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# K-Book Trends

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TOPIC

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## AI Reshapes the Reading Landscape

From technology to everyday language

Written by Kai Song (Editor-in-chief at Hanbit Media)

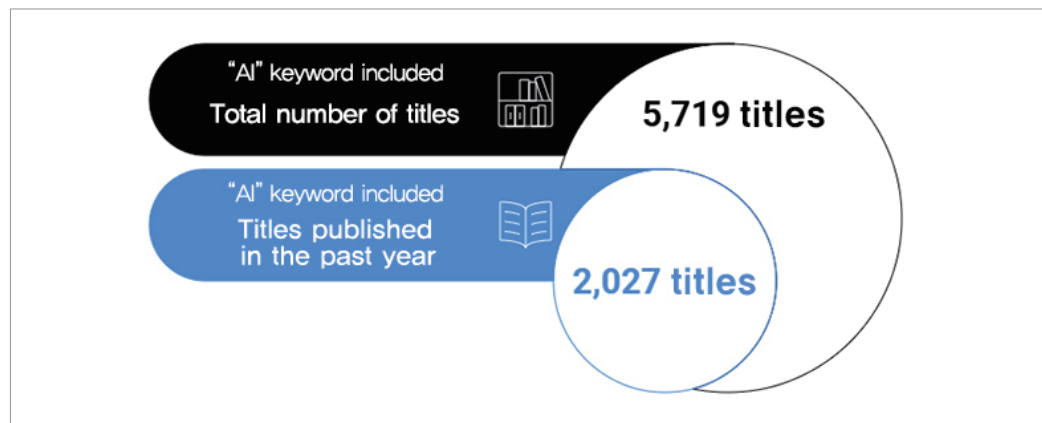
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### A “quiet revolution” in our bookshelves

According to statistics from the online bookstore Aladin, out of roughly 65,000 new titles published in a single year, no fewer than 2,027 carried the keyword “artificial intelligence (AI).” Even more striking is the pace: of the 5,719 AI-related books registered with Aladin to date, fully 35.4%, more than one-third, were released in just this past year. This is no mere trend, but a market-shaking “explosion.” This surge is fundamentally unlike the period before ChatGPT. In the past, the AI section was filled with specialist texts on machine learning and deep learning for developers; now it has been taken over by practical guides and business strategy titles targeting professionals, creators, and small-business owners. The

tidal surge of AI has at last broken free of specialist domains and swept into everyday life.

#### How many titles contain the keyword “AI”



Two seismic waves mark the turning points of this change. The first arrived in November 2022 with the launch of ChatGPT. Reaching 100 million users in just two months, this astonishing tool pulled AI out of research labs and onto everyone’s screens. In the face of this first wave, the market was swiftly reorganized by practical books on the usage of ChatGPT, opening the curtain on AI’s mass adoption. The second wave struck in 2024 with even greater force. It has become natural for people to use AI for drawing illustrations, editing videos, or drafting business plans. Beyond simple curiosity, people began to recognize AI as a “tool for addressing the problems of their work and daily lives.”

This trend has brought significant changes to the city market as well. Readers now seek specific answers on how to integrate advanced technologies such as “AI agents,” “multimodal AI,” and

“retrieval-augmented generation (RAG)” into their own work and creative practices. No longer content with merely being “users,” they aspire to become “designers” who can build and train their own AI systems. This desire has opened the next chapter in the AI book market.

Area	Keywords and examples	Characteristics
Practical / Workplace Use	AI agents, guides on generative AI, ChatGPT	Customized usage guides for office workers (automation, prompt engineering)
Technology / Development	LLMs, RAG, LangChain, AI engineering	Works that delve into advanced concepts, written for practicing engineers
Creator Economy	Video, Midjourney, content design, advertisement	Works focused on AI-based creative activities and generating extra income
Business / Strategy	AI trends, AI strategies, AI leadership	Works for corporations and leaders that examine the impact of AI technologies on industry and business, such as <i>Park Tae-Woong's Lecture on AI</i> (Hanbit Biz) and <i>The Era of AGI</i> (Hanbit Media)
Society / Ethics / Future Outlook	Future society and AI, AI ethics, copyright	Works reflecting on the social implications of technology, by authors such as Yuval Harari and Ethan Mollick

## What sparked the “big bang” of AI books?

So, what has powered such a dramatic shift? It can be summarized from four angles. First, AI has transformed from “novelty technology” to “capable colleague.” AI has ceased to be something exceptional and has become a natural part of everyday life. Tasks like meeting-note summaries, draft reports, and image generation now sit alongside Excel and PowerPoint as standard tools of knowledge work. With AI now embedded in everyday

work infrastructure, a massive wave of “let me try it, too” has been propelling the market for related books.

Second, the grammar of creation is shifting toward being “AI-native.” From planning through production to distribution, AI now pulses through every vein of the content industry. Keywords like “short-form video production” and “ad copy generation” appear on book covers as a matter of course. Readers now flock not to books that merely list functions, but to those that map the entire creative process, the “A to Z of making,” through AI.

Third, bookstores themselves are serving as “megaphones” for AI books. Dedicated sections for AI titles and promotional displays at major bookstores act as powerful marketing engines themselves. Where readers’ eyes linger, books sell; what sells, inspires more titles. This is the very “economics of curated promotions,” where supply creates demand and demand in turn stimulates further supply, convincing readers that the world is filled with nothing but talk of AI.

Last but not least, AI education has shifted from “optional” to “essential.” As AI literacy and prompt engineering entered corporate and academic curricula, a stable market for “textbooks” has emerged. Unlike short-lived fads, this demand is institutionally rooted. The AI book market thus spans a layered ecosystem, from “light introductions” to “weighty course materials.”

## How to find “true gems” in the deluge of AI titles

With so many AI titles pouring forth, how can readers avoid losing their way? I recommend choosing AI books according to the following three principles. First, set a “goal” rather than a “tool.” Instead of vague curiosity, such as “Well, because AI is all the rage these days,” define a specific problem you need to solve, for example, “I want to cut campaign planning time by 30%.” A book that provides a clear workflow and measurable indicators for solving that problem will be the true solution that saves your time. Second, focus on the “essence” rather than knowledge with a short shelf life. The specific functions of AI may change overnight, but the core principles of problem-solving do not change easily. What you should learn from books is not the ever-shifting location of buttons, but solid “frameworks” that endure over time, such as problem definition, results evaluation, and organizational application. One should note that books carry wisdom that endures.

Third, choose books that prove out the “process” rather than merely showing the “results.” A book that stops at “Look at this amazing image I made with AI” is difficult to apply to your work. What we are really curious about is the story behind it: “What idea did you start with? How did you solve the problem after dozens of failures? And as a result, how much did you reduce the cost?” The commands, that is, the prompts, needed to obtain proper outcomes are what truly matter. Only books that contain the

“language of the field” through concrete results and trial and error can fulfill not only the ability to use AI, but also real, practical needs.

### **It is time to ask the question**

Let us return to the number mentioned earlier: over the past year, the keyword “AI” appeared 2,027 times among new releases. This figure goes beyond a passing fad and poses an important question to us: “Amid countless possibilities, what will we choose, and how will we put them to use?” AI has moved past the stage of proving “what it can do” to asking us, “so what will YOU do?” In a rapidly changing world, the only way not to lose your way is to equip yourself not with piecemeal features, but with an unwavering personal “architecture and context.” May the AI book on your shelf serve as a fine compass for that journey.

**SPECIAL PROJECT**

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[New Ways of Walking Through Cities ⑩]

**A World  
Carried by the Yangtze River:  
Shanghai**Written by Jung Hwan-Jung

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Shanghai has always been a paradoxical space in Chinese history. What is now the city of Shanghai was once Shanghai County (上海縣), under Jiangsu Province (江蘇省), functioning as an administrative town and regional market-port, though it was no match for Suzhou (蘇州市) or Hangzhou (杭州市). Everything changed in 1842, after the First Opium War and the signing of the Treaty of Nanjing, when Shanghai was designated as a treaty port. European powers established concessions, exercising administrative and policing authority and enjoying extraterritorial rights. From China's perspective, it was hardly different from colonial subjugation.



Yet Shanghai rapidly developed alongside the influx of foreign powers. Rival empires competed to exhibit their strength, and individuals carved out their own spheres through wealth and information. The reason why the Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea was established in Shanghai on April 11, 1919, was also because the city was a battleground of world powers, where Japan's influence had its limits. The site of the provisional government itself lay within the French Concession, allowing relative freedom from Japanese repression. In this way, Shanghai is not only internationally significant but also holds a special meaning for Korea. Today, it is bustling with trade and tourism, but beneath that flow are much deeper, intangible ties that have stretched on like the Yangtze River itself.

## A serial killer in Old Shanghai, brimming with foreign flair



*Cannibals in Old Shanghai*

A vast space where people of different backgrounds and purposes weave their lives together becomes a story in itself. In such places, where language, culture, and race collide, conflict is unavoidable. The changing landscape of Shanghai under foreign powers thus offered an especially compelling setting for creators. In those days, Shanghai was a city where nothing was too surprising and no one too unusual, not even a *jiangshi* (Chinese hopping vampire).

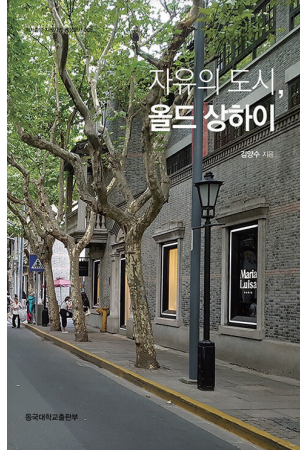
“This place, called the Paris of the East, was a port swarming with foreigners from all over the world, a city overflowing with outsiders. For a *jiangshi* starving for foreign energy, it was the perfect hunting ground and the ideal home.”

- from *Cannibals in Old Shanghai*

Author Kim Yi-Sak, long a fan of Chinese and Hong Kong dramas and music, set the story in Old Shanghai at the height of its chaos. The short story, *Cannibals in Old Shanghai* (Goldenbough), features a *jiangshi*, a Chinese vampire that was also hugely popular in Korea during the 1980s and 1990s, as both protagonist and narrator. It won a prize in the 1st Urban Fantasy Literature Contest and served as the title story of a collection drawn from popular short works on the publisher's online fiction platform, BritG.

In the story, "I" am resurrected as a *jiangshi* who died centuries ago, now surviving in Shanghai by feeding on foreigners. A suspicious encounter, disguised as chance, pulls "me" into a string of serial murders, where "I" come face to face not with supernatural horrors, but with man-made hell. The story deftly blends the centuries-old Chinese legend of the *jiangshi* with Western tales of cannibalism, recalling the murderous barber from the movie, "Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street," who supplies victims' bodies for meat pies. Fans of gore movies will also recognize the echo of the 1993 Hong Kong film "The Untold Story: Human Meat Roast Pork Buns." Layered onto this is also a case reminiscent of Britain's legendary killer Jack the Ripper, infusing the story with a deep undercurrent of tension.

## A haven for artistic freedom



*City of Freedom, Old Shanghai*

Shanghai has been as irresistible to scholars as to creators. Few other East Asian cities have drawn such a diverse mix of people and exerted such global influence. And yet, its importance cannot be confined to just two centuries of modern history. The author of *City of Freedom, Old Shanghai* (Dongguk University Press), a professor of Chinese literature and former head of the Society of Chinese Literature, sought to make this story known to a broader audience.

“Secondly, on a nation-state level, Shanghai at the time was a dynamic space built by people who had migrated in search of ‘freedom’ from the constraints of nationalism. In an era when nation-states were being established worldwide and competing through nationalism, Shanghai’s ‘extraterritorial

concessions' offered refuge from such pressures, and this allowed the city to grow into an international metropolis.”

- from *City of Freedom, Old Shanghai*

The power vacuum created by competing forces in Shanghai bred an unusual kind of freedom. And, that freedom, in turn, nourished the growth of art and culture faster and healthier than elsewhere. For artists facing oppression in their countries, especially writers whose creativity was stifled under totalitarian regimes, it was only natural to flock to Shanghai as they confronted a new era. The author, who has long studied Chinese literature, vividly and engagingly recounts the Shanghai that artists lived and created in, or the Shanghai they longed for or despaired of.

The book reads less like an academic treatise, but more like a warm, companionable guide written from the perspective of someone who loves culture and the arts. What especially stands out is its fresh reinterpretation of not only literature, but also film and music through the space of Shanghai from the early to mid-1900s. Writings and records left by Korean literary writers such as Lee Kwang-Soo, Shim Hun, and Pi Cheon-Deuk, as well as Japanese writers like Ryūnosuke Akutagawa (芥川龍之介) and Haruki Murakami (村上春樹) about Shanghai, serve as essential compasses for understanding what the city meant to artists of that era.

“Old Shanghai,” which gave birth to the modern city



*Day and Night in Shanghai*

While *City of Freedom, Old Shanghai*, introduced earlier, presents Shanghai’s history and its culture and arts through people and works, *Day and Night in Shanghai* (Greenbee) heads a little deeper. It offers an academic account of the emergence of urban culture and the formation of the urbanite in Shanghai during the early 20th century. Yet, that does not make it a stiff or difficult book. Through concrete cases and records from the time, it shows in greater detail the process by which Shanghai came to hold its present stature.

“These glimpses into Shanghai’s landscapes may appear to revive a historical sensibility, but in truth, they contribute to the creation of a pseudo-historical space that can function only through the erasure of its broader contexts. In other words, they spread an ‘imagined nostalgia.’”

- from *Day and Night in Shanghai*

The author explains that the nostalgia for “Old Shanghai,” which surged around the turn of the 2000s, began in China in the 1990s and spread across the globe. In that process, ideologies such as imperialism and communism were diluted, and a characteristically Chinese market economy began to take shape. In particular, Chapter 2, “How media reveals the world,” explains in detail, through a variety of cases, the process by which Shanghai absorbed Western influences. It shows how newly emergent or rapidly developing media, magazines above all, penetrated the everyday lives of Shanghai’s citizens.

Things were the same for film. It notes that the 1930s, when leftist cinema, cloaked in the trappings of melodrama, was popular among white-collar employees and wage workers, marked the heyday of Shanghai film. It then offers a clear, well-organized analysis of how these new media affected not only Shanghai, but China, East Asia, and ultimately the wider world. Reading the book makes clear why that period has come to be symbolized, centered on China, as an “age of nostalgia.” It also leaves you with the sense that nostalgia for “Lao Shanghai,” or “Old Shanghai,” is still very much ongoing.

Today, as of 2025, Shanghai is home to some 25 million people across 6,341 square kilometers. It is the only city in China that has its own official emblem, in a country where local self-government is not recognized. Hong Kong and Macau have their own symbols as well, but they differ from Shanghai, as they are special administrative regions returned from British and Portuguese rule. Shanghai’s



emblem underlines its singular importance within China. This shows just how exceptional Shanghai's significance is, even within China.

A Chinese saying goes: “To see China's past, look to Xi'an (西安市); to see its present, look to Shanghai; to see its future, look to Shenzhen (深圳市).” As such, the brilliance of China today is most vividly displayed in Shanghai. By the 1910s, Shanghai had secured its place as Asia's premier city, and by the 1930s, swing jazz was in vogue. The city's cosmopolitan sensibility was so advanced that it absorbed jazz nearly at the same time as the US, where the genre was born. That is why even today, many people travel not to experience China, but to experience Shanghai itself, anticipating the dazzling present they will encounter in a city that is China's brightest, yet the least characteristically Chinese.

## EXPORT CASE

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## The Export Case of *Hello Baby*

Women's stories have strong appeal  
in the global literary market

Written by Lee Hye-Myung  
(Rights Team at EunHaengNaMu Publishing)

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Published in March 2023, *Hello Baby* (EunHaengNaMu Publishing) by Kim Eui-Kyung is a novel that tells the stories of women struggling with infertility, an issue that has long been overlooked in our society. In recent years, infertility has become more common, and I even had acquaintances seeking treatment at clinics, but my knowledge was limited to the fact that the procedures placed a heavy burden on women's bodies. For me, reading *Hello Baby* was a shockingly fresh experience, as the novel vividly and realistically depicts the treatment process and the psychology of women who choose to undergo it, making it feel almost like reportage. At the time, there was a steady demand overseas for women's stories, and since attention was being paid not only to infertility treatments, but also to the social and cultural pressures imposed on women,

in particular, I believed that women readers abroad would surely relate to *Hello Baby*.



Korean and German editions of *Hello Baby*

### The translation process of *Hello Baby*

One of the most crucial elements when it comes to export is preparing an English sample. However, because preparing a sample translation is a significant financial burden for publishers, most publishers actively utilize support programs run by institutions such as the Literature Translation Institute of Korea (LTI) or the Publication Industry Promotion Agency of Korea (KPIPA). Reflecting the overseas interest in women's stories mentioned earlier, *Hello Baby* was considered for export potential, and soon after publication, we applied to several translation support programs with the aim of preparing a translation as quickly as possible. While waiting for results, we received an email from a translator who said the book had moved her deeply



KPIPA booths and exhibition hall at the 2023 Frankfurt Book Fair

and that she wished to do the sample translation. However, since the results of the translation support programs had not yet been announced at the time, we had no choice but to reply that it was difficult to confirm a translation project in advance. Later, fortunately, *Hello Baby* was selected for KPIPA's sample translation support program. We reconnected with the translator who had expressed interest, and work began on the English sample and synopsis.

That same year, EunHaengNaMu Publishing participated in the Frankfurt Book Fair. With extensive experience in exporting Korean titles and a consistent track record of publishing Korean literature, the company prioritized export meetings. Then, Shinwon

Agency proposed a meeting with Peters Fraser and Dunlop (PFD), a UK-based literary agency. PFD was already well known for working with good literary authors around the world, so the proposal was a welcome opportunity. It was both surprising and thrilling to realize how much interest foreign agencies now had in Korean writers and literature. Additionally, since the English sample and synopsis were completed just before the fair, *Hello Baby* was fully prepared to head to Frankfurt.

### **The export process of *Hello Baby***

At the Frankfurt meeting with PFD, we presented a rights guide containing information on the rights sales of EunHaengNaMu Publishing's titles and introduced books that might be of interest. PFD expressed the strongest interest in works dealing with women's stories, so we immediately introduced *Hello Baby*. When they heard that the novel portrayed solidarity among women going to infertility clinics, with each chapter presenting the story of women from different backgrounds and ages, their attention was instantly drawn. They said it was exactly the kind of book they were looking for, and requested materials as quickly as possible. PFD also explained how they handle exclusive agency agreements and asked for our thoughts. However, because we knew from experience that a genuine evaluation after reviewing the manuscript was more important than initial enthusiasm, we hoped this would mark the beginning of a meaningful partnership

with an agency interested in Korean literature rather than expecting immediate results.

After returning from Frankfurt, we sent the requested materials to PFD through Shinwon Agency. To our surprise, we received a proposal for exclusive representation of *Hello Baby* within just two days. Even more impressively, they had already contacted the translator who worked on the sample. While we had worked with agencies in exclusive formats before, such a quick and enthusiastic engagement from an overseas agency was unprecedented. What left the deepest impression was their concrete plan, laying out when and how they wanted to publish the book across the UK, the US, and Europe, demonstrating clear commitment to the export of *Hello Baby*. Although other agencies were also reviewing a contract for *Hello Baby* at the time, PFD's proactive interest and concrete plans made it easy for both the author and the publisher to reach a consensus.

### ***Hello Baby's* advancement into the European market**

Less than a month after beginning exclusive representation with PFD, we received our first publication proposal from the German publisher Aufbau Verlag. It was a traditional literary house, and while the advance was considerable, what mattered most was that it was the first export contract for the author. PFD predicted that a German deal would open more doors in Europe, and indeed, soon after, publication proposals arrived from the Netherlands and

the UK. In particular, a heartfelt letter from the editor at Fourth Estate, a HarperCollins imprint in the UK, deeply moved not only the author but also EunHaengNaMu Publishing.



Logos of Aufbau Verlag and Fourth Estate

Toward the end of 2023, PFD sought to secure additional contracts across more language markets before the year was over. As soon as news of the UK deal became known, Hogarth Books, part of Random House in the US, sent a pre-emptive offer, again with an accompanying letter from the editor addressed to the author. Having so often sent letters from editors when contracting important foreign titles, it was deeply gratifying to be on the receiving end this time, and for Kim Eui-Kyung, the experience could not have been more rewarding.

In just a few months, contracts were concluded in Germany, the Netherlands, the UK, and the US, soon followed by Italy, Türkiye, and Japan - bringing the total to seven countries. The book is scheduled for publication this year in Germany and the Netherlands, and we look forward to the response from international readers. Reflecting on the export journey of *Hello Baby*, it seems clear that the enthusiastic dedication of the

publisher, translator, and agency came together with perfect timing to produce such strong results. Personally, I was once again reminded how vital it is for a literary agency to have both conviction in a work and the ability to execute decisively. It is our hope that many more meaningful export experiences with precious Korean works will follow in the years to come.

## ONE-LINER QUOTES

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## Records of Literature and Life

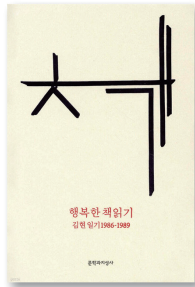
Book club specialist's pick

Written by Kim Min-Young (director at Soongrye Munhakdang)

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Kim Min-Young is a freelance writer whose profession revolves around “book-reading clubs.” After working as a TV writer and publishing journalist, she became a freelance writer at the learning community “Soongrye Munhakdang (송례문학당).” She studied at Korea University’s College of Media & Communication. Her books include *I Go to the Book Club Again Today* (Book by Book) and *Overcome the Fear of Writing the First Sentence* (Chungrim). She has also co-authored *Is It Only Me That Finds Writing a Review Difficult?* (xbooks), *The Power of Reading By Asking Questions* (Book by Book), and *There Are Picture Books That Give Strength* (Seomdre Publishing).

The book, *Happy Reading*, is a kind of book journal worth opening if you want to revisit the “memory” of Korean literature. It is an interesting record that satisfies the curiosity of those who wonder about the crossroads that today’s Korean literature has



### *Happy Reading*

Written by Kim Hyun, published by Moonji Publishing



When I read the works of confident critics,  
my heart grows confident too,  
When I read the works of timid writers,  
my heart grows timid as well,

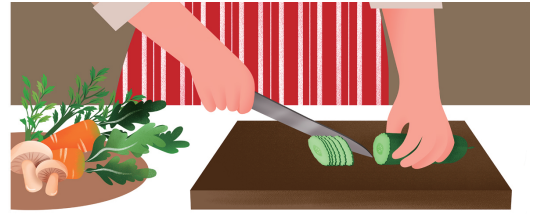
passed through. Covering the years from 1986 to 1989, the book acts like a magnifying glass, exposing the inner layers of Korean literature during that period. Its author, Kim Hyun (1942–1990), was a passionate literary critic who never hesitated to show both affection for and sharp criticism of Korean literature. The book vividly conveys Kim Hyun’s voice, reflecting his wide engagement with both Korean and international literature.

This book ranges in form from brief two-line notes to full-length critical essays, making it a free and varied reading experience. The author’s attitude, endorsing works he loves with enthusiasm and questioning shortcomings without hesitation, comes across almost as a unique “method of reading.” If you read as Kim Hyun did - asking questions, marveling, and keeping records - you may find your own book journal taking shape. I recommend this book to readers who wish to chronicle their reading without being confined to the formats of book reports, reviews, or critiques.



### *Knife Marks*

Written by Kim Ae-Ran, published by Changbi Publishers



At the tip of my mother's knife  
lingered the indifference of one  
who had spent her life feeding others.  
To me, she was not a weeping woman,  
nor one who wore makeup, nor one who submitted—  
but a woman who held a knife.

Writer Kim Ae-Ran's short story, *Knife Marks*, is a slim, pocket-sized book with illustrations. This work, which earned the author the Lee Hyo-Seok Literary Award, is known to draw on autobiographical elements, giving readers a glimpse into how her parents met, married, and raised children, making it feel like a kind of "Kim Ae-Ran manual." Still, it should not be mistaken for an autobiography. The award's judges noted that she "viewed a familiar and long-used subject through the distinct perspective of a young writer." And, for that reason, it is a piece worth savoring for Kim Ae-Ran's unique literary imagination and intuition.

The story follows the narrator's mother, who opens a *kalguksu* (knife-cut noodles) shop, one of the easiest small businesses to start in the countryside. She hangs the old signboard "Matnadang (맛나당)," salvaged from a failed bakery, and begins selling *kalguksu*. According to the story, making *kalguksu* is a simple process. The mother prepares and sells them with her own straightforward recipe, and the narrator observes her as she supports the family with a detached perspective. That same

matter-of-fact perspective extends to the father – he fails to earn money but is regarded no differently. At no point does the narrator pass judgment or appeal for sympathy; she merely wishes there were someone to gently soothe her mother’s weary back, and simply refers to her father as a “perplexing man.” Following Kim Ae-Ran’s sentences, concise yet generous, readers may even feel inspired to try writing a story themselves. It is a short story I would recommend to anyone who wishes to practice transcribing Korean literature.

KNOWLEDGE

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## Models for Supporting Connections between Local Bookstores and Libraries

Written by Gu Sun-A  
(writer and head of Chaegbang Yeonhui)

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The publishing market is said to be facing increasing difficulties day by day. The most fundamental problem is the decline in the reading rate - in other words, the shrinking number of readers. However, rather than lamenting the decrease in readers, now is the time to make efforts to sustain and expand the readership. Then, what are the things that move most closely with readers for the promotion of reading? Libraries and local bookstores. According to the Value-Added Tax Act Article 8 of the Publishing Industry Promotion Act, a local bookstore refers to a bookstore that registers as a retail business for books and is operated by a small or medium-sized enterprise in accordance with Article 2 of the Framework Act on Small and Medium Enterprises. In this article, however, the term “local bookstore” encompasses

independent bookstores, curated bookstores, and concept bookstores, just like neighborhood bookstores.

Libraries and local bookstores differ in their functions, roles, and the characteristics of their visitors. The purpose of a library is to strengthen the local community through the spread of reading culture. Libraries established in each administrative district serve not only as places for book borrowing and collection, but also as cultural hubs that offer various educational programs for citizens, such as coding, photography, and foreign language classes. Meanwhile, local bookstores aim not only to generate profit through books, but also to create cultural spaces centered on books. Libraries and local bookstores have recently begun to join forces to secure readers and increase reading rates. This collaboration represents a convergence of cultural, social, and economic objectives, including the development of a reading ecosystem, support for local bookstores, and the strengthening of their role as cultural hubs.

### **Books are the core of library-bookstore collaboration**

The collaboration between libraries and local bookstores first began when local governments started prioritizing the purchase of books from local bookstores in accordance with the ordinance to revitalize them. In the past, a few suppliers purchased books for libraries, schools, and cultural facilities. However, since 2019, as “local bookstore revitalization” policies spread nationwide,

many libraries have started to increase the percentage of their budgets allocated to purchasing books from local bookstores. The Seoul Metropolitan Government, under the “Ordinance on the Promotion of Local Bookstores in Seoul Metropolitan City,” encourages city-run organizations, public corporations, and affiliated institutions to prioritize purchasing books from local bookstores. This later developed into the “Direct Borrow Program (희망도서 대출 사업)” initiative. In this program, when a resident requests a book not available at the library, the library commissions a local bookstore to purchase the book, and the resident borrows and returns it directly at the bookstore.

In recent years, projects that bring curated books from local bookstores to libraries have also increased. These projects publicize the existence of local bookstores to local residents and expand the list of books by presenting books selected under new themes. Here, libraries generally purchase all or part of the curated selections from those bookstores. This led to the “Gachi Seojeom (가치서점; can mean either ‘bookstore (서점) joined by all (같이)’ or ‘valuable (가치) 서점(bookstore)’)” project jointly run by the Korea Federation of Bookstore Associations and Mapo Seogang Library in 2024. In this project, curated books from bookstores were displayed in the library, with book consultations offered to library users. Meanwhile, the bookstores themselves hosted related cultural programs. A further expanded example can be found in the “Local Bookstore Lounge (지역 서점 라운지)” on the first floor of the Gyeonggi Provincial Library, which is set to open

in October this year. There, programs such as curated exhibitions from five local bookstores, book talks with bookstore managers, and meetings with authors will be held.



“Gachi Seojeom” run by Mapo Seogang Library in 2024

### Activities supported by libraries for local bookstores

Libraries are also actively supporting the cultural activities of local bookstores. Support is divided into public project funding and independent cooperative projects. A representative example of public project funding in Seoul is the “Seoul Book Shops (서울형책방)” project, which has been run annually since 2019 by the Seoul Metropolitan Library. The project selects approximately 50 local bookstores each year and supports classes, lectures, and gatherings tailored to each bookstore’s identity. Also, Mapo Central Library, located in Mapo-gu, a region with the largest concentration of small bookstores in Korea, including independent bookstores, operated the “Mapo Book Readers Family (마포독서가문)” project from 2022 to 2023, linking local

book clubs one-to-one with bookstores. This project, aimed at promoting reading culture and revitalizing local bookstores, supported book clubs by providing books purchased from local bookstores and designated reading spaces. Both the clubs and bookstores expressed satisfaction; however, the project has since been discontinued, unfortunately.



Footage from “Seoul Book Shops” in 2025

Local libraries outside Seoul are even more active in supporting bookstores’ cultural activities. For example, Woodang Library in Jeju collaborated with 24 independent bookstores in 2023 on the program “Let’s Go Together: Bookstores (모다들엉 책방 이야기).” Additionally, the Ochang Lake Library in Cheongju has been operating “Late Night Bookstore in Our Neighborhood (우리동네 심야책방)” since 2020. In 2024, Sejong City collaborated with independent bookstores on the “Learn With Local Bookshops (동네서점 배움자리)” program as part of its lifelong education initiatives. As such, supportive activities linking libraries with local bookstores serve as a mechanism for bookstores to reinvent



instance, Dawon Jeumteo Library in Hwaseong has been running the “Bookstore Tour in Our Neighborhood (우리동네 책방 투어)” program from May to October this year, which organizes the programs of three themed local bookstores into a single touring course. Additionally, starting in July, Jeonju introduced six courses that connect 16 libraries, 14 bookstores, and 10 cultural facilities. For each course, participants received a mobile Book Culture Voucher that could be used to purchase books at local bookstores. The Seoul Metropolitan Library first launched the “Bookshop Tour on Foot (책방산책)” program in 2016. In this program, citizens and bookstore managers walked together through neighborhoods with clusters of small bookstores, such as Haebangchon and the Hongik University area. It was run until 2018. Later, the “Seoul Book Shops” program, mentioned above, was created, and district-level bookstore tours began appearing. For example, the Ahyeon Annex of the Mapo Lifelong Learning Center held a tour in 2024 and again this year under the name “Following Neighborhoods, Following Books (동네따라 책따라).” One participant remarked, “I didn’t know there was such a bookstore in my neighborhood. Since it’s close to home, I shall also visit the bookstore from time to time, rather than just going to the library.” A participating bookstore manager commented, “I used to think library users and bookstore readers were different, but now I have begun to see that bookstore readers and library readers might not be separate after all.”



Seoul Metropolitan Library’s “Bookshop Tour on Foot” in 2018;  
 Mapo Lifelong Learning Center’s “Following Neighborhoods, Following Books” in 2025

Along with the ongoing bookstore tours, another activity that has recently become more common is small-scale book fairs jointly organized by libraries and local bookstores. For example, Tamna Library in Jeju hosts the “Jeju Book Fair” annually, with participation from other local libraries and bookstores. Also, in 2024, Woodang Library recruited booth operators from among publishers, bookstores, and others within Jeju for the “All Together Book Fair (혼디 모다들엉 북페어).” Similarly, in Chungju in the same year, local bookstores “Gwae (궤)” and “Binkan (빈칸)” hosted a fair together with small bookstores, publishers, independent authors, and the Chungju Public Library, featuring programs such as introducing representative books of the year and making keyrings. If bookstores go beyond merely hosting booths or managing operations on commission and instead take an active role in planning and running the event, a more substantive book fair, like the Gunsan Book Fair in Gunsan, is likely to emerge, supported by both readers and publishing professionals.

## Library-local bookstore collaboration in the future

Collaborations between libraries and local bookstores are gradually expanding these days. However, it is not that libraries directly cultivate bookstores, nor do bookstores gain immediate economic profit. Even so, such collaboration serves as a bridge, encouraging readers and library users to visit and experience bookstores. For bookstores, this means securing new readers; for libraries, it reinforces their role as cultural hubs at the heart of the community.

However, collaboration between libraries and local bookstores needs to expand into more practical forms from now on. Beyond temporary public funding projects, locally rooted cooperative models that bookstores can continue to operate are necessary. Examples include regular programs inviting local authors, projects to develop local content, book-reading festivals, book clubs for young adults, and placemaking initiatives, all expanding models of cooperation that connect books and spaces. Ultimately, collaboration between libraries and local bookstores can become a key strategy in forming sustainable local cultural communities through books. This, in turn, will provide the foundation for cultural vitality and the expansion of the reading ecosystem across society as a whole.

## KOREAN PUBLISHERS

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### Storyseller

A storyteller who delivers unique experiences to the public

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Just as words have power, a name that is spoken often should not only convey identity and vision but also carry a positive meaning.. What if we employed homonyms, words with multiple meanings? Such a name, open to diverse interpretations depending on context and intent, also carries a sense of wit and delight. Storyseller (이야기장수; *Iyagijangsu*), founded by Lee Yeon-Sil, one of Korea's most celebrated editors, fills its books with stories as diverse and engaging as the word *jangsu* (장수), a term that



Logo of Storyseller

itself carries multiple meanings, including “seller.” More than just selling stories, Storyseller seeks to reach readers everywhere, sharing life stories that are ordinary yet one of a kind.

It’s a pleasure to have you with us on *K-Book Trends*. Could you introduce Storyseller to our international readers along with the meaning of its name?

Our company’s name comes from the idea that we do not merely sell printed books, but bring the voices of Korea’s finest storytellers wherever stories can reach. The Korean name *Iyagijangsu* combines two elements: *iyagi* (이야기; story) and *jangsu* (장수). “*Jangsu*” has three connotations: first, someone who sells stories; second, one who makes stories last; and third, a guardian who protects them. *Iyagijangsu* is also another term for *jeongisu* (전기수; 傳奇叟; meaning “storyteller”), performers during the Joseon Dynasty who stood in marketplaces or on the streets, captivating crowds by orally sharing entertaining tales.

Storyseller began as an imprint of Munhakdongne Publishing before growing into an independent house. What motivated you to take on the challenge of starting a one-person publishing company within a major publisher, and what kinds of stories did you hope to create through it?

My wish was to continue creating stories and books by authors I deeply cherish, consistently and in my own way, well into the later years of my life. That meant creating my own brand and establishing my own company. As I mentioned, *Iyagijangsu* is

another word for “*jeongisu*.” Just as those “storytellers” once gathered weary commoners in village squares with their tales, Storyseller strives to become a modern-day “storyteller.” Storyseller makes books for the public rather than exclusively for experts or academics. We also have a special focus on the diverse lives of Korean women.

“Storyseller makes books for the public  
rather than exclusively for experts or academics.

We also have a special focus on the diverse lives of Korean women.”

The combination of “story (*iyagi*)” and the multifaceted word “seller (*jangsu*)” is intriguing. You once said you prefer being called “Ms. Seller (*jangsunim*)” over titles like “CEO.” Do many people actually call you that?

The nickname “Ms. Seller (*jangsunim*)” was first given to me by Kim Hana, author of *Two Women Living Together*, a book that we published. She began calling me “Ms. Seller” in the sense of being a brave “guardian of stories,” and now not only authors, but also readers use that name to call me. At Storyseller, it is not just me as CEO, our staff, too, are called “Mr. and Ms. Sellers.” We are regarded not as mere “publishing employees,” but as courageous “Mr. and Ms. Sellers” who protect stories and stand by authors; and we hope to continue working in that spirit with joy.



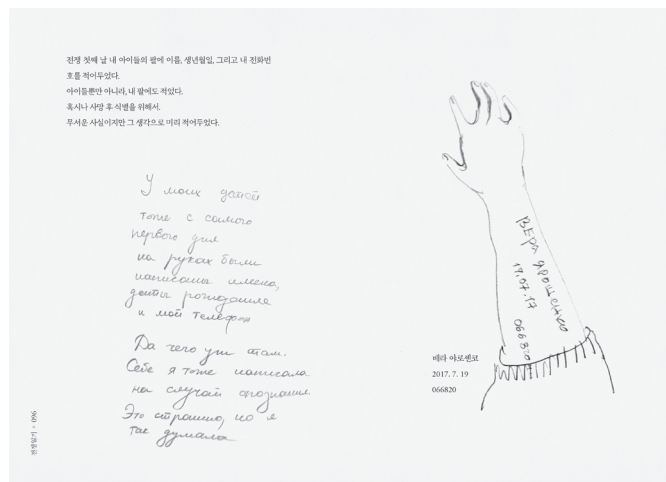
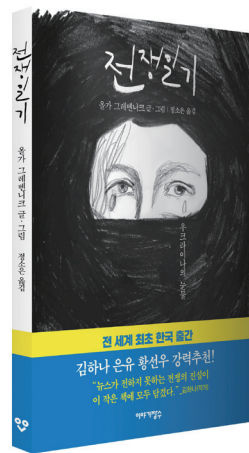
*Two Women Living Together*

Just like a *doljabi*, the Korean first-birthday ritual where an infant’s choice is believed to foretell their future, a publisher’s first book can also set the course for its path ahead. *The War Diary*, which deals with the war in Ukraine, was Storyseller’s debut title and must carry special meaning. Why did you choose it as your very first publication?

At first, I had planned to debut with another Korean author. But, then, I heard that Ukrainian author Olga Grebennik had been recording the war from its first day in illustrated diary form and posting it on Instagram. When I was invited to be the first Korean publisher to release this book, a work that could not be published in either Ukraine or Russia, I had no choice but to revise all my plans and immediately begin preparing it for publication.

One of the images writer Olga Grebennik posted to Instagram Stories left a deep impression on me. It shows a child’s wrist with words written on the skin thrust out toward the world, as if pleading, as if begging for help. It was the very first day of the war in Ukraine. Hearing the first explosions, Grebennik wrote

her daughter's name, date of birth, and a contact number on the child's wrist. In that moment, a mother hearing terrifying blasts, this is what she thought: "Ah, we could die. Without even a name. At any time." *The War Diary*, leaning on the cry of that arm outstretched to the world, came together at an almost miraculous pace and was finished in just 20 days.



Cover and pages from *The War Diary*

Since *The War Diary*, your books have been released at such close intervals that it almost seems as if you had stockpiled manuscripts and authors in advance. What is the secret behind bringing out so many titles in such a short time?

I had not prepared in advance to start a publishing house. I made the decision in January 2022, and with no contracts at all, I began publishing books that April. Although I now have staff, for quite a long time I worked entirely on my own, and even to me, the pace has felt almost unbelievable!

In my opinion, a publisher's brand is ultimately defined by the books it produces and the authors it champions. That is why I wanted to build up a strong list quickly and to publish books that would embody Storyseller with sincerity. In these early years, I felt it was important to keep releasing titles that readers would continue to talk about. There is no hidden secret: only investing the time, sweat, and thought that each book demands.

*The Cruel History of Smoking Women* and *Detective Park Mi-Ok* tell the stories of women who fought their way into realms long considered the “preserve of men.” Through the figures of the “smoking women” and the “legendary policewoman,” what message did Storyseller hope to convey to readers?

Storyseller is committed to amplifying the voices of Korean women. In the past, Korea's deeply patriarchal and conservative culture fostered pervasive gender discrimination. Yet, even within that environment, Korean women demonstrated remarkable talent and ability, stepping into the center of society. *The Cruel History of Smoking Women* and *Detective Park Mi-Ok* embody that history. The former exposes how, in earlier times, women who smoked were dismissed as “loose women,” while the latter powerfully overturns the scorn and ridicule faced by the first female detective and police chief in Korea. I think these stories gave women, standing at the heart of Korean culture and society, a sharp sense of catharsis. And, the stories of Korean women who continue to work, live, and spark revolutions in their own

ways inspire people across gender and generations alike. I believe Korean women have both the power to lead their lives in new directions and the capacity to invent new paths. Storyseller seeks to capture these voices of Korean women in our books.



*The Cruel History of Smoking Women; Detective Park Mi-Ok*

*Han Dong-Il's Latin Transcription Book and How to Write Life-Changing Emails* encourage readers to write. Could you tell us why you place such emphasis on encouraging writing?

Those who have absorbed many good books often go on to become writers themselves. Good readers become good writers, and those who aspire to be good writers are, in turn, the most faithful readers. Writing and reading are bound together as one continuous link. Storyseller hopes to make books that inspire readers to write their own stories, and authors to long for new stories to read.

*Han Dong-Il's Latin Transcription Book* was published in response to Korea's recent craze for handwritten transcription. The book,

compiled by Professor Han Dong-Il, a lawyer at the Vatican’s Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura (Rota Romana) and a Latin scholar, collected some of the world’s most beautiful Latin sentences. Readers can copy the original texts and their translations, experiencing the very breath of these masterpieces. Meanwhile, *How to Write Life-Changing Emails* shows how everyday writing, in this case, email, when done efficiently and beautifully, can transform both work and life. Readers and writers, after all, are never far apart.



*Han Dong-Il’s Latin Transcription Book; How to Write Life-Changing Emails*

Although Storyseller also publishes poetry, fiction, and graphic novels, non-fiction seems to be your true strength. You even described the essay as “a genre of ordinary people.” What criteria do you use when deciding which essays to publish?

Well, our foremost priority in essays is the presence of a truly unique story, an account that can only be written once in a lifetime, grounded in singular philosophies and experiences. While

Storyseller does publish essays by well-known figures, we also decide to publish when discovering modest, often unseen lives that have never been spotlighted in the media. Conversely, even when it is an essay by an “ordinary” person, if it contains extraordinary experiences, or if the writer, while living an everyday life, shows the qualities of an unsung hero, we are honored to welcome them as authors.

“We prefer essays that hold a life story  
that can be written but once in a lifetime,  
shaped by philosophies and experiences that are utterly unique.”

The cat series, such as *This Kittie Will Grow Up Like This*, *Everyone But Me Has a Cat*, and *Cats Hid Their Talents*, have become emblematic of Storyseller. With so many books that feature cats as subjects or protagonists out there, what do you think has made Storyseller’s cat series stand out and gain such popularity?

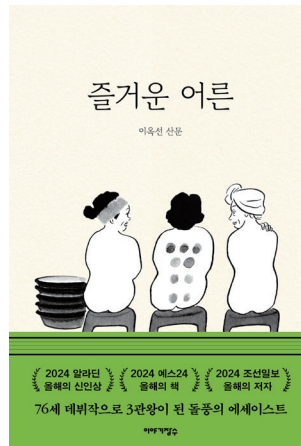
Storyseller has consistently published books by Lee Yong-Han, an author devoted to stray cats. He runs a “cat diner” that provides food for them, and he actually lives alongside these strays, recording their lives in words and photographs. So, his books are filled with rare images and stories, such as cats climbing trees, eating snow in the winter fields, or using a row of earthenware jars as if it were a cat tower. I am captivated by such stories, born from a long devotion to a single subject, and a life lived in its company, which reveal sights that others cannot see.



*This Kittie Will Grow Up Like This; Everyone But Me Has a Cat; Cats Hid Their Talents*

Since becoming an independent publishing house, is there a book that marked a turning point or carried special meaning for Storyseller?

Yes, it is Lee Ok-Sun's *Joyful Adult*. It is an essay written by a 76-year-old woman who had lived as a homemaker, describing how she embraces her later years with joy in her own way. The book struck a chord with readers from young women to the elderly and has become Storyseller's bestselling title to date. Remarkably, it was her debut work at age 76, and it went on to sweep major awards in 2024, winning "Rookie of the Year" and "Book of the Year" on Aladin, online bookstore, "Author of the Year" from *The Chosun Daily*, and "Book of the Year" from Yes24. Reading this remarkable debut, I realized how extraordinary, inspiring, and even entertaining the seemingly ordinary life of someone who has lived each day with resilience can be.



*Joyful Adult*

You seem quick to recognize and bring out the distinctive qualities of authors, whether it be a poetry collection by comedian Yang Se-Hyung, a picture book by artist Jung Eun-Hye, or the debut novel of writer Ysra(Lee Seula). Do you see yourself as having a special eye for trends or powers of observation across diverse fields? And, how do you build and maintain such strong relationships with your authors?

As I mentioned earlier, Storyseller focuses on books for the general public, we respond sensitively to current trends and to what captures the attention of younger generations. We try to look beyond books, paying attention to what excites people, and even to those who may not yet be writers but seem destined to become one. We also keep an eye on interviews and mass media to discover potential authors for Storyseller.

As for maintaining good relationships with authors, I don't think there is a special secret, nor do I feel the need to force it. Because we only plan and publish books by authors we genuinely fall in love with, our editors naturally become their first fans and

strongest supporters. In this way, Storyseller has evolved into an author-friendly publishing house that consistently thinks from the author’s perspective as their “first fan.” Genuine affection doesn’t require effort, yet it creates real strength. Storyseller moves forward with that affection at its core.



*The Path of Stars; Eun-Hye's Hug*

Your books, such as *Two Women Living Together* and *The Age of Filiarch*, are scheduled to be published in overseas markets. Could you share more about the progress of these exports and your concrete efforts to connect with international readers?

In the past, I thought that exporting the rights to Korean essays would be difficult, given the cultural and lifestyle differences between Korea and the West. However, recent Korean essayists have proven that stereotype wrong. Storyseller’s essayists write and live with humor, with revolutionary spirit, and with entirely new ways of life. *Two Women Living Together* was hailed as a milestone for K-essays when it sold its rights in a billion-won

contract to HarperCollins in the US and Penguin Random House in the UK. The book has also been exported to Taiwan, China, and Japan. It is especially meaningful because it delivers the message that one does not need to marry in order to build a new form of “modular family,” a message that gave Korean women great courage and vision.

Ysra’s *The Age of Filiarch* was also introduced to the English-speaking markets through Hachette, and has since been exported to Japan, Taiwan, and Italy. At an event hosted by the Literature Translation Institute of Korea (LTI), Storyseller, together with author Ysra and her husband, translator Lee Hwon, personally presented sample manuscripts and synopses to overseas publishers. As a result, we received a pre-emptive offer without going through an agency. Seeing how the energy and uniqueness of a book created, written, and translated in such close collaboration could reach international publishers was a powerful experience. Beyond these, Storyseller’s other essays, such as *Joyful Adult*, *Detective Park Mi-Ok*, and *Eun-Hye’s Hug*, have also been actively exported.

\* *K-Book Trends* Vol. 39 – [Go to the interview with writer Ysra](#)

Whenever the rights to our authors’ books are exported, Storyseller makes every effort to visit the country with the author and meet local readers, even if the local publisher cannot manage to invite us. Simply hearing that a foreign edition has been released is one thing, but meeting readers face-to-face, through signings or book



*The Age of Filiarch*

talks, offers a completely different level of impact and emotion. That is why we will once again take part in the “K-BOOK Festival” in Japan this year, following last year’s participation. Last year, we wore traditional *hanbok* and introduced Korean books to Japanese readers. This year, too, I look forward to presenting Korean essays in a special way together with our authors and returning home with those experiences.

We look forward to Storyseller’s continued journey as a publisher that both shares meaningful stories and safeguards them over time. Looking ahead, what goals do you hope to achieve, and what kinds of stories would you like to share with the world?

Even as print sales dwindle, stories are everywhere. Storyseller will remain committed to nurturing an ecosystem in which gifted storytellers can write with joy, and to bringing those stories wherever they are meant to go.

## KOREAN AUTHORS

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### Writer Seo Hyun

There is always laughter in imagination

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Technology develops, and the world advances for a more comfortable life, but we are living so busily that we barely have time to look up at the sky. Just as we have grown distant from books that are read slowly and savored, we have grown closer to videos that we flip through quickly. So, what about picture books? Picture books may be quicker to read than texts, but they keep us on the page longer than videos, offering a leisurely kind of reading

that helps us look at the world more warmly. And, this is not just limited to children. Picture books introduce children to a rich new world and help adults regain the leisure and laughter they have lost. And, there is a tender-spirited author who touches our hearts with such picture books - Seo Hyun.

It's an honor to have you with us on *K-Book Trends*. Please say hello to our readers with a brief introduction of yourself.

Hello, I am picture book author-illustrator Seo Hyun. I am delighted and grateful to be able to share my stories about picture books with you.

Your debut title, released in 2009, *The Sea of Tears* (Sakyejul Publishing), delighted not only children but also adults, by humorously triggering their tear ducts. It continues to be loved to this day. Could you tell us how *The Sea of Tears* first came about?

*The Sea of Tears* was originally created as an assignment while I was studying picture books at the Hanguk Illustration School (HILLS). As it was my first time making a picture book, I felt overwhelmed, but when the instructor told us to start with a story from our childhood memories, what came to my mind was "tears." I cried a lot as a child. I cried when scolded by my parents, of course, but I also often cried over anxious thoughts. Thoughts like, "What if there's a fire at home?" and "What if my parents get into an accident and I am left all alone in the world?" Looking back now, these were common worries any child might have, but I don't know why I burst into tears so often. Back then, I believed I was

especially prone to crying. I could never cry loudly; I always cried in silence. While making *The Sea of Tears*, I wanted to comfort and cheer up that little child I once was. I think readers resonated with those feelings, which is why they came to love this book. I am truly grateful.



*The Sea of Tears*

In *Got Bigger!* (Sakyejul Publishing), you dynamically captured both children's desire to grow taller and their boundless imagination. Could you share the secret to capturing children's hearts so well and conveying it in such an enjoyable way?

It was one summer day over ten years ago, during the monsoon season, when the rain was pouring down refreshingly. I suddenly felt the urge to step outside and get soaked, so I put on a raincoat and went to a park thick with trees. There, I witnessed a wondrous sight - the trees gulping down the rain and then, swoosh! - stretching high into the sky. For a brief moment, I was completely immersed in nature and was carried into a dreamlike scene. That vivid feeling has never left me. Out of that memory, mingled with the boundless energy of a child's growth, came the story of *Got*

*Bigger!*. When I make stories, I always recall the child within me. I slip naturally into a child's mode, using different memories as material for imagination. It feels like play. And as the imagination continues, sometimes the story takes a completely different direction from what I first envisioned, but that is the true charm of it.



*Got Bigger!*

Many reviews of *Itchy Itchy* (Sakyejul Publishing) say that children can't help but dance along while reading it. The adventure, which begins with a single strand of hair, leaves a deep impression even on adults reading alongside children. Did you actually try out the dances and movements in the book yourself while drawing? Were there any models or inspirations you referred to?

I couldn't come up with sophisticated moves because I am no dancer, but I imagined the liveliest gestures possible in my mind as I drew. Sometimes I even tried them out a little while sketching. Rather than aiming for realistic dance movements, my focus was on "gestures that feel joyful." Just as a song can make you hum

and sway without realizing it, I wanted to convey sheer joy and excitement to readers. That's how *Itchy Itchy* was born.



*Itchy Itchy*

In *Horai-Fried Eggs* (Sakyejul Publishing) and *Horai Horai-Fried Eggs* (Sakyejul Publishing), a character named “Horai” takes steps toward a wider world. The books combine playful imagination with glimpses of character growth. What story did you want to tell through “Horai”?

The Horai series actually talks about “imagination” through the character named “Horai,” a fried egg. Horai refuses its fate as food and easily breaks free from it. That, I think, is the power of imagination. Just like imagination, which constantly changes and knows no bounds, Horai embodies infinite possibilities. In *Horai Horai-Fried Eggs*, Horai appears as an alien lifeform that devours the Earth, plunging the world into darkness. Then, a god appears and replaces the Earth’s empty space with another egg. While working on the Horai series, I often thought: though we are bound to this land by gravity and other constraints, perhaps it is imagination that truly saves and liberates us.



*Horai-Fried Eggs; Horai Horai-Fried Eggs*

In *Rice Cake House of a Tiger* (Sakyejul Publishing) and *Grass Bug Picture Dream* (Sakyejul Publishing), readers encounter motifs from Korean folk paintings. Have traditional paintings, classical artworks, music, or folktales influenced your work or artistic style?

*Rice Cake House of a Tiger* was inspired by the folktale *The Brother and Sister Who Became the Sun and the Moon*, while *Grass Bug Picture Dream* was inspired by Shin Saimdang's painting "Chochungdo (草蟲圖; Insects and Plants)." I have always liked folktales, but I hadn't considered using them as motifs for picture books until I was working with "Vacances," a group project I belong to. The two books are quite different, aside from drawing inspiration from tradition and using comic panels as a device. *Rice Cake House of a Tiger* is loud and fast-paced. I wanted to twist the terrifying image of the tiger from Korean folktales into a new character and put it in comic predicaments, creating a thrilling story.

Meanwhile, *Grass Bug Picture Dream* is quiet and calm. I imagined the hidden stories within the old painting "Chochungdo," and connected them to dreams. Readers often recall Zhuangzi's *The*

*Butterfly Dream* (胡蝶之夢) when they read this book. I wanted to explore the meaning of dreams and the boundaries between dream and reality within this Eastern worldview. And, since it was about dreams, I left the ending ambiguous.



*Rice Cake House of a Tiger; Grass Bug Picture Dream*

You mentioned the “Vacances” project, in which you are working alongside many popular picture book authors. Could you tell us more about this project and your work in it?

“Vacances” was formed in 2019 and currently consists of 18 picture book authors who create various forms of independent publications inspired by Korean folktales and culture. Breaking away from the conventional way of publishing with established publishers, we work freely, like going on vacation as the name “Vacances” suggests, handling everything from creation to production and sales ourselves. Of course, there are many difficulties and clumsy moments since we do everything on our own, but it’s enjoyable because it allows us to attempt things we couldn’t do within traditional publishing.



Logo of “Vacances” and authors (Source: Vacances website)

I have created independent publications, including *Mr. Rabbit Goes to the Palace Under the Sea*, *Underwater Palace Travel Agency*, *Egg Ghost*, *Rice Cake House of a Tiger*, and *Grass Bug Picture Dream*. These works recreated characters from folktales in various formats such as accordion books, flyers, coupons, card games, and comics. Among them, *Rice Cake House of a Tiger* and *Grass Bug Picture Dream* were later republished by Sakyedul Publishing. In those cases, rather than reprinting the original independent versions, I create entirely new versions.



*Mr. Rabbit Goes to the Palace Under the Sea*

Sometimes you work with a text writer and only meet readers through illustrations, as you did with *Mr. Gall the Cat* (Kookmin Books) and *Why Can't an Eight-Year-Old Cry?* (Moonji Publications). How does that experience differ from when you make both text and illustrations yourself?

When collaborating with text writers, I enjoy encountering worlds I could never have imagined on my own. I try to illustrate the stories hidden between the lines without disrupting the writer's world in the story. When I work on both text and illustrations, the world feels entirely mine, a playground where I can be as free and excited as I want. But, that also comes with greater responsibility. I often spend so long poring over the text that I hesitate to move on to drawing. Still, each time I complete such a project, I feel proud of myself.



*Mr. Gall the Cat; Why Can't an Eight-Year-Old Cry?*

Your works are never without humor. Are you personally a humorous person? Or, do you make an effort to seek out humor? If so, what kinds of efforts do you make, and how do you weave humor into your works?

I truly love humor. I enjoy spotting funny moments in various situations. But, I'm not very good at sharing them verbally with

people. I think that's why humor often finds its way into my books, it becomes my outlet. It feels like holding back what I want to say and then pouring it all into the book. I sometimes introduce myself as someone who "travels through my mind in search of humor and does one fun thing every day." That reflects my wish to always find humor and joy in daily life.

"I sometimes introduce myself as someone who  
'travels through my mind in search of humor  
and does one fun thing every day.'"

Are there any works in preparation at the moment? If so, please introduce them to us.

As I'm now raising my 17-month-old baby, it's been difficult to find time for work, so things are moving along very slowly. I don't have specific plans yet, but I would love to make a picture book for babies filled with a mother's love.

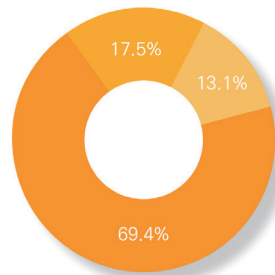
Last but not least, could you share your goals or wishes, either as a picture book author or personally?

My hope is to cheer on children across the world with joy, including my own baby, with picture books filled with humor and warmth. And, on a personal note, my dream is to become a lovable grandmother one day.

## IMAGE OF K-BOOK

## Beautiful *Hanbok* Captured In Illustrations

Q. What is the most impressive fashion item in Korea?



**No. 1**  
Attire  
(Hanbok)  
**69.4%**



**No. 2**  
Accessories  
(Norigae, Ssamji)  
**17.5%**



**No. 3**  
Headwear  
(Gat, Binyeo)  
**13.1%**

In the heart of Seoul, around Gyeongbokgung and Deoksugung Palaces, you will often spot people walking around in *hanbok*. Wearing *hanbok* to palaces has turned into a cultural experience of its own. The vibrant colors of *hanbok* blend beautifully with the palace architecture, and since *hanbok* wearers get free admission, it has become a popular activity for locals and tourists alike. It seems that there is a special kind of harmony when tradition meets everyday life.

In a recent *K-Book Trends* survey, *hanbok* was selected as the No. 1 item people associate with “Korean fashion.” With over 1,600 years of history, *hanbok* has taken many forms depending on the



“Hanbok” is the first thing that comes to mind when thinking of a “Korean fashion item”

era, season, gender, social class, and occasion. Traditionally, men wore pants and *jeogori* (jackets), while women wore skirts and *jeogori*. Light fabrics like ramie and hemp were used in summer, and silk and cotton provided warmth in winter. The curved sleeves of the *jeogori* carry a soft elegance, and nature-inspired designs, such as flowers, butterflies, and cranes, often decorated the clothes. The traditional five colors, or *obangsaek*, symbolize balance: between *yin* and *yang*, the seasons, and even social class and manners. *Hanbok*, in this way, reflects Korea’s aesthetics and cultural identity.



*The Story of Hanbok Worn During The Joseon Dynasty*

This month's issue introduces the art book, *The Story of Hanbok Worn During the Joseon Dynasty* (Hyejiwon Books). It helps readers appreciate the beauty and meaning of *hanbok* throughout history, with clear explanations and rich illustrations. Compiled by an illustrator who originally serialized stories about *hanbok* on her personal blog, the book covers *hanbok* styles from the early to late Joseon era in exquisite illustrations. For readers seeking basic knowledge, it explains the structure and evolution of men's and women's *hanbok* in simple terms. It also organizes themed sections on accessories and hairstyles that complete the look for everyone, from children to adults, the *hanbok* worn by palace attendants, and the ceremonial attire of kings and queens. What makes this book special is how the text is paired with delicate illustrations so that you can almost feel the fabric and imagine the look just by flipping through the pages.

» [Go to the voting event for the next issue](#)

## LET'S TRY

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# The Joy of Running Through Seoul

### Event

Let's Try introduces various useful, books published in Korea every month.

Also, don't miss gift events related to the introduced books!

Simply click on the link below and make an entry to the event! Let's Try!

### *Run Seoul: Exploring Every Corner*

– Written by Sung Sang-Hyun, published by Musicartsportspub



Even an ordinary street can turn into a beautiful running course!  
Here are themed courses that make running in Seoul genuinely fun.



Marathon Majors, personally ran every route before introducing 27 themed courses across Seoul. For example, there is the “Coffee Run,” which starts and ends at a café, the “Five Palaces Run,” which passes all five royal palaces in one go, and the “Drama Run,” which links filming locations from hit K-dramas. A veteran runner of ten years with 29 full marathons under his belt, the author has crafted each course while exploring every corner of Seoul. By connecting landmarks, the routes are designed to be engaging and manageable, not dull or exhausting, making them appealing even for travelers. Whether you are a beginner, a visitor wanting to discover the city, or a dedicated runner, *Run Seoul: Exploring Every Corner* invites you to hit the streets and experience Seoul through its diverse running paths.

[» Go To Article](#)

## NEW BOOKS

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The era when massive, heavy bodies become smaller and lighter

### Forecast of the Times: The Emergence of Light Civilization



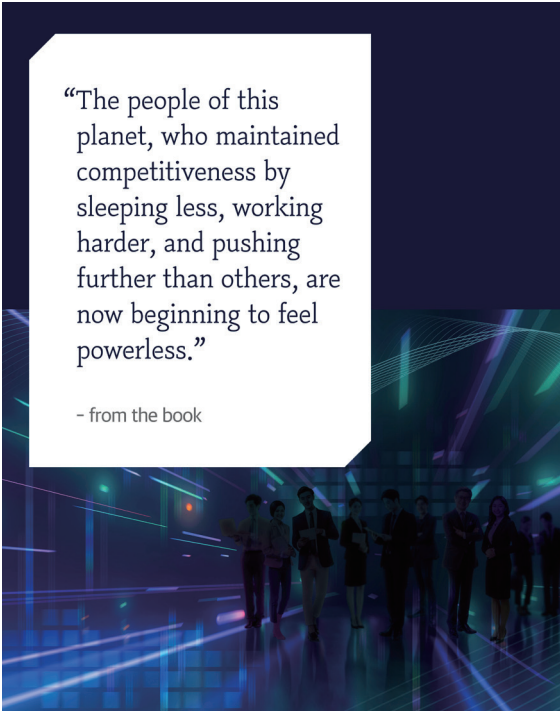
Since the Industrial Revolution, the mass production system that made producing more things at a faster pace, and the organizations that grew as large as the technology itself, have defined the “heavy civilization” that dominated our society for the past 200 years.



However, with the advent of AI, the diligent and hardworking life has become the very symbol of inefficiency. Now, it is not the size or weight of the economy that matters, but the speed of response to change.

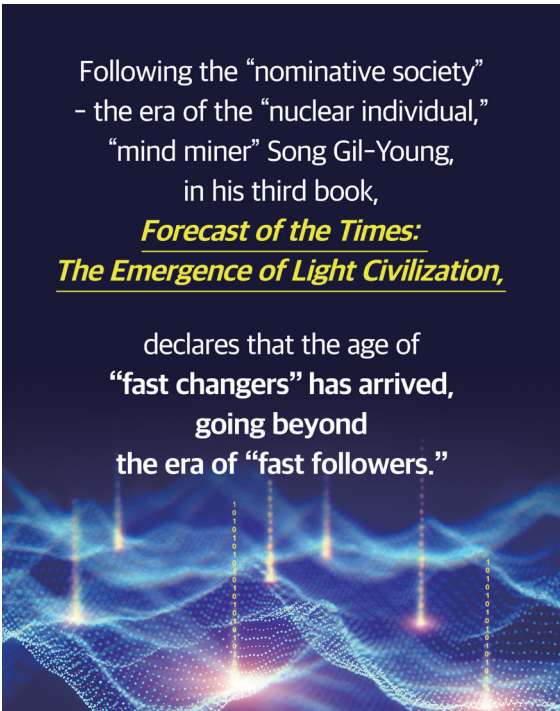
This is because humans can never match the speed and productivity of AI.





“The people of this planet, who maintained competitiveness by sleeping less, working harder, and pushing further than others, are now beginning to feel powerless.”

- from the book



Following the “nominative society”  
- the era of the “nuclear individual,”  
“mind miner” Song Gil-Young,  
in his third book,

***Forecast of the Times:  
The Emergence of Light Civilization,***

declares that the age of  
“fast changers” has arrived,  
going beyond  
the era of “fast followers.”



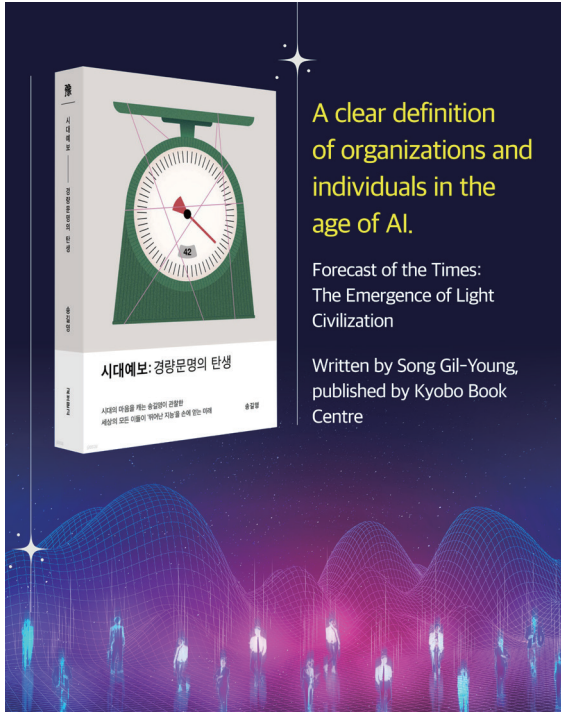
“The greatest wave of change will emerge from the new collaborative style of light civilization, characterized by lighter production and closer communication.”

- from the book

The generalization of AI, enabling the growth of the nuclear individual's capabilities and allowing even small organizations to achieve great advances through cooperation,

**must remind us that only the power to respond instantly to change will ensure survival in this new civilization.**





A clear definition  
of organizations and  
individuals in the  
age of AI.

Forecast of the Times:  
The Emergence of Light  
Civilization

Written by Song Gil-Young,  
published by Kyobo Book  
Centre

**BEST SELLERS**

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**Autumn:  
Democracy Reflected in the Pages**

Bestseller Trends in the Three Biggest Online Bookstores in Korea for the 2nd week of September, 2025

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September 15 is the International Day of Democracy, designated by the United Nations. Coincidentally, Korea's September book market also saw the spotlight fall on works that reflect a strong desire to safeguard democracy. At No. 1 on the overall bestseller list for the second week of September was *About Goodwill* by Moon Hyung-Bae, former Justice of the Constitutional Court of Korea. Once a scholarship recipient of the well-known philanthropist Kim Jang-Ha, Moon gained public attention in April when he published a book. In this new essay, published after his retirement, he reflects on the lessons of "Adult Kim Jang-Ha," who taught that true gratitude should be given back to society rather than to individuals. Meanwhile, author Kim Cho-Yeop's *The Double-Sided Shell* entered the list at No. 4 immediately upon release. This is her third short story collection in four years – it is being greatly welcomed by readers.

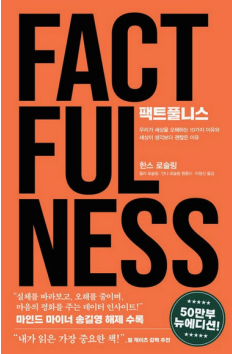
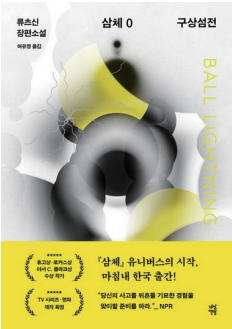

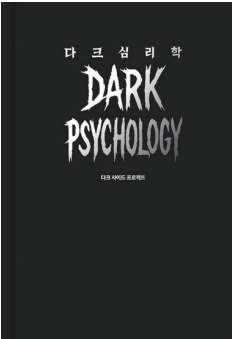
Also, *Seo Kyung-Seok's Essential Korean History*, which had ranked No. 5 in the young adult category in August, recorded No. 1 in the overall history category. As the first broadcaster to achieve a perfect score on the Grade 1 Korean History Exam, Seo explains his secrets to success in a way that is both easy and engaging. At No. 2 was *A Couchside Journey Through the Three Kingdoms: Wei and Shu* by Samguk General Yang Yang, a YouTuber known for his “Three Kingdoms Travelogue” series. The book combines his extensive knowledge with humor and specialized insight, earning strong support from readers. Meanwhile, ten years after his *Exploring Eurasia: Journeys and Encounters* (Seohaemunjip) series gained wide popularity, author Lee Byung-Han has returned with *Lee Byung-Han's Journey to America*. The book explores four influential figures who currently shape the United States, and investigates the foundations of 21st-century America. From non-fiction to fiction, humanities, cooking, self-help, and history, September's bestseller list is as varied and vibrant as the colors of autumn leaves.

\* The rank of bestsellers below was organized after integrating domestic bestsellers in the second week of September from the three biggest online bookstores in Korea – Kyobo Book Centre, Aladin, and Yes 24.

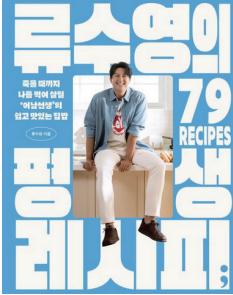
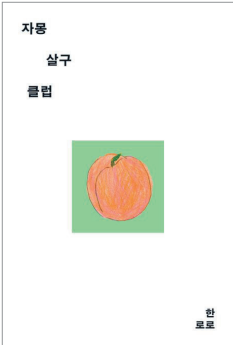
Top 10 bestsellers for the 2nd week of September

<p>1</p>		<p><b><i>About Goodwill</i></b></p> <p>Author   Moon Hyung-Bae          Publisher   Gimm-young Publishing          Genre   Non-fiction</p>
<p>2</p>		<p><b><i>The Let Them Theory</i></b></p> <p>Author   Mel Robbins          Publisher   Business Books          Genre   Self-help</p>
<p>2</p>		<p><b><i>Honmono</i></b></p> <p>Author   Sung Hae-Na          Publisher   Changbi Publishers          Genre   Fiction</p>
<p>4</p>		<p><b><i>The Double-Sided Shell</i></b></p> <p>Author   Kim Cho-Yeop          Publisher   Rabbit Hole          Genre   Fiction</p>

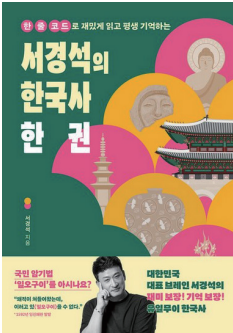
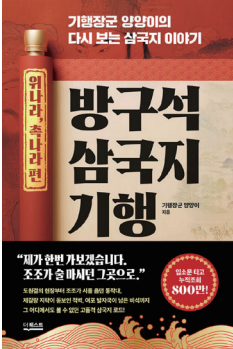
Top 10 bestsellers for the 2nd week of September

4		<p><b><u>Factfulness</u></b></p> <p>Author   Hans Rosling, Ola Rosling, and Anna Rosling Rönnlund          Publisher   Gimm-young Publishing          Genre   Humanities</p>
6		<p><b><u>Ball Lightning</u></b></p> <p>Author   Liu Cixin          Publisher   Dasan Books          Genre   Fiction</p>
7		<p><b><u>Malice</u></b></p> <p>Author   Keigo Higashino          Publisher   Vookda          Genre   Fiction</p>
8		<p><b><u>Dark Psychology</u></b></p> <p>Author   Dark Side Project          Publisher   Ascending          Genre   Psychology</p>

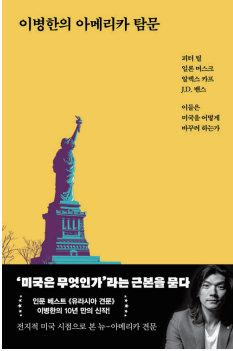
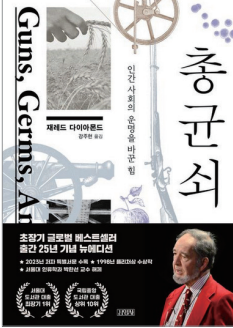
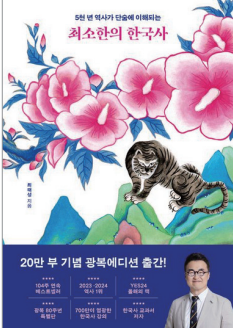
Top 10 bestsellers for the 2nd week of September

9		<p><b><i>Ryu Soo-Young's 79 Recipes for Life</i></b></p> <p>Author   Ryu Soo-Young          Publisher   Semicolon          Genre   Cooking</p>
9		<p><b><i>Grapefruit Apricot Club</i></b></p> <p>Author   Han Roro          Publisher   Authentic          Genre   Fiction</p>

Top 5 history books for the 2nd week of September

1		<p><b><i>Seo Kyung-Seok's Essential Korean History</i></b></p> <p>Author   Seo Kyung-Seok          Publisher   Changbi Edu</p>
2		<p><b><i>A Couchside Journey Through the Three Kingdoms: Wei and Shu</i></b></p> <p>Author   Samguk General Yang Yang          Publisher   The Quest</p>

Top 5 history books for the 2nd week of September

<p>3</p>		<p><u><i>Lee Byung-Han's Journey to America</i></u></p> <p>Author   Lee Byung-Han          Publisher   Seohaemunjip</p>
<p>4</p>		<p><u><i>Guns, Germs, and Steel</i></u></p> <p>Author   Jared Diamond          Publisher   Gimm-young Publishing</p>
<p>5</p>		<p><u><i>Minimal Korean History</i></u></p> <p>Author   Choi Tae-Sung          Publisher   Front Page</p>

## #K-BOOK

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## #Tradition

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

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#### *A Round of Tightrope Walking*

##### 1. Publication Details

**Title** | A Round of Tightrope Walking

**Author** | Minha

**Publisher** | Gloyeon

**Publication Date** | 2022-11-25

**ISBN** | 9788992704724

**No. of pages** | 36

**Dimensions** | 165×280

##### 2. Book Intro

A Picture book that depicts our tightrope walking through synaesthesia.

Korean tightrope walking, which is listed as a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage, is regarded as a comprehensive art, beyond just showing acrobatic talent like tightrope walking in other countries, but through the jokes and interactions between the tightrope walkers and the clowns, and the performance of Six Samhyeon Instruments. ‘A round of tightrope walking’ captures these characteristics of our tightrope walking in a picture book whilst taking into the modern scene. Each page is threaded, so the readers can experience the feel of the tightrope with each turn of the page. The book contains the performances of Master tightrope walkers like Kim Dae-kyun in the contents of the book through a



QR code. Readers can enjoy walking the tightrope by turning the pages along with the jokes throughout the performance.

[See more details >>](#)

## *An Old Tailor Shop at Intersection*

### 1. Publication Details

**Title** | An Old Tailor Shop at Intersection

**Author** | Jaesun Ahn

**Publisher** | Woongjin ThinkBig Co., Ltd.

**Publication Date** | 2019-04-24

**ISBN** | 9788901230870

**No. of pages** | 48

**Dimensions** | 205×245



### 2. Book Intro

2020 Bologna Ragazzi Opera Prima Award winning picture book.

The story is based on real shops which have managed to stay on their location over 100 years. Throughout the story, readers can find out the value of work, the beauty of devotion to job and craftsmanship. The color based on brown and grey, details of the old and modern crowded city, sewing tools and equipment, and tailoring processes will fascinate readers. A variety of body shapes fitted with modern bespoke suits can also be your 'it' factor.

A small tailor's shop is located at an intersection of the crowded downtown of Seoul. It was when people are still wearing traditional Korean clothes called *Hanbok*, the tailor shop making bespoke suits looks strange to the locals. So, when the tailor's first customer comes in his shop, he wants to make a perfect bespoke suit. He puts his heart into every stitch so that nothing cannot go carelessly. It takes 18 days to be completed, and he feels satisfied with his work when seeing the customer's happy face.

One day, a tragedy hits the country, which knocks down buildings including the tailor's shop. The tailor puts together everything and re-opens it. Its second owner is the third son. He learns everything from his father from choosing fabric to making clothes to suit individual tastes. His suits are as good as his father's, customers also like their new looks in suits.

Time goes by, their regular customers get older. Things are changing around the shop such as new roads and tall buildings, and people begin to buy more off-the-rack suits which are manufactured in shorter time in factories. Now the second son owns the tailor shop. Like his grandfather and his father did, the third owner wants to maintain his devotion to suits even though everyone says that it's time to change. He puts more effort to make his new customers' suits, thinking that one suit tells a story of both a maker and the wearer. Their devotion to a one-and-only suit would run in the family, and the shop is still open today.

[See more details >>](#)

## Market Day

### 1. Publication Details

**Title** | Market Day

**Author** | Ahn Dohyun; Kim Yongtaik

**Publisher** | SIGONGSA Co., Ltd.

**Publication Date** | 2018-12-04

**ISBN** | 9788952794956

**No. of pages** | 324

**Dimensions** | 188×250



### 2. Book Intro

Come market day, the whole world would gather in one place.

A photographic memoir about the days of the traditional marketplace.

Photographer Lee Heungjae who has taken photographs of marketplaces around the country collaborate with Kim Yongtaik and Ahn Dohyun, two of Korea's most beloved contemporary poets, to revive memories of the traditional market day.

The book is the newly combined version of books created by Lee Heungjae and Kim Yongtaik, and Lee Heung-jae and Ahn Dohyun 20 years ago. Not many remember the traditional weekly or biweekly market, but there are still places where markets take place and people gather. Even now, marketplaces are an opportunity for meeting acquaintances and missing those who are not there, and nostalgia. This is a book about the market as a place for such encounters.

The marketplace where people and merchandise would come together regularly was a venue for socializing, selling and buying, and also a channel for the

latest news and happenings around the town. The people you saw there were somebody's father, mother, son or daughter, all whom you knew and cared for. Friendship and care were exchanged with all of the market's merchandise. Today's marketplace is a mere shadow of the lively atmosphere you would experience in the old days.

Photographer Lee Heungjae is able to add warmth that is fading from these markets, bring out the lost smiles and stories, reviving the lively marketplace that once was. The close-ups of every person visiting the market capture the friendly faces of somebody's father or mother. The elderly person carrying a heavy basket while getting on the back of the bus reminds us of our mothers, and the old men laughing heartily over a story over bowls of soup and rice remind us of our fathers.

The people you see in Marketplace are those you pass by in everyday life, but their stories draw you in to each page. A lady stops shopping to look into the camera and give a shy smile, a group of merchants sit on the ground to have lunch together, and an elderly couple share a meal of soup and rice. The special yet ordinary moments of the marketplace are not of the dead past, but of a lively present.

[See more details >>](#)

## *Have You Ever Seen such a Beautiful Daenggi?*

### 1. Publication Details

**Title** | Have You Ever Seen such a Beautiful Daenggi?

**Author** | Na Sueun; Kang Hyomi

**Publisher** | Mirae N Co., Ltd.

**Publication Date** | 2018-10-20

**ISBN** | 9791162338841

**No. of pages** | 36

**Dimensions** | 215×273



### 2. Book Intro

Learn about Korean traditional accessories, which are the beautiful objects that decorate our bodies and, at the same time, great historical symbols that tell the atmosphere of the times. Meet the fictional character "Myeongdamjeong," the most fashionable person of the Joseon Dynasty. This is a fun picture book

that explores the various uses and types of traditional Korean accessories with elegance and beauty.

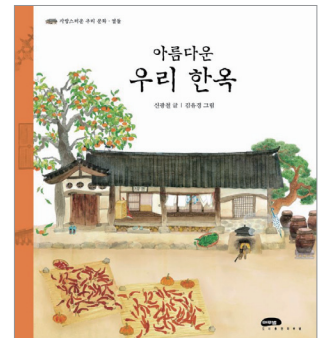
When watching historical Korean dramas, the most interesting and eye catching points after the story line are the beautiful *Hanbok* (traditional Korean clothing) worn by the characters and the beautiful accessories with unique personalities. That's why the old accessories in the historical dramas are often popular, and some Korean hairpin (binyeo, or Korean ribbon called daenggi) featured in drams are sold out. However, traditional accessories are not mere beautiful things. It is because many historical facts are hidden in the materials and patterns used in jewelry. *Have You Ever Seen such a Beautiful Daenggi?* is a picture book that presents the Joseon's representative accessories and its beauty. The story is simple. The fictional character, Myeongdamjeong goes seeking a woman wearing norigae and embroidered daenggi at the request of a gentleman. At the same time, through ornaments that symbolize the social atmosphere and life of the Joseon Dynasty, the book offers a better understanding of the life of our ancestors, as seen in historical dramas.

[See more details >>](#)

## *Beautiful Hanok*

### 1. Publication Details

**Title** | Beautiful Hanok  
**Author** | Kim Yukyung; Sin Gwangcheol  
**Publisher** | Marubol Publications  
**Publication Date** | 2018-09-02  
**ISBN** | 9788956635835  
**No. of pages** | 40  
**Dimensions** | 225×245



### 2. Book Intro

Our ancestors built houses with consideration for how they could live a healthy, comfortable life. Scientifically, “Hanok” (Korean traditional house) is the best house design for harmony between nature and people. Materials are collected from nature, making the house healthy. The gentle curves add a subtle touch of beauty to Hanok, which is now garnering attention as a part of global cultural heritage beyond the borders of Korea. *Beautiful Hanok* Story contains the lives and wisdom

of our ancestors.

Our ancestors valued living in harmony with nature. *Beautiful Hanok Story* embodies the true essence of what our ancestors valued about nature. Our ancestors believed that having a mountain in the back and water flowing in the front were requirements for a perfect building location. So, every single aspect of the house, including location, positioning and height was carefully considered before building began. A house that embraces nature and becomes part of that nature itself, this is the Hanok of Korea.

Before glass and boilers were invented, which type of house was the brightest and warmest house in the world? The answer is Hanok. In *Beautiful Hanok Story*, you can meet Hanok built scientifically to embrace nature and consider people. The scientific characteristics even have modern-day expert in awe. *Beautiful Hanok Story* allows children to learn about the lives and wisdom of our ancestors which were contained in Hanok, the pinnacle of housing which harmonized nature and science.

The roof of a Hanok does not have any straight lines. This is because gentle curves fit Korean's nature better than strong straight lines. Also, Hanok is a house that combines the floorings of the southern Korean culture and Ondol of the northern Korean culture. These two different cultures formed harmony in a single space, similar to how Koreans often experience the sentiments of "resentment" and "pleasure" at the same time. *Beautiful Hanok Story* hopes to offer an opportunity to admire the beauty, excellence and Korean sensibility and culture embodied in Hanok to children as well as adults.

[See more details >>](#)

## *Traditional Korean Homes*

### 1. Publication Details

**Title** | Traditional Korean Homes

**Author** | Kim Eunhee; Lee Sang Hyun

**Publisher** | SIGONGJUNIOR

**Publication Date** | 2017-02-20

**ISBN** | 9788952784872

**No. of pages** | 48

**Dimensions** | 300×250



## 2. Book Intro

In late Joseon era, during a time of great changes inside and outside the country, Jinsa Choi's family gathered and discussed two concerns. First, two daughters' wedding is at the corner but there are not enough rooms to accommodate visitors. Second, their food storage is not secure as thieves are increasing day by day due to social unrest. So Choi family decides to expand food storage to build another building for visitors and erect walls to prevent thieves.

The story begins by introducing each room of Choi's house and telling what is happening there. Readers can see the pictures of the beautiful spaces of hanok (traditional Korean house), such as "anchae" (main building), "sarangchae" (detached building) and courtyard.

First, the family meeting takes place in anchae, the center of the house. It is usually for women, but it is also a place where family gathers to discuss important issues. Mr Choi goes to the shrine and report to ancestors that his daughters would marry soon, and watch the new "haenlangchae" being built inside "sarangchae," a men's space. Finally, the haenlangchae and strong fence are completed. On the wedding day, Choi's relatives gather and women are busy making food in the backyard. Following the story line, reader can naturally understand what each building is used for and what it looks like, etc.

In addition, the book gives explanation on the shape of roof, pillars, doors and window, and the types of gates and fences, along with vivid pictures. The book guide readers to understand peculiar elements of hanok, such as "gudeul" (Korean floor heating system), "daecheong maru" (wooden floor), and eaves, and how scientific hanok is in prevention of coldness and heat.

The books also shows how the unique cultures of Korean people – nomadic, sedentary and transitional – is reflected in hanok. This book will provide an opportunity to learn about hanok and Korean culture itself, not just as simple buildings.

[See more details >>](#)

## *Low Rating haenyeo and mysterious lucky bag*

### 1. Publication Details

**Title** | Low Rating haenyeo and mysterious lucky bag

**Author** | Bang Hyeon-II; Yoo Soon-hee

**Publisher** | GAEAMNAMU

**Publication Date** | 2016-12-22

**ISBN** | 9788968303579

**No. of pages** | 128

**Dimensions** | 163×218



### 2. Book Intro

Asol is staying with her grandmother at her house on Udo, while her mother is away on a business trip to Vietnam. Due to her past of having been an outcast in school among her urban peers, Asol has trouble fitting in with her classmates in her new school on Udo. One day, Asol goes to the beach to find her grandmother and stumbles upon a dolhareubang statue, near where she discovers a lucky bag said to belong to Grandma Yeongdeung, the protector of Jeju Island. Grandma Yeongdeung asks for the bag back, but Asol will return it only if the Grandma Spirit agrees to grant her grandmother's wish. What exactly is her grandmother's wish? Will Grandma Yeongdeung grant the wish?

This book crosses over effortlessly between reality and fantasy, all the while describing in desperate detail the sacrificial lives of the women haenyeo divers who risked their lives to dive in the sea. The book's message is of hope, that the Jeju haenyeo culture will never cease. This culture, which values community and coexistence with nature, could teach an important lesson for us in contemporary society where the spirit of sacrifice and compassion seem to have long disappeared. Hopefully, this book will encourage more readers to reflect on the treasured haenyeo culture.

[See more details >>](#)

## *Princess Meju and the Secret Millennium Soy Sauce*

### 1. Publication Details

**Title** | Princess Meju and the Secret Millennium Soy Sauce

**Author** | Kim Eon-Hee; Lee Kyeong Soon

**Publisher** | GAEAMNAMU

**Publication Date** | 2016-01-28

**ISBN** | 9788968302572

**No. of pages** | 168

**Dimensions** | 163×218



### 2. Book Intro

Honga's grandmother is an artisan soy sauce maker who refuses to tell anyone the secret to making her amazing soy sauce. On the other hand, Honga's father insists that they should share such valuable knowledge with more people, and hosts a group of Honga's classmates for a workshop where they can learn how to make fermented soybeans. On the day of the event, Honga heads into a secret forbidden zone in the house, together with her classmates. While there, someone ends up breaking a large jar containing starter soy sauce. Who broke the jar? Has the thousand-year-old soy sauce been lost forever?

This book tells the story of an artisan food maker and her family, and the imaginative storytelling crosses over between fantasy and reality to make for a fun read. The author, Lee Kyeong Soon, has insightfully developed her characters and tells a compelling story with richness and depth. The fantasy that Honga experiences in a bamboo forest are quite unique and mysterious, while at the same time urges the speed of the thousand-year-old history along. This book will allow young readers to learn more about the wisdom and spirit of our ancestors, as contained in our traditional sauces, and cherish the beauty of keeping traditions alive.

[See more details >>](#)

## *Bubble Bubble Makgeolli Ensemble*

### 1. Publication Details

**Title** | Bubble Bubble Makgeolli Ensemble  
**Author** | Lee Kyoung-Kook; Choi Eun-Soon  
**Publisher** | GAEAMNAMU  
**Publication Date** | 2015-11-20  
**ISBN** | 9788968302275  
**No. of pages** | 140  
**Dimensions** | 163×218



### 2. Book Intro

Jun-soo's family manages a makgeolli (traditional Korean rice wine) brewery that they've owned for generations. Jun-soo doesn't want to inherit the difficult family business, but he cannot say so because he is afraid of his grandfather. Out of fear that he will have to finally take over the brewery, he devises a plan that he shouldn't have come up with. What's his plan?

The author vividly depicts a traditional makgeolli brewery through solid and robust research. The brewery in this story is based on Jipyong Brewery, a national registered cultural property located in Gyeonggi Province in Korea. The characters in this book show how hard it is for different generations with different views and values to continue to hold tradition together. They also remind readers that what is most important in life is to understand, respect, and sympathize with one other.

[See more details >>](#)

## *Take it extra!*

### 1. Publication Details

**Title** | Take it extra!  
**Author** | Jo Yunju; Han Young-Mi  
**Publisher** | GAEAMNAMU  
**Publication Date** | 2015-08-25  
**ISBN** | 9788968301865  
**No. of pages** | 156  
**Dimensions** | 163×218



## 2. Book Intro

Sora visits her grandmother in Jeongseon, Gangwon Province, together with her father who has recently lost his job. To encourage her dad and cheer him up, she decides to sell their homegrown vegetables in the outdoor market, without telling the grown-ups. Her grandmother, for her part, also steals out to the Jeongseon market to sell mountain herbs and plants, to help her son. There, however, she gets into an argument with a customer about where the herbs are actually from. Sora steps up to help her and break up the fight, but the incident leads her uncle, the president of the local merchants' association, and her father, to try to find a solution. Will Sora's family figure out what to do?

Through this book, set in the context of the Jeongseon local market, the author portrays contemporary issues such as the fading values of traditional markets, early retirement, interracial marriage, the controversy surrounding food origins, and more, in a relevant, resonant way.

[See more details >>](#)

## *A Story Told Stitch by Stitch from the Finger Tips*

### 1. Publication Details

**Title** | A Story Told Stitch by Stitch from the Finger Tips

**Author** | Jee Hera; Jee Hera

**Publisher** | BORIM PRESS

**Publication Date** | 2014-07-15

**ISBN** | 9788943309817

**No. of pages** | 36

**Dimensions** | 215×280



## 2. Book Intro

This picture book intends to display the world of traditional sewing and its significance. This book introduces the various sewing techniques and production processes in detail and shows the depth and beauty of the each artifact work. It also contains the lives and cultures of women of the past, who were frugal housekeepers and also the guardians of traditional culture.

[See more details >>](#)

## *Big Hand Grandmother*

### 1. Publication Details

**Title** | Big Hand Grandmother  
**Author** | Lee Ukbae; Chae Inseon  
**Publisher** | Jaimimage Publishing Co.  
**Publication Date** | 1998-01-01  
**ISBN** | 9788986565065  
**No. of pages** | 48  
**Dimensions** | 225×264



### 2. Book Intro

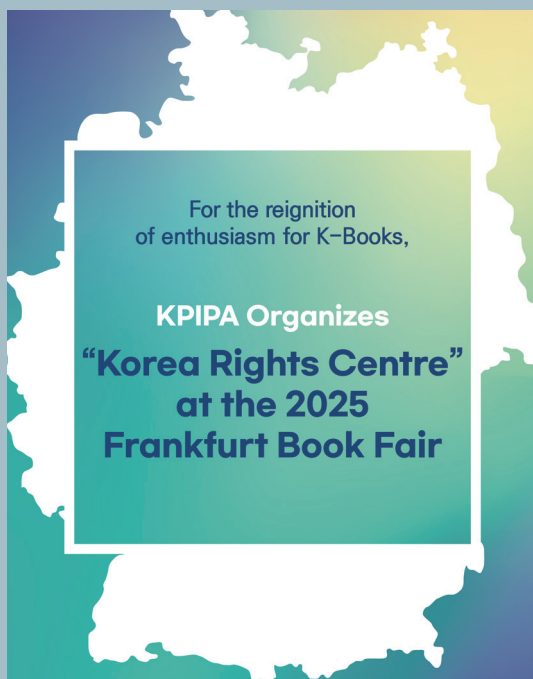
The generous grandmother always gives out things plentifully. When the holiday comes, she prepares food to share with the animals in the forest. At the same time, the animals gather together to help prepare food and have fun. This book lets you feel the richness of the holiday and the generosity of sharing.

[See more details >>](#)

INFO

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For the reignition of enthusiasm for K-Books,

## KPIPA Organizes “Korea Rights Centre” at the 2025 Frankfurt Book Fair



The world's largest book fair, the Frankfurt Book Fair, is opening its doors.

Frankfurt Book Fair offers a global stage for promoting the export of Korean publishing content and strengthening the capacity of Korean publishers.

To carry forward the growing global enthusiasm for K-Books, we are heading to Frankfurt, Germany.



Through the promotion of Korean publishing culture and industry, we aim to elevate Korea's presence and build strong global publishing business networks.

**Period**

October  
15 (Wed.) - 19 (Sun.),  
2025

**Venue**

Messe Frankfurt,  
Frankfurt am Main,  
Germany



At this year's fair, 15 Korean publishing companies, 41 consignment publishers, and 101 Korean titles will meet with international publishing partners and export experts to lay the foundation for K-Books' global advancement.

## Major programs

1

### 1:1 export consultations

Business matching between overseas buyers, including publishers, agencies, and IP firms

2

### Networking reception

Sharing information on the global publishing market; enhancing understanding of publishing trends; building networks



The Publication Industry Promotion Agency of Korea (KPIPA) will continue to make every effort to ensure the sustainable growth of K-Books.

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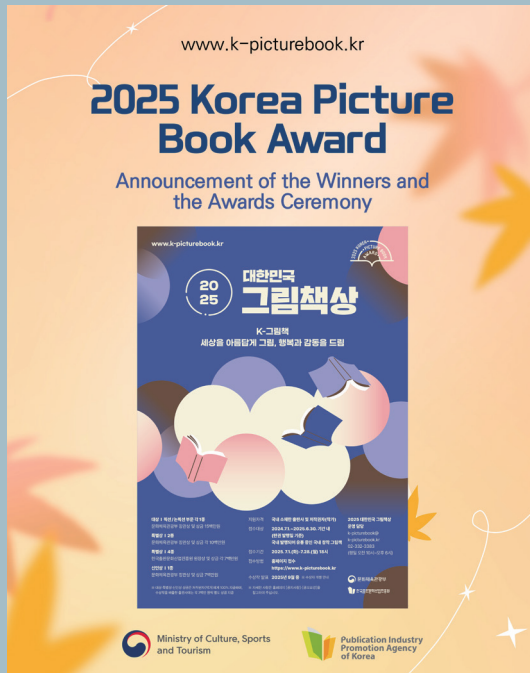
**We ask for your  
interest in the Korea Rights  
Centre at the  
2025 Frankfurt Book Fair!**

INFO

## 2025 Korea Picture Book Award

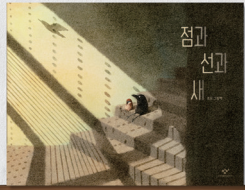
Announcement of the Winners and  
the Awards Ceremony

[www.k-picturebook.kr](http://www.k-picturebook.kr)



Grand Prize

• Fiction •



*A DOT, A LINE, AND A BIRD*

written and illustrated by Zo-O,  
published by Changbi Publishers

• Non-fiction •



*What Wonderful Beetles*

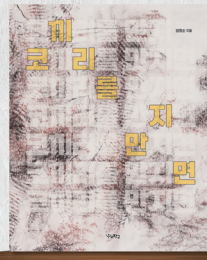
written and illustrated by  
Kim Yoo-Dae,  
published by Iyagikot publishing

Special Prize



*The Boy Who is  
Crazy About Flower*

written and illustrated by  
Kim Dong-Sung,  
published by Borim Press



*When We Touch  
The Elephant*

written and illustrated by  
Oum Jeong-Soon,  
published by Woorischool

Special Prize



*The Memory of the Building*

written and illustrated by Choi Kyung-Sik,  
O Sori, Hong Ji-Hae,  
published by Sakejeul Publishing



*The Guardians of Gyeongbokgung*

written and illustrated by Cho Soo-Jin,  
published by Uhheung-Project



*A Boy With a Bronze Helmet*

written and illustrated by So Yun-Kyoung,  
published by Bombyeott Publishing Co.



*Cheer*

written and illustrated by Gong Eun-Hye,  
published by Maummoja

Rookie of the Year



*Come In*

written and illustrated by Min Byoung-Kwon,  
published by Gilbut Children Publishing Co., Ltd.

**Awards Ceremony**

**Date**  
11.10.(Mon), 2pm

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**Venue**  
Ferrum Hall, Ferrum Tower (3F)

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**Content**  
9 awards in 3 categories

The graphic features a light orange background with faint autumn leaves and a white paper note pinned to the top. The text is centered on the note in a clean, sans-serif font.