

# The Argus

No. 530 NOVEMBER 15, 2022  
Since 1954

***Is Vegan Leather a Truly Ethical Option for the Earth?***

**For Sale**



**Faux Leather vs. Natural Leather**

**Take a Look at the Dilemma of Faux Leather**

**We Need to Critically See Through Various Aspects**

**Can Vegan Surpass the Natural?**



# The Argus

ESTABLISHED 1954

Published monthly except on school holidays by and for the students of Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, The Argus, the oldest campus English magazine in Korea, pursues the highest standard of campus journalism and academism.


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## Editorial

# Realizing the Role of the Press

What is the role of the press? From the time I joined The Argus as a Cub Reporter at the same time as I entered HUFs in 2021, to the present, I have constantly been thinking about the role of the press. The role of the press in society is diverse and important, such as delivering undistorted information to people, serving as a voice for the underprivileged, and delivering information quickly. Among these roles, as a reporter at The Argus, I mainly wanted to write articles that convey the other side of society or both sides of a subject that people are not aware of. Ultimately, I tried to create a starting point for public discussion to make a better future by addressing numerous problems that the public is unaware of and analyzing them from the creative perspective of college students. For this reason, after becoming Editor-in-Chief, I usually say to reporters with my values, "Do not take everything for granted, and question yourself." I try to publish an article containing this wish every month, and in this November issue, The Argus focused on the duality of vegan leather.

Do the readers know what veganism is? Veganism is a philosophy that refrains from consuming anything made by exploiting animals. The primary purpose of veganism is to protect the rights of animals, but it can also protect the environment. This is because a large amount of greenhouse gas is emitted in the process of meat production. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)'s special report on "Climate Change and Land," published in August 2019, if people around the world stop eating animal products and go vegetarian, there would be a reduction of about 8 billion tons of greenhouse gas, which is 22 percent of the 37.1 billion tons of greenhouse gas emitted worldwide in 2018. As climate change is worldwide, veganism has emerged as a way to prevent this, and has gained popularity and spread beyond the domains of food, cosmetics, and even the fashion industry. One product resulting from this is vegan leather, which is made of vegan material, not livestock skin. Instead of real leather, it is now used in leather jackets, bags, and shoes that people commonly use. If you search for vegan leather on a portal site, you can see several shopping malls selling related products. If you take a close look around the various shopping malls, you will notice that vegan leather comes with a specific phrase. That is, *environmentally friendly*. The Argus raised one question. Are vegan leathers truly *environmentally friendly*? The Argus analyzed the answer academically along with the sharp perspective of 23-year-old Staff Reporter Lee Jue-hyun. 

By Yang Yu-min  
Editor-in-Chief

양유민



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>> Veganism is the latest craze in various industries including fashion. In line with consumption trends, much faux leather (also vegan leather) products are being released by the fashion industry, which consumes as many animals as the restaurant industry. Unlike in the past, when natural leather was preferred, vegan leather is considered as a better option these days. What makes consumers choose vegan leather over the materials? How exactly does vegan leather differ from natural leather? It is worth looking into whether vegan leather is really an ethical consumption. The Argus critically investigates the ambivalence of vegan leather, hoping to sustain the planet Earth.

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## HUFS Institute of Indian Studies HK+ Project Team Holds 4th Korea-India 2030 Forum

The Institute of Indian Studies HK+ (Humanities Korea, National Research Foundation) Project Team at HUFS hosted the 4th Korea-India 2030 Forum online on November 4, 2022. Following the topic “21st Century Korean and Indian Young Leadership and Future Vision,” it was designed to provide a venue for discussion and cooperation for the 2030 generation, the backbone of Korean and Indian society.

©HUFS Institute of Indian Studies



▲ Each group of participants has various topics discussing the vision of Korea-India in the 21st century.

A total of 45 participants including Korean and Indian researchers, politicians, journalists, cultural experts, and students in their 20s and 30s made stimulating presentations and had discussions on cooperation between Korea and India in their respective fields. The HUFS Indian Institute emphasized the importance of the forum, saying, “The role of the 2030 generation, the future leaders, is emphasized now more than ever to maintain the future of both countries based on coexistence and co-prosperity and to promote substantial development.”

Through these exchanges, the two countries sought to deepen their mutual understanding, strengthen emotional bonds through networking, and lay the foundation of constructive and future-oriented cooperation. Lee Ga-bin (Department of English Literature and Culture ‘20) said, “I hope there will be many opportunities to increase understanding of each other between the 2030 generation of both countries so that they can actively form a more friendly relationship.” It is expected that people in various fields of both countries will strengthen their solidarity by discussing the future together. 🇰🇷

By Lee Jue-hyun

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## Black Knights, HUFS American Football Team, Wins 2nd Prize

On October 9, 2022, the Black Knights, HUFS American football team, won the second prize at the 62nd Autumn Seoul League. The final started at 3 p.m. in Hongcheon County, Gangwon Province, 104 kilometers from Seoul, and the result was a 13-0 loss to the Royals from Sungkyunkwan University.

Oh Sung-min (Division of Global Sport Industry ‘22), a Black Knights player, said, “We sustained our momentum of attack at the beginning of the game, but we lost in the end.

However, this defeat is valuable in that it gives us a chance to find out what we have to improve. To play better next season, we promise that all the Black Knights players, managers, and the coaching staff will train steadily.”

The Black Knights team is rapidly posting strong results reflected by their performance in the 61st American Football Challenge Bowl held in January 2022. They have a short history, so the number of people who support the team is relatively small. However, they usually have intensive training (three times a week, even more than four times a week) when preparing for a game. In this regard, the Black Knights team makes a good model of a new and small American football team overcoming difficulties with unceasing effort. National competitions are coming. The Argus supports the team and cheers them on for good results in every game they play. 🇰🇷



©Black Knights

▲ Whenever the Black Knights team has a game, they chant to hype up.

By Lee Ju-won

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## HUFS Institute of Latin American Studies, Pachamama, Publishes Translation of “The Story of Dokdo Reading by Ecology”

HK+ (Humanities Korea, National Research Foundation) National Strategies Research Project Agency of HUFS Institute of Latin American Studies, Pachamama, published a translation of the National Institute of Ecology (NIE) “The Story of Dokdo Reading by Ecology” into Portuguese celebrating Dokdo Day on October 25, 2022. Starting with this book, Pachamama is planning to publish a translation in Spanish as well.

Dokdo Day is a day to proclaim that Dokdo is an integral part of Korea’s territory and to inform the world of its will to protect the island from any controversy. The book is concerned with the ecological information surrounding the island to reassure Dokdo unchangeably belongs to Korea by conducting and disseminating research on one of its own natural resources in the domain of ecology. The translation project was initiated by the challenge that language barriers hinder the dissemination of information about Korea’s natural resources to countries all over the globe. In this vein, it is meaningful in that it is the first joint endeavor project after the agreement between HUFS and NIE made on June 3, 2021, and the first translation of the book in another language.

Professor Shin Jung-hwan, the Head of the project, said, “The translation of the book will be useful not only to domestic and foreign researchers in the field of ecology, but also to the public interested in Dokdo.” Kim Min-ha (Department of Portuguese ‘19) said, “I think this translation is meaningful in that we can promote and naturally spread the right perception of Korean culture, history, and natural resources to foreign countries, as well as the Hallyu contents, which has already been widely known around the world!” The Argus hopes that the various foreign language departments at HUFS will fulfill their missions to spread truth transparently to positively influence the world. 📖



By Lee Jue-hyun  
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## HUFS Announces Affiliated Hospital for Flu Vaccination

The Health Service Center at HUFS Seoul Campus recommends that students, faculty members, staff, and administrators visit an affiliated hospital and get vaccinated against influenza (flu) to prevent viral infection. Students and faculty, including their family members and acquaintances, can get vaccinated at Sahmyook Medical Center, about a five-minute walk from Exit No. 2 at Hoegi Station, until they run out of vaccines. The vaccine is GCFlu Quadrivalent from Green Cross Corporation. The cost is 31,500 won (US\$22.10), a 10 percent discount from 35,000 won (US\$24.55).



▲ In September 2022, South Korea's public health authorities issued an influenza warning for the first time since 2019.

People who want to get vaccinated should call 1577-3675 and make a reservation with Dr. Lee Chan-woo of the Department of Family Medicine. After the reservation is confirmed, people should visit the first floor of the new building, and it is not necessary to submit a student ID or employment certificate.

Kim Se-hyun (Division of International Studies ‘21) said, “People who live near the medical center can access it easily, though those who do not live nearby are unlikely to go there. However, it will certainly be a good opportunity.” As the temperature decreases, patients with respiratory diseases are increasing. The Argus hopes that people will take care of their health in preparation for winter. 📖


By Lee Ju-won  
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# How Close Are You to the Goals You Set at the Beginning of the Semester?

By Kim Jun-hong  
*Cub Reporter*

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Every time a new semester begins, we make plans and resolutions for the upcoming semester. With hope and anticipation, we set various goals such as studying a new foreign language or going on a diet. Now in November, half of the second semester has already passed. How close are you to the way you pictured yourself at the beginning of the semester? Could the readers answer it as a percentage? The Argus asked HUFSSans by offering time to reflect on themselves over this semester so far. 





**Kim Yu-bin**

(Dept. of English Literature and Culture '22)

I thought I would study English hard when I first entered Hufs, but I spent a lot of time getting used to university life. As a freshman, I did not expect that it would take this long to adjust to school. I did not realize that life as a college student is completely different from that of a high school student. I thought I would spend most of my time studying, but maintaining a good social life was almost all I did. But I do not regret it at all. Rather, I am more satisfied that my plans went wrong. I was able to learn many other things, besides studying.



I am on the Student Council, and I was elected the Student President of the College of Asian Languages and Cultures this semester. At the beginning of my term, I hoped students could enjoy a better school life with the help of the Student Council. I successfully promoted various offline events such as snack events and sports contests. Throughout these events, I was able to keep most of the promises I made when I first ran for the President. I am so glad and proud of myself, and I will do my best till the end of my term to make it to 100 percent.



**Jeong Han**

(Dept. of Indian Languages and Cultures '21)



**Rachel Zimmer**

Exchange Student

I wanted to learn Korean enthusiastically, and I learned much more than I thought since the Korean class is intense. Considering that I started studying five weeks ago, I think I am doing pretty well. At this point, I am proud of what I achieved since I have learned much more than I had thought. Also, ever since I arrived, I have met a lot of new people. It was great because everyone here is open and willing to help. For the remaining half of the semester, I would like to travel outside of Seoul. I have seen a lot of Korea so far, but I really want to see and experience more. Then that will make me 100 percent.



I wanted to make every day full and meaningful. My goals for this semester were to take classes in the morning, study thoroughly, and work and exercise every day. However, it was nearly impossible to live just like my plan. I failed to do so. However, thanks to my failure, I have grown up a little. I thought I knew myself very well, but through this chance, I can look at myself accurately and notice my limits and shortcomings. It is a shame that I am living a life far from my initial plan, but I strongly believe it was a good opportunity to grow up and become a better person.

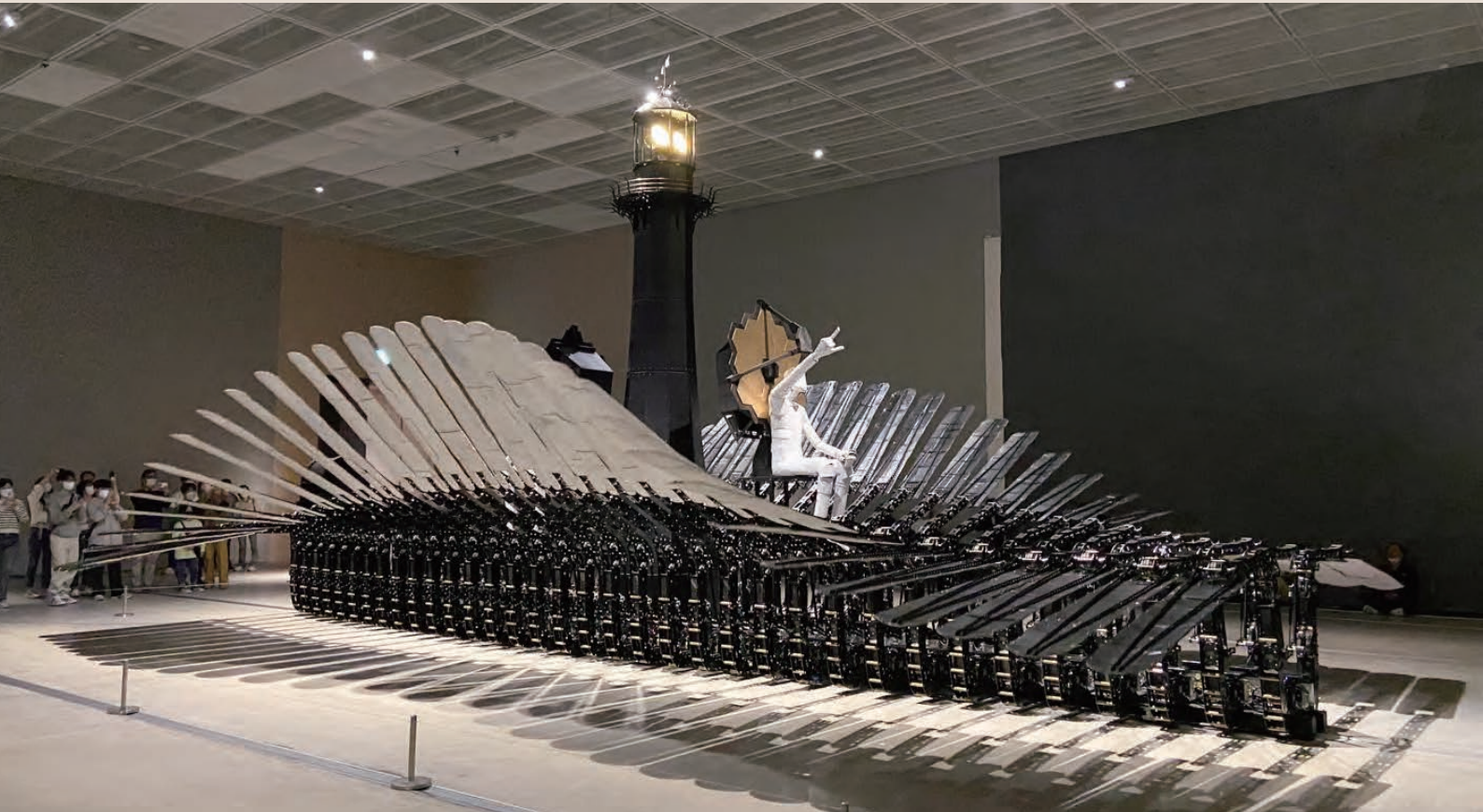


**Cho Joo**

(Dept. of English for International Conferences and Communication '21)



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## Who Is the Navigator of This Ship?

Finding the Way  
by Visiting  
the Exhibition

# "Little Ark"

By Cho Eun

*Associate Editor of Culture Section*

There is a popular Korean quote, "Life is like navigation." Using the word "navigate," which means "to direct the way that a ship will travel," as a metaphor for life implies that life and the captain, the owner of the life, should have a destination to pursue and a way to the destination. Do people know where their destination is and where they are headed at this moment? It seems like people nowadays are losing sight of their original goals and the reason for life, in this era of competitive survival, pursuing things like entering college, getting a job, and having their own house. They focus only on victory in the shorter term, forgetting their long-term resolutions while sometimes getting distracted. The exhibition "MMCA Hyundai Motor Series 2022: Choe U-Ram [Little Ark]" casts an open question as such to society in general, and hopes that visitors will ask themselves philosophical questions to find their own path. The Argus wishes those young who fear facing competition will find their path to stand strong in the competitive society, by introducing the exhibition "Little Ark."



## Before Reading

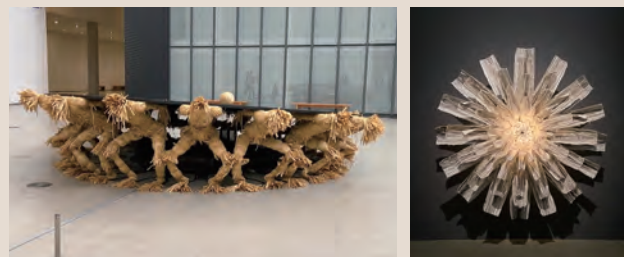
- **Location:** National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul (10 minutes from Anguk Station by walking)
- **Opening Hours:** 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. (until 9 p.m. on Wednesday and Saturday)
- **Admission Fee:** 4,000 (US\$2.80), free for those under 24 or over 65, and every Wednesday and Saturday from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.
- **Exhibition Period:** 2022.09.09 - 2023.02.26
- MMCA Hyundai Motor Series, which started in 2014, consists of annual advertisements in which Hyundai Motor supports one Korean author or a team. The artist Choe U-Ram has designed art pieces meticulously representing machines and mythology since the early 1990s. For 30 years he has questioned about the realms of society, philosophy, and religion via his artworks.

📷 All photos are taken by Cho Eun

### 1

## The Endless Competition to Possess the Head.

There is a spinning round table and three blackbirds on its top waiting for prey to suddenly die. The exhibition starts with the work “Round Table,” which consists of human-shaped straws lifting the round table with a ball rolling on the top of it and “Black Birds” hung from the ceiling. The “Round Table” has 18 human-shaped straws without heads propping up the round table with their whole body. The ball made of straw, rolling here and there on the table, is the head of the human-shaped straws. The 18 human-shaped straws cycle through raising the table and being squashed by the table. This figure raising the table in turns looks like human-shaped straws competing for the single head. Unfortunately, the more they lift up the table, the farther it gets as the head rolls down through the slope. However, there is a hidden secret in this work. The movement of the round table is not the result of the straws’ sorrowful movement but of the driving part’s action in the middle of the table. Although it looks like human-shaped straws are supporting the table autonomously, they



▲ The “Black Birds” is circling above the “Round Table,” where human-shaped straws are competing to get the head. The work “One,” a white flower, is displayed on a black wall, showing the color contrast.

are being forced to labor by a big structure. The work, which shows many human-shaped straws forced to compete to get one head, represents the harshly competitive societal system of survival. Visitor Min Won-gyu said, “It was creepy that the



▲ The “Little Ark” contains “Lighthouse,” “Two Captain,” and “James Webb.” Visitors can watch the performance of the “Little Ark” navigating.



human-shaped straws’ instability when lifting the round table reminded me of real human movement.”

The blackbirds hanging from the ceiling are quietly wandering above the round table like black eagles hovering near dead bodies. Two different interpretations are possible for the work “Black Birds.” They look like they are waiting for the victim of a sorrowful crash or like they have an onlooker’s attitude about an unreasonable contest. The three birds, which seem uninterested in the fierce struggle, symbolize an existence or a class that is just overlooking them at a higher level.

After passing the “Round Table” and the “Black Birds,” there is a huge white flower on a black wall. The artwork “One,” made of the same material used in the protection suits used in COVID-19 sites, slowly cycles through blooming and falling. Artist Choe gives reverence to those who lost their lives because of sudden disease and to the sacrifice of medical professionals, expressing his sympathies to the era as an artist. He thinks that the infectious disease and its result, which made everyone’s daily life stop and made the whole world lose its way, also represent the grief of this era.

## 2

### The Fear of Being Lost

After the artwork “One,” there is a big ship with two humans sitting in the middle. Diverse paddles made of wastepaper

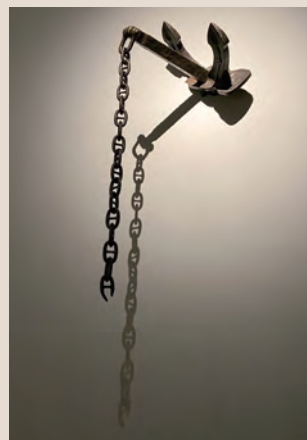
embody a big box, the “Little Ark” which contains “Lighthouse,” “Two Captains,” and “James Webb.” In the middle of “Little Ark,” which depicts a huge ship, there is a “Lighthouse” flashing here and there from up high. “Two Captains” has two people pointing at its front with their finger and sitting on a chair, which is also artwork called the “James Webb.” These are located on both the left and right sides of the “Lighthouse.” Each person of the “Two Captains” is pointing at the completely opposite side, and the chairs where the “Two Captains” are sitting are imitations of the telescope James Webb of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Each telescope of “James Webb,” which looks like it is heading into space, is also looking in the opposite direction. Both works, pointing the opposite way, depict the life of a contemporary man who is losing his own way by thinking his path is the only right one. The “James Webb,” which represents the new telescope made by NASA, seems like it is leading humans into unknown outer space. The “Little Ark” provides a 20-minute show every 30 minutes. The paddles on the side move up and down and back and forth, dancing in a group to the music. The paddles’ movement looks like a rough voyage of the “Little Ark” or a flapping wing. During the performance, the “Lighthouse”





flashes everywhere, shining at visitors. Unlike a usual lighthouse that guides other ships, “Lighthouse” scans every direction from the highest place in the middle of the ship, which awakes visitors to the reality that surveillance and restrictions are often carried out in the name of social rules and guidelines. Visitor Lee Min-joo said, “I was immersed in the artwork by watching the performance of the ark with music heightening the experience.”

The “Infinite Space,” “Angel,” “Anchor,” and “Exit” displayed near the “Little Ark” reveal a common subject with the “Little Ark.” The “Infinite Space” in front of “Little Ark,” made of two mirror structures and neon light, makes it look like there is a path because of the reflection. Meaning the world of other dimensions, “Infinite Space” symbolizes that human desire is infinite so that it can seek other dimensions, even when people are facing a survival crisis because of diverse disasters. “Angel,” a gold angel hanging on the ceiling, is spreading its wings, but the whole body is drooped as if it is dead. Such an appearance makes visitors think that the angel is not flying but dangling from the ceiling. The bow decoration “Angel” should stand up straight on a bow, but it is hung powerlessly from the ceiling. Artist Choe says that



◀▲ The “Angel” is hung from the ceiling powerlessly, and the “Anchor” is stuck in the wall separated from the ship “Little Ark.” The video art “Exit” shows diverse forms of doors opening endlessly.

people must salvage themselves through their own power, not through any kind of god or the absolute. The “Anchor” dropped out from the “Little Ark” is stuck on the wall, which makes visitors doubt and be confused as to whether the ship is sailing or not, if the ship is not sailing then where the ship is tied up, and why the anchor is separate from the ship. There is a video artwork, “Exit,” which shows diverse doors that keep opening in front of “Little Ark.” When one door is opened, the other comes up, and this process repeats. The never-ending door opening depicts endless agony and competition. Additionally, one of the captains of the “Two Captains” points in the direction where the video is played, making visitors feel the emotion of the ship sailing the endless way, not knowing where they are. Unlike the title “Exit,” the video that repeats the opening and closing of doors represents the endless human greed; as one desire is fulfilled, another is newly pursued. It also raises the question of whether there is a real “exit” in this sorrowful era.

### 3

#### Consolation in Pain and Scarcity.

Walking through the door next to the “Exit,” visitors can see a caw-toothed wheel depicting a lotus. The word “cakra” from the “Cakra Lamp” means “wheel” in the ancient Indian language, Sanskrit, and is often symbolized as a lotus. Choe’s cakra’s metal floral leaves made of exquisite craftsmanship repeatedly close and open with the lights coming from the middle. The floral leaves moving along their pivot look like



▲ The “Cakra Lamp” is displayed on the wall, and it is shining brightly. The “Red” is displayed in a red room, evoking the precedent work “One.”

they are going to collide, but they do not crash into each other and persist in their movement. Between two layers of walls where “Cakra Lamp” is displayed, there is “Ala Aureus Nativitas,” a bud-like anima-machine made of iron and metal. The movement of gold floral leaves and lights is the appearance of “Ala Aureus Nativitas” changing to a kind of insect or animal spreading its wings. Artist Choe explains that these gold floral leaves or insect wings depict a creature that flies to people in the dawn when the moon is set and the sky is full of stars and eavesdrops on people’s dreams. They exist to listen to human dreams and hope and burst forth with new hope in the hidden crack of the city.


The small room behind the “Cakra Lamp” and “Ala Aureus Nativitas” is full of red light. The work “Red” in the middle of the wall is a red version of the early artwork “One,” which embodies the sorrow of Choe toward the ones who lost their lives from COVID-19. This work borrowed the concept from an ancient mythological belief that the red flower means “a

new life sprouted from the god’s blood fallen to earth.” In addition, the passionate energy of the color red makes visitors feel the essence of life and the sincerity of nature, living every single day at its best, even though they are destined to die someday. Nature, which is faithful regardless of its destiny, encourages visitors to do their best in the repeating agony of life. While the artist encourages youth to always give their best effort in everything they do, he also worries that they might get lost on the way to finding their passion in this competitive society. He is hoping people living in this era find the right direction and devote their power to that way.

Entering the last stop of the exhibition, “URC-1” and “URC-2,” which are named after the artist Choe U-Ram, are displayed. The two huge circular sculptures of car lights are stars made by headlights and taillights collected by the scrapped cars from the new car development laboratory. Choe collected the light from experimental cars that exist for a moment and disappear like a ghost, and he gave them new life as an element of a star. The artist tells us that things that disappear in an instant can illuminate the dark era and society using the starlight from cars, a symbol of speed competition and a means to show off wealth.



▲ The stars “URC-1” and “URC-2” are made of car lights. The lights are making patterns by shining alternately.

According to National Health Insurance Corporation’s 2022 statistics, the depression diagnosis rate of those in their 20s exceeded that of those in their 60s for the first time. The burden of life that today’s 20-year-olds should bear is heavier than the round table of squashed human-shaped straws from the work “Round Table,” and include the onus of studying, building qualifications for employment, getting one’s own house that is almost just a dream, and paying off student loans which is getting harder to do. The exhibition makes visitors wonder who made youths’ lives difficult and whether today’s social structure is desirable, while hoping that young people will not lose their way by falling into the swamp of competition. What is important in life is to recognize who we are, what we want, and where we started this competition at the first moment and do our best in our life. In the process of navigating life, the young people of today will reach their own treasure island that they dreamed of by doing their best without losing their compass. 

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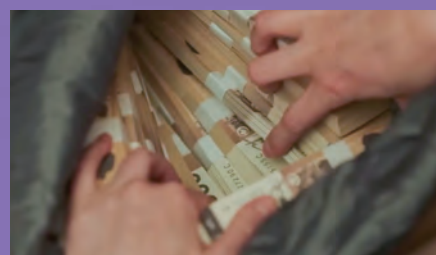
# “Little Women,” Little but Never Vulnerable

By Lee Ju-won

Staff Reporter of Culture Section

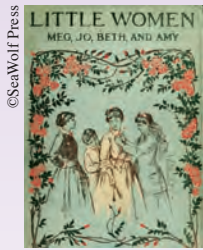
The novel “Little Women,” written by Louisa May Alcott, describes a poor but harmonious family as bright and humorous.

Meanwhile, the playwright Chung Seo-kyung dramatized the novel, which was published in 1868, into the story of three sisters living in South Korea in 2022. The playwright Chung asks the sisters living a peaceful life in the original work, “What if 70 billion won (US\$48,831,531.22) fell from the sky?” In response to the question, she explains what “money” means in modern society through the mystery-thriller drama “Little Women,” which aired from September to October, 2022, on the tvN channel in South Korea. What is the reason that a picturesque classical novel depicting domestic life in the 19th century has been reinterpreted as a mystery-thriller that agonizes over what money symbolizes today? The Argus aims to understand Korean society’s social, cultural, and economic issues by comparing and analyzing the two works based on philosophical thoughts.



©tvN

## Before Reading



**Original Novel “Little Women”:** “Little Women,” the first American novel to win the Newbery Award in 1934 for the best children’s literature of the year, depicts four sisters with different personalities beautifully and confidently, Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy, as they follow their dreams in difficult family circumstances.

**Drama “Little Women”:** The three sisters, Oh In-joo, Oh In-kyung, and Oh In-hye, who live in a rooftop house in Seoul, South Korea, are so poor that they cannot go on a field trip. One day, In-joo’s one and only coworker, Jin Hwa-young, died leaving 70 billion won (US\$48,831,531.22), in company slush funds, for In-joo, and she suddenly became rich. So, In-joo digs up the path through which the money came to her. Although it is black money, she contemplates whether she will live happily with it or give it up. Eventually, In-joo realizes that Jin’s death and where the money came from are deeply related to the wealthy and powerful Wonryeong family, and the three sisters, In-joo, In-kyung, and In-hye, each solve problems with their own strength. As a result, the three sisters achieve their dreams in their own way and share the 70 billion won (US\$48,831,531.22) to escape from poverty.



## Money: A Means of Living? Pride? or Independence?



### The First, Meg and In-Joo

Meg, who works on dressing up outside, and In-joo, who longs for a friend wearing a pink skirt, are the first-born child in both the novel and the drama versions of “Little Women.” Meg and In-joo are obsessed with fancy clothes and care about what others think, because they want to emerge from poverty by marrying a rich man beyond their means. However, Meg falls in love with a poor man and makes a promise to live forever with him. In contrast with Meg, who gave up on material happiness, In-joo tries not to lose the 70 billion won (US\$48,831,531.22) in order to live happily with her sisters without worrying about money. This is because In-joo has the responsibility of the so-called “K-jangnyeo”\* who traditionally makes a living for the family as the first-born child. Therefore, for her, money is a just means of survival as In-joo is concerned with family welfare over personal greed. “Not being poor anymore, this is only one way for us to live a different life. I will make sure we all live without worrying about money.” As In-joo said, this saying shows her sense of responsibility for her family.



### The Second, Jo and In-kyung

Jo and In-kyung are the second of the sisters in the two works. Jo wants to be a writer rather than getting married and being called someone’s wife. In-kyung is a reporter who asks questions to people in power without fear. They have energetic personalities that go straight toward a common goal. They are so stupidly honest that they do not hide their thoughts, speaking bluntly, even to their boss. In particular, In-kyung tries the hardest of the three sisters not to surrender to money. When In-joo asked In-kyung, “In-kyung, let us start anew at a really great apartment. We’ve been poor for so long. We deserve to be happy now,” In-kyung replied “So, what about it? Poverty can bring people down, but it can also make people stronger. We can overcome anything now that we have gotten to where we



are. I am proud of us. I am not giving it all up over measly money. I don't mind being poor. It is how I have always been. But I don't want to become a thief because I am poor. That would mean that I lost." Lee Hye-in, a 23-year-old female viewer, said, "Even though buying an apartment with black money is ethically wrong, it seems that In-kyung's resolute refusal of In-joo's proposal while preserving her beliefs was a selfish decision, ignoring the poverty in the family." On the other hand, Lim Hyun-ji, a 22-year-old female viewer, said, "In-kyung is not very interested in money, but doing the right things rationally and passionately displays her sincerity," showing obvious differences in opinion.



### The Third, Amy and In-hye

Amy dislikes old and dirty things, so she always wears a well-ironed dress. In-hye, a sophomore at an art high school, keeps a decent appearance with neat school uniforms. The well-ironed dress and neat school uniform are a metaphor for their dignified attitude, although they are young. Retaining this attitude is possible because both want to succeed on their own no matter what. For this reason, Amy decided to go to Europe and show off her outstanding artistic abilities through her paintings. In-hye also had a strong desire to study at an art school abroad. However, the difference between Amy and In-hye is that Amy wanted to become famous through her paintings first, but In-hye treated her paintings as a means to earn money. In-hye got paid for painting for Park Hyo-rin, the daughter of the Wonryeong family, so that Hyo-rin could submit it for an art contest. In-kyung knew this, and insisted, "That is a crime," but In-hye considered her concerns as overprotection. In-hye was just flattered that she could earn money on her own, even in an illegal way. Her effort to escape poverty came from her knowledge of the sacrifices of her sisters that are hidden behind their affection. Chung Eun-gwi, a Professor of the Department of English Literature and Culture at HUFs, explained, "In the novel, the value of money harmonizes with other values, but in the drama 'Little Women,' money is the biggest driving force for all the characters." In poverty, each of the three sisters chooses black money to take responsibility for their livelihood or does not give in to money or tries to make her own money. If readers had 70 billion won (US\$48,831,531.22), what would readers do?

\*K-jangnyeo: "K-jangnyeo" is a combination of the words "Korea" and "jangnyeo," which means the first daughter who has excessive responsibility, sincerity, humility, and habitual concessions. It was first used on social media, but is now widely used in book titles, TV, and journals.



### The Reasons for Obsession with 70 Billion Won?

On Christmas morning, the four sisters, Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy, from the original novel, gather at the table to have breakfast. Their mother suggests giving breakfast as a gift to the poor neighboring family with a newborn baby. They are willing to give food to the poor family even though they must have been hungry waiting for breakfast for about an hour.



What is the reason they show compassion to neighbors although the family is not financially stable? Professor Chung said, “Humanitarian values were very important in 19th century American society. It was the ideal moral law of the day that doing good deeds and giving to others makes one richer.” When the novel was created, sharing between neighbors and loving family was more important than abundant capital. This Puritan spirit\* in the United States is well reflected in the novel. However, the characters in the drama “Little Women,” especially the powerful Wonryeong family, are killing each other and taking money away from their families, aside from helping their neighbors. Then the question is, “why is South Korea in the 21st century so obsessed with money that people risk their lives over it?”

Currently, South Korea is in a state of unlimited competition. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the annual working hours of South Koreans reached an average of 1,928 in 2021, more than the 1,500 OECD average. An unlimited competitive society was caused by meritocracy depending on individual abilities. In other words, the meaning of meritocracy has changed into inheritance of wealth today. In an interview of Hankook Ilbo with Kim Ho-ki, a Professor from Department of Sociology at Yonsei University, he said, “Meritocracy has increased inequality due to income disparity, meaning equal opportunity does not bring fairness that achieves social equality.” Also, the Korean slang expression “Spoon-class theory”\* is commonly used to describe the degree of distribution of inherited wealth into social classes. “Bo-yeon went to SKY\* and her uncle is a bank president, right? Hyeon-ji went to an Ivy League\* school and her father-in-law is a government minister. Ju-eun went to a prominent University too and her dad’s an exec at a large corporation. And then there’s you. What about you?” The line that Jin said to In-joo, comparing In-joo with her co-workers, clearly reveals that Korean society classifies individuals into different socio-economic classes, as so-called Spoon-class theory suggests. Born with a dirt spoon (not a silver spoon as they say), In-joo inherited nothing but debt from her parents. To make matters worse, she is a divorced woman who graduated from a two-year accounting school, which worsens her difficult life. This situation makes her think that money is power and a means for the three sisters to be happy in modern society. The difference between the four sisters who share anything and everything and In-joo who knows the money is dirty but wants to keep it shows modern people’s desire and greed. In this regard, the 70 billion won (US\$48,831,531.22) that suddenly popped into their lives makes people look back on where the human desire for money came from, what money means today, and how humanity fluctuates between hopes and fears about money.



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\*Puritan spirit: The Puritan spirit stands for a strict ascetic attitude that gives up worldly pleasures and emphasizes labor and diligence.

\*Spoon-class theory: An idea that individuals are classified into different classes based on their socio-economic status, which is usually expressed as diamond, gold, silver, or dirt spoons.

\*SKY: The word is a compound word of the first letter of Seoul National University, Korea University, and Yonsei University.

\*Ivy League: Ivy League consists of eight private universities in the Northeastern United States.

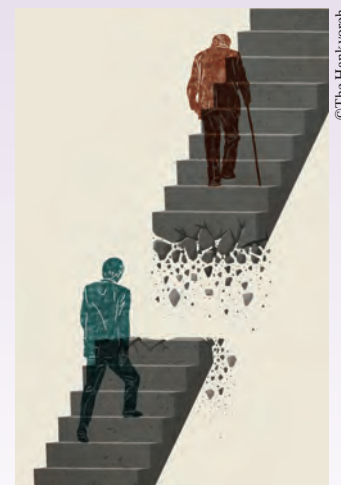


### *The Reasons for Dramatization as a Detective-Mystery-Thriller*

Yoon Young-chun, a translator of the novel “Little Women,” said in an explanation in the book’s appendix, “The content is not exciting or shocking. When I read it for the first time, I felt rather bored.” As he said, the original work does not reveal the exact boundaries of the basic structure of the novel, exposition, rising action, climax, and resolution. The death of Beth is the most impactful factor if someone has to pick. So, why was this ordinary and realistic novel reborn in the mystery genre?

The drama “Little Women” includes an element of suspense when a friend is deceived into avenging an unjust death in the family and pulls the trigger to protect 70 billion won (US\$48,831,531.22), mercilessly killing a person standing in the way. As of October 13, 2022, “Little Women” was ranked NO. 1 on the Netflix Most Popular Series Top 10 (non-English) and all listings that ranked NO. 1 to NO. 3 have in common that they are within the mystery and thriller genres. It is clear

that mystery-thrillers have captivated South Korea. Chong H. Cho, a retired Professor from the Department of Film and Digital at Dongguk University, said, “South Korea is suffering from COVID-19, the Russian Invasion of Ukraine,\* rises in exchange and interest rates, and falling house prices. These difficulties are not only a problem for certain classes. In this situation, it is easy for people to become immersed in these genres because they make people forget their current anxiety and uncertainty for a while.” Also, Kim Seok-won, a 26-year-old male viewer, said, “There is nothing easy to achieve in South Korea such as employment and studying. In this frustrating reality, it is very exciting to guess the culprit and predict the story through foreshadowing. Watching mysteries and thrillers is how I relieve stress.” It seems clear that these genres allow the public to reflect on current society, enabling philosophical thinking. Furthermore, these genres are easy to integrate with other genres. The Netflix drama “Juvenile Justice,” which is about the juvenile trials, was released on February 25, 2022, and became popular as a combination legal thriller. Kim You-young, a web drama writer, said, “The reason why ‘Juvenile Justice’ gained popularity is that it has met the wish to strengthen punishment for juvenile delinquency, because some Koreans think that juvenile delinquents walk away with a slap on the wrist.” As such, the drama “Little Women” punishes the criminal and makes viewers enjoy the narrative; three sisters find their own way. In addition, it asks viewers about the role of money in society, and what social structure has made individuals obsessed with money, so that it allows viewers to reflect not only on themselves but also on South Korean society. Thus, mystery-thrillers revealing modern society and values contain violence, and violence can resolve the unrealizable needs of viewers as a way to get vicarious satisfaction.




▲ A ladder for social mobility has broken due to high interest rates, high prices, and high exchange rates.

\*Russian Invasion of Ukraine: The Russian Invasion of Ukraine began on February 24, 2022, when Russian President Vladimir Putin announced a special military operation.



▲ Violent crimes such as false accusations, kidnappings, and shootings are easily seen in South Korean dramas.

The drama “Little Women” adopted the personalities of the sisters in the original novel “Little Women.” However, the factors that American society in the 19th century changed into South Korean society in the 21st century, and that a domestic novel developed into a mystery are different. In particular, the biggest difference is the role of money in the sisters’ lives in both. This is why the drama “Little Women” satirizes the capitalist values of South Korea. According to the Pew Research Center in the United States on November 18, 2021, when asked about “What makes your life meaningful?” only South Korea ranked material affluence as the top priority. In a dialogue between In-joo and In-kyung, “Which would you prefer? Rich but mean parents, or incompetent, but kind parents?” “You always talk nonsense. How could someone be incompetent and nice? Incompetence in itself is bad,” as this line demonstrates, money goes beyond ability and becomes a personality.

However, affluence does not necessarily come from money. Money may be a necessary means of human life, but it should not be an end. In other words, money should not be a top priority over oneself. What is the purpose of life for readers? Why not see the drama “Little Women” and look back on the reader’s own life so far, where the purpose of life has been twisted by money? The Argus encourages readers to move on their path without being swayed by the standards imposed by society. 



# Vegan vs. Natural: The Dilemma of Faux Leather

By Lee Jue-hyun

Staff Reporter of Theory & Critique Section

Human beings evolve as they make better choices. For the sake of human health, animal safety, and ultimately of a symbiotic lifestyle on Earth, people have been struggling to come up with a better solution. As a part of this endeavor, an uprising keyword recently in Korean is “Vegan.” On Instagram, for example, there are more than one million postings with “#Vegan.” As several industries are scrambling to launch vegan-based products nowadays, such as vegan restaurants, vegan cosmetics, and vegan fashion; veganism has become a lifestyle.

The fashion industry is a domain that consumes as many animals as the restaurant industry does. Since natural leather became more expensive as its quality got better and better, people who could not afford the cost used to be the major customer to buy faux leather. However, things are changing. There is a voice of self-reflection calling us to pursue animal-friendly consumption these days, as there are ethical problems involved in obtaining natural leather. As a result, faux (vegan) leather, which is a non-animal fake leather, is welcomed in the market. Now people who do not want to wear “genuine” are looking for “faux,” and “faux” now became a new option, not only meaning imitation anymore. Although genuine leather has been the standard of luxury, now it is time to reconsider what “real” luxury is. Is vegan leather, or fake leather, really an optimal solution to ethical consumption?

Celebrating World Vegan Day on November 1, The Argus looks into whether vegan leather is fool's gold or a forgery surpassing the original, and it helps readers to establish standards for the future.





### Before Reading

#### • What is Vegan?

“Vegan” is a stricter concept than vegetarians who only avoid carnivorous diets. It refers to a lifestyle of avoiding not only food but also all animal-tested personal and household products, and also avoiding buying and using all animal-derived products such as leather, fur, and wool. The concept of vegan was first created in 1944 when Donald Watson co-founded the Vegan Society in England. It was initially used to mean “non-dairy vegan,” but in 1951, the association defined it as “the doctrine that humans should live without exploiting animals.” The “vegan certification” conducted by the Korea Agency of Vegan Certification and Services is given as a standard for not using animal-derived raw materials, managing cross-contamination between vegan and non-vegan products, and not conducting experiments on animals.



©Wikipedia

#### • What is Vegan Leather?

Vegan leather refers to leather without sacrificing animals. According to the criteria for classifying vegan and non-vegan materials by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), vegan materials include natural materials such as organic cotton, hemp, and seaweed fibers, synthetic materials such as polyester and polyurethane, recycled materials such as tires and corrugated cardboard, and artificial fur and leather.

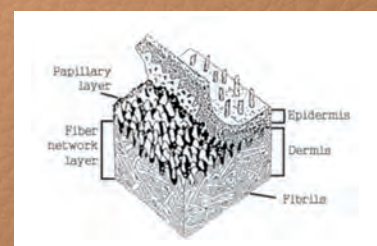
## 1. Vegan Leather, Is It Going Greener?

### Natural Leather Prefers Skin of Young Animals

The movement to use vegan leather increased along with concern about animal ethics issues as the process of obtaining natural leather became more widely revealed to the public. For natural leather, the quality of the final product depends on the quality of the raw material. In order to obtain high-quality leather, the skin is torn off of a live animal, or even an unborn animal taken out of its mother's belly. Why should natural leather of good quality be obtained like this?

Animal skin is softer and more flexible when it is as young as it could be. It consists of moisture, fat, and protein, and the proportion of components varies depending on age and gender. The outermost skin (epidermis) is about one percent of the total thickness of the skin and is mainly composed of a protein called keratin.\* The “dermis,” whose main component is collagen protein under the epidermis, is a relatively thick, rigid layer compared to the epidermis. It is made of strong fibrillar connective tissue,† which is why it is a major component used for leather.

Collagen is a substance well known for its ability to connect cells and make skin look glossy. The younger the animal is, the more collagen it has, the thinner the epidermis is, and the softer the skin is. Therefore, the skin of young animals is mainly used to obtain soft and flexible leather. On the other hand, vegan leather is artificial leather made from fabric artificially coated with a synthetic leather surface layer to reproduce the appearance of natural leather. Vegan leather is primarily made with synthetic fibers.\* It looks almost like natural leather and at the same time is made of completely non-animal ingredients, which makes it free from animal ethics issues.



©Dante blog

▲ Which part of the skin will be used depends on what leather product will be made.

\*Keratin: One of the proteins of animals, commonly seen such as hair, horns, nails, and claws.

†Fibrillar connective tissue: A tissue composed of fibroblasts and contains intercellular proteins.

\*Synthetic fiber: A fiber that chemically synthesizes raw materials such as oil, coal, and natural gas.





©Vietnam-Korea Times

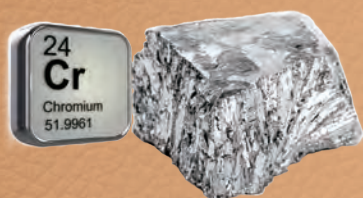


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©KEITI blog

©Sports Performance Bulletin



▲ Hexavalent chromium is a Group 1 carcinogen designated by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC). The Korean government classifies hexavalent chromium as a Group 1 carcinogen.

©Roi U blog



▲ People working in industrial sites are exposed to hexavalent chromium; chromium poisoning symptoms appear in their hands.

stomach, and negatively affects kidneys and liver.

Despite these problems, more than 480,000 tons (t=1000 kg) of chromium are produced annually and it is still commonly used in many ways. Workers exposed to high concentrations of chromium have damaged skin, even after wearing protective gear. They also show symptoms of chromium poisoning, such as skin ulcers or holes in their nasal cartilage. Therefore, vegan leather, which does not use animal skin, is highly regarded in that it does not go through chromium tanning.

## Risk of Chromium Used in Tanning

Tanning is called the flower of the leather making process. The epidermis separated from the animal's body retains protein, fat, salt, and fur, which makes it easily rot at room temperature. Therefore, to obtain soft and strong leather, these elements of the epidermis must be removed through tanning. Currently, the most widely used tanning method is "chromium tanning," putting leather and chromium in a large washing machine. Chromium-tanned leather is easy to dye and resistant to moisture, making it suitable for mass production and commercialization, accounting for 80-90 percent of the leather market.

However, chromium is a blue-white, harmful heavy metal. There are three states: chromium, trivalent chromium, and hexavalent chromium which come from the soil, ash, and volcanic gas. Chromium has different physical properties and toxicity depending on its molecular structure. Trivalent chromium, a naturally occurring element, is essential for human metabolism. It helps the metabolism of glucose, cholesterol, and fat inside the body; and if insufficient, metabolism is not done properly resulting in weight loss or damage to the ability to remove glucose from the blood, leading to diabetes. On the other hand, hexavalent chromium, produced through an industrial process, is a carcinogenic substance and is not easily diluted or dissolved. Long-term exposure to high concentrations creates skin ulcers, stimulates the nasal mucosa and



©PSSO

▲ Chromium Tanning is putting leather and chromium in a large washing machine.

\*Trivalent chromium, Hexavalent chromium: It is a chromium compound with +3 oxidation numbers and +6 oxidation numbers, which are virtual charges representing the degree of oxidation of elements respectively.



## Increasingly Catching Up with Natural Leather

The concern that follows when using natural leather products is about damage. As natural leather products can easily get the surfaces scratched and are difficult to manage, vegan leather, which is relatively easy to use, is welcomed. According to a paper Research Trend and Product Development Potential of Non-animal Leather, published by the Korean Society for Biotechnology and Bioengineering in 2020, the recent leather process is coating artificial leather with waterborne polyurethane dispersion (PUD) to compensate for the weaknesses of existing artificial leather. The high-quality leather, like the skin of a young animal, is moist as if it contains a little bit of water, which is why waterborne material is used to imitate this feeling. PUD makes higher quality levels of leather through a combination with other materials. The most frequently used combination recently is PUD and disulfide. Leather produced with PUD combined with disulfide has self-therapy capability and increases surface resilience. Scratches on the surface are cured for 12 hours at 60 degrees and the efficiency of self-healing capacity is up to 80 percent.

In addition to coating, phase change materials (PCM) are added to improve air permeability in the stage of manufacturing leather. One of the disadvantages of vegan leather was that it was vulnerable to heat and poor ventilation. PCM added to the vegan leather to make up for these problems is characterized by accumulating or releasing a large amount of thermal energy. As a result, it can withstand higher temperatures than before, and with PCM, it can be cooler too. Shin Hyun-jae, Professor of Biochemical and Polymer engineering at Chosun University, explained, “The reason for adding PCM is to add functionality such as heat management. The coating alone cannot give the desired function, so such usage is intended to overcome the weaknesses by putting various PCMs inside.” These days, artificial leather is becoming excellent in imitating the quality of natural leather.



▲ The development of artificial leather processing technology continues to catch up with the texture of natural leather.

\*Waterborne: It refers to molecules that are not dissolved in water but dispersed into tiny particles.

\*Sulfide: It is a basic compound with two atoms of sulfur.

\*Phase-changing material: It refers to materials that cause state changes.

## 2. Vegan Leather, Is It Greenwashing?



▲ Dioxins generated from discarded plastics eventually come back to humans.

### After All, Plastic

Vegan leather is “eco-animal,” but not absolutely “eco-friendly.” When selling vegan leather products, sellers often introduce them as “eco-friendly” products; but in fact, vegan leather is synthetic leather, or plastic material that is not different from artificial leather. The most common way to make artificial leather is to add a plastic coating to the fabric lining. Therefore, if you look closely at the composition table of vegan leather products, you can find that synthetic fibers such as

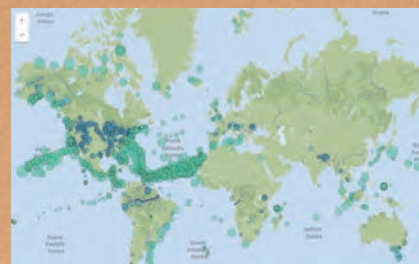
polyester, polyvinyl chloride (PVC), and polyurethane (PU) are used.

Although its usage has decreased, PVC is still a major material among plastic materials, is one of the world’s top three plastic compounds and is a WHO-designated carcinogen. It is usually stable, but it releases a large amount of toxic gas and



environmental hormones when incinerated. As the name implies, polyvinyl chloride contains chlorine, and when incinerated at 250-400 Celsius, the toxic substance polychlorinated dibenzo-p-dioxin (PCDD), an organochlorine compound, is generated. PCDD does not decompose or easily bind to other substances because its molecular structure is chemically stable. Therefore, when PCDD floating in the atmosphere falls to the ground with rain, it causes soil and water pollution. PCDD accumulates in grass grown in contaminated soil, and livestock that eat the grass, are eventually served at table leading PCDD to end up in the human body.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) announced in 2017 that 35 percent of marine microplastics were synthetic fibers or plastics from clothing. The Korea Consumer Agency's report "Microplastic Safety Survey in Drinking Water" in 2020 suggests that microplastics of less than 150 micrometers can pass through the inside wall of a digestive canal, and those of less than 0.2 micrometers can be absorbed into the body's tissues, causing partial immune system abnormalities or intestinal inflammation. The World Health Organization (WHO) says that the degree of exposure to microplastics is not yet a concern, but considering the fact that since COVID-19, wearing masks has been accelerating the increasing rate of plastic use, it is clear that the level of exposure should be lowered.



▲ Each circle on the map represents the amount of microplastics from a water sample. Larger circles represent more microplastics per liter.

\*Organochlorine compound: It refers to any combination of substances produced by living things and chlorine.



▲ Artificial leather has a shorter lifespan than natural leather and is weak to external damage.

## Low Durability

The difference between natural and vegan leather is stability. Considering the lifespan of the leather, vegan leather is estimated to be about 4-5 years. On the other hand, natural leather can be handed down to the next generation if it is well managed. Considering this, vegan leather has a fairly short lifespan. Among the many factors that shorten the lifespan of vegan leather, the biggest problem is damage from heat or moisture. Natural leather is composed of a collagen layer, which is an animal protein, so that it actively responds to heat and moisture. If there is no moisture, it contracts and expands again when it rains, the same is applied when it is heated. Therefore, the size of watch straps, bags, or jackets made of natural leather may decrease or increase.

On the other hand, the plastic material of vegan leather cannot perfectly reproduce collagen yet, so the durability of the leather is low. There are two types of plastic—"thermosetting plastic" that hardens when it is heated and "thermoplastic" that softens unlike thermosetting plastic. Among these two types of plastic, an appropriate type is selected as a material. Plastic materials, which are less flexible than collagen in response to the external environment, create a dilemma because the leather becomes hard when the response ability is increased, and the leather becomes weak when leather is softened. Therefore, some low-quality artificial leather becomes hard when heated, and high-quality artificial leather with a high degree of imitation of natural leather may be as soft as natural leather, but the durability of the artificial leather is low.





## Biodegradation Difficulties

When a product is discarded, it is expressed as eco-friendly if it has biodegradability that can be easily decomposed by microorganisms in the ground. Biodegradation requires sunlight, wind, and water. Part of the tissue is destroyed by light, and as water enters the gap, it splits into small pieces, and microorganisms penetrate and eat it up and the product is biodegraded. Unlike natural fibers, which generally do not take more than eight weeks to decompose, synthetic fibers take from 20 up to 200 years. This is because the plastic in vegan leather has a strong resistance to light and the binding tissue of carbon that makes up the plastic is so dense that water cannot easily flow into it.

There is also a problem that microorganisms have not yet adapted to plastic. Professor Shin explained, "Plastic is a substance that natural microorganisms have not been frequently exposed to because it hasn't been long since it was invented and produced. Similar to not eating foods you haven't tried, microorganisms can't eat well when plastic goes out into the natural environment." Plastic is less affected by light and water, so the role of microorganisms is important, but the decomposition ability of microorganisms is not high enough yet. Professor Shin said, "If plastic is widely introduced in the natural world, the biodegradation problem is expected to be solved because natural microorganisms and various conditions evolve to deal with the plastic." There is a possibility of decomposition as the organisms that eat plastic, including silkworm moths, have recently been revealed one after another. However, Professor Shin added that at this level, it is difficult to expect biodegradation and it will take time for nature to adapt to plastic. In other words, it is true that vegan leather is more likely to be treated naturally than before, but it is important not to exceed the degree that is acceptable in nature.




▲ Plastic takes a long time to decompose. Lifespan of a common plastic water bottle is 450 years.



▲ Researchers are continuing to discover microorganisms to biodegrade plastic. Recently, studies have shown that microbes in the sea and soil are evolving in living on plastic overflowing around them as time goes by.

As veganism has become a lifestyle, it is believed that consuming vegan products is a more ethical option than consuming natural leather products. But it turns out that it may not be a good enough option for the Earth yet, though vegan leather is good for animals.

It is clear that the desire to consume vegan products was part of an effort to create a better society. However, this belief may rather be what keeps consumers from looking the other way. So far, vegan has been a vegan in the sense of protecting animals, but the vegan in the future should go further and become a vegan that can protect the Earth, where both animals and humans live. Now that sustainability is needed more than ever, The Argus hopes readers become consumers who can make true ethical choices based on a broader perspective. 

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# Rice Price Takes Nosedive

**By Shin Jun-seo**  
*Editor of Social Section*

There is a saying that “Koreans live thanks to bapsim (strength earned by eating rice).” As such, “bap (signifying a meal)” and rice farming are key parts of Koreans’ lives. Recently, however, there has been an extraordinary phenomenon over this “rice.” According to data from Statistics Korea (KOSTAT), as of June 2022, the overall consumer price index rose 6 percent compared to last year, while the price of agricultural and livestock products rose 5.1 percent. However, as of July 25, 2022, the price increase in place of production was 43,918 won (US\$30.46) per 20kg, down 21.4 percent from 55,856 won (US\$38.74) in July of last year. Most of the prices are rising because of reasons such as logistics problems around the world due to the spread of COVID-19, disruptions in grain supply due to the Russian Invasion of Ukraine,\* and soaring exchange rates, but rice prices are falling.

The problem is that while the price of materials needed for farming, including fertilizer for producing rice, has risen, the price of rice has fallen, causing farmers to suffer heavy losses. It is a serious problem considering that 545,033 out of 1,007,158 agricultural households as of 2019 are farming rice, according to the data of the KOSTAT e-country index. Thus, what is the ultimate reason for this huge drop in rice prices? In honor of Farmer’s Day on November 11, which reflects the importance of agriculture, The Argus aims to identify the problems encountered in rice farming, the core of Korean agriculture, and analyze the causes.

\*Russian Invasion of Ukraine: On February 24, 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered the launch of a special military operation, and Russia invaded Ukraine.



## 1. The Problem of the Rice Price Nosedive

According to KOSTAT “Investigation of rice price in production area” statistics, as of August 5, 2022, the price of 20kg of milled grain was 43,093 won (US\$29.89), the lowest price since it was 43,066 won (US\$29.87) in May 2018. Rice prices, which were 46,834 won (US\$32.49) in September 2019, continued to rise to 48,143 won (US\$33.39) in September 2020 and to 54,228 won (US\$37.61) in September 2021, before falling to 47,225 won (US\$32.76) in September 2022. This is a significant drop compared to 56,803 won (US\$39.40) on October 5, 2021, which was the highest price ever due to the bad harvest in 2020. This plunge in rice prices hits farmers the hardest. Bae Hyung-taek, the general manager of policy of the Nonsan city Farmers’ Association, said, “In addition to the price of rice, which is down by more than 60,000 won (US\$41.62) compared to 2021 based on 80kg of rice, the production cost, which has soared more than 30 percent, cuts the farmer’s income by more than half.”

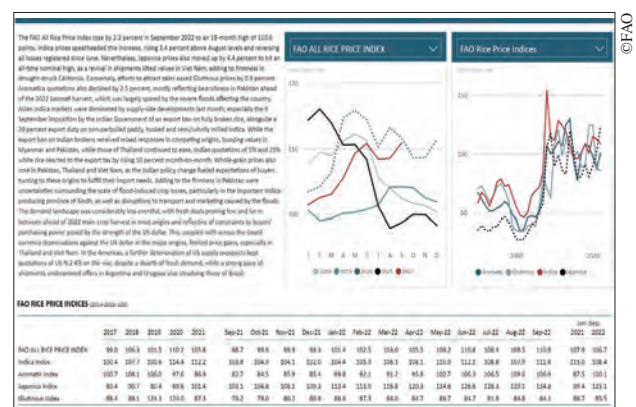
Professor Yoo Chun from the Department of Trade at Mokpo National University said, “The prices of daily necessities and food, including flour and cooking oil, have risen due to factors such as distribution and supply disruptions caused by COVID-19 and the Russian Invasion of Ukraine. On the other hand, South Korea’s rice prices have continued to fall since last year. While the international grain prices are rising, only Korean rice prices are falling.” In fact, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) rice price index, the international rice price index continued to increase from 101.4 in January 2022 to 110.9 in September. On the other hand, the price of rice in Korea has plummeted.

## 2. Amendment of the Grain Management Act

An amendment to the Grain Management Act was revised in 2020. According to the 2019 National Assembly Budget

Office’s “Analysis of the Major Issues of Reorganization of the Direct Payment for Public Benefit,” the revision of the Grain Management Act aims to systematize policy measures for the grain supply and price stability, to minimize instability of the rice market, and to secure predictability of the rice price. The amendment of the Grain Management Act required the government to establish a “market isolation” measure by October 15, 2020, such that whenever excess rice supplies exceed a certain standard of 3 percent of production, or pre-harvest season\* or harvest season prices fall more than 5 percent from the average rice price, the government could buy rice, resulting in market isolation. As such, the amendment to the Grain Management Act as a safety device for rice prices is stipulated to fulfill its function and role. However, it did not play its role properly.

\*Pre-harvest season: The season when new rice is coming out. It is from September to October of the lunar calendar.



▲ According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) rice price index, the international rice price index continued to increase from 101.4 in January 2022 to 110.9 in September.

### 3-1. Oversupply of Rice, Decrease in Consumption of Rice

The main causes for the decline in rice prices are an oversupply of rice and a drop in rice consumption. According to KOSTAT, rice production in 2021 was 3.88 million tons (ton = 1000 kg), an increase of 380,000 tons from 3.5 million tons in 2020, widening the gap with decreasing demand. Consumption of rice is on the decline compared to increased production. According to the results of the “Grain Consumption Survey” released by KOSTAT on January 27, 2022, the annual consumption of rice per person from November 1, 2020, to October 31, 2021, decreased by 0.8 kg (1.4 percent). This is the smallest amount since the statistics were compiled in 1963, and it is half the amount compared to 116.3kg, which is the amount consumed 30 years ago in 1991. Professor Yoo said, “The consumption of rice per person has decreased every year. In 2021, the average daily rice consumption per person was 155.8 grams per person, down 1.4 percent from the previous year.” Considering that it takes about 100 grams of rice to make a bowl of rice, Koreans now eat about only one and a half bowls of rice a day.

The imbalance between consumption and production is also affecting the increase in rice stocks. According to data from Nong Hyup (Agricultural Cooperative Association; NH, henceforth), which is a cooperative organized by farmers themselves to increase agricultural productivity, NH rice stocks were at 313,000 tons as of August 2022, increasing from 154,000 tons in August 2021. Additional costs, including inventory management costs due to increased rice stock, are around 270 billion won (US\$187,280,205.30). NH predicted that in 2022 rice production would be 3.79 million to 3.85 million tons considering this year’s crop production situation and cultivation area, while demand for new rice would be 3.46 million tons due to a decrease in rice consumption. NH predicted that at the end of October 2022, the stock of aged rice would be 150,000 to 180,000 tons and new rice would be 330,000 to 390,000 tons, resulting in a total oversupply of more than 500,000 tons. As consumption declined and production increased, the supply exceeded demand, and rice prices fell.

### 3-2. Changes in Eating Habits

The decrease in rice consumption is due to changes in eating habits. According to the “2021 Grain Consumption Survey” released by KOSTAT on January 27, 2022, annual rice consumption per person in households recorded 57.7kg in 2021. This is a 2.5 percent decrease compared to 2020, and it is said to be a 19.0 kg decrease compared to 2010. The daily consumption of rice per person was also 158.0 grams on average, down 2.5 percent from the previous year. According to *The Economist*, an economics magazine, experts cite the increase in single-person households and avoidance of rice consumption as the reasons for the decline. Those in single-person households often eat alone and tend to rely on eating out, delivery, and convenience food rather than cooking at home. According to the “2020 Statistics of Single-person Households” report released by KOSTAT, “In 2019, 47.7 percent of single-person households bought instant food more than once a week, a rate 7 percent point higher than 40.7 percent of all households.” Kim Joon-hyung (Department of English Literature & Culture ‘21 at HUFs), who lives alone in Imun-dong, Dongdaemun-gu, Seoul, said, “It is very rare for me to eat at home. Most of the time I eat out. I think I usually eat convenience foods such as bread rather than rice.”

Professor Yoo also cited changes in eating habits as a reason for the decline in rice consumption, saying, “In the 1990s, rice consumption decreased due to an increase of meat consumption, and since 2000, because of convenience food and dining out, and recently, because of not eating breakfast or eating alternatives such as yogurt, rice consumption is declining.” As such, the decrease in rice consumption has been a phenomenon that has been going on for a long time, and thus a big change is needed. However, the government focuses only on short-sighted and short-term responses such as pushing rice-oriented eating habits and promoting rice consumption.



### 3-3. Grain Management Act Not Being Properly Implemented

The steady decline in rice consumption is certainly a cause of the decline in rice prices, but it cannot be said to be the fundamental cause for the decline in rice prices in 2022. The main reason for the rice price drops due to oversupply amid falling consumption is that the government did not carry out the provisions detailed in the Grain Management Act. The amendment of the Grain Management Act has a clause recommending that the government purchase excess rice supplies, resulting in a market isolation if oversupply were to occur beyond a certain standard. Market isolation is a policy that stabilizes prices by controlling the circulation through the government's purchase of a certain amount of rice. Article 16, paragraph 4 of the Grain Management Act states, "Where the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs buys the rice under paragraph (3), the purchase volume shall be determined based on the production that exceeds the demands on the rice produced on the relevant year: Provided, That in cases prescribed by Presidential Decree such as where the rice price fluctuates or is expected to change, the Minister may allow the buying of rice in quantity not less than or not more than the productions exceeding the demands."

The general manager Bae pointed out the government's "Late market isolation" and the "Lowest bidding method," a way to win over those who bid the lowest price when purchasing rice for market isolation, as the main reasons for the decline. Despite the recommendations of the Grain Management Act, such as market isolation, late responses and failure to immediately conduct market isolation led to a plunge in rice prices while a drop in rice prices due to a good harvest in 2021 was expected. He said, "The direct reason behind the current rice price crash is that the government did not implement market isolation measures at the right time at the end of last year. The rice crop survey for the year is announced on September 15 every year, and on October 15, the government's rice measures have to be announced following the survey. As a result of the September 15 crop survey in 2021, an estimated 3.88 million tons of rice production, which exceeds 3 percent of domestic rice consumption, was announced. Accordingly, the government needed to stabilize the rice market by announcing the rice market isolation measures on October 15 under the Grain Management Act, but they didn't do anything."

The South Korean government purchased 200,000 tons of rice from the market in February 2021 and 126,000 tons in

May. As rice prices continued to decline, the government purchased an additional 100,000 tons in August. In 2021, more than 270,000 tons of rice were produced beyond the rice demand of 3.61 million ton. Rice was isolated from the market four times. Despite the market isolation of rice, the price of rice continued to fall due to excess stock. In 2020, the government recklessly released rice to address the shortage of rice stocks in the market due to a massive famine that was the greatest in 52 years, and it was the starting point for a plunge in rice prices in 2021. According to a press release by the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (MAFRA), after the government declaration on November 12, 2020, which released about 370,000 tons of rice to the market by the end of August, the government's rice stores fell short of the FAO's recommended stock of 700,000 tons by falling to 150,000 tons. However, the August release increased the market's rice inventory by 43 percent compared to 2019. Professor Yoo said, "If the government had firmly isolated rice from the market and given a danger signal to the market, rice prices would not have fallen like this. According to the Grain Management Act, rice market isolation measures should be established on October 15, but in 2021, measures were established late due to pests, and the situation was not properly analyzed due to delayed measures. The government's market isolation was late." It seems clear that the government ignored the possibility of a sharp drop in rice prices despite the expected plunge in rice prices and caused the fall in rice prices with a late market isolation announcement.



▲ Farmers are pointing out government's late market isolation and lowest bidding method as the main reasons for the decline.



### 3-4. The Government's Complacency


The reason why the government did not properly enforce the provisions of the law stemmed from complacency in viewing the rice problem lightly and thinking that just solving the current rice price problem in the short term would be okay. Professor Yoo pointed out the government's complacency over the rice issue, saying, "No one is willing to take responsibility for the rice issue, which is the core crop of Korean agriculture, and there is no one leading and making appropriate policies." This is well illustrated in the example of "A Support Project of the Cultivation of Other Crops in Paddy Fields." In 2018, the government launched this project to provide subsidies to farmers who plant other crops such as beans and corn instead of rice in paddy fields. For planting crops such as corn, 4.3 million won (US\$2,982.61) was paid per hectare, 3.25 million won (US\$2,254.30) for soybeans, and 2.8 million won (US\$1,942.17) for helping to restore the fertility of soil if not farmed. The MAFRA allocated a budget of 355.8 billion won (US\$246,793,692.76) to the project from 2018 to 2020. The aim of this project was to cope with the overproduction of rice. However, as of November 2020, 62 percent of the 42,396 hectares used to cultivate other crops through this project from 2018 to 2019 had become paddy fields again. Rice production needs to be reduced, but the KOSTAT "2021 Rice and Pepper Plantation Area Survey" shows that the area of rice cultivation actually increased in 2021. It decreased from 737,673ha in 2018 to 726,432ha in 2020. The number, however, increased to 732,477ha in 2021. The reason is that the project disappeared in November 2020. In an interview with Hankyoreh with Yoo Jang-soo, President of the Jeonnam Eco-Farmers Association, on the reason for the increase in rice cultivation areas in 2021, he cited the government's suspension of the project to support the cultivation of other crops except for rice in

paddy fields. In order to control the supply and demand of rice, the government had provided subsidies for growing other crops such as soybeans in rice paddies since 2018, and when it stopped in 2020, rice production surged as farmers increased paddy fields which produce rice to receive rice subsidies.

However, this is not the only instance of this issue. The government implemented a "Rice Production Adjustment Policy" in 2003 to reduce the supply of rice, but there was no significant effect on reducing production, so it ended in 2005. In 2010, the government pushed for a "Rice Income-Based Diversification Project" to give 300,000 won (US\$208.09) per 10a to farmers who grew other crops in addition to rice. However, due to lack of preparation, many farmers could not participate in the early stages. The government, who expected rice production to decline, ended the project again in just three years. Following these two temporary projects is the support project for cultivating other crops in paddy fields. Such cash-backed policies are abolished first when the government needs to cut its budget, and all three of these projects were repeatedly implemented and abolished, only confusing farmers. As a result, farmers' response to the project to support the cultivation of other crops is also small. The general manager Bae said, "There is not much response to the project from field farmers. This policy will only work if sufficient benefits and support measures are devised to exceed the income earned from rice cultivation when farming other crops." In addition to the government's failure to foster confidence that farming alternative crops could compensate farmers' loss of income, just temporarily caring about rice prices without developing long-term sustainable rice projects will not help stabilize future rice prices or encourage the production of crops other than rice to reduce rice supply and increasing self-sufficiency in other crops.



▲ To Korean rice farmers and the people who consume rice, more attention should be paid so that an appropriate rice policy can be made.

Agriculture is an industry that is fundamental to human life. "An underdeveloped country can become a developing country through industrial development, but it cannot become a developed country without agricultural development." This is what Simon Kuznets, the 1971 Nobel Prize laureate in economics, said. As such, agriculture is important, especially in the case of Korea, where the staple food is rice. However, the current rice situation in Korea is not good. Due to the gap between supply and consumption, there is a vicious cycle of supporting farmers through subsidies for rice production and buying back the over produced rice with taxes citizens pay. The rice policy cannot properly control the price of rice or ease the pain of farmers. For Korean rice farmers and the people who consume rice, more attention is needed so that an appropriate rice policy can be made. 

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# Weight of “The Crown”



**By Park Kun-ha**  
*Editorial Consultant*

On September 19, 2022, the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom (UK) was held. From her accession to the throne on February 6, 1952, to her death on September 8, 2022, she reigned for 70 years as monarch of the UK. She is the second longest-serving monarch in history among monarchs around the world. Most British living today have seen only Queen Elizabeth II as head of their state in their lifetime. Fifteen prime ministers of the UK have served under her reign. Queen Elizabeth II stood firm in her place even in turbulent times, fulfilling her role as the spiritual anchor that united the UK. In a survey conducted to commemorate the 60th anniversary of her accession, she was ranked number one in a survey asking who the greatest king is. Therefore, it can be said that she is a monarch loved all over the world.

There is a drama that deals with the story of Queen Elizabeth II. It is the Netflix Original Series “The Crown.” “The Crown” is a seasonal biographical drama that has aired since November 2016 and tells the story of her life as Queen Elizabeth II of the UK. So far, it consists of a total of four seasons, and each season consists of 10 episodes in less than an hour. About 60 episodes are planned to be produced over six seasons. “The Crown” has won Best Television Drama Series at the 21st Satellite Awards, the 74th Golden Globe Awards, and the 73rd Primetime Emmy Awards. It also won the Emmy Award for Best Actress for Olivia Colman and Claire Foy for their roles as Queen Elizabeth II. The fifth season is scheduled to be released in November of this year, and the final season is currently being filmed. What was the weight of the crown that Queen Elizabeth II carried for 70 years, a whole lifetime? I will dig into what life was like, focusing on the drama The Crown.





## “The Crown Must Win. Must Always Win”

The father of Elizabeth II, George VI, ascended to the throne because his brother Edward VIII abdicated the throne to marry Wallis Simpson, a two-time divorcee. After the sudden death of sonless George VI from lung cancer, the British throne passed to his eldest daughter, Elizabeth Alexandra Mary, who was just 25 years old, ushering in the era of the queen. What makes this drama attractive is that it tries to be as neutral as possible about the scandals and rumors of the British royal family and tells the story based on facts. The controversy that began after the accession of Queen Elizabeth II was about her surname. Originally, the British royal family had a naming convention that a married woman should follow her husband’s surname. Therefore, Elizabeth II had to follow the surname of Philip Mountbatten, a Danish name. However, as the head of a country, she could not follow the foreign surname, so she continued to use the surname of Windsor. In the process, her husband Philip expressed his dissatisfaction, saying, “You’ve taken my name.”

Elizabeth II did not learn in higher educational institutions but took private lessons. Thus, she repeatedly made academic mistakes and appeared withdrawn. Moreover, since she inherited the throne at a young age, she often found herself in deep trouble and role conflicts between herself as Elizabeth Alexandra Mary Windsor and as Queen Elizabeth II. Besides being a queen, she was a wife, a mother, and an older sister of her family. Still, she was in the highest position with great power and had to make the most difficult and arduous decisions for a multitude of people she was responsible for. For example, Elizabeth, as an older sister of Princess Margaret, supported Margaret’s marriage with Peter Townsend, wishing her happiness above anything else. However, Queen Elizabeth II, for the sake of British royal status, was not able to give final



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approval to it. This drama is not directed toward one side, but shows both sides of the story, allowing viewers to accept it from various viewpoints. In the drama, Queen Mary, the paternal grandmother of Elizabeth II, gives Elizabeth advice about making choices as a monarch and shows the attitude when there is a conflict between her as an ordinary human being and as a queen, by saying, “The crown must win, must always win.” The story of “The Crown” may be viewed simply as royal gossip, but if you look into it, you can feel the anguish, despair, and weight of the crown more than you might think.

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## What Does the Existence of Royalty Entail?

You might be thinking, “Do we need a monarchy in this day and age?” The UK cannot avoid the skeptical view that questions the role of the British monarchy because the constitutional monarchy that Britain has adopted can be traced back to the era of absolutism in the 16th through 18th centuries. Indeed, there was a person who publicly criticized the monarchy







of Queen Elizabeth II. In his newspaper, Lord Altrincham argued that British people no longer think of the royal family as being above their heads as in the past. While many people sympathized with and praised Altrincham's criticism, conservatives began to attack him, and he quickly became a celebrity. When Altrincham was given the opportunity to appear on one of the most famous TV shows in the UK, he insisted that his critique of the monarchy was not to argue that it should be replaced with a republic, but to change the royal family of the UK. Queen Elizabeth II did not ignore the press; she met him in person and heard his story. She took

some of his advice and put it into practice. She was no longer a royal family as high as the sky but came to be a monarch standing next to the people.

There were fewer issues about the opposition to the British monarchy than now, and many say it was thanks to Queen Elizabeth II, who played the role of the queen while maintaining political balance. She helped the elected prime minister lead the country well but did not interfere. She tried to approach the nation in a friendly manner by showing the life of the royal family in a transparent way. Also, during her service, the UK underwent major changes as World War II brought an end to imperialism. The power of the UK, which had led the world as the British Empire, weakened and the United States emerged as a new power. In the meantime, she diligently took care of the British Commonwealth realms, which were former British colonies, and actively met with leaders of various countries around the world to maintain the UK's influence.

In particular, the Commonwealth realms are a group voluntarily created by 56 countries that were former British colonies, and it has operated smoothly by Queen Elizabeth II. Fifteen countries including the UK, share the British monarch as their head of state, and the governor of each country takes over the role of the king. The king only plays a symbolic role, and it is up to the leaders selected by the people of each country to rule the country. The member states hold summit meetings every two years, and build friendships by participating in the Commonwealth Games, a sports event similar to the Olympics. It is said that economic exchanges such as trade are also active among them. In particular, the UK helped member countries a lot economically. Queen Elizabeth II led the meeting and played a role in uniting them, while there are signs of changes after Charles III takes over the throne. With the death of Queen Elizabeth II, more and more countries of the Commonwealth realms are trying to reform their political system to a republic system.

Watching "The Crown," I felt like I shared the agony and anguish of Queen Elizabeth II, who reigned as a symbol of the UK for 70 years. How many things did Elizabeth go through before she became a great monarch loved by the majority of the people? I express my respect to Queen Elizabeth II, a witness of European history. I would like to evaluate her as a symbol of peace by promoting reconciliation after the war. Blessings to Queen Elizabeth II, a respected and beloved defender of freedom and peace. 🇬🇧

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# LET'S LIGHT UP THE DARKNESS

## QUINQUATRIA

By Yang Yu-min  
Editor-in-chief

From September 28 to 30 in 2022, “2022 QUINQUATRIA: Light Up,” the annual festival of HUFS, was held for three days. Because of COVID-19, “QUINQUATRIA” of 2020 and 2021 had been held online, but after two years, it was eventually held face-to-face. Getting out of the times of darkness caused by the pandemic, HUFS students could experience their college life romance, enjoying various contents, events, and performances of HUFS clubs and famous entertainers. For those who were not here, but want to feel the excitement of the fest, The Argus captured some vivid and energetic images of the festival. Let’s take a look at the vivid scenes of “QUINQUATRIA.”

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The Flea Markets



The Open Air Theater for Reading



The Food Truck



The Booths






The Central Stage



**By Cho Eun**

*Associate Editor of Culture Section*

In the afternoon, Seoul Campus was full of students enjoying the “QUINQUATRIA,” between and after classes. Each department held booths providing diverse activities or serving snacks related to its unique theme, and many students visited to enjoy the booths. Some clubs were singing and playing music on the central stage, which the students enjoyed very much. The Open Air Theater was filled with people enjoying the atmosphere and reading books, sitting on bean bags. The Food Trucks were also prepared so that students could enjoy delicious food while watching the performance. Near the fountain in front of the Humanities Building on campus (Seoul), Dongdaemun Market retailers came and held small Flea Markets. They sold natural craft soaps, homemade cookies, etc. The map of Dongdaemun Market, where the actual locations of the retailers’ shops were marked, was also shown on a big banner next to the Flea Markets. The QR code on the banner also gave more information and it helped promote the Dongdaemun Market for market revitalization. “QUINQUATRIA” is not only for HUFSans anymore, but also for residents of Imun-dong, and further of Dongdaemun-gu. 

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FBS Song Festival



Hwimori



Aegis





CHUNG HA

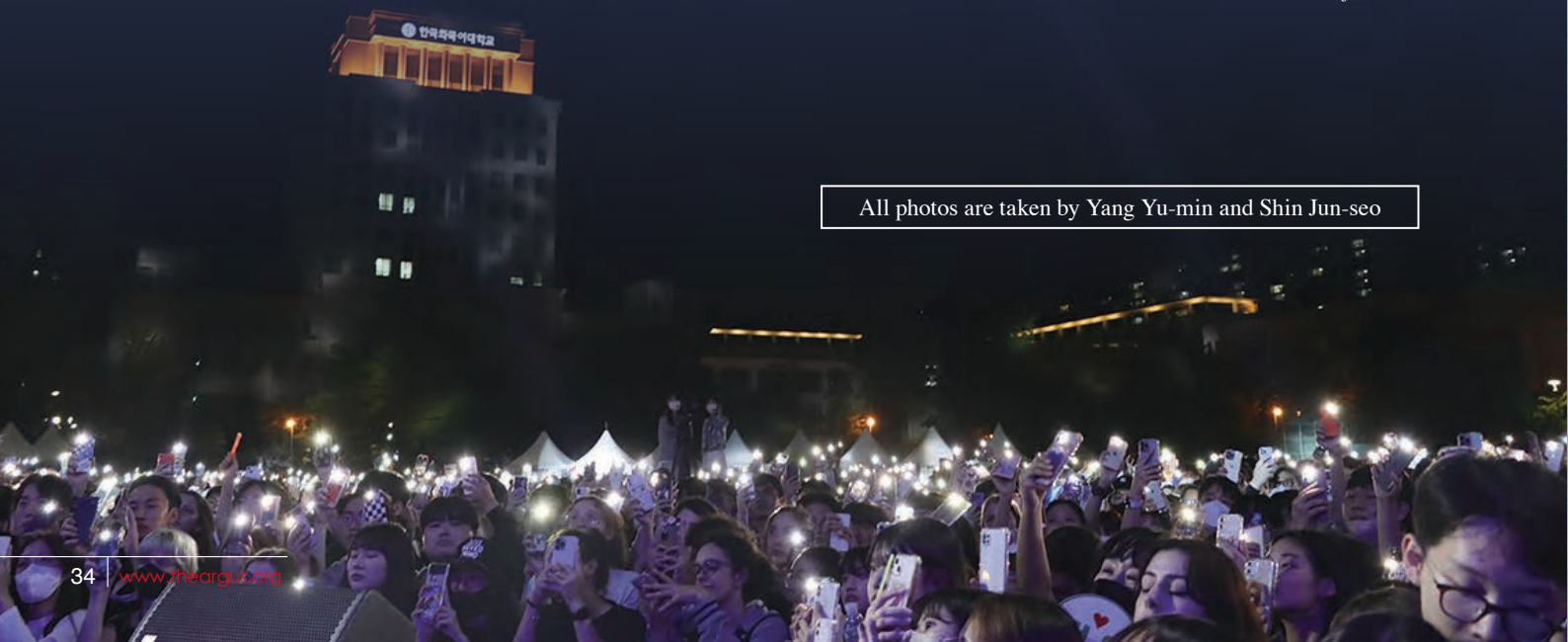


Car, the garden

**By Shin Jun-seo**  
*Editor of Social Section*

The sun has set, and night has come to make “QUINQUATRIA” more fascinating. HUFS cheering squad “Aegis” excited the crowd. HUFS College of Chinese Pungmulnori team “Hwimori” performed Korean traditional folk music enthusiastically with drumming, hitting instruments, and dancing. In addition, there was “FBS Song Festival” for HUFS students where 15 participants sang songs that touched many people’s hearts. After the song festival, the performance of Korean vocalist Car, the garden was next. He sang a total of six songs including his famous songs such as “Tree” and “Myeongdong Calling.” While the mellifluous voice of Car, the garden made students emotional, Korean pop singer, dancer, and choreographer CHUNG HA made people more enthusiastic. Park Eun-sang (Department of English Literature & Culture ‘21 at HUFS) said, “As the school festival has been converted to a face-to-face festival, I am happy to enjoy ‘QUINQUATRIA’ since it was hard to enjoy it in the last few years because of COVID-19.” At the time of the performance, the students responded to the performers by waving their cell phone with its flashlights on, and each of the lights brightened the dark night altogether. With “QUINQUATRIA,” the night of HUFS became brighter than ever. ♪

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All photos are taken by Yang Yu-min and Shin Jun-seo






# Nothing Is Ever Eternal

**By Nam Gyeong-eun**  
*Editorial Consultant*

“Do not build a life entirely dependent on Internet services.” This is a lesson I learned from the recent day of crisis. On October 15 at 3:33 p.m., the SK C&C Data Center in Pangyo, Seongnam-si, South Korea was on fire. It was reported that the fire started in the battery room on the third basement floor of the building. NAVER, Kakao, and SK affiliates were in residence at the center managing their essential data. It is commonplace for such major companies to place their main server at an exterior data center for efficiency, but the fire was especially catastrophic for Kakao because it did not have an extra backup server for core data. Kakao services were interrupted for 10 hours. It was a historical event in South Korean history because Kakao services, including KakaoTalk, Kakao T (for mobility), Kakao Games, etc., are used by 91.5 percent of the total population of South Korea. It could have even been much worse if Kakao Bank managed their main server at the mentioned data center, but some bank services related to KakaoTalk services, such as Kakao Pay, or easy transfer between Kakao friends were also unavailable.

What is worth speculating on is how massively people's lives were disrupted by a fire in a single building. Not only direct Kakao services, but other online services which use KakaoTalk login services, were also out of commission, too. Users of Upbeat, a virtual coin investing application using its login service with Kakao, could not actually use the normal investing service and have reported to the Financial Supervisory Service about their losses due to the Kakao service error. Considering that such damage was for each person, it is expected that there could be astronomical damage for companies using Kakao service or other services that use Kakao servers for incidental services.

The damage was not only limited to personal financial loss, which is somehow able to be compensated, though. The service disorder of 10 hours also caused even partial privacy violations. The “Multi-profile” service, which refers to a service that KakaoTalk provides for its users so that they can use different profiles for different groups of friends, seems to have failed differentiating one group from another during the hours of mayhem. Even some of the users' deleted private pictures were exposed to Kakao friends. One surprising fact that I learned was that data once uploaded online is only turned off even if you delete it. Whatever you post online never actually disappears.

I hope that the injured parties will be rewarded in the near future properly, but what I take as a lesson from this situation is that we should live our lives more offline in reality. The online world would have seemed to people like an abundant land free from physical limits which even frees people from such physical restrictions and gives people chances to turn back time. However, the data online actually were the same as spoken sentences offline in that they can never be taken back, and the liberation from the physical world was never eternal. 

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# Winter Is Coming!



## Yang Yu-min

Born on August 24, 2002, in summer, I like winter the most. Although my birthday is in summer, I hate the muggy air the most because I am sensitive to hot weather. As summer goes by and the seasons get colder, I feel more excited. As winter approaches, I put electric blankets on my bed and look forward to the day when I can buy tangerines. Also, I take out a warm scarf and soft knit from deep inside of my closet and think about what to do at the end of the year. At the end of 2022 draws near, I want to meet loving friends and family I miss, and talk about what has happened in the meantime. I hope that the readers will also spend a warm winter with their loved ones.

## Shin Jun-seo

Fall is getting shorter, and winter is coming faster. Since I was often sick in winter when I was young, I hate winter. But since winter is also part of the four seasons, I have to find a way to overcome this cold. I meet my friends when the cold comes since the warmth I get from the people around me is the best. I play basketball, drink with my friends, and sometimes just talk. I hope readers of The Argus will also overcome this cold by interacting with other people.

## Cho Eun

I have ambivalent feelings about winter. I hate the brutal cold and dislike shivering, but I love the soft and warm mufflers and gloves with my breath showing its shape. The way I prepare for winter is by taking out mufflers, gloves, and bed socks because I have cold hands and feet. The diverse colors, patterns, and textures of these things make my heartbeat pound. Choosing the optimal outfit for a day depends on my emotions that day. When I miss the autumn wind, I choose the brown-colored check muffler; when I feel Christmas, I choose the red fluffy set; and when I want to feel cozy, I wear blue bed socks. It is also fun to think about what new things to buy. It won't be easy, I guess, to save some money this winter!







## Lee Jue-hyun

When it gets colder, I start to prepare something warm all around me. It could be a hand warmer or hot water pad, but something that I never forget is jazz and carols. These are my all-time favorites, but especially in winter, they fill me with love and delight like I am having Christmas every day. Having time with my loved ones with that music is the best protection I can have against the cold winter.

## Lee Ju-won

When the weather gets colder, I carry cash, 3,000 won, in my pocket to eat Korean street food such as fish-shaped waffles, pan-fried sweet pancakes, fishcakes, and egg bread. Even in the cold, only 3,000 won makes me warm and happy. However, I need to mind that street food chefs usually do not stay put in one place. That is why I carry cash with me every time I go out because I never know when I will come across them. I think now winter is on its way, so I am ready to carry some cash!

## Park Kun-ha

As the days got colder, I again realized the importance of warmth. Warming up a cold body with a warm blanket and thick jacket is good, but the first thing that comes to my mind is a warm dish of delicious soup. If you eat warm food in a warm place with someone you care about, you will feel the warmest even in the middle of winter for that moment. Feeling the happiness and preciousness of the warmth, I always wish that moment could last forever. Ironically, it seems that interestingly, warmth doubles on a cold day. Even if we face challenges and cold spurts every day, why don't we warm up our lives gradually with a little happiness?

## Nam Gyeong-eun

My favorite fashion item is a muffler. My favorite exercise is walking and jumping on the street on a cold winter day with friends, talking all night long, and holding hot fish-shaped pastries in each hand. My favorite day of the year, except "Gyeong-eun-mas (my birthday)," is Christmas when everything is red, green, and bright. My favorite food is a sip of super-hot homemade "Doenjang Jjigae," Korean traditional soybean paste stew, after a snowball fight. Thus, my favorite thing seems to be winter.





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