

No. 546 NOVEMBER 12, 2024

The Argus

Since 1954

**South Korea:
Solidifying Its Role as
a Key Mediator**

**South Korea's Position in
the South Korea-North
Korea-U.S. Triangle**

**North Korea's Response:
Matching U.S. Policies
Step by Step**

**A Calibrated, Pragmatic
Approach vs. Diplomacy
of Personal Ties**

**What's Next for North Korea?
Predicting Its Future Moves**



The Argus

ESTABLISHED 1954

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Editorial

Noticing the Overlooked

In the flow of life, critical realities often fade from view. People frequently become numb and desensitized to issues that should be treated seriously, as they become too commonplace and normalized in everyday life.

This November issue explores problems in today's society that are so deeply embedded in daily life, casually dismissed as they occur, or even forgotten, such that their severity often goes unnoticed and overlooked. The first step in addressing these issues is to acknowledge their severity and analyze the reality and their causes. Perhaps this is one of the most impactful issues in South Korea, but people do not see it as a big deal and just vaguely think it will not change their generation. It is the division of South Korea and North Korea. Rather than taking an indifferent attitude that it is a problem that will not get better or that nothing will happen, we can think about a way forward by looking at the attitudes of South Korea and North Korea, their relationship, the impact on the international community, and U.S. policy toward North Korea, which is one of the biggest influencing factors. On a more mundane level, there are many people using hate speech in the name of humor, or simply because everyone else is using it. Instead of following this negative trend, why not be tolerant and consider the meaning and impact of the words that we use?

With the development of the information society, the risk of personal information infringement has increased. However, people often forget the importance of personal information protection even though they store personal information and agree to provide such information for convenience. Instead of mindlessly assuming that their personal information is safe, people should be aware of personal information protection technologies and make efforts to prevent related breaches. Public art, as art for the public, can sometimes fall short of its primary function, and even when people are aware of this issue, many people just overlook it. In addition, the housing predicament in Korea is often perceived as just another "problem" of everyday life. In order for public art to fulfill its function, and to remind us of the meaning of "home" to Koreans, we need to understand the reality and the causes of the problems.

These issues should no longer be dismissed simply because they are long-standing or pervasive. By confronting these issues directly and actively, we can begin to dismantle the complacency that allows them to persist. The cost of apathy can add up over time, but the ability to investigate a problem has far more potential for a positive impact than we might imagine.

By **Kim Yi-eun**
Editor-in-Chief

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>> The U.S. has significantly impacted North Korea's actions towards South Korea. U.S. policies, ranging from engagement to pressure, have influenced North Korea's nuclear program and its interactions with South Korea. While these policies have aimed to address North Korea's nuclear ambitions, they have also had broader consequences for the country. While the focus has often been on North Korea's nuclear program, it is important to consider the broader implications of U.S. policies. With the U.S. presidential election held on November 5, 2024, its outcome could significantly impact inter-Korean relations. By examining these dynamics, the goal is to foster critical thinking on Korea's approach to national security in a shifting geopolitical context.

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Voices of Influence

HUFS Introduces Global Esports Management Major

A new major, Global Esports Management will be available starting this November, following the approval of a revised academic regulation by the university president on July 29, 2024. HUFS students will be assigned to the major starting in 2025.

The new major aims to cultivate leaders in the esports industry, develop esports-related academic curricula, and foster a public-private-academic partnership to create an esports industry cluster. The major is open to current HUFS students who are either esports participants, enthusiasts, or aspiring esports industry professionals, including retired esports players. The Global Esports Management major offers a comprehensive curriculum divided into four core areas: esports business, esports event management, esports information strategy, and esports content creation. Each core area consists of at least four specialized courses.

Song Inyoung, a teaching assistant in the Department of Global Sports Industry, highlighted the unique features of the newly established Global Esports Management major. “While our existing Global Sports Industry program has focused on cultivating comprehensive professionals in various fields including sports diplomacy, administration, marketing, media, and IT to lead the global sports industry, the new major will concentrate on fostering specialized expertise in esports and gaming. Through close collaborations with gaming companies located in Pangyo and organizations like Korea e-sports Association, students will gain invaluable hands-on experience.” This new major is expected to provide students with a deeper understanding of esports and opportunities for practical experience. 📖



▲ HUFSGlobal Sport Industry opens Global Esports Management as a new major for HUFS students.

By Kim Si-yon
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HUFS Hosts QUINQUATRIA: 70th Anniversary Festival

HUFS Seoul Campus hosted its annual festival, QUINQUATRIA: 70th Anniversary. Held from Oct. 7 to 8, 2024, the festival offered a variety of programs for students to enjoy.

From 6 p.m. onward both days, students were treated to a series of performances, including a singing contest, a cheerleading competition, and concerts by popular artists. Twilight, a special event featuring performances by HUFS students, took place from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. on both days. The singing contest, co-hosted by Foreign Studies Broadcasting (FBS) and Yeowoon, the 58th General Student Council (GSC), was held on Oct. 7. Artium brought students together as they cheered along to the university’s anthems, “HUFS to the World, the World to HUFS” and “For Tomorrow.”

In addition to the main stage performances, the festival featured various sub-events to enhance the overall experience. Students could create lasting memories at photo zones and enjoy a peaceful reading experience at Minerva’s Wisdom, the Book Picnic, as reading spots were set up throughout the campus. Yang Ye-sul, a freshman majoring in English for International Communication and Conferences who was a staff member at the booth, shared her excitement about the recent festival. “Unlike the spring festival, our department’s booth was part of a more intimate event, which made it a unique and fun experience.” QUINQUATRIA offered a diverse range of activities and department-specific booths, making it a more eclectic festival than previous years. 📖



▲ HUFS students relax on bean bags provided for Minerva’s Wisdom (Book Picnic) event during the festival.

By Kim Si-yon
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HUFS Living Library Hosts Monthly Cinema, Book Club

The HUFS Living Library at the Seoul Campus hosts a Monthly Cinema and Book Club, where participants watch a film or read a book each month, followed by a discussion on the topic. These programs are available to all HUFS Seoul Campus students. In November, the Monthly Cinema is scheduled for Nov. 8, followed by the Monthly Book Club on Nov. 20.

On Nov. 8 at 7 p.m., the Monthly Cinema featured a screening of the movie *Hedwig*, followed by a discussion on gender issues. The next Monthly Cinema will take place on Dec. 13, featuring the movie *Cart* with discussions focused on labor and non-regular employment. The Monthly Book Club will be held on Nov. 20 at 7 p.m., discussing the book *You're the One* focusing on gender issues. Students can register for both programs through the Google Form on the HUFS Living Library's Instagram account.

The goal of the HUFS Living Library is to provide students with experiences to reflect on various issues and share their thoughts openly. Lee Min-ji, a director of the HUFS Living Library said, "We aim to create an open space where everyone can share and learn from one another's perspectives without worrying about discomfort or being judged for their opinions. Our programs are designed to allow participation without the need to complete reading the books, so we hope students feel free participating in these programs."



©Instagram @hufsego

▲ Students can check the detailed information of Monthly Cinema and Book Club on the HUFS Living Library's Instagram account.

By Park Se-eun
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HUFS FLEC Operating English Zone

The Foreign Language Education Center (FLEC) at HUFS Global Campus is operating English Zone. English Zone is a place for students to take classes and use only English on campus, in an effort to improve students' English skills. Through English Zone, students can utilize class time to learn English with native speaking instructors through a free English program. It is available to all HUFS Global Campus students and runs from Sep. 19 to Dec. 6, 2024.

The detailed offerings of English Zone include English-Zone, English-Clinic, and Writing-Clinic. English-Zone is a conversation program with native speakers, covering various topics in English. English-Clinic provides one-on-one tutoring for personalized guidance in learning English, while Writing-Clinic offers supplementary lessons on college-level writing with TESOL tutors. In English Zone, only English is permitted, and students can scan a QR code on-site to check in for attendance. Reservations can be made on the HUFS integrated information system starting from 9 a.m. the day before the session, up to 10 minutes before it begins, and reservations are first-come, first-served. English Zone operates from third to sixth period, and various professors lead the sessions depending on the day of the week.

English Zone aims to enhance students' English proficiency by providing spaces and programs that offer free opportunities to engage with native speakers through diverse activities. Jeong Yu-Been a sophomore studying Czech and Slovak, who used the program, said, "Since I always wanted to practice English conversation, English Zone was very helpful. Although each native professor had a different teaching style, I appreciated the opportunity to discuss a specific topic in English. I also learned various expressions, which greatly helped me on my speaking tests."

English Zone 1					
Day	Topic	Time	Topic	Time	Topic
11:00-11:50	Free Conversation	Free Conversation	Free Conversation	Free Conversation	Free Conversation
12:00-12:50	Free Conversation	Free Conversation	Free Conversation	Free Conversation	Free Conversation
11:00-11:50	Free Conversation	Free Conversation	Free Conversation	Free Conversation	Free Conversation
12:00-12:50	Free Conversation	Free Conversation	Free Conversation	Free Conversation	Free Conversation

English Zone 2					
Day	Topic	Time	Topic	Time	Topic
11:00-11:50	Free Conversation	Free Conversation	Free Conversation	Free Conversation	Free Conversation
12:00-12:50	Free Conversation	Free Conversation	Free Conversation	Free Conversation	Free Conversation
11:00-11:50	Free Conversation	Free Conversation	Free Conversation	Free Conversation	Free Conversation
12:00-12:50	Free Conversation	Free Conversation	Free Conversation	Free Conversation	Free Conversation

©HUFS FLEC

▲ Students can check the English Zone timetable on the HUFS FLEC website.

By Park Se-eun
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Memorable Moments with Professors: Lessons Beyond the Classroom

By Jang Ye-ryn
Cub Reporter

University is not only a place for advanced learning and academic achievements but also an ideal place for people from different backgrounds to build meaningful connections. With midterms over and more than half of the second semester already completed, we would like to reflect on the memories and connections we have built with our fellow HUFSAans. What has been your most valuable and unforgettable memory with a professor or class?



Shim Ji-young (Dept. of Language & Trade '24)

In one of my liberal arts classes, I remember something the professor said during the lecture. While discussing our attitude toward new encounters and experiences, the professor emphasized the importance of setting aside what we have previously learned and accepting things as they are. Although this may sound obvious, it was impactful because we tend to judge others based on our accumulated knowledge and values. The professor pointed out something I had not given much thought to before. As a freshman in college with many opportunities to meet new people and form new connections, I reflected on whether I had made enough effort in this regard.

Yu Ji-eun (Dept. of Language & Diplomacy '24)

During one of my economics classes, we were discussing various examples of complementary goods when the professor mentioned “cereal and milk.” It seemed like a pretty standard moment, but suddenly someone’s iPad’s voice assistant, Siri, misinterpreted the phrase and responded with a loud voice. The whole class paused, surprised by the unexpected interruption. What made it even funnier was that a friend sitting next to me, who had been dozing off for most of the lecture, woke up because of it and started laughing. The entire section around us joined in, and for a brief moment, we all shared this spontaneous, light-hearted break from the lecture. Looking back, it is one of those small, unplanned moments that remind me how even in the most serious or structured environments, humor can pop up and bring everyone together.



Huh Seo-nu (Dept. of Political Science and Diplomacy '24)

I once asked my professor about the reason they became a PhD in political science, and to my surprise, the professor answered that pursuing a doctorate in political science was never part of their original plan. During their undergraduate years, the professor’s major was focused on studying China, but over time, they developed an interest in political science, which eventually led them to earning a PhD in the field. At the time, I was struggling with thoughts about my future career path, and the professor’s response helped relieve some of that burden and allowed me to focus on the present. That conversation with the professor remains a significant memory for me.

Choi Hye-min (Dept. of Spanish '24)

One of the most memorable moments from my introductory Spanish grammar class was when the professor surprised us by cooking Spanish food - tacos and lemonade - right in the middle of the lesson. It was a refreshing change from the usual lectures, and seeing the professor step out of the traditional teaching role to share a bit of Spanish culture made the experience even more enjoyable. It was not just a fun break; it also created a lasting memory that made the class feel more personal and engaging.



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Endless Challenges, the Path Toward a Dream

By Kim Si-yon

Staff Reporter of Social Section



Success is never an overnight achievement. Achieving one's dreams requires a high level of responsibility and perseverance, and a cycle of challenges and setbacks is inevitable. However, there is a person who never gave up amidst these challenges and ultimately realized his dream. Philip Ahn (Ahn Yong-hun), a proud alumnus of HUFS, is that person. Despite multiple failures, he persistently challenged himself and eventually became a police officer, his long-held aspiration. Job Action Day is a day to encourage job seekers to go beyond simply finding a job that meets their needs and to pursue a fulfilling career by infusing their work with passion. In celebration of Job Action Day on November 4, The Argus conducted an interview with HUFS alumnus Philip Ahn, who turned challenges and failures into stepping stones to success, to inspire the readers with the courage to pursue their dreams.



The First Act: A Journalist's Tale

1 The Argus: Would you please introduce yourself to the readers?

Philip Ahn (Ahn): Hello, my name is Philip Ahn. I am a 1987 graduate of HUFS, where I majored in Vietnamese and English. After working as a journalist for 15 years from 1990 to 2005, I became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1994 and currently am serving as a parole officer for the Washington State Patrol. A parole officer is a unique position in the U.S. law enforcement system, tasked with supervising individuals who have been released from prison on parole. As a parole officer with law enforcement authority, I monitor parolees, and if they reoffend, I petition the Parole Board to revoke their parole and testify in court about their violations. With 19 years of experience as a lieutenant, I primarily focus on sex crimes.

2 The Argus: Please tell more about your 15-year career as a journalist. Would you elaborate on your experiences in the field?

Ahn: I had always dreamed of becoming a journalist, drawn to the profession's autonomy. After completing my military service, I pursued an MBA in the United States while studying for the journalist qualification exam, which

I eventually passed. I was then assigned to the social affairs section of the JoongAng Ilbo's Los Angeles bureau, where I covered police and prosecutors.

As a journalist, one must be proficient in language, as it is essential for effectively communicating in the field. I was tasked with translating news from mainstream American media into Korean for JoongAng Ilbo readers in Korea who were eager to learn about the U.S. but may not have been fluent in English. Since my sources were always English speakers, I needed to be able to transcribe spoken English into written Korean, converting colloquialisms into formal language, and applying academic English to real-world situations. To excel at these transitions, I dedicated myself to mastering both English and Korean, striving to become a true bilingual. In the world of journalism, "I do not know" is not an acceptable answer. Journalists must always have a broad perspective and a wide range of knowledge. Even when journalists get assigned to unfamiliar areas, one must quickly learn and adapt. Journalists cannot be confined to their comfort zones or areas of expertise.

3 The Argus: What was the most rewarding moment of your journalism career? Is there a specific article you are particularly proud of?

Ahn: One time, during the 1999 Incheon National Sports

Festival, I covered a promising young athlete from a very poor family. I wrote a heart-warming story about her, highlighting her circumstances and her potential. The story resonated deeply with readers, and a corporation stepped forward to offer her a full sponsorship, covering her college tuition and living expenses until graduation. It was incredibly rewarding to see how my words could change someone's life.



▲ Reporter Philip Ahn (C) strikes a pose with players from the 1999 Women's Youth World Volleyball Championship team.

©Philip Ahn



▲ Reporter Philip Ahn (L) poses for a photo with a former volleyball player at the 1999 Women's Youth Volleyball Championship in Portugal.

©Philip Ahn

Another memorable moment was when I broke the news of Choo Shin-soo's first Major League hit. As a journalist for the JoongAng Ilbo, I was the first to report on this significant achievement for a Korean baseball player. The article generated a huge amount of buzz, and Choo went on to become one of the most famous Korean players in Major League Baseball. At that moment, I truly understood the power of journalism. It is about capturing historic moments and using the written word to give wings to people's dreams.



The Second Act: Becoming a Cop

4 The Argus: What motivated you to make the transition from a long career in journalism to a career in law enforcement?

Ahn: I grew up watching my father, a police officer, and I saw firsthand how demanding the job was. Despite the challenges, I always admired him. The real turning point for me came during the 1992 Los Angeles riots. Witnessing the lack of Korean political influence and the inadequate protection for the Korean community, I realized the importance of law enforcement. I remember one night during the riots when my car was surrounded by a mob.

That was the moment I felt truly vulnerable. I thought to myself, "If only I were a police officer, I would not be in this situation." A year after the riots, I secretly took the exams for the Seattle Police Department, Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), and King County Sheriff's Office in Washington, though unfortunately, I did not pass any of them. Having experienced the riots firsthand, I wanted to be a certified officer in the U.S. to protect myself and my family. In the U.S., the government provides strong legal protection for law enforcement officers. I wanted to provide a stable life for my children, and being a police officer in the U.S. is a very stable career. With a generous retirement plan, it is also a financially attractive profession.

5 The Argus: Were there any times when you felt discouraged while studying for the police exam? If so, what did you do to stay motivated?

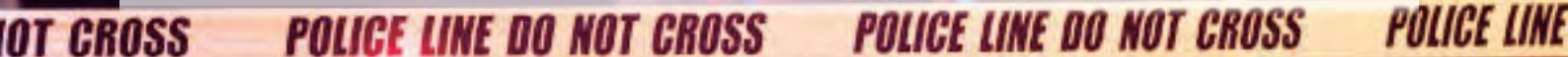
Ahn: When I first took the police exams in Seattle, Los Angeles, and King County in 1993 and failed, I honestly gave up on my dream of becoming a police officer. However, 13 years later, I found myself back at the exam center. After 10 attempts over six months, I finally made it. When I first took the exam, I felt the exams were incredibly difficult. English was the biggest challenge. Even though I had worked as a foreign correspondent and a social affairs reporter, I was shocked by the difficulty of the written exam. The questions were situational, asking how a police officer would respond in certain scenarios. The language used was highly specialized and beyond my usual vocabulary.



▲ Parole officer Philip Ahn conducts a routine patrol as Washington State's parole officer.

©Philip Ahn

I was lucky enough to finally pass the written exam and got an interview. The first question was, "Tell me about you. Describe yourself." I was completely unprepared for this style of interview. After failing, I concluded that I was not cut out for it. But with a determination to succeed, I persisted and finally became a police officer in 2006 after ten attempts. My dream of becoming a police officer was something I pursued when I was at my lowest point. I believe that true motivation comes from experiencing many failures. I was determined to see it through to the end.



6 The Argus: When did you feel the greatest sense of accomplishment as a police officer?

Ahn: There was a sexual assault case that I can never forget. The victims were two Korean sisters who had been adopted from Korea. When they turned 25 and 26, they reported that they had been repeatedly sexually assaulted by their American adoptive father. However, the perpetrator was able to avoid prison time and was instead placed under the supervision of a parole officer. I was assigned to supervise him. Because the victims were Korean adoptees, I felt a deep connection to their case. The thought that this man had inflicted lifelong trauma on these young girls made me determined to supervise him closely. Eventually, I caught him violating his parole conditions, arrested him, and brought him to justice. That was when I felt the greatest sense of accomplishment. When I first became a police officer, it was difficult to remain emotionally detached. When criminals first met me, they would often make derogatory remarks like, “Hallelujah, you’ve got a job in the United States,” or “I think we have a language barrier between you and me. I want another officer.” However, the people who give me authority are also the people I have sworn to protect. Now I remind myself that I must protect all citizens, regardless of their race.



©Philip Ahn

▲ Parole officer Philip Ahn provides testimony of the perpetrator in a courtroom.

7 The Argus: What connections do you see between the society you witnessed as a journalist and the one you encounter as a police officer?

Ahn: Whether interviewing a source or interviewing a suspect, the goal is the same. I have to extract the information I need within a limited time frame. Just like

a straight news story, a police report must adhere to the five W’s and one H, condensing all necessary information into a concise format. The primary difference lies in our objectives: journalists inform the public, while police officers protect society.



©Philip Ahn

The Third Act: Toward a New Challenge

8 The Argus: What kind of future do you envision for yourself?

Ahn: Police officers do not have a fixed retirement age but must retire when they can no longer do the job. While the pension and social security benefits at 65 are sufficient, I want to continue working. I want to continue my career in investigation by becoming an FBI linguist, effectively utilizing my fluency in English and Korean. With my investigative experience, I am confident in handling investigative translations and court interpreting.


9 The Argus: Lastly, for those Argus readers who hold onto dreams yet feel hesitant to chase them, could you share a word of encouragement?

Ahn: Having learned about the world in university, I hope The Argus’ readers will now go out and experience it. I would like to tell them not to limit their potential. As a member of the HUFS community, remember that language is your superpower. If you want to go global, you need a foreign language. But do not just jump in; prepare thoroughly.



©Philip Ahn

▲ Philip Ahn gives a special lecture on becoming a U.S. police officer at Dongguk University’s Department of Police Administration.

The story of Philip Ahn, a HUFS alumnus, exemplifies the notion that no endeavor is ever in vain. Despite numerous failures and setbacks, he consistently rose to his feet and pursued his dreams. His story proves that failure is merely a stepping stone to success. Only those who relentlessly strive toward their dreams can achieve them, and it is crucial to remember that the driving force behind achieving one’s dreams is a combination of passion and self-belief. 

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Public Art: Spark for Urban Regeneration or an Eyesore?

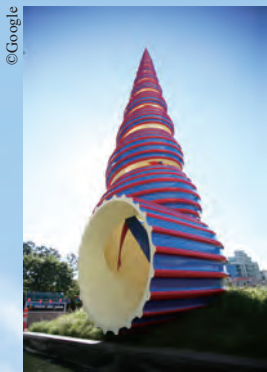
By Park Se-eun

Staff Reporter of Culture Section

In South Korea (hereafter Korea), the legislation of The Artwork Policy for Buildings in September 1972 led to widespread dissatisfaction due to the indiscriminate placement of artworks. To address this issue, the government implemented an amendment to Article 9 of the Culture and Arts Promotion Act on November 26, 2011, introducing an optional funding system. This allowed developers to contribute to a culture and arts fund instead of directly installing artwork. Despite being intended “for the public,” meaningless public art installations have continued, leading to public indifference. Even in November 2024, more than 10 years after the amendment was implemented, problems regarding public art still occur. The Argus aims to rekindle public engagement toward public art by analyzing the causes of the problems and proposing solutions.

Who Is Public Art For?

Problem 1: Public Art Losing Its True Meaning



▲ Spring (2006)

How do you perceive the public art installations that stand tall in the city? Are they merely steel structures you pass by, or do they hold any special meaning or value for you? The definition of public art is “art placed in public spaces,” and its original goal is to allow the public to enjoy art in their daily lives. However, the current state of public art

seems to stray far from this purpose. Public art often goes unnoticed, or worse, neglected and seen as an eyesore. At the entrance of Cheonggyecheon Square stands “Spring” (2006), a massive conical structure measuring 20 meters tall and 6 meters wide, created by a renowned American sculptor Claes Oldenburg at a cost of 3.4 billion won (US\$2.5 million). Despite the significant investment, it has faced criticism for not aligning with Cheonggyecheon’s urban identity and has been mockingly nicknamed “snail” and even “excrement.” Much like mass-produced goods, modern public art often feels disconnected from its surroundings, and installed without much consideration for its significance. This creates a sense of dissonance for the public leading to the opposite effect of what public art is intended to achieve.



Cause 1: The Lack of Discourse Surrounding Public Art

When “Spring” was installed, the government’s original goal was to commemorate the restoration of Cheonggyecheon. However, the work was installed without any consideration of the cultural and historical context of the area. As a result, it strayed far from its original intent and lost the true meaning of public art. This raises the question: What is the true meaning of public art? According to art critic Hong Kyoung-han, true public art is defined as “art for the public.” To achieve art for the public, the work must meet the needs and values of the community. It requires aesthetic, social, and cultural reflection on how public art can positively impact and engage people in the public realm. Hannah Arendt, a German political philosopher, defined the public realm in her book *The Human Condition* (1958) as a space where people exchange opinions and discuss public issues. This goes beyond physical space and serves as a social and political sphere where individuals freely express their views and build relationships, forming a shared world.

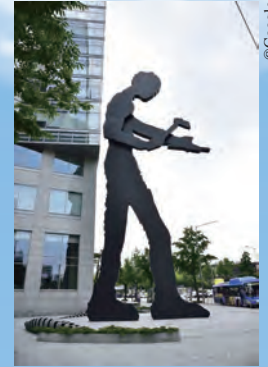
In September 1972, the government legislated The Artwork Policy for Buildings which required that 0.7 percent of the construction cost of new or expanded buildings exceeding 10,000 square meters be allocated for the installation of art. Initially, the program aimed to improve the urban environment and support the creative activities of artists. However, when it became mandatory in 1995, it shifted focus towards meeting quantitative goals for public art installations. According to the paper “The Legal Basis for Public Arts: Percent for Art Ordinance” (2004) by Yang Hyun-Mee, a professor of cultural art at Sangmyung University, the original purpose of the law became distorted, leading to inefficient installations that disregarded essential public art elements such as site-specificity and public engagement. As a result, public art has become more about bureaucratic processes and budget consumption than about enriching public spaces with meaningful art, shifting from art for the people to art for municipal gains.

Solution 1: Public Art as a Platform for Communication

“Hammering Man” (2002), by an American sculptor Jonathan Borofsky, installed in front of the Heungkuk Life Insurance building in Jongno Ward, Seoul is an example of successful public art.

This artwork, has now become a symbol in the Gwanghwamun area. The anonymous figure and

the repetitive hammering motion capture the essence of “labor,” which mirrors the endless cycles of daily life, receiving praise for its relevance to its surroundings. Art critic Hong said that contemporary public art should emphasize the artist’s engagement with their environment and the issues at hand. He said “the realization of publicness” is essential in public



▲ Hammering Man (2002)

art, meaning that art should not only be aesthetically valuable but also foster interaction with the community. For this to be effective, the public must trust in the positive influence of art in addressing local issues, creating mutual understanding.

According to the book *Mapping The Terrain: New Genre Public Art* (1994) by an American artist Suzanne Lacy, the need for social reflection through art and actual public participation is important. Lacy emphasizes that public art must go beyond placing aesthetically pleasing objects in public spaces. Instead, it should engage with and benefit the lives of people, acting as a platform for dialogue and connection within the community. To improve the quality of public art, institutions responsible for installations should focus not on quantity but on fostering genuine public engagement and enhancing the meaning behind each piece. By involving the public in the installation process, public art can better serve its role as a medium for communication and social cohesion, reinforcing its relevance and impact.

2 Public Art That Has Taken Away Residents' Privacy

Problem 2: Invasion of Privacy in Areas with Public Art Installations

Imagine a crowd gathering late at night, snapping photos and making noise right outside your home. These disruptions to daily life are the reality for residents of Ihwa Mural Village in Jongno Ward, Seoul. Some tourists even took nude photos in front of a famous mural featuring angel wings, causing significant distress to the local community. Eventually, residents painted over the stairs which had the signature mosaic flowers with gray



▲ The mosaic flowers on the outdoor stairwell attracts many tourists to Ihwa Mural Village.

paint. Mural villages, which were popular from the mid-2000s to the early 2010s, were created with the purpose of revitalizing underprivileged neighborhoods by beautifying them with murals and public art, has now become an inconvenience to residents. Public art meant to boost tourism and local economies instead blurred the boundaries between private and public spaces, leading to privacy violations. As a result such

instances of public art only attracted tourists without resolving the complaints of the local communities.

Cause 2: Lack of Communication Between Residents and Public Authorities

The core issue lies in the lack of communication between public authorities responsible for public art installations and the residents. While authorities prioritize economic benefits and tourism, residents are more concerned about their privacy. Public art, designed without consulting the community, ends up disrupting the daily lives of residents. According to the paper “The Problem of Public Art in the Case of the Ihwadong Mural Damage Incident: Focusing on Hannah Arendt’s Concept of Public Space” (2016) by Jeong Yun-jeong and Kim Jin-A, researchers of cultural studies at Chonnam National University, public art initiatives often fail when they prioritize economic benefits over residents’ well-being. Their research found that the root cause of public art failures in local communities stemmed from insufficient understanding of the area and lack of consultation with residents. Residents, on the other hand, expect clear boundaries between public and private spaces and often oppose installations like benches or other communal objects for fear of increased noise, encounters with strangers, or even potential criminal activity. Public art projects designed to boost local economies rarely benefited the residents, who instead suffered from the side effects of increased tourism.

Solution 2: Protecting Privacy Through Communication with Residents

For public art to successfully coexist with residential areas, open dialogue and mutual understanding are crucial. Public authorities need

to consider both the economic goals and the well-being of the community, ensuring that public art installations do not come at the cost of residents’ privacy and quality of life. Gamcheon Culture Village in Busan offers a successful example of balancing public art with local life fostering a harmonious coexistence.

According to the book *Public Art Discusses Urban Sustainability*

(2021) by Koo Bon-ho, a Korean cultural artist, this success is rooted in the collaboration between artists, residents, and the local government. From the planning stages, residents actively contributed ideas for the village’s rejuvenation, and they participated in the installation and operation of public art projects. This level of engagement allowed for a system where the benefits of tourism could be smoothly reinvested back into the community.

In contrast, according to the paper “A Study on the Sustainable Ewha Mural Village in a Viewpoint of Urban Regeneration” (2019) by Son Yong-hoon, a professor of Environmental Studies, and Lee Dong-kun, a professor of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Seoul National University, in the arbitrary decision-making process key factors such as the physical environment of the residents were overlooked, resulting in economic inequality conflicts over noise, and privacy concerns. For future public art projects, measures such as noise control, landscape improvement, pollution management, pedestrian-focused planning, safety, and consideration of the local identity are essential. Ultimately, the sustainability of public art is not enough to merely install art and expect residents to accept it. Successful public art initiatives depend on making systems for residents to participate in the process and to ensure their privacy.



▲ Gamcheon Culture Village has colorful murals and sculptures.

3 Who Should Own Public Art?

Problem 3: Copyright Infringement of Public Art Creators

The controversy surrounding public art often extends to the ownership and rights of the creators.

The mural at Dorasan Station, commissioned by the government in 2007 was destroyed in 2010 by the government. However, this destruction occurred without the artist's consent, which raises critical issues regarding the infringement of the artist's rights. The artist subsequently filed a lawsuit against the government, claiming violations of his artistic freedom and moral rights under the constitution. While property owners have the authority to dispose of their property, artists often lack the means to protect their moral rights regarding the integrity of their work. However, unlike artworks displayed in galleries, public art exists in shared spaces where the controlling authority can unilaterally change or remove the artwork based on public sentiment or other considerations. Consequently, public artists may find their works altered or destroyed without their consent, leading to a potential loss of their moral rights.



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▲ The government demolishes artist Ivan's mural "Roaring Tiger and Two Wings of the Korean Peninsula" painted at Dorasan Station .

Cause 3: Ownership of Public Artworks

Public art copyright issues are rooted in the separation of copyright and ownership. According to the Korea Copyright Commission (KCC), when a public institution commissions an artist to create public artwork, the artist retains copyright, but the ownership of the artwork transfers to the institution, which makes it easier to alter or remove the artwork without considering the artist's moral rights, including the right to maintain the integrity of their work. In the current legal framework, the rights of artists concerning the preservation of their work are not explicitly defined, resulting in varying interpretations and potential disputes between copyright holders and owners.

In Korea, Article 93 of the Copyright Act outlines the moral rights of authors, including the right to integrity. However, this provision does not provide clear definitions or detailed

protections for specific types of public art. The law tends to apply the right to integrity restrictively, only when the alteration of the work damages the artist's honor or reputation. This makes it challenging for artists to assert their rights over alterations or removals of public artworks, which are often viewed merely as property. According to the book *Copyright Culture* (2017) by KCC, the current legal framework offers inadequate protection for public art copyright holders. There are no clear guidelines mandating obtaining the consent of the artist or consulting with the artist.

Solution 3: Legal Protections for Copyright, Ensuring the Right to Integrity

The current Korean copyright law fails to adequately cover the scope of infringements related to public art, necessitating improvements to better protect artists' rights. According to the report, *A Review of Copyright Disputes Surrounding Public Art in the U.S.* (2020), by Park Kyung-sin, a professor of Arts & Culture Management Department at Kyung Hee Cyber University, a balance must be struck between the right to integrity and the exercise of ownership. It is important to preserve duties over mere procedural compliance. The need for legal reform is not only crucial for copyright holders but also vital for the advancement of public art.

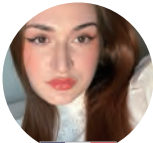
Since public art plays a significant role in shaping community cultural identity, protecting the rights of creators becomes even more essential. To achieve this, clear regulations regarding the right to integrity must be established, fostering an environment that motivates artists and respects the value of public art. Such legal improvements would ultimately contribute to the qualitative enhancement and sustainable development of public art, strengthening the trust between artists and local communities. Advocating for clearer legislation and guidelines can help safeguard the rights of artists while still allowing public institutions to manage and curate public spaces effectively. This would foster a collaborative environment where the interests of all parties involved are respected, and public art can thrive sustainably.

"Public art is not just a visual object, but a cultural activity that questions the world and seeks answers." Art critic Hong criticizes the current state of public art for not fulfilling its role and discusses the goals public art should pursue. Public art serves as an important medium that not only provides artistic appreciation but also embodies social communication, participation, and the stories of the community. Furthermore, when art permeates the lives of the public and enhances civic consciousness and social participation, public art gains greater meaning and value. Therefore, public art realizes its true significance when it fosters social dialogue among the public and offers opportunities for people to engage with society through public art. 📖

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Hate Speech: Would It Still Be Funny If It Were Your Story?



▲ Alice (France),
Division of International
Studies



▲ Nayli (Singapore),
Division of International
Studies



▲ Claral (Singapore),
Division of International
Studies



▲ Seongjin (South
Korea), Department of
English for International
Conferences and
Communication



▲ Mina (Türkiye),
Division of International
Studies

By Park Gyeong-jin

Associate Editor of Culture Section

Online videos and social media comments are full of words that mock certain people. While the humorous tone and witty phrasing may make some people chuckle, those who express their discomfort are labeled as “too serious.” The hundreds or thousands of “likes” prove that many people perceive them in a funny way. However, let us reconsider such comments. Are they not hurting people under the cover of humor? If the answer is “yes,” then surprisingly, such posts are hate speech.

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) established the International Day for Tolerance and emphasized that tolerance is respect and appreciation for the world’s rich cultures, forms of expression, and ways of being human. Despite this statement, hate speech is being used indiscriminately in direct opposition to basic human dignity. To celebrate the International Day for Tolerance on November 16, The Argus invites students from various nations to discuss the reality of hate speech around the world based on their experiences and to create a society where hate speech is no longer accepted as humor.

Before Reading

The United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech defines hate speech as “any kind of communication in speech, writing, or behavior, that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or a group on the basis of who they are, in other words, based on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, color, descent, gender or other identity factor.”



1 The Argus

“Over the past 75 years, hate speech has been a precursor to atrocity crimes, including genocide, from Rwanda to Bosnia to Cambodia.” António Guterres, Secretary-General of the UN, has highlighted the impact of hate speech, citing the serious consequences it has caused in the past. Hate speech, which has consistently existed throughout history, has evolved as it has been used by many people, leading the public to recognize its seriousness. Nevertheless, numerous instances of hate speech are still being generated and consumed. Are there groups that continue to be targets of hate speech in your country?



Alice I saw a video of a French woman wearing a hijab* being attacked by a man shouting, “Go back to Iran,” as he assaulted her. Hate speech against Muslims in France is a serious problem that has been growing for some time, and such incidents are becoming more common. Now even the media and politicians perpetuate this rhetoric, leading many to believe that anti-Muslim sentiments are acceptable and fair, which is absolutely misguided.



Nayli “LGBT people should be put in gas chambers and executed.” This is one of the most shocking comments I saw on the Internet. When Pink Dot SG, an LGBT support movement, held its event in 2016, many



©Secret Singapore

▲ According to Pink Dot SG, Pink Dot SG is a non-profit movement started by a group of individuals who care deeply about the place that LGBTQ Singaporeans call home.

Singaporeans reacted with violent opposition, resulting in numerous death threats and hateful online comments. Over time, more people have started to accept the community, but hatred toward LGBT individuals still exists in Singapore.



Seongjin People with disabilities have been subject to hate speech in Korea. For example, the term “Byeong-sin” disrespectfully refers to individuals with disabilities. People have stereotypes of “normal” people and regard physical barriers as abnormal. Also, in the Korean educational system, there has been a lack of understanding of people with disabilities. The media portrays them as abnormal, so the public does not perceive the act of hate speech toward this population as wrong.



Mina In *Türkiye*,

Kurds* are often labeled as terrorists or separatists, while Armenians are targeted with slurs rooted in historical tensions. Syrian refugees are blamed for economic issues, with phrases like “they are taking our jobs” or “they are ruining our culture” commonly used in public discourse. These sentiments stem from historical conflicts, nationalistic ideologies, and economic frustrations, creating an environment where discrimination thrives.



©Arab Center Washington DC

▲ According to Arab Center Washington DC, almost 200,000 Syrians have received Turkish citizenship, making it impossible to imagine a future for *Türkiye* that does not include the Syrian community.

*Hijab: According to Oxford Languages, hijab is a head covering worn in public by some Muslim women based on the Islamic religion.

*Kurds: According to the Cambridge Dictionary, Kurds are members of a group of Western Asian people who come from a region between the Mediterranean, the Black Sea, and the Caspian Sea. Kurds make up around 18 percent of *Türkiye*'s population.





2 The Argus


According to the study “Humorous Hate Speech on Social Media” (2023) by Kristin Schmid, a researcher at Ursula Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, humor has the ability to camouflage and inadvertently normalize hostile ideologies. As a result, humorous hate speech tends to be more acceptable to the public than explicitly expressed hate. Given the challenges in regulating such speech, it is crucial to raise awareness of the dangers and veiled perils of humorous hate speech, especially among young social media users. In your opinion, what forms of hate speech exhibit elements of hate that are not visible, leading to their serious implications being overlooked and treated lightly as jokes?




Alice I think in France it is problematic to group Asians together jokingly as if they share the same nationality or traits; for instance, when someone treats someone as if they are Chinese, and that person responds, “I am Japanese, not Chinese,” the other might reply, “It’s okay, it’s the same.” Due to its colonial history, the French have a complex psychology that leads to a tendency to view any term used to refer to non-white races as harmless and often as a joke.

 **Clara** One term I heard in my childhood was “Apunehneh,” which refers to Indians but contains a description of Indian migrant workers in Singapore. It was commonly used by parents as a warning to children, saying, “If you don’t hold your mom’s hand, the ‘Apunehneh’ will take you away.” This way of depicting them reinforces stereotypes, teaching children that “they are different.” As a result, the diverse ethnic groups in Singapore cannot assimilate, leading to underlying tension.

 **Nayli** The terms “Pondan,” “Bapok,” and “Agua” describe individuals who exhibit more masculine traits as females or more feminine traits as males in Singapore. Originally, these words did not carry negative meanings. However, their humorous usage within discussions of ridiculing those in the gay community has caused harm, especially among younger people.


 **Seongjin** In Korea, there is the term “Gupsik-chung,” which is an expression combining “Gupsik,” meaning school lunch, and “Chung,” which means bug or insect. It is used to belittle the immature behavior of elementary, middle, and high school students. The problem is that this expression is used in our society without any particular significance because it is aimed at the younger generation, implying that they have less power, leading to a lack of awareness about the issues it creates.

 **Mina** The term “Çingene” (Gypsy) is a derogatory label for the Roma community, often overlooked as hate speech. It suggests that they are dirty or untrustworthy, which is simply untrue. Although some people may use it without intending harm, it marginalizes this vulnerable group. These expressions are deeply embedded in everyday language, making it hard for people to recognize their offensiveness.



3 The Argus


Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO, has stated that tolerance and diversity are not just ethical imperatives, but practical, political, and legal necessities. As such, an attitude of tolerance that recognizes diversity should be encouraged and monitored at the national level. Could you share whether your country has systems in place to regulate or prevent hate speech, and if so, how well they are working?


 **Alice** French laws technically prohibit discrimination based on race, gender, religion, and other factors. For example, a well-known French politician attacked a French woman, stating that she should have a French name. He went to court over this issue, but it sparked a debate in our society about freedom of expression. People often try to justify their opinions as freedom of expression. Someone might say, “I hate all Muslims. They’re all terrorists. That’s just my opinion.” This allows people to hide behind the concept of freedom of expression. This represents a paradox within our system, making it often difficult to legally challenge such statements.




▲ According to World Population Review, 6.7 million Muslims live in France in 2024.

©The Guardian

 **Nayli** In Singapore, laws such as Section 298A of the Penal Code, which addresses promoting enmity between different groups on the grounds of race and committing acts prejudicial to the maintenance of harmony, are in place to regulate hate speech. The government is promoting a zero-tolerance stance toward hate speech.

 **Clara** To add to Nayli’s words, another aspect is the government’s intervention on social media platforms. While the government decrees that “hate speech is banned,” there is a lack of personnel to adequately review the innumerable comments and webpages. As a result, there are instances where the government does not intervene, and unfortunately, hate speech can even be used as a political tool.

 **Seongjin** The Korean government is running an organization named the National Human Rights Commission of Korea (NHRCK), and it has created several initiatives to combat hate speech. The NHRCK actively monitors hate speech incidents and gathers reports from the public. This leads to educational campaigns to raise awareness about the harms of hate speech and to provide legal advice



▲ NHRCK is a commission established in 2001 as a national advocacy institution for human rights protection.

©The Law Times

to the government on how to handle the hate speech issue.



Mina Turkish Penal Code Article 216 criminalizes incitement of hatred based on race or religion.

However, enforcement is inconsistent, and the legal definition of hate speech is often debated. There have been discussions about introducing more specific regulations, but talk is just among citizens and has never moved to the government. The politically polarizing concerns about limiting freedom of expression complicate this issue.



4 The Argus

Having discussed the various instances of hate speech and their realities around the world, what do you believe is the line between hate speech and humor?



Alice The biggest distinction lies in to whom it is addressed. Humor is very personal; I might share certain jokes with friends, but I would not make the same jokes to random strangers. In France, there is a famous magazine known for its satirical humor based on hate speech called *Charlie Hebdo*, which suffered a terrorist attack in 2015. However, the fundamental question was, “Who exactly enjoys this humor?” The problem of this magazine was that no one enjoyed their jokes. This incident sparked discussions about the line of hate speech and humor.



Nayli I believe it comes down to intention. Hate speech always carries an underlying animosity directed at someone. Humor does not necessarily require

us to consider the intention behind it. However, hate speech forces us to think about that intention, creating a very fine line between humor and hate speech.




Claral Willfulness creates a fine line for evaluating someone’s intent. For example, there is Kumar, a famous Singaporean comedian who wants to address social issues, and he does not shy away from talking about race. He is intentional about raising social issues that need to be addressed, and he does not use derogatory language in the process. He sets boundaries when describing people and their characteristics. This allows him to communicate about social issues to people in a humorous and non-hateful way.



Seongjin I believe the issue lies in the target. Hate speech typically targets individuals or groups with less political or economic power, such as disabled people, LGBT individuals, or those who are economically disadvantaged. In contrast, humor with satirical elements often targets entities that possess more power, such as the government, nations, or large corporations. This distinction in direction is important, as it reflects a different dynamic in how power and vulnerability are expressed in speech.



Mina In my opinion, the key factor is whether the humor perpetuates harm or challenges it. The boundary between hate speech and humor is often blurred. Humor is a popular form of social commentary, but it crosses the line when it targets vulnerable groups or incites hatred. Humor that critiques authority or societal norms can be constructive, but when it reinforces harmful stereotypes or dehumanizes people based on their identity, it becomes hate speech.

“Should I just say it and get reported?” This question implies that someone wants to say something hateful but does not do it because they know it is ethically and legally wrong. However, those who read the comments already know what is about to be said. The victim forced to witness everything is further tormented by the fact that all people share the same thoughts without needing to voice them. Today’s hate speech is being overused in a very subtle and more malicious way, harming human dignity, and many individuals participate in it by either showing support for demeaning expressions or dismissing them with laughter. But is the excuse of “just a joke” still valid when the arrows of those words are directed back at oneself? Can victims truly laugh in such a situation? In a time when people have to deal with so much hate speech, The Argus hopes the readers take a moment to engage in self-reflection and never forget that tolerance is a fundamental aspect of human decency. 



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The Inter-Korean and U.S. Relations: Looking Back to Move Forward

By Kim Si-yon

Staff Reporter of Social Section

On July 27, 1953, the Korean War, a conflict between South Korea and North Korea, came to a standstill with the signing of an armistice agreement. This armistice, however, did not mark the end of the war but rather a temporary cease-fire. As a result, the threat of renewed hostilities has persisted, leaving the Korean Peninsula as the world's last divided nations. Once a unified people, South and North Korea now maintain a precarious balance. South Korea's responses to North Korea's actions have been significantly influenced by the United States' policies toward the North. As the U.S. presidential election was held on November 5, 2024, The Argus aims to provide readers with a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics of the South Korea-North Korea-United States relationship.

Agreed Framework: A Stepping Stone to Korean Peninsula Denuclearization



▲ U.S. and North Korean representatives sign the Agreed Framework in 1994.

On October 21, 1994, the U.S. and North Korea reached an agreement in Geneva. Known as the Agreed Framework,

this accord served as a foundational agreement between the two nations to resolve the escalating North Korean nuclear crisis that had emerged in the early 1990s. Under the agreement, North Korea pledged to freeze its nuclear program. Additionally, this Agreement included a commitment to the gradual implementation of the “Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula,” agreed upon by the two Koreas on December 31, 1991. This Joint Declaration had sought to create a peaceful and unified environment on the Korean Peninsula through denuclearization. However, the two Koreas held fundamentally different views on the scope of inspections and procedures, leading to a breakdown in the implementation of the declaration. However, after the Agreed Framework, the Kim Young-sam administration took steps to ensure North Korea's compliance with the Joint Declaration, including reactivating the Nuclear Control Joint Commission, as well as promoting inter-Korean exchanges and summits.

©AP Photo



Background 42nd U.S. President Bill Clinton's "Engagement Policy"

North Korea's agreement with another country on nuclear weapons marked its first such accord since withdrawing from the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in March 1993. The influence of U.S. President Bill Clinton's engagement policy towards North Korea was significant in changing North Korea's stance. Previously, the U.S. had consistently employed a policy aiming to prevent North Korea from acquiring materials or funds for its nuclear development. The Clinton administration initially followed this tradition. In fact, when North Korea withdrew from the NPT in 1993, the Clinton administration viewed North Korea's decision as a declaration of war against the international community. Clinton even ordered an airstrike on North Korea's nuclear facilities.

However, when North Korea retaliated by claiming that "the South had declared war," the Clinton administration reconsidered its North Korea policy. The conflict with North Korea in 1993 demonstrated the limitations of coercive diplomacy, leading the Clinton administration to conclude that a combination of strong deterrence and diplomatic persuasion was the best approach to deter North Korea's nuclear development. Lim Eul Chul, an associate professor and director of the North Korean Research Center at Kyungnam University's Institute for Far Eastern Studies, stated, "North Korea has consistently responded with corresponding attitudes to the easing or strengthening of U.S. hostility toward North Korea." Professor Lim argued that the Clinton administration, considering this aspect of North Korea, "pursued a comprehensive package deal that would resolve all the U.S.'s security concerns about North Korea, premised on guaranteeing North Korea's regime security and economic security, rather than bold, proactive measures or approaches." Instead of imposing sanctions on North Korea, the loose reciprocity approach in the 1994 Agreed Framework enabled the U.S. to secure North Korea's agreement.



North Korea's 2006 Nuclear Test: Deepening the Nuclear Shadow

The North Korean nuclear test of October 9, 2006, marked a significant setback for inter-Korean relations, which had seemed to be improving under the Agreed Framework. On that day, North Korea's official news agency, the Korean Central

News Agency (KCNA), claimed to have successfully conducted an underground nuclear test at the Punggye Village nuclear test site, approximately 385 kilometers northeast of Pyongyang, North Korea's capital. Following North Korea's nuclear test declaration, the South Korean government immediately asserted that it would not tolerate North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons. Korea's then President Roh Moo-hyun, who had pursued a policy of engagement with North Korea during his tenure, even considered the possibility of independent nuclear arming or military action against North Korea to protect the country from nuclear attacks.

©History Channel



Background 43rd U.S. President George W. Bush's "Pressure Policy"

The Bush administration's hostile policy towards North Korea was one of the primary reasons for the renewed tensions on the Korean Peninsula. After assuming office in the 2000 election, President George W. Bush adopted a policy of "Anything but Clinton," completely overhauling all policies implemented by the previous administration. In his first State of the Union address on January 29, 2001, Bush explicitly designated North Korea and several other countries as an "axis of evil," vowing to prevent them from posing a threat. While strengthening ties with democratic allies, the Bush administration pursued a policy of engaging with potential adversaries on equal terms, but resorting to military force if negotiations failed. The Agreed Framework of 1994 collapsed in 2002 due to the Bush administration's suspicions regarding North Korea's uranium enrichment program.

On October 3, 2002, the Bush administration sent James Kelly, then the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, to Pyongyang. Citing a report by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Kelly accused North Korea of conducting nuclear weapon development. When North Korea's deputy director, Kang Sok-ju, responded that North Korea had the right to possess highly enriched uranium, the U.S. interpreted this as an admission of nuclear weapons possession. The Bush administration then intensified its pressure on North Korea. In October 2004, Bush signed the North Korea Human Rights Act, which authorized the appointment of a special envoy for North Korean human rights, further isolating the North. In September 2005, the U.S. Treasury Department froze North Korean assets at Banco Delta Asia in Macau, accusing the bank of counterfeiting U.S. currency and laundering

money from drug trafficking. Ultimately, North Korea's first nuclear test in 2006 was seen as a direct challenge to the Bush administration's aggressive policies.

Escalating Tensions: The Cheonan and Yeonpyeong Incidents



▲ YTN reports on the damaged Cheonan, struck by a North Korean torpedo.

On March 26, 2010, the Cheonan corvette, a South Korean corvette on a coastal patrol mission, was struck and sunk by a torpedo fired from a North Korean submarine. Of the 104 crew members, 58 were rescued, but 46 lost their lives. However, before the full investigation was complete, on November 23, 2010, North Korea launched an unprovoked artillery barrage on South Korea's Yeonpyeong Island. This attack marked the first time since the Korean War that a civilian populated area had been shelled. On the day of the attack, the Korean Marine Corps had been conducting a pre-scheduled live-fire drill. North Korea perceived this as a provocation and responded with a surprise barrage of artillery shells, with about half landing in the sea and the rest striking civilian areas on Yeonpyeong Island. It resulted in the destruction of military barrack and the evacuation of over 1,700 residents.

Background 44th U.S. President Barack Obama's "Strategic Patience"

"We will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist." In his 2009 inaugural address, former President Barack Obama expressed a willingness to engage in dialogue, even with hostile nations. At the time, the U.S. had adversarial relations with North Korea, Iran, and Cuba. Among the three, only North Korea rejected the U.S.'s offer for dialogue, responding instead with continued provocations. In April of that year, shortly after the Obama administration took



©The New Yorker

office, North Korea launched a Taepodong-2 long-range missile and conducted its second nuclear test in May, provoking the U.S. further.

The Obama administration's policy of "strategic patience" was based on the idea that, unless North Korea changed its behavior, the U.S. would not extend a hand. The core of the strategy was not a proactive willingness to negotiate or a patient engagement but rather the assumption that the U.S. could afford to wait for North Korea to denuclearize. Kim Joon-hyung, a professor at Handong Global University, noted in his study, *U.S. North Korea Policy under Obama: Neglect and Utilization* (2014), that after eight years of the Bush administration, North Korea-U.S. relations had deteriorated to a post-Cold War low. While Obama's pre-inaugural call for direct talks had raised expectations, those hopes quickly turned to concerns after he took office. Restoring relations with North Korea was not a priority for the Obama administration, and it waited for North Korea to show a willingness to negotiate instead of taking an active role. North Korea, hoping to escape the economic and military pressure and international isolation imposed by the Bush administration, was instead met with a continuation of similar policies under Obama, which gradually shifted to strategic patience. Unable to tolerate this shift, North Korea provoked South Korea.

The Panmunjom Summit: A New Era of Trust on the Korean Peninsula



©KBS News

▲ U.S. President Donald Trump (L), North Korean Chairman Kim Jong-un (C), and South Korean President Moon Jae-in (R) meet together for the first time at Panmunjom.

On June 30, 2019, marking 65 years since the armistice, President Donald Trump and Chairman Kim Jong-un met at the southern side of the Joint Security Area (JSA). South Korea's then President Moon Jae-in accompanied Trump

on his visit, making it the first time the leaders of South Korea, North Korea, and the U.S. had met together since the armistice agreement. Archives on July 1, 2019. According to a Hankyoreh report on June 30, 2019, Kim called for moving beyond the past and toward the future. The same day, BBC reported that Trump described his visit to the JSA as a great moment and a tremendous step forward. Furthermore, with former President Moon confirming that he and Trump shared the same goal regarding denuclearization, the summit raised hopes for stabilized relations among the three countries.

©Getty Images



Background 45th U.S. President Donald Trump's "Maximum Pressure and Engagement"

Shortly after taking office, former President Trump labeled North Korea as a rogue state. Lee In-ho, director of Research Institute for New Korea noted that, "The Trump administration prioritized the North Korean nuclear issue in its diplomatic agenda and adopted a North Korea policy of Maximum Pressure and Engagement." The Trump administration's strategy aimed to bring North Korea to the negotiating table for denuclearization without preconditions by exerting all-encompassing pressure. Director Lee explained that, "In 2017, the Trump administration responded to North Korea's missile and nuclear tests by ramping up coercive measures, utilizing economic, diplomatic, and military tools for sanctions and pressure." Economically, the Trump administration imposed UN Security Council sanctions as well as bilateral sanctions on North Korea. Militarily, it conducted joint South Korea-U.S. military exercises and deployed THAAD, designed to stop ballistic missiles. It also urged the international community to sever diplomatic and trade ties with North Korea. In response, North Korea conducted its largest nuclear test on September 3, 2017.

Despite the escalation of hostilities throughout 2017, dialogue between the two countries began in 2018. The Trump administration's North Korea policy transitioned to one of engagement, aided by South Korea's mediation efforts. In Kim's 2018 New Year's address, he mentioned inter-Korean talks. This was a significant policy shift, as North Korea had never voluntarily initiated or participated in dialogue before. The South Korean government responded by proposing high-level talks, which North Korea quickly accepted. After being informed of Kim's willingness to denuclearize, South Korea

relayed four key messages to the U.S.: Chairman Kim's willingness to denuclearize, a suspension of nuclear and missile tests, no objection to continued South Korea-U.S. joint military drills, and a desire for a North Korea-U.S. summit. Trump immediately made the start of a shift from the pressure policy to a more active engagement policy aimed at denuclearization. The inter-Korean-U.S. summit at Panmunjom was one of the results influenced by this change in Trump administration policy.



Sirens Set Off Anxiety Across South Korea

A text message from the Ministry of the Interior and Safety sent early on May 31, 2023, warning of an alert in the Seoul area at 6:32 a.m., plunged South Koreans into unexpected anxiety. This came after North Korea launched a reconnaissance satellite aboard a space launch vehicle, the Chollima-1, towards the south.



▲ North Korea's state media, KCNA, releases footage of the launch of its first military reconnaissance satellite, Chollima-1.

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North Korea unveiled the Chollima-1 in April 2023, and had aimed to use it to secure long-range strike capabilities against U.S. aircraft carriers and amphibious assault ships capable of conducting landing operations through the deployment and operation of aircraft. North Korea was already under UN Security Council sanctions on all weapons, including nuclear weapons and missiles, due to its continued provocations against South Korea. However, the launch of the Chollima-1 was a violation of these sanctions. In response, the South Korean presidential office strongly condemned North Korea's actions as a clear violation of UN Security Council resolutions and a grave provocation.

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Background 46th U.S. President Joe Biden's "Calibrated and Practical Approach"

In his first 2020 campaign rally before 6,000 citizens in Philadelphia, President

Cover Story

Joe Biden criticized the Trump administration's North Korea policy, saying, "Are we a nation that embraces dictators and tyrants like Kim Jong-un?" Throughout his presidency, Biden emphasized multilateral diplomacy and cooperation with allies. The unresolved North Korean nuclear issue was a key reason for Biden's approach. Yoon Duk-min, a distinguished professor at HUFS, explained in his 2021 paper, "Evaluating Biden's North Korea Policy," that no North Korean nuclear weapons or missiles were reduced, and the definition of denuclearization was not even agreed upon during the Trump administration.

In response, the Biden administration conducted a policy review on how to address the North Korean nuclear issue. Following the review, the administration adopted a "calibrated, practical approach," showing its commitment to advancing relations with North Korea through ongoing consultations with allies. While Biden's administration maintained the goal of North Korea's denuclearization, it focused on managing the situation through strengthened trilateral cooperation across the U.S., South Korea, and Japan. Biden recognized South Korea as a key player in North Korean policy, supporting inter-Korean dialogue and cooperation during South Korea-U.S. summits. He also aimed to pressure Pyongyang with China's cooperation. The focus of his policy was on preventing nuclear proliferation by working closely with allies and partners. Director Lee noted, "During Biden's term, there was no substantial contact or dialogue between the U.S. and North Korea." The launch of North Korea's Chollima-1 missile was a clear threat aimed at the Biden administration, which had maintained a hostile stance toward North Korea from the start.



Prospects

The Voice of Korea on August 23, 2024, reported that, should Vice President Harris be elected, she is expected to continue




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▲ Kamala Harris (L) and Donald Trump (R) each outline the policy platform of their political parties.

Biden's current North Korea policy, focusing on strengthening extended deterrence against North Korea through bilateral and trilateral cooperation with South Korea and Japan. Director Lee commented, "Unless North Korea changes its stance first, it seems unlikely that Harris will actively pursue a solution to the nuclear issue." Meanwhile, former President Trump criticized Biden's North Korea policy and emphasized his personal relationship with North Korean Chairman Kim Jong-un. Director Lee predicted, "If Trump is elected, it is likely he will resume negotiations with North Korea."

The U.S. Republican Party's engagement policy toward North Korea may promote inter-Korean dialogue and exchanges, but a step-by-step approach will be needed on denuclearization. On the other hand, the Democratic Party's hardline policy may try to bring North Korea to the negotiating table through pressure, but excessive sanctions risk provoking North Korean aggression. What national strategy should South Korea pursue? According to Director Lee, "The South Korean government must maintain a strong South Korea-U.S. alliance while developing wise and strategic responses that allow South Korea to lead on Korean Peninsula issues." A strategy is needed to solidify South Korea's position in South Korea-North Korea-U.S. relations after assessing the overall direction of U.S.'s North Korea policy revealed by the 2024 U.S. election.

The U.S.'s North Korea policy has significantly influenced the dynamics of tension and cooperation between South and North Korea. The key to improving inter-Korean relations lies in South Korea firmly establishing itself as a central player in the U.S.'s North Korea policy. While South Korea should flexibly respond to changes in the U.S.'s North Korea policy, it must also prepare an independent strategy to maintain its own security and peace on the Korean Peninsula. Now is the time for South Korea to maintain international cooperation to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue while simultaneously building substantive trust between the two Koreas. 

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The Hidden Risks Behind Convenience: A Guide to Preventing Personal Information Breaches

By Lee Seun

Associate Editor of Theory & Critique Section

“Would you like to save the ID and password?” This message frequently appears when logging into websites. Once agreed, entering them again would not be necessary. Now, try purchasing an item from a shopping site. With just a few clicks, saved card information will be automatically entered. Such everyday conveniences are made possible because individuals have provided their personal information and consented to its use. However, as people grow accustomed to this convenience, awareness of the need to protect personal information diminishes. If personal information is leaked, it can cause significant harm to individuals and have further societal repercussions. Therefore, it is crucial to take preventive measures to protect personal information. In November 2024, the Artificial Intelligence Safety Institute will be established in South Korea (hereafter Korea). This institute has promised to address personal information protection issues related to artificial intelligence training data, highlighting the growing societal importance of personal information protection. In light of this, The Argus aims to raise awareness about the importance of safeguarding personal information by recommending behaviors to avoid, explaining the reasons for these behaviors, and introducing information protection technologies.

Before Reading

Personal Information

Article 2 of the Personal Information Protection Act states that personal information refers to any of the following information relating to a living individual: (a) Information that identifies a particular individual by his or her full name, resident registration number, pictures, etc.; (b) Information which, even if it by itself does not uniquely identify an individual, may be easily combined with other information to uniquely identify an individual; (c) Information under items (a) or (b) above that is pseudonymized* and thereby becomes incapable of uniquely identifying an individual without the use or combination of information for restoration to the original state.

*Pseudonymization: A procedure to process personal information so that the information cannot uniquely identify an individual without additional information, by erasing in part, or replacing in whole or in part, such information

01 Avoid Using Public Wi-Fi

1) Evil Twin Attack

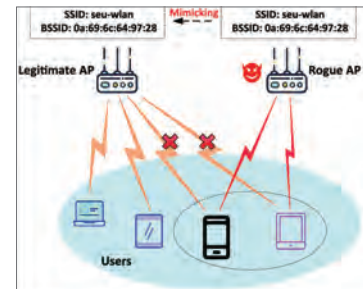
In Korea, public Wi-Fi is so well-established that mobile data is hardly needed outside. However, carelessly connecting to a public Wi-Fi could lead to being the target of an “evil twin attack.” This attack involves disconnecting a user from a legitimate Access Point (AP)* and tricking them into connecting to a rogue AP instead. Imagine a scenario: a visit to a cafe, ordering a coffee, and sitting down, connecting to the cafe’s public Wi-Fi. Suddenly, the Wi-Fi signal weakens, and the device owned automatically connects to another available Wi-Fi with a stronger signal. With the smooth connection, browsing websites, working on documents, and even transferring funds became possible without any issues. Later, unintended document deletions and unauthorized transfers are discovered. This is a typical scenario of falling victim to an evil twin attack.



▲ Connecting to public Wi-Fi is convenient, but it carries risks of malicious attacks.

How did it happen? In the Wi-Fi settings on a device, the names of available Wi-Fis can be seen. These names are called Service Set Identifiers (SSID), which are unique names assigned to wireless networks during setup. The SSID can be seen due to beacon frames, which are periodically broadcast by Wi-Fi APs to announce the Wi-Fi’s presence and allow devices to connect to it. Through broadcasting, the Wi-Fi AP makes its presence known to nearby devices, which helps people easily discover nearby Wi-Fi APs. Then, people try to connect to the visible AP through the SSID that appears on the device and connect through the authentication process. However, this is where the problem arises. Hackers exploit the fact that beacon frames are transmitted as unencrypted, easily readable plain text. They can extract details such as the SSID, Basic SSID (BSSID), Extended SSID (ESSID), and channel number from legitimate AP beacon frames. With this information, hackers create a rogue AP that mimics the legitimate one by setting the same BSSID and ESSID, and operating on the same channel number as the legitimate AP. Afterward, the hacker launches a deauthentication attack on the target device, forcing it to disconnect from the legitimate AP. When the device tries to reconnect, it is tricked into connecting to the rogue AP, which

typically has a stronger signal. This attack works because devices cannot distinguish between legitimate and fake connections, and the hacker’s rogue AP is physically closer to the victim’s device, offering a stronger signal than the real AP. In essence, the hacker uses smartphones, laptops, or tablets to get closer to the target and create a stronger connection than the legitimate AP, enticing users to connect to the rogue network. Once an evil twin attack is successful and the user connects to the rogue AP, all the data shared over the network passes through the hacker-controlled server. This allows the hacker to monitor all of the victim’s online activities, from browsing social media to accessing bank accounts. The real danger of an evil twin attack lies in the fact that the hackers can steal all the personal information stored on the victim’s device. Worse still, evil twin attacks often leave no trace, meaning most people will not even realize they have been hacked until they start experiencing the real consequences, such as unauthorized transactions or identity theft.



▲ Hackers exploit SSID information from public Wi-Fi to set up rogue APs.

*Access Point (AP): A device that connects wireless devices, such as laptops or smartphones, to a wired network, acting as an intermediary for wireless internet access

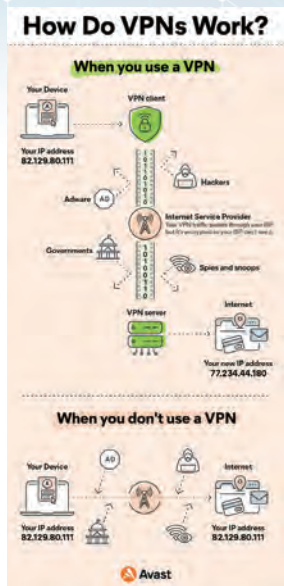
2) Virtual Private Network

Should public Wi-Fi never be used? While it is true that using a personal hotspot with a password is the best way to prevent hacking, there are situations where using public Wi-Fi is inevitable, such as when you run out of mobile data. Sometimes, the device may even connect to public Wi-Fi networks without you realizing it. In such cases, it is crucial to take preventive measures to avoid becoming a victim of an evil twin attack. To protect data on public Wi-Fi, a virtual private network (VPN) can be used. A VPN creates a private network over the internet, allowing secure and anonymous data transmission even when connected to public Wi-Fi. Essentially, when browsing the web through a VPN, the user’s connection is first routed through a remote VPN server before reaching the intended website. Likewise, any data sent from the website to you goes through the VPN server before reaching the user’s device. This process offers several layers of protection for

personal information. First is encryption. A VPN encrypts the data exchanged between the devices and the visited websites, preventing hackers from interpreting the information transmitted over public Wi-Fis. This ensures that sensitive personal information remains hidden and cannot be misused. Second is anonymity. The internet consists of numerous interconnected computer networks, routers, and endpoints that facilitate the exchange of information. A crucial part of this system is the IP address, a unique identifier assigned to each device on the network,

which allows websites to trace activity back to the user's location. VPNs hide the real Internet Protocol (IP) address, making it difficult for websites and hackers to track online activities, helping maintain anonymity. In other words, the websites you visit will not have direct access to your real IP address. The final way is security. In addition to encryption, VPNs protect internet connection from unauthorized access. If any suspicious activity is detected, VPNs often feature a kill switch, which can terminate selected programs or your connection entirely to prevent data leakage. Using a VPN can greatly reduce the risks of connecting to public Wi-Fis while protecting privacy and securing personal information. A researcher from the Korea Internet & Security Agency (KISA) explained, "VPNs encrypt users' internet traffic, pass data through VPN servers, and check for tampering with the packets. Using a reliable VPN or end-to-end encrypted communication can help prevent attacks." This highlights how VPNs safeguard personal information.

There are two methods to effectively use VPNs in real-life. The first method is using a VPN service provider. Users can choose a VPN service accessible through browsers or by downloading an app or software onto a device. VPN services typically charge a subscription fee based on the number of devices, and each device must be configured individually. The second method is to use a VPN router. This involves purchasing a router with a pre-installed VPN connection or



▲ VPNs enhance security on public Wi-Fi by encrypting data between the user and websites.

manually installing VPN software on a home router. The advantage of this approach is that every device accessing the internet through the router is automatically protected. By implementing these methods, it is possible to prevent personal data leaks, ensuring information remains secure while using public Wi-Fi.

02 Avoid Using the Same Password Across Multiple Accounts

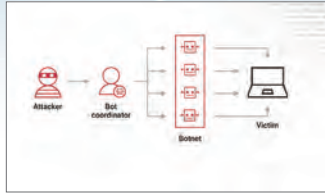
1) Brute-Force Attack

In today's digital society, people regularly face situations requiring the use of passwords in their daily lives. Email, school accounts, websites—many places require passwords to protect personal information. However, since it is nearly impossible to remember all these passwords, people often set the same password across multiple sites. Despite having set a password, this practice can make users a target for hacking, particularly through a method known as "brute-force attack." A brute-force attack is a hacking technique where the hacker tries every possible combination to crack a specific password. The attack relies on the fact that, given enough time, the hacker will eventually discover the password. While this method may seem rudimentary, it is still widely used by cybercriminals in the field of cyber threats and remains a highly profitable form of attack. During brute-force attacks, hackers try various combinations of usernames and passwords to gain access to user accounts or Information Technology (IT) environments. However, just because brute-force attacks are effective does not mean hackers manually try every single password. Today, almost all brute-force attacks are carried out by bots, which are programs capable of repeating certain tasks automatically without human intervention. These bots are programs that hackers can control once they infect a system. When a hacker spreads malicious software to someone else's system, that PC becomes infected and is turned into a bot, also known as a zombie device, which connects to the hacker's computer. From there, the hacker can remotely control the bot and use it to attack other vulnerable systems, directing it to perform various malicious activities.

Most brute-force password decryption attacks are carried out through botnets, short for "Robot Network," which can attempt hundreds of thousands of trial-and-error logins per hour, significantly increasing the success rate. A botnet is a network

Caduceus

made up of hundreds or thousands of computers infected with malware, and the infected computers can be controlled by a single attacker. A researcher from KISA explained, “Botnets are formed by connecting multiple infected devices to a network. The attacker can manipulate the botnet centrally, trying multiple password combinations and distributing the load across many devices, allowing the attack to be executed more quickly and on a larger scale. While smartphones and other electronic devices have lockout features that freeze the account after several failed password attempts, botnets can bypass these defenses by using methods such as changing IP addresses, distributing attacks across different accounts, dodging CAPTCHA,* and inserting time intervals between attack attempts.” This explains the principles behind brute-force attacks.



▲ Hackers use botnets to quickly attempt multiple password combinations to hijack accounts.

*CAPTCHA (Completely Automated Public Turing test to tell Computers and Humans Apart): A security measure designed to differentiate humans from bots, often used to prevent automated attacks like brute-force attempts

2) Two-Factor Authentication

Is remembering or recording a different password for every site to prevent various threats necessary? Just imagining it feels exhausting. A solution to ease this burden is to use two-factor authentication (2FA). 2FA is a security method that requires two different forms of identity verification before granting access to a system or service. By adding a second layer of protection, 2FA makes unauthorized access much more difficult for hackers. Previously, logging into a service required only one authentication method such as an email address or a username and password. This combination of encrypted personal information is used to verify the user's identity but still represents just one layer of authentication. 2FA helps reduce the risk of data breaches and protects against identity theft and other threats by utilizing unique identifiers related to a specific user. 2FA works by requiring two of the five potential types of authentication factors. The first is the knowledge factor, which includes information only the user knows, such as a password, personal identification number



▲ 2FA provides an additional layer of security to prevent unauthorized access.

(PIN), or answer to a security question. The second is the possession factor, which includes something only the user has, such as a security key, mobile device, or ID card. The third is the inherence factor, something unique to the user, typically involving biometric data like facial recognition, fingerprints, or iris scans. In addition to these three factors, there are also behavioral and location factors. Behavioral factors analyze digital artifacts related to the user's typical actions. For instance, 2FA may flag a login attempt from a new device as suspicious if it is not one of the user's trusted devices. Lastly, location factors consider geographical information, such as analyzing IP addresses or GPS locations during the authentication process. By using 2FA, it is possible to significantly enhance online security and protect oneself from unauthorized access, identity theft, and other digital threats.

How does 2FA work? The 2FA process consists of five steps. First, the user opens the application or website of the service or system they wish to access and is prompted to log in with their credentials. Next, the user enters their login credentials, which typically include a username and password. The application or website verifies this information and recognizes that the correct initial authentication details have been provided. Third, if the login credentials do not match, the application or website generates a security key for the user. This key is processed through an authentication tool, and the server validates the initial request. The user is then prompted to submit a second authentication factor. Finally, after the user enters the code into the application or website, they are approved, authenticated, and granted access to the system. 2FA can typically be set up in the security settings menu of the website.

03 Do Not Download Anything Without a Reliable Source

1) Ransomware

There are times when someone says they lost all the files on their computer. Just imagining it is terrifying. In such cases, ransomware infection is often the cause. Ransomware, which is a combination of the words “ransom” and “software,” is a type of malicious software that infects a computer system, encrypts the user's sensitive data, and demands a ransom to decrypt the data. It installs itself on the system without the user's consent, encrypts all the user's files, holding them

hostage, and demands payment in exchange for unlocking them. For example, imagine receiving an email with an attached file. Without thinking, the user clicks on the file, only to find that all the files on the computer are suddenly locked and inaccessible. While in shock, the hacker contacts the user, claiming that they will unlock all the files if the user pays them a large sum of money. However, even after making the payment, there is no guarantee the hackers will actually unlock the files. In the end, the user is forced to reset the entire computer, losing all the files. This is an all-too-common ransomware scenario.



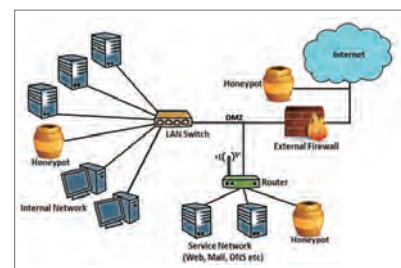
▲ Ransomware encrypts files, blocking user access and demanding payments to unlock them.

How do hackers hold documents on a personal computer hostage? First, they create a piece of malicious software that encrypts data. Then, they either send this malicious code via email or trick the victim into downloading it from a website. Once the malicious software is executed, the files on the desktop become encrypted, and their extensions change to something like “.crypt.” Ransomware operators use various techniques to encrypt their target’s data. First, disk coder ransomware encrypts the entire disk, preventing the user from accessing the operating system. Screen lockers block access to the device’s screen, while crypto ransomware encrypts the data stored on the victim’s disk. Finally, PIN lockers target Android devices by changing the access code, locking the user out of the device. Ransomware is a hacking technique based on encryption. Ransomware is a hacking method based on encryption, using both symmetric and public-key encryption methods. Symmetric encryption uses the same key for encryption and decryption. The ransomware encrypts the user’s files and asks the victim for a password. Once the victim pays the password, the ransomware uses that password to decrypt the data and return access to the user. It makes it fast but challenging for key distribution and management. In contrast, public-key encryption uses different keys for encryption and decryption, solving key distribution issues. The

hacker embeds their public-key in the ransomware to encrypt the symmetric key, which can only be decrypted using the hacker’s private key.

2) Honeypot

One of the main infection routes of ransomware is through downloading software from unreliable sources. Therefore, one of the most important precautions to avoid ransomware is to not download software from dubious sources. However, an individual’s caution alone is not sufficient to completely prevent ransomware attacks. Kug Kyoung-wan, Ryu Yeon-seung, Shin Sam-beom, professors of Security and Management Engineering at Myongji University, said in their paper “Implementation of Reliable Dynamic Honeypot File Creation System for Ransomware Attack Detection” (2023), that an analysis of the operating patterns of known ransomware reveals that once an attacker successfully infiltrates a system, the first thing they do is search for targets to encrypt in order to demand a ransom. If the attack target can be identified before the encryption process begins, preventive measures can be taken, effectively stopping the ransomware attack. To prevent ransomware, it is necessary to set up traps to ensure that hackers cannot steal personal information once they gain access. The technology used in this case is called a honeypot. A honeypot aims to trick hackers into revealing useful information by posing as a tempting target. It is a computer or computer system disguised as a plausible cyber-attack target. In the context of ransomware, honeypot technology typically works by placing bait files in specific paths where hacker intrusions are expected. As soon as the ransomware accesses these bait files and attempts to encrypt or modify them, the honeypot detects and blocks the ransomware.



▲ Honeypot technology detects attacks by using bait files to lure hackers.

As the risk of personal information leakage continues to grow, the personal data we unconsciously provide in our daily lives can lead to significant damage. To prevent this, various methods like using VPN, 2FA and honeypot should be actively employed. While privacy protection methods are evolving alongside technological advancements, the most critical aspect remains individual awareness and proactive defense. Striking a balance between convenience and security, and developing habits to protect oneself, are the first steps in responding to future information breaches. 🇰🇷

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Dreaming of a Roof over Your Head, Is It a Floating Cloud Castle?



By Cho Subin

Associate Editor of Theory & Critique Section

A survey conducted by Research & Research found that most people in their 20s and 30s in South Korea (hereafter Korea) have plans to own a home, but many anticipate it will take a long time to accomplish. In fact, 40.2 percent expect it to take 20 years or more, and 20.3 percent believe they may never be able to own a home. Since the Korean War,* Koreans have worked diligently to rebuild their country and their own homes. However, with the outrageous rise in housing prices, becoming a homeowner through hard work has become increasingly difficult. The large-scale jeonse fraud* scandal in Korea highlights the shift from housing as a necessity to real estate speculation. On November 11, 2024, an amendment of the Special Act on Support for Jeonse Fraud Victims and Housing Stabilization comes into effect. Why is it difficult to become a homeowner in Korea? The Argus will explore the meaning of homeownership in Korea through philosophical, economic, and sociological perspectives, drawing on three books.

*The Korean War: This refers to the war that broke out on June 25, 1950, started by North Korea. An armistice was signed on July 27, 1953, and the Korean Peninsula has been in an armistice ever since.

*Jeonse Fraud: Since 2022, some landlords in Korea pulled off a large-scale scam, cheating around 10,000 tenants out of their security deposits in jeonse, a type of rent contract in Korea.

[Before Reading]

1. *Place and Placelessness* (2005)

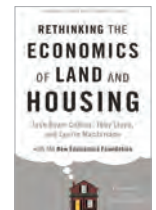
Edward Relph, a professor from the Department of Geography & Planning at the University of Toronto, introduced the concepts of “place” and “placelessness” in this book. Relph explores the significance that humans attach to places and the relationship between places and human identity.



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2. *Rethinking the Economics of Land and Housing* (2017)

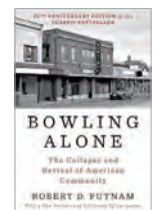
This book by Josh Ryan-Collins and Laurie Macfarlane, economists at University College London, and Toby Lloyd, a director of United Kingdom's housing charity Shelter, examines the history of land ownership. By examining United Kingdom's housing market, this book offers insights into the global housing affordability issue.



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3. *Bowling Alone* (2016)

Robert D. Putnam, a professor at Harvard Kennedy School, explores the decline of social capital and its consequences in U.S. society in this book. By examining the concept of social capital, Putnam offers insights into issues such as inequality and housing problems in contemporary society.



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What Does Your House Look Like?

1. The Meaning of Home

When asked to draw a house, most people envision a standalone structure with a roof, windows, and a door. In his study, “Establishing Interpretation System and Improving Validity of HTP (House-Tree-Person) Test” (2019), Baek Won Dae, a Ph.D from the Department of Counseling Psychology at Sahmyook University, found that most psychometricians interpret HTP test results based on the common features of houses drawn by participants, such as triangular roofs, doors, chimneys, and windows. However, the 2020 *Population and Housing Census* revealed a discrepancy: over 51.2 percent of Seoul residents live in apartments, which are buildings with five or more floors and multiple units that form a defined neighborhood. The symbolic nature of the HTP house drawing often reflects individuals’ self-perceptions and unconscious thoughts about homeownership, with the detached house frequently representing the ideal home.

What does home mean to people? The book *Place and Placelessness*, argues that people develop deep connections to places they experience, and this sense of belonging is essential for well-being. Humans form deep emotional attachments to places and seek to establish roots in various communities. It is equivalent to the desire for freedom, and a prerequisite for fulfilling these desires is to be rooted in a place. By being rooted in a place, people not only understand their position within a larger context but also develop a meaningful spiritual and psychological connection. This attachment, characterized by care and respect, forms the foundation of the relationship with the world. Citing Martin Heidegger, a German philosopher, the book argues that through such care and consideration, a place can truly become a “home” or a “dwelling.” A home, therefore, is not just a physical space but is the bedrock of identity, the place where people dwell, and a guiding force in people’s lives.

2. What Does Homeownership Mean to Koreans?

“...That place, how could it fade even from my dreams? / My heart, nurtured in the earth, yearns for the boundless blue...”

In the 1930s, when Korea was a Japanese colony, Korean poet Jeong Ji-yong wrote *Homesickness*. Many poems written by Korean poets during this period expressed longing for their lost homeland. Embedded in these poems is a yearning for home and family. The Japanese colonial rule not only deprived Korea of its sovereignty but also shattered the traditional Korean community, which was centered around agriculture and family. Many Koreans were forcibly displaced, separated from their families, or driven to extreme poverty, leading to a deep longing for their homes.

Even after liberation from colonial rule, economic hardship and the war made homeownership a significant aspiration for Koreans. According to the study “A Life History Analysis on the First Homeownership of Korean” (2010) by Park So-Im, Shin Soo-Young, and Yoon Chung-Sook from Yonsei University’s Department of Housing Environment, life events have been crucial factors in determining homeownership among those born in the 1950s and later. The study suggests that the economic conditions and social atmosphere of the 1950s significantly influenced both the meaning of owning a first home and the decision-making process. For those born in the 1950s, who experienced the aftermath of the Korean War and the subsequent economic development, owning a home was often motivated by the desire for a stable and secure life. In the highly competitive society that emphasized academic achievement, a longing for a stable life with marriage, a family with childbirth, homeownership, and emotional and financial security might have contributed to that desire.

The 1997 Asian financial crisis had a profound impact on the Korean economy, and the housing market was no exception. The previously steadily rising housing prices experienced fluctuations, with periods of both decline and growth following the crisis. The expansion of housing finance, especially long-term mortgages, shifted Koreans’ perspective on how to achieve their enduring goal of homeownership. Unlike previous generations, people increasingly relied on loans to finance their home purchases or rented a home until they could save for their desired home. In 2021, the most rapid increase ever in housing prices, recording an increase of 14.97 percent compared to the previous year, led to a phenomenon, the so-called “real estate blues.” The soaring cost of housing has made

it increasingly difficult for many Koreans to become homeowners. The fear of missing out on future price increases has fueled this desire, further widening the wealth gap between homeowners and non-homeowners.

Home: A Reflection of Your Net Worth

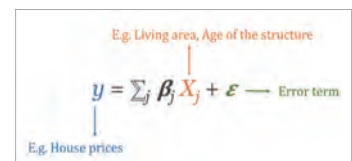
1. How Did Homes Become Assets?

As societies transitioned from agrarian to industrialized and capitalist systems, land, once primarily a means of production, evolved into a cornerstone of the housing market. Residential real estate began to hold more significance than land designated for other purposes. According to Statistics Korea, households headed by individuals aged 65 or older hold 81.3 percent of their total assets in real estate. Rising housing prices have made real estate a major asset and a popular investment, making gap investing a trendy strategy. Why has housing become so deeply intertwined with personal finance? The book *Rethinking the Economics of Land and Housing* explains this development using “land rent,” one of the factors of production alongside capital and labor in economics.

A unique characteristic of land in the market is its immobility. Unlike other factors of production such as capital and labor, the supply of land is relatively fixed in the short term. As demand for land increases, so does its price, inevitably leading to higher land rent. While the production of ordinary goods follows the law of diminishing marginal product — where the increase in output from an additional unit of input decreases as the amount of input increases — land and real estate are largely exempt from this law. Speculative demand can even lead to increasing marginal returns. When the total housing stock or total real estate assets increase due to new housing supply and demand for housing outpaces supply, the law of diminishing marginal product can be reversed, leading to increasing returns. Son Jong Chil, a professor of the Division of Economics at HUFs, explains, “Expectations of additional capital gains can lead to rapid price increases.” Indeed, the *Financial Stability Report* (2023) by the Bank of Korea (BOK) shows that residential real estate assets in Korea have grown to three times the size of the gross domestic product. Furthermore, the book by Ryan-Collins, Lloyd,

and Macfarlane argues that the limited supply of land characterizes it as “positional goods.” Positional goods are those valued for their conferred social status rather than their intrinsic worth. The book suggests that the positional nature of land increases demand for it as incomes rise more rapidly compared to other goods.

Given these land characteristics, how are housing prices determined in Korea? The value of land reflects the level of economic activity in a region. The development of new transportation infrastructure can significantly increase property values, reflecting both current economic activity and expectations for future growth. To analyze these factors, the hedonic price model is used. Sherwin Rosen, a labor economist at the University of Chicago, argued that housing choices are not solely based on the physical attributes of land and housing but also on locational characteristics, such as proximity to amenities and nuisances. Firstly, the hedonic price model establishes a function with housing prices as the dependent variable and various factors influencing them as independent variables. The model then estimates the expected price based on these variables and uses the analysis to estimate the demand curve for housing under various environmental conditions. A study by Professors Kim Woo sung and Hong Jengei with undergraduate students Lee Sion, Jang Hyunsoo, and Kim Jeawan at Handong University titled, “Analysis of Structural Change of Housing Preferences using Hedonic Price Model: Case Study of Apartment Transaction Data from 2006 to 2017 in Gangnam Area” (2019), found that factors like the complex’s location, parking spaces, construction year, total units, parking ratio, floor area ratio, and proximity to subway stations and schools significantly affect apartment prices in Korea. The hedonic price model also reveals changes in housing preferences over time. The study showed that while the effect of exclusive private areas on apartment prices decreased, the effect of the number of parking spaces increased. Additionally, the study found that expectations for redevelopment decreased from 2006 to 2013, but recovered after 2013.



$$y = \sum_j \beta_j X_j + \varepsilon$$

E.g. House prices

E.g. Living area, Age of the structure

Error term

▲ The hedonic price model estimates housing prices (y) by multiplying the price (β) of each independent variable (X) by its value and then aggregating the products.

2. The Detrimental Effects of Soaring Housing Prices on the Economy

Due to soaring housing costs in Seoul, some poor people are forced into living in roughly 6-square-meter rooms called “jjokbang” at low cost. Even middle-income households find it challenging to live in their desired homes due to the high cost of housing. While some have benefited from rising asset values, the surge in housing prices has wider implications for the national economy and financial markets. In the 2008 global financial crisis and Japan’s prolonged economic stagnation since the late 1980s, a housing bubble was formed as many took on excessive mortgages, expecting prices to keep rising. When prices fell, widespread defaults led to bank failures and a severe recession. The growing reliance on real estate credit has amplified the systemic risks tied to housing market fluctuations.

In Korea, housing prices are closely tied to household debt. While stock prices also fluctuate, rising housing prices are more concerning when they outpace economic fundamentals like income growth and population increase. Though housing prices can adjust to inflation, excessive increases driven by speculation can cause significant issues. Professor Son explains, “When housing prices rise due to speculative factors, purchasing a home with excessive debt beyond one’s income can become problematic,” noting the potential negative impact on the entire economy. Excessive housing price increases can have three negative consequences for the economy. First, this phenomenon can lead to excessive household debt, which can stifle consumption and slow economic growth. Secondly, rising house prices can over-allocate resources from productive sectors to relatively low-productivity and non-tradable goods industries such as real estate and construction, hindering overall economic growth. Lastly, skyrocketing house prices can fuel asset bubbles, which, when they collapse, can wreak havoc on the financial system.



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▲ The 2008 financial crisis serves as evidence that fluctuations in real estate prices play a significant role in the economy.

3 How Korea's Housing Market Reflects Societal Issues

1. Apartments as a Symbol of Status and Success in a Highly Competitive Society

If you walk through a city in Korea and see a group of high-rise buildings of similar shape clustered together in a certain area, it is likely an apartment complex. These urban landscapes of Korean cities have earned them the nickname “apartment forests,”



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▲ In Korea, residential areas frequently feature large-scale apartment complexes, which people commonly call an “apartment forest.”

but why have apartments become the predominant form of housing in Seoul? Valerie Gelezeau, a French geographer, argues in her book *Seoul, Giant City, Radiant Cities* (2007), that “a large number of people crammed into a small space” cannot fully explain Korea’s apartment concentration. Gelezeau notes that government policies have contributed to the perception of apartments as symbols of middle-class status and family life. In the aftermath of the Korean War in 1953, the government prioritized rebuilding Seoul and providing housing for displaced citizens. The government built various types of housing, including temporary housing for evacuees and refugee housing. Until the 1970s, apartments were considered substandard housing. However, when the government began constructing apartments with larger spaces, targeting the middle class, it changed public perception and rendered apartments as a symbol of upward mobility.

The book *Place and Placelessness* explains this process as the formation of place identity. Individuals, groups, or the public shape the identity of a place, which is then maintained. This identity is created through shared visual elements, activities, and media-derived images, resulting from a combination of direct observation and preconceptions. As more apartments were built targeting the upper class, living in an apartment became associated with a higher social status. This trend was particularly pronounced during Korea’s rapid economic growth period following the Third Five-Year Economic Development Plan in the 1970s. Korean apartment complexes typically consist of hundreds of units,

creating self-contained communities. These complexes often have their own amenities, such as gardens, playgrounds, badminton courts, and shopping centers, providing residents with a sense of community. The significance of these shared spaces increased the value people placed on their homes, leading many to go into debt to own property and aspire to live in even better apartments.


2. The Rise of Seoul Centric Society

Imagine a 101-square-meter unit apartment built in 1979 in Seoul. As of September 2024, the average real estate transaction price for this is approximately 2.56 billion won (US\$1.9 million). Despite its prime Seoul location and redevelopment potential, the exorbitant price is not justified by its deteriorating condition, including peeling handrails and rusty pipes. In contrast, a 2024-built apartment of the same size in the southern Gyeonggi Province, 40 kilometers south of Seoul, offering modern amenities, can be purchased for around 440 million won (US\$326,683.35). This stark contrast in housing costs is evident throughout the country. Housing is much cheaper outside Seoul, with some rural areas having too many empty houses. Why, then, do so many Koreans insist on living in Seoul? Korea's long-standing focus on developing Seoul has caused major regional imbalances, concentrating most industries, schools, and transport infrastructure in the capital.

Housing inequality has become a significant social issue. The rising cost of homes has created a divide between those who can afford them and those who cannot. This inequality is reflected in neighborhood differences and extends to within-building disparities between owners and renters. The book *Bowling Alone* links rising economic inequality to the decline of social capital. When individuals participate in social networks characterized by trust and cooperation, social capital is formed, resulting in shared gains. The book attributes the decline in community activities to the decline

in social capital, exemplified by the growing popularity of bowling. This erosion of social capital has contributed to crises in various areas of U.S. society, including politics, economics, and culture. Additionally, the decline in social capital, once evenly distributed across income levels, has strengthened class-based social networks. According to the book before the 1960s, there was a sense of shared responsibility for children, but polarization has fragmented communities in the U.S.

The 2023 Legatum Prosperity Index reveals a striking disparity in Korea, where low levels of trust, as indicated by its 107th ranking in the social capital category, contrast sharply with its overall position. Housing, a significant barrier to social mobility, reinforces class divisions with the intense competition for university admissions. Yi Young Jae, the Third Sector Institute Research Professor of Hanyang University, analyzes Korean society, saying "Increasing wealth inheritance, especially through housing, will significantly erode Korea's social capital." This could result in a society unable to fully utilize the combined strengths of government, markets, and civil society. Seoul's concentration is a mirror of income disparity and educational disparity. The BOK found that students from Seoul accounted for 32 percent of all students entering Seoul National University, which is Korea's top university. Detailed findings show that only about 8 percent of the entrance rates gap between Seoul and non-Seoul students is due to differences in student potential, while 92 percent is attributed to the advantages of living in Seoul. In a Financial Times interview on September 24, 2024, Rhee Chang Yong, the BOK governor, even proposed capping top universities' enrollment for students from one of Seoul's most expensive real estate districts, to address the overconcentration. While population density is a factor, it is important to consider the region's development prior to the population surge and resulting income inequality.

"Where do you live?" is a common and seemingly benign icebreaker, but the answer may reveal a lot about someone in Korean society. A specific neighborhood or apartment complex often implies social status. Homes are not just starting points but also indicators of one's life journey, as they often represent significant assets and shape social networks. Society should strive for a world where everyone has stable housing and can pursue their dreams in their own homes. 

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Meditation

By **Nam Gyeong-eun**
Editorial Consultant

“*Die Sonne scheint, der Himmel ist blau, und die Vögel singen*” (The sun is shining, the sky is blue, and the birds are singing). This is a typical sentence from a German lecture. Traveling around Europe, The Argus tried to capture the moment when the sun really shone and the sky was blue, and deliver the readers a harmonious song on earth, sung by animals, plants, architecture, and humans. Focusing not only on the beautiful part of the earth, a variety of moments of the world are captured to inspire the readers to reflect on themselves, to find out more about the relationships in this world and the connections between human beings.

All photos by Nam Gyeong-eun.



▲ St. James Park London, United Kingdom



▲ Monet's Garden with Waterlily, House of Monet, Giverny, France



▲ Venice, Italy



▲ Waterlily Series by Oscar-Claude Monet, in Orangerie Museum Paris, France.

Photo Essay



▲ Notting Hill London, United Kingdom



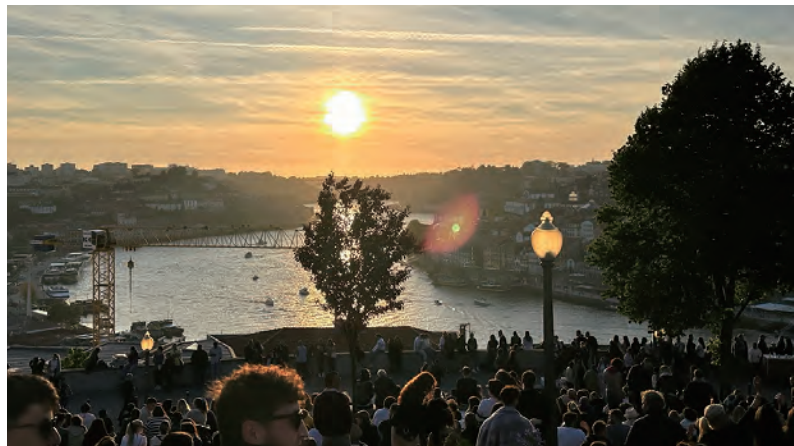
▲ Colosseum Rome, Italy



▲ Interlaken, Switzerland

All the photos in these two pages have the same optical conclusion, “meditation.” The word meditation was also an important inspiration for an artist called Claude Monet, considered by some as the father of impressionism, who painted more than 250 paintings of water lilies in the final 30 years of his life, in his own garden in Giverny, France. Imagining his almost maniacal obsession with water lilies, it is understandable that he spent most of his time observing them in different weather, with different sunlight, in different locations. That would unconsciously have led to the number of paintings he created. Inspired by this painter, in this modern world of “analyzation,” Instead, please focus only on the “impressions” of the atmosphere of the world, where all things can be seen differently time to time, in different eras, with different living things, and with different points of view. Through each of their own meditations, through these photos, we can stop on a short respite from our rapidly changing society, set aside our anxiety and unbalanced desire for “knowledge,” stop analyzing and putting effort into exploring every inch of the world, and just learn more to capture the moment, embracing the world as it is. This little meditation can lead people to be more contemplative and gain deep enlightenment, to the level of capturing more than 250 views of one thing, as Claude Monet sought to. 📷

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▲ Porto, Portugal



▲ Valencia, Spain



▲ Valencia, Spain

Voices of Influence

• Kim Yi-eun

I have always been a person who overthinks situations and worries about unnecessary things. However, the “so what,” “that could happen,” and “what is done is done” attitudes of my friends in high school helped me worry less and enjoy the present more. Even now, when I find myself overthinking something, I try to focus on the present and not let my emotions get in the way.

• Park Gyeong-jin

I participated in a program called HUFs Life Academy in 2022. It was a program that explored humanities, life, and career paths through the medium of books. During that time, I met many people who lived completely different lives from me, so I was able to learn about various ways of living without making any judgment and also how to solve problems when I encountered them.

• Lee Seeun

The friend I admire most is always seeking out diverse experiences while also studying diligently. In the past, I was limited to only extracurricular activities within the school, but she introduced me to a world I had never known. She broadened my perspective on the world and taught me to approach a wider array of activities with a positive attitude.

• Cho Subin

My first part-time job was a turning point for me. Working in a team of four, we learned to understand each other’s mistakes and successfully divide up tasks. Overcoming unexpected challenges together enabled me to become more mature and tolerant. The memories of our team struggling to find efficient ways to clean the whiteboard and distribute learning materials still remind me of a lasting passion.

• Kim Si-yon

Back in high school, college seemed like the only destination. I, like many others, blindly followed that path, postponing my own dreams. However, college

has been a transformative experience. What I once thought was a one-size-fits-all journey has turned out to be diverse. Surrounded by peers embarking on such varied journeys, I also have been inspired to think beyond the conventional.

• Park Se-eun

I tend to overthink things, which often causes me to take a long time to turn my thoughts into actions. However, during high school, I had opportunities to interact with friends who enjoy taking on challenges, which is the opposite of my tendency. Through these friends, I learned not to complicate my thoughts and put them into action. This helps me dispel negative thoughts about taking on challenges.

• Kim Su-yeon

Connecting with people from my college projects and recent travel buddies has shown me that it is okay to be different. Sharing struggles openly, I discovered that everyone has their own idiosyncrasies. This made me realize that the idea of “normal” is a myth. When I feel like I do not fit in, remembering their stories helps me feel less alone.

• Lee Jue-hyun

I did not know how to take care of others, but my friends I met in Germany showed me how to love and rely on the people around me. If I was once skeptical about human relationships, now I have become someone who truly values and cherishes the people who care about me. I am grateful to my friends for that.

• Nam Gyeong-eun

I am a person more comfortable being alone, but I have two sisters, and with us five, including our parents, it feels like nothing is impossible. I enjoy being alone in Germany, but I still miss our typical meal times when we never stopped eating. The tea boiling, laughs never ended, and there I learned to appreciate the vivacity, the bond, and the care of my family.

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