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# K-Book Trends

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



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## TREND

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## TOPIC

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## South Korea's online platforms where readers can meet genre literature

Written by Ryu Young-ho (Director of Kyobo Book Centre's content business division)

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Typically genre literature refers to genre fiction, which in turn is used to call novels with similar elements or narrative styles like books of science fiction, fantasy novels, detective thrillers and mysteries. As we entered the 2010s, the market for e-books and web novels which represent digital publishing content rapidly grew and genre fiction has been shaking up the conventional literature scene ever since. In South Korea, web novels centering on genre fiction appeared in earnest in January 2013 on Naver's web novel service.

What sets web novels apart from conventional novels is the fact that their formats can vary depending on the author's situation. Usually,

readers have to pay for each chapter in the novel, so authors base their stories on fun and suspense. Needing to keep readers hooked, events in web novels happen quickly in short amounts of time. Also, as increasingly more users read web novels on their smartphones, sentences have evolved, becoming easier to read on smaller screens and authors rely on vivid details to keep readers going. Writers also use more dialogue to narrate situations and characters.

Cheap and easily accessible, web novels are also representative of snack culture that's quickly read and consumed. Due to these market conditions, the South Korean web novel market has grown exponentially. According to the Korea Creative Content Agency, the South Korean web novel market value amounted to 400 billion won in 2018. This would mark a 150 percent growth in a year, as the market in 2017 was estimated to be around 270 billion won. When compared to where the market was in 2013 at 10 billion won, the market has grown 40 times its size over the past five years. The growth in the market has also led to the growth in jobs for web novelists. In 2018, there were 26 writers who made over 100 million won by working as an official web novelist for Naver. The writer who earned the most was estimated to have taken home 470 million won when taking into account profits from previews and manuscript fees.

Then what types of web novels are read most in South Korea? According to Naver Webtoon which runs the web novel platform, as of August 2019, 107 web novels were being serially posted, and 56 of them (52.3 percent) were romance novels whereas 29

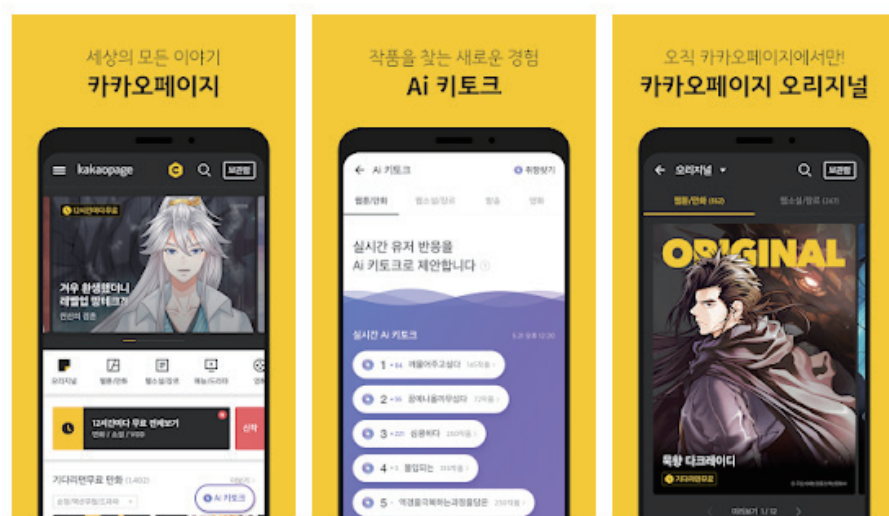
(27 percent) were romance fantasy novels. At Kakao Page, which shares the web novel market almost evenly with Naver, things were quite similar. Of the 3,628 novels being serially uploaded, 1,234 (34 percent) were fantasy novels while 1,019 (28 percent) were romance novels. This was largely attributed to web novel readers' preferences for light and fun reading material.

### **Introduction to main web novel platforms**

Web novel platforms for genre fiction usually refer to websites or mobile apps where web novels are posted chapter by chapter online. In the 1990s, web novels were usually posted on online boards for fantasy and science fiction. In the 2010s as the usage of smart devices proliferated, platforms and ways to use those platforms have all changed. Web novel platforms first appeared in the 2000s. Munpia and Joara which are still in operation today can be called first-generation web novel platforms. As the market for web novels grew, so did the number of web novel platforms, but readers are concentrated in popular platforms that are famous and have more writers and readers. Well-known web novel platforms in South Korea would include Kakao Page, Naver Web Novels, Munpia, Joara, Tocsoda, Ridibooks, Millie's Library, Mr. Blue, One Store, Bookpal, Snackbook, Romantique and Blice. Below are explanations of each business and related issues.

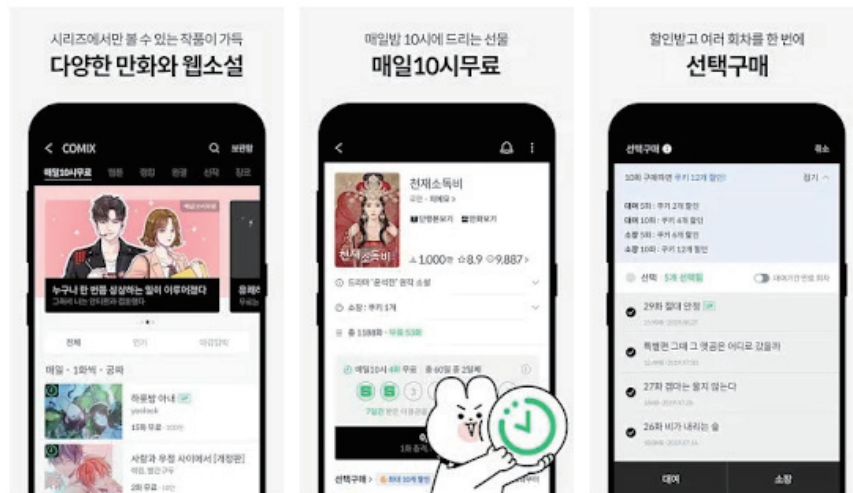
## Kakao Page (page.kakao.com)

This web literature service provides readers with webtoons, web novels, web dramas, dramas and movies. The number of registered users stood at 3.3 million in 2013 and jumped to 22 million in the first half of 2019. In the first six months of 2019, the number of hits on written work on Kakao Page measured around 44 billion. Kakao Page is a mobile app and service provided by Kakao. It is operated by Kakao Page Co Ltd. Kakao Page has utilized its 'wait until it's free' marketing strategy with much success. The number of written works published on Kakao Page including webtoons, comics, novels and bestsellers amounts to around 62,000. More than 3,500 of these have been provided to readers through the 'wait until it's free' marketing strategy. Kakao Page became a content business subsidiary of Kakao in December 2015. In 2016, it succeeded in turning an annual profit and has seen only success since. In 2018, the company recorded annual sales of 180 billion won and 220 billion won in users' transaction payments.



Kakao Page mobile app

## Naver Web Novels (novel.naver.com)



Naver Web Novel app

Naver Web Novels is a web novel service that has been operated by Naver Webtoon Co Ltd since May 2017. Centered around genres including romance, romance fantasy, fantasy and martial arts, the service offers different chapters of web novels written by professional writers every day of the week. It operates a 'promotion' system where writers and their work are divided between the Challenge League and the Best League. The Challenge League is a board for creative work where anyone who wishes to become a genre fiction writer can upload their writing. To become promoted to the Best League, writers must have previously uploaded their work on Challenge League and every month, new pieces of work are selected based on their popularity, consistency in serial uploading and other management standards. Challenge League work categories include romance, fantasy, martial arts, mystery, history and war and light novels. As Naver Webtoon saw the birth

of many new webtoon artists, Naver Web Novel is also working on energizing the genre fiction industry in South Korea and discovering new writers.

#### [Munpia \(www.munpia.com\)](http://www.munpia.com)

Munpia is another web novel website where novels are uploaded by chapter. Their slogan is, 'The utopia of web novels, the world of writing Munpia'. It began as a community website in 2002 and grew into a listed company offering pay-to-read services in 2013. As a website specializing in web novels, it mainly offers genre fiction like fantasy and martial arts novels. As of 2018, monthly page views on average reached over 100 million with website visitors amounting to around 400,000. Annual sales at Munpia were around 5 billion won in 2014. They soared to 19 billion won in 2016, and 27 billion won in 2017. In October, Munpia received equity investments worth 25 billion won from China's largest web novel platform, China Literature Limited (CLL) and South Korean gaming company NC Soft.

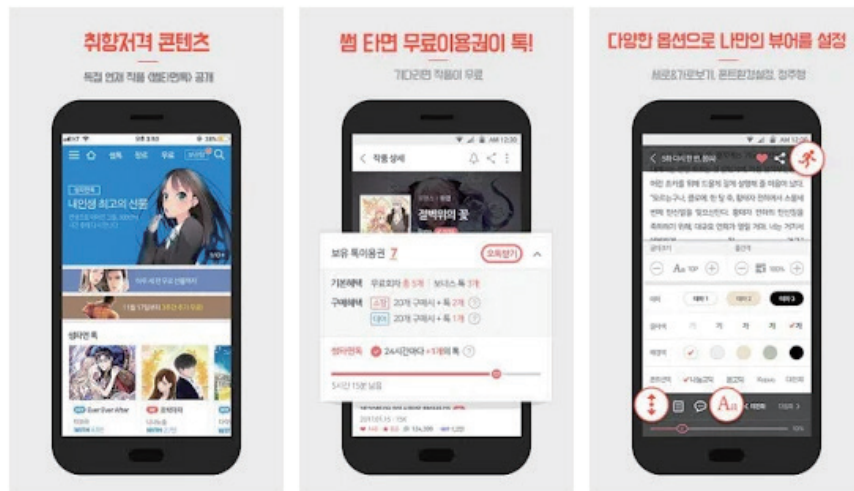
#### [Joara \(www.joara.com\)](http://www.joara.com)

What began as a web novel community in 2000 has now grown to become the country's biggest web novel platform with over 500,000 works of literature in its database. The website's paid subscription service called 'Noblesse' is currently serving as a gateway of sorts for writers to prove their ability in the web novel market. Joara

has 1.3 million members, 150,000 writers, 9.5 million daily views and 2,600 daily updates. Recently it has also been making efforts to enter markets outside South Korea. In 2019, the website carried out content export negotiations with countries including Thailand, Indonesia, Taiwan, China and Turkey to distribute its popular web novels globally.

#### [Tocsoda \(www.tocsoda.co.kr\)](http://www.tocsoda.co.kr)

Tocsoda is operated by one of the country's biggest bookstore chains, Kyobo Book Centre. The name is an abbreviation of 'all the piquant web novels are here' in Korean. Every month, the website selects five to ten freely submitted web novel series and awards the authors with 1 million won each as part of a policy called "Super Rookie Support". A web novel competition hosted by Tocsoda called "Show Me the Fandom" sought to set itself apart from conventional judging processes usually comprised of money prizes and an internal selection process carried out by professionals. All the novels submitted to the competition were offered to readers for free and readers in turn, freely offered their feedback. Prospective web novelists were cheered on by the fact that readers would be directly selecting the work to be awarded and also handing out the prize money. During the contest period, around 4,000 writers applied to become members of the website while over 3,500 novels were submitted. Tocsoda has said its goal is to create a good environment for writers to carry out their work while readers can comfortably read stories.



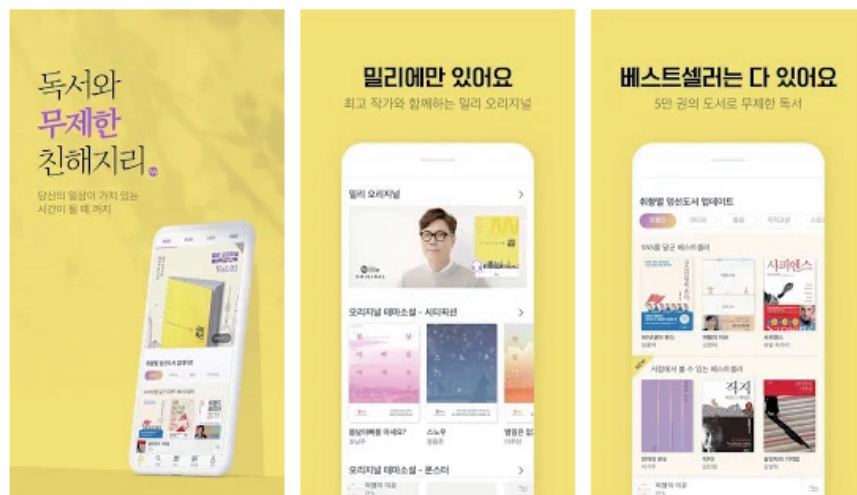
Tocsoda app

### Ridibooks (ridibooks.com)

Ridibooks began as an e-book store operated by Ridi Co Ltd in November 2009. The website sells regular books like bestsellers, comics and web novels involving romance, fantasy and martial arts. Users can purchase e-books and download them onto their smartphones, tablets or PCs. As of March 2019, Ridibooks offered more than 2 million books, and the number of accumulated downloads stood at over 500 million. As of May 2019, the number of members at Ridibooks was 3.7 million, while in 2018 alone, the website saw nearly 840,000 new members join its website. Ridibooks has the biggest market share in South Korea's e-book market. It has affiliated itself with roughly 2,550 publishers and has 2.13 million e-books offered in terms of content. The company has attracted a total of 33.5 billion won in investments so far.

### Millie's Library ([www.millie.co.kr](http://www.millie.co.kr))

Launched in July 2016, Millie's Library has the largest reading subscription service in South Korea. It has been acknowledged for its efforts in expanding the reading content market in the digital age by offering a wide variety of secondary content in addition to its some-40,000 e-books, like the world-first reading service via chatting called 'chatbook' and 30-minute audiobooks read by famous celebrities. Millie's Library also offers reading content called 'Millie Original' where the company plans and produces exclusive reading content. This has included ordinary novels, essays and children's books like 'Pink Fong Fairy Tales' to reach readers with a plethora of content.



Millie's Library app

### Book Cube ([www.bookcube.com](http://www.bookcube.com))

Book Cube began offering its services in 2008, and it is a digital content distributing platform with over 600,000 e-books, around

40,000 web novels and over 1,000 webtoons. In February 2019, it launched its own publishing brand called AURORA, with the goal of providing "romance just for you" and has been exclusively publishing work by new and experienced authors since.

### **BritG ([britg.kr](http://britg.kr))**

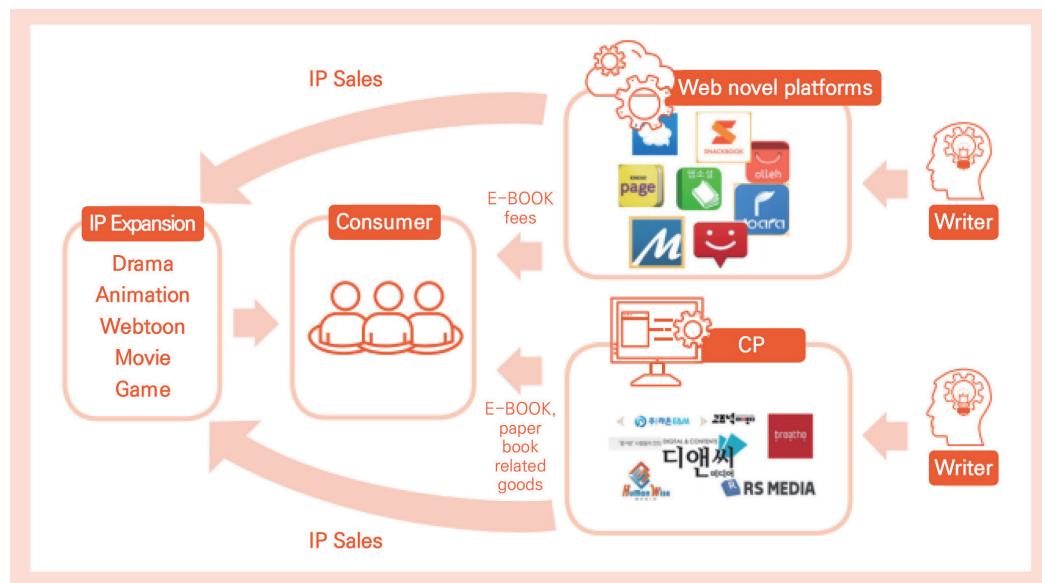
BritG is a web novel platform that encourages the participation of users created by publisher Golden Bough. It was opened in beta form in February 2017 before taking on its current form. If most online novel platforms largely handle full-length novels, BritG differentiated itself by specializing in short-to-mid length novels. It has also set itself apart from other similar services by operating many literary prizes, creating a review culture and actively taking part in the editing process. More than 7,000 pieces of work have been registered on the website, and of these, some-50 full-length and short novels are awaiting publication while some have already been published in paper form. After creating a unique reviewing structure through review contests and review requests, BritG has connected that to creative writing. Every month, it selects the best reviewer, and that person is given a book and gift certificate as a prize. Outstanding reviews are separately displayed, and writers can request one-on-one reviews from top reviewers or receive reviews en masse from users.

### Blice ([www.blice.co.kr](http://www.blice.co.kr))

South Korea's largest phone company KT opened Blice in July 2018 as a provider of web novels about romance, fantasy, martial arts and other topics. The website offers users with book recommendations based on big data, and it was the first to utilize blockchain technology to protect key information within the platform. The website operators have stressed Blice is a safe platform where writers and users can make transactions safely.

Growth in South Korea's web novel market is expected to continue. The number of talented writers with professional abilities in a number of genres is also expected to increase. The reader population of web novels is growing as the 'smart' media environment is becoming an everyday trend. Platforms that specialize in web novels are ramping up their investments to secure writers and readers, using that money to find differentiated content and marketing models. The content from web novels is increasingly being expanded and success stories multiplying, like *What's Wrong With Secretary Kim?* (Gaha) which was adapted into a popular TV drama series and *The Legendary Moonlight Sculptor* (Rok Media) which was made into a game sharing the same world from the web novel. More single sources of content are being adapted into multiple products as the 'one-source, multi-use' system becomes more commonplace. Recently, web novels are also being adapted into webtoons. The good thing about content that has been verified as a commercial product is that it can be offered easily to both

Korean readers and users outside South Korea. Now, South Korea's web novel market is busily moving to enter markets outside the country.



Flow chart of web novel content (Korea Creative Content Agency)

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**SPECIAL PROJECT**

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**South Korea's literary awards and competitions of 2019****Standards for selecting the country's best authors and literary works**Written by Choi Ha-Yeong

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South Korea's publishing industry has been making efforts to consistently discover new writers, fresh writing and excellent works of literature through literary awards and literary contests. Here is a look into the written work that received literary awards and/or were submitted to literary competitions in 2019.

**Gateway to bigger success for new authors: new author awards**

Every January, South Korea's biggest newspapers hold literary competitions. These spring competitions are generally acknowledged as gateways or springboards for new authors to bigger success. This type of literary competition held early in the year was made widely known by the *Dong-A Ilbo* in 1925, and this

year, 25 media companies nationwide held such competitions for writers. These contests are meant for new writers and authors who already have established careers in the industry can be barred from entering them. Awards are given to works including short novels, poems, commentaries, fairy tales, etc. In today's climate, South Korean writers need not be awarded in these competitions in order to enter the industry, but in South Korea, it is considered to be a great honor to receive one of the spring literary awards because, in addition to the plaque and prize money, the winning literary work is published in the award host newspapers.



*Novel Collection of Spring Literary Award Winners (2019) (Korea Association of Authors),  
Poetry Collection of Spring Literary Award Winners (2019) (Munhak Segyesa),  
Play Collection of Spring Literary Award Winners (2019) (Worin)*

In addition to newspapers, key literary magazines like *Munhakdongne*, *Literature and Society*, *The Quarterly Changbi* and *Hyundae Munhak* also hold contests for best new authors. These magazines look for the best novels, poems and commentaries and the award-winning pieces are published in the respective

magazines. The authors' work is assessed based on the literary magazines' individual characteristics, and the writers go on to have active careers after receiving the award and entering the field. Author Park Sang-young, writer of *Love Rules of Big Cities* (Changbi), received a new author award from *Munhakdongne* and launched his career. Yang Seon-hyung, who received a new author award from *Literature and Society*, published his first novel *Sentimental Novel* (Moonji Publishing) last year.



*Love Rules of Big Cities, Sentimental Novel*

## **Diverse Literary Awards Recognized by South Korean readers**

Prominent literature publishers of South Korea also hold meaningful contests. These contests are for all authors, whether they be new or experienced. These contests are at times, viewed as a means for seasoned authors to test their abilities. The Hyundai Munhak Award, Hankyoreh Literary Award and Today's Author

Award are the most well-recognized of these prizes. Authors who receive these awards are later published by these businesses, taking them one step closer to readers.

Established in 1955 to boost authors' motivation to write and promote the quality of literature in South Korea, publisher Hyundai Munhak's literary award now boasts a long history. Major recipients of this prestigious award include authors beloved by Korean readers like Kim Young-ha, Yi Mun-yol and Shin Kyung-sook. In 2019, Park Min-jung won the award for *Morg Diorama*.

Hankyoreh Publishing has been handing out its literary award since 1996 for the future and development of South Korean literature. Novels like Park Min-kyu's *Sammi Superstars' Last Fan Club*, Chang Kang-myung's *Bleach* and Choi Ji-wol's *Times of Loss* have been given this award, and most recently, Park Seo-ryun's *Chegongnyeo Gangjuryong* was awarded this prize.

Today's Author Award from Minumsa was first created in 1977, and from 2015, the judges decided to give the award to a published work of literature, rather than receive newly written manuscripts that had yet to be published. Since then, the judges have been selecting the best literary work from each year. In 2016, Chang Kang-myung's *Comment Troops* (Eunhaengnamu) won the prize while in 2017, Cho Nam-joo's *Ji-young Kim, Born in '82* (Minumsa) was given the honor. In 2018, Bae Soo-ah's *The Snake and Water* (Munhakdongne) received the award.



*Morg Diorama* (Novel awarded the 64th Hyundai Munhak Award in 2019),  
*Chegongnyeo Gangjuryong*, *The Snake and Water*

Many prestigious literary awards in South Korea are named after writers who played significant roles in shaping the country's contemporary literature. Prizes like the Shin Dong-yup Literary Award, Kim Su-young Literary Award, So-wol Poetry Literary Award, Yi Sang Literary Award and the Kim Dal-jin Literary Award were all created in recognition of each author's spirit and their achievements. These awards have received positive praise from readers and each year, and readers keep close tabs on them for the next prizewinners.

Of these, the Shin Dong-yup Literary Award was established in 1982 in light of the literary spirit that Shin, a poet, had and to support talented writers. Only Korean literary work published within the past two years by an author with less than 10 years of professional experience is allowed to enter the competition and in 2019, novelist Kim Se-hee's *The Still Days* (Minumsa) won the top prize.

The Kim Su-young Literary Award was created by Minumsa in 1981 out of respect for Korean contemporary poet Kim Su-young, and when it was first created, the prize was given only to works of poetry that had been published. However, from 2006, the gates to the award were opened to poets yet to be published, allowing young writers a chance to receive the prize. Famous Korean poets like Hwang Ji-woo, Na Hee-duk have been given this award, and in 2018, Lee So-ho's *Cat Calling* received the honor. This year's award recipient has yet to be announced, and many readers are waiting for the outcome in anticipation.

Kim So-wol was a writer of sentimental poems, beloved by the Korean public for years, and the So-wol Poetry Literary Award was created to celebrate the history of his work. The award was established in 1987 and given to well-known poets like Jeong Ho-seung, Kim Yong-taek and Ahn Do-hyun. In 2019, Na Tae-ju's *My Heart Slightly Leans* (RH Korea) was given the award.



*The Still Days, Cat Calling, My Heart Slightly Leans*

Aside from these, there are now increasingly more competitions for unique literary genres that have been seeing more reader attention in South Korea. Web platforms for creative writing like Naver and Munpia hold competitions for web novels and webtoons. In the 5th competition hosted by Munpia this year, Highend's *The Genius' Game Broadcast* won the top prize and is currently being published as a series on the platform. Naver hosted a contest this year for the best webtoon and web novel and the prize money for each genre ran as high as 100 million won. The works that receive the awards will be given the opportunity to publish their work officially on Naver. Kakao Page, joining hands with publisher Changbi, hosted a competition for the best adult literature this year. Awarded works were given the chance to upload their work for paying customers on Kakao Page and later be formally published.

There are many diverse literary awards and unique competitions in South Korea. The quality and popularity of awarded works are justified by the prizes, meaning the awards could be good criteria for someone looking for Korean authors or books to publish abroad. Korean writers who have seen immense success outside South Korea like Han Kang, Kim Ae-ran and Kim Yeon-soo have all been recipients of prizes at home, like the Yi Sang Literary Award and Hwang Sun-won Literary Award. Every year, talented authors offer excellent pieces of work to capture the minds of readers. It would be a good idea to take a look at who receives the judges' attention in the coming year.

## EXPORT CASE

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# Hwang Sun-mi, Author of *The Hen Who Dreamed She Could Fly*

**Books that connect readers and writers, and the universal values within them**

Arranged by Hwang jina

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Author Hwang Sun-mi's stories of life that are narrated in many different ways have been welcomed by readers around the world, going beyond generational and cultural divides. Her most famous work, *The Hen Who Dreamed She Could Fly* (Sakyejul), which received much love from South Korean readers, has been translated and published in numerous countries globally, and recently, her *Miracle on Cherry Hill* (Sakyejul) was released in the United Kingdom. In the following interview, the author hoped she would be able to communicate with even more people through her books that warmly tell stories about universal values that all humans have, like love, happiness, dreams and hope.



The work you debuted with, *Flowers You Plant in Hearts* (Sigongsa) was newly re-published this year. You've written so many stories as a leading children's book author over the past 24 years. We would like to know if there was a special reason you came to focus on literature for children.

I was able to start my career as a writer after *Flowers You Plant in Hearts* won a Nong-min Literary Award. I wasn't even in first place but second. It was a clumsy beginning. It's interesting and thankful at the same time that the work I debuted with 24 years ago has now been newly re-published as a pretty book.

If I have to find a reason why I was drawn to writing children's books, I think it was because of my younger years, when I read books with the purest reasons. I wanted to become a person who wrote and read fun stories my entire life. Back then, I loved reading books more than eating, and I never felt lonely, even if I had no

friends. I think I can say my experiences reading as a young girl saved me in my most vulnerable years.



After its publication, *The Hen Who Dreamed She Could Fly* was translated and released in different countries around the world and later adapted into works like animations and plays.

© Sakyejul



*Miracle on Cherry Hill* © Sakyejul, *The Dog Who Dared to Dream* © Imazu

You work is loved at both home and abroad. Why do you think that is? What has the response towards your books been like outside South Korea?

I actually don't know the exact reason, and even I would like to know. I'd like to ask my readers if I get the chance, but I am not

good at speaking foreign languages. Perhaps it was because the readers were able to understand my books through universal humanism? A middle-aged woman I met in Brazil once told me, "A life like Sprout's is so unfortunate". One time I was passing by a bookstore in Sweden and I spotted a copy of *The Hen Who Dreamed She Could Fly*. I pulled it out and started reading it when a worker in the store hastily came up to me and started telling me about the book, saying "The main character of this book is a chicken, and you'll be able to find some respite in your daily life if you read this," not realizing the author was me.

Students at Stockholm University who read and discussed *The Dog Who Dared to Dream* (Imazu) with me told me the friendship between the old man and the dog in the story was heartbreaking. They also said they had never seen a Korean book before and there was even a young student who asked me a simple question - whether I had a dog at home.

*In The Hen Who Dreamed She Could Fly, the reality that Sprout faces after escaping the hen house isn't great. The themes you deal with in the story like life, death and freedom run quite deep. Were there any messages you wanted to tell readers specifically through the book?*

I wanted to tell readers they were the main characters in their respective lives, even if they felt they weren't worthy of much attention. I think we all need to remind ourselves, like a magic spell, that miracles can happen when we try our best.

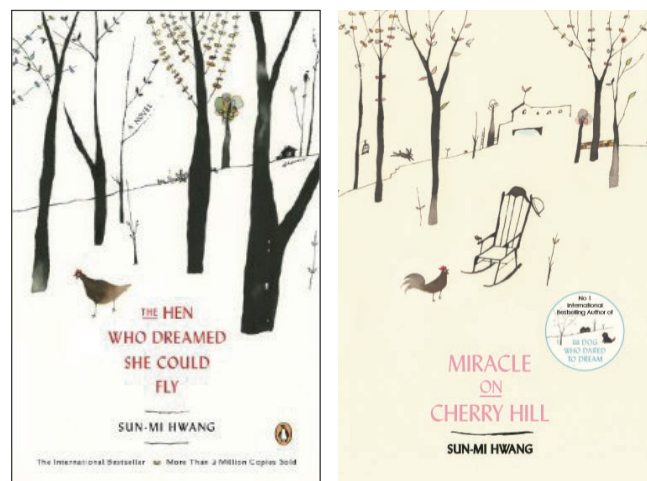
For Korean literature to be introduced to readers outside South Korea, some localization or understanding of the local culture might be necessary. Considering this, the process of translating and publishing *The Hen Who Dreamed She Could Fly* must not have been easy. Is there anything that comes to your mind regarding this?

Getting the book translated in Japan was most difficult, from my recollection. There were errors in the translation itself, and in the process of getting those errors fixed, we ran into an emotional, nonsensical situation where someone said it reminded them of 'a modern version of Koreans being forced to change their last names to Japanese' (something that happened during the Japanese military occupation of the Korean peninsula). It was definitely an experience that led me to confirm translating should be done by literary experts.

The problems arose from free translation. There were several parts in the book that were problematic, and one of those was the translation of the name of the main character. There was some debate over whether the main character's name would be expressed by how it sounded in Korean, or choose a Japanese word that meant Sprout. During this time, the deadline for publishing the translated version of the book passed and things grew emotional. Eventually, we ended up with two translated versions of the book - one for sale and one for personal possession. There were only 10 copies made of the latter, which were divided between the Japanese publisher, the second translator and myself.

As a writer, do you feel any issues should be addressed for more Korean literature to be exported overseas?

First and foremost, we need to nurture more literary translators. And bigger quantity doesn't necessarily mean better quality, but I do feel the shortening length of children's books is something to be pondered over. I've actually had foreign agencies tell me that they want stories that are longer in length. We should avoid trying to publish light stories, shallow books, blaming children for their short attention spans.



*The Hen Who Dreamed She Could Fly*, and *Miracle on Cherry Hill*  
published in the United Kingdom © Sakyejul

Recently your book *Miracle on Cherry Hill* was published in the United Kingdom. What has the reader response there been like so far? Also, tell us of any other books you might like published outside South Korea.

*Miracle on Cherry Hill* was published by Little, Brown in the United Kingdom in July this year. It hasn't been long since it was

published, so I think it's a bit early to say what the exact response has been like. Right now, we are preparing to launch the book in the Netherlands. Before this book was published, Little, Brown also released my book, *The Dog Who Dared to Dream*, and some stores displayed these three books in a row together. They present a unified format as they all have the same translator, illustrator and cover concept.

If I am given the chance, I would like to introduce *Exit* (BIR Publishing), which addresses single mothers and adoption, and *The Voice In the Gap* (Moonji Publishing) that deals with teen angst and their concerns.



*Exit* © BIR Publishing, *The Voice In the Gap* © Moonji Publishing

Could you tell us about your future plans? And if there is a message you'd like to tell readers both inside and outside South Korea, please tell us about that also.

A story about a single-parent household is currently in the works, and I've also been working on a story about teenage North Korean

refugees for quite a long time. I've been meeting with some of these teenagers who are now living in South Korea, and they have been more cheerful than I thought and present much potential.

I want to track our problems and stories in diverse ways. Books are a wonderful way to connect writers to readers, and I wish to communicate with many people through my work.

## BOOK TRIP

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# Seoul's Tongin-dong

The power of messages that transcend time,  
in remembrance of poets Yi Sang & Yun Dong-ju

Written by Ji-hye Gwon

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This issue's “Book Trip” begins at Sejong Village, just outside of Exit 2 of Gyeongbokgung Subway Station in Seoul. Sejong Village is where King Sejong's former residence was, and the region was given its name in 2010 out of respect for King Sejong's

achievements. In the Joseon Dynasty, this area was where the ordinary people lived their lives in harmony while in contemporary Korea, artists and writers like Lee Jung-seob, Pak No-su, Yi Sang and Yun Dong-ju show off their talent. Currently, some 600 hanok (traditional Korean houses) call the place home while unique stores are nestled in all the alleyways in between.

West of Gyeongbokgung Palace lies Hangeulro, a street given a special name to expand awareness on King Sejong's achievements and the excellence of Hangeul, the Korean language. Walking down this path will lead visitors to colorful locations in many alleyways. Among these places are two special locations that have been created to remember poets Yi Sang and Yun Dong-ju. These locations offer pockets of knowledge that lend insight into the writers' worlds that shared a common denominator - literature.

### **Genius poets Yi Sang and Yun Dong-ju who lived through an age of misfortune**

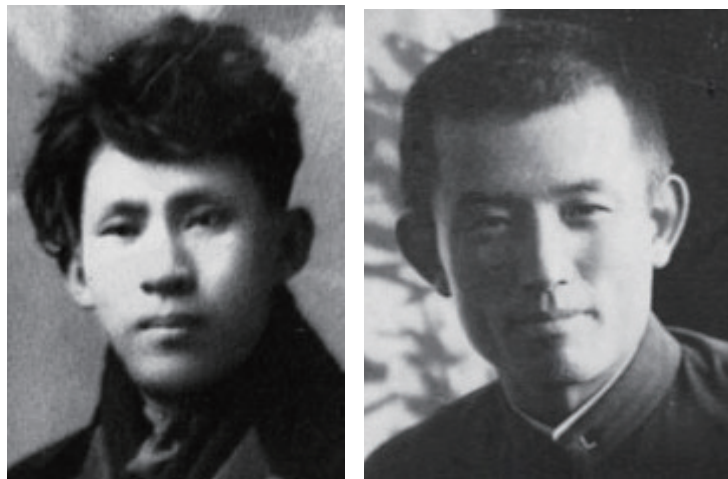
Yi Sang and Yun Dong-ju were poets who lived during Japan's military rule of the Korean peninsula, and they are writers who are loved by the Korean public to this day, with few Koreans unaware of their names and most famous work.

Yi Sang (1910~1937, actual name Kim Hae-kyeong) was a poet and a novelist. He also worked as an architect and was widely recognized as a 'genius writer' who worked in many different areas. His most famous work includes poem *Mirror* (1933), *Five*

*Senses* (1934) and short novel *The Wings* (1936). He is famous for experimental work that went against conventional literature by inserting mathematical characters in his writing or ignoring grammatical rules.

Yun Dong-ju (1917~1945) was a poet and an independence activist. His poems are known for being lyrical while retaining strong will. Yun's main work includes *Foreword* (1941), *Night of Counting Stars* (1941) and *Self Portrait* (1936). This year, a collection of his poetry was published to mark 100 years after his birth. Yun is widely known as the poet Koreans love most and also the nation's third most prominent independence activist. In his work, the sadness of an intellectual who lived in a colonized nation can clearly be seen.

The lives of the two writers were quite alike. The two young artists who lived short lives under Japanese military rule both left their marks on Korean culture and the art world and their influences lived beyond their generation.



Yi Sang and Yun Dong-ju

## 'Yi Sang's House' A Space Cherishing the Memories of Genius Poet Yi Sang

Walking a short distance from Exit 2 of Gyeongbokgung Station will lead you to Yi Sang's House close by. This location was designated as one of Seoul's future heritage sites, and it was created by renovating a part of what was formerly Yi Sang's residence. One wall of the building is an archive of Yi Sang's work (which includes first editions), and his poems, novels, essays, photographs, drawings, blueprints, illustrations are all divided by year. A small area that is connected to outside the house has a bust of the poet on display, which compels visitors to feel his presence is still filling the house in a certain way.

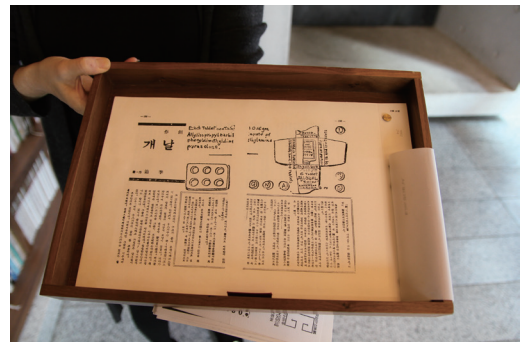
Despite graduating from university majoring in architecture at the top of his class, Yi Sang's initial dream was to become a painter. This may be the reason why his work displays both characteristics of architect and artist. Some called him "a genius poet of misfortune who was born beyond his years" because of his unique perception of space and artistic talent. For example, in poems like *Five Senses*, there are concepts there that are unique to this day, which make his poems more interesting the more one reads them. This is also the reason behind the numerous explanations about his poems. However, pulmonary tuberculosis ended Yi Sang's life early, leaving the young poet as an ideal. It is a relief today's readers can discuss much about his life at Yi Sang's house.



*Selected works by Yi Sang (First Edition)*



Interior and exterior of Yi Sang's house



*Five Senses* that shows uncommon ideas and Yi Sang's leading work *The Wings* printed in a newspaper

## The Yun Dong-ju Literature Center, where Yun, the poet of stars, still shines

The Yun Dong-ju Literature Center takes about 30 minutes by foot from Gyeongbokgung Station, so visitors are recommended to take a bus to the building.

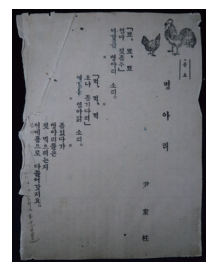
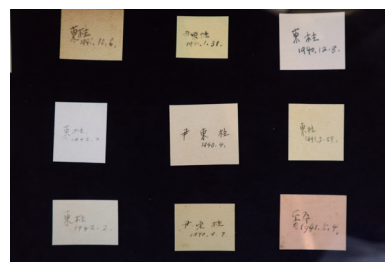
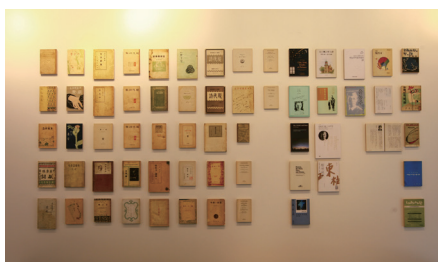
The center is a small location that was renovated from an old, former water supply facility and a water tank that lay abandoned at the foot of Inwang Mountain. Despite their modest exteriors, the lives of the facilities present themselves like poetry, as it is a special place where we could experience the extensive history of Yun Dong-ju. In the nine exhibition centers, there were photographs and facsimile editions of his writing, providing a peek into his life. Looking very closely at the story of his life for an extended period of time, one could spot the human that was Yun Dong-ju.

Yun had a fondness for poetry, and although he tried to publish a collection of 19 poems around the time of his university graduation, he was unable to do so due to people around him advising him not to, fearing censorship by Japanese authorities. During this time, Yun was also preparing to travel to Korea, having put a halt to his studies in Japan. However, he was arrested on charges of independence activism and ended up dying in a prison cell. His first collection of poetry was published postmortem with the title *Sky, Wind Stars and Poems* and it has been a steady seller to this day. The 31 poems in this collection reflect Yun's emotions very well as the detailed perfectionist he was. *Sky, Wind, Stars and Poems* has

been translated into several different languages including English, Japanese, French, German and Czech, and beloved by readers around the world.



*Sky, Wind, Stars and Poems* (First Edition)



Interior and exterior of the Yun Dong-ju Literature Center (© Yun Dong-ju Literature Center)



The hill of poets located behind the center and a boulder inscribed with Yun's poem, *Foreword*

### Best 3 independent bookstores in Tongin-dong

In the Tongin-dong area are many independent bookstores, big and small. Among these, word of three bookstores has spread like wildfire among book lovers for their unique but sure concepts. All three locations are quite close to Yi Sang's House, within 5 minutes walking distance.

#### One Book

Add. 24, Jahamun-ro 9-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul

Concept. A curated bookstore full of the curator's preferred books

Web. @of\_onebook



One Book is an independent bookstore with a special concept that is definitely worth more than one visit. Every first day of the month, just one, new book begins its month-long journey. The glass pane facing passersby on the street as well as a wall within the small space is decorated with stories about books, like a writer's monologue. Like a stage of a play with no actors, 'One Book' comes alive as the main character of its own special story, keeping visitors' eyes and ears focused.

### The Book Society

Add. F2, 22, Jahamun-ro 10-gil, Jongno-gu, Seoul

Concept. A bookstore that emulates an artist's workspace

Web. [www.thebooksociety.org](http://www.thebooksociety.org)



This particular bookstore is an independent store that specializes in artistic books where one can easily believe they stepped into a project workshop of an artistic team. Books on art that are usually difficult to find in regular bookstores draw one's attention. Here,

the owners only sell independent publications on design and art. This unique factor has been maintained for a long period, and the store also sells secondhand books.

### BOAN Books

Add. F2, 33 Hyoja-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul

Concept. All productive artists, whether by their own volition or not, can find rest here

Web. @boan1942



This location first opened its doors in 1942 as the 'Tonggeuidong Security Inn', offering many who came and went a place for rest for the past 77 years. Today, with the sign 'BOAN 1942', the location

offers lodging for artists and is also all these things: a community club, a cafe, an exhibition space, a market and a bookstore. BOAN Books on the second floor sells eye-catching independent books on art and literature in addition to magazines. It is also home to several big and small book clubs. One corner of the store also sells secondhand books, and it is worth checking out for books you might have missed at regular bookstores.

## Event

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# 2019 South Korea-China Publishing Copyright Exchanges Event

Written by Jeon Hye-young

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Currently, in 2019, many South Korean publications can be seen throughout the world regardless of genre, including literature, books on hobbies, learning languages and children's books. Thanks to the efforts of many publishing experts and professionals inside and outside the country, South Korean publications have now started to become known overseas. However, exchanges came to a standstill after active engagement for many years with one country. This country was China. After political conflict arose between the two countries over the deployment of an anti-missile system called THAAD in South Korea in 2016, bilateral publication copyright deals were also affected. Three years after this issue presented itself, relationships were mended for the first time in three years at the “2019 South Korea-China Publishing Copyright Exchanges Event”.



## One-on-One Business Matching Between South Korean, Chinese publishers

The “2019 South Korea-China Publishing Copyright Exchanges Event” was held in Seoul on Oct. 30. On the day of the event, one-on-one copyright consulting business matching sessions were held between Chinese and South Korean publishers. Fourteen publishing companies from China under China Publishing Group participated in the event, and 25 South Korean publishers took part. Major South Korean publishers who have consistently carried out work in other Asian markets including Taiwan and Thailand like Woongjin Thinkbig, Hakgobang, Darakwon and Mirae N were at the event, along with independent publishers UU Press and Seosawon. Genre literature publishers including Gozknock

ENT and children's book publishers Turtle Books and Kinderland were also present. Some of these publishers have previously been introduced by *K-Book Trends*, and readers interested in learning about them further should click the links below:

- \* [Link to interview with Gozknock ENT] (Vol. 11)  
<http://kbook-eng.or.kr/article/195>
- \* [Link to interview with Darakwon] (Vol. 04)  
<http://kbook-eng.or.kr/article/292>
- \* [Link to interview with Mirae N's Iseum] (Vol. 18)  
<http://kbook-eng.or.kr/article/790>
- \* [Link to interview with Minumsa Publishing Group's Imprint Golden Bough] (Vol. 03)  
<http://kbook-eng.or.kr/article/305>
- \* [Link to interview with Bookgoodcome] (Vol. 10)  
<http://kbook-eng.or.kr/article/235>
- \* [Link to interview with Uupress] (Vol. 06)  
<http://kbook-eng.or.kr/article/271>



## Greenlight for publishing exchanges

This year's event was jointly hosted by the Publication Industry Promotion Agency of Korea (KPIPA) and China Publishing Group (Chairman Tan Yue). It aimed to expand exchanges between the publishing industries of both countries by supporting Korean book exports to China and introducing quality Chinese books to Korean

readers. The visit to South Korea made by the China Publishing Group was seen as meaningful, as it is directly under the Chinese government's central propaganda department. Their presence at the event was interpreted as China's strong willingness to seek bilateral cooperation after publishing exchanges between South Korea and China were halted for the past three years due to the THAAD deployment issue. Hopes were high this event would be the beginning of sustainable exchanges between the two countries.



Publications from South Korea and China that were translated and released in the neighboring countries over the past 10 years

### List of South Korean publisher participants for the exchange event

Gilbut | [www.gilbut.co.kr](http://www.gilbut.co.kr)

Joara | [www.joara.com](http://www.joara.com)

Turtle books | [www.littlekartacademy.com](http://www.littlekartacademy.com)

Gozknock ENT | [blog.naver.com/gozknock](http://blog.naver.com/gozknock)

Kookhak | [www.kookhak.co.kr](http://www.kookhak.co.kr)

Darakwon Inc. | [www.darakwon.co.kr](http://www.darakwon.co.kr)

Dasanbooks | [www.dasanbooks.com](http://www.dasanbooks.com)

Yellowpig | [www.yellowpig.co.kr](http://www.yellowpig.co.kr)

Seosawon | [blog.naver.com/seosawon](http://blog.naver.com/seosawon)

Hakgobang | [www.hakgobang.co.kr](http://www.hakgobang.co.kr)

Mirae N | [www.mirae-n.com](http://www.mirae-n.com)

Minumsa | [www.minumsa.com](http://www.minumsa.com)  
Vegabooks | [www.vegabooks.co.kr](http://www.vegabooks.co.kr)  
Byeolsoop | [everlys@naver.com](mailto:everlys@naver.com)  
Bookgoodcome | [www.bookgoodcome.com](http://www.bookgoodcome.com)  
Book21 | [www.book21.com](http://www.book21.com)  
Sunnysunday | [sunnysunday.co.kr](http://sunnysunday.co.kr)  
Woongjin Thinkbig | [www.wjthinkbig.com](http://www.wjthinkbig.com)  
Uupress | [uupress.co.kr](http://uupress.co.kr)  
Ekbook | [ekbook.co.kr](http://ekbook.co.kr)  
Kidaribook | [blog.naver.com/kidaribook](http://blog.naver.com/kidaribook)  
Kinderland | [www.kinderland.co.kr](http://www.kinderland.co.kr)  
Tiumbooks | [www.tiumbooks.com](http://www.tiumbooks.com)  
Korea Institute of Piano Pedagogy | [www.pianoicon.com](http://www.pianoicon.com)  
Hangilsa | [hangilsa.co.kr](http://hangilsa.co.kr)

## KOREAN PUBLISHERS

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### I-Seum

**Standing high as children's true place of learning,  
a publisher specializing in children's books**

Arranged by KIM Young-Ihm

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Mirae N's children's book publishing arm I-Seum was established in 2000. The name I-Seum means "to help children and young adults who will lead the future to create their own thoughts". The publisher has established itself in the industry as one that has succeeded in exporting learning comics, books on liberal arts and general education, workbooks for young children and other educational material. Their books have proved to be fun and useful in diverse areas. The following provides a look into I-Seum's vision for the future as a publisher that wishes to become a stepping stone for children who will create their own awesome world and a lighthouse for those children through a variety of books with new insight.

# Mirae N 아이세움

Mirae N's children's book publishing arm I-Seum

As a publisher specializing in children's books, I-Seum has been publishing various books from learning comics, books on liberal arts and general education, workbooks for young children to other educational material. What is most important to the company when planning and producing publications? We're curious to know if I-Seum's books have a unique factor that sets them apart.

Mirae N's slogan is "New learning, the embodiment of bigger joy". I-Seum aims to help children understand joy and realize that joy through education as a foundation. Regardless of the form of content, I-seum's identity is to pursue both education and fun, and we try to combine those values in all our work.

We have a large array of publications. Our key publications are our many book series that have sold steadily in markets and are considered as classics that serve as foundations for reading and learning. As people's bodies grow, their learning histories grow with them, and we think there are imperative books that need to be read at certain points in their lives. These books can be the basics of liberal arts or literature, or basics in school education. The bulk of our books at I-Seum try to help children joyfully read with little

pushback. In order to do that, books should have a firm goal, and in order to keep a certain level of quality, writers and editors need to be focused at the core. They should have the stability to create books without being shaken by changing factors, and this is a unique characteristic of I-Seum books.

Children's books share the fact they are for children's minds, but they can all be different based on their surrounding culture. Are there any parts you take particular care of, in order to approach children more easily? Also, what has the response been like from countries you've exported your books to?

We take many things into consideration when developing a book series, like the amount of information or fun in the content and probability of storylines. However, we have found young readers really love charismatic characters. And the characters that readers love in each country our books have been published in all vary little by little. In Japan, Jio and Pipi from our *Surviving* series, in China Pangyi and Tori from the *Treasure Hunt* series and in Taiwan, Universe and Element from *Tomorrow, I'm the Experiment King* have proven to be popular. We take particular care in making the characters that children love consistent in the books.



Surviving series



Treasure Hunt series

I-Seum's seen much success in overseas markets including the United States, Japan, China, Taiwan and Europe, becoming a leader in publishing K-books. What was your unique strength that made it possible for you to succeed in those markets and what books are popular in those countries?

Our *Surviving* series, *Treasure Hunt* series and *Tomorrow, I'm the Experiment King* have been successful in several Asian countries.

These books are learning comics but as fun as ordinary animations. Most children's books for learning focus on delivering knowledge, but our book series have spectacular scenes, thrilling stories and detailed emotions that our writers and editors spend much time on creating. This would be the same for our webtoon-like features that are detailed and draw in readers. Content that readers can focus on and the stories that keep readers curious about what's coming next are most likely our strengths that have contributed to our global success.



*Tomorrow, I'm the Experiment King series*

*Britannica Educational* series is different from our previous comic book series. It is an educational encyclopedia series that has been received well from critics for its trustworthy information, high-quality editing and design. The series has seen sales skyrocket in China, even more so than in South Korea, because Chinese

consumers prefer encyclopedia series that have numerous books. This popularity most likely stems from the fact our books have universally acceptable information unrelated to specific regions or social sentiment, accurate labels and copyright legitimacy. This universality and good content in our classic content have also contributed to our successful entry in global markets.

Last June, I-Seum showed off much content focusing on experience at the 2019 Seoul International Book Fair. You've been creating a wide range of content for children. What would be your competitive edge over other children's book publishers?

People say there are fewer people reading every day, but people are actually continuously reading things and wanting content that is fun, touching and educational. Even if it's not paper books, good content is leading culture and markets by taking shape in different forms. It is only natural that one form of content that consumers love can be recreated in different forms of media. I-Seum has a vision that has kept in tune with the change of time that the company should boost its competitiveness through content in addition to books. The YouTube videos for our *Surviving* series and desk supplies using our *Butt Detective* character all saw good responses from consumers at the Seoul International Book Fair. A great example of written work turned into animation, *A Commonly Seen Pair of Sister and Brother*, was formally introduced at the book fair, heightening the level of excitement at the event. Going forward, we

plan to make diverse attempts involving digital media, videos and consumer goods.



*Butt Detective series*



*A Commonly Seen Pair of Sister and Brother series*

What other plans do you have for expanding your presence in markets both at home and abroad? We'd also like to ask you about your goals.

I-Seum has many export achievements under its belt over the years, but we've only been able to export books to China, Japan

and the United States among the top 10 countries with the biggest publishing markets. The Spanish language market is the biggest language market after English and Chinese, and we've yet to enter this market. However, our competitiveness has been proven through our export success in 14 different countries and we plan to expand our exports through our know-how and self-confidence. Children around the world may speak different languages, but the fact that they all love reading fun books is the same. And with this in mind, we plan to continue carrying out our vision: "New learning, the embodiment of bigger joy". I-Seum was also selected for KOTRA's export support program for 2020, and we plan to create even more meaningful growth.

**Is there anything you'd like to say to readers outside South Korea interested in publications for children?**

So much content produced in South Korea, whether they be television dramas, movies or variety shows, tie together stories, create charisma and have powerful strength that captures the eyes and hearts of those that view it. The positive combination of developers who understand the unlimited potential of content and consumers who love excellent content and disseminate it not only aids the development of the culture industry but also makes the lives of individuals plentiful and fun. This is the same for children's publications, and we will work further to help children learn and enjoy everything in a diverse way.

## KOREAN AUTHORS

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### Author Kim Yun-jeong

A writer who sees children's futures, and touches adults' hearts

Arranged by Jeon Hye-young

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When you hear the word 'book', what shape comes to your mind? Most likely a rectangular, straight, hard form where stories are told page by page. What about books that have transparent OHP film as pages instead of paper? And books you need to shine a light on

to see the title? This writer is the author of those books. She is an author who attempts the creation of books that have diverse form, breaking away from conventional formats. This was our meeting with author Kim Yun-jeong, who also runs her independent publishing brand called YUN Edition, named after herself.

Please introduce yourself to our *K-Book Trends* readers.

I am children's book author Kim Yun-jeong, who used to write and illustrate books but now publishes them too.

After having my child and spending much time with them, I naturally came to spend time with picture books. At first, the picture books merely served as reading material for my child, but one day I realized they had been comforting me and had taken place inside my heart. I was touched and delighted by many of these books and little by little, I began to think I would like to create picture books as well. After, I created dummy books, entered competitions and became a children's book author.



*Message of Hands* (YUN Edition) and *With You* (Kookmin Books)

As you just said, you used to write and illustrate books, but now you're creating them. What compelled you to launch YUN Edition?

From 2013, I began creating dummy books and participated in the children's book fair at Bologna, Italy every year. In the first year, I participated as an individual and the next, I created a booth with my friends. But starting in 2016, only publishers were allowed to participate in the Korean pavilion at the book fair. Having a booth outside the Korean pavilion was too expensive, so that year I registered for my own publishing business.\* Until then, I'd been using 'Yun' to identify myself at the Bologna children's book fair, so I decided on YUN Edition for the business' name. Even when I was registering for the publishing business, I never dreamed I would actually publish books under the name. From an author's point of view, publishing books seemed like a different world altogether, and I wasn't able to find the courage immediately.

\* In South Korea, anyone can register for a publishing business even if they don't have published books due to local regulations.

Your publication business began because you needed to participate in the children's book fair at Bologna. You've been taking part in that particular book fair every year - is there a special reason you do so?

The first book I made was a dummy book called *Yummy Yummy!*. I never thought manufacturing this book would be difficult. When I created the dummy book, the reaction I had from children was

positive, and I simply thought if I took the book to a publisher, they would easily be able to produce it for me. But from 2010, 13 publishers declined to publish the book for two years. After that, I wondered if my book was the problem and grew curious as to how publishers in other countries would react to the book. Eventually, I decided I would take my book to the Bologna children's book fair, which I did in 2013. I've now been going for 7 straight years (laughs).



**Long long fold out book**

As you unfold each page, you will find a bull turning into a rabbit, the rabbit into a fish, the fish into a flower pot, etc. This is an "accordion picture book," you will have lots of fun unfolding its pages. The colorful and polished illustrations are another attraction of the book.

*Long Long Foldout Book* (YUN Edition),  
the final product from Kim's dummy book *Yummy Yummy!*

\* *Long Long Foldout Book* YouTube video  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kgQCsenh0c4>

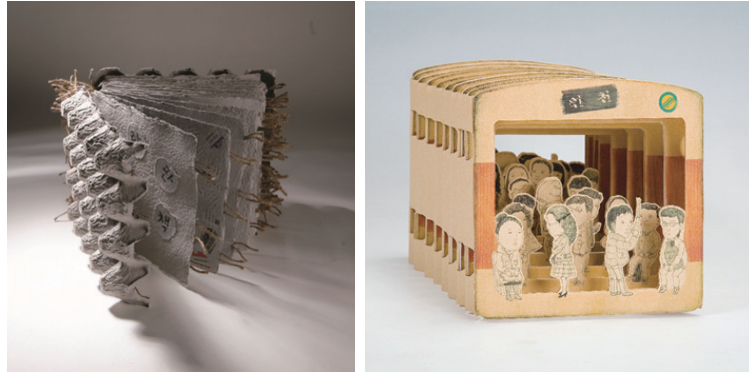
Back then, since it was my first time to attend the book fair, the pressure from the cost was quite high. I felt it was too high of a cost to pay to take just one dummy book to the fair, so I made three more. Once I got there, I saw there were so many books. There were other books difficult to produce just like mine, in addition to bizarre picture books, picture books that seemed difficult for children to understand - just so many. I realized then if I had seven or eight books rather than just one book that was hard to physically manufacture, I stood a chance at publishing. So each year, I added one more dummy book to my arsenal, and in 2015 when I took *Message of Hands* to the book fair as a dummy book, I had at least seven books that had yet to be published (laughs).

You've been creating witty books, jumping beyond limits that paper books present. Where do you get your ideas?

The books I made that were difficult to publish weren't created with the thought in mind they would be published as picture books. At the time I was also working as a book art author, and in the process of thinking of pieces that were closer to book art, I asked myself, "Couldn't these be published, even in a small number?" And the books that were eventually created from these ideas include works you are familiar with, like *Message of Hands* and *With You*.

There is no special strategy I have when it comes to ideas. I just look at everything in my everyday life from a 'book' point of view. I take memos every chance I get, look at them and choose what

can be expanded into products and create my dummy books from there.



Book art pieces *Egg Carton Picture Book* (Created in 2009) and *Subway Line 1* (Created in 2010)

Even in the case of *Message of Hands*, I didn't have a special occasion from which I chanced upon the idea. One day, my eyes happened to fall on my mother's rough and tough hands, and this broke my heart. From then on I wanted to create a book that portrayed what I saw that day. And then some time after on a winter day, I was looking out a window. The window that blocked the cold wind and brought in only the sunlight reminded me of my mother. I used transparent film to portray that window and led my book with hands.



The hands printed on plastic film are the main points of this book

We have heard the response towards your books has been positive. Have any of your books been exported?

Only the response has been positive, I think. One thing I've heard most often ever since my first year at the book fair is whether my dummy books are for sale. Editors tell me their publishers will probably be unable to mass produce my books, but ask me whether they can personally buy my dummy books. Teachers or activists also have introduced me to publishers, but my books would cost a lot to publish, so we are all wrapping our heads around this issue. From next year, my *Long Long Foldout Book* is scheduled to be published in Mexico, while *Message of Hands* and *With You* will be published in China.

*Rolling Lump of Poo* (Kookmin Books) and *Ice Cream Poo* (Sallim Children), are all joyful and funny books in conventional picture book format. Do you have plans to release these kinds of books in the future as well?

These two books weren't hard to publish at all, so I saw their release fairly quickly. I want to keep writing fun and exciting books. I think 'being fun' is the most important when writing children's books, because you are reading them with children. I think it'd be very sad if my books were ignored by children. Much time and thought goes into the stories or format of the books because even the most serious of stories need to be wrapped in a 'fun' way.



Rolling Lump of Poo, Ice Cream Poo



English version of *Rolling Lump of Poo* created by the National Library for Children and Young Adults for multi-cultural readers

Could you tell us if you have a special philosophy or faith you wish to portray in your books? We are also curious about your future plans.

Once children become interested in a certain picture book, they read it dozens of times. This also means there is a grown-up who will end up reading that book to them dozens of times (laughs). So I think an author's eye needs to be able to see the future of children and an author's fingertips also need to be able to touch the hearts of those adults.

First of all, I'd like to publish my dummy books, even if it takes a bit of time. My third book involving film called *The Red* is set to be published by YUN Edition next year in addition to works by my significant other and books I am working on with them.

\* *In Light* (YUN Edition), a book jointly produced by Kim's significant other, Choi Deok-kyu  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zi9QnAAcXAQ>

## Publishing Industry

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# South Korea's publishing market based on category

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

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The biggest characteristic of South Korea's publishing industry is that the portion of books on education and learning for young children to students of all ages is very large. South Korea's college-attendance rate is roughly 70 percent, which is one of the highest among OECD countries. According to a 2016 survey by the Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education & Training (KRIVET), 47 percent of respondents said they went to college for a better job, 25 percent said they attended to learn more and 14 percent said they went to college because graduating from university would result in better treatment in society. South Korea has a dense population compared to the geographical territory it has and combined with Korean parents wanting to educate their children for their future stability, the situation has created a society where

nearly all the people have received higher education. At the epitome of this situation lies one of the world's best private education systems (online/offline cram school classes outside of regular schools) aimed solely at getting children into the top colleges. According to a survey released in 2018 by South Korea's education ministry and Statistics Korea on private spending on education for underage school students, South Koreans spent roughly 20 trillion won on private education in the course of a year. The survey also showed 5.3 percent of South Koreans' household spending was on education, a significantly higher portion than countries like the United States (2.2 percent) and Germany (0.9 percent).

In a 2018 survey by the culture, sports and tourism ministry released in 2019 on the content industry, the book and publication industry in South Korea as of 2017 was valued at a total of 3.9985 trillion won. Of that, textbooks and educational material accounted for 2.8287 trillion won, and other books accounted for 1.698 trillion won. Hence, 70 percent of the country's entire publishing industry was tied to demand for learning material, textbooks and workbooks for all students from toddlers to high school students. The value of the publishing market reflects purchasers' demand for published content from all areas of society, and the high portion that educational material accounts for in South Korea's publishing industry is becoming a core element influencing the country's publishing industry structure, publishing management, publishing distribution, bookstore sales and the country's reading ecosystem on a whole.

The second characteristic of South Korea's publishing market is that book sets are popular. Book sets for children aimed at education or learning in addition to literature book sets for students and adults lead this category. Book sets usually have anywhere from 50 to 100 books under a unifying topic or subject. One of the representative book sets available in South Korea for adolescents and adults would be Minumsa's *World Literature Book Set* with over 300 books. Book sets are usually sold either directly through publishers, at online bookstores, door-to-door salespeople who allow customers to pay in installments or stores specializing in children's book sets. The market for these book sets is estimated to have a value around 500 billion won. Book set publishing began developing in the 1950s starting with literature content. It later expanded to books for children and comics for learning. As these products have many books, their prices can be daunting. This price pressure can be alleviated through discount sales marketing, but since the fixed book price policy was enforced in South Korea from 2014, discounts have become limited, and book set retail prices were even changed to accommodate the new policy. Also, as the birth rate in South Korea declines and the regular book market grows, the book set market has been shrinking. To overcome these hardships, book set publishers attempted to sell large numbers of these sets via TV home shopping channels, providing slashed prices. Recently, these book sets have been appearing in secondhand markets, where profits have nothing to do with the actual publishers.

Next, when looking at the market for regular books, individual volumes account for 800 billion won, academic and specialized books account for 200 billion won while children's books (except for book sets) account for 140 billion won. Among regular books, literature publications take up the highest share, and non-Korean writers tend to be the most popular out of all the bestselling books in South Korea. Readers tend to prefer poetry and essays written by South Korean writers while popular books tend to stay on bestseller lists for extended periods once they make it to bestseller status. In book categories outside literature, the influence of popular writers is quite significant and recently, 'media sellers' that have been introduced on TV, social media and Youtube by either celebrities or other famous people, have been swaying bestseller trends.

At Kyobo Book Centre, the country's biggest bookstore chain on both the Internet and offline, literature sales accounted for 14.8 percent of its total sales, while books for practical use accounted for 11.2 percent. Meanwhile, liberal arts, science and social science books each took up 11.1 percent of total sales while science and technology books accounted for 10.7 percent. Children's books made up 10.4 percent of total sales, educational books for underage students 9.9 percent, books for foreign languages 6.4 percent, books for employment and job-related tests 5.9 percent, arts 3.5 percent and religion 2.8 percent. Here, the portion of educational books for underage students was relatively modest because at bigger bookstores, sales tend to be equally proportioned between

categories. As for mid-to-small sized bookstores, sales for books on education tend to be much higher than other books.

According to data collected by KPIPA, the number of paper books published in 2018 reached a record high of 81,890. This number has been growing steadily over the past five years, starting from 67,062 in 2014, 70,091 in 2015, 75,727 in 2016 and 80,130 in 2017. When divided by category, books published in 2018 were comprised of 7,298 children's books (2,739 books for young children; 4,559 books for children) and 22,617 books on education (3,944 books for elementary school students; 6,092 books for middle to high school students; 1,923 foreign language studies books; 10,658 employment/tests/certificate books). There were 14,637 literature books (7,573 novels; 7,064 poetry and essay books), 11,677 books on liberal arts (1,621 philosophy/psychology books; 1,903 history, culture books; 4,936 books on religion and 3,217 books on other subjects) and 3,835 books on arts and popular culture. Also, there were 9,434 books on social science (5,505 books on politics and society; 3,929 books on economics and management), 7,282 books on science and technology (971 natural science books; 4,813 books on technology and engineering; 1,498 books on computer/information communications) and 5,110 books for practical use (1,490 self-development books; 544 books for home life; 1,130 books on cooking and hobbies; 1,067 books on health/sports/leisure; 879 books on travel). The percentages the categories accounted for in all published books in 2018 are

as follows: education 27.6 percent, literature 17.9 percent, liberal arts sciences 14.3 percent, social sciences 11.5 percent, science and technology 8.9 percent, children's books 8.9 percent, practical books 6.2 percent and arts/popular culture 4.7 percent. These proportions have shown little change over the past five years.

This data set from KPIPA also showed 69.8 percent of publishers that published books in 2018 (8,058 total) released less than five books that year. Publishers that released 6 to 10 books accounted for 12.0 percent, publishers with 11 to 30 books in 2018 took up 12.2 percent while publishers that published more than 31 books in the same period accounted for 6.0 percent (583). This shows small or one-person publishers currently constitute a huge portion of South Korea's single-volume publishing market. A small number of large publishers usually dominates most countries' publishing markets. In South Korea, this data reflects the diversity of publishing activities in the country. However, while there is no domination of the market, there is also a downside in that there is limited momentum for new growth backed by the equity of large publishers and a general slowness in reacting to market changes due to a lack in leadership by these big companies.

The e-book market in South Korea is valued at around 340 billion won. Most e-books sold in South Korea are either e-book versions of books that already exist in paper format or web novels in digital form. The webtoon market is led by portal operators or specialized

platform companies rather than traditional publishers. Recently more service users pay for subscription services to have unlimited access to e-books for less than 10,000 won per month.

The current status of imported and exported printed books (according to trade statistics from Korea Customs Service) shows in 2018, \$138.61 million worth of regular books for adults were imported, surpassing the \$101.65 million worth that was exported. Meanwhile, \$26.16 million worth of children's books was imported in comparison to \$2.30 million worth that was exported that year. In regular book exports, Korean books were included in addition to English learning books for non-English speaking readers. Children's English learning workbooks and English fairy tale books made up the bulk of imported books.

Copyright imports and exports data show South Korea annual imports about 10,000 copyrights for books that are later translated and published in Korea while copyrights for around 1,500 Korean books are exported - far less than imports. Copyrights are usually imported from countries including the United States, Japan and three European countries (the United Kingdom, Germany and France), and books of diverse categories are dealt with. South Korean copyrights are exported to Northeast Asian countries that are geographically nearby, like China Taiwan and Japan in addition to Southeast Asian countries like Thailand and Vietnam. Children's learning comics and practical use books for adults are

usually exported to these countries. The competitiveness of South Korea's learning comics has been well proven in markets outside the country.

From the next issue, this section will look at the status of each category within South Korea's publishing market. By category, this section will offer information on the market size, special characteristics, key publishers, main writers, publishing trends, popular books and other related issues.

## Publishing Policy

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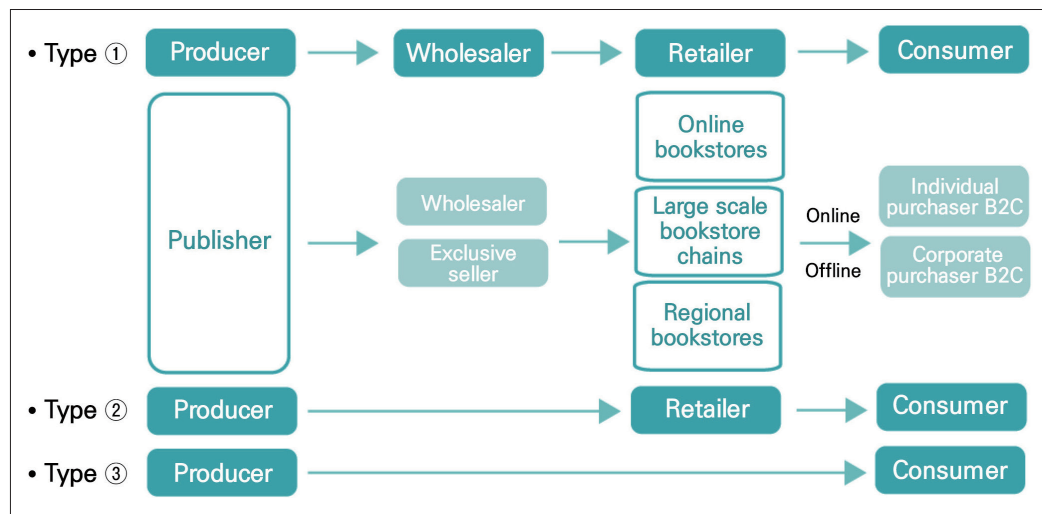
# South Korea's publishing market and distribution structure

Written by Choi Sung-gu (Head of team at Book Trade Promotion)

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South Korea's publishing market can be divided into three categories: book publishing (paper media publishing), educational publishing (textbooks and educational material publishing) and internet/mobile digital publishing and production. When taken as a whole, publishing sales stood at 4.0078 trillion won in 2010 and rose 8.2 percent to 4.3388 trillion won in 2017, showing an average growth of 1.1 percent each year in between. A characteristic of South Korea's publishing market is that educational content accounts for a huge piece of it. From 2010 to 2017, educational publishing has seen an average 1.8 percent in growth while paper book sales have seen an average decline of 2.6 percent over the same period. Meanwhile, e-books have seen sharp growth, with sales jumping 17 percent on average each year from 2010 to 2017.

Companies like Woongjin Thinkbig, Daegyo, Visang Education and Neungyule that are in the educational publishing industry sell their publications in bookstores through regional distributors who have received rights to sell in specific regions from the publishers. In the case of regular books, third party logistics specifically meant for publications are used to directly supply books for online bookstores, large chain bookstores and regional mid-sized bookstores. Distributors include nationwide wholesalers (Booxen, Interpark Songin Books, Bookplus) and regional wholesalers. Distribution through wholesalers has been on a decline as regional bookstores have seen their market share shrink on aggregate. Retailers can be divided into three channels: online bookstores (YES24, Kyobo Book Centre, Aladin, Interpark), large scale chains (Kyobo Book Centre, Youngpoong Bookstore and Seoul Bookstore), and regional bookstores. In 2018, more than 80,000 new books were released from roughly 8,000 publishers. From about 2,000 brick-and-mortar bookstores, 85 are for large scale bookstore chains and online bookstore Aladin operated 45 locations for secondhand books. Recently the importance of membership business has grown amid publishers directly marketing and selling to consumers obtained through social media channels. The below flow chart shows the three types of publication distribution processes in South Korea:

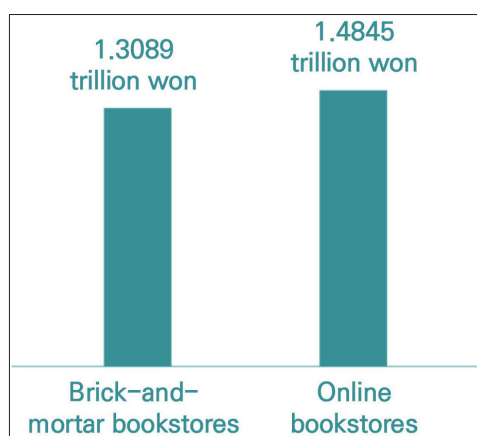


Distribution structure of publications

Another characteristic of South Korea's publication distribution structure would be consignment sales. Publishers provide books for bookstores to sell, later collect profits from sold publications and buy back books that fail to sell. Online bookstores have transaction structures that are usually based on orders, while the distribution of new books through large scale chains or regional bookstores use a combination of consignment sales by distributing first edition copies and order-based transactions. Consignment sales have proven somewhat problematic as sales profits are at times not transparently taken from bookstores and return rates of unsold books can be high.

South Korea has a fixed price system in place for books. Despite this fact, online bookstores take up a large share of distribution channels. Recently, the size of sales through online bookstores surpassed those of brick-and-mortar bookstores. According to

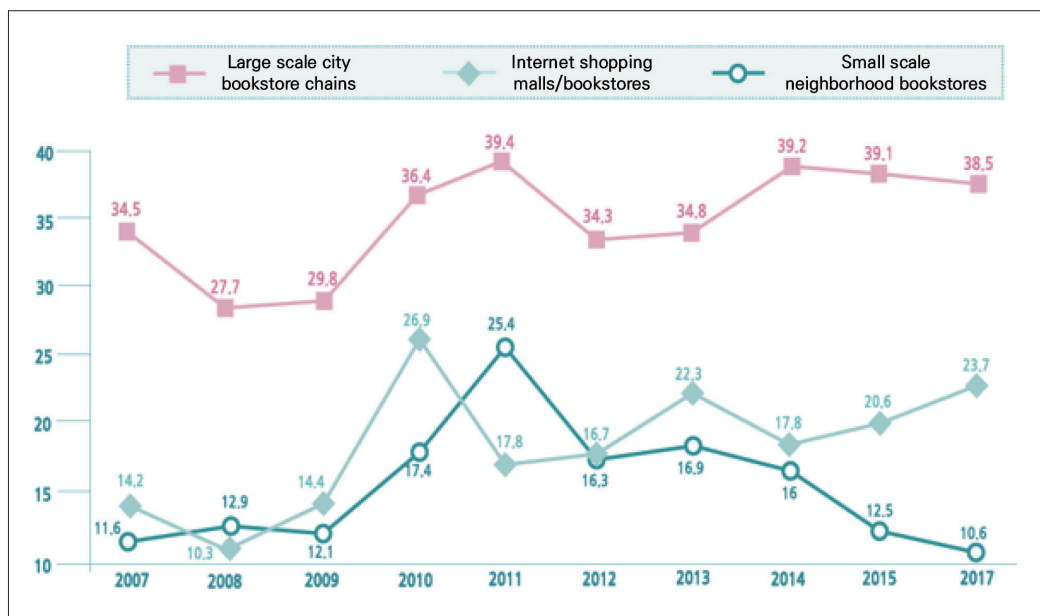
“2018 Publishing Industry Survey”, the retail book industry was worth 2.7945 trillion won in 2017 and among this, online stores accounted for 1.4845 trillion won (53.1 percent) while brick-and-mortar bookstores accounted for 1.3089 trillion won (46.9 percent). The biggest portion of transaction clients for publishers was constituted by online bookstores at 22.2 percent while the proportion of large scale bookstore chains stood at 18.0 percent. Direct sales by publishers were 13.4 percent, wholesalers/exclusive sellers 12.6 percent and institution sales were 12.1 percent.



Distribution channel sales portions divided between South Korea's brick-and-mortar bookstores and online bookstores (2017)

As consumer culture trends change, large scale bookstore chains and independent bookstores that have brick-and-mortar stores have been attempting to expand their service offerings based on consumer needs. This is because bookstores are no longer simply places where books are sold and bought, but spaces that sell diverse experiences with books as a medium. They are being required to transform into comprehensive cultural spaces and lifestyle goods stores. Recently, new types of independent bookstores have become

popular thanks to social media, but they are having trouble staying open due to sluggish book sales. The stores themselves become well-known through traditional media and social media, but actual book sales have been too low that the stores have been unable to make any impact on publication distribution channels as locations for book sales. The aforementioned survey has shown 38.5 percent of adult consumers prefer to buy books at large scale chains, 23.7 percent at online bookstores and 10.6 percent at regional and neighborhood bookstores. The changes in bookstore usage can be referenced in the chart below.



Changes in book distribution channels mainly used by South Korean adults (2007 to 2017)  
 (Reference: "2017 Survey in South Korean Reading Patterns")

Publishers have also been trying their hand at directly marketing and selling books to readers using membership business strategies. This would include podcasts, Youtube channels and mobile book clubs. Readers have also shown changes in their buying patterns by gaining information on books from Youtube and social media,

reading them online and later purchasing them in paper format if they truly like the books. Readers who use online bookstores have quickly been moving from PC to mobile, and more than 50 percent of sales at online bookstores are now made through mobile apps.

The e-book market has been growing on the back of expansions in periodical downloads and subscription services. The growth rate of the e-book distribution market has been sharp, but e-books only account for 5 percent of South Korea's entire publishing market. The e-book market, including web novels, is estimated to be worth around 400 billion won. In the case of Ridibooks, which is the biggest seller of e-books in South Korea, the business has seen an average 40 percent growth every year for the past 3 years. Recently, Ridibooks has seen sales around 100 billion won after launching its monthly subscription service called RIDI Select, which brought in an influx of new users. Companies like Kyobo Book Centre, Korea E-Pub and Millie's Library provide e-books mostly comprised of novels. Serially published web novels dealing with fantasy, martial arts and romance along with 'snack-culture' web content developed for mobile devices are leading the growth seen in the e-publication market, and these are usually serviced through major online portal platforms like Naver and Kakao. Interest in audiobooks has grown greatly as well, and attempts at creating audiobooks using Naver's voice synthesizing technology using the voices of famous people has been garnering public interest.



Various platforms for e-book distribution

〈RIDI Select〉 <https://select.ridibooks.com>

〈Millie's Library〉 <https://www.millie.co.kr>

〈Kakao Page〉 <https://page.kakao.com>

〈Naver Audioclip〉 <https://audioclip.naver.com>

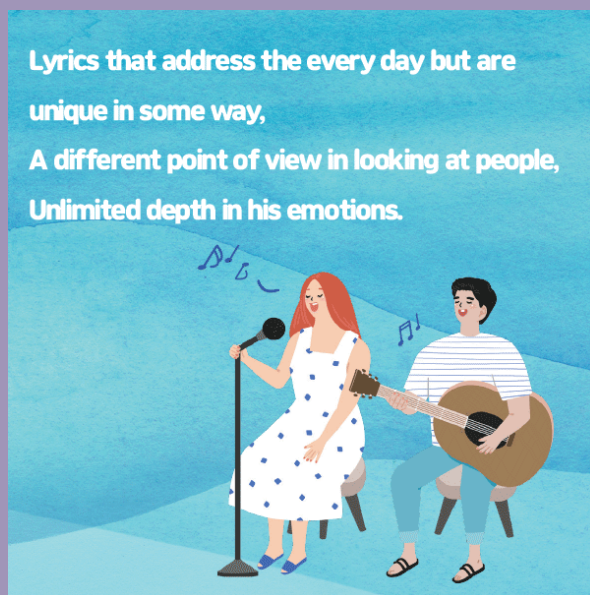
New Books

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Fish In the Water



Lyrics that address the every day but are  
unique in some way,  
A different point of view in looking at people,  
Unlimited depth in his emotions.





## Since his debut in 2012

Lee has been loved by so many and he has now metaphorically described in a novel his life values and views on art.

“

I wanted to express the thoughts I've lived with through a different way other than music

”

Carries Lee's views on life's shining moments  
<Fish In the Water> tells the musical story of main character 'Sun-e'

Life's answers are discovered one by one with 'Haeya' met at the edge of Sun-e's travel embarked to find what it is to be a true artist and music.

**"If I don't have music,  
I'll go to the sea!"**

**"Why the sea?"**

**"Because the waves sound  
most like music!"**

**We should live like we sing,  
Like we talk,  
Like we swim**

**A novel seeped with  
emotions like musical notes  
detailed sentences**

**and the author's  
philosophical views.**



## Fish in the water

Author | Lee Chan Hyuk Publisher | Sukha Genre | Novel

## Best Sellers

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# South Korean bestsellers in November

Bestsellers at South Korea's biggest online bookstores, Kyobo Book Centre and Interpark

Written by Choi Ha-Yeong

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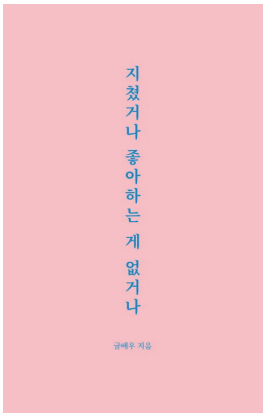
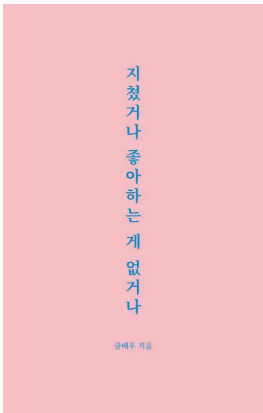
The bestseller lists for the third week of November from South Korea's biggest online bookstores Kyobo Book Centre and Interpark were nearly identical, showing a clear trend in reader demand as the year-end wanes closer. In addition to *Trend Korea 2020* which topped both lists last month, books like *8*, *The Longevity Paradox* and *Ji-young Kim, Born in '82* were popular at both bookstores, showing South Korean readers were into a number of subjects in November like economics/management, self-development, health and novels and not just focused on one category.

However, if one category has shown consistent strength on South Korean bestselling book lists, that would be essays. On both top 10 bestseller lists were Geulbaewoo's *Either Tired or Nothing You Like* and Ven. Pomnyun's *Now Is Good As Is* while at Kyobo, *I Want To Be a Good Person Only To You* found itself at no. 8. The continued demand for essays was seen reflecting readers' need for comfort through warm essay books as they battle the coming cold weather.

Also in November as the year draws to a close, readers sought out books that could help them close out the year in a good way and prepare well for the new. The second-bestselling book at Kyobo Book Centre was *Q&A a Day: 5-Year Journal* while at no. 9 at Interpark was *The Intellectual Devotional*, showing readers' hopes to improve themselves in the new year.

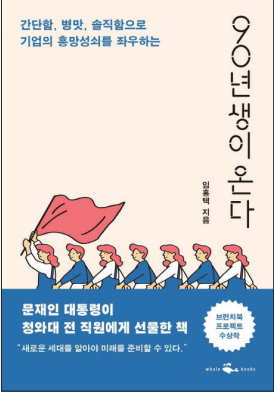
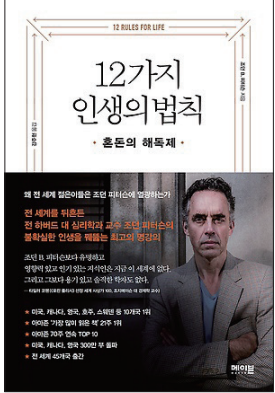
\* The following lists were compiled from information on the official websites of Kyobo Book Centre and Interpark based on data from the third week of November.

<Top 10 Bestsellers>

No.	Kyobo Book Centre	Interpark
1		
	<p><b><i>Trend Korea 2020</i></b>            Author   Kim Nan-do, SNU Life Sciences Research Center            Publisher   Miraebok            Genre   Economics/Management</p>	<p><b><i>Trend Korea 2020</i></b>            Author   Kim Nan-do, SNU Life Sciences Research Center            Publisher   Miraebok            Genre   Economics/Management</p>
2		
	<p><b><i>Q&amp;A a Day: 5-Year Journal</i></b>            Author   Potter Style            Publisher   Tornado            Genre   Self-development</p>	<p><b><i>8 (Eight)</i></b>            Author   Lee Ji-sung            Publisher   Chai Garden            Genre   Self-development</p>
3		
	<p><b><i>Either Tired or Nothing You Like</i></b>            Author   Geulbaewoo (Kim Dong-hyuk)            Publisher   Ganghanbyul            Genre   Essay</p>	<p><b><i>Either Tired or Nothing You Like</i></b>            Author   Geulbaewoo (Kim Dong-hyuk)            Publisher   Ganghanbyul            Genre   Essay</p>

No.	Kyobo Book Centre	Interpark
4	 <p><b>8 (Eight)</b> Author   Lee Ji-sung Publisher   Chai Garden Genre   Self-development</p>	 <p><b>Seol Min-seok's Great Adventure into Korean History 12</b> Author   Seol Min-seok Publisher   iHuman Genre   Children</p>
5	 <p><b>The Longevity Paradox</b> Author   Steven Gundry Publisher   Bronstein Genre   Essay</p>	 <p><b>Now Is Good As Is</b> Author   Pomnyun Publisher   Jungto Publishing Genre   Essay</p>
6	 <p><b>Now Is Good As Is</b> Author   Pomnyun Publisher   Jungto Publishing Genre   Essay</p>	 <p><b>The Longevity Paradox</b> Author   Steven Gundry Publisher   Bronstein Genre   Essay</p>

No.	Kyobo Book Centre	Interpark
7	 <p><b>부의 인문학</b> Liberal Arts Study of Wealth Author   Brownstone Publisher   Open Mind Genre   Economics/Management</p>	 <p><b>작가들의 비밀스러운 삶</b> La Vie Secrete Des Ecrivains Author   Guillaume Musso Publisher   Balgunsesang Genre   Novel</p>
8	 <p><b>I Want To Be a Good Person Only To You</b> Author   Yoo Gwi-seon Publisher   Studio Audrey Genre   Essay</p>	 <p><b>Ji-young Kim Born in '82</b> Author   Cho Nam-joo Publisher   Minumsa Genre   Novel</p>
9	 <p><b>Ji-young Kim Born in '82</b> Author   Cho Nam-joo Publisher   Minumsa Genre   Novel</p>	 <p><b>The Intellectual Devotional</b> Author   David S. Kidder, Noah Oppenheim Publisher   Wisdom House Genre   Liberal Arts</p>

No.	Kyobo Book Centre	Interpark
10	 <p>간단함, 명맛, 솔직함으로 기업의 흥망성쇠를 좌우하는</p> <p>90's Kids Are Coming</p> <p>문재인 대통령이 청와대 전 직원에게 선물한 책</p> <p>“새로운 세대를 알아야 미래를 준비할 수 있다.”</p> <p>보통사람 프로젝트 주성하</p>	 <p>12 RULES FOR LIFE</p> <p>12가지 인생의 법칙</p> <p>· 혼돈의 해독제 ·</p> <p>왜 먼 세계 젊은이들은 조던 피터슨에 열광하는가 진 시대를 뒤론는 진 위대도에 승리함의 관습 조던 피터슨의 불확실한 인생을 꿰뚫는 최고의 명강의</p> <p>조던 B. 피터슨은 다 유명하고 영광이 흐르던 인기 있는 개성있는 개성 이 세계에 없다. 그리고 그보다 좋게 살고 싶어한 사람도 없다.</p> <p>· 2018 대한민국 베스트셀러 1위 (출판 1주일 만에 10만 부 돌파)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· 미국, UK, 캐나다, 호주, 스페인 등 10여 개국</li> <li>· 100여 개국 100여 개 출판사 동시 계약</li> <li>· 100여 개국 100여 개 출판사 동시 계약</li> <li>· 미국, UK, 캐나다, 호주, 스페인 등 10여 개국</li> <li>· 100여 개국 100여 개 출판사 동시 계약</li> </ul>
	<p><b><i>90's Kids Are Coming</i></b> Author   Im Hong-taek Publisher   Whale Book Genre   Economics/Management</p>	<p><b><i>12 Rules for Life</i></b> Author   Jordan B. Peterson Publisher   Maven Genre   Liberal Arts</p>

## Book Summary

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# Export Prospects of Korean Books

KPIPA's Choice for Supporting Abstract · Sample Translation

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*The world is beautiful even with tears*

### 1. Publication Details

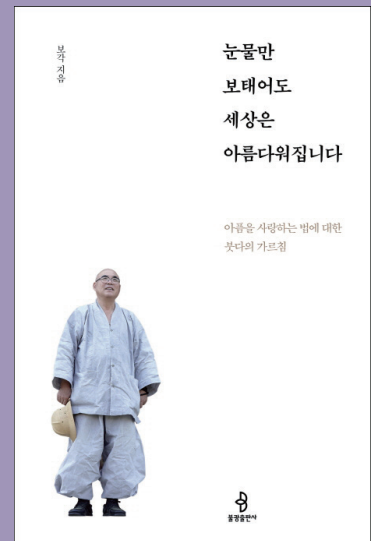
Imprint | Bulkwang Media  
 Title | The world is beautiful even with tears  
 Subtitle | Buddha's teachings on how to love pain  
 Author | Venerable Bokak  
 Genre | Humanities: social science  
 Format | 150×214  
 Binding | Paperback  
 Pages | 336pages  
 ISBN | 9788974796730

### 2. Contact

Name | Choi Changho  
 Phone | +82-2-420-3200  
 Email | pepsichoi@naver.com  
 URL | <http://www.bulkwang.co.kr>

### 3. Marketing Information

Keyword | Buddhims; Buddhist precepts  
 Target Readership | Young adults and up



#### **4. About the Author**

Venerable Jeongnyeom took his vow under the guidance of Venerable Huichan, also known as the Forever Changing One. Venerable Jeongnyeom graduated from Joong-ang Sangha University, and he was the Chief Priest at Sangwonsa Temple on Odaesan Mountain. Presently, he is the Chief Priest at Woljeongsa Temple on Odaesan Mountain. During the Vassa (Buddhist Lent), he stays at the temple to focus only on meditation with his fellow priests. He established Munsu Seonwon (Munsu Meditation Center) and Donglim Seonwon (Donglim Meditation Center) for practicing Buddhists. In 2012, he received the Camelia Award, an Order of Civil Merit. He was a board director of Dongguk University and BTN (Buddhist True Network) and also a representative of Citizens' Coalition for Economic Justice. Presently, he is the director of the One-Hundred-Year Plan Center at Joyge Order of Korean Buddhism. He is committed to conceptualizing the role of Buddhism and implementing its precepts for future generations.

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

The writer of the book is a Buddhist monk. Venerable Bokak studied social welfare in 1974, and he has been a professor in the Department of Buddhist Social Welfare at Joong-ang Sangha University for the past thirty-five years. He is a scholar and also a practicing activist who is committed to expanding the welfare infrastructure under the Buddhist precepts by establishing senior homes and centers for physically challenged children. In the book, Venerable Bokak introduces and explains the essential ideas of Buddhism—ideas that he practices in his own life—in an easy-to-understand manner. By introducing the stories of Buddha (his birth, taking his vow, his attainment of Great Wisdom, and his enlightenment) as well as the epigrams of master priests, Venerable Bokak explains what Buddhism is and how its ideas should be practiced in everyday life. The ultimate goal in life is to practice compassion for yourself as well as the people around you, and the book reiterates the truth that only when you practice compassion can you be truly free. In the book, Venerable Bokak suggests solutions based on the Buddhist teachings to conflicts in life, discords among people, and social problems. The book teaches or asks readers to ponder on the problems of everyday life: why we try to have or possess more things instead of learning how to be content with what we have; the status of people is not decided by their birth but by their behaviors; just as different instruments create a harmony of sound, a religion should be open-minded about other religions; doing what we can do now is a way to live immortality. The book will have readers contemplate on how one can live in harmony with others by following the Buddhist teachings. A being cannot exist by him or herself; we exist so that we will live well with others and die well. The last stage of enlightenment is to “enter the market with help-bestowing hands,” meaning one must go into the world and share the pain of people. Venerable Bokak’s life is an example of this precept. To him, the Buddhist teachings begin and end with the idea of compassion. He also

stresses the fact that the role of Buddhist priests is to offer compassion to the world and to draw people to find compassion in themselves rather than working as messengers of Buddhist ideas, for in this day and age, anyone can easily find information about Buddhism, especially online. Venerable Bokak believes that if Buddha were to revisit this world, he would come back as a social welfare worker.

## *Talkative Moon*

### 1. Publication Details

Imprint | Who's Got My Tail  
Title | Talkative Moon  
Author | Cha Jaehyuk  
Illustrator | Choi Eunyoung  
Genre | Picture book  
Format | 196×242  
Binding | Hardcover  
Pages | 44pages  
ISBN | 9791195641352



### 2. Contact

Name | Hwang Junghye  
Phone | +82-10-7193-8899  
Email | whosgotmytail@gmail.com  
URL | www.whosgotmytail.com

### 3. Marketing Information

Keyword | Picture book for infants  
Target Readership | Children ages 3 to 8 years old

### 4. About the Author and Illustrator

Author - Cha Jaehyuk

Along with the illustrator Choi Eunyoung, Cha Jaehyuk makes interesting stories that help children to grow their imagination. He has authored *500 Won*, *A Weird Repair Shop*, and *In My Mind*.

Illustrator - Choi Eunyoung

Choi Eunyoung was selected as the Illustrator of the Year at the 2016 Bologna Children's Book Fair. Choi has illustrated *500 Won*, *A Weird Repair Shop*, *In My Mind*, and *Puffy Snow*.

## 5. About the Book

One night after the rain, a child finds village people in the square looking up at the Moon and laughing. The child wonders why they are laughing like that. The people inform him that the Moon tells them interesting stories every night. How can the child also hear the Moon's stories?

### *Island of Crying Bamboo*

#### 1. Publication Details

Imprint | Sigongsa  
Title | Island of Crying Bamboo  
Author | Song Siwoo  
Genre | Genre literature  
Format | 130×203  
Binding | Paperback  
Pages | 368pages  
ISBN | 9788952739087

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#### 3. Marketing Information

Keyword | genre, whodunnit, mystery, murder, island  
Target Readership | teenagers, young adults, adults

#### 4. About the Author

Born in Daejeon, South Korea, Song Siwoo studied philosophy at Korea University. She made her literary debut in 2008 when her short story "Good Friends" won the New Writer's Award hosted by the quarterly Mystery. Her novels *The House with Red Lilacs*, *A Running Investigator*, and *Here Comes the Black Dog* have all been optioned for television. The TV series *A Running Investigator* began airing on OCN in September 2019. In 2017, Song published the short story collection, *The Bones of a Child*. She currently works at the National Human Rights Commission of Korea. Her interests include law and ethics as well as the polemics of psychiatry.



## 5. About the Book

All of her previous titles have been optioned for screen adaptations! The latest work by Song Siwoo, the author of the TV series, A Running Investigator (aired on OCN).

The first full-fledged mystery novel from the biggest rising star in Korea's genre literature.

Unlike Song Siwoo's previous works, this is a full-fledged mystery novel focusing on tricks and riddles. Although the distinction has become vague in recent years, this work is closer to the classical mystery genre—at the heart of which lies the revelation of the course of criminal action in a given case rather than the motivation. The author successfully presents ingenious yet impeccable twists, building on her solid craft and astute plotting.

It's the night before a storm and strong gusty winds are blowing hard. On a remote island full of bamboo trees called Hojukdo, eight strangers have been invited as monitors for a brand-new training center opening in the near future. The following day, a dead body is found. Someone has been murdered in a way that cannot be explained. Now isolated by the storm, the training center resonates with the eerie sounds of a flute, which couldn't possibly be called a melody. A long-time grudge passed down from mouth to mouth as a folklore over the years, anxiety inside the enclosed space, and the impossible murder. How and why? Who committed such a heinous and bizarre crime?

## *Unexpected Season*

### 1. Publication Details

Imprint | Sigongsa  
Title | Unexpected Season  
Author | Im Haun  
Genre | literature  
Format | 128×188  
Binding | Paperback  
Pages | 280pages  
ISBN | 9788952738684

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### 3. Marketing Information

Keyword | teenagers, high schoolers, friendship, love, bildungsroman, new writer  
Target Readership | teenagers, young adults, adults

### 4. About the Author

Im Haun was born in November 1994 in Seoul, South Korea. Since graduating from a community college, he has been working in the special security industry at Gimpo International Airport. Im began writing novels in 2016.

### 5. About the Book

"It feels like you're the only one who treats me fairly. You avoid everyone."  
A 25-year-old writer's remarkable debut novel surprises us with its fresh perspectives and frank expressions.

"It's my choice—whether or not I'm interested in someone. It's not a matter of course."

The story of us unprocessed by the language of grown-ups.

This is a captivating story about six teenagers—each wounded in a different way—who step out to experience the wider world through their relationships with others. At some point in life, we all go through times of wandering.

Unexpected Season sheds light on that experience through the perspectives and language of teens, rather than through the eyes of adults. The adult helper usually found in novels about a teenage protagonist is absent from this story, which means that the kids must deal with conflicts and obstacles each in their own way. It is touching to see them struggle to find their own path. Given that many novels about teenagers have been filtered through "the eyes of adults," it is not difficult to guess where the novelty of this novel by a young author (born in 1994) comes from.

Eighteen-year-old Ban Yoonhwan shuns the world because of a painful childhood experience. Ji Naroo is an outcast, ostracized from the rest of the world. Troublemaker Kang Eunbi likes Ji Naroo but always gives him the cold shoulder. Model student Kang Byul is tormented by regrets about the past. Perfect kid Yoon Geon has lost touch with his true feelings. These are some of the unique and fascinating characters who take a step forward into the world and share their wounds through their relationships with others. Whether we like it or not, we must deal with human interactions every day. Within that process, sometime we get hurt unknowingly. People say we become adults when we get used to the hurt. Yet, the author asks, "Is getting used to the hurt necessarily a good thing? Or, are we simply becoming hard-hearted?" As stated in the author's preface, Im Haun has written this book in hopes of thawing readers' hearts. Perhaps for that reason, the sincerity and truthfulness we find in the characters—even though they don't promise a bright future or say that everything will be okay—present us with unexpected warmth and consolation.

## Sitcom

### 1. Publication Details

Imprint | Jaeum&Moeum

Title | Sitcom

Author | Bae Joon

Genre | Literature

Format | 120×186

Binding | Hard cover

Pages | 280pages

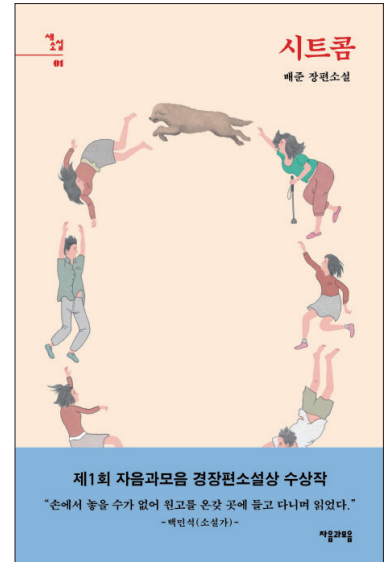
ISBN | 9788954439077

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### 3. Marketing Information

Keyword | Fun; drama; novel; Jaeum & Moeum Novella Award; Bae Joon

Target Readership | young adults, adults

### 4. About the Author

Bae Joon was born in 1990 in Jeju-do. He received the 1st Jaeum & Moeum Novella Award.

### 5. About the Book

The first novel by Bae Joon, a new author who knows how to write a page-turner that draws the reader in. *Sitcom* is the winner of the 1st Jaeum and Moeum Novella Award. The judges (Hwang Gwangsu, Baek Minseok, Bae Sangmin, Pak Kwonil) voted unanimously for the book, raising expectations.

Novelist Baek Minseok, one of the judges, showered the book with high praise for its gripping power, saying, “It’s not always that I enjoy being a judge for a contest this much. I couldn’t put it down—I read it, carrying it around everywhere.” Pak Kwonil called the author “the mutant we’ve been waiting for,” and Bae Sangmin also praised the book for its “ability to draw the reader in with its outlook for the world today.” Bae Joon, who says that he has lived a boring, tedious life and plans to go on living such a life, states that as far as novels go, he “can’t stand anything boring.”

The story is set against the backdrop of a high school, with various characters—students, teachers, parents—undergoing all kinds of funny and absurd situations that occur all of a sudden. The scenes are reminiscent of TV dramas

but are even more dramatic than that. The sentences sound as though they're from a video clip, and the stories unfold with great exaggeration, with several incidents taking place simultaneously. The rowdy episodes, however, continue in an elaborately thought-out manner.

## *One day a cat came to me*

### 1. Publication Details

Imprint | Bulkwang Media

Title | One day a cat came to me

Subtitle | The philosophy of a cat living its life at its best

Author | Venerable Bokyung

Genre | Literature

Format | 143×215

Binding | Paperback

Pages | 264pages

ISBN | 9788974793753

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### 3. Marketing Information

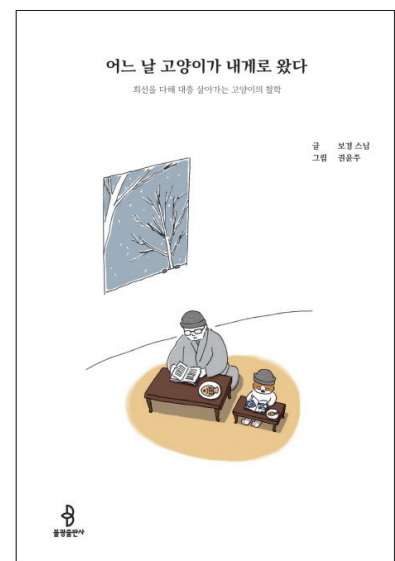
Keyword | Essay; Animal; Temple

Target Readership | Adult

### 4. About the Author

The venerable Bokyung entered the Buddhist priesthood under the venerable monk Hyeonho at Songgwangsa Temple. He served as the director of education at Jogye Order Education Center, member of Central Council, Executive Director of Social Welfare Foundation of Jogye Order, and the head monk of Beopryeon Temple.

He is the author of Joy of Life, Strolling in the Forest of Tales, Happy Prayer, and Daily Meditation That Will Change Your Life. His anthologies of lectures and essays include the following titles: Joy of Meditation, Study of the Lotus Sutra, Lectures on 42 Sutras, Yearn Act and It Will Come True, Joy of Reading Suttanipata, Study of Suseonsa, Lectures on Zen Riddles and Chanting, and Wisdom of Life Derived from Agama.



## 5. About the Book

In the winter of 2017, the venerable Bokyung completed his term of twelve years as the head of an urban temple. He was on his way to a mountain temple when he came upon a cat out of nowhere in the middle of the woods.

For the duration of the winter, they served as each other's mirror into themselves. Life is whole as it is, for just one person if not for two people but the togetherness will bring about a new experience. This book contains an inner dialogue of the two.

"If you are well, then I am well," is the Ancient Roman greeting. In other words, when my life is going well, then it is ultimately benefitting the universe. The "you" here refer to all things that are related to one because nothing in the Universe is separate from me. The mountain, field, wind, flower, and tree could be us, and the time and space within us where all things exist are us.

That is why the Buddhists believe the foremost prerequisite to live a harmonious life is to gain oneness. Think of your family. Don't we feel thankful to our loved ones for the simplest reason that they are well?

How would you define the way you are by looking at a cat? This question could lead to another one of "Are you well, yourself?" Even though we live in an era of the most sophisticated technology, people feel more alone and alienated. Be it a person or an animal, a cat or anyone, if you are prepared to treat a being with warmth and compassion, then this entity called "I" can live a fuller life. Thus, be it a cat or a human being, everyone deserves to be happy for the simple reason of being born. Hence, this is a book that can draw out the latent compassion in all of us through a "cat."

## *Drawing Statues of Peace*

### 1. Publication Details

Imprint | BORI PUBLISHING COMPANY

Title | Drawing Statues of Peace

Subtitle | A trip to illustrate peace monuments  
in 75 places in Korea

Author | Kim Sejin

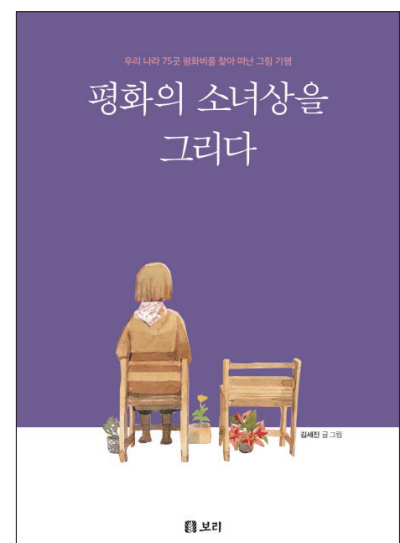
Genre | Humanities, social sciences

Format | 130×185

Binding | Paperback

Pages | 168pages

ISBN | 9791163140092



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## 3. Marketing Information

Keyword | History; Korean History; Modern History of Korea; Comfort Women for Japanese Military; Sex Slaves for Japanese Military; Civil Movement; Peace Movement

Target Readership | Teenagers, young adults, adults

## 4. About the Author

Born in Jeonju, North Jeolla Province, author Kim Sejin is an aspiring cartoonist in his 30s who spent his childhood during the Civil Administrations, his teenage years during the Kim Daejung and Roh Moohyun Administrations, and his 20s during the Lee Myungbak and Park Geunhye Administrations.

He stayed in Australia for 2 years from 2013 as part of a working holiday program, and since January 2016, he has been taking part, as an official guardian of the Statue of Peace, in civil movements calling for an annulment of the Korea-Japan Agreement of December 28 and a just resolution to the issue of the Japanese military's sex slave system. From May 15, 2017, for 104 days, he traveled the country to find and draw 75 Statues of Peace. He is currently using those drawings to let people know of the issue.

## 5. About the Book

Drawing Statues of Peace was released on August 14, the International Memorial Day for Comfort Women.

Author Kim Sejin began to take part in social movements in 2016 as a guardian of the statue in Jongno. One day, a person came up to him and asked if he knew how many such statues there were in Korea and where they were located.

That's when he realized he knew nothing about the statues. The person handed him the "National Peace Statue Map," and Kim decided to go find the statues and draw them. He worked part-time in factories and on construction sites for several months to save for the trip, during which he also checked the exact locations of the statues. And on May 15, 2017, at last, he set out on a journey. Starting from the statue in front of the Consulate-General of Japan in Busan, he went across the provinces of Gyeongsang, Jeolla, Chungcheong, Gangwon, and Gyeonggi, arriving in Seoul as the last stop, and encountering 75 Peace Statues along the way. He drew by day and slept beside the statues by night. The record of this 104-day trip is what Drawing Statues of Peace is all about. Each statue has a different face, posture, and background, which Kim has illustrated with

clear watercolors. Now, the statues are not just about “comfort women”—they are the symbol of the peace and civil movements. The author also includes stories he heard about how each unique statue was built.

The book carries the author’s hope to create a small opportunity for the annulment of the Korea-Japan Agreement and a sincere apology from Japan so that the sex slave issue can be truly resolved in the end.