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碩士學位論文

# Experts on Failure

(실패의 전문가들 翻譯論文)

濟州大學校 通譯翻譯大學院

韓 英 學 科

金 孝 宣

2016年 7月



# Experts on Failure

(실패의 전문가들 翻譯論文)

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이 論文을 通譯翻譯學 碩士學位 論文으로 提出함

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# Experts on Failure

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JEJU NATIONAL UNIVERSITY



# Experts on Failure

Great failure stories told by mentors of our time

Written by Jeong Yoo-ri & Jeong Ji-yeong

Illustrated by Kim Kyeong-chan





If I had run without a goal, I would have become tired, have given up, and would not have achieved as much as I have today. If you think you are not patient enough, have a goal in your head and chew it over in your mind all the time. Then, even in the worst situation, you will not give up easily as you take steps toward your goal.

- Marathoner Lee Bong-ju

Failure was obvious, but I decided to stake my life on my work. I believed it would not be a success but a process of failure, from which junior colleagues could learn something. If my failure could become a source of success, that was good enough to make me go for it.

- Rocket expert, Chae Yeon-seok

Pulling myself together, I decided to start from scratch. I made up my mind that I would keep memories of the past success, cheers, and applause, but would not hold onto them. I pledged to treat every challenge in the future as my first challenge.

- Musical director Jang Yoo-jeong

Especially in times of difficulty, creating your own path can be a breakthrough rather than taking the path already made. Of course you may fear failure, but the failure you experience during this process will become the foundation of your life.

- Korean PR expert, Seo Kyoung-duk

## Experts on Failure

Great failure stories told by mentors of our time



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# Experts on Failure

Great failure stories told by mentors of our time

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Illustrated by Kim Kyeong-chan

SAMTOH

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Never confuse a single defeat with a final defeat.

\_ F. Scott Fitzgerald

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Four and a half laps of running around the earth with dream of  
completing the course

Marathoner Lee Bong-ju





## Marathoner **Lee Bong-ju**

Lee Bong-ju, who was happy to run, started competing in marathons in high school. After winning his first international marathon at the 1993 Honolulu International Marathon, Lee successfully ran races all around the world. While completing 41 races, he experienced a lot of frustrations, but he overcame all of the difficulties with positivity, like his entertaining nickname "Bongdari." After a silver medal finish in the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, he won the Boston Marathon in 2001. He also had consecutive wins in the 1998 Bangkok and 2002 Busan Asian Games. Lee still holds the Korean-best record of 2:07.20, which he set in 2000 at the Tokyo Marathon. In 2009, he was awarded the Blue Dragon Order of Sports Merit, Korea's highest order for athletes, in recognition of his exceptional contribution to the nation.

## **Resolution to put more effort into a hard-earned opportunity**

During my high school years, I joined the track team, following my friend's suggestion after considering several extracurricular activities. I liked running because it did not require any sports equipment, like baseball or soccer, and I could do it whenever and wherever I wanted. I always ran to school instead of taking the bus to save on bus fares, as well as to enhance my ability. Although it was over 15 kilometers, I never skipped a day running to school. Before I knew it, running became part of my life.

During this time when I was really into running, I was given an offer to join the track team at a different high school. My tuition fee would be exempt under the condition I entered their school as a student athlete. But to do that, I had to be a freshman again, which meant giving up taking my second-year courses. My parents objected, but I had already made up my mind. As long as I could run, it didn't matter to me.

Unfortunately, the new school got rid of its track team because of its poor performance records. I was disturbed by the thought of not running any more. Fortunately, not long after feeling uneasy, I transferred to a new school with a track team and finally settled down. Moving around several schools gave me the opportunity to make myself stronger. I promised myself to make even more of an effort since I kept my dream even after going through a difficult time.

## **Never accept weakness**

My feet are really ugly. They are an uneven pair and they are flat. I used to feel a sense of frustration when I thought about what it would be like if I had been born a marathon runner with great abilities and a little

bit more of a perfect fit... but soon I realized it was useless. I was well aware that we can not change what we were born with.

I never even won third place in the 100-meter running event at my school sports days because of my slow running speed. So I trained every day to improve my endurance, making no exception on rainy days. Even when I was on my honeymoon, I took my training suit. I got up at 5 in the morning, ran on strange streets, and came back to the hotel. I had no time to be lazy or distracted because I had a clear goal to win a gold medal in the Olympics.

In the meantime, my obsession with my weakness vanished. If I had run without a goal, I would have become tired, have given up, and would not have achieved as much as I have today. If you think you are not patient enough, have a goal in your head and chew it over in your mind all the time. Then, even in the worst situation, you will not give up easily as you take steps toward your goal.

### **Take time off when you need it**

I was preparing to qualify for the national marathon team before the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. But I worked so hard that my knee injury got worse, and I could not participate in the qualifying race. It hurt greatly that I did not even get the opportunity to go to the Olympics. As a marathoner, I should have been more strict about my health.

Instead, I watched my close friend and colleague Hwang Young-jo win the gold medal on television. I did not have the heart to run again. As I lost this precious opportunity, I thought it would all be downhill from this point. To get it together, I decided to take time to rest rather than to go into training. Doing other sports, such as swimming, I gradually settled myself down. So that after half a year of getting myself together,

I came back to my place.

**If you try hard, whatever the results, it will be valuable**

On the day of the Atlanta Olympics, the runners who were running with me in the leading group started to fall behind one by one. I thought I might win the race. But then, an unknown marathoner, Thugwane from Kenya, ran ahead of me. Still, I was not worried that I could turn things around.

The distance remained between us. When I entered the stadium and saw the finish line, I picked up speed. It was possible to narrow the gap, but I could not catch up with him. I passed the finish line after Thugwane and won the silver medal. With the delight of completing the race safe and sound, I raised my arms high and passed the line. It was a great achievement to win second place, competing against the world-class runners. It was not a moment of failure but a moment of success. The other runners in the marathon sincerely congratulated me as well.

In Korea, however, it was not a big deal. I was easily forgotten from their memories because I did not win first place. Looking back, I also felt a sense of frustration at the marathon, but now it remains as a moment of happiness. It was not so different from the happiness that I felt after the consecutive wins at the 1998 Bangkok Asian Games (claiming first place with 2:12:32) and at the 2002 Busan Asian Games (claiming first place with 2:14:04). I was happy because I did my best in every game and I was satisfied with the outcomes.

**Focus on training without being disturbed by gossip**

It was 1998 when I was prepared for the Rotterdam Marathon. My coach

didn't want me to participate in the race because I was not in good condition. People around me also said that they did not understand why I wanted to be in the race with the obvious poor result expected. But I insisted on taking part in the marathon. I wanted to show that they were wrong. Finally, I became the first Korean marathoner to reach 2:07 (2:07:44). I realized there was a moment that I had to believe in myself and go forward.

When I came back to train after the Rotterdam Marathon, there were some communication problems with my team. I left the team because my motivation would fall and my outcome would not be so good if I trained with an undesirable team. Those who did not know the story strongly blamed me. They said that my marathon life would end because I turned my back on my coach who had spent a long time with me. I just ran and ran because any explanation might be considered an excuse. I was not bothered by their gossip when I focused on training.

On February 13, 2000, I won second place at the Tokyo Marathon, which was again the best record in Korea. After breaking a new record, all the criticism about me disappeared.

If I had not set a good record, I could not have participated in other games. So I realized that a true marathoner has to show his ability through performance.

### **The important thing is to run till the end of the race**

It was 2002 when the Sydney Olympics were held. Since I was in good shape all through the race, I was sure to win the gold medal. But since the gods were jealous, I had an accident. The marathoners in front of me tripped over themselves, so I lost my balance and fell down. I picked myself up and ran again, but I had already lost my pace. Losing your

pace in a marathon means breaking the rhythm in your breath and drastically decreasing your stamina, which makes it hard to complete the race. I wanted to give up, but I bit the bullet. I did not want to look weak before my mother and my brother, who came all the way to Australia to cheer me up.

The pain in my leg, which was injured from the fall, got worse. Every time I took a step, both my body and heart became heavier. Because the gap was wide between the lead group and me, I had to accept that I could not win the gold medal. But I ran on till the end. Those who were disappointed in my poor result might blame me, but I did not want to give up the race.

Finally I passed the finish line, placing 24th. I comforted myself by saying I had done a good job. If I had given up in the middle of the race, I would have regretted it for a long time. I would have wasted time thinking of my mistake. The winner is the only one to be first in the race, but even though you are not the winner, there must be at least one thing you can gain by simply finishing the race. Through all your sweat and tears, you can feel your growth and taste the joy of the challenge.

A few days before the 2001 Boston Marathon, my father passed away. With deep sadness, I could not train for the race while holding his funeral. It was the only period that I skipped training. People worried that I might become weak and tired both in mind and body. But I ran and ran thinking of my father. I finally passed the finish line, coming in first, clocking in at 2 hours, 9 minutes and 43 seconds.

The Korean national anthem was played in the victory ceremony hall for the second time, following Seo Yoon-bok's win at the 51st Boston Marathon in 1947. I returned home and received an enthusiastic welcome from the people of Korea. Sprinkled from the building, the flowers thrown were like warm greetings sent from my father.

## **Building my own road instead of running on the ready-made path**

In 2009, turning 40, I retired after the national sports festival with 41 finished marathons. I felt a sense of frustration at not achieving my goal of an Olympic gold medal. But I have no regrets because I did my best in every race.

Now I have another dream: a life as a sports administrator. While training, I realized that there should be an institution as well as physical support to protect athletes. Based on my experience, I made up my mind to help solve athletes' problems.

Of course I might fail because administration is a totally new field to me, but I am willing to take on the challenge. I want to pull it off because as a senior, I believe it is my responsibility to young runners who will follow my road to run.

**Dream together!**

### **I am a marathoner**

Since a marathon is a race that challenges the human limit, physical strength is required. If feeling something strange, you have to stop running and be examined by a doctor at the race.

One thing you should know is that you are not allowed to get help from other runners when you fall down. For a fair game, you would be immediately disqualified. But you can rest for a minute when feeling tired. Please make sure that you never run off the course!

Do you think it is difficult because there are a lot of rules to follow? It is, however, a liberal sport because you can talk to the runner next to you and listen to music while running. Is 42.195 kilometers taxing? Then you can join a short course such as a half marathon, or a 10 kilometers or 5 kilometers race.

### **Strict control on food**

Dieting is as important as training to a marathoner. Because being overweight brings about joint pain, marathoners should pay attention to weight control.

One week before a race, Lee Bong-ju would eat to be in his best shape. His menu included beef without salt, boiled eggs, rice and vegetables. Lee says dieting is really painful and that he asked himself countless times, "Can't I have what I want to eat only this time?" Lee, however, overcame the temptation because once he lost control, he might not only lose his mental strength but also his body's shape. Who wants to destroy all the effort put forth by making a single mistake?



Draw about rockets that I never let go of even for a single day

Rocket expert Chae Yeon-seok



## Rocket expert **Chae Yeon-seok**

Rocket expert Chae Yeon-seok has been in love all his life with rocket research. Because of damage to his eardrum during an experiment in his childhood, his parents objected to his career, but he never gave up. He restored Singijeon, the world's first two-stage rocket, and developed the KSR-III, the nation's first liquid-fuel rocket, which was successfully launched into space. When he was the president of the Korea Aerospace Research Institute (KARI), he discovered the origins of the country's rocket and contributed to the progress of the space program by constructing the Naro Space Center. Now with younger experts in KARI, he is trying to build a next-generation rocket to help put satellites in space.

## Out of curiosity, a relationship with rockets began

When I was a child, I would often imagine flying aboard a rocket after seeing a rocket for the first time in a cartoon. One day while attending elementary school, I happened to see a bulletin board at the corner of the playground. On it I found information that the United States and the Soviet Union had been competing in keeping their manned spacecraft in space longer. I thought space travel using rockets was far away, just possible only in a cartoon, but it was a reality.

After reading the article, I was very curious about space travel. However, relevant data was not available. In those days, only a few wealthy households could subscribe to newspapers. There were no TVs, and most of the radios were simple crystal radios<sup>1)</sup>. So instead, I drew what I imagined. On the fall field day, I sent a balloon made out of vinyl into the air, which was named Satellite. Watching the balloon emitting thick smoke, I was anxious to know what a real satellite looked like.

After I became a middle school student, I borrowed books about rockets and space travel from the school library and bought some more at a secondhand bookstore to make my dream of becoming a rocket scientist a reality. Becoming as close to my science teacher as my own family, I could do various chemical experiments after school and on weekends. I also made a scientific instrument with him and presented it at an exhibition. I received an honorable mention for the work. Working as a student journalist on the recommendation of my teacher, I wrote articles and could pick up science news around the world and expand my horizons.

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<sup>1)</sup> crystal radio • A very simple radio receiver consisting of a metal needle which is put into contact with a crystal, often galena, to detect signals instead of vacuum tubes.

## **An accident cannot stop my dream**

I was still into rockets when I became a high school student. After school, I assembled rocket kits or drew blueprints for rockets while others were busy going to a private educational institute or a library to study. I drew rockets even during exam weeks. So, as I made a remarkable improvement in my knowledge of rockets, it was easy for me to make a small one that shot upward from the ground.

I wanted to exhibit this rocket that I made for myself in a science exhibition and show it to many people. My mother scolded me because I always talked about rockets and did not study. Nevertheless, I was determined and prepared as best as I could be. Thinking about hundreds of people watching my rocket fly into the air, I was really excited. Loud cheers from the crowd rang in my ears like an auditory hallucinations.

I made a rocket for a rocket plane and kindled a fire in the rocket. I expected the gunpowder would catch on fire when all of the wick was burnt and make the rocket fly away. But even long after the wick was burnt away, the rocket did not budge. I approached it to see what was wrong. Just as I looked into the rocket, the gunpowder exploded. The explosion caused me to have an ear injury. I am now almost deaf in one ear.

Shocked by the accident, my mother was worried and mad at me. However, I thought I had to study harder about rockets because I realized it was tough to become a rocket scientist. I could die or hurt myself again, so I decided to learn about rockets from the bottom up. Even after the injury, my passion for them never ceased. I sometimes think I could have never become a rocket expert if I had not had the accident. I firmly decided in my heart that I would not give up making rockets after the incident. I thought it would be unfair if I could not do

what I loved to do even after being depressed by the injury.

### **Rockets open doors for me**

Focusing only on rockets, I neglected my schoolwork. I failed to enter a university. It was a natural consequence because I did not study, but I felt very discouraged when thinking about how I would live in the future. Then all of a sudden, I had a crisis, thinking that I might not be able to conduct rocket experiments if I did not study and go to college. I imagined what would happen to me if I went. As colleges have nice lab equipment and technical texts, it would be good for my rocket experiments. After finding a reason, I could concentrate on my studies. The following year, I was able to enter a university to study physics.

As a college student, I still had rockets on the brain. I made a rocket club. With some like-minded friends I did research on rockets. We also assembled and launched rockets at the landfill site. We failed more times than we succeeded, but we never got discouraged. We found it interesting to find our mistakes and prepare another experiment after fixing the problems, hope welling up in us again.

I also wrote articles about rockets in my spare time. The articles were being published serially in a magazine called *Student Science*. Although I started it without expecting any attention, it gained popularity. Some readers sent me their comments saying that it would be good to produce a book with a collection of my series of articles.

So, I made up my mind to write a book on rockets. I prepared a manuscript for several months and wrote a letter to the publisher. Fortunately, it was published. My book, *Rockets and Space Travel*, was selected as an excellent book by the Ministry of Culture and Public Information in 1972. I was a sophomore in college and was given a



scholarship for bringing great honor to my school. Thanks to rockets, I could graduate without worrying about paying for college. In my last year of university, I won an excellence award for my research paper on Singijeon, ancient Korean rockets. Again, I could finish my masters on a scholarship. After that, I researched rockets, working as a professor at a college.

Then all of a sudden, I decided to offer my resignation and go to the U.S. to study rockets. My fellow professors were surprised at this. They asked me why I would go abroad to study because there was no guarantee that I could earn the same treatment after I came back. But working as a secure and well-paid professor was not my dream. I wanted to be a rocket scientist to make my country's rockets and satellites and launch them into space.

### **Face obstacles from the start**

When I came back from the States, the Korea Aerospace Research Institute was being established. I participated in its foundation. At the time, Korea had little interest in rockets. It was the time when we had never even dreamed of them because when we tried to make a big rocket, foreign countries cast doubts on whether we were building missiles and kept us in check. However, I knew that rockets were extraordinarily important.

Knowing what is going on in other countries, being able to tell the weather, and helping fly planes and drive cars safely is closely connected with rockets and satellites. If we do not have rocket technology, we cannot launch satellites into space to obtain such information at the time we want. Because of these reasons, I could not give up this important rocket research.

I wanted to develop a rocket which could put satellites into orbit. First, I had to choose a type between solid-fuel and liquid-fuel rockets. My choice was liquid ones. I had to follow various international conventions in their development process because rockets could be used as weapons. However, liquid rockets were relatively free from those regulations and their technology was crucial to build big rockets.

Although no one had ever tried to make rockets in the nation, I was highly motivated to do it at any minute. However, state support was as essential as an individual's ability or enthusiasm for rocket development because money for the research cost up to tens of billions of won.

I formally asked the government to fund my rocket research and development. However, I only received a cold response. They could not spend loads of money on the research with no guarantee of success. It was so frustrating that they did not know how important rockets were. I requested over and over again, but the answer was always the same.

People around me said that they knew it would not work and told me to give up. I fell into despair, thinking I could not do it alone nor could I find a way. But then, there was a surprising news report on North Korea. They had test fired a satellite with the Daepodong missiles. This made the whole nation nervous and the country also lost face. We believed that we were much better off and had more advanced science technology than North Korea, but a satellite, the fruit of high technology, was launched by them first. Even though they failed to put it in space, this set the alarm bells ringing in the nation and made the government feel pressed for time.

A missile is a rocket loaded with bombs in its head. So we had to develop liquid-fuel rockets first in order to build big rockets to fight back against North Korea. The government, who had not so long ago told me it would be difficult to help me, changed its way and started to actively

support rocket research. Thanks to this switch, I was able to actually develop liquid-fuel rockets. Even when I failed to enter a university and had to study one more year, I made a blueprint of them. I could finally make those rockets.

### **Someone has to do it even if he fails**

Working on developing liquid-fuel rockets, I did not expect instant success. I did not start by estimating chances of success. Failure was obvious, but I decided to stake my life on my work. I believed it would not be a success but a process of failure, from which junior colleagues could learn something.

If we never even try because the chances of success are slim, our rocket technology will stand still. If my work could raise awareness about the importance of rockets and my failure could become a source of success, that was good enough to make me go for it.

As expected while developing rockets, numerous failures continued, some of which we never thought would happen. Yet, we succeeded in launching a rocket earlier than expected and the whole world was astonished. The success of South Korea only after three launches, coming from a country which had little accumulated technology, was a very rare case. But it was more pleasing that the nation agreed on the importance of developing rockets.

After the success of liquid-fuel rockets, we were more actively assisted by the government. The research and development budget was increased, the Naro Space Center was established in Goheung, Jeollanam-do, and excellent scientists were added. Gaining momentum, the rocket research steadily evolved over a short period of time. Scientists from other countries were blown away by our development



speed.

I think our success is because of our ethnic characteristics. We are good with our hands and clever. We can easily realize how much our ancestors were smart and skilled with their hands when we see the world's oldest rocket launcher, Singijeon, which was made during the Joseon Dynasty. The reason why rocket development had been stalled in our country was that no one had ever tried to do it, fearing failure for a long time. In any field, even though the failure seems obvious, someone has to be bold and keep challenging in order to yield fruitful results.

### **Even if repeated failures occur in the future**

I first started developing rockets because I wanted to launch satellites into space. Since we had succeeded in building liquid-fuel rockets in the first step, we needed a big rocket to do the job. So, we began working on the development of the Korea Space Launch Vehicle, the Naro rocket.

There are a handful of countries that make rockets with their own technology and launch satellites. The success of the Naro would set the stage for our country to launch satellites. With that aspiration, I worked on the research for a long time and prepared to launch our rocket.

However, rocket development was really hard because even a minute error caused failure. We had more difficulties in building the Naro since it was much more complicated than liquid-fuel rockets. In particular, those of us on the ground had few clues as to what would happen to a rocket flying in a vacuum.

The two Naro launches failed, but we should not be disappointed. Without those two failures, we would never learn two lessons and make progress. Our failures are sure to be a definite part of good stepping stones to a bigger success.

**Dream together!**

### **The people who invented the world's first rocket**

Rocket scientist Chae Yeon-seok hurt his eardrum while experimenting with his rocket. Because his mother asked him not to perform any experiments, he could not do it for a while. He really wanted to, but he had to be patient. Instead, as his interest never withered, he spent time reading books about rockets. Then, he saw "Singijeon" in an old book.

Singijeon is a rocket-propelled launcher, which was invented in the middle of the 15th century during the reign of King Sejong of the Joseon Dynasty. There was no invention record of this big paper container of rockets in the world until six-pound rockets were developed in the early 19th century by the English military engineer W. Congreve. In other words, Singijeon is the world's largest paper rocket, more than 300 years ahead of other countries.

Singijeon is classified depending on its size: large, medium, small, and a two-stage rocket Sanhwa Singijeon. It is said that 100 small and medium-sized arrows mounted on the Hwacha launch cart flew 100 to 200 meters immediately after ignition. Furthermore, Daesingijeon and Sanhwa Singijeon are considered to have a range of more than 500 meters.

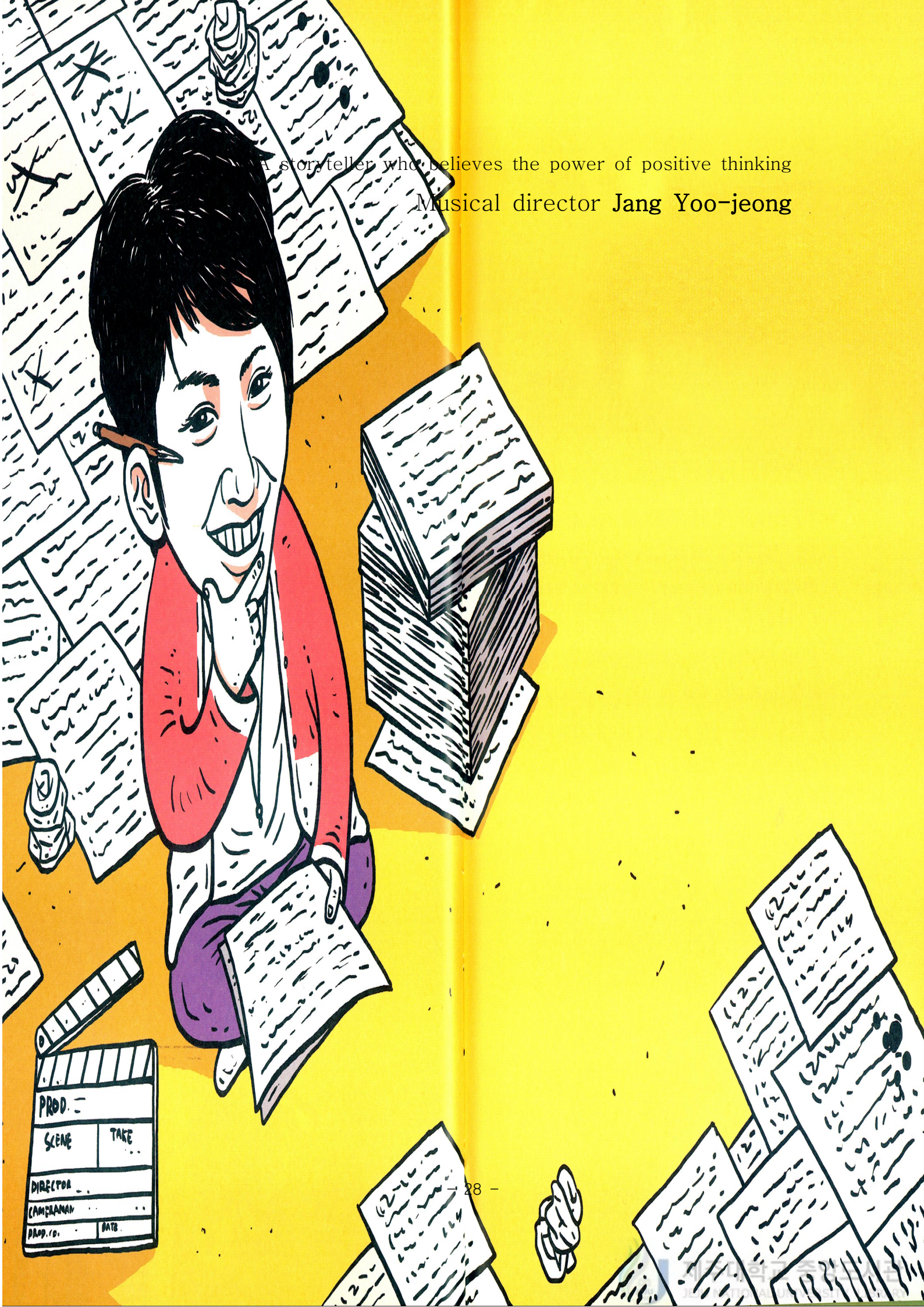
Chae Yeon-seok found the blueprint of Singijeon and Hwacha, and he restored Singijeon of the Joseon Dynasty. Singijeon arrows were fired for the first time during Daejeon EXPO in 1993. People from all around the world watched as a reconstructed rocket from the 15th century took off. Another amazing thing about Singijeon was its measurement units called

cheok, chon, pun, and ri, equaled to 30cm, 3cm, 3mm, and 0.3mm respectively. This shows that even in the 15th century our ancestors were very precise in their work, calculating even 0.3 millimeters, proving how creative and skilled they were.



A storyteller who believes the power of positive thinking

Musical director Jang Yoo-jeong





## Musical director **Jang Yoo-jeong**

When young, Jang Yoo-jeong developed a consuming passion for writing. She started to stage plays when she began studying playwriting at the Korea National University of Arts. Although it is painful to create plays at times, she maintains her balance by taking trips and studying various fields. Among her major works, *Songsanyahwa*, *Oh! While You Were Sleeping*, *Brothers Were Brave*, and *Finding Kim Jong-wook* have won the hearts of her audiences. In 2006, *Oh! While You Were Sleeping* brought her the Best Musical and Best Script Award in the 12th Korean Musical Awards. In 2007, she won the Best Script and Best Lyrics Prize in the first year of The Musical Awards with *Finding Kim Jong-wook*. In 2009, she received the Best Composition/Lyrics Award and the Best Script in the third year of The Musical Awards. She has been recognized as a talented director who writes and directs her own plays. In 2010, she directed the movie *Finding Kim Jong-wook*, the first Korean musical made into a film.

## Creating stories is the most dynamic activity for me

Since childhood, I could easily access music and dancing because my mother majored in Korean dance. To me, art was not something strange and special but part of my life. In elementary school, I was in a Korean traditional music club where I learned how to play the gayageum as well as the art of pansori, a traditional Korean genre of musical storytelling. I also learned how to play the flute in a school ensemble. I rarely missed school events since I loved learning and hanging out with my friends.

However, among all the activities, writing was my favorite. It may seem boring to sit at a desk and write stories, but, to me, writing was more exciting than any other activity. I often had my head in the clouds, creating time, space, and wonderful characters and expanding my stories. I naturally dreamed of becoming a novelist.

As I chose Korean literature as my major in university, I sat down to write novels. But contrary to my expectations, the people around me said that my novels were not like novels, but more like dramas. Whenever I received those comments, I got so frustrated, feeling trapped inside a squared manuscript. I was confused and thought that being a novelist was beyond my ability even though I really wanted to be one. As I was repeatedly frustrated, my dream became distant. During that time, I happened to join the Dramatic Literature Society, and I started trying out another genre called drama. A drama is created like magic when a fascinating story is in harmony with the actors and actresses who breathe life into it, the music which flows like a poem, and the props and lights. Besides, unlike novels, we can check the audience's response right away. I was particularly attracted to the role of a director to create, organize, and lead a lively stage.

## There is a moment you cannot take back

In university, I used to look forward to Fridays. On that day, I would go to Seoul from Gwangju by train to see a play in Daehakro over the weekend. As my passion for plays grew bigger, I wanted to see every stage introduced to the world with my own eyes.

When I was a sophomore, I directed a play entitled *Mother's Room*. But some problems appeared. On the day of the performance, the anniversary of the Gwangju Democratization Movement<sup>2)</sup> took place, which caused traffic congestion in the town. In the end, only three people came to see the play in the theater located in front of the provincial office building.

Whether the audience was large or small, the scheduled stage play had to be performed. The curtains rose and the play began, but in the middle of the play one of my seniors called me out to advise me. He said that the flow of the play was not smooth and the acting was bad. All he said was what I had to take care of as a director. I could not make any excuses nor avoid my responsibility.

When I came back to the stage, there were way too many errors. But it was hard to stop the play to fix them when it had already been performed. At that moment, I realized that a play is a really difficult art. If I were not perfectly ready for the performance, I would make mistakes that I could not take back. So I decided to be more careful when I wrote and put on a play and that I would study more.

## With a clear goal, even pain is pleasure

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<sup>2)</sup> Gwangju Democratization Movement • A pro-democracy movement which was initiated in Gwangju, Jellanam-do Province, from May 18 to 27, 1980. People rose up against the military regime that indulged in corruption and violence. Many citizens lost their lives, but it was a starting point of democratization of South Korea.

The Dramatic Literature Society that I joined dealt with only Korean plays. I was sorry that I could not touch foreign works. I was eager to study plays systematically and fill my lack of knowledge. Then one day on the way to class, I suddenly stopped walking. Feeling the wind, I thought I wanted to go off somewhere. It was in an instant that I made up my mind to go to England and I prepared for studying abroad.

As we all know, student life abroad is challenging. However, living in England was much more difficult at that time. What was worse, my country faced a financial crisis<sup>3)</sup> right after I came to England. So foreign students like me had a hard time.

I worked at a restaurant and a hamburger store on weekdays and went to clean empty houses on weekends. I walked more than three hours round trip to school, studied directing and acting, and went everywhere workshops were held. Since I studied while working, I could not get enough sleep and often had a simple meal. But it was not hard and I did not think I suffered. It might be because I did what I liked to do. It was an invaluable experience although I lived in a foreign country only for a little more than a year.

### **The time when I was more hardworking than anyone else**

After I came back, I thought I needed to study more about directing. So I told my parents that I wanted to go to university afresh. They opposed it as expected. My mother even hid my university application form. I

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<sup>3)</sup> financial crisis • The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is an international organization, which provides loans to help member countries tackle balance of payments problems, and in return for IMF's help, a country is required to embark on an IMF-monitored economic reform and financial restructuring program. Due to the financial crisis, South Korea requested a loan from the IMF in 1997.



figured out that it was a huge burden for any parent to send a child to a university twice. In addition, to start studying again at 25 meant to enter the workforce later than people my age. I understood they would not readily agree to it.

I had worries of my own as well. I was concerned about whether I could hold my own among those who were gifted and had many talents. However, I was set on studying the basics of theater. I tried to persuade my mother with all my heart, and finally I had an entrance exam for the directing department at the Korea National University of Arts. Although I was worried that I might fail the exam, I did my best and passed it.

I rented a room in Seoul to attend university there. While carrying my stuff, my television was broken. But I did not throw it away or have it fixed. I might have wanted to buy a new one if I would have thrown it away, or I would have watched it if it were fixed. I had the broken television for all four years. At nights, I deliberately did not turn on the boiler. When the room was not warm, I would read books for a little longer. I doggedly hardened myself because I started studying again as an older student.

### **Believing in myself, I catch my breath**

After a long period of research and consideration, I wrote and directed *Songsanyahwa*, *Oh! While You Were Sleeping*, and *Finding Kim Jong-wook*. Responses from the audience were great, which made me feel confident and in return feel more passionate about theater day after day.

However, I could not always write stories without any trouble. There was a time I could not even write a sentence for three months. Having a hard time getting to sleep at night, I eventually gave way to my tears in

my studies. I could not stand this heaviness on my heart. Tough times continued for me.

Then one day, I happened to meet Choi In-ho, a writer who I had admired. I asked him what he would do when struggling with writer's block. I indeed wondered whether he had ever experienced the same problem as me. He gave me an unexpected answer. He said he remembered crying every day when he wrote for a newspaper, and locking the door to avoid reporters who came for his manuscripts.

While talking with him, I felt my mind become relaxed. Even such a great writer as he had difficulty writing, so I came to consider my problem as no big deal. Finally the belief arose that things would get better soon.

After that, I finished my play script in two months, which I held onto for over two years. The play was *Brothers Were Brave*, which I could complete after meeting with author Choi In-ho. But, it did not mean that I put an end to hard times in the future. Writing and directing is an extremely difficult fight against oneself. I had to admit that I could not continue to write satisfying scripts as long as I was not a gifted writer.

Whenever suffering from writer's block, I explored other fields which I was interested in, such as criminal psychology. I actively went to the movies and traveled. Then, I finally found it in my heart to write stories. So, I realized that it is good for me to experience various things until I have the mindset to do something instead of staying stuck in negativity. After this realization, I produced the musical, *Legally Blonde* and the movie *Finding Kim Jong-wook*.

### **Stop dwelling on the past glories**

As my musicals received good reviews from both the audience and

critics, my name Jang Yoo-jeong also became well known. Around that time, a new opportunity came to me to make a film version of my musical *Finding Kim Jong-wook*. Although I was worried about how to express characteristics of the musical genre in the movie, I decided to take up the challenge.

Many people saw the film, and the reviews were favorable. It was a success, but personally, I was not satisfied. In a way I thought it was not so bad, but it did not meet my high expectations. But then, I asked myself if I was used to the past cheers and applause. I thought as a producer I was required to examine my work in an objective manner. Thus I forgot the past glories for the time being, and let go of others' expectations and my greed as well. Finally, I could find some parts of the movie that left much to be desired.

Pulling myself together, I decided to start from scratch. I made up my mind that I would keep memories of the past success, cheers, and applause, but would not hold onto them. I pledged to treat every challenge in the future as my first challenge.

### **Discovering a lot of potential in myself**

Drama and film are an art in which interaction is the most important. However great the work is, it cannot shine without the support of its audience. I have received more love than I deserve, but I know nothing lasts forever. So I sometimes imagine the moment when no one would want to see my works. In my imagination, however, I never give up or get depressed. It may hurt, but I am well aware that I have my inner power to raise myself up.

Even if the time comes when I cannot display my ability any more in the position that I am in now, I will not think it is the end of my life. I

believe I can enjoy my new life by challenging fine arts such as the opera, dance drama, and performance. I want to be a person who never loses passion and a positive attitude. Even when I am older, I want to be flexible in my thinking.

When someone asks me for advice on the choices in life, I tell them to follow their heart. If they say they do not know what their heart wants, I suggest that they try to challenge themselves in as many different things as possible. Then they can certainly find what they love. When you go to Busan from Seoul, you can arrive at your destination with one rush if you take an airplane or a train. But if you lay over at Pohang and Yangsan, which seems you are taking the longer way around, you can have more experiences and chances to reflect on yourself on the way. In other words, you can discover a lot of potential in yourself.

I hope people do not jump to a conclusion, saying "It is the only dream I have." Searching for many different dreams, you can find your hidden talents and gain strength to defeat failure. However, when you make a choice, you should know the definite reason. Even though you start what you like to do, there comes a moment when you do not want to do it anymore. Then, try to remind yourself of your goal that you have set for the first time, and you can set your heart on fire again to go on.

## The musicals Jang Yoo-jeong produced

### *Oh! While You Were Sleeping*

This musical is based on Jang Yoo-jeong's first-hand experience in Kkottongnae Village, a Catholic-run community for the disabled. During the Christmas season, one patient disappears at a charity hospital run by a catholic foundation. Because they are going to appear on a TV show to receive donations, the hospital is in an uproar. Peter, the director of the hospital, begins to question fellow patients and volunteers to trace the patient's whereabouts. During his search, he encounters the underprivileged, such as alcoholics and elderly people with dementia, and talks about wounds and healing. Since its premiere in December 2005, it has steadily received plenty of love from the audience, reaching the 2,000th performance in September 2011.

### *Brothers Were Brave*

This musical that premiered in March 2007 is a fusion, in which a tradition called the head family mixes well with modern music like hip hop. The story begins when Seok-bong and Joo-bong, two brothers from the Andong Lee head family, go down to their family home after getting the news of their father's death. Since they are like cats and dogs, they lock horns over the ownership of their father's inheritance and a woman named Aurora. Going through the funeral process, however, they clear up their misunderstandings and develop a harmonious relationship.

**Dream together!**

### **Questions I had on the road**

The musical *Finding Kim Jong-wook* is based on the director Jang Yoo-jeong's backpacking experience in India. While travelling, you can see familiar things in a new and different way, and come across new questions. In other words, you break out of the existing frame and imagine freely, which also makes you ponder and get inspired. Once, when she participated in the Theater Festival in Slovakia, Jang Yoo-jeong took the overland route instead of taking a fast and comfortable one. She said that she traveled on horseback along the route and took heart while riding across the endless plain from Mongolia to China.

Whenever she goes travelling, she always makes sure to take her pocket notebook which she made for herself. She jots down what she sees, hears, feels, and fragments of thought in it during her trip. She carefully keeps her notebook like a treasure chest, not opening it for five years. When she reads it after all that time, answers to the questions that she had on the road come up. Also, she can recall that time, from which images or impressions can linger in her mind.

### **Finding Kim Jong-wook**

This musical deals with a fresh first love. The heroine visits the Finding Your First Love Agency in order to search for her first love named Kim Jong-wook whom she met in India 7 years ago. On the way to find him, she realizes what true love is. Since its premiere in 2003, it has received a lot of love. In 2010, it was made into a film, which attracted more than a million viewers.

### **The stage that combines stories, songs, and dances**

A musical is performed on a stage combining various artistic elements like drama, music, and dance. Based on a tight and interesting plot like a drama, the play begins when actors and actresses who act realistically appear on stage, and music that attracts audience is played. The actors dance to the music or sing in order to effectively deliver the inner workings of the characters or situation.

A musical is produced by combining so many elements that the director should have an eye for understanding dances and songs as well as the sense of making stories. Musical actors and actresses are also required to have versatile talents in acting, dancing, and singing.



Creative confidence in the world as a stage  
Korean public relations expert Seo Kyoung-duk





Korean public relations expert **Seo Kyoung-duk**

Inspired by backpacking through Europe, Seo Kyoung-duk started on his path to becoming a public relations expert. On July 27, 2005, he placed his first advertisement in the *New York Times* to properly promote the Republic of Korea and Dokdo. Furthermore, he has taken the lead in drawing attention to issues, such as the forced mobilization of comfort women and China's Northeast Asia Project, in order to stand up against Japan and China respectively, which attempt to distort history. Also, he has been trying to showcase the Republic of Korea to the rest of the world by running a video advertisement about Korean culture, highlighting aspects like Korean food and Hangeul, on a billboard in Times Square in New York and Piccadilly Circus in London. With surprisingly brilliant and amusing ideas, he has the power to win people's eyes, ears and hearts and bring them all together.

## Challenges that make me happy to be alive

There is a place that is more comfortable and fantastic than any other place to me, a person who has been traveling to every corner of the earth. That place is Sinrim-dong, where I was born. Spending my childhood there, I made lots of valuable friends. As you can guess, young Seo Kyoung-duk really liked hanging out with people.

Since I was a child, I have made friends of all ages. I became friends with people my age and older and treated them like family. Thanks to this experience, I think I can interact with people I meet for the first time without being anxious and shy.

Every day in Sinrim-dong was like an adventure because of the constant hustle and bustle of the town. However, not all days were happy. I failed to enter the university that I had wanted to attend, and there was a time when I had to prepare to take the college entrance exam again. I did not see any of my friends and dedicated myself to studying, but the result was not as satisfying as my efforts. I lost my confidence, and at the thought of disappointing my parents, I was so depressed.

I thought about studying one more year, but decided to go to university to have a more meaningful youth. I knew that my parents had secretly enrolled me at the university that I had been accepted into the previous year. As a college student, I felt more free. I wanted to be away from a life cornered with books and have diverse experiences, meeting many people and interacting with them. Thinking of ways to put this dream into action, I ended up with the idea that two heads are better than one. So I created an intercollegiate cultural club under the name of "The Competition for Survival."

I came up with this name because I thought that endless challenge

and competition were necessary to achieve great dreams in the globalized era. The word "survival" sounds so desperate and dreadful these days due to a serious unemployment crisis, but the survival in the club name means that in every moment, we should find "what makes us happy to be alive."

The club's major activity was taking on creative challenges with endless imagination and the vigor of young men. Now that we had started working, we had the ambition to do something that would go down in history.

Today, college students focus on preparing for their careers starting from their freshman year. However, especially in times of difficulty, creating your own path can be a breakthrough rather than taking the path already made. Of course you may fear failure, but the failure you experience during this process will become the foundation of your life.

### **Thorough preparation, as important as ambition**

There was news that Seoul would bury a time capsule in order to commemorate the city's 600th anniversary as the capital of Korea. After having a discussion with the members of "The Competition for Survival," I decided to take part in this event.

By going around the country for a long time, we contacted college students directly and conducted a survey about how life would change in 400 years. The event organizers were skeptical about what we young fellows could do, but when they saw our work, they were on board with it. The data we had compiled was selected as one of the 600 items to be put in the time capsule and our story was featured in the newspaper. "The Competition for Survival" instantly became famous.

Having confidence that we could do anything, we tried to make the

largest Taegukgi, the national flag of Korea. We thought that if we could make it with the handprints of 10,000 college students to mark the 50th anniversary of Korean independence, a sense of pride could be infused in the young people who would shoulder the future of Korea. In addition, if it could be recognized by the Guinness Book of Records and briefly reported on television and in newspapers, it would provide a great opportunity to promote Korea to the world.

With the help of the 50th Anniversary of the Korean Independence Commemoration Committee and a textile company, we were able to get sponsorship for a fabric that measured 150 meters wide, 120 meters long, and weighed over 1,000 kilograms. However, the problem was finding a place to spread the fabric for our event. I thought for a moment that Yeouido Square would work, but it was impossible to spread the fabric because it was so long. We also thought of a large rice field, but it was the growing season.

Our attempt ended in failure after all. I was personally disappointed, but most of all, I was so sorry that my heart felt heavy to disappoint the people who had helped me so much. A few days after feeling down, I was able to determine the cause of the failure. It was fine to zealously push forward with the project, but I realized that thorough planning beforehand was more essential. Since the time of this failure, I have become more careful when proceeding with a project.

### **Cherish the failure**

Before I joined the military, I traveled to Europe. This experience was very special to me because I met a lot of people who had very limited knowledge about Korea. Leaving my embarrassment and disappointment behind, I decided to properly promote my country. While traveling, I had

a fun and rewarding time, playing the role of a private ambassador. I pasted Taegukgi on my hat, wore a brand new shirt that celebrated the 2002 FIFA World Cup Korea-Japan and stuck a small flag out of the top of my backpack.

Although I wanted to do more activities to promote Korea, I decided to enlist in the military. At that time I was 36, meaning it was rather late to join. I thought at first that I would not be able to fit into the strict military life since I was very active, but life in the military was quite nice. It gave me a chance to meet various types of people in one place, and I could build up my strength through regular exercise and training.

However, like other common soldiers, I was worried a lot about what to do after leaving the military. Then one day while watching television, I saw a man wearing a jacket made out of grass. "That's it!" I thought, deciding it was the right time to do something big that I would stake my life upon.

I was discharged from the military in 2001, about a year before the World Cup. Right after coming back home, I hopped on a plane and headed to America. I did it on a whim with only one piece of information: Jene Pool, the name of the man wearing the grass jacket on TV. I had a brilliant idea and was quite eager to contribute to hosting the World Cup.

However, it was really hard to find Jene Pool with only his name. As I had little time left until I had to leave New York, I was nearly down to my last dollar. The insecurity about not being able to find Jene Pool crept in. Thinking of giving up, I became very anxious and America suddenly looked unfamiliar. But because I was so desperate and I had expected it to be challenging, I could not give up. I braced myself not to be discouraged.

After spending the rest of my money to ask a detective in New York for help, I managed to meet Jene Pool. I explained to him that I

would like to promote my country to the rest of the world by hosting an environmentally friendly World Cup with grass jackets. He told me that he would do his best to help me, and immediately all of my fatigue melted away.

As soon as I returned to Korea, I sent a letter to the president with a picture of a grass jacket attached. I thought it would be effective to attract worldwide attention if he could wear it. However, I received a reply from the Blue House that it would hardly be able to happen. At first I was disappointed when all my efforts seemed fruitless, but then later I felt like it was not necessarily a failure. I gained confidence that there is nothing I cannot do with patience and passion. Also, as my story that an average citizen made a jacket out of grass from the World Cup Stadium was reported at home and abroad, it gave a chance to publicize the need to promote the World Cup.

Even today I still remember that time and all the numerous failures and challenges I experienced to meet Jene Pool. If I had had given up along the way, I would have never obtained such a fantastic outcome.

### **Sincere hearts lead to change**

When hearing the news that the government of Shimane Prefecture in Japan created Takeshima Day<sup>4)</sup>, I thought it was time for someone to step in to correct Japan's wrong claim to Dokdo. I visited the *New York Times*, one of the world's most famous newspapers, and told them that I would like to place an ad about Dokdo. They were very embarrassed about what I said. Not only were they unfamiliar with Dokdo, but they

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<sup>4)</sup> Takeshima Day • In 2005, Shimane Prefecture in Japan created Takeshima Day. It was to mark 100 years after their claim on Dokdo as being Japanese territory and naming the island Takeshima in Japanese on February 22, 1905.

had doubts as I was an individual bringing up a national issue. I tried to persuade them that I could run an ad to publicize Dokdo on my own. Fortunately, the *New York Times* agreed to the advertisement after holding internal meetings.

Once approved, I stayed up several nights trying to come up with ideas for the ad's first draft. I repeatedly told myself to do it again, spending so long at my desk that I nearly wore out the shorts I had on. Working hard to the point of nosebleeds, drafts finally filled every wall in my room. As everything around me, including myself, was covered with all things about Dokdo, I felt like I had been dropped on the island. At the end of much laborious effort, I sent a completed draft to one of my juniors and asked him to do some design work.

On July 27, 2005, there were so many emotions going through my mind until this first advertisement for Dokdo was placed in the *New York Times*. I was so worried that my sincerity would not be recognized that I was hardly able to sleep. However, I received an enthusiastic response. My efforts were appreciated not only from people in Korea but from people outside of the country, who cheered me on and offered to help me with this kind of advertisement in the future. I felt so overwhelmed because I had worked all alone in the beginning, but now I had the support to work together with other people.

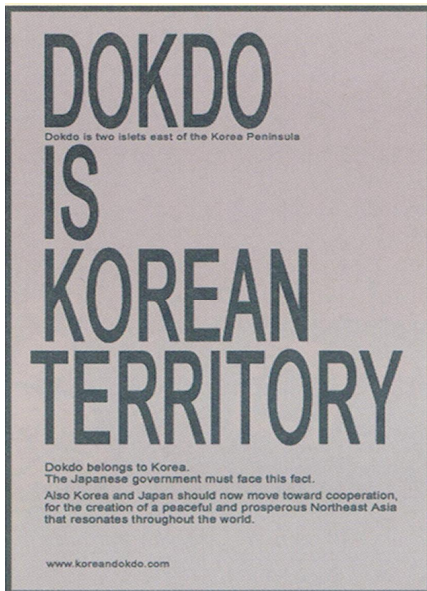
The Dokdo advertisement in the *New York Times* was amazing. Showing their interest in Dokdo, the foreign press, like the BBC, wanted to interview me. It was the end result of bold challenges and sincere efforts.

After the Dokdo advertisement, I also received shocking death threats. My email inbox was bombarded with curses and threats from Japanese conservative organizations. I was frightened by the gruesome contents at first. However, I mustered up the courage, because if I felt

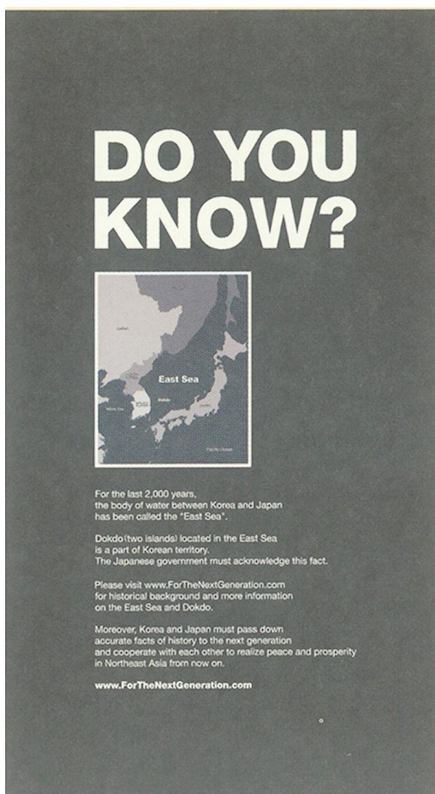
daunted by lies, I could not properly promote the Republic of Korea. I also came to believe that whatever I do, there will come a day when I will achieve recognition, as long as I am sincere in my heart.



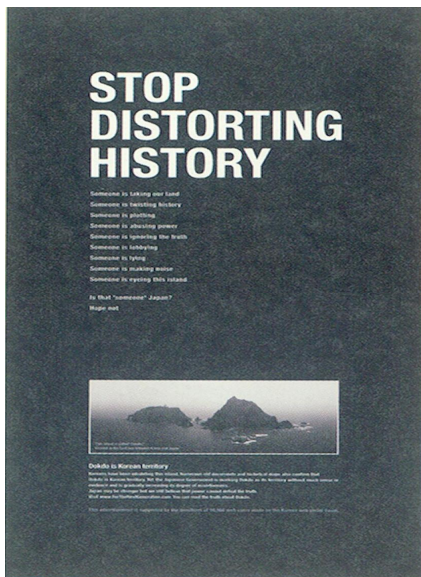
PR expert Seo Kyoung-duk's Dokdo campaign to spread correct information



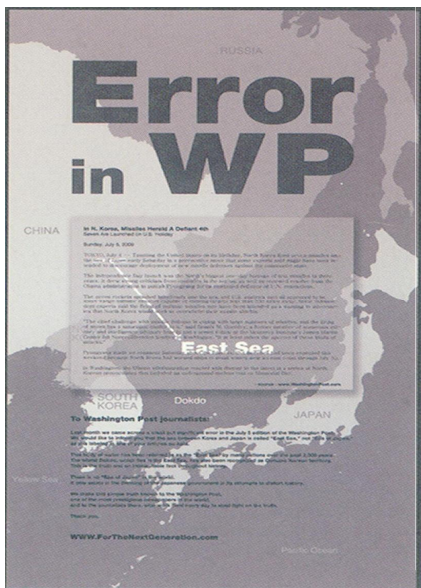
On July 27, 2005, the first ad for Dokdo was printed in the *New York Times*. It was to protest Japan's establishment of Takeshima Day and to let the world know that Dokdo is Korean territory.



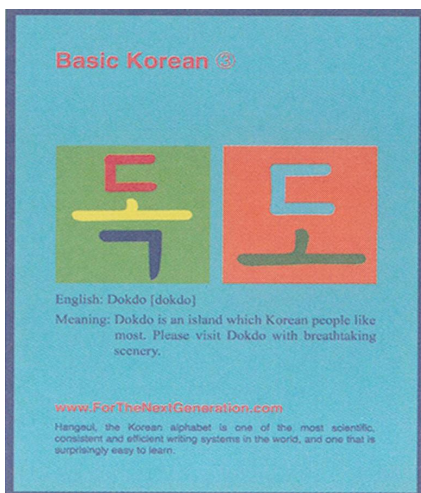
On July 9, 2008, another advertisement for Dokdo could be found in the *New York Times*. The ad featured a headline that said "Do you Know?" along with a map accurately marking the "East Sea" and "Dokdo." The copy of the ad stated, "For the last 2000 years, the body of water between Korea and Japan has been called the 'East Sea.' Dokdo, located in the East Sea, is a part of Korean territory. The Japanese government must acknowledge this fact."



On August 25, 2008, another Dokdo ad was placed in the *Washington Post*. This ad, titled "Stop Distorting History," contained a message that "someone" is taking our (Korea's) land and falsifying history. It was a national campaign funded by more than 100,000 Internet users.



On August 13, 2009, a correction titled "Error in WP" ran in the *Washington Post*. The newspaper corrected their error in a past article marking the "East Sea" as the "Sea of Japan." This ad says, "We make this simple truth known to the *Washington Post* to shed light on the truth."



On October 5, 2011, a Hangeul advertisement for Dokdo was carried on the front page of The *Wall Street Journal's* European edition. It was an ad taken out under the sponsorship of 120,000 Korean Internet users in commemoration of Hangeul Day.

**Dream together!**

### **Truth of Dokdo**

Korean PR expert and professor, Seo Kyoung-duk, Korean Singer and avid Dokdo promoter, Kim Jang-hoon, along with Professor Hosaka Yuji, a naturalized Korean originally from Japan, worked together to establish the Dokdo website titled "Truth of Dokdo ([www.truthofdokdo.com](http://www.truthofdokdo.com)).\" The website deals with historical data and related international laws, which can be used to counter Japan's claim. It has been gaining people's attention because they have presented objective evidence that Dokdo belongs to the Republic of Korea. Hope you visit the website to see the truth about Dokdo.

### **Take a quick look at the website, Truth of Dokdo**

- 1. Keicho Map of Japan, first official map of Japan created by Tokugawa Shogunate in 1612 :** Ulleungdo and Dokdo do not appear on the Keicho map of Japan. However, the locations of Ulleungdo and Dokdo are found on the old map of Korea.
- 2. San Francisco Peace Treaty signed on September 6, 1951 :** The Mainichi Newspaper under the direction of the Japanese government pronounced the results of the San Francisco Peace Treaty with Japan. The treaty states that Dokdo is Korean territory.

### **Encountering proud Korean language**

When you visit world-renowned art galleries or museums, language services are readily available in English as well as Chinese and Japanese. However, the Korean language service is hard to find. In order to enhance the status of Korea and the pride of being Korean, Korea PR

expert and professor, Seo Kyoung-duk visited world-class art galleries and museums to request Korean services.

In 2007, after a long period of negotiations for over six months and with sponsorships for production costs, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art in New York started providing Korean language guidebooks and audio services. Also in 2008, English promotional brochures were added to the Korea Gallery at the Smithsonian Institution National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C. in order to help non-Korean speakers gain a better understanding of Korean culture. Seo Kyoung-duk is also planning to work on making the Korean language service possible at museums in other countries including Britain and Germany.





who fell in passionate love with ballet

Ballerino Lee Won-kook



## Ballerino **Lee Won-kook**

Starting ballet at the age of 19, Lee Won-kook was regarded as a late starter, but he has gone on to become a Korean dancer representing his country. As a grinder who loved ballet, he performed in the National Romanian Ballet and the Kirov Ballet Company, which are said to be hard for Asians to enter. As a principal dancer in the Korean National Ballet, he danced in many productions and taught junior dancers. Now, with his "Lee Won-kook Ballet Company" he is trying to make ballet more accessible to the public.

## **Hopeless childhood with neither spotlight nor applause**

As a young adult, I was a male dancer in the country's top ballet companies — Universal Ballet and the Korea National Ballet. I was the first Asian ballet dancer to perform in the Mariinsky Theatre, which is said to be hard to get into if you are not a Russian dancer. I was also invited as a visiting dancer to the world-famous National Romanian Ballet. I received many awards for my ballet performances and was given the honor of being called "The Textbook of Korean Ballet."

People who do not know me probably think that I was born to do ballet. It seems that I have lived a trouble-free life. However, I started ballet when things got tough, and I wasted a considerable amount of time before I began.

It was nineteen when I first started ballet. I started quite late. People usually start ballet at a very young age so the dance movements can be acquired naturally. However, I did not even know what ballet was until I was 19. Why was it that late? To find out what happened to me, we need to go back in time when I was in my first year of middle school.

## **Beginning to wander, days with neither dream nor desire**

One day while attending middle school in Busan, my teacher came to class and flew into a rage. Someone had sent him a disrespectful letter. In order to catch the culprit, he made everyone in class submit a handwriting sample.

Unfortunately, the handwriting in the letter looked like mine. The teacher did not believe me no matter how much I argued that I did not write it. In the end, I was beaten until my buttocks turned black and

blue. I also felt pain in my back and legs, but the bruise in my mind was more hurtful. I got it into my head that no one in this world believed me.

After that, I skipped classes. I did not want to see the teacher and thought there was no need to study. A long period of aimless wandering began. Skipping classes once or twice made it easier for me not to go to school that often. After graduating middle school, I barely managed to attend high school. However, my wandering was not over. As the years passed by, my friends, who were the same age as me, went to college or tried to find a job, while I still did not have any dreams and was wasting time.

### **Ballet made me diligent and passionate**

As I saw my friends go to college or find a job, I grew impatient. Only then did I regret that I had wasted my past, but I could not turn back time. I felt very sorry for my parents who were probably the most distressed. I decided I would do anything for them.

When I made up my mind, my mother recommended ballet. The first thing that came into my head was why ballet, out of all the things I could do? It was completely unfamiliar to me and it did not seem to be a good fit for men. But I did not want to let her down this time. I began to go to a private ballet academy in my neighborhood.

There were only girls in my ballet academy and I felt ashamed to practice ballet with them. Besides, it was not fun at all to repeat similar movements every day. I wanted to quit several times a day. Whenever I wanted to, I would think of my mother, bite the bullet and continue.

Six years passed. At last I had a chance to perform on stage. I was only a beginner, yet the chance was given to me because of the shortage of men in ballet. Even though it was a small stage, dancers who were

recognized as the cream of the crop in ballet came from every corner of Busan. As I carefully watched the dancers come on stage, I directed my attention toward the males. It was the first time I saw ballerinos. Watching them dance, I thought they were marvelous and gorgeous. I wanted to be like them.

Since that day, there was a great change in me. I took an interest in ballet and practiced by myself. I kept in mind how other ballerions danced and repeated their moves again and again. When I became familiar with them after dozens of practices, I felt like I was on cloud nine. I finally discovered the fun of ballet.

I became enthusiastic once realizing ballet was fun. I went to academy very early and practiced ballet until it closed. After academy, I would go to the beach and drag a tire to strengthen my ankles. Thinking I needed to do more to increase my strength, I always ran back home. When things seemed beyond my ability, I encouraged myself with the thought that I had to practice twice as hard as others because I was a late starter. In the meantime, I noticed an improvement in my ability to dance.

Having more confidence, I decided to move on to a fresh challenge and enter the Busan KBS ballet competition. Surprisingly, I won the grand prize. It was a splendid achievement that I accomplished in a little more than a year. Needless to say, my parents were absolutely delighted, which made me very proud of myself. I was overwhelmed by the thought of having a dream, "Ballet."

### **No mountain too high**

After I received the prize in the ballet competition, I was regarded as a talented ballet student and was accepted into a college that I had longed

to attend. Living in the capital of the country, I could see ballerinos as there were a lot more male dancers in Seoul than Busan.

The ballerinos I first met in Busan created my dream, but the ones in Seoul discouraged me. Their powerful but flexible moves looked too difficult for a newbie like me to follow. It was the first time I felt frustrated since I started ballet. The dancers who learned ballet at a very young age were like giant mountains, too high for me to climb.

I was deeply troubled for a while, thinking I might have to go back to the time I had no dreams unless I could dance as well as they did. I did not want to throw away my dreams. I was determined, thinking, "I can catch up with the other ballerinos if I can fit what they do in two days into one. Let me do it or die."

First, I cut back on my sleep and increased my practice time. I began practicing ballet from 6 a.m. and kept practicing till late at night after the other dancers left the studio. I spent more than twice as much time practicing than they did. I did nothing but ballet for a year. I rarely met with people and could not even dream of seeing my friends. After late night practice I was exhausted, went straight to bed, got up early and went back to practice the next day. That was it for my daily routine.

In 1989, the Dong-A Dance Competition was held. It is an important competition that gathers the hottest dancers in the whole country together. I did not feel intimidated or get cold feet like I used to. I thought I could have good results if I performed as I had practiced over the past year. My results met my expectations as I became the winner of the national competition. It brought greater pleasure because it was the result of my painstaking practice. It gave me the assurance that I could overcome my disadvantage of starting ballet late through hard practice.

**Murmurs of 'failure' turn into exclamations**



You seldom find ballerinos who are over 30. In reality, dancers over 25 hardly have the chance to participate in auditions. However, I did not have the slightest intention of stopping ballet. I could not understand that I had to quit my career, which was a tough choice, because of my age. So I decided to establish a ballet troupe with some like-minded colleagues who wanted to be on the stage. It was all to keep on with ballet.

That was the reason for starting our Lee Won-kook Ballet Company. We rented a small theater in Daehakro for ballet performances. However, we were soon faced with problems. The performances had a poor turnout. The Korean National Ballet played to a packed house, which meant about 2,000 tickets were sold for their performance at a large auditorium, while we played to less than 10 people. If things went on like this, we could neither rent a theater nor pay our dancers.

There were murmurs that the Lee Won-kook Ballet Company had failed. I decided to bite the bullet, believing that if we showed a great performance we could draw a full audience. We practiced much harder for every performance. After a few months, our performances gradually drew in an audience through word-of-mouth. A number of empty seats steadily filled up and finally the tickets were all sold out. People stopped whispering about us before we knew it, and our story was even reported in newspapers and magazines.

Still now, the Lee Won-kook Ballet Company keeps working hard. I'd like to show the beauty and joy of ballet to more people through our company. If I had given up when things were tough and had not kept on this path, I could not have this dream.

**Dream together!**

### **Monday Ballet Recital**

The Lee Won-kook Ballet Company began to hold performances at a small theater for the first time in Korea. A piece, under the name of "Love Serenade," was performed in April 2008. Selected as one of the excellent performances by the Korean Cultural and Arts Centers Association, this performance gained popularity in the form of a gala show with highlights from famous works.

Since July 2010, "Monday Ballet Recital" featuring a heart-moving story-ballet format with the addition of dramatic elements has won the hearts of audiences. It runs on Mondays at 8 p.m. at Daehakro.

### **How to show appreciation for a dancer's beautiful performance**

We applaud and shout "Bravo" to dancers after their wonderful performances. It means "well-done" in Italian, which is used to compliment dancers for their beautiful performances. But do you know these compliments are different depending on gender or the number of dancers?

**Bravo** to a single male dancer

**Brava** to a single female dancer

**Bravi** to a group of male dancers or a mix of both genders

**Brave** to a group of female dancers

These terms are used the same at operas and vocal concerts. If you use this as a guideline, you can give the appropriate compliments to the performers.



Fairy tale land giving bloom through the imagination

Children's book author Kim Hyang-e



Children's book author **Kim Hyang-e**

Holding her father's hand, Kim, at 10 years old, used to visit the library and found books interesting. At 40, she started to write children's books. She made her literary debut by winning the Korea Children's Literature Award with *Room Filled with Loom Songs* in 1991. She won the Samsung Literature Award with *The Moon Knows* in 1993, and the Sejong Children's Literature Award with *Do You Know 'Ssalbaengee'* in 2001. She has become one of the leading children's book authors and is loved by readers. Her works include *My Name is Na Dab-ge*, *Dreaming Dollhouse*, and *Only My Elder Brother is Welcome in My House, Not Me*. She is also well known as a doll maker through her exhibitions titled *Fairy Tales Read by Dolls*.



## Let my imagination run free while playing with dolls

Being born during the Korean War, I got sick quite frequently. I was shy, so I mostly stayed inside the house rather than playing with friends outside. As I was used to playing alone, I was so shy that I would even burst into tears when my eyes met other's.

Around 7 years old, I played with a rubber doll, which was given as a UN relief item, but my second baby brother chewed and damaged the doll. I cried all day long, so my mother made me a doll out of plain canvas. Carefully looking at my face, my father drew its eyes, nose, and mouth with his fountain pen.

I treasured the rag doll like it was my friend, but my little brother dropped it in the chamber pot. I cried loudly enough to raise the roof of the house, but my mother did not make a doll this time. I had no choice but to make one with my own hands. In those days, mothers made clothes for their children. We learned how to sew from our mothers who mended our mischievous little brothers' clothes or made new ones for them.

Whenever I played with a doll, I stretched my imagination to create a story. Recalling the old stories that my grandfather told me, such as *Shimcheong-jeon*, *Heungbu-jeon*, *Janghwa* and *Hongryun-jeon*, I named my doll after the main characters in these stories and made sequels to them.

I think this is where I should talk about my grandfather. He was a farmer and liked books. On market days, he bought a story book and used to read it to me in the reception room. As he was a good story teller, the room was crowded with village people. There were no other amusements but his stories, which helped to develop my imagination and creativity. I think this early life experience paved the way for my career



as a children's book author and doll maker.

### **Books, more delicious than doughnuts**

At age 10, my family moved to Seoul. My father was very concerned that my brothers and I might get teased for coming from the countryside, so he bought clothes for us at a department store. He also called the local kids together to hold wrestling matches with us and acted as an umpire. He spent every free moment visiting our school to see how well we were adapting.

One day, when we were playing outside in an alley, my father called us in and showed us some comic books. As we became absorbed with reading comics, he no longer borrowed them. Instead, he took us to the National Library. I can still never forget the first day when I went to the library holding my father's hand.

My father bought a box of doughnuts in front of the library. As it was not a usual treat, my brothers and I licked our lips wondering when we could have them. My father led us to the Children's Reading Room and gave the box to the librarian saying, "Whenever my children finish reading a book, give one doughnut as a reward."

Upon hearing what he had said, I dashed to a bookshelf to have more doughnuts than my brothers. I chose *Aesop's Fables*, which was thin with large font and had many pictures. I read the book in one sitting and had a doughnut. As I read a book for a doughnut, I found that books were more delicious than the doughnuts.

After returning from the library, I was itching to talk about the books I read. Sitting at the gate till late into the night, I told the stories to the local kids. The stories were told by me, who had been bashful about talking in front of others.

The next day, after school, I saw the kids in front of my house. They asked me to tell more stories. After that, I used to tell them stories every day. I always had enough to reel off because I would run to the library when I ran out of stories.

One day, I was honored with the top prize for writing a book report about *My Sweet Orange Tree* at a school assembly while the whole school watched me. Upon coming back to the classroom, my homeroom teacher had me read the report in front of the class. I remember it was so embarrassing that I felt my heart fluttering and my face burning.

My father was happier with this than anyone else. He bought me the 50-volume world literature series published by Kemongsa. I couldn't be happier to have those fifty books which were not library ones but all mine. I sat up all night reading them and thought I wanted to be a person who wrote beautiful stories and be the pride of my father.

### **Playing pretend**

During my first year of middle school, I was known to be good at writing after my poem "Cricket" was published in the school newspaper. I also represented my school at the writing contest after being awarded in school. I was so flattered, but I could not enjoy my school life for long.

As my warm-hearted father lost his job, my mother's tears never dried up. Besides, she had to earn extra money to take care of her five children, and I helped her out.

I became a school ghost again and was often left to find myself in tears. The only upside for me was that I could recall Sara in *A Little Princess*, which I had read at 10. Sara, who went to a fancy boarding school, was forced to live in a tiny attic and work as a servant. But Sara endured her hardships by pretending her father was there, the fireplace

was burning, and delicious bread was on the table. I did the same to endure hard poverty.

In high school, during the time while others had to stay in school far into the night studying for the college entrance exam, I read novels in the library. As I just assumed that I could not go to university due to family circumstances, I gave up studying. There is a right time for studying, but I wasted it.

At that point, I thought school work was only for the college exam, and that without a college degree I could not be accepted by society or get a job. That was the first mistake that I made. Instead of thinking of my dream, I encouraged my brother to go to art college to realize his dream of being a painter. In those days it was natural that girls sacrificed themselves for their brothers.

If I had been myself today, I would have poured out all my troubles to my teacher before getting so scared and giving up. I could have found a way to go to college on a scholarship using my talent for writing.

### **The beginning of studying about creating children's stories**

After high school, I met a man the same age as me at work and I married him at the age of 27. Because of the sad memory in my adolescence, I tried hard to make a happy and harmonious family. Above all, I put my life into raising my babies. I made clothes and toys as well as food for them and took them to a bunch of places to help them have a lot of experiences. Making an effort to be a good mother made me happy.

Most of all, it was the happiest time for me when I read a book to my children. They constantly asked questions about what would happen next. So, I made the characters in the stories into dolls for them and

said, “Why don't you guess the next story?”

My children let their imaginations run away playing with the dolls as I had done in my childhood. I made all the stuff in the house into dolls, such as their pillows, blankets, clothes, and cushions, to be their friends to talk with.

That was when the desire to write children's stories came to me. Just in the nick of time there was a publisher that asked me to write after reading my letters to the editor in the daily newspaper. The company published a collection of essays written by women who wrote as a hobby. The women who had participated in the publication party created a literary society and began to study writing. The novelist Seo Young-eun, who had been teaching the society, reached out and touched my heart and said, “Here is where a fairy tale lies.”

Along with my friends in the literary society, I competed in an essay contest and won a participation prize in children's stories. Later, I was awarded for the “Children's Stories by Mom” hosted by the publishing company, Samtoh. At that time, Jeong Chae-bong, who was the judge for the Samtoh Award, asked me whether I wanted to learn how to write children's books.

I started to study writing at 37 as one of Mr. Jeong's students. It was not easy to write children's stories. It would hurt when we sharply criticized each other's writing. It was tough to study with his students who had majored in creative writing at college because all I had done was take part in the literature club in middle school and high school. Feeling I was not capable, my pride was hurt.

I was also not comfortable neglecting my children and housework that I had put my life into. Thinking I was weak-willed and indecisive, I was quite eager to quit studying but could not utter a word. Then, I grabbed at the excuse that my mother-in-law was suffering from cancer

to avoid taking the writing classes.

It was the second time I had failed. I had abandoned the great opportunity to learn to write for myself. I might have been afraid of what Mr. Jeong had said: "You should be willing to take a risk for losing something you really care about to write," and "Write until you are completely wiped out." As I did not have a clear sense of direction at the time, it was so burdensome.

### **Realizing my dream of becoming a children's book author**

One day while caring for my mother-in-law, I became aware of how much I would regret for the rest of my life if I wasted my time like I had been doing. I was often up all night with my sick mother-in-law, so I would read books and write practice pieces. I read my completed works to my mother and revised them after seeing her reaction.

I entered the annual spring literary contest along with my friends from the creative writing class. Encouraged after I knew that I had been on the shortlist, I again entered my name for the contest the following year. With high expectations came great disappointment. After losing twice in a row, I thought it would be better to give up.

As I was not strong-minded, I got frustrated easily and ended up quitting working toward my goals. But thinking of abandoning my dream hurt my pride. Finally, I broke into tears in front of my family.

My husband recommended traveling to Jeju Island to ease my mind. While taking a walk on a trail in Jeju, I found some dried cotton flowers and took them home. At dawn of one day, the flowers, which were kept on my desk, caught my eye.

I thought, "While it takes tireless efforts and devotion to weave cotton cloth with these cotton flowers, how did I want to start my

literary career only with the several stories? How arrogant!"

After that day, in addition to writing stories I learned to weave at an agricultural museum. Thus, *Room Filled with Loom Songs* was born, and it gave me the honor of winning the Gyemong Children's Book Award. With the Kemongsa's world literature series, which was given to me on my 10th birthday, I dreamed of becoming a writer, and when I turned 40, I became a children's book author.

As people say, "once you get interested in something, it is hard to quit," I worked enthusiastically. Finally, with *The Moon Knows* I won the Samsung Literary Award and became the "Cinderella" of children's literature. I received more attention when the book was selected for the recommended reading list by various media outlets. But then all of a sudden, I was under pressure to create better works.

My father encouraged me by saying, "An angler doesn't always catch big fish. He catches small fish and sometimes big fish. Unless you cast your fishing rod, you cannot even catch small fish."

Taking heart from what he had said, I worked hard again on my writing.

### **My second dream: Dollhouse in fairyland**

As I became 60, I suffered repeated failures, but each time I took it as an opportunity like a blacksmith strikes the red-hot iron with his hammer to make it strong. I found the wisdom and ways to lash and temper myself in books.

While giving lectures as a guest speaker all over the country, I met children who were obsessed with TV and games, then I had another dream to build "a dollhouse in fairyland." In the dollhouse, I will exhibit works and books, from which the impressive scenes will be created by



dolls. When seeing the exhibition with admiration and curiosity, children will find books interesting and read them. I will also create a space where children can have fun and be happy through after-reading activities and experience-oriented education.

I will work hard for every child in my country to bear what Winston Churchill said: "The habit of reading determines your destiny."

**Dream together!**

### **Main characters in one place**

Since childhood Kim Hyang-e has loved making dolls, so she has collected them, which led to her dream of building a dollhouse in fairyland.

She realized her dream by holding an exhibition titled *Reading Fairy Tales with Dolls*. She hopes that children can find reading fun while meeting the main characters from books through her exhibition.

### **Traditional Korean dolls have disappeared**

While collecting dolls, I found an unfortunate fact about Korean dolls. *The World of Dolls*, published in London in 1923, introduced 12 world representative dolls, among which was a doll wearing a jobawi, a women's winter hat with earflaps, rainbow-colored jacket, and azalea-colored skirt. But the attention for our Korean dolls has been lost and they have become extinct.

Our ancestors made dolls and put them in the grave with burial goods. Hoping that they would protect their villages, they also made huge dolls called "jangseung" stand at the village entrance. Scarecrows were placed in the middle of the rice field as well. Puppet shows that had puppets with unique faces and costumes were popular and so was Mansukjungnori, Korean shadow puppetry. When you look at the dolls in the play, you can see Korean people's personalities.

However, the characteristics of Korean dolls were transformed by the influence of Japanese dolls during the Japanese colonial rule. In addition, as Western dolls were introduced by missionaries, dolls in Korea begin to have white skin and big eyes with double eyelids.

After the Korean War, only cheap dolls for export and plastic ones were

manufactured. In the end, the traditional doll industry declined. We may be to blame for not considering dolls artwork. We now know that when we take on Korea's true aspects, we can regain our reputation.



Success shines at the moment you challenge!

Chef Edward Kwon



## Chef Edward Kwon

Kwon was the head chef at the Burj Al Arab Hotel in Dubai, which is considered a "7-star hotel". It was a stable and decent position, but he returned to Korea and began a new challenge of running his own restaurants, such as The Mixed One and Lab XXIV. He believes good cuisine refreshes our lives, gives joy, touches our hearts, and allows us to experience beauty. Hoping to share these experiences, he writes books and appears on TV shows. Kwon is now working hard to open a culinary school that will train young cooks dreaming of becoming great chefs.

## The dream of being a priest in a cool cassock

When I was a child, the church was my favorite playground. Although I was led to church for the first time by my mother, my first impression was that it was very comfortable. Whenever I went to church, I felt relaxed and calm. During my school days, I used to run to church after class, which became my habit. I would read books alone and play table tennis with my friends. Seeing girls was another perk because I went to an all-male middle and high school.

However, the best part about going to church was getting to see the priests in their cassocks. It was so nice to look at the stiff ironed collar perched above dozens of buttons. I naturally dreamed of becoming a priest wearing a cool cassock. How wonderful to be a priest and stay in church all the time! Just simply thinking about it made me happy.

To realize my dream of becoming a priest, I decided to go to Christian seminary. But I soon faced a great challenge as my grandmother opposed my plan. She could not bear to see her grandson become a priest, so she took to her bed. Seeing my grandmother in bed, I had to abandon that dream.

After scrapping my long-cherished dream, I did not feel like doing anything. I was often absent from school, gallivanting around even during exam week. My grades plunged, and my teachers gave up on me. When high school graduation was around the corner, I could not go to any colleges. My father suggested enlisting in the military, but I did not want to flee like that. I left for Seoul with no definite objective.

Bravely entering Seoul, I had no place to sleep and no money to spare. I immediately started searching for work. Fortunately, I got a job, which enabled me to not only work in the kitchen at a restaurant, but it also gave me a place to sleep and eat. That was how I was introduced to



cooking. At that time, I never thought that it would be my job and my dream.

### **Surviving in the battle field known as the kitchen**

Even though I was working in the kitchen, my work was far from cooking. I carried food materials to the storage when they arrived and served as a waiter when the restaurant was busy and understaffed. Since it was always busy and work was strict, I was extremely occupied following the chef's orders and skipped meals often. I thought that I could have a lot of delicious food while working in the kitchen, but I always had to work on an empty stomach.

Then one day, a piece of pork cutlet dropped while it was cooking. I put it in my mouth without thinking because I had not eaten lunch, and I was so hungry. But suddenly, someone hit me on the head with a frying pan.

"How dare you touch the food for the customer!" the chef roared at me. I had worked in the kitchen for only a week, so I did not have the slightest idea what the rules were.

Even after that, I often made mistakes, but I worked harder than anybody else. About six months later, I got the chance to move to another restaurant where I could work only in the kitchen. Since I got paid more and my job was exciting, I did what I was told to do quite well. I eventually thought that cooking would be my calling in life.

### **One hour earlier, one hour later**

As I was learning to cook, it became time for me to join the military. A friend of mine, who was going to take the college entrance exam again

with me, had a physical checkup too. Since the same thing would happen to me soon, I wondered what I should do. Before entering the army, I wanted to at least set my goal.

First of all, I decided to go to college and delay my military service. I also chose culinary art as my major. I studied hard and luckily passed the exam. After one semester, I joined the army. As I was an administrative clerk and not an army cook, I was at a loss when I returned to school. Compared to my classmates, I was terrible at cutting. To become proficient at it, I started to work part time at a restaurant. That was my first step to becoming a chef.

Back in school, I fired myself up to study cooking. I got the chance to have practical training at a hotel. It was training that every student in the culinary program gained at least once, but I took it as an opportunity that would never come again. I was determined to do my best.

I came to the kitchen an hour earlier than the other students, and left an hour later as well. My peers thought I did this as a way to be noticed and considered me a brown noser, but I did not care. I was eager to work hard, and it was true that I wanted to stand out.

The one-month training period passed quickly and it was time to go back to school. I wanted to work more and learn to cook by observing skillful chefs. I had a dream of becoming a chef at a hotel, so I asked the hotel to simply let me work without being paid. They did me a favor and agreed because they were understaffed. However, they only gave me one more week.

As time went by, my heart became heavy at the thought of not having the opportunity anymore. But then, a miraculous thing happened. Watching me come to work early and stay late in the kitchen, one of my seniors had me interview for a position. My sincerity most likely shined though, and I was fortunate enough to be selected among the many

applicants. I was so happy that my heart was filled with enthusiasm to work hard.

### **Learn the way a kitchen works firsthand**

I was working in the kitchen one day when the worktop shook and a knife fell from above stabbing me in the hand. Although I was bleeding with so much pain, I was obsessed with the idea of doing my share of the work. I just wrapped up my hand and kept working. Devoting my attention to my job, the blood from my hand ran down to the sink and the floor. Upon seeing this, my seniors yelled at me to go see a doctor. I insisted on working because I hated to leave the kitchen. "You are going to cover the food with your blood!" One of them shouted. In the end, I had to go to the hospital.

All I wanted to do was return to the kitchen after a quick treatment. I took this accident lightly, thinking my hand would soon recover, but it was more serious than I had thought. The doctor advised me to stop working and get treatment. I insisted that I should go back to work. I was afraid they would not welcome me back because I was such a screwup. Just then, the doctor made a terrifying comment. He said, "If you never want to cook again, you can go back." My mind was already back in the kitchen, but finally I had to stay in the hospital. Then I realized how much I loved cooking.

When I came back to the kitchen after being released from the hospital, my seniors did not reprehend me. They were understanding about my mistake because of my hard work. After the accident, I paid more attention to my cooking equipment. From my own personal experience, I realized how important it is to know the way kitchens work firsthand.

## **Back to the beginning again, being called stupid**

I was quite lucky to find a job. It is very hard to get the chance to work at a hotel after graduating the culinary art department. It is like asking for the moon. But I found employment because of my practical training experience during culinary school. Moreover, the hotel I would work for was a large hotel with a lot of branches around the world, which opened the door to experiencing many different dishes.

By the time I became used to working in the kitchen, I wanted to know a bigger world. Cooking Western dishes made me wonder about foreign cultures. It seemed if my curiosity was gratified, I would cook better. I went to see the executive chef, Jean Paul Naquin who was an internationally renowned chef from France. If he would write a letter of recommendation for me, I could go to an American branch. He was willing to help me, probably because he liked my frequent unconstrained questions.

Before long I was transferred to a hotel in San Francisco, and I left for America filled with anticipation about the future. It was the year 2000, and I had just turned 30. My cooking life in America put me back to the very beginning again. It was like the time when I left for Seoul without any plans and stepped into the kitchen of the restaurant in Wangsipri.

In the beginning, I was not even able to sort out very simple ingredients. There were lots of new ingredients that I had never seen in Korea, and it was very tough to memorize every one.

Once a chef told me to bring "Granny Smiths," so I secretly asked my coworker what they were. He said they were apples, so I went to the storage stocked with ingredients and brought an apple that looked ripe.

However, the chef was still looking for "Granny Smiths" even with the apple in my hand. I proudly showed it to him, but he yelled "Stupid!" and turned away.

After being called stupid I was out of my mind because I had traveled a long way to the States. I belatedly found out that a "Granny Smith" was one variety of apples, but I carelessly picked an apple without looking at what kind it was. In the chef's eyes I could see how I looked stupid because I could not even bring the right apple.

My poor English was another difficult challenge. I was called Lily in the States. The nickname came from my pronunciation of "really," which sounded like "lily" when asking questions. That was not all. Every time I went to a supermarket, I always carried a hundred-dollar bill with me. I paid with it for whatever I bought and came back home with my change because I feared speaking with the clerk.

However, I could not avoid these things forever. I started to go around the market and memorize names of ingredients. I also began to have conversations in English with anyone I met. After a few months, there was less confusion with ingredient names and less fear of speaking in English.

### **Good food makes the moment beautiful**

I cooked food while traveling around the world in places such as America, Korea, China, and the Middle East. It was because I wanted to grow by experiencing diverse cuisine and also because I wanted to give a chance to other chefs by giving up my spot. Fortunately, each time I changed my workplace, I felt that I had improved a little. The reason I became the head Chef at the Burj Al Arab Hotel in Dubai was that I did not stay satisfied with the fame and honor my achievements brought me.



It was cooking itself that was valuable to me, not a stable and famous place.

The first hotel where I worked in Dubai was the Fairmont Hotel. It was a great place but the Burj Al Arab Hotel right in front of it was indeed splendid and luxurious. People even came to call it a "seven star" hotel, which does not exist. I was curious about what the place was like. At last, after exactly 365 days, I was the head chef at the Burj Al Arab Hotel.

There were lots of celebrities among the hotel customers. I had a very rewarding time meeting with people who enjoyed my dishes, but this time again I did not stay long. I had a bigger and more wonderful dream.

Leaving the head chef position at the world-class hotel, I returned to Korea. I was eager to show my dishes to my home country. To do this, I opened a restaurant in the basement of a department store. There were some people who considered it strange for the head chef of a famous hotel to start an ordinary small-scale restaurant. However, that was the adventure I had dreamed of. I wanted everyone to enjoy the dishes that only the rich can afford.

I also appeared on a television cooking show. I had to become more famous, so I could make more money. Some looked at me unpleasantly because to them I looked like I was there to become a celebrity instead of being there as a chef. But I had a compelling reason. I had a dream to open a culinary school: a school where students can learn for free as long as they have the passion for cooking. I want to train young cooks into great chefs, but I still have a long way to go.

Some support my dream, but others say it is an adventure with little chance of success. They say I have that dream because I do not know much about the Korean situation. I too wonder if this adventure will turn out to be successful. However, I am not afraid of failure. If I had feared

failure, I would have never become a chef. I was not afraid of failure the time I jumped into the kitchen of a restaurant and first experienced cooking, or when I left for the States without any plans, or when I came back to Korea. In the years to come, I hope you keep watching me with interest.

**Dream together!**

### **The three great cuisines in the world**

Many in the food world believe the three great cuisines are truffles, foie gras, and caviar. All three dishes have hard-to-find ingredients and are expensive. A truffle looks like animal poop or a stone, and is hard to find and dig out, so we need help from dogs or pigs, which have a sensitive sense of smell. Foie gras is a dish made from the liver of a goose that has been specially fattened. Caviar is a dish made from the eggs or roe of a shark, especially from a sturgeon well-known for its large size and vicious temper. In Old Russia, caviar was highly valued and people used to carry it in their pockets instead of money.

### **A world-famous Korean dish recommended by Edward Kwon**

In Korea, we also have a great dish. It is as delicious as the three great cuisines, and it has a lot of nutrients. But, it is not expensive. Then is it the icing on the cake? In fact, Chef Edward Kwon feels sorry for this. Kimchi is not properly appreciated because it is cheap and familiar even though it is made with care from a variety of fresh ingredients over a long period of time. If a dish made from kimchi were to have a high price, people might not willingly have it.

Of course it does not mean that we need to raise the price of kimchi. However, when you encounter a high-priced kimchi dish, rather than being surprised, why not respond this way: "It deserves it!" Kimchi served on the table every meal is a healthy food, which has been recognized by people all around the world. Recently, kimchi has attracted attention because it has been proven to be effective in preventing cancer and easing atopic dermatitis. Also as it is well known for abundant lactobacillus, kimchi keeps our intestines healthy.

### **How to make kimchi**

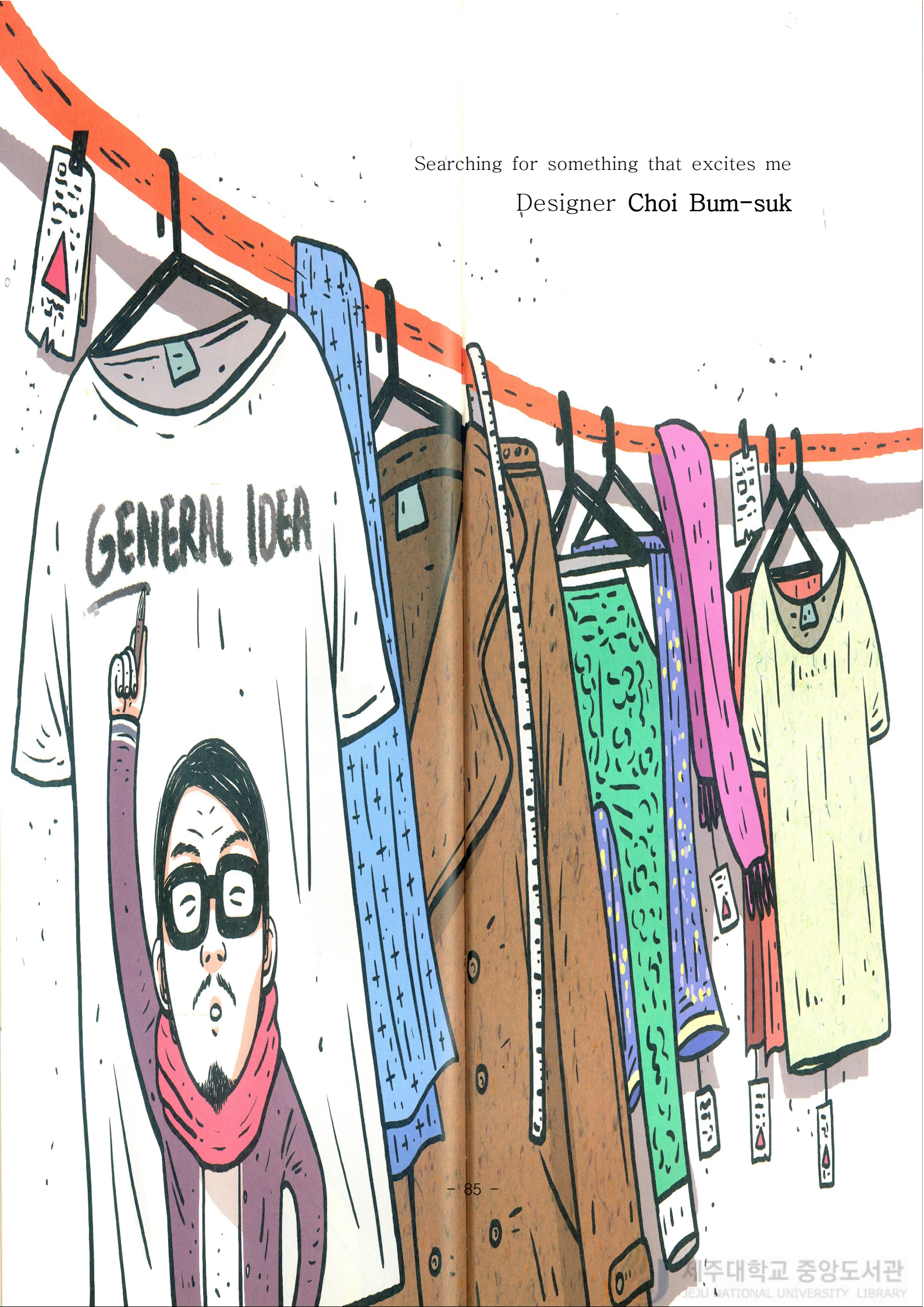
1. Pick a fresh cabbage and carefully prepare it.
2. Pickle the cabbage in salted water.
3. Make the paste with shredded radishes mixed with minced garlic, ginger, salted shrimp, water parsley, mustard greens, chives, green onions, and red pepper powder.
4. Put the paste between the leaves of the cabbage so that the spices are absorbed.
5. Place the cabbage tightly wrapped with its outer leaves in a jar and leave it to ferment.

The paste can vary depending on regional characteristics or personal tastes.



Searching for something that excites me

Designer Choi Bum-suk





## Designer **Choi Bum-suk**

At the age of 19, Choi sold clothes by renting an empty stretch of wall in a deserted alley in the Hongdae district, and later he worked at a fabric store and learned the basics of clothes. He made his own brand, MU, and opened his store in Dongdaemun. At 25, he happened to see a fashion show abroad and dreamed of becoming a designer. In 2003, he made his debut as a designer in the Seoul Collection, and launched his own brand, General Idea. Since 2009, he has participated in the New York Collection every year, and in 2010, he was selected as one of the "top 3 noticeable designers" by IMG, the organizer of the New York Fashion Week. At present, he is a professor in the design department at Seoul Arts College.

## Things I like

During my childhood, my family lived in a small house measuring 6 pyeong. My parents were always busy due to poverty-stricken family circumstances, so I had to go to my elementary school entrance ceremony all alone. I knew what loneliness was, but it did not last long. I kept busy by hanging out with my friends and had no time to feel unhappy. I still do this. Whenever I happen to feel down, I try to find something fun and fall into it.

As you can guess, I have loved clothes since I was a child. When I was young, I used to wear my father's or brother's clothes and slip out of the house because I felt so special when I received lots of attention. Of course this caused some adults to raise their eyebrows at me. But because I was only expressing myself and I was going through puberty, I did not mind.

Children today are very interested in taking care of their appearances, which I consider to be a positive thing. They can think about their own individuality and develop their aesthetic sense. Some scold them for imitating adults, but I believe it is a normal part of growing up.

## Catch my breath in front of the wall

Everybody faces moments when they have to make a choice. Depending on which way you choose, it may lead to what you'd call success or failure. But if you choose what you really want, you will never give up even when you encounter an unexpected bad result. Failure is just part of the process, not the end. You are able to learn from your failures and move forward.

Looking back, I realized that I made my first choice before my high school graduation. I was overwhelmed thinking about what I should do for a living. I took no interest in jobs that made good money and looked good to others. I was only concerned about what I liked and what I was good at. Out of several interests, such as sports, cooking, and singing, my thoughts ran to clothing. It was clothing that made my heart flutter.

When I first decided to sell clothes, I did not even think about what I would do if something went wrong. I challenged myself to succeed and not to fail. Walking around the market, I concentrated on buying clothes to sell. As I had a lot of interest in clothes, I knew about fashion trends and also had confidence in selling them. What I desperately needed was a place to sell them.

"Where would be the best place?" I kept thinking. I associated whatever I saw with a clothing store. That might be why I came up with the idea of changing an empty wall in a deserted alley in Hongdae into a store. The gloomy grey wall was completely transformed. I started business with displaying vintage clothes I liked on the wall.

However, contrary to my expectations, the business was so slow. In the cold winter, my mouth was frozen. People showed interest in the clothes but did not buy them. I tried to be positive, thinking, "Things never work on day one. Everything will turn out fine tomorrow." But things did not improve until the end of winter. I was really upset. I felt like the whole world was laughing at me. Blocked by walls all around me, I could not find the exit. I kept asking myself, "Could I start again?"

I could not come out of my dire situation for a while. Even when there was a delighted uproar, I let out a sigh. But since I just turned 20, I could not give up. I carefully analyzed the causes of my failure. I also started to work in a fabric store. I opened the doors of the store at dawn and delivered fabrics till late at night. In some ways, I had a tough

time but actually it helped me pull myself together. Saving my monthly wage of 400,000 won, I could move on to fresh challenges.

**wall** [dictionary definition <sup>1</sup>] a vertical structure that encloses a house or room

**wall** [dictionary definition <sup>2</sup>] a limit or an obstacle that is difficult to overcome

**wall** [dictionary definition <sup>3</sup>] a metaphor of a rupture in relationships or ties

**wall** [Choi Bum-suk's definition] an unavoidable moment we encounter in our lives that we must and we can step over

### **Design challenges**

In Dongdaemun, I opened a clothing store with my own brand named MU, which means "nothing." I designed clothes in my style and sold them. I was preoccupied with what I should do to blend Choi Bum-suk's personality with the world. I was so delighted not only because everything went well with business but also because I was recognized by people.

If my goal had been to make a lot of money, I would have been satisfied with owning a store in Dongdaemun. However, I was crazy about "clothing" and a designer is a person who communicates with the world through clothing. I decided to be a designer at 25. I was not worried about my late start, but I could not deny that 90 percent of my mind was still filled with concerns thinking, "Can I do it?" Yet, I was sure that I would succeed if I made clothes one step at a time. Although I did not have a good educational background, a wealthy family, or a glorious career, an opportunity was given as I kept trying.

## **Those who cherish their dreams achieve them**

I left for a business trip to France by chance, and in Paris I saw a fashion show. Picture the models walking the runway wearing what seemed like the only clothes in the world! I felt that these clothes were more beautiful than anything else in the world. I wanted to hold a fashion show, but the chance did not come easily. Luckily, I was introduced to a designer who organized the Seoul Collection. I expressed my interest in doing a show. He asked me what college I had graduated from.

I answered I had only graduated from high school. My mouth went dry as I felt worried about the answer which might not be what he wanted to hear. Although I did not have a formal education in fashion, I learned more than anyone else by working in the field and I also had confidence. So I made it clear what I wanted. I promised to make 10 clothes within 10 days to prove myself.

I cut out fabric numerous times and stayed up for 10 consecutive days putting my heart into every stitch. I thought I would lose to the world if I backed out. Finally, on the appointed day, I took my clothes to the designer. I was recognized as a talented and determined designer at last, and I was able to participate in the Seoul Collection. My clothes were well received in the show. I had plenty of interviews, and began to appear on television as well. My clothes came into the spotlight, but my educational background drew more attention. I think this was because I am a rare case in Korea. I wanted to be judged by my ability and not by my educational background. I do not think that we are entitled to have a dream only after we meet all the qualifications the world wants. I do not believe we require qualifications to dream a dream.



## Take a step towards the future

After the Seoul Collection, I launched my brand named General Idea and opened a shop. As GI was established, I held several fashion shows. While I made my name as a designer, I suddenly wondered what New York was like.

New York is the fashion capital of the world and is known for being more generous to Asian designers than France or Italy. I thought I could give it a go in New York. I also had an urge to receive more recognition abroad than at home. Feeling excited, I prepared for the New York Collection, one of the Big Four fashion weeks<sup>5)</sup> around the world. But their response was less than I had expected.

The problem was that I had designed my clothes to match the black hair and black eyes of Asians. However, New York is a place where many different ethnic groups live together, so I should have designed my collection to relate to the diversity of New Yorkers in order to attract their attention. It was quite an invaluable experience. I learned that fashion is not so simple. A country's history, culture, and lifestyle are all reflected in fashion.

After realizing this, I wanted to try again. But my close friends asked me to stop. They might have thought it was stupid to do again what I had tried and failed before. Also, they cared about me. What were the results of my second attempt? Blonde-haired foreigners cheered with their blue eyes twinkling. I was selected as one of the "top 3 noticeable designers" by IMG, the organizer of the New York Fashion Week in September 2010.

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<sup>5)</sup> Big Four fashion weeks • The fashion weeks held in New York, London, Milan, and Paris are considered the "Big Four." Each of the Big Four holds the fall/winter collections between January and March while the spring/summer collections are held between August and October. The Big Four fashion weeks are by invitation only.

Today I often hear that I need to maintain what I have accomplished and take it easy. However, as I continue to dream, my dreams get bigger. I would like to make women's clothes and open General Idea shops all over the world. I also want to be a good father and go traveling with my children.

**Dream together!**

### **Collection that evokes inspiration**

Designer Choi Bum-suk has collected fashion related items for a long time. Mr. Choi collects things with a military look because he likes this style. He also collects clothes and accessories. Recently, he made a collection out of eyeglass frames and buttons. Both pieces are practical and can be used for a long time.

Frames will complete your look and a button, while small, plays an important role in determining the finishing touch. Collecting things helps prepare Choi to create new designs. He has never neglected even the most trivial items and has always tried to look at things from a new perspective, which has led him to be a collector.

All the stuff in our everyday lives can be collected, ranging from common things like banknotes and dolls to movie posters, which may be thrown away after used once. Try to find something new from the things around you that people usually ignore. By collecting things, you will create your own brilliant museum as well as develop the power of observation, creativity, and endurance.

### **Additional interview**

We want to know the writers, Jeong Yoo-ri and Jeong Ji-yeong who interviewed the "experts on failure!"

#### **Why did you get interested in "failure" and not "success?"**

**Ji-yeong ::** I think success is a delicious soup, while failure is the spices in it. Only when the spices are added, success becomes more valuable. However, people don't often see the magic secret spices named "failure." No one among these eight experts on failure ever gave up. Even when they faced repeated failures, they did not change their goals. So finally, they could enjoy their delicious soup called success. Everyone encounters failure. Then, remember the magic secret spices which these experts on failure pass you over, and you can try again, believing you are one step closer to success.

#### **Which story was the most impressive while interviewing?**

**Ji-yeong ::** Every story was impressive, but among them, Ballerino Lee Won-kook's rings in my heart because my childhood was similar to his. I found my dream late like him. I used to be passive with everything, but became a totally different person after finding my dream. You know we can gladly do what we like even when we are not told to. What if Lee Won-kook had not met ballet? We would not see a great ballerino who represents our country. Everyone has his or her own dream and road to walk on. But it takes a little longer for some people to search for them. Whenever it happens, open your eyes wide and listen carefully wherever you are. If you never give up, your dream will come to you before you know it.

**Please tell me your "failure" story!**

**Yoo-ri ::** During my childhood, I was very weak. Often sick, I spent most of my time staying home. I could not hang out with friends, and unfortunately developed the habit of hiding behind.

One warm spring day, however, a bicycle abandoned at the corner of my yard caught my eyes. Although it was old and rusty, I wanted to whizz around on the bike like my friends did. Without any plan, I took it outside. Sitting on its seat, I kept my balance and began pedaling. But I kept on falling and hurt my arms and legs. Feeling sad, I cried a lot and did not ride the bike for a few days. I was very discouraged because I failed on my first try. But I suddenly thought I would not be defeated by the bike. I was worried that I would be left all alone if I could not overcome this difficulty. I took the bike outside again. I asked my mom to hold it behind me and put training wheels on it. After all the failure, I finally could ride a bike! As I went out to ride the bike, I became healthy and made friends as well. I became a tomboy in my neighborhood before I was aware of it. It was only possible because I changed my attitude toward failure.

**What is your dream?**

**Yoo-ri ::** I want to write stories that can touch children's hearts. To do that, it takes time and patience when you put your sincere heart into every single letter. Surely I will go through the process of failure many times. However, I am not afraid because I feel excited when I imagine my readers, even if there were only one reader, who will laugh, cry, and be moved while reading my stories!

**Finally, what would you like to say about "failure" to children?**



**Ji-yeong** :: Have you ever seen the face of a soccer player who scored a goal? I mean the scene when the player celebrates his goal while receiving congratulations from his fellow players.

Why is he so happy when he scored a goal? Yes. It is because he succeeded in scoring a goal after passing the tough defense. If he had scored a goal without difficulty, he would not have felt that much happiness. Like this, the joy of success comes when you overcome failure. Scoring one goal brings more happiness than scoring a hundred goals in a game with no defenders and goalkeeper.

So never give up if you fail in the future. It is better to encounter failure than live a meaningless life without goals. If you go through failure after failure, you will become an expert on failure someday!

## Writers • Illustrator

### Writer **Jeong Yoo-ri**

Jeong Yoo-ri majored in children's literature at the graduate school at Chung-ang University. Trying to create the world in a book where anyone can have fun, she works in the "Dreaming kkoriyeon," a club for fairytale lovers. Her books include *The Strongest Bridge in the World*, *Star Rookie in the Forest*, *Going His Way Na Dae-ro*, and *Cuckoo Wants to Sleep*.

### Writer **Jeong Ji-yeong**

Whenever his father bought him a storybook during his childhood, Jeong Ji-yeong was so excited that he could not sleep. Now he can't sleep writing such books. He hopes that he could write books to be salt and light. He majored in Korean literature at Baek-seok University and studied creative writing at the graduate school at Chung-ang University. Now he works in the "Dreaming kkoriyeon." He received the Digital Literary Award from the Chosun Ilbo, one of the major newspapers in South Korea. His books include *Question Mark Philosophy*, and *The Wright Brothers*.

<http://jiyeong.com>

### Illustrator **Kim Kyoung-chan**

Although his big build doesn't seem to be suited for his job, Kim Kyoung-chan has loved drawing since he was a child. After graduating from college, he has held exhibitions and worked on illustrations for many books. To draw fun cartoons and pictures, he is now sharing the pain of the creative work with other four men in a small studio in Sindorim, Korea. He has illustrated many books including *I Sold Grandma*, *The Answer is in the Question*, and *Why Did Prince Yeon-san Become a Tyrant?*

[Blog.naver.com/jsclubkkc00](http://Blog.naver.com/jsclubkkc00)

There were murmurs that the Lee Won-kook Ballet Company had failed. I decided to bite the bullet, believing that if we showed a great performance we could draw a full audience. We practiced much harder for every performance. After a few months, our performances gradually drew in an audience through word-of-mouth.

- Ballerino Lee Won-kook

As I became 60, I suffered repeated failures, but each time I took it as an opportunity like a blacksmith strikes the red-hot iron with his hammer to make it strong. I found the wisdom and ways to lash and temper myself in books.

- Children's book author Kim Hyang-e

The reason I became the head Chef at the Burj Al Arab Hotel in Dubai was that I did not stay satisfied with the fame and honor my achievements brought me. It was cooking itself that was valuable to me, not a stable and famous place.

- Chef Edward Kwon

If you choose what you really want, you will never give up even when you encounter an unexpected bad result. Failure is just part of the process, not the end. You are able to learn from your failures and move forward.

- Designer Choi Bum-suk

Failed and frustrated? Want to realize your dream?

Hush! Experts on failure share their "magic secret spices."

With these spices, something amazing will happen in the future!

Four and a half laps of running around the earth with dream of completing the course • Marathoner **Lee Bong-ju**

Dream about rockets that I never let go of even for a single day • Rocket expert **Chae Yeon-seok**

A storyteller who believes the power of positive thinking • Musical director **Jang Yoo-jeong**

Creative confidence in the world as a stage • Korean public relations expert **Seo Kyoung-duk**

A man who fell in passionate love with ballet • Ballerino **Lee Won-kook**

Fairy tale land giving bloom through the imagination • Children's book author **Kim Hyang-e**

Success shines at the moment you challenge! • Chef **Edward Kwon**

Searching for something that excites me • Designer **Choi Bum-suk**

**SAMTOH's 1% Sharing Campaign** SAMTOH has raised the "SAMTOH Bluebird Fund" from 1% of its book royalties and has donated to the charity Beautiful Foundation that supports housing for teenage heads of household. SAMTOH has made a donation of around 50 million won to the Beautiful Foundation until 2011. SAMTOH will continue its 1% sharing campaign.