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K-Book Trends

offers Korea's highly informative publishing content
to those in the global publishing industry.

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TOPIC

“Trend Forecasters” Dominate Bookstores in Korea

Written by Jang Dong-Seok (Director of the Bookcity Culture Foundation)

When the new year is just around the corner, something unique happens in bookstores in Korea – they all put out various “trend books” that provide predictions for the new year on the most conspicuous shelves they have. The consumers who are curious about what will happen in the new year – or even tomorrow – all have their eyes focused on those books. This attention pushes “trend books” up the list of best-selling books. For example, when you search “trend” on any online bookstore you can find, you will get roughly 1,200 books. And even if you cut it down to “New Year,” there are about 800 books in the fields ranging from business, social sciences, humanities, and self-help. So, what implication is behind such an end-of-year trend, or what is the hidden secret?

Books about the Trends of the New Year are generally published from October

So, these trend-forecasting books – hereafter “trend books” - have become a genre in Korea, being some of the hottest books to find at the end of the year. Interestingly, these books, published mainly in early December about 5-6 years ago, began to appear earlier. Now you can see them appearing in online and offline bookstores beginning in early October. So, to exaggerate a little, these trend books offer 10 months worth of forecasts, because the next generation will come out in October again. Who knows – they may even begin publication around Thanksgiving in the near future!



Trend Korea 2023 and Life Trend 2023

The series at the forefront of this “trend book frenzy” is *Trend Korea* (Miraebook). The first volume of the series was published in mid-December 2008, but the following year, the publication

period moved forward. *Trend Korea 2010* was published in early December, and from *Trend Korea 2011* to *Trend Korea 2018*, they were released in late November or early December. But, it didn't stop there. *Trend Korea 2019* and *Trend Korea 2020* were published in late October, with *Trend Korea 2021* coming in mid-October. Last year's *Trend Korea 2022* and this year's *Trend Korea 2023* went one step further as they became available in early October.

Another key trend forecaster, the *Life Trend* (Bookie) series, is no exception. Its first volume, *Life Trend 2013*, was released in mid-December 2012, but it changed the publication date for the next volume, *Life Trend 2014*, to November. *Life Trend 2019* and *Life Trend 2020* were published at the end of October, and from *Life Trend 2021*, the publisher officially set the publication date as early October.

Now, there's a simple reason for this "earlier-than-last-year" phenomenon of trend books. They want to dominate the market. It is not simply a matter of dominating the shelves of offline bookstores or the front page of online bookstores. It is about determining the "trend." By giving a particular name to a certain trend, the publishers acquire some kind of exclusive right to be the first – or only – forecaster of it. And as some of the keywords mentioned in such a trend are spread across all sorts of media, including TV, newspapers (though they are regarded as outdated marketing sources these days), and Social Media (this channel has become the mainstream), the book sells more copies. So, the

reason why various trend forecasters are published in the market one after another in early October, too early for the end-of-the-year atmosphere, has become a trend itself targeting to be the first mover in the market.

Trend books Broaden their Scope to Real Estate and Education

In the early days of trend books, they mostly analyzed social phenomena and social trends. But, they advanced and expanded the scope to include different genres with public interest. While the *Trend Korea* and *Life Trend* series are representative trend books that analyze social phenomenons and consumer sentiment, books these days have begun to cover all aspects of society such as generation, education, real estate, money, media, IT, blockchain, the metaverse, employment, and aging.

The best example of trend books about real estate, the biggest interest of some Koreans, is the *Real Estate Trend* (Wise Map). Beginning with its first volume, *Real Estate Trend 2022*, published early last November, *Real Estate Trend 2023* was released this year. And, as the real estate market has been full of ups and downs this year in Korea, it seems to have been quite popular in the business genre. Another trend book of its kind, which was published earlier than this series, is *Real Estate Trend in Korea 2016*, published by the Real Estate Team of Industry Division 1 of *The Chosun Ilbo* in December 2015. Written by a team of 20-26 real estate experts, the series released new volumes that predict

real estate trends in 2017, 2018, and 2020. The fun fact is that books predicting the real estate market are not concentrated on a particular season, but are published all year round as if it is a particular interest of Korean people.



Real Estate Trend 2023, Education Trend in Korea 2023, and Job Trend 2023

Meanwhile, “education” is also the next significant interest of Koreans. Trend books related to education are published throughout the year. For example, *Education Trend in Korea 2023* (Eduniety), published in late October this year following *Education Trend in Korea 2022* released in mid-November last year, chose “20 Keywords Leading Korean Education” as its sub-title. While the book is relatively simple in context, talking about the current educational environment in Korea, new year tasks for schools, and prospects, it is high in quality in that it offers a comprehensive evaluation of the reality of education in Korea, not just centering on college entrance.

Also, reflecting how Korean society is interested in employment,

more trend books about this topic are steadily released every year. For example, the sub-title of *Job Trend 2021* (Vision Korea) published in mid-November in 2020 was “How COVID-19 Changed People Work,” and that of *Job Trend 2022* published in mid-November last year was “How the MZ Generation is Changing the Employment Culture.” In addition, this year’s recently published *Job Trend 2023* has put “Recruiting Experience Changes How People Work.” While the main topic revolves around “recruitment,” it pinpoints its relevance with various social phenomena, including the pandemic, MZ generation, work-cation (a newly coined word combining work and vacation), and the metaverse.

One thing to note here is that even though the “trend books” discuss trends about diverse social issues, they are inevitably the same in that they provide analysis of social phenomena that the trends themselves have given impetus to. Trend books face undeniable limitations as they just put together puzzles – topics like consumption, education, and real estate – in the frame called “trends.”

“Wording” Decides the Fate of Trend books

Most readers tend to give complete trust to words like “trend” and “prediction” as well as the number of the new year, like 2023. They anticipate and fantasize that such things are really going to happen in the new year. But, to be honest, these “trend

books” are not outlooks for the new year. Instead, they are a multi-angle analysis of the world we are living in, but with a good-looking name tag. The best example is the “Redistribution of the Average,” the first trend for 2023 suggested by *Trend Korea 2023*.

In the past, people often thought that they belonged to the “middle class.” Many lived an average life, neither particularly good nor particularly bad. But, entering the 21st century, the term “middle class” has become a dead word. Polarization is deepening, where the rich get richer, and the poor get poorer. It’s not just about income. What about politics? It seems like there are only the far rights or the far lefts. People at demonstrations are polarized, too, let alone politicians. No voice is heard from the middle. Instead, people deliver words of the far right or far left through “rumors” on all Social Media platforms. Moderation and practicality? These words seem to have vanished from politics.

What about housing issues? Apartment prices, which rose steeply last year, are now sinking. While the young generation is desperate to find affordable houses, some people already have tens of houses. It’s what society is like these days, no matter what area it may be. There’s no such thing as “average.” But, let’s give it a second thought. Doesn’t “the missing average” sound similar to an expression that we have been using for a long time? Yes, it is another word for “polarization,” as I have mentioned earlier. The book *Life Trend 2023* picked “conspicuous non-consumption”

as the new year's trend, which can be represented by non-consumption and non-spending. It is obvious that people spend less as the economy is not doing very well. But, the younger generation is using this situation as one of the tools to "show off" themselves. For example, some people do the so-called "vegan reset challenge," where they have a vegan diet for a month in January, and there are more people participating in the "meatless Monday" campaign, where they don't eat meat on Mondays. Elevating the act of spending less or not spending at all to a type of social campaign might be the young generation's wise choice. Meanwhile, the significant growth of the secondhand and refurbished markets is partially supported by the young generation's non-consumption and non-spending. These phenomena have been spreading for the past few years, and it is clear that they will extend to become a more significant trend in 2023.

After all, the key for trend books to succeed converges to "wording." A thorough analysis of social phenomena and words or expressions that can stimulate the public's curiosity is the critical skill determining whether a trend book will succeed. Still, trend books play an essential role in our society. Through social analysis and appropriate wording, trend books significantly impact society's "agenda setting." Moreover, readers think and act based on the keywords presented in trend books to a certain extent. In that aspect, trend books have great social responsibility. This is why I don't welcome lightly-written trend

books about various topics pouring into the market.

Not everything in the West is good, but trend books in many Western countries usually give outlooks in a 10-year cycle. They think short-term predictions are mere analyses of current phenomena, and thus do not have practical forecasts. Of course, it might be because giving long-term outlooks lets you free from responsibilities. And, of course, again, I understand why Korea tends to focus on near-future trends. Korea will be the most dynamic country in the world. In fact, Korea is almost the only country in the world where all areas of society, such as politics, economy, society, and culture, are in such severe ups and downs. In this respect, Koreans paying particular attention to the New Year trend is a good representation of Korea itself, where every Tom, Dick, and Harry lives on unpredictable ground. Trend books will return at the end of – or October – every year. So I put down the pen, hoping that the books created after a year of hard work will be valuable guides for readers to open a new world.

SPECIAL PROJECT

[Korean Scholars ⑫]

Art Critic Professor Yu Hong-June

Steps Taken Alongside the Beauty of Cultural Heritage

Written by Choi Ha-Yeong

Korea has a long enough history for the world to be surprised. Its history dates back to B.C. 2333, when the first nation on the Korean peninsula, *Gojoseon*, was founded. For a long time, Korean ancestors left countless cultural heritages to their descendants, and people of the current era find a beautiful legacy and enjoy the mood and glimpses of the past. Professor Yu Hong-June, who has visited many historic sites and published books on them, is a representative art historian and critic of Korea. He is also renowned as the author of the best-selling humanities book series *My Exploration of Cultural Heritage* (Changbi). From 2004 to 2008, professor Yu served as the 3rd director of the Cultural Heritage Administration. He is now working as a professor of Art

History at Myongji University. In addition to his *My Exploration of Cultural Heritage* series, he delivers the beauty of Korea to many readers through his diverse works. Let's follow in the footsteps of professor Yu today.



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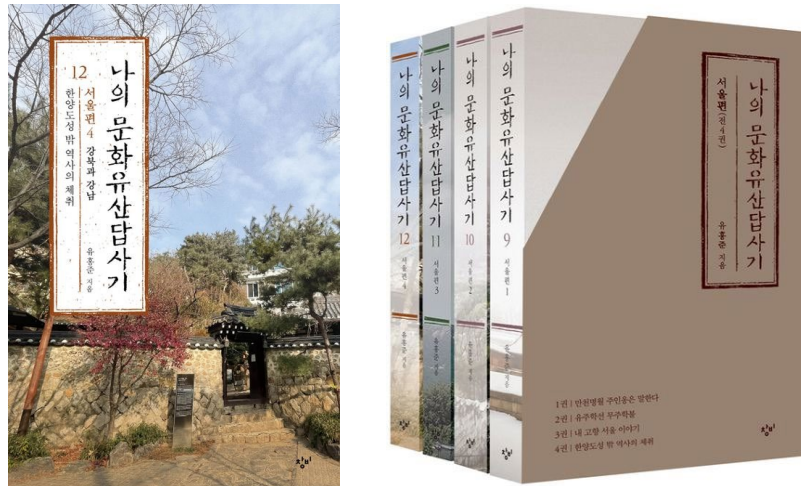
Korea's representative humanities book, *My Exploration of Cultural Heritage*

Professor Yu Hong-June, the writer of *My Exploration of Cultural Heritage*, a representative humanities book collection of Korea with more than 20 volumes in the series, got a Bachelor of Arts in Aesthetics from Seoul National University, a Master of Arts in Art History from Hongik University Graduate School, and a Doctor

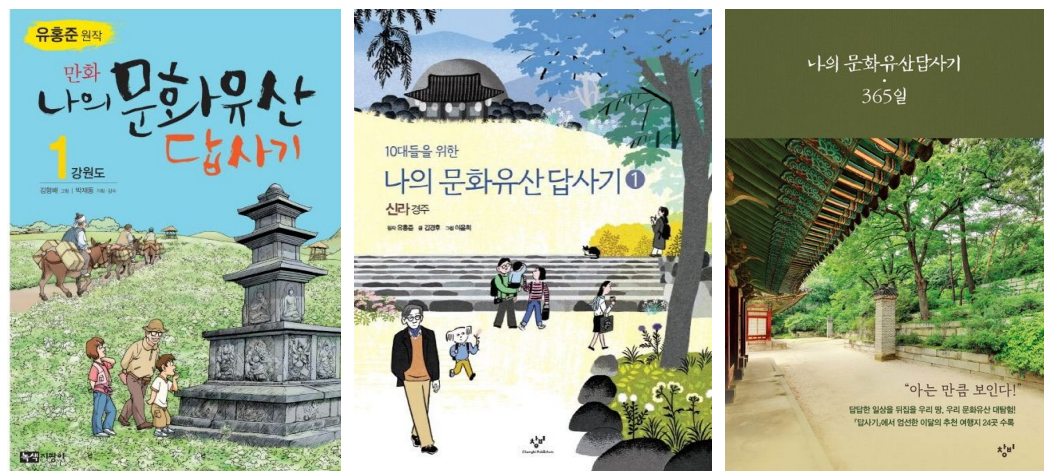
of Arts in Eastern Philosophy from Sungkyunkwan University Graduate School. Debuting in 1981 after winning a prize in art criticism in a prominent literary contest hosted by *Donga Ilbo*, he worked as an art critic. From 1985 to 2000, he held open lectures called Korean Art History for the Youth in Seoul and Daegu and was the director of the Korean Cultural Heritage Exploration Team. It was the time the journey for *My Exploration of Cultural Heritage* started. As soon as *My Exploration of Cultural Heritage 1: Places to Go in South Provinces* was published in 1993, the book became a best seller, breaking the record of 1 million copies for the first time as a Korean book on humanities. The book was also on the best sellers list for 60 consecutive weeks, leading to the nationwide location recce hype.

My Exploration of Cultural Heritage is a travelogue that not only covers Korea but also North Korea, Japan, and China, visiting cultural heritages and delivering relevant information, humanistic significance, and its meaning in the current era. There are twelve books on Korea, including editions on North Korea, five on Japan, and three on China. The most recent series is *My Exploration of Cultural Heritage 11: Seoul (3)* and *My Exploration of Cultural Heritage 12: Seoul (4)*, released together last October. Professor Yu considers the *My Exploration of Cultural Heritage* series as an ongoing project. However, he did not forget to look back on the past as he republished five books launched in 2011 after thoroughly revising them. It is because adding newly found historical sites to the places he visited before

and complementing books with new information is as crucial as visiting new areas.



The most recently published *My Exploration of Cultural Heritage* 9~12: Seoul

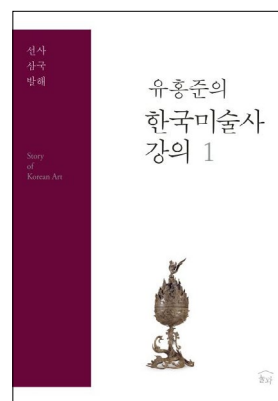


My Exploration of Cultural Heritage 1 in Cartoon, *My Exploration of Cultural Heritage* 1 for Teens, and *My Exploration of Cultural Heritage* in 365 Days

While the series is loved by many, seeing that parts of it were included in school textbooks and quoted as college entrance exam questions, it is challenging for young children to read the voluminous series. Thus, professor Yu wrote *My Exploration of Cultural Heritage in Cartoon* (Noksaek Jipangyi) and *My*

Exploration of Cultural Heritage for Teens (Changbi) series for students who might feel that history and culture are difficult to study. So now, it has become easy for young children and teen readers to meet Korea's precious cultural heritage and beautiful nature and be proud of it. Professor Yu also published *My Exploration of Cultural Heritage in 365 Days* (Changbi) in 2021 while traveling shrunk due to COVID-19, looking forward to the day people can go traveling freely. The book is a diary and a travel guide that summarizes *My Exploration of Cultural Heritage*, and it includes 24 Korean tour destinations selected by professor Yu.

Korea's beauty (美) shown through books



An Eye for Arts by Yu Hong-June series and Lecture on Korean Art History 1 by Yu Hong-June

In addition to the *My Exploration of Cultural Heritage* series, serialized for more than 30 years, professor Yu introduced Korean cultural heritages and their beauty through various series. For example, the *An Eye for Arts by Yu Hong-June* (Nullwa) series,

which consists of 3 books (*Gookbo Soon Rae*, *Myeongjak Soon Rae*, and *Anmok*), shows readers how to appreciate beauty and enjoy art pieces. All series are published in large-print versions to help the middle-aged and elderly read without issues. Another series by professor Yu is *Lecture on Korean Art History by Yu Hong-June* (Nullwa). The series has four books, easily explains the culture and common sense of Korean art history, and includes lively pictures and friendly explanations of the heritages along with an appendix, helping readers read the book without difficulty.

Besides these series, professor Yu also released books on diverse aspects of Korean culture. *Chusa Gim Jeong-Hui* (Changbi) is considered a piece that brought *Joseon*'s genius Gim Jeong-Hui back to life. He was considered the Korean Leonardo da Vinci for his talents in calligraphy, poetry, a bibliographical study of Chinese classics, and many others. Gim Jeong-Hui is the Origin of K-Wave as he captured the people of China and Japan around 200 years ago. In addition to historical facts, professor Yu's engaging and touching writing style and Gim Jeong-Hui's life mix well in the book and give people in the current era a deep feeling. Professor Yu also wrote diverse books, including *Geumgangsan* (Hakgojae), a book about the history and cultural heritage of the Korean peninsula's most famous and beautiful Mt. Geumgang, and *Munjadoe* (Daewonsa), a book on folk paintings and paintings of characters from the *Joseon Dynasty*.



Chusa Gim Jeong-Hui, and Munjadoe

The reason books written by professor Yu, Korea's representative art historian and critic, are loved so much is his writing style, which reflects his excellent talking skills. One thing to remember is that professor Yu is a hard worker who reads thousands of books and takes tens of thousands of photos to write a book. His witty descriptions, literary writing style, intellectual summary of academia, and endless passion that led him to walk ceaselessly have made professor Yu a best-selling author. Professor Yu takes the lead in promoting Korean cultural heritage to the general public through his 30 years of work, *My Exploration of Cultural Heritage*, and various writings. Let's take a trip following his footsteps in his books as professor Yu shows his passion for literature and affection for cultural heritages. As you follow his kind guidance, you will find a strong passion growing in your heart without knowing.

EXPORT CASE

Korean and Japanese Publishers Join Hands

The Joy of Working Together

Written by Kim Seung-Bok
(Head of publisher CUON and book cafe Chekccori)

Jinbocho, located in Tokyo, Japan, is famous for being the center of bookstores. About 130 old bookstores are lined up, and bookstores – both big franchises and independents – can be easily found in every alley. Old bookstores on the first floor set out a little table in front of them every morning to display books, and the alleys are soon crowded with people looking to buy books. This place has many publishing houses as well. People say Jinbocho has become famous as a hub for bookstores because there have been many educational institutions in the area since the 1600s. In addition, many prominent universities still exist in this region. As such, Jinbocho is a town of 100-year-old bookstores and publishing houses.

I myself am writing books, running a bookstore, and working as

a book broker in this town where writers, producers, and readers all naturally gather around. In this article, I would like to talk about a project where three books by one writer were translated and published by three publishers in Japan simultaneously. Another project was led by a Japanese editor who worked with a Korean publisher to publish a book at the same time, starting by requesting stories from novelists in different Asian countries.

After majoring in literature in Korea, I came to Japan to study further. Currently, I'm working with Korean and Japanese publishers as a broker between the two countries' content, while running my own publishing house CUON (cuon.jp), and a book cafe Chekccori (www.chekccori.tokyo), which sells Korean books. As CUON and Chekccori are located in Jinbocho, they have been benefiting a lot from the local infrastructure.

One day, Masahiro Oga, the head of publisher Shogakukan, dropped by Chekccori. He was holding the book *I Love My Family for Who They Are* (家族だから愛したんじゃないくて、愛したのが家族だった), written by Nami Kishida and published by Shogakukan in 2020. While he was a regular at my bookstore who would always buy a book every time he visited, he was also a book lover that would recommend me to read books that he had read. This book was an essay about the writer's family, where her mother was in a wheelchair, and her younger brother had Down Syndrome. Even though the stories were heavy, featuring a family with disabled members and the sudden death of her father, the writer chose to write them in a light, joyful way,

making the readers think as if they were looking at well-made characters in fiction. The book does not have “enlightening” stories teaching lessons about the disabled or resentment over social perspective and lack of social infrastructure for the disabled, which other content of this type usually does. However, these critical thoughts do exist behind the witty sentences. The sentences had multiple layers, and the book gave me a lingering impression after I finished the book. Maybe this is why the book was already a bestseller in Japan.



I Love My Family for Who They Are, a bestseller in Japan

Then I began to wonder if there were any books on the subject in Korea as well. So I began searching for similar Korean content to present to Japanese publishers, a true but universal story

written by a person with a disability. Then, I found *The Case for "Wrongful Life"* (Sakyejul Publishing), published in 2018. This is a book written by Kim Won-Young, who has a grade 1 physical disability but has become a lawyer. Kim brings the question, "Could it be that I/he/she was born wrong?" asked by so many people who think of people with disability, or even the disabled themselves, to the forum for discussion of our society. And, taking examples from around the world, he tries to defend himself by proving that even those who are called "disqualified lives" are dignified and worthy of their existence. His stories are highly logical, compared to Nami's sentimental book, but they gave me the same heartrending impression. I mean, can you be heartbroken while reading a lawyer's reasoned argument? So I wanted to see more of Kim Won-Young's books.

The next book written by Kim Won-Young is *Desire Instead of Hope* (Prunsoop Publishing), published in 2019, a story about his own experience as a disabled person. It covers the course of Kim entering Seoul National University and becoming a lawyer, including the moments when he just had to watch his friends go to school from his room, wait for his grandmother to return from the field, leave home to go to the dormitory for the disabled, and ultimately enter an ordinary school to study. It is a coming-of-age story of a young, weak boy who was regarded as an "invisible being" in a society growing up to stand on the stage called the world. Published in 2019, this book is the revised edition of *Hot Desire Over Cold Hope*, written in 2010 when the writer was 28

years old. Adding a prologue and epilogue to the revised edition, writer Kim spoke about the changes that have occurred in Korean society and himself over the past decade. It truly has the unique beauty of a revised edition.

Meanwhile, in his other book, *Becoming a Cyborg* (Sakyejul Publishing), published in 2021, he fiercely debates with SF novelist Kim Cho-Yeop, who wears a hearing aid, as a lawyer in a wheelchair about the point where the human body combines with science and technology. Both do not demand “better technology for the disabled” - they talk about how our bodies, technology, and society should be reshaped.

- * *K-Book Trends* Vol. 50 – Go to the interview of writer Kim Won-Young
www.kbook-eng.or.kr/sub/interview.php?ptype=view&idx=1062&page=1&code=interview
- * *K-Book Trends* Vol. 19 – Go to the interview of writer Kim Cho-Yeop
www.kbook-eng.or.kr/sub/interview.php?ptype=view&idx=688&page=5&code=interview



The Case for “Wrongful Life,” Desire Instead of Hope, and Becoming a Cyborg

After reading Kim Won-Young's books, I began to mull over how I could translate and publish all three books in Japan at once. It was because each of the three books was totally different in context. So, upon finishing the three books, you can have a complete understanding of writer Kim Won-Young, and have your thoughts expanded on Korean society, what humans are, and what technology is for at the same time. And I became more convinced that readers who read Kim's books for the first time would keep looking for his other books. So, I once thought, "What about signing three books and publishing them at the same time?" But, I was missing one important thing – CUON was a big dreamer with little financial capacity. So, I decided to look for publishers for the other two books, as CUON can manage to publish one book. Like this, good books motivate people.

First, I approached Yukiko Hori at Iwanami Shoten, a bookstore specializing in humanities books. She was one of the regulars of Chekccori, who was very interested in non-fiction, as opposed to other publishers. Her questions are detailed. For example, she asks, "Is there a book about mathematics written by a mathematician?" or "I'm looking for a book that interprets a particular historical incident. Do you have one?" So, one corner of my brain is full of books I want to recommend to her. Anyway, as soon as I told her that there was a book where two writers with disabilities debate over the technology and the device that supports them, her eyes shone. And my suggestion to publish the writer's books at once and do marketing together was

greatly welcomed. Then I asked Ayako Sakai in Shogakukan, which published Nami Kishida's book, if she was interested in publishing Kim Won-Young's third book. As an experienced editor, books she edited sold well in the market, no matter what genre they might be, giving her the nickname "best seller maker." I even dreamed of Kim Won-Young becoming a bestselling author in Japan through Midas touch. So, talking about this dream with Ayako, I suggested she publish *The Case of "Wrongful Life."*

Now, the three editors all got on the boat called Kim Won-Young. It was the summer of 2021. Thanks to the prompt and friendly cooperation of Prunsoop and Sakyejeol, publishers in Korea, the contract work, translation, and editing went smoothly. Translator Mika Makino who lives in Busan, took charge of translating books *Becoming a Cyborg* and *Desire Instead of Hope*. Maki Igarashi translated the last book, *The Case of "Wrongful Life."* I recommended these two translators myself. This was possible because I was aware of the books' characteristics and the translators' styles. Mika said she even attended Kim's lecture and his dance recital (he is also a wheelchair dancer) during the translation. As well, Mika is one of my close friends who keeps sides with the people she loves until the end.

Meanwhile, publisher Shogakukan is a representative publishing house in Japan in terms of size and history (it was founded more than 100 years ago). It is mainly dedicated to making books that do not leave people with visual, auditory, or physical disabilities

behind. In addition, Shogakukan has a special department for “accessibility,” which works to break down the barrier of reading for anyone who attempts to read. For example, Kim Won-Young’s *The Case of “Wrongful Life”* was published as an e-book and audiobook, and the publisher is currently working on the braille version. That’s why Shogakukan is a month late, as all three publishers are working on the simultaneous release in November 2022.

Ahead of the publication, the editors of the three publishers had several meetings both offline and online (through ZOOM) on how to introduce Kim Won-Young to Japanese readers. We made the staff at bookstores as well as opinion leaders, read the pilot version 4 months before the publication. We also had a book-reading session with readers who read the pilot version. It was like preliminary work to discover readers’ touching points.

Books Tokyodo in Jinbocho began to exhibit the posters of the three books even before the publication, as shown in the picture below. The publishing industries in both Korea and Japan are eyeing this new attempt, where three publishers publish and market three books by the same writer at the same time. The books have not yet been released as of November 20, but once they are available, you will be able to see more varied activities by writer Kim Won-Young.



Posters displayed by Books Tokyodo

Moving on to the next project – making one book in Korea and Japan simultaneously. This project also began in an alley in Jinbocho. While taking a stroll around the village after lunch, I ran into editor Kosuke Kashiwabara. He used to make weekly magazines and is quite bright about what's happening in Korea. He is currently learning Korean and is a big fan of Korean movies. Anyway, one day, he brought someone with him to Chekccori. She was a journalist at *Mainichi Shimbun*, one of the major newspapers in Japan. He said she was trying to write a script on artist Lee Jung-Seob and his wife. So, Kosuke was his editor, and they came together to find books about Lee Jung-Seob. This spared another corner of my brain for Lee Jung-Seob.

I was a messenger telling Kosuke every time I heard about new books on art during the Japanese colonial period, as well as books about Lee Jung-Seob. Then, two years later, journalist Onuki – yes, the same journalist at *Mainichi Shimbun* - finally released the book. And even before the book was officially published, the news drew a lot of attention in Korea – her interview made a headline in *The Chosun Ilbo* (www.chosun.com/national/weekend/2021/01/02/COHGHHC2XZJA2TNRXW3E7KHCEXE/), a news agency in Korea. Some books related to artist Lee Jung-Seob shown in the photo, were bought at Chekccori. And over time, CUON has had the privilege of becoming the exclusive broker of the book's copyright.

While Kosuke and I were walking together, talking about this and that, I told him about the project where a Korean writer and a Japanese writer write fiction about a certain topic and make them into one book. Surprisingly, he already had writer Chung Se-Rang in mind. So, I asked him, “What about the Japanese writer?” And he scratched his head and said he hadn't chosen one yet. So, I told him that we could first talk with writer Chung Se-Rang and ask her if there is a Japanese writer that she wants to work with. We were so deep in conversation that we didn't know we had entered Kokyo (imperial palace). The hour-long walk was enough to narrow down our plan. So, we gave our suggestion to writer Chung Se-Rang, and she replied with an even more upgraded idea. It was to create an anthology where 7-9 millennial writers from Korea, China, Japan, and Southeast

Asia write different stories with the same topic of *Isolation*. I thought it was a very editor-like idea, as she used to be an editor before. Anyway, this proposal has been steadily progressing since October 2020, and as of November 2022, we have received manuscripts from 9 writers. The book is scheduled to be released simultaneously in Korea and Japan.

* *K-Book Trends Vol. 20* – Go to the interview of writer Chung Se-Rang
www.kbook-eng.or.kr/sub/interview.php?ptype=view&idx=677&page=&code=interview&total_searchkey=%EC%A0%95%EC%84%B8%EB%9E%91

Writers of the anthology scheduled to be published simultaneously in Korea and Japan

Country	Writer
Korea	Chung Se-Rang
Japan	Sayaka Murata (村田沙耶香, Murata Sayaka)
Singapore	Alfian Sa'at (Alfian Sa'at)
China	Hao Jingfang (郝景芳)
Thailand	Wiwat Lertwiwatwongsa
Hong Kong	Han Lizhu (韓麗珠)
Tibet	Lhacham Gyal
Vietnam	Nguyen Ngoc Tu
Taiwan	Lian Mingwei (連明偉)

Kosuke's passion and efforts in this book are surprising. First, he called upon experts knowledgeable about the culture of each country and received recommendations for writers. Then he asked the authors of the manuscripts, and as soon as he obtained them, he found a translator to translate them into Japanese. Also,

other work than editing, such as signing a contract with each and every writer, were his job as well. He has written on the publisher's website (shosetsu-maru.com/bungei-news/zetsuen_news/06) about the entire process of this project. Meanwhile, he was hoping to publish the book in Korea as well. Simultaneously, if possible. Here, editor Kim Young-Soo of Munhakdongne Publishing has volunteered to take his side. So, from August 2021, Kim and Kosuke exchanged emails and concentrated on making the Korean version. It was quite an experience to see two people from different countries making a book together only through the manuscripts. The Korean version has been translated from the Japanese version. As a referenced person in the emails, I could take a sneak peek at how the two editors from Korea and Japan talked about all sorts of things via email, including movies and dramas they've watched, and events that took place around the world, with the publication project at the center.

Around the time when the production almost reached the end, there was news that Japanese writer Sayaka Murata, one of the writers participating in the *Isolation* project, was coming to Seoul to attend the Seoul International Writers Festival (September 23-30, www.siwf.or.kr). Kosuke rolled up his sleeves once again. He asked Sayaka Murata to spare some time and planned a meeting between her and Chung Se-Rang during her stay in Seoul. This meeting naturally became a promotional event for the *Isolation* project, as their discussion was published in both Korean and Japanese literary magazines. Kim Young-Soo and Chung Se-

Rang agreed to join the meeting, and the two writers gathered in Seoul. It was also a time when both editors finally saw each other in person. I attended the meeting as well. The friendly conversations between the editors, who learned about each other quite a lot through emails exchanged for more than a year, seemed to have become another accomplishment of this project, let alone the in-depth discussion between the writers.

The process of young editors with different cultural backgrounds living in the contemporary era getting to know each other through the same project will live on to other projects in the future, and the world will grow and be a better place. And the reason why I could publish Korean literature in Japan and have fun as a broker between Korean and Japanese books is that I had so many of these heartwarming experiences as I worked.

Apart from the paper book, Kosuke made the audiobook (the video is for promotional purposes) version of the book cooperating with famous actors/actresses in Japan, where he received videos of writers talking about how they felt during the project. The editors will work on the videos again so that they are introduced into different media once the books are published. It shows how much effort the editors put into creating and promoting a single book. Of course, it is backed by the company's support, but looking at Kosuke stride through complex and troublesome tasks sacrificing himself, I naturally came to root for him. Those who work hard and enjoy doing valuable things have many like-minded friends.



The *Isolation* project, ahead of simultaneous publication in Korea and Japan

It is too bad that I cannot give the reaction of Japanese readers to the books mentioned in the two episodes above, since they are not yet published. However, if I have the opportunity, I will talk later about the way each company marketed the books and how enthusiastic Japanese readers were.

BOOK TRIP

[Book Space in Korean Media ③]

Seoul Metropolitan Library

A Historical Space Featured in Films and Dramas

Written by Kim Jeong-Yeon

Located in the center of Seoul, there is a special place near City Hall Station that boasts the history of Seoul. The Seoul Metropolitan Library was reborn as a space of books and culture for citizens after being used as the city hall during the Japanese occupation of Korea. As the library was used as the background for the popular Korean variety show “Running Man” and the music video of PSY’s “Gentleman,” which led the Korean Wave, it has been a frequently-visited tourist destination for people from around the world. The building of the Seoul Metropolitan Library, which countless people have visited throughout its history, also has a tremendous aura. Just in front of the library is Seoul Plaza, where you can find various groups of people, from busy office workers to foreign tourists taking photographs. Here

is a short walk through the Seoul Metropolitan Library, which has kept its place as the repository of Seoul's history surrounded by the rapidly changing city.



Special spots unique to the Seoul Metropolitan Library

The first thing you see when you enter the library through the main entrance is the General Collections room. Divided into rooms 1 and 2 over two floors, it stores general Korean books. Also, the “Saengag Maru (meaning ‘thinking floor’ in Korean)” stairs are like the iconic spot of the library. If you sit down and read books leisurely surrounded by shelves full of books covering the entire wall, you will find yourself immersed in reading without even noticing it, just like the name “Saengag Maru” implies. This was already a spot that citizens frequently visited in

the library, but after it was found out that the place was used for the music video of PSY's "Gentleman," it became a popular place for foreign visitors as well. So if you are a K-Pop lover, it would be a great experience to take the time to befriend books at "Saengag Maru."



General Collections room seen from "Saengag Maru" and footage from the music video of PSY's "Gentleman" (Source: PSY Youtube (youtu.be/ASO_zypdnsQ))

The Global Collections room on the fourth floor is unlike any other library. The world map filling the wall and each shelf decorated with national flags create a somewhat solemn atmosphere. However, as this room stocks various books written in different languages, anyone from all over the world can enjoy them comfortably. Some examples are original books written in various languages, the "Korea collection," which introduces Korea as a country, some materials donated by embassies and cultural centers, and international publications. The "Korea collection," in particular, includes Korean books written in different languages and books about Korea, which help foreign visitors understand the country more easily and learn about Korean literature.

There is another unique location within the Seoul Metropolitan Library. As the name suggests, in the Seoul Document Collections room located on the third floor, you can read publications, academic journals, and periodicals published by the Seoul Metropolitan Government and Seoul-related organizations. There is also a section where you can find a summary of Seoul's history, including the former mayors of Seoul and the city's transformations. As you can choose books from a wide range of fields, from politics and administration to travel books related to Seoul, it will be a meaningful place to add to your itinerary if you are planning to come to Seoul. But please note that books in the Seoul Document Collections room cannot be checked out.



Views of the Global Collections room and the Seoul Document Collections room

Joy found in the Library

There are many other entertainment elements in the Seoul Metropolitan Library besides books. For example, on the third floor, themed “Where the memory of Seoul lies,” there is another

place where you can meet the history of Seoul, apart from the Seoul Archival Services room. The restoration of the Old Mayor's Room had been used since Korea's liberation from the Japanese occupation in 1945 until May 2008. It is divided into three sections: the Planning & Situation Room, the Reception Room, and the Mayor's Room. As it is a pretty good representation of the then Seoul, displaying old supplies and furniture, you will feel as if you are walking inside Seoul's history.

This office was also used to shoot the popular SBS variety show "Running Man." In the 130th episode titled "Reincarnation Special," seven members became special envoys and raced across the Seoul Metropolitan Library, transcending time and space as they came across historical facts. So let's go back in time to the history of Seoul while thinking of "Running Man" members doing hidden missions in all corners of the library.



The Planning & Situation Room and footage from the 130th episode of "Running Man"
(Source: SBS official website (programs.sbs.co.kr/enter/runningman/vod/55286/22000052424))



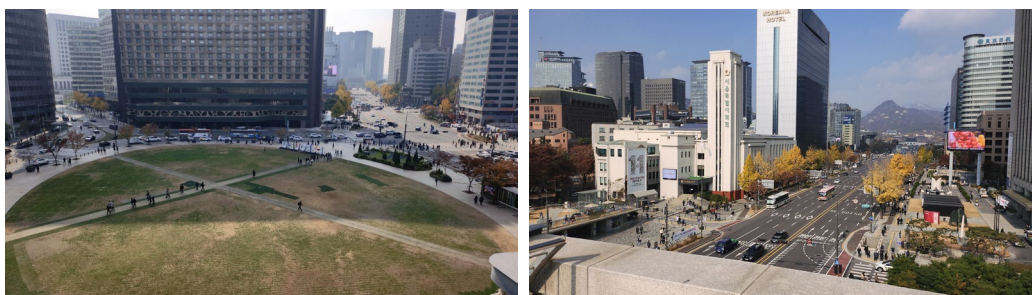
Views of the Reception Room and Mayor's Room

The fifth floor is where you can find traces of the old city hall, just like the third floor. On the fifth floor, you will find detailed explanations of the building's structure, construction materials, and history, just like a museum. Also, if you come through the door to the outside, there is "HaneulTteul," a roof garden. While it is also known as a famous observatory in Seoul, you can enjoy a panoramic view of Seoul Plaza. The magnificent view from the garden will refresh your heart. "HaneulTteul" is also where the drama "Fight for My Way" was filmed, starring the popular actors Park Seo-Joon and Kim Ji-Won. The drama, featuring a love story of youth, attracted empathy from many Koreans while receiving a great deal of love from global viewers. The drama was also reproduced as a webtoon – it was a hot topic because there are few webtoons based on dramas, whereas there are a lot of dramas based on webtoons.



Poster of drama “Fight for My Way” and the main illustration of its webtoon

Seoul Plaza, which can be seen from “HaneulTteul,” is where the library holds various programs, such as “Seoul Plaza Reading Books.” This program was organized by Seoul City commemorating World Book and Copyright Day on April 23, and it is more meaningful as it was an outdoor event held for the first time in two years due to the pandemic. It was massive in size, displaying about 3,000 books and accommodating up to 500 visitors. Unfortunately, it ended in November, bringing the year’s event to a close. It is scheduled to reopen in April next year. On top of that, various events, including book-related programs and yoga and DIY classes, are regularly organized in the plaza. For more information on schedules and applications, go to the library website (lib.seoul.go.kr/lecture/applyList).



Seoul Plaza and Seoul seen from “HaneulTeul”

With the story adding more uniqueness to the Seoul Metropolitan Library, the place is filled not only with books, but also with various things to see and enjoy. Apart from the exhibition rooms and rooms storing materials and books, if you take a closer look at different parts of the library, you will find photographs of Seoul in the past. You will be able to feel as if you have witnessed the changes in Seoul in person. The Seoul Metropolitan Library has become a beloved spot for foreigners as it was used as a background for many different TV shows and films, promoting Korean history to the world. Its appearance has changed slightly over time, but its history remains intact. Let's take a break by visiting the Seoul Metropolitan Library, which serves as a shelter in the bustling, vibrant city.

Seoul Metropolitan Library

Website: <https://lib.seoul.go.kr>

Contact: +82-2-2133-0300

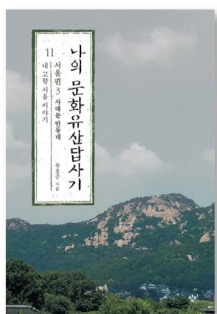
Address: 110, Sejong-daero, Jung-gu, Seoul

ONE-LINER QUOTES

Korean Editor's Pick

Written by Park Tae-Geun (Editor-in-Chief at Wisdom House)

If you are interested in Korean culture and stories, you will eventually find yourself wondering, “What country is Korea?” Of course, there will be many ways to answer this great question, but if I were to answer, I would choose two books instead with two words “land and people.”



My Exploration of Cultural Heritage II: Seoul (3)

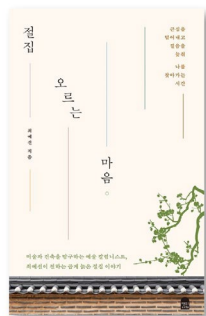
Yu Hong-June, Changbi



I realized that a person's love for their hometown comes only when there are “people” connected with them.

The first book – or series – that I recommend is *My Exploration of Cultural Heritage* (Changbi). This is one of the representative humanities book series in Korea and is regarded as the pioneer that settled “exploration journals” as a genre that differs from travelogues. The series has sold more than 4 million copies since it was published 30 years ago. It currently consists of 20 volumes – 12 about Korea, 5 about Japan, and 3 about China. Among the volumes covering almost every region in Korea, I chose *My Exploration of Cultural Heritage 11: Seoul (3)* because it is not just the iconic city of Korea, but also the writer’s hometown. After spending his entire life searching for artifacts, ruins, and people, he came a long way to talk about his hometown. Doesn’t it make you look forward to experiencing the magnificent moment where the history of the land of Seoul is combined with the life of the storyteller? Well, I gave it such a grandiose meaning, but I was just happy that Seochon, Seoul, where the writer lives today, was where he was born and finished all the educational courses from elementary school to university. Maybe it’s another story of “land and people,” where they are connected to one another. I can’t wait for your story to carry on here in Seoul.

* *K-Book Trends* Vol. 53 – Go to the article about Professor Yu Hong-June
www.kbook-eng.or.kr/sub/trend.php?ptype=view&idx=1118&code=trend&category=61



On My Way to Temples
Choi Ye-Seon, Annes' Library



The generosity and good energy of temples comes from the hearts of those who pass through.

The next book I would like to recommend is *On My Way to Temples* (Annes' Library). In Buddhism, you call a place where monks practice Buddhist teachings and share sermons with other followers a temple. In this book, temples are plainly expressed as “*juljip*,” which is a combination of “*jul* (temple)” and “*jip* (home),” to show how friendly and open the places are. Perhaps the writer wanted to describe temples as a place where people can visit freely and as a place that ages with countless footsteps of former visitors and their hearts. Temples in Korea are already famous across the world; seven temples, including “*Tongdo Temple*,” “*Buseoksa Temple*,” and “*Bongjeongsa Temple*” were listed as “Sansa, Buddhist Mountain Monasteries in Korea” on the UNESCO World Heritage list in 2018. As you can meet temples on any mountain you climb in Korea, temples can be said to be the most frequently visited places, and are locations of culture and nature in Korea. Now, what is in your heart that brings you to the temple? The writer answers this question through three words: “*pohaeng*,” which refers to the act of taking a short walk

in the middle of meditation, “*chingyeon*,” which refers to the act of seeing something/someone in person, and “*hapjang*,” which refers to the act of putting hands together with the palms facing each other. She also talks about 20 temples and the stories of people related to them. No matter which path you seek or walk on, I believe it will lead you to a temple one day. I hope that moment comes into your life.

KOREAN PUBLISHERS

Humanitas

Going Forward with Belief in Change

휴머니타스

Humanitas' Logo

All individuals live in a society - the link between an individual and a community cannot be broken. Issues and relations formed among people and society cause problems and conflicts. Some cases are minor discords among individuals but sometimes become a huge problem for the community. Humanitas is a publisher that pays attention and listens to small and big societal issues that people face. Humanitas takes steps along with individuals and members of society and turns small movements into changes. Today, we met Humanitas, which has continuously

explored diverse situations in Korea from a social science perspective.

It's an honor to have you here on *K-Book Trends*. Please introduce Humanitas, its mission, and the meaning of the company's name to our overseas readers.

Humanitas is a contrast to theology, the study of god. The word derives from a Latin word that became the origin of humanities, the study of humans. Seniors and juniors, who majored in politics at a graduate school, gathered and started the company in 2002. At that time, we pondered upon what name we should choose for our publishing company for a long time. Politics, in a broader sense, is a social science and humanities in a more general sense. All three areas are about issues and relations among people. So, we all decided on the company's alternative name, Humanitas. Humanitas was not a commonly used term. Very few understood the word at once. But now, the company name Humanitas sounds familiar to many.

The slogan, "We publish books on critical social issues," written in your introduction, is quite impressive. What kind of books of yours are on critical social issues?

A social issue reflects how much one cares about a different individual and society. Unless isolated in the middle of space,

one naturally lives in a small or big community. Within the community, one is born, hurt, consoled, in love, broken up, and dead in the end. Books on critical social issues look at problems in society and help readers view matters in a social context.

Your message must be clear, as your motto is releasing books on critical social issues. How do you want society to change through Humanitas' books?

As human history and individuals' lives show, change is like Sisyphus' Roll of the Stone. They both take a step forward and move two steps back. We are living somewhere in a long and slow process. Having faith in change itself can be our target. We believe that books do not change the world by themselves. Instead, they walk along with society and individuals that push the stone forward. Humanitas hopes to make the community a safer, more peaceful, and freer place to live for more individuals.



Democracy, Democratization, Parasite, Our Old Companion, and 1980 Democracy in the Popular Uprising

The current society's border is becoming vague and wider nationally and globally. Humanitas publish many books that readers overseas can agree with. Please introduce Humanitas' books that you would like to introduce to readers in other countries.

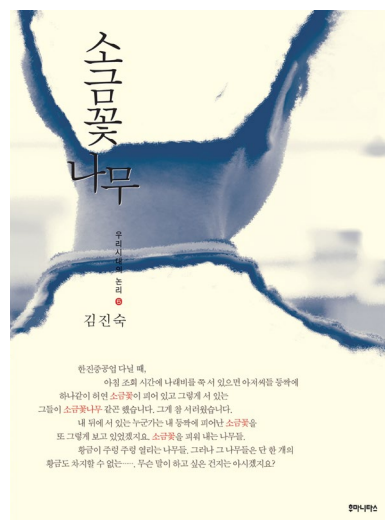
I think Korea's experience with democratization can be enjoyable to readers overseas. Professor Choi Jang-Jip's *Democracy, Democratization* tries to make a systematic analysis of Korean society after democratization, shows the historical and structural origin of Korean democracy, and views from a microscopic point of view.

Jeong Jun-Ho's *Parasite, Our Old Companion*, is one of the Humanitas science series, which talks about themes where human, nature, and science meet. It is an attractive book about human history with parasites that take humans as hosts.

Kim Jeong-Han's *1980 Democracy in the Popular Uprising* talks about the 5.18 Gwangju Democratization Movement, one of the most critical events in the history of Korea's democratization. One scholar recommended the book, saying, "The book made me realize the importance and beauty of social science. Such research fits the methodology and critical thinking of social humanities, a recent direction of the area as a combination of humanities and social science. Moreover, a study that looks at both present and reality is public and practical."

It must be challenging to run a publishing company for a long time by releasing books in only one area. So what's the secret behind Humanitas's success in solidifying its position in the social science area?

Social science is the area company members are interested in and know the best. In addition, most of the editors have worked in Humanitas for a long time, getting to have expertise of their own in their interest area. As a result, editors also became an intellectual of that particular segment.



A Salt-flowered Tree

You might have met many forms of life as you release books reflecting society. Of all the books, which one is the most memorable? Please share a story on it.

Meeting with the writer or translator opens the door to a new horizon of recognition. It is more so when their lives symbolize

critical issues in Korean society. For example, *A Salt-flowered Tree*'s author Kim Jin-Sook started working as a welder at the age of 21 in 1981 at Hanjin Shipbuilding & Construction, was fired in 1986 for joining a labor movement while she was in her 20s and was reinstated in 2022 at age 60 after 37 years. As a labor activist, her writings and speeches moved many people's hearts, and some even say that one cannot help but cry when listening to her tribute speech.

Her writings and speeches reflected details of life, like a small hope of a father who wanted to buy a pair of trendy shoes for his child or eat dinner with his family. Humanitas collected her words and pieces and published a book titled *A Salt-flowered Tree*. 'A salt-flowered tree' represents white salt flowers blooming on the back of laborers' clothes from sweat. Since Kim Jin-Sook was too poor to study, she even read the letters on the newspapers covering a fish-shaped bun. Despite her background, her accurate writings were beautiful and higher in quality than ones written by doctors or professors, surprising editors. The experience of weaving stories of salt flowers blooming in her life and listening to labor activist Kim Jin-Sook being called the Writer of *A Salt-Flowered Tree* Kim Jin-Sook made us feel like standing at the starting line of bookmaking again.

You've been talking about many social issues in your books. For example, much lamentable news has recently been about labor workers in Korea. What's one specific social issue Humanitas is focusing on? Also, what kind of social issues will your company cover in 2023?

Labor issues are critical in our lives regardless of political views or positions. They are also something Humanitas continues to pay attention to. We focus on industrial accidents, unstable labor, occupational health, and recently published books on shipyard industrial accidents, teen labor, and platform labor (especially delivery service).

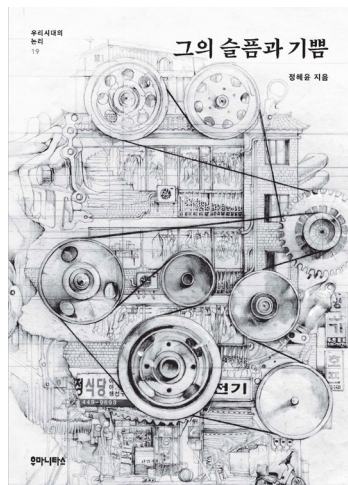
Poverty, inequality, democracy, and politics are regular topics that Humanitas deal with. In 2023, Humanitas will start a series called "My Story," covering an individual's narrative representing a part of our society. Stories are like those of a human rights activist for the severely disabled who poured all his life into securing rights of movement for people with disabilities, a street vendor's experience as a street vendor rights activist, and a railway engineer's stories on the railroad. Through the series, we aim to show stories gathered to form a mosaic and our society's shapes.

Please introduce popular books that best show the color of Humanitas.

Jeong Hae-Yun's *His Sorrow and Joy* is a reportage that recorded 5-year-long stories of fired workers who were part of SsangYong Motor's lay-off and strike, victims to one of Korea's most tragic events caused by cutbacks. The book is a speculative labor reportage written sincerely "after listening for a long time until the sorrow and despair are turned to lights," and shows what work means to people and the process of one living a life for someone else.

Park Sang-Hoon's *Manufactured Reality* is a book that breaks bias on regionalism, which has been believed to be a severe and chronic issue of Korean politics and one with a long history. The book shows that most regionalism was created and used to emphasize certain ideologies, not showing reality as it is.

Huh Huan-Joo's *Eighteen Years Old, Going to Work: The Story of a Field Trainee*, is a book on complex issues, including Korea's elitism, unstable work conditions, platform labor, and industrial accidents, shown through stories of vocational high school students. While the college entrance rate in Korea exceeds 70%, the book shows what it means to join the labor market as a high school graduate.



*His Sorrow and Joy, Manufactured Reality,
and Eighteen Years Old, Going to Work: The Story of a Field Trainee*

We cheer for Humanitas, which spreads diverse voices of people to the world. Lastly, please tell us about Humanitas' plans or goals.

As long as humans form society and community exists, there are perennial topics, such as labor, politics and democracy, poverty, and inequality. Though details, forms, and subjects may evolve with societal changes, Humanitas will continue to follow and pay attention to important topics.

KOREAN AUTHORS

Writer Kim Yeon-Su**Playing the Happiness of Every Moment**

We all dream of living a happy life. What is a happy life? Some might say that it is achieved through social success or economic wealth. But there's no guarantee that they will lead to true happiness. Here's an interview with writer Kim Yeon-Su, who writes when he is happy and wants to cherish the happiness that comes from each moment, realizing that feeling joy is more important than making success or pleasing people. Perhaps that's why his writings always deliver positive energy to people, no matter how long – 28 years since his debut – he has been writing. Following is the story of writer Kim Yeon-Su, who writes as if he is playing an instrument with full affection toward writing.



© Channel Yes

It is an honor to have you on *K-Book Trends*. Please say hello to our subscribers and give a brief introduction of yourself.

Hello, it is good to see you all. I debuted in 1994 with my full-length novel *Walking While Pointing to the Mask* (Sekyesa). Since then, I have published many full-length novels, short stories, and essays, as many as the number of years I've been in my career as a writer – 28 years.

You published *Such an Ordinary Future* (Munhakdongne) recently. This is a short story collection published after 9 years. How does it feel to be meeting readers through the book?

I believe that the true value of novels derives from a good coordination of inner desire and the external environment. I

have had some time to look back at myself, as I couldn't catch up with the speed of change in society. Then, with the COVID-19 outbreak, I have seen people around the world change their lifestyles with no other choice. Only then did I have the desire to create new stories. Perhaps it was the desire to communicate with people who lived in modern times like me. I think it's a good thing that my stories about changes since the pandemic can come together as a book. I believe there is still time to change our lives and the world in a better direction. I look forward to hearing other thoughts from readers after reading my book.

You said you had a “strong internal desire to change” until right before you published your latest book. What made you think so? Also, please tell us how your “new attitude” is reflected in the book.

Watching my parents die naturally reminded me of the end of life. I realized that I hadn't really thought about it at all in my entire life. I just had the belief that, if I lived my life to the fullest by pursuing the so-called “social success,” there would be a good end. But then, one question came to my mind – is chasing success, giving up on the things I love right now, the best life possible? Can that success be called true success?

Such questions have given rise to a desire within. A social norm cannot be my standard of living. Instead of social success to show people, I wanted to take moments of bliss as a new standard for myself. Roughly then, the pandemic occurred. Seeing how

it shook the economic foundation of our society, I had a vivid realization that no matter how one does their best, it might be difficult to achieve the “success” that this society defines. So how do you get happiness from moments in life in this intimidating time? My answers to this question are in the short story collection *Such an Ordinary Future*.



A Diary of Days, The Last of Seven Years, and Such an Ordinary Future

Which book of yours do you think represents you the best? And why do you think so?

I think *A Diary of Days* (Leger), *The Last of Seven Years* (Munhakdongne), and *Such an Ordinary Future* are the best representations of myself today. These three books influenced me in sequence. The book *A Diary of Days* encouraged me to write *The Last of Seven Years*, and the two books ultimately led me to write *Such an Ordinary Future*. The entire process of writing these books was a journey for me to find my own voice.

In July, the revised edition of *The Writings Written in My Youth* (Maumsanchaek) was published, which was initially released in 2004. It must have been a refreshing moment for you as you face the book you wrote 20 years ago. What did you particularly focus on as you worked on the revision?



The Writings Written in My Youth

I first thought of letting the book go out of print as I thought it no longer had the value to be read as time went by. But, as I read through the book once again, things became new. It was time that made it so. Over time, the events of twenty years ago have become completely new. Time makes things rise and fall. It also makes grief the seed of happiness, and chance the seed of failure. It's the magic of time. And, upon learning this, I could see the time ahead of me in detail, and I realized what to focus on and what not to do. The pain I have right now might be a necessary ingredient for me to achieve what I want. And, from that point

of view, I was able to be thankful for the unexpected chance and learned not to be obsessed with it. As these realizations came during my revision work, I wanted to deliver them to my young readers.

What is the most important element when you write novels? Is there a particular part you pay attention to the most?

What's more important is how I feel when I write novels. I must be in a good mood. There's no point in writing when I'm obviously not feeling so good, but before that, I can't just hold a pen. I write when there's something I want to write about. If I want to continue writing after scribbling, that means I'm in the mood to write. In that case, I continue to write all the way. Of course, difficult times come even when I'm writing in a great mood. But it is just that. I'm not in pain. This is the key. It would be better to put the pen down when you are in distress, since there is no chance that the condition leads to a good novel.

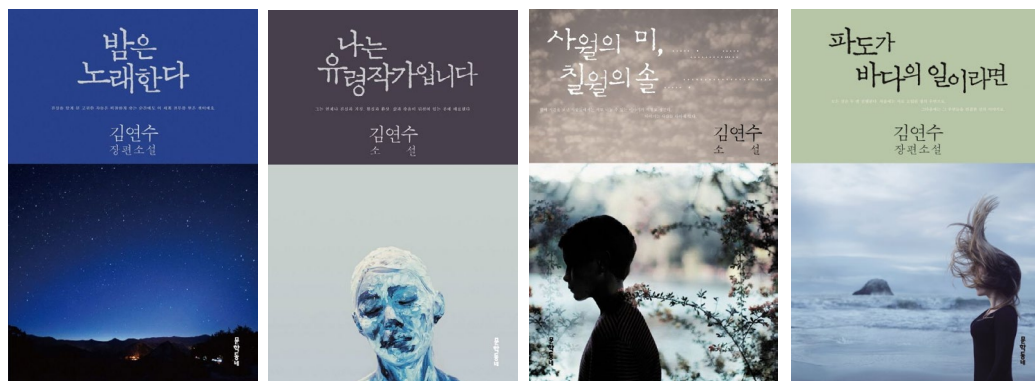
You said the act of writing something is the beginning of writing a novel. From your experience, what kind of writing usually leads to novels?

I think with my fingers. I enjoy typing. I sometimes become a pianist or a keyboardist when I type. I particularly like the sound it makes. So, I tend to type on the keyboard, randomly, even if

there's nothing to write about. Yes, that means I'm always writing something. Sometimes it's a complete sentence, and sometimes it's ridiculous self-talk. Well, it doesn't matter – I can listen to the sound of the keyboard. When I have nothing to type, I write stuff I wrote in the past. I sometimes copy them, and sometimes fix some parts. Sometimes a story abruptly begins as I do so, and from what I've experienced, it becomes a novel. The short stories, too, if I rewrite them several times, they become full fiction.

You have also written novels based on historical facts, such as *The Night is Singing* (Munhakdongne) and *I'm a Ghost Writer* (Munhakdongne). Are you interested in history? What made you add historical elements to your novels?

When you are swallowed up in your own troubles, you come to think that pain is unique to you. But history has long held that this is wrong. In the course of history, all adults worried about immature young people. As well, there are so many stories of people who have lost loved ones and have had to spend the rest of their lives without them. But, when you realize that pain and grief are not unique to yourself and everyone is experiencing the same thing, your mind will grow even greater. I think it's hard to understand your life without reference to the long history of humanity.



The Night is Singing, I'm a Ghost Writer, Mi of April, Sol of July, and If the Waves Belong to the Sea

Your books, such as *Mi of April, Sol of July* (Munhakdongne), and *If the Waves Belong to the Sea* (Munhakdongne), were published in other countries, meeting readers across the world. While there's less chance to meet your readers face-to-face due to the pandemic, what do you want to talk about with them through your books?

I think the pandemic has made every citizen of the world experience the same thing. It allowed us to understand one another across borders. So, I hope to talk with people from around the world about how it is going to change us and our world.

You have been continuously writing prose collections as well. What would it be - a prose collection or novel - for your next work? Please tell us about your future plans or goals.

After deciding to do more things I love, I decided to write only when there is something I want to write. These days, I want to write novels more than essays. So, my next work is going to be

a collection of short stories. Then, I'm thinking of writing a full-length novel featuring the Imjin War.

PUBLISHING INDUSTRY

Current Employment Status in the Korean Publication Industry

Written by Baek Won-Keun
(President of the Books & Society Research Institute)

The “2020 Content Industry Statistics (2022.3.)” report published by the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism provides various statistics from the status survey conducted in 2021 on the overall content industry. With the latest statistics available today, it is the only document that shows the current situation of the publishing industry in figures, including statistics about the Korean publishing industry.

About 185,000 people are employed throughout the publishing industry, including newspapers and printing

The report shows that the number of employees in the publishing industry reached 185,444 in 2020, which is a 0.5% increase from 184,554 in 2018. This figure covers all publishing-

related fields, such as publishing, printing, wholesaling, retailing, online distribution, and renting. To look at the publishing industry in more detail, this number includes various sub-industries, including the paper book publishing sector, such as general book publishing, textbook publishing, and educational supplements, and the online publishing sector, such as online/mobile e-book publishing, newspaper publishing, magazine and periodical publishing, and others. In short, the number 185,444 covers all the “publishing” fields we can think of when referring to the general publishing industry, encompassing not only paper books but also e-books, magazines, newspapers, and other publications.

As I have mentioned above, from a microscopic view, Korea divides the publishing industry into two – general book publishing and textbook/educational supplement publishing. This is because education takes a significant proportion – more than half - in the entire publishing market, ranging from textbooks for elementary, middle, and high school students, to textbook supplements, exercise books linked to textbooks, and learning materials for preschoolers. In this article, I will refer to this area as “educational publishing,” and neither academic textbooks nor technical books are included. So it's basically textbooks for elementary, middle, and high school students, and learning materials for children. Other various publishing fields will be classified as “general book publishing.” Also, as the online/mobile e-book publishing sector mainly refers to

e-publications, it will be classified as “e-publishing” in this article.

Current employment status in the publishing industry by field

Unit: Number of employees

Field	2018	2019	2020	On-year difference (%)	Average annual rate of change (%)
General book publishing	9,392	9,631	9,846	2.2	2.4
Educational publishing	15,681	15,828	15,243	-3.7	-1.4
E-publishing	2,292	2,487	2,495	0.3	4.3
Magazine publishing	10,482	10,808	10,581	-2.1	0.5
Printing	52,056	52,748	53,557	1.5	1.4
Bookstore business	26,931	26,637	26,830	0.7	-0.2

* Only 6 among 12 fields surveyed as of 2020 are shown.

Source: 2020 Content Industry Statistics, Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, March 2022

Around 65,000 employees work in publishing houses, e-book publishers, magazine publishers, and bookstores

Based on this classification, the number of people working in the publishing industry counted as of 2020 was 9,846 for general book publishing, 15,243 for educational publishing, 2,495 for e-publishing, 10,581 for magazine publishing, 53,557 for printing, and 26,830 for bookstore businesses. Compared to the figures from two years ago (2018), the size is roughly the same, while e-publishing saw a slight increase and educational publishing lost

some. Such changes are interpreted to have been driven by the changing social conditions - the decline in the birth rate affecting the school-age population and the evolution of the media sector affecting e-publishing.

Furthermore, although the publishing industry was hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the employment status has remained almost the same. This implies that the negative impact of the virus has not been equally critical in the industry. The 2021 Publishing Industry Survey (as of 2020) announced by the Publication Industry Promotion Agency of Korea (KPIPA) in June this year reports that publishers that “maintained” the number of employees compared to the previous year accounted for 89.1% in 2020. Publishers who saw an “increase” were primarily those with over 50 employees, accounting for 4.9%. Meanwhile, publishers who experienced a “decrease” in the number were mainly in the educational publishing sector, accounting for 6.0%. In short, it seems that the pandemic has had a different impact on publishing – some have been only windblown, and others have been swept away by a storm.

Meanwhile, if we look at the regional distribution of employees in the publishing industry as of 2020, Seoul was the most popular region accounting for 51.1% with 79,122 employees, which is a 0.1% increase on year. The region also experienced a 1.6% average annual increase from 2018 to 2020. In terms of general book publishing and educational publishing, the metropolitan area including Seoul (5,273 in general book publishing and

9,368 in educational publishing), Gyeonggi-do Province (2,410 and 4,275 respectively), and Incheon (268 and 477 respectively) took up more than 80% of the entire number. While it is true that the metropolitan area with Seoul in the center is dense in population with focused economic productivity, you can see that the publishing industry has also followed the demographic characteristic with a majority of employees working in the region.

Let's move on to the current employment status based on employment types. The number of regular workers in the overall publishing industry was 144,526, which is 93.3% of the entire workforce. Non-regular workers accounted for 6.3% with 9,749 people, and dispatched workers took up 0.4% with 633 people. By publishing fields, the general book publishing sector is composed of 4,175 males and 5,356 females as regular workers, and 162 males and 152 females as non-regular workers. Regular workers were the majority, and females accounted for a slightly bigger proportion than males with 56%, while males took up 44%. Meanwhile, the educational publishing sector composed of 7,472 males and 6,900 females as regular workers, and 415 males and 448 females as non-regular workers, showing a similar trend as the general book publishing sector; regular workers accounted for the majority, and males taking up 52% of the proportion, slightly more than females (48%).

Moving on to the magazine publishing sector – the workforce comprised 5,473 males and 4,281 females as regular workers, and

570 males and 189 females as non-regular workers. The regular workers accounted for 93% of the overall workforce. For gender ratio, there were more males (57%) than females (43%). Next, the bookstore sector comprises 11,297 males and 13,766 females as regular workers, 789 males, and 818 females as non-regular workers, and 98 males and 63 females as dispatched workers. Regular workers accounted for most of the workforce, like other sectors. Regarding the gender ratio, there were more females (56%) than males (44%) in this sector.

Editing and production account for almost half of the entire workforce in the publishing industry

Looking at the employment status based on work types, the “production” field was hiring the most significant number of employees, taking up 42.6% of the overall workers in the publishing industry. The general book publishing sector had 4,553 employees, including editors accounting for 46% of the population, followed by 1,945 in management (20%), and 1,275 in business planning (13%). For the educational publishing sector that had the greatest number of workers by field, 6,806 were in production (45%), 2,663 in management (17%), and 2,026 in others (such as distribution) (13%). From the overall viewpoint, the marketing and promotion fields have been continuously hiring more people, which implies that publishing houses’ efforts to outperform in the sales competition are focused on marketing.

In reference, the 2021 Publishing Industry Survey (as of 2020) announced in June this year by KPIPA reports that the average proportion of publishing houses using outsourcing for proofreading, correction, and editing was 28.2%. This means the industry has relied on a great deal of outside labor.

Employment status by field in the publishing industry

Unit: Number of employees

Field	Business planning	Management	Production	Marketing	R & D	Others (distribution)	Total
General book publishing	1,275	1,945	4,553	506	339	1,227	9,846
Educational publishing	1,434	2,663	6,806	1,198	1,146	2,026	15,243
E-publishing	193	353	1,324	167	244	213	2,495
Magazine publishing	992	2,203	6,005	620	228	535	10,581

* Only 4 among 12 fields surveyed as of 2020 are shown.

Source: 2020 Content Industry Statistics, Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, March 2022

As for the distribution of employees in the publishing industry according to level of education, four-year university graduates represented 56.7%, followed by 22.7% of high school graduates or less, 17.3% of two-year college graduates, and 3.3% of post-graduate graduates. Again, however, the proportion varied between fields and types of work.

As for the composition of employees in the publishing industry by age, those in their 20s accounted for 23.2%, followed by those

in their 30s 49.5%, which was the largest proportion. Those in their 40s accounted for 12.9%, and those in their 50s or above covered 14.4%. The general book publishing sector consisted of 1,906 people in their 20s, 4,584 in their 30s, 1,462 in their 40s, and 1,893 in their 50s and over. The educational publishing sector consisted of 3,175 in their 20s, 8,753 in their 30s, 2,316 in their 40s, and 998 in their 50s or above. The e-publishing sector composed of 552 in their 20s, 1,429 in their 30s, 363 in their 40s, and 152 in their 50s or above, while the magazine publishing sector consisted of 2,014 in their 20s, 5,421 in their 30s, 1,697 in their 40s, and 1,449 in their 50s or above. The common characteristic was that people in their 30s accounted for the largest proportion, and the number of employees clearly decreased with age. This can be interpreted that there are many cases in which people transfer to other industries, as the publishing industry tends to give less wage or provide poorer welfare than the average, and that new businesses set up by experienced workers that left the industry mostly tend to hire people in their 20s and 30s.

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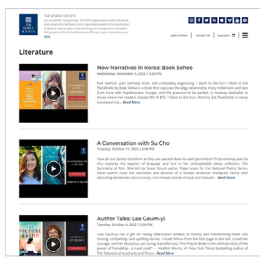


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THE KOREA SOCIETY

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A non-profit media organization in the US, run to improve the Korea-US relationship. The newest information in the Korean publishing industry can be acquired in the Literature section of Arts/Culture.

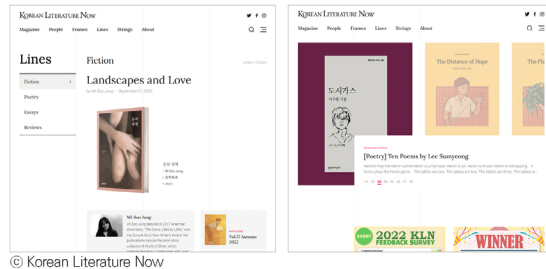


* THE KOREA SOCIETY:
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Korean Literature Now (KLN)

#LTI Webzine
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News about Korean literary content is provided in various formats, such as audiobooks, interviews, and book readings.



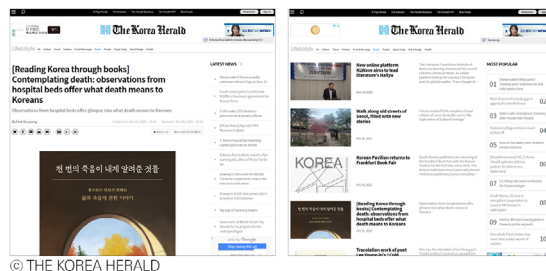
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* Korean Literature Now (KLN):
www.kln.or.kr/

THE KOREA HERALD

#English newspaper
#News about the Korean publishing industry

The representative English newspaper in Korea. News about the Korean publishing industry can be found in the Books section of Life & Style.



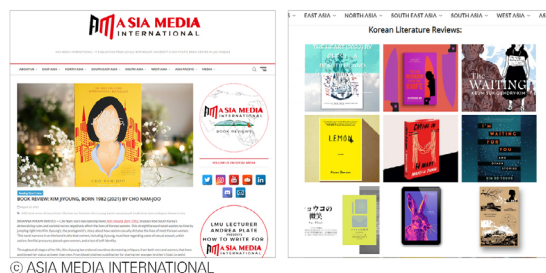
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NEW BOOKS

The Age of Daughters



**The first
full-length
novel
by Lee Seula,**

who has been speaking
to the hearts of
Korean readers through
her essays, including
Daily Lee Seula.



A beautiful man, an uncommon woman,
and a tough young lady
present to you a family drama
that you have never seen before,

**A story where daughters
who earn a living for their families
are the protagonists!**



Daughter in charge of
the family (家女長)

refers to all daughters
who strive to turn the world
upside down while
supporting their families.



Patriarchal Matriarchal?
It's now time for
daughters to stand up!



**This novel features
a beautiful yet
satisfying revolution**

that is very unlikely to happen
in patriarchal families!

“

It would be too much
for this short book
to be an alternative
to patriarchy.

I just hope this will be
one of many resistance
movements.

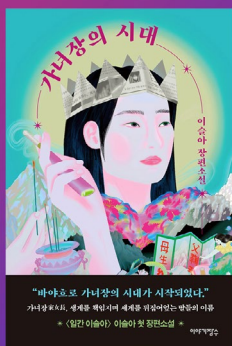
From the preface

Every step made by
“daughters” creates a path of
upheaval and shock.

**A story of courageous
and loving daughters**

struggling to change the fate of
themselves, their families, and the world!

**The struggle of daughters trying
to turn the world upside down.**



The Age of Daughters

Lee Seula, Storyseller

BEST SELLERS

2nd Week, November 2022

Best Seller Trends in the Four Biggest Online Bookstores in Korea

Books of various fields could be found on the best sellers' list for the second week of November. For example, *Read Law Classics with Cho Kuk*, written by jurist Cho Kuk introduces classics related to law that he explicitly picked. With the implicit meanings of sentences in them, he analyzes how they are applied in Korean society. Meanwhile, just like how leaves change colors in different seasons, the book *Uncanny Convenience Store 2* has returned with its maple leaf edition. How about enriching the season of books with *Uncanny Convenience Store 2*, which has changed its clothes to fit the red season? Also, *Lee Eun-Kyung's Daily Vocabulary for Elementary Schoolers* is out, which will be a great teacher for children's English vocabulary as they prepare for the upcoming new year. In this calendar-themed book, Lee Eun-Kyung, who has been a trusted mentor for parents, teaches words from literary works that children like, helping them learn

new vocabulary every day.

* *K-Book Trends* Vol. 44 – Go to the interview with Kim Ho-Yeon

www.kbook-eng.or.kr/sub/interview.php?ptype=view&idx=959&page=&code=interview&total_searchkey=%EA%B9%80%ED%98%B8%EC%97%B0

For children's books, several series have added new volumes to their sets. For example, Dr. Egg, a comic book series about observing nature, presenting popular kids' Youtuber Dr. Egg's content, returned with an eighth volume. It rapidly took over the first place on the best sellers' list. Also, Rangrang Brothers' Rice Cake Shop is the seventh volume of the Manbok's Rice Cake Shop (BIR Publishing) series, which has been setting records as a children's book series, selling more than a million copies while being included in textbooks. Through the new book, writer Kim Lily presents fun stories about rice cakes, following the tales in the previous volumes. Meanwhile, animal behaviorist professor Choi Jae-Cheon released Choi Jae-Cheon's Animal Adventure for kids. This new series launched with the book Choi Jae-Cheon's Animal Adventure 1: Blue Ghost of Ferry Beagle will lead children to the world of ecology, helping them learn and experience many things in nature and build the heart to embrace it.

* *K-Book Trends* Vol. 41 – Go to the interview with Kim Lily

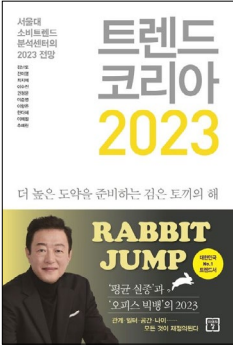
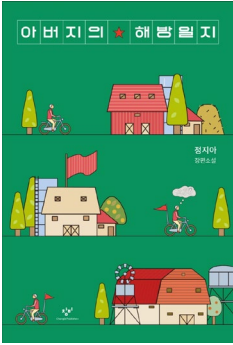

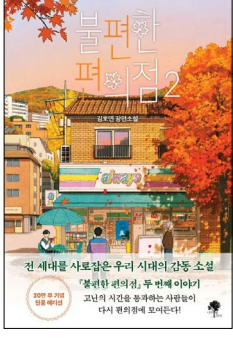
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* *K-Book Trends* Vol. 44 – Go to the article about professor Choi Jae-Cheon


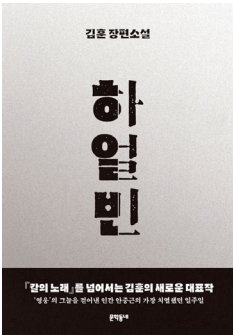
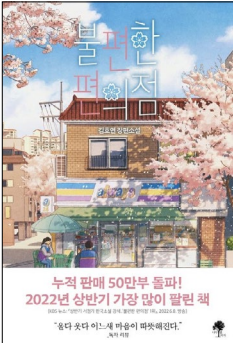

www.kbook-eng.or.kr/sub/trend.php?ptype=view&idx=958&page=1&code=trend&category=61

* The rank of best sellers below was organized after integrating domestic best sellers in the second week of November from the four biggest online bookstores in Korea – Kyobo Bookstore, Aladdin, Yes 24, and Interpark.

Top 10 best sellers for the 2nd week of November

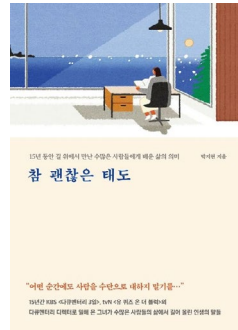
1		<p><u>Trend Korea 2023</u></p> <p>Author Kim Nando and others Publisher Miraebok Genre Business</p>
2		<p><u>Father's Liberation Diary</u></p> <p>Author Jung Ji-Ah Publisher Changbi Genre Fiction</p>
3		<p><u>Read Law Classics with Cho Kuk</u></p> <p>Author Cho Kuk Publisher O My Books Genre Humanities</p>
4		<p><u>Uncanny Convenience Store 2</u> <u>(Maple leaf edition)</u></p> <p>Author Kim Ho-Yeon Publisher Namu Bench Genre Fiction</p>

Top 10 best sellers for the 2nd week of November

5		<p><u>Lee Eun-Kyung's Daily Vocabulary for Elementary Schoolers</u></p> <p>Author Lee Eun-Kyung Publisher Forest Books Genre Family</p>
6		<p><u>Harbin</u></p> <p>Author Kim Hoon Publisher Munhakdongne Genre Fiction</p>
7		<p><u>Uncanny Convenience Store</u> (Cherry blossom edition commemorating 400 thousand copies sold)</p> <p>Author Kim Ho-Yeon Publisher Namu Bench Genre Fiction</p>
8		<p><u>Crossing the Limit</u></p> <p>Author KRAFTON, Iain McCaig Publisher Goldenbough Genre Art</p>

Top 10 best sellers for the 2nd week of November

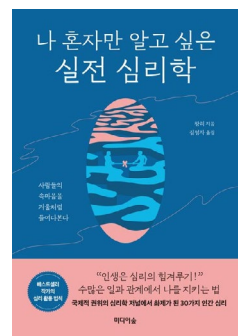
9



A Fairly Good Attitude

Author | Park Ji-Hyun
Publisher | Maven
Genre | Humanities

10



Practical Psychology for Your Daily Life

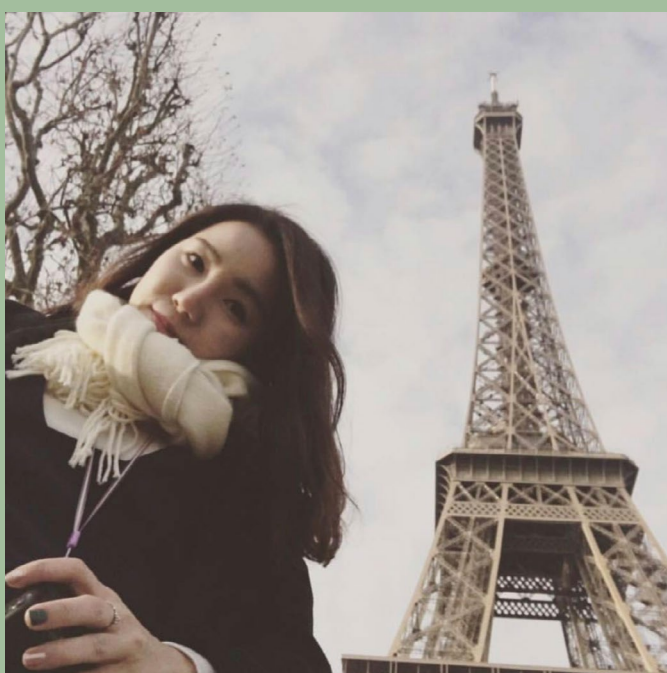
Author | Wang Li
Publisher | Mediasup
Genre | Self-help

Top 5 children's books for the 2nd week of November

1		<p><u>Dr. Egg Series 8</u></p> <p>Author Park Song-I Publisher Mirae N Co., Ltd.</p>
2		<p><u>Rangrang Brothers' Rice Cake Shop</u></p> <p>Author Kim Lily and others Publisher BIR Publishing</p>
3		<p><u>Hunhan Nammae's Science Exploration 6: Physics 2</u></p> <p>Author Hunhan Nammae (original), Lee Hyeon-Jin, Doctor SCO Publisher Gimmyoung Junior</p>
4		<p><u>Magical Thousand Characters 55: Make a Clear Decision!</u></p> <p>Author Yoo Dae-Young Publisher Owl Book</p>
5		<p><u>Choi Jae-Cheon's Animal Adventure 1: Blue Ghost of Ferry Beagle</u></p> <p>Author Choi Jae-Cheon and others Publisher Dasan Kids</p>

KOREAN TRANSLATOR

VO THI KHANH LAN



Profile

- Korean-Vietnamese translator
- E-mail: vothikhanhlan@gmail.com

Education Background

- From 2015 to 2018, SEOUL NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, REPUBLIC OF KOREA, Graduate School of International Studies / Korean Studies
 - Thesis: *A Research on South Vietnam and South Korea Relations (1965-1975) - Focusing on the South Korea's Initiative.*
- From 2007 to 2011, HO CHI MINH NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, VIETNAM, University of Social Sciences and Humanities / Korean Studies

Certificates

- Seoul National University Master's degree
- James Cook University (Singapore Campus) Academic English
- Posco Asia Scholarship Certificate
- Ho Chi Minh National University Bachelor's degree

Publications (Book Translation & Publishing)

- *Vineyard Man* (Kim Rang, Chunggeoram) – Nha Nam Publisher, 2012
- *I Have the Right to Destroy Myself* (Kim Young Ha, Bokbok Seoga) – Nha Nam Publisher, 2012
- *Red Pencil* (Shin Soo Hyeon, BIR Publishing) – First News Publisher, 2013

- *Everyone loves SNSD* (Collaborate with Dr. Nguyen Thi Hien) (Lee Young Hoon) - Koreana Magazine Vol. 3, 2016
- *Fate, Destiny and Moon Jae-in* (Moon Jae-in (the former president), Deohyumeon) - First News Publisher, 2019 (Editing)
- *Everyone loves SNSD* (Collaborate with Dr. Nguyen Thi Hien) (Lee Young Hoon) – *The collection of Korean modern short stories*, Tong Hop TP HCM Publisher, 2021
- *Coding Activities for Kids* (Karin Nygårds / Bae Jang Yeol) - MIND BRIDGE Publisher / Publication Industry Promotion Agency of Korea, 2021, sponsorship
- *Enough, That's Quite Enough* (Song Sok Ze, Munhakdongne) – TRE Publisher, 2021 / Literature Translation Institute Of Korea, 2019, Sponsorship
- *Da Ga Ra* (Jeram) – Jeram Si Publisher, 2022



Vietnamese covers of *Vineyard Man*, *I Have the Right to Destroy Myself*, *Red Pencil*, *Enough, That's Quite Enough*

Article / Interview

- *Enough, That's Quite Enough* (Song Sok Ze)

- Translated Books - Digital Library of Korean Literature (LTI Korea)

- * library.ltikorea.or.kr/translatedbooks/404051

- *Enough, That's Quite Enough*, TRE Publisher, 2021 / Phu Nu Magazine

- *Con người hồi ôi: Những biến đổi cảm thụ mang tính thời đại* - Báo Phụ Nữ (phunuonline.com.vn)

- * www.phunuonline.com.vn/con-nguoi-hoi-oi-nhung-bien-doi-cam-thu-mang-tinh-thoi-dai-a1436498.html

#K-BOOK

#Mystery & Thriller

KPIPA Introduces K-Books for Global Publishing Markets through K-Book Platform

*Leap Year***1. Publication Details**

Title | Leap Year
 Author | Song Kyounghyuk
 Publisher | GOZKNOCK ENT
 Publication Date | 2022-03-18
 ISBN | 9791163162971
 No. of pages | 304
 Dimensions | 128 * 188

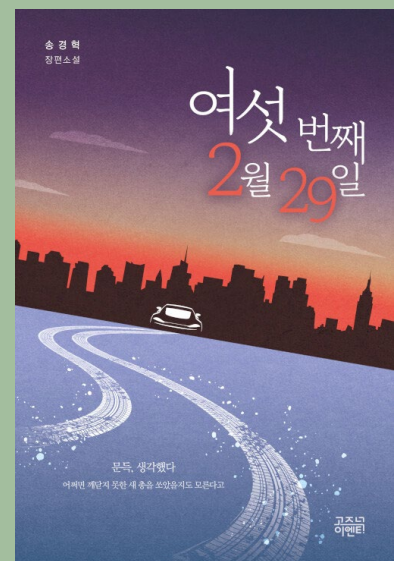
2. Copyright Contact

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 Email | miaepark@gozknock.com
 Phone | +82-10-2733-1219

3. Book Intro

Tragedy is nothing but a result of desperation.

Suhyun lived with his mother who was seriously ill. He barely made ends meet by illegally driving a taxi. On February 29 of 2004, he happened to meet a woman whose username was Hyunchae on a poker website. They arranged an in-person meeting, and Hyunchae appeared at the meeting place with pistols. In the spur of the moment, they stole a car and drove to an underground parking lot of a bank, where they robbed 300 million won from a cash transportation truck. They shot and killed a bank employee in the course.



The accomplice who demands money every four years

As they parted ways, Hyunchae said that she would meet him again on next February 29, but Suhyun did not pay attention to her words. With the money from the bank robbery, Suhyun started a successful business and the bank robbery case remained unsolved.

On February 29, 2008, Suhyun happened to pass by the place where he had met Hyunchae and came across her who had been waiting for him all day. Hyunchae was carrying a gun and demanded money from Suhyun.

On February 29, 2012, Suhyun again met Hyunchae on Jayu-ro. She demanded more money, but he refused. Several days later, there was a car accident on Jayu-ro that involved a man's death.

That tragedy might not be a coincidence

After that, Suhyun never went to meet Hyunchae on February 29. Instead, having a hunch that she was fixing her eyes on him, he hired a detective agent to investigate her. The investigation revealed that Hyunchae was a victim of a horrible crime of illegal sex filming. The man who died on Jayu-ro was the one in the film, and Suhyun came to learn that he was deeply involved with the crime. People who were involved with the film were dying one after another.

Suhyun desperately searched for Hyunchae in vain.

What she wanted...

On February 29, 2020, reappearing in front of Suhyun, Hyunchae points a gun at his head. Suhyun manages to overpower her then puts her into a car trunk, sinking the car into a lake.

Several days later, however, someone tips off the police about the sunk(en) car. When they open the trunk, someone else but Hyunchae is found dead. The dead body turns out to be another assailant of the sex crime involving Hyunchae.

Suhyun recognizes the dead body as the one he and Mubae committed to the waves a few years ago and gets confused. Because of this incident, Mubae gets Suhyun wrong and attempts to kill him in the end. At the critical moment, the police is called in to save Suhyun based on a tip-off from somebody, but they arrest Suhyun as the culprit of the bank robbery and murder case of 2004.

On February 29, 2024. Hyunchae visits Suhyun in jail. Suhyun retrospects upon the past, looking at her, and thinks that he may have fired his gun in spite of himself.

* k-book.or.kr/user/books/books_view?idx=6321

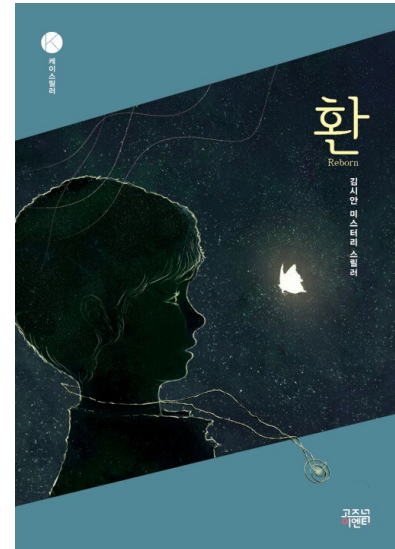
Reborn

1. Publication Details

Title | Reborn
Author | Kim Sian
Publisher | GOZKNOCK ENT
Publication Date | 2022-01-21
ISBN | 9791163162360
No. of pages | 320
Dimensions | 145 * 210

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3. Book Intro

At the happiest moment, a child appears from the past

A baby is born to Ji-young and Seok-hoon who are happy together. It is a “reborn child” who has no philtrum and remembers his previous life. The child never speaks about his memories from his previous life. On his fifth birthday, he says “our home” pointing at Jeonghoe Village on TV. Ji-young and Seok-hoon go to the village, which has been devastated, and meet Mi-yeon, who calls herself “nowhere girl” and Mi-do, who is a doctor of occupational and environmental medicine there. They hear about the tragedy that occurred in the village 20 years before.

Perhaps it may be a seed of tragedy

Goh Mi-do, who is nicknamed Komodo dragon because of her venomous character, reveals the truth of the incident that happened in the village. Twenty years before, Mi-do’s father and elder brother died in the incident. Mi-do senses that the incident is closely related to reborn children and plans to use a reborn child, Gi-hwan. However, around that time, Gi-hwan is kidnapped. The kidnapper, who was once Mi-do’s good neighbor, tells her about an unidentified lump of meat. Mi-do remembers the familiar smell that she’d smelled before. It was non-perishable processed meat that she heard is traded in slums. Perhaps it may be the seed of tragedy.

What is the memory from the previous life that the child with no philtrum tries to hide?

As the conflict between Ji-young and Seok-hoon about their son reaches its peak, Seok-hoon is deeply confused and makes a wrong decision□to extract

Gi-hwan's milk teeth. Reborn children lose their memories when they lose their milk teeth, but if their milk teeth are forcefully extracted, they cannot grow normally because their memories get all mixed up. Gi-hwan manages to escape from Seok-hoon and arrives at Jeonghwa Village. Gi-hwan enjoys a peaceful time there with Mi-do and Mi-yeon for couple of days, but Seok-hoon arrives and takes him back home. Gi-hwan loses his sense to keep silent. In order to wake up an unconscious child from the abyss, his name from the previous life should be called. The past that the child refuses to recall should be revealed and what the child wants to forget should be asked.

All the sins of those involved in the tragedy should be disclosed. Mi-do and Ji-young try tooth and nail to dig up the past, while those who are sinful hide the past in fear. Finally, Ji-young and Mi-do pluck up courage and reveal the truth of the incident of 20 years ago. At the center of the incident was Yun Tae-seok, the director of Reborn Child Memory Storage Bureau and Won-seok, father of Seok-hoon. They produced processed meat using pork that had been unsuccessfully genetically modified and was illegally traded. They uncover the hidden truth and unravel the entangled relationship. Gi-hwan comes to his senses by being called by his previous name, and thus loses the memories from his previous life. People slowly realize that it was not that reborn children didn't speak of their past lives, but that the people didn't listen to what they had to say.

* k-book.or.kr/user/books/books_view?idx=6318

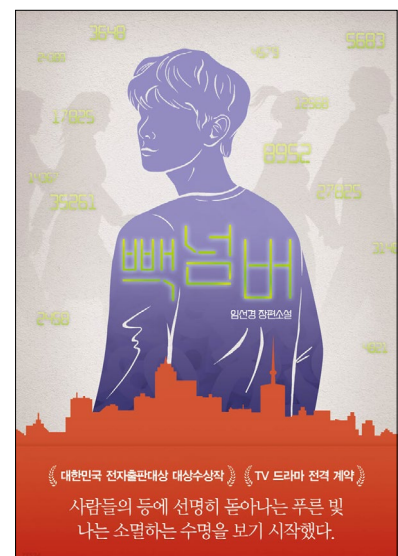
Back Number

1. Publication Details

Title | Back Number
Author | Im Seonkyung
Publisher | GOZKNOCK ENT
Publication Date | 2021-06-30
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3. Book Intro

One day, Lee Won-yeong, an ordinary college student, loses his parents in a car accident. He almost dies but miraculously survives. When he wakes up in the hospital, he sees something strange: green numbers flashing on people's backs. The numbers are visible only to him. As the day passes, the numbers decrease by one. Won-yeong learns that the back number indicates the days each person has left to live. For example, if there's a number 1 on your back, then today's the day you will die.

Everybody must face their last day of life. However, we live as if "the day" will never come since we don't know when that day will be. The clearest thing in the world is "death" and the most unclear thing in the world is the "day of death." However, Won-yeong knows when that day will be. To him, it's clear. But the one thing he cannot know is the number on his own back.

* k-book.or.kr/user/books/books_view?idx=6320

Robot Teacher

1. Publication Details

Title | Robot Teacher
Author | Lee Heejun
Publisher | Byeolsoop
Publication Date | 2021-08-12
ISBN | 9791191204728
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Dimensions | 150 * 220

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3. Book Intro

Robot Teacher, the first novel by the 25-year-old rookie writer Lee Heejun, is a perfect blend of mystery, sci-fi, thriller, and coming-of-age story, which offers a whole new kind of entertainment through the fusion of multiple genres and captivating storyline.

What stands out most in this novel is the amusing narrative that successfully highlights the beauty of each genre. The plot strongly grabs readers' attention throughout, proceeding seamlessly from the cheerful beginning to the urgent

middle part, and an ending that leaves a powerful feeling behind. The logical and intelligent humor created by the thorough and creative process of reasoning reminds us of such classic mystery books as the *Sherlock Holmes* series, and the dynamic chases and action sequences make our hands sweat like a Hollywood blockbuster. In other words, the book has perfectly utilized the head (reasoning) and body (action) together, demonstrating what it means to “capture readers through a story.” The fast-flowing yet smooth sentences support the dynamic narrative even further.

Another major strength of this novel is the characters. The protagonist, the AI robot named Gauss, is a humane and gentle teacher, who also plays the detective in pursuit of truth using its reasoning capability that surpasses that of humans. And Gauss, in turn, is chased by an old lady called Seon Yu-Han. Normally she is an ordinary and kind lady who works part-time at a restaurant, but since her grandson’s death, she pursues the robot ahead of the police with her dogged determination and remarkable reasoning. Combined with other original characters, the book creates a realistic and unique air – and a sense of fun, which sets it apart from other teen novels. While investigating a murder, the robot has conflicts with inhumane humans, during which it struggles to keep its own humane qualities. In this way, the book addresses the question of relationships and humanity, and the final decision of Gauss at the end resonates strongly across readers’ hearts.

It has been quite a while since we saw a genre fiction that has a powerful storyline and unique characteristics. The gripping story, fast plotline development, and urgent incidents appear without ceasing, giving no chance for the reader to feel bored or put down the book. To all mystery and sci-fi fans, as well as general readers who like stories in themselves, we strongly recommend this new type of genre fiction from Korea, a new level in teen literature.

The film rights in Korea were recently sold. Readers will soon be able to watch the movie version of the book.

* k-book.or.kr/user/books/books_view?idx=5856

Poong-woon Tak, the Ghost Supervisor #2

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Title | Poong-woon Tak, the Ghost Supervisor #2

Author | Choi Juhye, So Yoonkyoung

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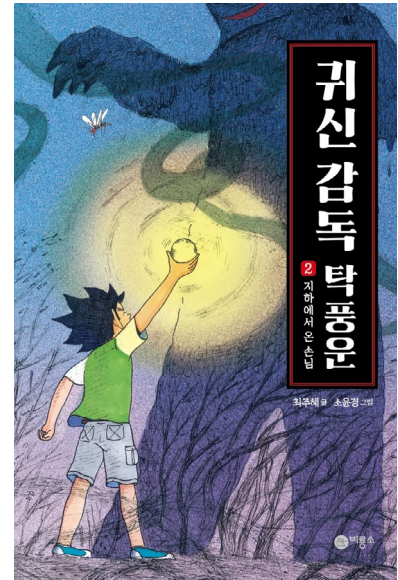
Dimensions | 130 * 190

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3. Book Intro

After much trial and tribulation, Poong-woon passes the final test to become a sinseon and is named a ghost supervisor. His master, the sinseon Cho, gifts him with a special present. It's none other than a Cool Fish Bag. The bag is designed to wear around the waist, as is the fashion these days, and when Poong-woon places his hand inside, he immediately realizes its true worth.

Master Cho leaves on holiday and Poong-woon finds himself alone, working as a ghost supervisor. Thinking himself still a novice, Poong-woon isn't sure if he's up to the task, but he manages somehow, even without his master. Then one day, a guest arrives from the underworld.

Iipse Bong, who emerges from the underworld, is an old friend of Poong-woon's. He is currently training to become a flower supervisor. To become one, he must also pass the test, which involves finding the Absolute Seed, which can blossom into the Absolute Flower. The Absolute Seed must be discovered in the heart of a human. Every person has a seed inside them, but they're all different sizes and colors. The Absolute Seed is rainbow-colored and can blossom into an Absolute Flower that has the power to make any dream come true. Can Poong-woon succeed in finding that elusive human with a good heart and strong spirit, who has an Absolute Seed planted in his heart? Meanwhile, Poong-woon has become friends with Jin Barun, whose parents opened a restaurant in their neighborhood. But soon, a nasty scandal breaks out surrounding some malicious online comments written about Barun Restaurant, and it's determined that the Heulseolchung monster was behind the attack. Heukseolchung is a small monster the size of a mosquito, and when he bites someone, the victim's tongue turns black and he starts saying nasty things about others. Poong-woon succeeds in getting rid of the monster, but the restaurant still loses customers due to the

vicious online comments. When they hold a small tasting event, some customers reluctantly arrive and upon tasting the food, become regulars. Barun, who is of good character and of kind heart, becomes stronger after what his family has endured. The seed in his heart grows to take on rainbow-colored hues and bursts into a flower. With the monster gone and the Absolute Flower obtained, it seems the hero has gotten everything he could want! But the book soon ends, with another adventure waiting on the horizon.

* k-book.or.kr/user/books/books_view?idx=5623

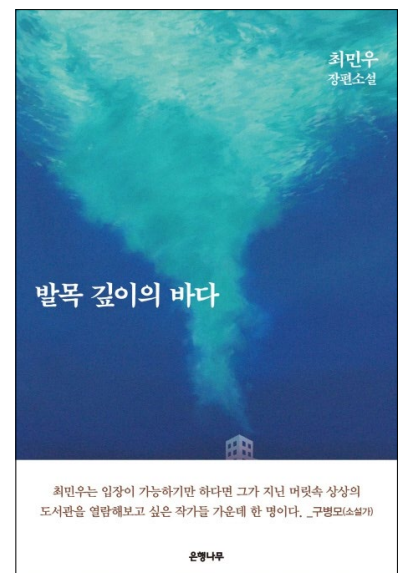
Ankle-Deep Sea

1. Publication Details

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Author | Choi MinWoo
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3. Book Intro

The Book Organizing Society has branches in nineteen locations nationwide. But the Book Organizing Society is only a name. The members are actually people who secretly move around and solve strange cases that occur everywhere in our lives. The branch office where Gyeonghae and Noa worked was located on the third floor of an old commercial building right next to the bus terminus. Gyeonghae was filling in Noa's empty seat, who disappeared shortly after he found the mirror a client had requested, when Hanbyeol appeared. Hanbyeol handed Gyeonghae Noa's business card and said he had told him to come anytime if something happened to his mother. Then surprisingly, the boy told her that his mother was immortal with eternal youth, and because of that she was being chased by someone. A boy with soft light brown eyes, precocious enough to surprise an adult. Gyeonghae was not allowed to accept a request from a ten-year-old boy without the consent of his guardian, so she first called on the boy's

father. But just as Hanbyeol had expected, his father seemed to have no interest in finding his wife.

Whilst Gyeonghae was thinking about what to do, Mr. Bear, the manager of the Society as well as a middle manager, appeared. He handed Gyeonghae a thick pile of documents and gave her a mission. According to the papers, the number of remains unearthed so far totaled an astonishing 91. He said that they had managed to block any press coverage for now, but it was only a matter of time before the case was disclosed to the world. “Find the important thing that is not important. I don’t care how trivial it is. You probably already know this, but everything that happens to us has meaning.” In that process, another request came in for the mirror that had come into Noa’s hands. A boy came, bones were revealed, and a mirror appeared—a special mirror that did not flip left and right. The fact that Hanbyeol came to Gyeonghae, and that before that, Noa had gone to see Hanbyeol’s family, that a woman who neither aged nor died had disappeared, that unidentified bones began popping up all over the place, they all seemed to be a part of a certain trend. They were all “phenomena” caused by one incident, and they were all some kind of sign. Gyeonghae had to uncover what that incident was.

* k-book.or.kr/user/books/books_view?idx=5392

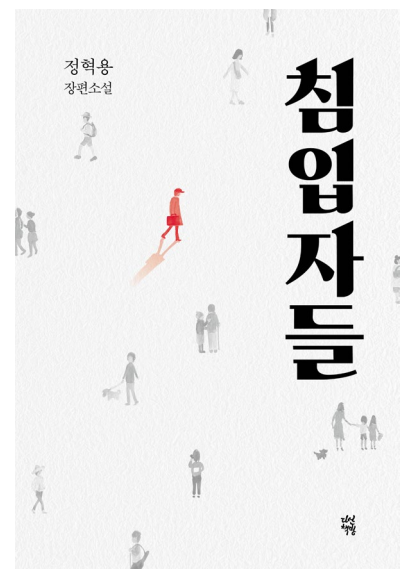
The Invaders

1. Publication Details

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Author | Jeong Hyeokyeong
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3. Book Intro

He is a normal delivery guy who is in comfortable climbing clothes, carries a moving cart, and goes up and down stairs faster than an elevator. However, no one knows about him well because his identity has been unknown, even his name. People call him 'Hangwoon-dong,' which is the same with the name of the area he works for.

What he wants is consolation, a little bit of comfort. However, there are always troubles. Moreover, people in Hangwoon-dong never leave him alone. There is a depressed guy who wants to kill him. A village idiot who is always with his bodyguard bothers him. An old professor forces to study economic philosophy and his granddaughter always boasts her beauty. Besides, staffs of a gay bar seduce him with secret glances.

Can the normal delivery derive comfort from these people? The breathtaking story goes on from even the first page!

* k-book.or.kr/user/books/books_view?idx=4445

The Day of Kidnapping

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Title | The Day of Kidnapping
Author | Jeong Haeyeon
Publisher | SIGONGSA Co., Ltd.
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Dimensions | 130 * 203

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3. Book Intro

"Let me introduce my kidnapper"

Myeongjun decides to kidnap someone in order to make money for his daughter's surgery, but in the ensuing action causes a car accident by mistake. His car knocks down a girl named Rohee, who was in fact his target of abduction. Rohee loses her memory as a result of the car accident, and believing Myeongjun is her father, keeps him on the trot. Impatient to return Rohee to her real family, Myeongjun rings up



her parents, but they don't pick up the phone. As a last resort, he goes to spy on Rohee's house, and what should he see but the dead bodies of her parents being carried out of the house before his very eyes! To make matters worse, despite her memory loss, Rohee's genius brain remains unscathed, and so she starts to suspect Myeongjun's clumsy lies.

A delightful everyday mystery from Jeong Haeyeon, who is fast becoming a major thriller writer in Korea.

With five full-length thriller novels under her belt, Jeong Haeyeon has mostly depicted the inner malice and appalling duplicity of humanity. This is yet another masterpiece from the highly talented writer, which deals with the subject matter of abduction but retains humor from start to finish. The unlikely chemistry between the clumsy yet humane thirty-something Myeongjun and the teenage genius Rohee gives rise to many laughs. Yet at the same time, the novel never loses its identity as a thriller. As Detective Sang-yoon gets to the bottom of the case step by step, we become overcome with the chilling fear of human malice. Then there is the pleasure of an unexpected twist. When the truth is exposed in full, it becomes clear how the selfish human desire to get ahead can have terrible consequences.

At first, the relationship between Myeongjun and Rohee seems to be clearly defined as that between perpetrator and victim or adult and child. However, while Myeongjun is simple-minded and clumsy, Rohee is intelligent and quick-witted, and so the situation is soon reversed. Their relationship takes another turn when they pretend to be father and daughter. Rohee, who is not used to calling anyone Dad, finds it difficult to ignore Myeongjun's blind affection for his daughter. The author satirizes Korean society, where many parents treat their kids as their possessions, and questions the real value of family through the uncanny bond between Myeongjun the kidnapper and Rohee the victim.

* k-book.or.kr/user/books/books_view?idx=2625

少年易老 (A Boy May Get Older Easily)

1. Publication Details

Title | 少年易老 (A Boy May Get Older Easily)

Author | Pyeon Hyeyoung

Publisher | Moonji publishing co.,Ltd.

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No. of pages | 256

Dimensions | 116 * 186

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3. Book Intro

Novels by Pyeon Hyeyoung start out with unexpected incidents. As the narrator tracks the causes of such incidents and the dark veil of life is lifted, the cruel truth hidden behind the darkness slowly reveals itself. The way characters try to remove the darkness in their lives meet the phraseology of Pyeon Hyeyoung and drive the reader into the tense situation of the characters, putting a reader into a breath-taking thrill and involved in solving the mystery.

The title piece, 少年易老, comes from Chu Hsi's work 少年易老學難成, which means "A boy may get older easily but it is difficult to master one's studies." When we focus on the change of a boy becoming an adult, the reason 少年易老 appears at the forefront of the book has great significance. What would the boy look like when he gets older? In other words, what does the adults in the novel look like?

What does it mean to become an adult? Knowing oneself better than anyone else and therefore maintaining one's dignity in any situation? Pyeon Hyeyoung then asks a serious question. Will an adult be able to withstand every unexpected thing in the world? The once-kind father loses his kindness as he looks after his grandfather on his mother's side (*Next Guess*), another character worked so hard and faithfully but eventually he was severely injured (*Wonder Box*), and even when appropriate amount of weedkiller was used but the yard is ruined (*Lawn*). In front of an incident you failed to anticipate, your body freezes in panic, maybe even collapses. Then you become obsessed with a single question. Whose fault is it? Why am I suffering because of someone else's fault?

Once this question is asked, there is no end. You must find the one responsible.

Even when you ask whose fault it was, in the end, there is only one answer. And that answer may be the one you wanted to avoid the most. The fact that you were there at the start of it all. It is unclear when it started, but as if life already knew you would fall, it drags you down into its fully-prepared trap. Within the pain, unable to blame anyone but yourself, will you be able to withstand the truth?

* k-book.or.kr/user/books/books_view?idx=2194

Eversible

1. Publication Details

Title | Eversible
Author | Moon Mokha
Publisher | Arzaklivres
Publication Date | 2018-12-05
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Dimensions | 137 * 197

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3. Book Intro

The debut work of rookie writer Moon Mokha, who effectively blends sci-fi, fantasy and mystery!

A novel that tells its story as a novel should, through character development and scrumptious dialogue. The most outstanding novel of all the recent debut works in the genre fiction category.

Yoon Seori, a promising new investigator, ends up working for a corrupt police agency, helping them, and winds up with a criminal organization that she should not have been involved with. She is assigned to an assassination operation via an informal order and is sent to the operation area, a ghost town closed off due a large sink hole, a city where a devastating disaster took the lives of more than 40,000 people and the scars still remain. She finds hundreds of people in this city where no one should be and witnesses the incredible superpowers that they have.

* k-book.or.kr/user/books/books_view?idx=2839