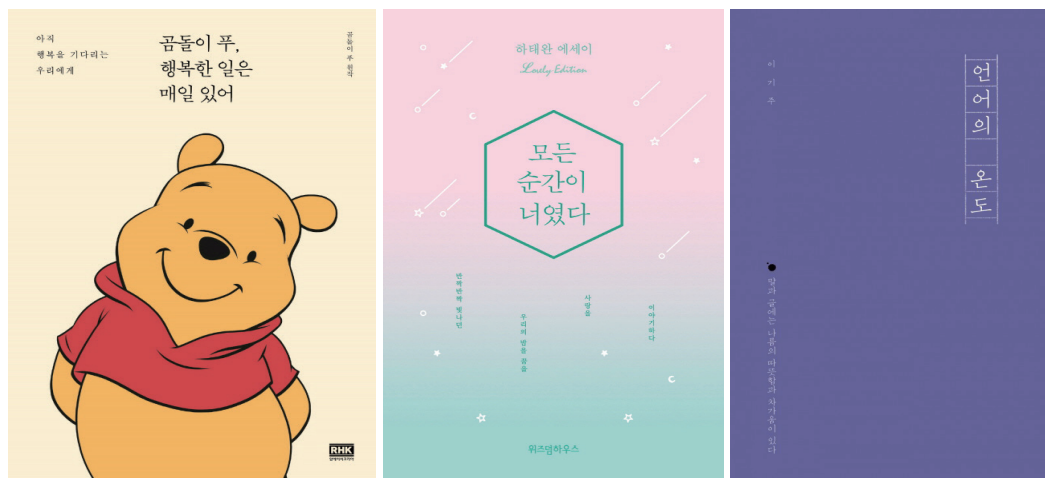
Written by Yeon Seung (Reporter at Seoul Economic Daily)

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Emotional essays that touch and 'heal' readers have seen no end to their popularity over the past several years. Works of writing that spell out everyday experiences and emotions in simple sentences as well as essays that provide comfort via narrators that are well-known animation characters have found immense demand from young readers in South Korea. 2018, in particular, was truly a year for these emotionally touching essays.

According to 2018 bestseller data from online bookstore YES24, *Pooh Bear, Happiness Happens Every Day* (RH Korea) was the bestselling book last year. Two places behind this book was *Every Moment Was You* (Wisdom House) and in fifth place was Lee Ki-joo's *Temperature of Language* (Malgeulteo). Jeong Mun-jeong's *How to Respond Smiling*

to a Rude Person (Gana) and Kim Su-hyun's *I Have Decided to Live as Me* stood at sixth and seventh place, respectively. In 10th place on the annual bestseller list was Baek Se-hee's *I Want to Die but I Want to Eat Ttukbokki* (Heun), making it six essay publications among the top bestselling books of 2018.



*Pooh Bear, Happiness Happens Every Day, Every Moment Was You, Temperature of Language*

When readers were categorized by age, women in their 20s to 40s were found to have sought out essay books the most. Purchasers of the Winnie the Pooh essay collection were predominantly female, with women outnumbering men 8 to 2. By age group, readers in their 20s made up 22.4 percent of purchasers, while those in their 30s accounted for 34.1 percent. Those in their 40s took up 31.4 percent.

The reason behind this fervent demand for essays by readers in their 20s to 40s is thought to be the power of comfort and understanding the books carry. Readers found comfort and were moved by a familiar animation character, Winnie the Pooh, which



they knew from a young age. This animation character, cute and familiar, offered words of comfort to readers who were tired of their hectic lives through the book. Prior to this trend, words of wisdom or advice usually came from books written by religious practitioners or members of academia. According to analysts, this recent shift towards more familiar voices reflects readers' needs for publications they can flip through for as short as 5 minutes to be comforted by words and illustrations in their lives, made difficult by volatile economic situations and high unemployment rates for South Korean youth. One such observer from YES24 says up to 7, 8 years ago, famous celebrity mentors like Kim Nando's *Youth, It's Painful* (Sam & Parkers) or Buddhist monk Hyemin's *The Things You Can See Only When You Slow Down* (Sam & Parkers) were popular among readers with their insight into life in general. However, now readers want books that lend words of warm consolation like a friend would, asking how their day was.

Choi Kyung-min of RH Korea who planned the Winnie the Pooh essay series said, "We were looking for animation characters women in their 20s to 40s would likely have grown up with because they are the target customer base for essay collections". "In our search, we believed Disney's Winnie the Pooh best fit that criteria and started planning the series," Choi said, adding, "I think readers were drawn to phrases like 'don't mimic the happiness of others', 'cherish the road you are currently on' and 'it's OK if you go slow' because they are things that seem simple, but you want to hear them. The books

likely saw help from the recent trend in which people seek out surefire happiness even if it's from something very small."

On social media platforms, readers of the Winnie the Pooh essay series uploaded excerpts from the books like 'special people are always inside our hearts', 'people who are happy for your good times are your true friends', 'my road can only be decided by me' and 'bodies don't lie; a weakened heart leads to weakened health'. The book saw much love on social media with readers hash-tagging the book and its warm words of advice.

Piggybacking on the success of the first book in the Winnie the Pooh essay series, the second installation in the series, *Winnie the Pooh, It's OK Even if You Don't Hurry* (RH Korea) was also loved by readers. South Korea's culture scene saw a Winnie the Pooh boom for a while as the publication coincided with the release of a Pooh movie, "Christopher Robin". As readers snapped up Winnie the Pooh books, they were also drawn to animation character-led books featuring the likes of Bonobono, Doraemon, Alice from Alice in Wonderland, Mickey Mouse, Peter Rabbit and Pororo.

Last year, readers also enjoyed reading self-reflective essay collections that give raw portrayals of everyday experiences and conflicts difficult to voice. Baek Se-hee's *I Want to Die but I Want to Eat Ttukbokki* saw immense popularity as she detailed the conversations she had with her physician while she was going

through treatment for dysthymia, a persistent mild depression. At first, only a small number of copies was published, but after word of mouth spread, the book ended up being one of the top 10 bestselling books of last year. This book too was mostly purchased by women in their 20s to 40s. By age group, 19.5 percent of readers were in their 20s, 23.8 percent were in their 30s, and 21.9 percent were in their 40s.

As the Winnie the Pooh series fueled the publication of similar books, so did *I Want to Die but I Want to Eat Ttukbokki*. After this particular book was published, books like *As I Send off My Depression* (Mujintree), *The Fall* (Isup), *To My Dear Self* (Gufic), *To You Like Me* (Harmony Book) and *I Am Slightly Depressed But I am a Normal Person* (Nol) spilled out onto the shelves of bookstores.



*I Want to Die but I Want to Eat Ttukbokki, To You Like Me,  
I Am Slightly Depressed But I am a Normal Person*



One other observation that has been made regarding this trend is that the essays focus on the 'self'. Readers who feel they are losing themselves amid complicated interpersonal relationships while becoming hurt have turned to essays that focus on the 'self' rather than other people. *How To Respond Smiling To A Rude Person* and *Conversing So People Don't Take You for Granted* (Hongik Books) in addition to *The Distance Between You and I* (Maven), *I Have Decided to Live as Me* (Maumsup), *I Have Decided to Live Desensitized* (Dasanchodang) all saw success through essays that focused on rejecting unfair requests from others and protecting oneself in relationships. Readers also adored books that told them to live their lives for themselves, like *The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F\*ck* (Galleon) and *I Accidentally Worked Hard At Life* (Woongjin Jisikhouse). These books managed to capture the hearts of young readers not by drawing them away from goal-oriented lives but rather by nudging them towards happiness and protection against words that are hazardous to one's mental state, and that could stem from unjust treatment or excessive interference from others.

*How to Respond Smiling to A Rude Person* advises readers on how to speak to rude people readers can run into in their everyday lives. The book also explains how people have different perceptions of personal space and helps readers to react sensibly to rude people firmly with no emotional turmoil. *I Have Decided to Live as Me* advises readers to take time for themselves to look back on who they are. The book tells readers they need not fret over other

people's social media accounts, and there is no need to make efforts blindly because they are anxious. As a result, this book found high interest among adult readers who have yet to discover who they truly are, despite their age.



*How to Respond Smiling to A Rude Person, The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F\*ck, I Accidentally Worked Hard at Life*



*I Like Myself the Way I Am, There Was Never a Day I Didn't Love You, I Will Embrace Your Heart*

Although the following books are seeing less popularity this year, publications written by social media influencers were popular among female readers in their 20s and 30s in 2018. Ha Tae-wan's *Every Moment Was You* and Cho Yu-mi's *I Like Myself the Way I Am* (Hummingbird), Kim Jae-sik's *There Was Never a Day I Didn't Love You* (Sam & Parkers), Kim Ji-hoon's *Because It's Special You* (Jinsimeuikkot Hansongi) and his *I Will Embrace Your Heart* (Jinsimeuikkot Hansongi) all stayed on the bestsellers list for long periods during 2018. These books, featuring short stories of love and special people, were seen to have moved the hearts of female readers thirsty for emotional content.



## EXPORT CASE

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# How Eduwill successfully exported the *PERFECT TOPIK* series to China and Taiwan

Arranged by Choi Ha-Yeong

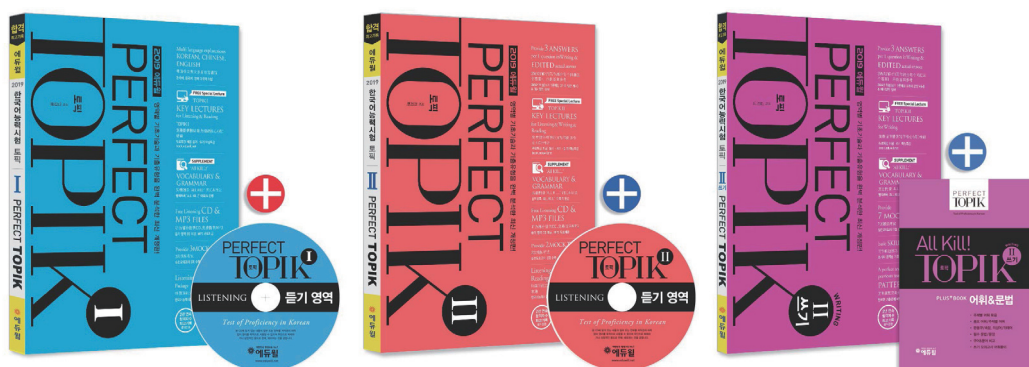
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Eduwill is a South Korean education company that prides itself on turning dreams into reality. A business that focuses on many aspects of education in addition to providing online and offline classes on obtaining various certificates and licenses, Eduwill also runs a publishing business for education material. Among the company's publications is the *PERFECT TOPIK* series that helps students study for the official Test of Proficiency in Korean. The series had previously been available only in South Korea before it was exported to China in 2016 and Taiwan in 2018. "Education can change lives and the world, and with this belief, we will lead efforts so that education may truly show its power," Eduwill says. The following details the export process Eduwill went through for *PERFECT TOPIK*.



Hello. We are delighted to introduce Eduwill to *K-Book Trends* readers. We heard *PERFECT TOPIK 1, 2, 2-Writing*, preparation materials for the TOPIK exam for non-Korean foreigners was exported to China after a Chinese public agency for global publications reached out to you regarding the series in 2016. You also started the export process for *PERFECT TOPIK 1, 2* in 2017 for Taiwan and the series became available there in 2018. Were there any special events that made these connections with China and Taiwan possible?

In August 2018, Eduwill's *PERFECT TOPIK 1, 2, 2-Writing* were released in South Korea and not even a month had passed before we received contact from China inquiring about the export of the three books. This resulted in the books being published there in 2016. We were offered another export contract from a different Chinese publisher at the time as well, and in 2017, we were contacted by two Taiwanese publishers in 2017. Of those, we chose Jong Wen Books to publish *PERFECT TOPIK 1, 2* in Taiwan last year.



PERFECT TOPIK 1, 2, 2-Writing Cover art for South Korean publication



PERFECT TOPIK 1, 2, 2-Writing Cover art for China publication



PERFECT TOPIK 1, 2 Cover art for Taiwan publication



*PERFECT TOPIK* was released in South Korea, but its core readership has been comprised of non-Korean foreigners. This is different from other books that are geared towards South Korean readers, and perhaps this helped the series become published elsewhere outside the country. We are curious to know whether you planned the series with it eventually becoming exported in mind.

TOPIK is an exam that has many more test-takers outside South Korea than inside the country. When we were first developing the preparation material, there were twice as many test-takers of the TOPIK outside South Korea than inside. So, when we were creating the content, we contemplated whether to focus on the local market or develop content with foreign readers in mind, but in order to target readers outside South Korea we needed more precise surveys and information on markets in other countries, so we ended up thinking about South Korean readers at first. However, we feel the series has been accepted well by non-Koreans because of its diverse lessons and trustworthy content that can actually help students.

Could you tell us what the reader response was like in China and Taiwan for *PERFECT TOPIK*?

In the case of China, copies of the *PERFECT TOPIK* series have been selling nearly as well as they have sold in South Korea despite the fact that the series was not developed with aggressive export efforts in mind. As for Taiwan, it hasn't been a year yet since the

series was published there, so we are not at a point to discuss detailed accomplishments, but our hopes are high for Taiwan sales when looking at how the series did in China.

Thanks to Hallyu, more non-Korean foreigners are taking an interest in the Korean language as Korean music, movies and television dramas gain popularity. It's not difficult to think the demand for Korean language study material will expand further from here on out. Do you have plans to export the *PERFECT TOPIK* series in other countries besides China and Taiwan?

The accumulated number of TOPIK applicants surpassed 2 million two years ago. This is 108 times more than what it was 20 years ago. And it's not hard to see foreigners singing along quite easily to Korean songs by BTS at their shows. In the case of our *PERFECT TOPIK* series, we weren't planning to export the books when we were developing the content. We did not have detailed export plans either as publishers in China and Taiwan reached out to us first after they recognized the series' excellence. However, as more countries take the TOPIK exam and Hallyu becomes more popular, we plan to observe the growing Korean language education market and will continuously research what kind of content is needed to study Korean by foreigners.

It must be important for Korean language study material to have content overseas readers want when they are exported outside South Korea. The publications should be right for the client country markets too. What would be some necessary criteria study textbooks for Korean should have in order to do well outside South Korea?

We really made our utmost efforts in selecting the authors and reviewing the content material in order to create textbooks that students all around the world would find easy to understand. We invited expert teachers of the Korean language who have experience in teaching Korean in universities outside South Korea and teachers who conduct classes on Korean for foreign students in local universities. There are commentaries provided in Korean, Chinese and English and the content was reviewed multiple times by students who major in Korean at the Laiocheng University in Shandong Province in China and the Hankuk University of Foreign Studies. Especially for *PERFECT TOPIK 2-Writing* we included actual answer examples from students and the feedback they received from the author. We believe the series received good responses because our examples and commentary took into mind the various levels of study students have, as well as precise analysis into how test questions are created. We didn't focus just on perfunctory hypotheses and the perfect answers to questions. Combining content that test applicants really need is the biggest competitive edge that an exam workbook can have.



When one thinks of exporting books abroad, it is easy to think of genres like picture books or novels. However, a closer look reveals books in the education genre are being readily exported overseas. Does Eduwill have a specific, relatively unknown genre to tell overseas publishers about?

Eduwill usually focuses on study workbooks for Korean licenses and certificates, which are difficult to understand if you are not fluent in Korean. However, because we publish books that have diverse content, we have some that are bound to attract foreign readers. For example, readers who are interested in Korean history after watching historical Korean dramas, they could have fun learning about the details of Korean history in our workbooks for the official national test for Korean history, even if they don't plan to take the exam. We are actually seeing non-Koreans who have much interest in Korean culture go on to challenge themselves to take certificate exams for Korean cuisine or to become tourism guide interpreters. So, workbooks for these exams could all be exported.

We would like to know if Eduwill has exported any other books besides the *PERFECT TOPIK* series, or if Eduwill plans on exporting more.

Aside from the three *PERFECT TOPIK* books, we don't have other export cases yet. However, the overseas response for the *PERFECT TOPIK* series has been positive that we are looking at possibly publishing more workbooks within that series. Like we said above,

demand for content dealing with the Korean language, Korean culture and travel are only becoming bigger through the Hallyu boom. There is also much interest in Korean language education in countries like China that many South Korean education companies are now branching out into the neighboring country. Eduwill will also keep a continued interest in possible overseas exports going forward.

*In our last question, we'd like to ask what Eduwill's future vision and plans are. Also, do you have a message you would like to tell our K-Book Trends readers?*

Eduwill's mission is to become an education company that turns dreams into reality. Our vision is to make the dreams of our customers, workers and regional society come true. The reason why Eduwill exists is to make the dreams of people who dream of a better tomorrow into reality. It is the final goal for all of our business endeavors. We focus on lectures and workbooks on employment and licenses, but we contemplate on what kind of studies, information and networks people will require after they achieve their certificates or licenses.

We plan to keep challenging ourselves to create content and services to help more diverse people achieve their dreams. With that being said, we have hopes there will be more opportunities for us to meet overseas readers who are currently reading this. We are curious to know what your dreams are and if there are any that you

would like for us to know about, don't hesitate to contact us. We will put our heads together to find a way to make your dream come true.



## BOOK TRIP

## By Embracing History and Culture, Incheon Blossoms with Literature

Written by KIM Young-Ihm



The remnants of history are always bound to be subject to different interpretations. Through that process, things from the past can be born again with new values. In the city of Incheon, signs of the passage of time since the port city opened its doors to the world can

still be seen. The city is now blossoming with literature after having embraced that history. The literature of Incheon can be found at times in comparatively desolate parts of the city, but it's worth seeking it out, similar to how a reader can read between the lines of a book and feel touched.

## The Museum of Korean Modern Literature

One of the key images of Incheon, when one thinks of the city, is Chinatown, where traces of Korea's chaotic modernization remain. In addition to former extraterritorial areas designated by China and Japan, Chinese eateries line the streets of Chinatown in Incheon, as a testament to the Chinese who lived here decades ago. In another part of town, traditional Japanese-style residences can be spotted. These were homes for the Japanese who lived in Incheon when the Korean peninsula was under colonial rule by Japan.



The Museum of Korean Modern Literature

In this slice of town where unique cultural landscapes lie can be found the Museum of Korean Modern Literature - a humble building but full of value as it wholly modernized Korea. The building is also a friendly sight for Korean visitors strolling down the streets of Incheon's Chinatown as it is imbued with Korean culture on a street filled with non-Korean culture. The Museum of Korean Modern Culture was a former warehouse, twins of which can easily be spotted in the city's old center. The museum is full of exhibits for those wishing to go on a short literary journey through Korea's modern literature. One can feel as if they are communicating with Korean authors of the past who poured out their passion in words at a time when chaos reigned the land. A quiet stroll through the museum shows the work of authors who worked in an age of pain, from the 1890s during the period of Modern Enlightenment to 1948 when the Korean peninsula was divided in half. This was not only an era of pain but also one where people were thirsty for literature. The works of many writers can be found here, including author and poet Choe Nam-sun's *The Ocean to the Youth*; poet and freedom fighter Han Yong-un's *Lover's Silence*; and Cheong Chi-yong who is said to have provided the framework for modern Korean poetry with his *Nostalgia*. There are works by familiar novelists as well. Among those featured are Yi Kwang-su who wrote Korea's first modern long-form novel *The Heartless*; Na Do-hyang who was the author of realist novels *Watermill* and *Deaf Samryongi*; Hyun Jin-geon, who was acclaimed as a pioneer for short novels like *My Destitute Wife* and *One Lucky*

Day; and Yeom Sang-seop, who wrote realist and naturalist novels like *Tree Frog in the Specimen Room*. In addition to these famous writers, others the museum showcases are poet Kim Sowol, famous for his indigenous and emotional poem *Azalea* that describes the Korean feeling of han; and Baek Seok, who opened the doors wide in Korea for modern poems with his *I, Natasha and the White Donkey*.



Inside the Museum of Korean Modern Literature, where diverse exhibits on literature can be found

Original manuscripts of some of this historic work and video resources can all be found at the museum. While browsing through the works of some of these familiar writers, visitors can easily look back on the thoughts, the spirit of the times and passion for literature all of the writers melded into their writing. The novels and poetry these people wrote not too long ago, but in a completely different situation from this day and age are still touching the minds of today. It could have easily been an age where no literature was written, but the words they have left behind also tell the history of the Korean peninsula from that time. The Museum of Korean



Modern Literature resonates with visitors as modern Korean history, invoking a faint longing and an aching which can be found in literature here.

### **Baedari Secondhand Bookstore Alley, where new life is breathed into books**

Those who seek out books that are more in tune with today can head over to the Baedari Secondhand Bookstore Alley. The alley used to be a street that was somewhat excluded from the rest of the city's development efforts but now, it has come to life thanks to none other than secondhand books that have been sold there for years. Baedari Secondhand Bookstore Alley was known as a location where those short on money but wanting to study would seek out. However, a few years ago when the hit K-drama “Guardian: The Lonely and Great God” shot some scenes here, resulting in crowds packing the street. The books and bookstores all bear the traces of time long passed and welcome passersby who flock to the area with excitement and curiosity.

'Welcome to slow travel through Baedari!' A sign welcomes visitors at the entrance of the alley, beckoning. The number of bookstores can be fewer than what many expect, but those that remain have kept their locations for a long, even stubborn, time. One can find themselves leafing through books they finished long ago, scanning the familiar pages again. The pages have yellowed, but they resonate with readers when one thinks about the joy

these books have given people over the years as they were passed on from person to person. After a short trek down memory lane in one of the secondhand bookstores, a further stroll down the alley stirs a sense of desire for more new store owners with their individual store signs and shops. There are small cafes where one can catch their breath with a cup of coffee and other locations where visitors can rest and read books. Visitors can easily hope the Baedari Secondhand Bookstore Alley can become a channel of communication for generations ahead, with its kind consideration for visitors.



Bookstores offer respite with piles of secondhand books and snug reading nooks



Two bookstores in the Baedari Secondhand Bookstore Alley

## Independent bookstores, declaring their affection for books

Where small neighborhood bookstores once stood are now independent bookstores, once again filling locations that had been vacated due to the deluge of large bookstore chains. What sets them apart from bookstores that existed there before are charm and appeal one can't find in large bookstores. In Incheon, stores like 'Nabi Nalda (Butterfly Flies)' and 'Connect the Dots' located on Baedari Secondhand Bookstore Alley, 'Hongyeseorim' nearby Freedom Park, 'North Pole Bookstore' in Bupyeong-gu and 'Chaekbangmodo' in Dong-gu have all eagerly opened shop as



independent bookstores. These stores differentiate themselves by communicating with readers actively in their own unique ways, but they all share the fact that they were born out of a special love for books.

Crowded with specially designed stuffed bears and cute books, 'Hongyeseorim' sells books that have been personally curated by the owner. 'Hongyeseorim' usually deals with independent publications, especially picture books, and this has made the store popular among picture book fans. The owner of the store recommends *Yan Yan* (Text Context) written and illustrated by Kim Seung-yeon. 'Hongyeseorim' has also engaged in a collaboration project with Korean publisher Minumsa and books like Kim Seung-ok's *Trip With No End* and Dazai Osamu's *No Longer Human* can be found here. 'Hongyeseorim' also runs a small club called 'Hongye Press -Make Your Own Book at a Neighborhood Bookstore', where joiners can create their own masterpieces.



*Yan Yan* (left), and *Trip with No End*, *No Longer Human* (right),  
from a collaboration project with Minumsa



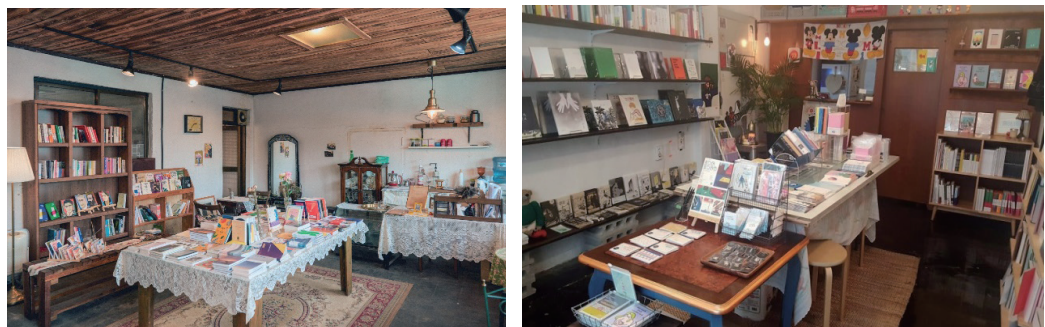
Some of the independent bookstores in Incheon have a strong, vintage vibe likely due to the personal tastes of the owners. One of these would be 'North Pole Bookstore'. *Capable of Anything* (Wisdom House) and *Incheon Cafes That Are Farther Away Than Seoul but Closer Than Jeju* are both popular books at 'North Pole Bookstore'. Gem-like books including *Flash* and *Your Own Beach* published by the owner himself can also be found at the store. 'North Pole Bookstore' also runs foreign language classes as well as a program for short film production.

Another independent bookstore, 'Nabi Nalda' is run by an owner who has their own firm philosophy on civic movements and the environment. The bookstore, which is unstaffed, usually sells books centered on these two topics. 'Nabi', which is Korean for butterfly, is also an acronym here for 'divide and empty', according to the owner, reflecting his will to share more with society through books at the secondhand bookstore. 'Nabi Nalda' has operated for over 20 years and books that can be found there include *Ecology Philosophy* (Munsachol), *The Private Life of Pets and Their Neighbors* (Ima) and *Shamefulness* (Naznsan) which all deal with either civic movements or the environment. The bookstore sells items other than books, making it a fun visit.

Small reading groups choose to meet at some of these independent bookstores. 'Words and Books' is a quiet bookstore that has consistently hosted reading group meetings. The store looks more like a coffee shop that sells books, including independently published work. There are more books that make visitors curious

than regular bestsellers, like *I Walked into the Sentence of You* (Dasiseojeom), *Although I Pushed My Way Out from a Crowd* (Sentences and Scenes), *The Invisible Eternity* (Dasiseojeom), which are all popular with readers. The store has a special stamp for purchased books that adds a bit of fun.

A former distilling plant, 'Connect the Dots' sells only used books and independent publications. It has attracted young people to Baedari Secondhand Bookstore Alley. 'Connect the Dots' was opened to provide a place of rest for people visiting the alley, rather than profit. There are many familiar titles there, in addition to independent publications like *I am an Introvert, Happy on my Own* (Book Reading Cat), *Cat Restaurant* (Bichae) and *To Those Who Are Uninterested in my Loneliness* (Byeolbitdeul). A second branch of the bookstore is being planned to boost communication with book lovers.



Connect the Dots (left) Hongyeseorim (right)

'Chaekbangmodo' is another interesting bookstore that is open until 1 a.m. , making it easy for people who usually can't reach bookstores at regular working hours. This bookstore sells beautiful picture books, as well as independent works of different genres like *Do I Look Like a Person That Changes as They Age*, *Memoir at 30* (Memoir), *We Loved* (Mimesis) and *Breaking Preconceptions About the U.S.*.

Independent bookstores may not all be flashy, but they were created for book lovers by those who also love books. They were all found to be expressing that affection in their different ways. The stores are all perfect locations to escape everyday life to enjoy a date with books and are a great new way to spend your time in Incheon.



Chaekbangmodo

There is no better place than Incheon to follow the trail of literature that also lives within us, after many generations and history. Time is needed for a flower to blossom, and it will be worth the wait to see what new blossoms Incheon will have in store for everyone in the future.

## KOREAN PUBLISHERS

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### Travelers sailing through the sea of knowledge - 'Across Publishing Group Inc.'

Arranged by Hwang jina

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Information and knowledge inundate our lives daily. Selecting what's important amid that torrent of data is not an easy task. South Korean publisher Across Publishing Group Inc (Across below) creates books that enrich lives, plucking knowledge from a sea of information. Across say they eagerly navigate the waters, publishing books with firm standards and values.



Please tell us about Across.

Across is a publishing company that focuses on humanities and culture. We also publish books on society, economics, management and other knowledge-based genres. Following our first publication in March 2011, we have released 95 books so far.

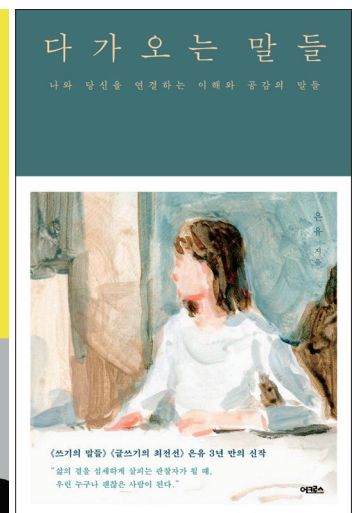
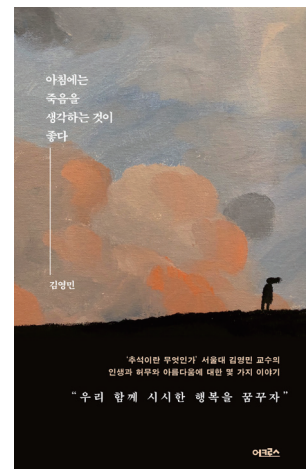
It's striking that you say your company aims to open a new frontier of cultural content for today's generation after traveling across a sea of knowledge to reach readers. What is Across's goal? What does the company aspire to become?

At Across, we're a collection of people who have come together to set off on a journey across the sea of knowledge in search of readers and fun adventures. Also, we're full of people who want to create that moment in which knowledge becomes wisdom. Across wishes for the knowledge inside our books to become absorbed in our readers' lives and eventually turn into wisdom. We also want to create books that are filled with the knowledge that readers actually need and not textbook facts. The company's biggest hope is that the knowledge that mankind has researched and studied over the years can be placed into books and later transform into wisdom that can make our lives plentiful and full of value.

Are there books from Across you would like to tell our overseas readers about? Please tell us of any representative works Across has.

First, we would like to recommend *Twelve Walks* by Professor Jeong Jae-seung of KAIST whose work focuses on bio and brain engineering. We feel *Twelve Walks* reflects Across's true colors out of all our books. The book contains 12 lectures discussing things like the wisdom the human brain has that enables it to make smart choices, and the insight science has, helping us to discover future opportunities in the Fourth Industrial Revolution. After its release, over 250,000 copies of the book were sold in the course of a year, making it one of Across's bestsellers.

In addition to this book, others we'd like to shed light on would be a collection of op-eds written by Professor Kim Young-min of Seoul National University called *Think of Death in the Morning*, Sungkyunkwan University Professor Oh Jong-woo's book on aesthetics *Words and Ideas of Art, When Words Hurt* by Professor Hong Sung-soo of Sookmyung Women's University that deals with hate issues, and lastly, essayist Eunyu's prose collection *Coming Words to Me*.



*Twelve Walks, Think of Death in the Morning,  
Words and Ideas of Art, When Words Hurt, Coming Words to Me*

When leafing through Across books, one can feel much thought was put into them to create really great content. Do you have special criteria you look for when searching for new manuscripts or authors?

Our top priority is never to publish books that might fool people with unverified knowledge or deceiving words. Our second priority is to release books that are based on accurate knowledge and research. Next would be to avoid publishing content that can stir up hate or prejudice. Lastly, we want to create books even ordinary

readers can understand, and not just specialists. These four criteria we strive to abide by.

**What are some keywords that can describe Across most accurately?**

We came up with the name of our company, Across, to express our goal to leap across boundaries and deliver new knowledge that comes from binding together ideas from different fields in an easy way to understand. This is why we believe 'crossover' and 'new knowledge' are the best keywords to describe us.

**Could you tell our readers about any new books Across is preparing?**

This summer we are planning a book called *North Korean Language Lesson* that deals with North Korean life and linguistics aimed to help preparations for the expansion of inter-Korean exchanges and an era of peace on the Korean peninsula. We also have in the works a book called *Reading Lesson for Parents* (working title) that aims to help children read on their own.

At times when we look at social media, some users leave comments saying they trust and read books from Across because of our brand. We feel this is the best compliment a publisher can receive, and we will continue our efforts to be the kind of publisher readers can trust.



## KOREAN AUTHORS

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### Illustrator Kim Hwan-Young

Warmth of life in Korea's countryside captures readers' hearts

Arranged by KIM Young-lhm

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Illustrator Kim Hwan-Young has captured readers' hearts with his beautiful work in children's tales like *Paper Rice* (Naznsan), *The Hen Who Dreamed She Could Fly* (Sakyejul) and *The Children Who Swallowed the Sun* (Changbi), as well as picture books including *The Butterfly Catching Father* (Gilbut Children), *Corn* (Sakyejul) and *Bbaeddaegi* (Changbi). His illustrations are known for their powerful brush strokes that can seem crude and rough at times, while his India-ink painting style conveys Korean emotions. Kim often opens up his atelier to readers, which is nestled inside a small countryside village in Boryeong, South Chungcheong Province. After leaving the city for the countryside, Kim created a studio for himself, and he has never stopped working since. In fact, he has been creating more artwork, as the artist has said his work

required him to have a sincerity that could only be gained from living outside the city. The books Kim has illustrated have a quaint, countryside beauty to them, and living outside the city has only made Kim's work more plentiful and polished.

Recently, Kim released his first book as both author and illustrator called *It's Warm* (Naznsan). At the time of this interview, his house was surrounded by greenery, and the illustrator himself said he was solely focused on his work as he co-exists with nature. Kim said he has had a keen interest in coming-of-age stories and *It's Warm* tells the story of how a child meets the world and what imprint the passage of time leaves on the child. Kim's *It's Warm* has an encouraging message for children, telling them whatever they choose to carry in their hearts or on their bodies should be things they want to keep for the rest of their lives.

Hello. It is wonderful to meet you through our webzine, *K-Book Trends*. Can you please introduce yourself to our readers?

Hello, I am Kim Hwan-Young, currently making picture books in a small city called Boryeong in South Chuncheong Province.

Was there a specific reason you decided to move to the countryside?

I think it was the influence of fairy tale books that led me to leave the city. In fairy tale books, oftentimes you find yourself needing to draw scenes from the countryside, but I grew up in Seoul, and

there were many aspects I simply wasn't aware of because I lacked that experience. Especially in the case of fairy tales written by Kwon Jung-saeng, there were many things I couldn't express because I hadn't grown up in the countryside. These things all led me here, and I think I am now 50 percent country folk.

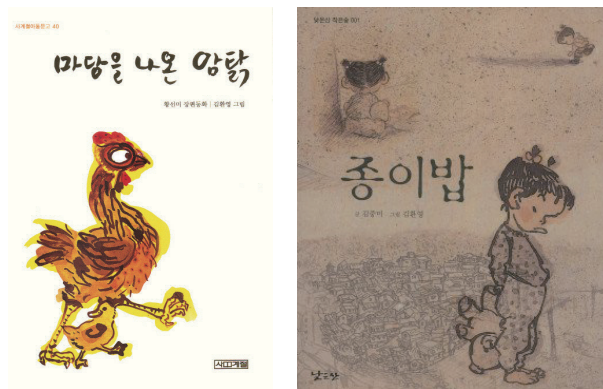


*It's Warm*

Through your existing work like *The Hen Who Dreamed She Could Fly*, *Paper Rice*, *Bbaeddaegi* and *Corn* as well as your most recent *It's Warm*, you've already reached so many readers. You've left a mark on readers who enjoy your work with broad, crude brushstrokes and Korean style of illustrating. What is most important to you when you illustrate books?

That would be the reality of things. This refers to my current style of living, as well. Many readers refer to *The Hen Who Dreamed She Could Fly* as my most representative work and this I started

illustrating in the city. I completed it in the countryside. I did my best when I was in Seoul, but I realized there were limits. To create paintings of rural scenery, I even resorted to carving my own brushes out of bamboo.



*The Hen Who Dreamed She Could Fly, Paper Rice*

After I moved to the countryside, the space around me as well as my living style changed and my experiences changed. As I started raising chickens, I learned things I didn't know before and small things, like blades of grass or flowers, started coming into my view. There was a huge disparity between what I had been painting in the city and what I was now personally experiencing. For example, just looking at the dirt and feeling it with your hands as you farm your crops are two very different things. I tried to express this in my work. Whether it's dirt or grass, touching it is quite different from looking at pictures of it, and I tried to convey that realness onto paper. My everyday experiences are linked to my work, and as an example in *Corn*, the tree you see in the first scene is an actual tree that stands at the entrance of my village. Like that tree, things that



are now linked to me in my life are expressed through my work. As my work reflects my life, I expect my illustrations will continue changing.

Your most recent publication *It's Warm* was written and illustrated by you. What was the message you wished to convey in the book, and what do you think is the most important part of the book?

As an illustrator, you receive a story from someone else, and you start painting. But from some 20 years ago, I accepted almost no stories written by someone else because I wanted to write about my life down in the countryside.

Through the years I realized there was a gap between my life and the stories I had to illustrate. For instance, I really wanted to do a great job illustrating *Bbaeddaegi* because it was a story about war for children and that in itself was stressful. I also felt apologetic towards the children who would eventually have to read it. Also, the illustrations were slow in coming as I knew very well the weight of life Kwon Jung-saeng, the author, had to endure. At the same time, I was also working on a peace picture book project with artists from China and Japan. I was the Korean representative, so this required much responsibility and a sense of duty. After working on these projects, I wanted to create a picture book that had a happy story. So, I began working on one, but I realized I was working from a want of happiness which I was deprived of in my childhood, not because I had been working on serious stories. My memories

were asking for happy stories from me, in both indirect and direct fashion. After this epiphany, I really threw myself into working on this happy project, which has now led me to this current stage in my life. This project was a process during which I healed and mended myself, and over that time, I felt a need to tell my story to readers. All these experiences I wanted to tell in *It's Warm*.

While you were working on your latest book, what did you feel was the difference between illustrating for someone else and writing and illustrating at the same time?

When you write your own story, there can be difficulties, but eventually, you're dipping into your own experiences. I also contemplated deeply on the message that my writing had. I wrote the story, but I also tried to look at it from a stranger's point of view. I kept asking myself questions about the story, going in and out of the story as the writer and a reader. In this process, I think I went to the far reaches of my consciousness then, like I was reaching for an unconscious state. In the case of *It's Warm*, the initial sketches for my illustrations were deeply affected by two broad elements, or memories that I have. One would be when I first saw a chicken trapped inside a wire cage at a market in Gapyeong and the other was when I saw a child whose birth name was 'potato'. When recalling memories, one may remember fleeting emotions from their experiences. I continuously tried to confirm whether the message I was telling was accurate, and in that process, you reach

an emotional peak, and I tried to stay in that mindset for as long as I could. When you're illustrating someone else's work, this doesn't occur easily, but I think it was possible because it was my story. When looking back on my previous experiences, *The Hen Who Dreamed She Could Fly* had good results because I felt one with the story. It's somewhat a physical reaction, and I think it happens more often when I write my own stories.

Your affection for *It's Warm* is probably quite substantial because it was the first book where you also wrote the story in addition to illustrating it. Were there any differences from your previous work?

In 2010, I published a collection of some 50 nursery rhymes. This was the very first time I had to express something in words and not through visual art. My art had been shown in competitions and exhibitions, but one day I stumbled upon poetry, and I started writing poems. When I created my collection of poems, the biggest hardship I had was working with words. The pressure was also on because these weren't spoken words that disappear once you say them, but written words that remain on record.

I overcame this internal hurdle and came to really express myself with *It's Warm*. I felt it was time for me to organize the content of my life. It was time for me to tell others what I had seen during my life and how I had viewed them. *It's Warm* stems from that thought process and is a story of life and growth. You see the wide and spacious bosom of a chicken in the story. A child named 'Potato'

plays in that bosom and comes to take part in hatching an egg. The creature that comes out of the egg grows with the child and naturally grows apart from its mother, and I wanted to cheer the child on in that process. I wanted to help that child remember the time it had with the chicken, create a permanent visual scene for that warm and plentiful time so that the child wouldn't forget it even as an adult.

I won't stop reinterpreting *It's Warm* because it was the first story I wrote and illustrated and I have much affection for it. An author can't help but endlessly observe what they're made up of inside. From this aspect, I think the book is good material for me to self-reflect.

**When you're selecting stories to illustrate, what are your most important criteria? We'd like to know if you have specific standards unique to yourself.**

I try to look for sincerity from the story and how polished it is. The biggest element for me, I think, would be sincerity. If you can't agree with the author's view of the world or values, then you can't illustrate their stories. I started illustrating for story-writers 30 years ago, and I've published over 100 books since. Even when I illustrated books to put food in my mouth, I needed to find an understanding of the story content. When that understanding is lacking, it's hard to express stories in art form. Even when you agree with the content and have an understanding, the illustrations



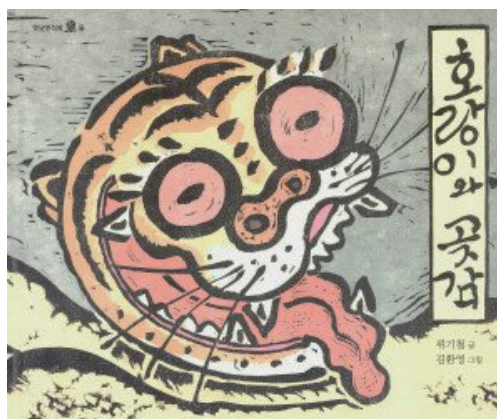
might not happen. Personally, I believe I have limitations when it comes to quiet stories. My illustrations go best with stories that are active.

Many associate your work with traditional Korean art, saying your illustrations have many overlapping elements. Could you list the pros and cons of that when it comes to exporting your work overseas?

I don't intentionally lean on Korean tradition when illustrating stories. I try to stick to drawing what I feel, and the things I've experienced and seen are reflected in my work. I am Korean, and the aspects of my life lived as a Korean person are probably why the Korean psyche can naturally be spotted in my work. It's not like I consciously remind myself how to illustrate in a certain style.

From the same plane, I don't have a specific strategy regarding overseas readers. I try to stay true to the emotions I have when illustrating. In Korean art, both uniqueness and universality exist. In this global day and age, art that embodies Korean emotions can divide people who like it and who don't whether that be at home or overseas.

In my case, I use bold colors and broad strokes and these make my art look more Korean. In the past, I tried to hide this strength in my art, but now I take pride in the uniqueness the bold colors and crude lines hold.



*The Tiger and Persimmon*

In the case of *The Tiger and Persimmon* (Kookmin Books), we received a lot of feedback from foreign readers. I think it was more so because the illustrations were made with carved wooden prints. It wasn't a deliberate decision to have the illustrations look like traditional Korean art - the illustrations came about after deep thinking on what they should look like. I actually think one should avoid the term 'Korean' when describing art because traditional art exists elsewhere too, and there are many elements that overlap between cultures. At times I ask myself whether the term 'Orientalism' that is used by the West to describe Asia is all-positive.

Your work was selected to represent Korea at the Biennial of Illustration Bratislava and also included in an artist reference book created by the Korean Board on Books for Young People (KBBY). Like these examples, your work is continuously being introduced to readers outside South Korea. How do you feel about the opportunities being given to you to reach foreign readers? We're also curious to learn if you have a sense of duty as an artist who is helping Korean children's books become known elsewhere.

The history of Korean picture books now spans roughly 30 years. In my case, I have worked as an artist and a poet. I've launched a magazine on nursery rhymes, and I've also worked with various formats like animations or comics. I feel a slight bit of pressure introducing myself to foreign readers as a picture book illustrator because I've dabbled in many other things. *The Hen Who Dreamed She Could Fly* was released in 30 different countries and for nearly all of the exported publications, the illustrations accompanied the story. It was surprising to me that all of these countries decided to accept the illustrations despite some cultural disparities. Often you will see stories exported, but illustrations rarely get the same treatment when it comes to children's books. It was a relief that there wasn't much pushback against the illustrations when the book was exported to other countries. The chickens, ducks or tree leaves were not detailed nor accurate, but I truly focused on the illustrations, and that is why readers are moved, I believe. When readers in other countries read the book, the book will deliver

Korean elements to them, and it is my hope that they will have positive thoughts when they think of Korea.



*Corn, Bbaeddaegi*

What do you think are the unique or appealing aspects of your art for readers outside South Korea?

That would be the distinctiveness South Korea has in general. *Corn* and *Bbaeddaegi* all take place during the Korean War. They're very real stories written for children. I think one of the things all mankind shares is pain. Contemporary Korean history includes the military rule of the Korean peninsula by Japan and the Korean War. The Korean War was a case in which a people were divided into two, aiming guns at each other. The Korean peninsula is still divided today, and that split is the result of that war.

I can't say war and military occupation of a country are 'appealing' aspects for foreigners. In Korea there were and are poor, oppressed people - people in pain. Readers outside Korea may have a difficult time reading these stories, but I feel the stories will help them



immensely to understand Korea. I'm sure they will feel illustrating modern history that people want to ignore and turn their eyes from is a meaningful task.

Now aside from painful stories from history, *It's Warm* with its happy and cozy story that takes place in a countryside market in Korea may entice non-Korean readers. This is why I'm curious what the overseas response will be like for the book.

**What kind of projects would you like to undertake going forward? Do you have a message you would like to tell children or readers in general with your work? Please tell us about your future plans.**

I will continue writing and drawing. I would like to open up my life and show the stories I have inside me. It took me a long time to complete something that is wholly mine, but I now want to keep expressing the space I live in and what goes on in my heart. My key themes will be life and peace, but I'm not sure what the format will be. I'm also curious to know what my future path will be like. Even if I tell stories on life and peace, it will eventually be a process in which I search for myself, as I go deep into my future projects. I am planning my second book after *It's Warm* and this too, carries a world that is whole and warm.

## Publishing Industry

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# Sales of key South Korean bookstores

Written by Baek Won-keun (President, Books & Society Research Institute)

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Today in many countries, online bookstores are a solid part of their publishing distribution networks. Up until the early 1990s, only physical bookstores of varying scale existed and readers' selection of books was based on book displays and how accessible the stores were. However, following the emergence of Amazon in 1995, online bookstores have solidified their position as key sales channels of the publishing industry in countries around the world. That change markedly took place in South Korea compared to other countries.

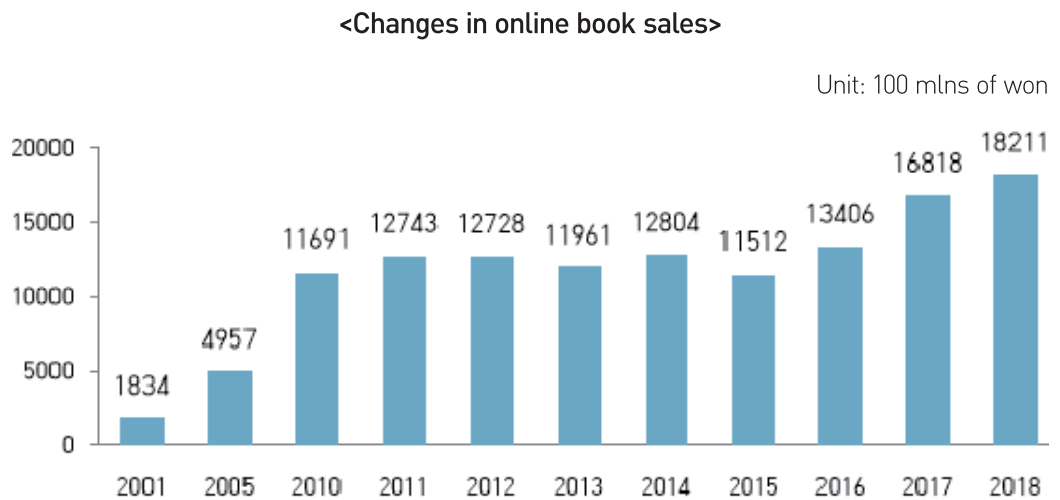
Currently, the market share of online bookstores in the United States stands at 45 percent, France 20 percent, Germany 18 percent and Japan 15 percent. In South Korea, that number is higher than 50 percent. South Korea is recognized as the country

with the highest market share for online bookstores in the world. Analysts see South Korea as an anomaly because a local version of Amazon.com has yet to exist in South Korea and the nation has a government-enforced fixed price policy on books.

After online bookstores first emerged in South Korea in 1997, they grew rapidly due to book discounts, with the fixed price policy largely ignored. Before the current amended version of the fixed price policy was enacted, there was no cap on book price discounts 18 months after a book's initial publication. From late 2014, regulations on book price discounts were strengthened, leading to a temporary decline in sales for online bookstores before they found strong growth again. How was this possible at a time when the publishing industry on the whole was not expanding?

According to the current fixed price policy for books in South Korea, online bookstores are allowed to provide up to a 10 percent discount on books and 5 percent of the book's price in customer loyalty rewards points. However, physical bookstores usually pay around 10 percent more for books from publishers or wholesalers compared to online vendors and are unable to provide the same discounts for customers. This gap in actual sales prices has had a crucial influence on the selection the public makes when buying books. Very few readers will choose to buy books at their neighborhood bookstores when they can get books for up to 15 percent cheaper online. At one point in South Korea, there were

6,000 physical bookstores, but now there are around 2,500 and no matter the size of the bookstore, all of them are experiencing difficulties.



Source: Statistics Korea, Online shopping trends survey (Survey scale expanded as of 2017)

Data from South Korea's Financial Supervisory Service, the nation's financial watchdog, show aggregate sales for all six major bookstore chains stood at 1.8254 trillion won in 2018, up 6.6 percent from 2017. Among those, South Korea's largest bookstore chain Kyobo Book Centre recorded 568.4 billion won worth of sales that year, both online and offline sales combined. Its total sales rose 4.3 percent from a year earlier thanks to the expansion of some of its locations, but the company's operating profit and operating profit ratio both saw declines. Kyobo provides discounts for books on its website, but books at its physical stores are sold at full price. However, the bookstore chain provides a service in which customers can order a book online at a lower price and later

visit one of the bookstore's chain locations to receive the book. It is difficult to find other countries with fixed price policies for books where discounts and full price sales co-exist.

Following Kyobo, the second to fourth largest book vendors in South Korea (YES24, Aladin, Interpark) are all companies that focus primarily on online sales. Instead of selling new releases in physical stores, these companies operate used bookstores. Especially, YES24 and Aladin have steadily expanded their offline secondhand bookstores in addition to their online sales. Thanks to this strategy, these companies have been able to offset flagging sales of new releases with sales of secondhand books. Due to government regulation that bars conglomerates from opening stores that sell new releases to protect smaller, regional bookstores, large book vendors have found a way to beef up their returns via secondhand book sales. Large online bookstore chains such as these also have services where members can buy and sell used books among themselves aside from the company's used book offerings. This too is also a characteristic difficult to find in other countries outside South Korea. Increased used book sales can lead to a decline in demand for new releases, and that effect has noticeably taken place in South Korea as used bookstores have flourished in the past several years. In the case of Aladin, secondhand book sales have surely had a positive impact on improving the sales of the online book vendor.



The country's top online bookseller YES24 saw sales at 485.6 billion won in 2018, jumping 10.4 percent from a year earlier. Aladin also saw a 10.1 percent increase in 2018 on-year, with sales at 356.2 billion won. Book sales at online shopping website Interpark soared 19.2 percent to 188.0 billion won in 2018 in annual terms. Aladin's operating profit margins was the best out of all the major bookstore brands last year at 4.7 percent. Aladin is not only one of the country's top three bookstore chains regardless of online and offline sales, but it has also been boosting efforts to expand its secondhand bookstore chain. Meanwhile, operating profit ratios for Kyobo and YES24 both stood at less than 1 percent last year. Youngpoong Bookstore Inc, which had the second largest profit in the country in 2018 for an offline bookstore company saw sales at 144.3 billion won, up 5.7 percent from the previous year. Seoul Mungo (Bandinlunis) trailed with sales at 82.7 billion won last year, recording a 25.1 percent fall.

<Sales at South Korea's largest online, offline bookstore companies>

Brand name	Feature	Sales (in mlns of won)		Pctg change
		2017	2018	
Kyobo Book Centre		545,006	568,448	4.3
YES24	Online bookstore	439,735	485,629	10.4
Aladin	Online bookstore+used books	323,669	356,292	10.1
Interpark	Online bookstore	157,765	188,010	19.2
Youngpoong Bookstore		136,502	144,304	5.7
Seoul Mungo		110,455	82,685	-25.1
Total		1,713,132	1,825,368	6.6

Online bookstores have also been aggressive in selling e-books. Kyobo, YES24 and Interpark have all created their own devices dedicated to e-books. However, in South Korea, e-books are usually original digital content like web novels or webtoons, rather than digital versions of paper books. However, other platforms for these digital publications have made it difficult for bookstores to get ahead in the industry, so bookstores have been resorting to launching monthly subscription services to increase their e-book market shares and are expanding their services to include audiobooks.

## South Korea's Key Publishing Related Organizations

Written by Won-keun Baek(President of Books & Society Institute)

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In South Korea's publishing industry, there are many private organizations. Inside these organizations are members who work for competing businesses, but inside the groups they seek interests and order for the greater good. They also help pass on voices from inside the industry to a larger audience. The following are organizations key to South Korea's publishing industry linked to production, distribution, sales and research.

The most representative of publishers' groups would be the Korean Publishers Association, founded in 1947. Inside the group are all kinds of publishers, big and small. So far the association has worked towards creating an order for distribution within South Korea as well as resolving several issues related to the publishing environment. It has also been a driving force for projects aimed at

developing the industry on a whole. The association has acted as a window for book deliveries to National Library of Korea and the National Assembly Library. The statistics that have been collected so far regarding these deliveries are extensively used as publishing and issuance data. For communication and external relations, the association publishes a monthly newsletter as well as a yearbook. It also hosts international book fairs and participates in others. Every June, it hosts the Seoul international book fair. It also creates special exhibits for Korean books at book fairs in Frankfurt, Bologna, London, Paris, Beijing and Tokyo. On every October 11, which is Book Day in South Korea marking the completion date of the Tripitaka Koreana(UNESCO World Heritage Site), the association holds a ceremony to award publishers who have played prominent roles in the industry. It is also responsible for projects linked to annual book recommendations for underage students, South Korean book exports and handing out awards to model book collectors.

Meanwhile, the Korea Publisher Society founded in 1998 is an organization of publishers who specialize in independent volumes which also operates the Seoul Book Institute as an auxiliary institution, aiming to cultivate publishing professionals. The curriculum of the institute spans everything from publishing planning, editing, and marketing to design. Also on every World Book Day(April 23) the Society holds celebratory events to boost reading. Previously the Society used to publish bestseller lists in

major bookstores every week, although it does not anymore. It has continued to strive for a rational publishing distribution system and also operated a reading university. Every year, the society hosts the Asian Publishers Fellowship Program and invites young publishers from all over Asia to shore up networking, encouraging them to discuss current events and issues. Every December, the Society selects the publisher of the year to recognize them for their efforts in the development of the industry.

Aside these, there are many other publishing related organizations, including the Korea Academy Publishing Association, Korea Science & Technology Publisher's Association, Korean Study Materials Association, Korea Christian Publishers Association, Association of Korean University Presses, the Korean Association of Children's Book Publishers and Korea Publishing Marketers Conference. In addition to these, there are other groups formed by publishers for greater public good, like the Korean Publishers Cooperative founded in 1958 that plays a key role in publications distribution, logistics and supply. This group was commissioned by the district officials of Mapo-gu in Seoul to operate the Gyeongui Line Book Street.

Meanwhile, the Korean Publishing Foundation founded in 1969 provides financial support including loans for publishers and projects for the broader benefit of the publishing industry. The Korean Publishing Research Institute founded in 1986



is a research facility that carries out study projects regarding publishing and it hosts publishing forums and hands out related awards. It also conducts reading status surveys of Korean citizens. The Book Trade Promotion Center founded in 2003 hosts international forums and partakes in publishing informatization projects. Bookcity Culture Foundation founded in 2003 manages Paju Book City sitting close to Seoul and the Asia Publishing Culture Information Center. It launches a children's book event every spring and in the fall, it holds the Paju Booksori Festival and hosts international publishing forums.

Founded in 1958, the Korea Federation of Bookstore Association represents South Korean bookstores. It especially acts as a voice for small to medium sized bookstores and has made efforts for fixed book prices, informatization of bookstores, national bookstore surveys and bookstore schools. In 2016, it declared November 11 as Bookstore Day and is currently working to create a certification system for regional bookstores to supply libraries.

The group Citizen Action for Reading Culture jointly founded in 2001 by relative organizations, is a civic group that promotes reading. It has been responsible for the "Library of Miracles" project, aimed at creating libraries for children only, as well as other efforts to create and manage libraries. The group works to boost reading culture inside the country by launching projects like "Book Start" and operating book clubs in addition to other

reading-related projects that includes government and private organizations.

the Korean Publishing Science Society founded in 1969 is a distinguished academic body that carries out research related to publishing. Its key programs include hosting regular academic conventions, issuing academic journals, hosting publishing policy roundtables, hosting international academic publishing conferences including those with China and giving out awards.

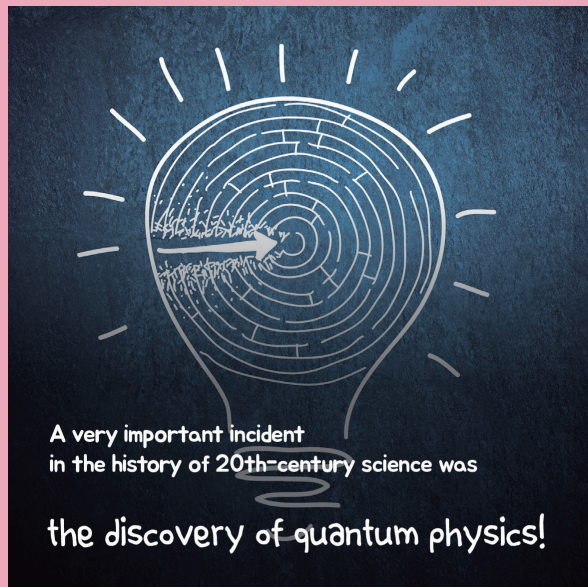
Numerous other groups apart from these mentioned are also currently making efforts towards expanding the publishing culture in South Korea, working in their own respective areas. There are critical views saying there are too many small groups jumbled together, but ‘variety’ and ‘harmony’ are values respected within the publishing society.

\* The above article was republished from *K-Book Trends* No. 6 released November 2017.

## New Books

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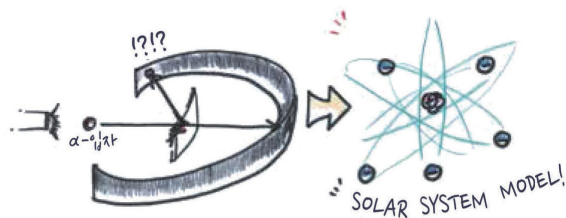
# Before Overtaxing Oneself



What is quantum physics?

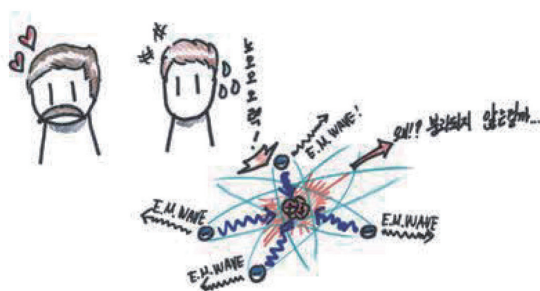


This would be the result of much thinking on  
how electrons move  
inside atoms that form all matter



But has mankind ever seen electrons move  
with the naked eye?  
Of course not!

Then what can we actually see?



Quantum physics can seem difficult  
but if you want to learn more in a fun way...





## Science Cookie

is a science community that  
communicates with the world  
using science as its framework



If you have yet to really savor  
science through the history of science,  
you haven't discovered the fun of it yet!

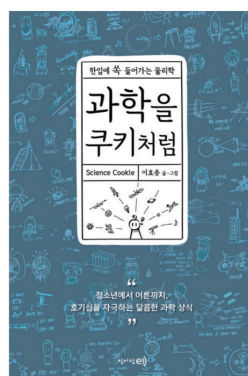




Science, tough and hard?  
Make it fun like eating cookies!



Youtuber Science Cookie's latest release  
<Science Cookie>  
Helps readers take one-step closer to science



**Science Cookie**

Author: Lee Hyo-Jong  
Publisher: Chungaram\_Media  
Genre: Science

## Best Sellers

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# South Korea's June Bestsellers

**Bestselling books at Aladin and YES24,  
the country's top online bookstores**

Written by Choi Ha-Yeong

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The top two bestselling books in the fourth week of June at South Korea's biggest online bookstores were both essay collections - author Kim Young-ha's *Why Travel* (Munhakdongne) and Tottenham Hotspur footballer Son Heung-min's *Thoughts While Playing Football* (Brainstore). Kim's *Why Travel* topped the charts thanks to a cover re-design just in time for the summer holidays. The book, released roughly two months ago, has been enjoying steady popularity since. Son's *Thoughts While Playing Football* is thought to have received a boost after Son recently played in several football matches as a national representative.






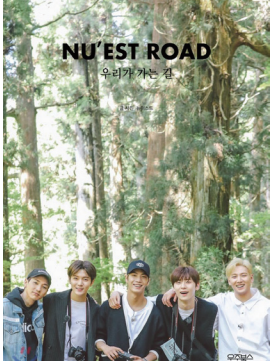
These two books weren't the only essay collections on the bestseller list for June. According to Aladin, Youtubers Park Mak-rye and Kim Yura's *Park Mak-rye, Can't Die Like This* (Wisdom House) was the fifth bestselling book in June while in 8th place stood Sallie Tisdale's *Advice For Future Corpses* (Being). At YES24, K-pop boy band NU'EST's *NU'EST ROAD, The Road We Go* (Woozoo Books) jumped to third place in June.


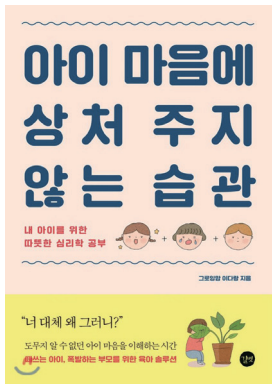

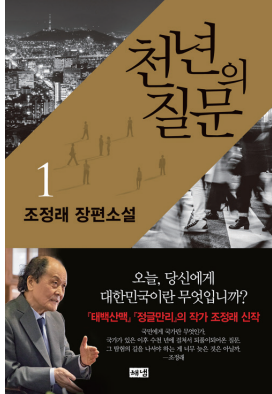


In addition to essay collections, novels were also in demand among readers. Jeon Min-hee's *Children of the Rune - Winterer Set* (Elixir) was the third bestselling book at Aladin while following that was Kim Ae-ran's *A Good Name to Forget* (Yollimwon). Jeon was featured in last month's *K-Book Trends* under KOREAN AUTHORS. In seventh place on Aladin's bestseller list was Jo Jung-rae's *The Question of a Thousand Years 1* (Hainaim). *The Question of a Thousand Years 1, 2* (Hainaim) stood at fifth and tenth place on YES24's bestseller chart in June.

Both bookstore chains projected the popularity of essays and novels would go on for the foreseeable future as few other books on their bestseller lists were of different genres.

\* The following bestseller lists were comprised from data taken from websites of YES24 and Aladin as of the fourth week of June.

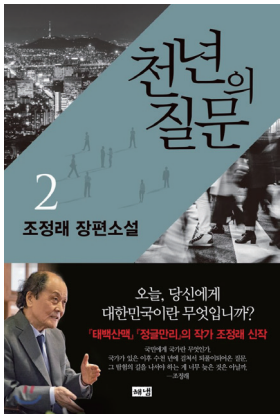
## <Top 10 Bestsellers>

No.	Aladin	YES24
1		
	<p><b><i>Why Travel (Vacation edition)</i></b>            Author   Kim Young-ha            Publisher   Munhakdongne            Genre   Essay</p>	<p><b><i>Why Travel (Vacation edition)</i></b>            Author   Kim Young-ha            Publisher   Munhakdongne            Genre   Essay</p>
2		
	<p><b><i>Thoughts While Playing Football</i></b>            Author   Son Heung-min            Publisher   Brainstore            Genre   Essay</p>	<p><b><i>Thoughts While Playing Football</i></b>            Author   Son Heung-min            Publisher   Brainstore            Genre   Essay</p>
3		
	<p><b><i>Children of the Rune – Winterer Set (7 Books)</i></b>            Author   Jeon Min-hee            Publisher   Elixir            Genre   Fantasy</p>	<p><b><i>NU'EST ROAD, The Road We Go</i></b>            Author   NU'EST            Publisher   Woozoo Books            Genre   Essay</p>

No.	Aladin	YES24
4	 <p><i>A Good Name to Forget</i>  Author   Kim Ae-ran  Publisher   Yollimwon  Genre   Novel</p>	 <p><i>How Not to Hurt Children's Feelings</i>  Author   Lee Da-rang  Publisher   Gilbut  Genre   Education</p>
5	 <p><i>Park Mak-rye, Can't Die Like This</i>  Author   Park Mak-rye, Kim Yu-ra  Publisher   Wisdom House  Genre   Essay</p>	 <p><i>The Question of a Thousand Years 1</i>  Author   Jo Jung-rae  Publisher   Hainaim  Genre   Novel</p>
6	 <p><i>Zombie High School Comics 13</i>  Author   Yoo Dae-young (Written by),  Lime Studio (Illustrations)  Publisher   Gametoon  Genre   Comics</p>	 <p><i>Depuis l'au-Dela 1</i>  Author   Bernard Werber  Publisher   Open Books  Genre   Novel</p>



No.	Aladin	YES24
7	 <p><i>The Question of a Thousand Years 1</i>            Author   Jo Jung-rae            Publisher   Hainaim            Genre   Novel</p>	 <p><i>Depuis l'au-Dela 2</i>            Author   Bernard Werber            Publisher   Open Books            Genre   Novel</p>
8	 <p><i>Advice For Future Corpses</i>            Author   Sallie Tisdale            Publisher   Being            Genre   Essay</p>	 <p><i>Genius Butt Detective and the Curry Mystery</i>            Author   Troll            Publisher   Mirae&amp;Iseum            Genre   Picture Book</p>
9	 <p><i>Depuis l'au-Dela 1</i>            Author   Bernard Werber            Publisher   Open Books            Genre   Novel</p>	 <p><i>Reading Strategy for Studying</i>            Author   Choi Seung-pil            Publisher   Chaek Guru            Genre   Humanities</p>

No.	Aladin	YES24
10	 <p><i>Depuis l'au-Dela 2</i>  Author   Bernard Werber  Publisher   Open Books  Genre   Novel</p>	 <p><i>The Question of a Thousand Years 2</i>  Author   Jo Jung-rae  Publisher   Hainaim  Genre   Novel</p>

## Book Summary

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# Export Prospects of Korean Books

## KPIPA's Choice for Supporting Abstract · Sample Translation

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### *The Neighbors at Happy Apartment*

#### 1. Publication Details

Imprint | Crayon House Co., Ltd  
 Title | The Neighbors at Happy Apartment  
 Author | Moon Mi-young  
 Illustrator | Kim Soo-yeon  
 Genre | Children's book  
 Format | 150×217  
 Binding | Paperback  
 Pages | 136pages  
 ISBN | 9788955476255



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#### 3. Marketing Information

Keyword | neighbors; communication; problem solving  
 Target Readership | Children

#### **4. About the Author and Illustrator**

Author - Moon Mi-young

Moon Mi-young previously worked as a newspaper reporter for twelve years before making her debut as a children's author by winning the grand prize in a major children's writing competition in Korea. She is the recipient of the Most Promising Author Award of the Purun Literature Prize. Her publications include *The Sun Under the Ocean*; *Kwonmin, Jangmin and Pyomin*; *Dream Factory in Cupboard Land*; *Children Reading Independent Newspapers*; *We Are All Owners*; *Do We Have Human Rights?* and *Bow-wow My Friend*.

Illustrator - Kim Soo-yeon

Kim Soo-yeon enjoyed drawing from a young age before deciding to dedicate her life to becoming a painter. After majoring in handicrafts at Sookmyung Women's University, she went on to study ceramics at Hongik University Graduate School. By conveying stories in her illustrations, she hopes to help increase children's empathy and help their imagination take flight. Her credits include *Smartphone Supervisor*, *Reserved Class*, and *Dog's Woes*.

#### **5. About the Book**

Seung-jun is embarrassed about living in the shabby, old Happy Apartment building. Then one day, someone leaves a black plastic bag full of bread on the front door handle of his apartment. Together with his friends, Jang-doo and So-hee who have recently moved in, he goes about looking for the 'Angel of the Front Door Handle.' Along the way, the trio wisely resolves a number of neighborly issues such as noise between floors and waste separation. Once Seung-jun finds the Angel of the Front Door Handle, he feels the warmth of his mother's love that he'd never realized before, and the Happy Apartment complex becomes a better place to live. From the way the children actively tackle the problems of grown-ups, it becomes clear what is really needed to resolve community problems. Rather than focusing too much on the problem itself and criticizing each other, we must think about how best to resolve our differences by starting with small things.

## *The Diary of the Puppy Mr. Bae*

### 1. Publication Details

Imprint | Crayon House Co., Ltd  
Title | The Diary of the Puppy Mr. Bae  
Author | Lim Jeong-jin  
Illustrator | Lee Eun-ju  
Genre | Children's book  
Format | 150×210  
Binding | Paperback  
Pages | 128pages  
ISBN | 9788955476248



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### 3. Marketing Information

Keyword | family love; puppy; diary  
Target Readership | Children

### 4. About the Author and Illustrator

Author - Lim Jeong-jin

Born in Seoul, Lim Jeong-jin studied Korean literature at Ewha Womans University. Her writing career began in 1986 when she won the First Prize in the Marronnier Women's Writing Contest. She won the Gyeongdong Children's Literary Prize in 1988 and published her first book Happiness Does Not Come from Grades. In 2013, she won the Korea Children's Literature Award for her book Baudeogi. Having previously worked at a magazine and a TV station, she now teaches creative writing at Seoul Digital University and various cultural centers in addition to writing children's books. Her publications include Khan the Cowardly Woolf, Mom and Dad Apart, My Little Big Brother, The Mermaid Who Loved the Shark, House with A Low Ceiling, Here Comes a Tiger, My Friend Croppy, Cloud Bus to World's End Village, Briquette House, Kkwolcheol the Python Who Doesn't Want to Become A Dragon.

Illustrator - Lee Eun-ju

Lee Eun-ju majored in landscape architecture but later studied animation and illustration. She hopes to present illustrations in children's books with healthy heartwarming messages. Her credits include I Found Kongwi with Flower



Shoes, Snow Queen, Snow White, Jack and the Beanstalk, Being Friends with Musicians, and The Crown Prince's First Love.

## 5. About the Book

Minsik lives alone with his father who runs a photo studio. One day, he gets a puppy and names him Mr. Bae. They welcome Mr. Bae into the family. Living with an animal companion helps Minsik forget his loneliness and become more responsible. Children will enjoy and easily identify with the stories in this book written in the form of a diary of both the warm-hearted Minsik and the cheery smart puppy, Mr. Bae.

Taking care of others is never an easy task, especially when it comes to a puppy who cannot talk. It's certainly not a decision we can make on impulse. This children's book, written from a puppy's point of view, helps us imagine how our animal companions might respond to what we humans say and do. It offers an opportunity to put ourselves another's shoes.

## *Safety Detective Who Sees Ghosts*

### 1. Publication Details

Imprint | Crayon House Co., Ltd  
Title | Safety Detective Who Sees Ghosts  
Author | Seo Yun LEE  
Illustrator | Min Jun KIM  
Genre | Children  
Format | 175×225  
Binding | Paperback  
Pages | 132pages  
ISBN | 9788955476118



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### 3. Marketing Information

Keyword | Safety, safe life, ghost, detective  
Target Readership | Children

#### **4. About the Author and Illustrator**

Author - Seo Yun LEE

Seo Yun Lee teaches at an elementary school in Seoul and also works as an EBS instructor. With her belief that "happy children makes a happy Korea", Lee meets thousands of children while teaching and tries to find the best way to educate them. Lee has appeared on the EBS TV program Educational Debate and gives lectures to corporations, public organizations, libraries, and schools. She has authored Tips for Studying during Vacation for Elementary Schoolers, Strange Junk Shop Selling Happiness, and Magic Camera that Finds You a Dream.

Illustrator - Min Jun KIM

Min Jun Kim studied Korean painting at university. He debuted as a picture book illustrator when he received the silver prize at the Publication Art Awards in 2000. Kim has illustrated Exploring Life through Vacation, My Puppy Jjoljjo!, and Right Girls' Counseling Center. He has also written and illustrated Rainy Day.

#### **5. About the Book**

After the death of his best friend Hyeon Su, Dohun starts studying safety accidents and how they are caused, which earns him the nickname "safety detective" from his friends. This book draws in children with the subject of ghosts and a detective to teach them about safety knowledge. Readers will be absorbed in the story through the different chilling settings for different ghosts and the chilling incidents behind the deaths of the ghosts. Investigating along with Dohun, readers find out the truth behind each ghost's death before moving on to the next incident. The author used what she has experienced teaching children when writing this story. This book is written in easy and short sentences so that it is easy to read and relatable to children. In addition, the book contains "Safety Detective Dohun's Classroom for Safety", which is designed to help children check how well they are informed on safety matters and learn common safety knowledge.

## *The Largest Library in the World*

### 1. Publication Details

Imprint | Crayon House Co., Ltd  
Title | The Largest Library in the World  
Author | Eun Kyoung LIM  
Illustrator | Yeon Ju KIM  
Genre | Picture book  
Format | 240×230  
Binding | Hardcover  
Pages | 40pages  
ISBN | 9788955476200



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### 3. Marketing Information

Keyword | Library; world; books; life; experience; social relationships; communication  
Target Readership | Children

### 4. About the Author and Illustrator

Author - Eun Kyoung LIM

Eun Kyoung Lim graduated from Ewha Womans University with a major in French education and studied Creative Writing at the graduate school of Myongji University. She made her writing debut when she won the new writer prize in the children's literature category in 2003. She has authored The Snow Queen and 100 Snowflakes, One's Courtesy Is a Mirror to See His Image, and Whoops, Parasites in My Body. She has translated The Best Child, Mom's Bag Is a Monster, and You are Always My Friend.

Illustrator -Yeon Ju KIM

Yeon Ju Kim says that she always tries to be a kind neighbor or friend. She does illustrations to discover the fun in daily routines and to share laughter with others. She hopes that her drawings in this book will make children happy in nature, just like the story in the book. She has illustrated Fall into Spring.

## 5. About the Book

For Nuri, books are a medium through which he communicates with the world. He dreams of discovering and exploring the wider world through reading, which is why he wants to go to the largest library in the world. However, his mom is worried about him always reading books.

One day, in his dream, Nuri travels in a big book and goes to the largest library in the world. He enters the world inside the book, where he encounters a marvelous universe, an underground kingdom, and dinosaurs from hundreds of millions of years ago. Then Nuri walks into the real world where we live. He sees beautiful nature and a peaceful village, and vividly experiences surprising events in a country far from his home across the ocean.

The largest library in the world can be literally an enormous library filled with countless numbers of books, but it can also be our neighborhood, our society, or the Earth, that is, this world itself.

When children are exhausted with reading and studying, the author hopes that instead of becoming absorbed in their smartphones, they will go outside and feel and experience the world around them.

This book guides children to have a relaxed mind in which they can experience the many stories in the world.

## *We All Have Our Firsts*

### 1. Publication Details

Imprint | Crayon House Co., Ltd

Title | We All Have Our Firsts

Author | Eul Ho KIM

Illustrator | Jin Ho SHIN

Genre | Picture book

Format | 240×230

Binding | Hardcover

Pages | 40pages

ISBN | 9788955476262



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### **3. Marketing Information**

Keyword | Moms; love for family; life; responsibility; caring

Target Readership | Children

### **4. About the Author and Illustrator**

Author - Eul Ho KIM

Eul Ho Kim is a reading coach who believes that you have to have passion, tenacity, and purpose when it comes to reading. He has worked as a head professor of learning coaching department of a graduate school. He was also the chairman of the Korea Reading Culture Promotion Association, which initiated a project to select 100,000 families with good reading habits under the slogan of "Reading Korea". Kim received a presidential citation at the 21st Reading Culture Awards for contributing to the promotion of reading culture. He has authored Power of Reading Discovered through Transcription, Reading and Studying Techniques, and Happiness Class for Dads.

Illustrator -Jin Ho SHIN

Jin Ho Shin studied plastic art at university and graduate school. He works as an illustrator for picture books and other works. Shin's illustrations mainly express the preciousness of ordinary life and the beauty of life. He publishes his illustrations as a series under the title Simple Life on Naver Grafolio.

### **5. About the Book**

Just like children do when they take their first steps or learn how to ride a bicycle for the first time, first-time moms undergo a lot of trial and error while mothering. However, they muster the courage for their children and grow up with their children. For everyone, life is a journey. Although every one of us walks down unknown roads in our lives, if we care about and look out for one another with a smile, we will never be lonely on the roads. This book offers comfort and support to not only moms and their children but also to those who have hard times in their life.



## Masala

### 1. Publication Details

Imprint | SANZINI

Title | Masala

Author | Seo Seongran

Genre | Literature

Format | 140×205

Binding | paperback

Pages | 240pages

ISBN | 9788965455820

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### 3. Marketing Information

Keyword | Novel; Novelist; Creativity; Writing; India; Travel

Media Review and Advertisement | The description of India's scenery is rich and full of detail, as it is based on the author's travels through India. – The Busan Ilbo / The sweet and delicious aroma of masala will stay with readers long after they put down the book. – Yonhap News

### 4. About the Author

Seo was born in Iksan in 1967, and grew up in Sadang-dong in Seoul. She studied Korean literature at Seogyung University, and received her MD in creative writing at Chung-ang University.

She debuted as the recipient of the Silcheon Literature New Writer award with [Grandma's Peace], in 1996. Her books include [A Room Memory], [Paprika], [A Bedless Woman], and she has also written novels such as [A Moon That Never Goes Away], [A Special Guest], [The Seventh Twenty Years Old], [A Good-Year Restaurant Recipe], [Sseu-eong], etc.

### 5. About the Book

According to Indian myth, Ganesha, the god of wisdom who has the head of an elephant and the body of a human is selected as the perfect scribe to transcribe the poem of Vyasa. Vyasa recites his poem without pausing, and when his writing tool breaks while transcribing, Ganesha pulls out his tooth to continue transcribing.



Inspired by this Indian myth, the author delves into a wild question that could very well be regarding herself.

“Would a partner like Ganesha who helped Vyasa’s poems find its way to print, make it possible for me to write a brilliant piece of work?”

All writers probably have the perfect “writer’s room” that they dream of. With this question, Lee Seol suddenly is lucky enough to get this kind of perfect “writer’s room” and the author follows the traces of Lee Seol, looking for answers.

“I” am searching for the writer Lee Seol, who vanished after finishing her short story, [The Novelist’s Wife], in the “writer’s room.” Lee Seol has left me with an unfinished novel, which begins with the strange encounter at the Shiva café, with a man named Jin who wears a necklace of Ganesha.

Lee Seol accepts the man’s offer to enter the writer’s room. And the writer’s room provides the perfect environment to focus on her writing without being bothered by anyone. However, she experiences conflict with the lady who comes to cook and clean, and her writing is halted.

I follow along the unfinished story and try to track Lee Seol and Jin, which brings me to encounter the novel’s characters one by one. On one particular day during this search, I notice I’m being followed by a stranger with an orange shawl. I learn that the maid who appears in the novel is the wife of the novelist M, and predict that the reason Lee Seol is gone is because of the novelist’s wife. I come to suffer memory loss due to an automobile accident, and have to be tested for severe headaches and ear ringing. I realize that a tumor has been growing in my head since long ago. In the course of treatment, I am able to remember Lee Seol, her novel, and the meeting with novelist M. And I embark on the task of finishing the story Lee Seol could never finish, in a new way.

## *Travels in Southern China*

### 1. Publication Details

Imprint | SANZINI

Title | Travels in Southern China

Author | Lee Junghee

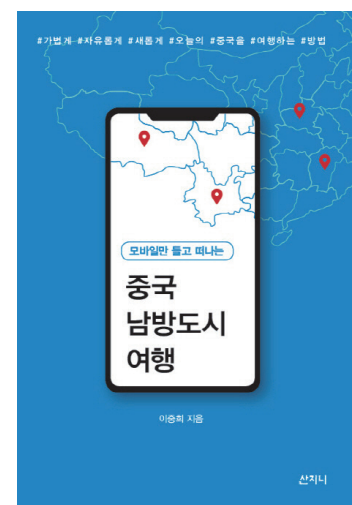
Genre | Humanities

Format | 152×225

Binding | paperback

Pages | 308pages

ISBN | 9788965455868



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## **3. Marketing Information**

Keyword | China; Travel; Southern China, Mobile Apps; Economy; Society; 4th Industry

Media Review and Advertisement | This book introduces how cities in the Southern region of China are transforming into world-class cities of tourism and economic development. – The Busan Ilbo / It feels like a special, comprehensive tour of the Southern cities of China with the guidance of an expert on Chinese society and economy. – News 1

## **4. About the Author**

Lee Junghee studied business administration at Yonsei University and received his MD in sociology from Brown University in the US. After being a researcher at the Daewoo Economic Research Center, he is currently a professor in the dept. of Chinese studies at Pukyong National University. He is also president of the Asian Conference of Korea. He was a visiting scholar to Peking University in 2004, Renmin University of China in 2008, and SunYat-sen University between 2017-2018, and has frequently visited China for 25 years, conducting his research. He has co-authored [Chinese Consumerism in the age of the Pacific rim] (Korean Studies Information), [Modern Chinese Society] (Sejong Publishers), and [Understanding Modern China] (Nanam Publishers), and has written numerous papers on China.

## **5. About the Book**

How much do we really know about modern China? The Southern cities of China have led the way for open door policies and the 4th industrial revolution, but they are not as well-known as their Northern counterparts. The author takes the reader along as he roams around the Southern region of China for 5 months, with nothing but his mobile phone.

This is not a travel guide. Readers won't find special information about tourist attractions, hotels or restaurants, nor will they find eye-catching photos. However, readers will be able to understand just how much of a turbulent change these cities are going through to become world-class tourism cities and economic leaders. The author, a researcher of modern Chinese society and economy, has a clear point of view. Readers are offered a picture of the economic policies of regional governments, promotion of local brandings, tourism policies which support local economies by attracting domestic and

international tourism, educational policies which emphasize the key points of the 4th industrial revolution, and the overall future direction of China. Most travel guides about China are limited to Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong and Macau. However, considering the vastness of the country, the variety of cultures and people, the long and turbulent history, other areas also spark great curiosity.

Some of these cities are Shanghai and Xiamen, which are the main background for the history and culture of modern China, economic zones like Shenzhen and Zhuhai, which are the picture of capitalism with its modern Western-style cityscapes, Hangzhou, which holds the future of China's 4th industrial revolution with its Xixi Park of Alibaba, Guilin and Huangshan which are cities that hold onto vast and awe-inspiring natural beauty, Dali and Lijiang which seem like cities from the past, Wuhan, which feels similar to the US city of Chicago and is also where many prestigious universities are located, Xishuangbanna, where there are natural surroundings, culture, and different races that are similar to those found in Southeast Asia.

Some are famous tourist cities such as Huangshan and Hongcun, but some are significantly historic sites that are not as well-known. Readers also experience the treat of taking a look at the most coveted universities in Mafengwo, which is also of a great point of interest to the author.

## *Ruru-hunters*

### 1. Publication Details

Imprint | Sigongsa Co., Ltd.

Title | Ruru-hunters

Author | Jungyoon Huh

Illustrator | Jin-ho Jung

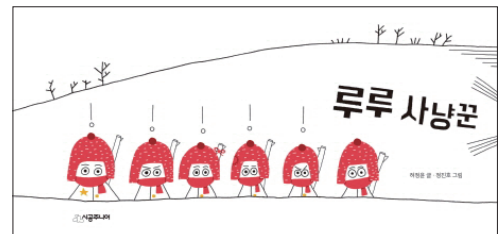
Genre | Picture book

Format | 268×125

Binding | Hardcover

Pages | 48pages

ISBN | 9788952788993



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### 3. Marketing Information

Target Readership | Ages 3-5

### 4. About the Author and Illustrator

Author - Jungyoon Huh

Jungyoon Huh leads a busy professional life as a picture-book writer, creative education developer, content creator, and professor at a university. She is the author a number of books, including Koji: The Booger Awaiting First Snow; Koji: The Booger Who Escaped a Nostril; Koji the Booger; Piggyback Rides; Ruru-hunters; Transparent Trees; Yellow Boots; and Monkey School. Transparent Trees was selected for the White Ravens' catalogue of international children & youth literature.

Illustrator - Jin-ho Jung

Comforted by books during a hospital stay as a child, Jin-ho Jung dreamt of living with stories. He won the 2015 Bologna Children's Book Award Ragazzi Award for his first picture book, Look Up!, and received the 2016 Golden Goblin Award and a Special Mention in the Art, Architecture and Design category at the 2018 Ragazzi Award for Wall. His works include Three-second Diving; The Star and I; and Yellow Boots.

### 5. About the Book

On the wide snow fields in the Arctic, eight hunters are gathered. They have only one reason for being here: to catch a very special spotted bear, Ruru. Among them, one hunter standing apart from the gang looks somewhat suspicious. He, as if to have Ruru for himself, carefully watches the other seven hunters and asks them questions: "What are you guys doing here?" "What's happened?" Each of the naïve-looking hunters kindly answers their dubious rival's questions, except for one hunter, who seems completely uninterested in hunting. During this volatile situation, this hunter, who has been drowsy the whole time, says he's going to take a leak. It seems likely that the suspicious-looking hunter will win Ruru after all. Then, the hunter who went to pee suddenly shouts, "That's Ruru!" As the tension mounts, the truth is finally revealed.

The gang of hunters suspect the moving spots in the distance are Ruru, and the suspicious eighth hunter grows restless, afraid of missing the bear. Even uttering ridiculous words like "moving boogers", he tries to divert the men's attention from it. At last, the eighth hunter successfully steers the other hunters the wrong way while he himself swiftly runs toward Ruru. Readers finally discover who the eighth hunter really is. The man most eager to catch Ruru is actually the bear's dad, disguised as a hunter to protect Ruru. This twist emphasizes the dad bear's love for his child, leaving readers with a touching message of a father's love that is strong enough that he risks his own life.



## *Five Balloons*

### 1. Publication Details

Imprint | Sigongsa Co., Ltd.

Title | Five Balloons

Author | Yangmi Kim

Genre | Children

Format | 150×220

Binding | Hardcover

Pages | 64pages

ISBN | 9788952789068



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### 3. Marketing Information

Target Readership | Ages 6-12

### 4. About the Author

Born in Seoul in 1967, the author Yangmi Kim studied literature in college. She debuted with a children's story Anchovy in 2000, and later received the 2006 Ma Haesong Literary Award for Jjinjjingun and Dubbangdu. She is the author and illustrator of a number of picture books, including Three Balloons and Five Balloons; and the author of children's stories including My Brother and I; Fur Ball; Summer and Autumn; and The Trio: Alone and Together.

### 5. About the Book

A divorce separates a family of five. The mother lives with the oldest and youngest daughters, and the father lives with the middle daughter. They are seemingly at peace, yet there is an unseen struggle. The second daughter, the narrator of this story, compares her experience of facing unfamiliar surroundings to standing alone atop a jungle gym on the first day at a new school. Being told that her parents are going to live separately is likened to confronting the horror of standing alone on the tongue of a giant monster. The story consoles its readers by depicting fear, sorrow, and heartache from parting, hidden behind the ordinary exteriors of life. Affirming that it is okay to feel hurt and sad, the book focuses on the feelings of the second child, who is still hurting inside. Only after being pricked by a cactus does the child confront her feelings, which themselves have suffered cuts and scrapes. Soon afterwards, when

her father forgets not only to pack a lunch for her school trip, but that it is the actual day of the trip, she realizes again that the drawers in her heart are too jam-packed to put anything else in. It is simultaneously painful and compelling to watch a child who has been hurt by adults' choices end up finding her own solutions. The child in the story sends letters and postcards containing her honest feelings and thoughts to her parents: "Mom, Dad, why didn't you tell me earlier that we were going to live apart as two families? ... I should have at least pestered you to let me live with Mom and my sisters."

Being able to express discomfort and anger in your own way seems advisable because it is not always virtuous to be considerate of other's feeling, suppressing your own. After emptying the drawer of your heart, that has become filled with conflict and hurt, some other unpleasant feelings might rush in. But once you face your inner feelings and find new energy and alternatives, it will be easier to empty the second and third drawers in your mind, or even to remove stuff in advance before the drawers get full—just like the child in this story, who gets her hurt and sadness off her chest, closes the distance with her father, and eventually recovers her daily life.

## *Girls' Talk*

### 1. Publication Details

Imprint | Sigongsa Co., Ltd.

Title | Girls' Talk

Subtitle | What They Don't Tell You about Puberty

Author | Ida

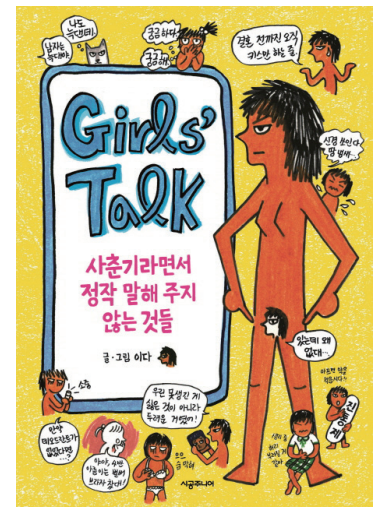
Genre | Children, others

Format | 148×210

Binding | Paperback

Pages | 140pages

ISBN | 9788952789259



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### 3. Marketing Information

Keyword | Essay for teenagers; puberty; sex education

Target Readership | Age 9-12, young adults

#### 4. About the Author

Artist, illustrator, and contractor for art labor. Born in 1982 in Pohang City, author Ida graduated from Seoul Women's University, where she majored in Christian studies and creative writing. In the early 2000s, she received attention for her book *Ida's Sloppy Activities*, which illustrated the dark, private thoughts within her. The autobiographical character in her works is referred to as "a grown-up girl"—she retains the identity of a little girl even after becoming a grown-up.

#### 5. About the Book

Open and entertaining; entertaining but insightful!

*Girls' Talk* starts from the period when the author first experiences the development of secondary sex characteristics. She is disappointed that the voluptuous cleavage she sees in her mother's magazine seem like an impossibility to her, and she is utterly devastated to discover messy hair growing on her underarm. Young readers will find themselves laughing as they encounter anecdotes about how she lacked knowledge about menstruation and misconstrued the dried blood stain on her panties as poop, or how she tore a page with a dirty story from her mother's magazine, kept it in her desk drawer, and read it until the paper fell apart.

But the book is more than a couple of amusing anecdotes. Through the story about an inferiority complex about her looks, she declares that she "didn't hate but feared her ugliness", criticizing the blind lookism that considers "ugliness an inferior trait". It also questions the social attitude that characterizes teenage girls' sexual desire as more passive and defensive than that of teenage boys. As such, *Girls' Talk* speaks about natural changes that people go through during puberty, while at the same time providing a penetrating insight into areas that need improvement. What is so remarkable about this book is the way it seamlessly blends the critical voice into stories that vividly capture the reality teenage girls face.

We need more stories of ourselves

*Girls' Talk* tells with ease the daily inconveniences and pain that women go through. Although anecdotes about menstruation, PMS or how underwear is too uncomfortable and tight (as it focuses more on fancy design than comfort), are presented from the author's viewpoint, she is not alone. The degree may vary, but those are things that most women have thought about at least once in their lives. These accounts of the author are tools that evoke in readers their own memories and empathy, which are further expanded and linked to become a general story of teenage girls, and ultimately, of women as a whole.

The author intends to share stories of women—something she needed and wanted so badly but simply couldn't find when she was young.