

READ THE

ROOM

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BA, DESGINLAB

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01

We start here.

Jo is my last name. We put last names first in my culture. From now on, you will see a lot of *we* instead of *I*.

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I REMEMBER ONCE SOMEONE SAID TO ME: *"You could have just said No."* THAT MADE ME RETHINK A LOT OF CONVERSATIONS I HAD IN THE NETHERLANDS. SO MANY AWKWARD ENDS OF CONVERSATIONS; PEOPLE ASKING BACK *"Are we good?"*, THE SILENCE BETWEEN US, AND WEIRDLY REPETITIVE SAME QUESTIONS LIKE *"are you sure?"* FOR SUCH A LONG TIME NOBODY HAD TOLD ME THAT —

I COULD HAVE JUST SAID **No!** BUT, WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

I HAVE BEEN SAYING **No.**

Scene #01

narration: Line 2, line 2 is approaching.
Please wait behind the yellow line.

* a phone screen is showing the map of the shortest route to transfer:

Line 2 at door 4-3 >> stairs >> Line 6

* J is standing at the edge of a screen door.

* people are picking up their bags from the floor and have already started moving forward.

narration: The door is opening. Please mind a gap and watch your step.
The door is opening-

* a narration is fading out.

* J takes a seat near the door.

* people are rushing inside to the subway.
J looks up, but an electronic display is hidden by people's heads and is invisible.

* The subway departs.

* an old lady stands in front of J.

J: Oh, take the seat, please.

old lady: No, no, it's okay. I don't go so far.

J: No, please. I will get out next stop.

You should

take a seat.

old lady: Haha, thank you. You sweet girl.

* the lady is sitting down slowly.

* J grabs her bag tight towards her chest.

* The subway is shaking and making a loud noise.

old lady: Do you want me to hold the bag? It looks heavy.

J: Oh, no worries. It only looks heavy. Very light.

old lady: Alright. Thank you, again.

* J is smiling and looking at her phone.

* the subway is approaching the next stop.

J starts to walk down toward the next car, 4-4.

* the old lady can't see her anymore through the crowd.

narration: The subway is approaching Ah-hyun. Ah-hyun.
(repeated in Japanese and Chinese)

* car 4-4 is full of people. There's no free seat.

* J is standing in front of a woman.

* a phone ringing

J: Hello?

V: Hey-

J: Ah, mm, wait. I need to put on my...

* J puts her phone between her chin and shoulder, looking for something in her bag.

J: Alright. I just needed to put in my earbuds.
Hey.

V: Hey! Are you almost here?

J: Yeah. Like... in 15 minutes.

V: Right. Did you eat anything?

J: Yeah I did. I always have dinner at work.

V: True. I forgot.

J: Did you though?

Should I grab something on the way?

V: No, no, I'm good. I ate something like,
an hour ago.

J: You sure? Sounds like you didn't eat
a proper meal.

V: Haha, I did. I did eat something filling.

J: I can get some ice cream.

V: Nah, I have some in my fridge.

J: Oke. Then I'll just go.

V: Mmmmm.

J: So you have ice cream at home, and... what
do we do for breakfast tomorrow?
I mean, I can sleep over, right?

* J opens a map on her phone.

* typing sounds

* phone screen, it shows the map search
result of "dessert."

V: Yeah, Of course. I have comfy clothes for
you too.

J: Great! Uh, actually, how about some
waffles?

V: Are you hungry?

J: Nah, just, I think it's good to have something.

V: Uh, Mmmmm, yeah, sure. Why not.

J: I knew it.

V: What?

J: I thought you would like it.

V: Ah, come one. You suggested.

J: I did.

V: But, hmmm, by the way...

J: Yeah?

* J clicks the waffle bakery at the top of the map recommendations. 6 minutes walking from the metro station.

V: Can you also get some cupcakes too?

J: Do you think the waffle shop will serve cupcakes too?

V: No, no, I mean if you see it on the way. It doesn't matter if you don't get it. It's fine.

J: I can do that.

V: But don't search for it for me. You can just come if there are no cupcakes.

J: We'll see.

narration: The subway is approaching
Hap-jeong, Hap-jeong.
You can transfer to line number 6.

* J is looking up at the electronic screen. It says the door opens on the left.

J: Hey, It's gonna be a bit loud here.
I'm transferring.
V: It's fine.
J: Do you need anything else?
V: Not really. Oh, maybe some drinks?
I'm out of soft drinks.

J: Cool I'll get some.
V: Alright! I'll wait for you.
J: See you soon.
V: Ciao!
J: Ciao Ciao!

* J on the phone again, walking up the stairs slowly.

* search screen: cupcake near me.

how to say



I'VE BEEN TRAINING TO TALK MORE LIKE WESTERNERS. THEY SAY *"No, I don't want it; I don't think so; I'm not okay; Can you leave me alone; It's none of your business."* THEY USE THESE KINDS OF WORDS SO WELL. THE MOMENT THAT ONE OF MY CLASSMATES SAID, "No", OUT LOUD TO A TEACHER. THE IMPRESSION IT LEFT ON ME. I FELT THAT FREEDOM VICARIOUSLY THROUGH THEM AND WAS WAITING TO SEE ANOTHER "No!" HAPPENING. HOW CAN PEOPLE MAKE SUCH A STATEMENT TOWARDS A TEACHER? IT WAS MY FIRST CULTURE SHOCK AND AN EXPERIENCE THAT MADE ME DETERMINED THAT I WANT TO ADAPT TO THIS SHARP WAY OF EXPRESSION OF ONE'S FEELINGS. ON THE OTHER HAND, I FEEL EMBARRASSED ALL THE TIME WHENEVER I TRY IT. IT FEELS LIKE I'M NAKED. *"Don't hurt someone's feelings."* HAS BEEN STUCK IN MY MIND FOR TOO LONG.

IT ALWAYS SEEMS LIKE I HAVE A HARD TIME SAYING NO TO SOMEONE ELSE. PEOPLE SAY IT'S A TYPICAL INTROVERT PROBLEM, BUT WELL, I GREW UP IN KOREAN SOCIETY, WHICH REQUIRES A LOT OF CONTEXT READING DURING ANY KIND OF INTERACTION WITH OTHERS. WE WANT TO ALREADY KNOW WHAT THE OTHER IS THINKING BEFORE WE TALK THROUGH IT. EVEN WORSE, GROWING UP AS THE FIRSTBORN IN A HOUSEHOLD WITH A TEACHER MOM LEFT ME WITH GREAT FEAR AND RELUCTANCE TO BE RUDE. THEREFORE, I HAVE EMBODIED THE INDIRECT WAY OF COMMUNICATION INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF MYSELF. THERE ARE RULES TO HOW I SAY NO.

- 1). TRY TO BE AS SOFT AS POSSIBLE.
- 2). DON'T GIVE A PROMISE.
- 3). REPLACE IT WITH A DIFFERENT COMMENT THAT CONNECTS TO REJECTION.
- 4). WHEN THEY ASK ONE MORE TIME, GIVE MORE CLUES TO THEM THAT YOU DON'T WANT IT.

THE POINT IS, YOU SHOULDN'T SOUND COLD. US KOREANS OFTEN TAKE THE HARD REFUSAL AS FEELING HARSH. A CLEAR AND DIRECT SPEECH MIGHT LEAD TO THE THOUGHT THAT YOU DON'T HANDLE THE RELATIONSHIP WITH CARE. THERE SHOULD BE A SIGN THAT YOU CARE ABOUT ONE'S FEELINGS AND YOU SHOW TOLERANCE FOR THEIR SUGGESTION.

FOR INSTANCE, SOMEONE ASKED TO GO HANG OUT AFTER A LONG WALK. YOU ARE TIRED AND FREEZING. WHAT I WOULD SAY IS: "*Lovely idea, but aren't you tired?*" THIS IS MY WAY OF SAYING NO. I DIDN'T FORGET TO COMPLIMENT THE SUGGESTION, WHICH IS IMPORTANT SINCE I KNOW THAT IT MEANS YOU ARE ENJOYING THIS TIME WITH ME, AND I ALSO WANT TO EXPRESS THE SAME. BUT I WANT TO GO INSIDE. SO I'M REMINDING YOU THAT IT IS GETTING LATE AND WE'VE WALKED ENOUGH. AS A REPLY, I'M EXPECTING SOMETHING LIKE;

"Do you want to go inside?" "Shall we sit down?" "We can do it next time."

CONSEQUENTLY, MY WAY OF SAYING NO REQUIRES AN OPPONENT'S REACTION. IT'S AS IMPORTANT AS NOTICING SOMEONE SAYING NO. WE ARE CAREFULLY READING EACH OTHER'S: WORDS, FACIAL EXPRESSIONS, TONE OF VOICE, ETC., AND HAVE TO QUICKLY FIND WHAT THEY REALLY WANT TO HEAR AND REACT TO IT. IN THE END, I WOULD SAY YES TO THE NO QUESTION. IT'S ACTUALLY UP TO YOU TO DECIDE TO SUGGEST NO TO ME. BECAUSE MY NO IS CONSTRUCTED BASED ON THE BELIEF THAT YOU WOULD CATCH THAT GLIMPSE OF WHAT I REALLY MEAN. A CONVERSATION IS A PATIENT PROCESS TO UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER'S FEELINGS AND TO CHOOSE BETWEEN A SPECTRUM OF INNOCUOUS WORDS. THERE IS AN OPEN BRIDGE TO CONTINUE, BUT IT DOESN'T MEAN THAT IT'S THE RIGHT PATH. ONE HAS TO PAY ATTENTION IN ORDER TO PROCEED OR YOU WILL FACE THE AWKWARD SMILE WITH A MURMURING SOUND OF "*oh no.....*"

MEASURING HOW HARD YOU CAN INSIST ON IS IMPORTANT. IT ALSO COUNTS IN FRIENDLY RELATIONSHIPS. EVEN BETWEEN CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS, LIKE LOVERS OR FRIENDS, WE ARE NOT USED TO HEARING A CLEAR NO. YES, WE DON'T ONLY REFUSE TO SAY NO, BUT ALSO TO HEAR IT. THE EMBARRASSMENT OF HEARING NO. IT MAKES ME RETHINK THROUGH THE WHOLE DAY TO REMEMBER IF I OFFENDED THIS PERSON DURING A MEETING. CERTAINLY, SAYING NO VAGUELY IS FOR THE GOOD OF BOTH OF US.

IS THERE ANYONE THEN WHO HAS THE AUTHORITY TO SIMPLY SAY - **NO?**

SINCE THE EUPHEMISM IS OFTEN USED BETWEEN VERTICAL POWER RELATIONSHIPS, SAYING NO ALSO VARIES IN DIFFERENT WAYS DEPENDING ON THE POSITION. THE INDIRECT LANGUAGE WAS HIGHLY DEVELOPED UNDER PATRIARCHY. IT BRED THE INDIRECT LANGUAGE OF THOSE IN A LOWER POSITION OF THE POWER DYNAMIC TO BE MORE SUBMISSIVE, MORE AMBIGUOUS. IT'S NEVER A SURPRISE THAT WOMEN TEND TO USE SUBSTANTIALLY MORE INDIRECT STRATEGIES THAN MEN, ESPECIALLY IN REFUSAL. ONE WHO'S MORE IN NEED OF MAINTAINING GOOD RECIPROCITY HAS TO BE MORE GENTLE. IN A WAY, INDIRECT LANGUAGE COULD BE SEEN AS THE WEAKS' LANGUAGE. IN CONTRAST, THOSE WHO ARE IN POWER DON'T HAVE TO HESITATE TO, STRONGLY AND DECISIVELY, SAY NO. PEOPLE HAVE LEARNED AND SET A FORMULA OF RESPONSE FOR A CERTAIN SITUATION.

TO THINK THAT WE NEED ALL OF THIS CONSIDERATION TO FINALLY SAY NO; IT LOOKS LIKE I ALMOST FEAR TO SAY NO. WHAT CAN BE DONE BY JUST SAYING NO? WHY DOES IT HAVE TO BE SO COMPLICATED? I THINK IT'S NOT AT ALL ABOUT WHY WE CAN'T, BUT IT'S ALL ABOUT WHY WE SHOULD. PEOPLE OFTEN SAY: "*I really appreciate your honesty*" HERE. I'VE HEARD IT MORE THAN ENOUGH WHENEVER I 'OPENED UP'. IN WESTERN CULTURE, PEOPLE TEND TO VALUE HONESTY HIGHLY AND GIVE MORE POINTS WHEN YOU HOW HONEST VULNERABILITY. BUT IN MY CULTURE, DISHONESTY IS THE ONE WE VALUE. MORE PRECISELY, THE WAY OF APPROACHING THE TRUTH DIFFERS A LOT FROM HONESTY.



value of

dishonesty 

IN THE KOREAN LANGUAGE, THERE IS A VERY SPECIFIC WORD:

눈치 [NUN-CHI / NOON-CHI].

*Nunchi, sometimes noonchi, is a Korean concept signifying the subtle art and ability to listen and gauge others' moods.*⁰²

TO BE ABLE TO BEHAVE LIKE A KOREAN AND TO FUNCTION AS A KOREAN, NUNCHI IS AN ESSENTIAL CONCEPT ONE HAS TO IMPRINT. IT'S THE REASON WHY WE DON'T HAVE TO BE HONEST WITH EACH OTHER AND WHY WE SHOULD SPEAK INDIRECTLY. IT'S A SENSE TO NOTICE SOMEONE ELSE'S NEED, DESIRE, OR FEELING EVEN BEFORE THEY TELL YOU SO. VIA THIS METHOD, YOU CAN ALWAYS ACT AHEAD AND MAKE EVERYONE COMFORTABLE. IT'S NOT ONLY FOR THE ONE-ON-ONE SITUATION. IT'S TO READ THE WHOLE ROOM.

BECAUSE NUNCHI IS WOVEN THROUGHOUT EVERY PART OF KOREAN SOCIETY, A LOT OF PARENTS START TO TEACH THEIR CHILDREN ABOUT NUNCHI WHEN THEY ARE YOUNG. EVERY KOREAN KID WOULD REMEMBER WHEN THEY GO TO AN IMPORTANT EVENT, THEIR PARENTS WOULD PREPARE THEM TO TAKE THAT NUNCHI ALONG. THIS SHORT WARNING ENCOMPASSES A LOT OF VIRTUES THAT CHILDREN HAVE TO LEARN. SUCH AS *"You have to use polite words to elders; don't talk when it's not needed; check again if it's appropriate before you do something; don't talk loudly, etcetera."* IN SHORT, LEARNING NUNCHI IS LEARNING HOW TO ACT LIKE A GROWN-UP IN KOREAN SOCIETY. NOBODY TELLS YOU WHAT EXACTLY THEY WANT OR WHAT THEY DON'T WANT. AND VICE VERSA, YOU ALSO DON'T TELL THEM.

02 Euny Hong, <Power of Nunchi>, 2019, Penguin Random House

SINCE NUNCHI IS SOMETHING EVERYONE HAS BEEN LEARNING AND IMPROVING, CONVERSATIONS TAKE PLACE ASSUMING BOTH SIDES ALREADY UNDERSTAND WHAT'S GOING ON. ANY KOREAN WILL TELL YOU THAT NUNCHI IS MORE NOTABLE IN ITS ABSENCE THAN ITS PRESENCE. THIS SENTENCE SHOWS THAT TO COMMUNICATE WITH NUNCHI HAS TO BE BIDIRECTIONAL. AN AMERICAN SELF-HELP BOOK <POWER OF NUNCHI>⁰³ EXPLORES THIS NUNCHI CULTURE AND SAYS:

“People react to the nunchi-challenged in the same way that they might react to a person with horrible breath: they might feel petty about it, they might not even know why they find them repellent, all they know is that they don't like being around that person and can't wait for them to leave.”

IT REMINDED ME OF A KOREAN SAYING *“You might get by, if you stay quiet.”* SILENCE IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF DISHONESTY, ESPECIALLY WHEN WE ARE TALKING ABOUT THE VALUE OF DISHONESTY. THIS VIRTUE KEEPS YOU SAFE FROM OVERSTEPPING, ESPECIALLY ABOUT TOPICS THAT EVERYONE KNOWS ARE RISKY. IT'S TO NOT BRAG ABOUT YOUR KNOWLEDGE OR POSITION. IT'S TO NOT DARE TO INTERCEPT SOMEONE'S ROOM TO NAVIGATE THEIR OWN DECISION. WE ARE SHARING THIS BELIEF THAT ONE WOULD HAVE UNDERSTOOD WHAT'S GOING ON AROUND THE ROOM AND WOULD HAVE THEIR OWN WAY TO DIGEST THE SITUATION. THAT'S WHY DISHONESTY IS NEEDED. WE ACTIVELY USE SILENCE TO CARE, RATHER THAN TO POINT OUT EVERYTHING WE SEE. IT'S BEHIND THE HUMBLE THOUGHT THAT PEOPLE WOULD KNOW WHAT I KNOW ALREADY. EVEN IF THEY SEEM LIKE THEY DON'T HAVE ANY CLUE; ONLY GIVING A HINT IS YOUR PART, NOT AN ANSWER. PEOPLE WILL COMMENT OR ASK ANOTHER QUESTION IF THE DELIVERY FAILED, BUT BEFORE WE CAN BE COMPLETELY OPEN, WE SHOULD TAKE TIME TO CUDDLE WITH OUR SENTENCES. THE DISHONESTY WE HAVE GIVEN AND RECEIVED. TO ACHIEVE THIS COMMUNICATION SMOOTHLY, CONVERSATION IMPLICATURE IS A MANDATORY METHOD TO DELIVER THE TRUTH LIKE A SUBTLE BREEZE. HOWEVER, NOT IN THE WAY THEY RECOMMEND IN WESTERN CULTURE.



HERBERT PAUL GRICE SAID IN <LOGIC AND CONVERSATION>⁰⁴ THAT THERE ARE FOUR MAXIMS TO MAKE THE CONVERSATION IDEAL: MAXIM OF QUALITY, MAXIM OF QUANTITY, MAXIM OF RELOCATION, MAXIM OF MANNER. SPECIFICALLY, IN MAXIM OF MANNER, HE MENTIONED FURTHER SPECIFIC MAXIMS – “*under the category of Manner, which I understand as relating....., rather, to HOW what is said is to be said, I include the super maxim, ‘Be perspicuous’, and various maxims such as:*

- 1). *Avoid obscurity of expression*
- 2). *Avoid ambiguity*
- 3). *Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity)*
- 4). *Be orderly”*

WHICH YOU CAN ALREADY SEE, IS ALMOST THE EXACT OPPOSITE OF HOW WE COMMUNICATE. GRICE SAID THAT A SPEAKER CAN EITHER FOLLOW OR UNFOLLOW THE MAXIMS. BUT WHAT IS INTERESTING IS THE ASPECT THAT HE CLASSIFIED WITH A SPEAKER CAN ASK TO BE EXCUSED TO UNFOLLOW THE MAXIMS. SINCE GRICE PUBLISHED HIS THEORY OF CONVERSATION IMPLICATURE, IT HAS BEEN CONSIDERED AS A SIGNIFICANT PART OF WESTERN PRAGMATICS. AND WHAT IS A NATURALLY POLITE AND VALUED WAY OF COMMUNICATION FOR US IS CONSIDERED PROLIXITY HERE, AND A SPEAKER MIGHT ASK FOR AN EXCUSE.

IN THE OTHER HAND, ONE OF HIS MAXIMS– “*under the category of QUALITY falls a super maxim, ‘Try to make your contribution one that is true’, and two more specific maxims:*

- Do not say what you believe to be false.*
- Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.”⁰⁵*

04 H.P.Grice, <Logic and Conversation>, Reprinted from *Syntax and semantics 3* : Speech arts, Cole et al. “Logic and conversation”, pp.41-58, (1975), with permission from Elsevier.

05 Ibid.

TO FULLY ACHIEVE DISHONEST POLITENESS, WE HAVE TO ACQUIRE THIS MAXIM OF QUALITY. IT IS NOT A COMPLETE LIE, BUT A STEPPED-BACK ANSWER CONTRASTING THE MAXIM OF MANNER. SO IT IS VERY NATURAL AND RECOMMENDED TO USE SUCH WORDS AS; I THINK, I SUPPOSE, I MIGHT LIKE, IT WOULD BE NICE, MAYBE, A LITTLE BIT, POSSIBLY, ETC. TO ADD A PINCH MORE AMBIGUITY, IMPLICATUM(WHAT IS IMPLIED) IS WHAT MATTERS. IN OUR NUNCHI-DOMINATED CULTURE, PEOPLE WOULD DIVE INTO ONE'S SENTENCE GLADLY TO DIG UP ALL THE IMPLICATIONS TO FIND OUT WHAT IT CONVEYS.



READ THE ROOM

Scene #02

* inside of a plane, a man is sitting next to me. It looks like he has a runny nose.

* I am looking at the PCR test result paper, it says the test was done 48 hours ago.

* the sound of paper crumpled.

* sneezing and coughing.

* a man keeps sniffing. I make a disgusted face under the face mask.

me: **Mmmhmm**

man: (takes out a wet tissue and rubs his nose, and continues sniffing)

me: **Phh...**

(leaning my body as far as possible from the man)

* I am staring at the man's wet tissue. It's inside of a mesh pocket in front of his seat.

* looks like the man wouldn't stop sniffing.

me: (Fuck - without saying out loud, I am cursing under the face mask.)

me: **Excuse me**

man: **Yeah?**

me: **Do you need a tissue maybe?**

man: **Oh, No, thanks. I have one.**

* I smile.

* man 2 is coming to the man's seat and explaining the documents he needs to fill in.

* At the top of the paper, there is a South Korean Embassy emblem.

man 2: So, you need to fill in here and here. And please keep it with your passport. We don't have an extra document so you shouldn't lose it.

man: Then you can just keep it all together.

man 2: Ummm, well, it's...

man: Hey, there's no need to make things complicated, isn't it?

man 2: Actually, um, you have to show this right after you get out when we land in Seoul.

man: I know. I get it.

man 2:

man: So here and here, right?

* man 2 is stepping on my blanket.

* I clear my throat and I am look at his foot stepping on it.

* man 2 doesn't seem like he noticed it.

* I am sighing and looking up to man 2. he looks tired and embarrassed by the man.

man: Are you gonna wait for me here?

man 2: Uh, No sir.

man: You can come back later.

man 2: Yes. I will go check others.
man: Good.

* an uncomfortable coughing sound from me

* I am taking out the diary and writing down something furiously

* In the note it says: “of course, these diplomat people have to be rude... it’s so tiring to see authorities just do whatever they want to do. prob they wouldn’t even do quarantine when they land. bc of that so so so important business they do. why do these men all have to make this disgusting sniffing sound just fucking clean your nose”

me: Um...
man: (keep sniffing)
me: Excuse me, do you feel alright?
man: Yeah, yeah, I am. No worries.
me: Yes.

* I stand up and walk down the aisle towards a toilet. It’s next to the cabin crew only area.

* there is a curtain between the two and I am hearing a muttering noise.

* my ears are muffled. I am trying to pop my ears by pinching the nostrils but it doesn’t work.

* I am touching the curtain with my index finger.

me: Hi, um.
flight attendant: Yes, what can I help you with?
me: Can I maybe move my seat to somewhere else?
If there's a free seat in the economy.

* flight attendant is moving out from behind.

* there's still some busy noise and small chats going on behind them.

flight attendant: Is there something wrong?
me: Sorry, pardon?
flight attendant: Oh, do you have any inconvenience at your seat?

me: Yes, yes, actually it's the person next to me.

* I am looking back over my shoulder. My seat is far enough away.

* nobody is sitting near the toilet area.

me: He's been very noisy, um, I think he has a very... congested nose and it's worrying me a bit that he keeps taking off his mask because of that.

* I am correcting the mask wire on my nose.

flight attendant: I'm really sorry, but due to new COVID rule we can't change your seat.

me: Oh, well. That's very sad.

flight attendant: However I can talk to him if he can be quieter. Would you like that?

me: Of course, thank you.

* awkward silence.

* the flight attendant is looking at me.

* I am stepping aside flustered.

me: Oh, I'm going to the toilet.

flight attendant: I see. Do you mind if I go ahead first?

me: No, please.

flight attendant: You can call me again if the problem continues.

me: Thank you.

* I am smiling under the mask to them as brightly as I can and bow.

* four softly smiling eyes over the mask from both of them.

* flight attendant also bows.

* a red sign on the toilet. someone's inside.

me: **Phhhh- fuck.**
(silently. No one could really hear it through the airplane buzzing.)

* flight attendant is talking to the man with a gentle gesture. Their hands are gathered together in front of their chest and their torso is slightly bent toward the man.

* man 3, who's sitting in the aisle seat of the same row next to me, is putting his head out of the headrest.

man 3: **Is there a problem?**

flight attendant: **Oh. No, sir.**

man 3: **I'm his colleague.**

flight attendant: **Mm. No, sir. This is a casual reminder of wearing a mask inside of the plane, during the whole flight. For other passengers and your own safety.**

man 3: (nodding sloppily and lying back down in the seat.)

* I am slowly walking back to my seat. 'They were colleagues,' I am saying to myself under the mask, raising both eyebrows.

man 3: **Mmmhmm.**
(quick glancing to me)

me: Sorry, your foot is on my
blanket.
man: Ah.
me: (sanitizing armrest and
table again)

* some more spraying sound

* man and man 3 sniffing



aren't you



of it?

BELOW IS A PART OF THE BESTSELLER LIST⁰⁶ IN SOUTH KOREA FROM 2018. (SINCE THE OUTBREAK OF THE PANDEMIC, THE BESTSELLER LIST AFTER 2019 HAS BEEN DOMINATED BY BOOKS RELATED TO MENTAL HEALTH CARE, ECONOMY, AND ENVIRONMENT. THEREFORE I DECIDED TO BRING 2018'S AS AN UNCONTAMINATED REFERENCE.)

01. POOH, EVERY DAY HAS A HAPPY MOMENT
03. HOW TO DEAL WITH RUDE PEOPLE WITH A SMILE
05. I DECIDED TO LIVE AS ME.
06. TEMPERATURE OF LANGUAGE
11. METHOD FOR NOT TO PAY ATTENTION
12. WORD BOWL
13. INDIVIDUALIST MANIFESTO
17. THE DIGNITY OF LANGUAGE
25. HOW FORMIDABLES COMMUNICATE

BESIDES THE FACT THAT KOREANS LOVE SELF-HELP BOOKS AND ESSAYS, IT SHOWS A STRONG TENDENCY OF INTEREST IN COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND A DESIRE TO FALL OUT OF COMPLEXITY. DESPITE WE LOVE TO COMMUNICATE INDIRECTLY, IT'S BEEN 4355 YEARS SINCE WE'VE SETTLED DOWN IN THE SAME LAND AND SAME INDIRECTNESS. THE VALUE OF DISHONESTY AND HABITS OF VAGUE EXPRESSIONS STILL STAY WITH US HOWEVER, THROUGHOUT THE NEW GENERATION INDIRECTNESS IS CONSIDERED TIRING.

<HOW TO DEAL WITH RUDE PEOPLE WITH A SMILE>⁰⁷ HAS BEEN RANKED AS THE BEST-SELLING BOOK FOR MORE THAN 160 WEEKS IN THE FIRST HALF OF 2018. THE DESPERATE LONGING TO LEARN TO TALK BACK TO RUDE PEOPLE WAS BIGGER THAN EVERYONE THOUGHT. IT TURNED OUT MORE THAN ENOUGH PEOPLE WERE TIRED OF SUPPRESSING THEIR FEELINGS IN ORDER TO BEHAVE.

FOR A LONG TIME, KOREANS HAVE BEEN SUFFERING FROM INDIRECT COMMUNICATION FOR THE SAKE OF BEING EXTREMELY POLITE. IT FEELS LIKE WE FORGOT HOW TO GET ANGRY PROPERLY. THE INDIRECTNESS OF OUR LANGUAGE MADE IT HARD TO CONFRONT OUR FEELINGS. WE HAVE TO ASK ONE MORE TIME OURSELVES BEFORE SAYING OUT LOUD; DO YOU REALLY WANT TO SAY NO? DO YOU REALLY WANT TO EXPRESS THAT YOU DISLIKE IT? THAT URGE TO EXPRESS NEGATIVE FEELINGS HAS TO BE LOCKED UP DEEP INSIDE OF US TO NOT BE ‘RUDE.’

SHOULD WE BLAME IT ON THE GOOD OLD SAYING 억지사지 [YEOK-JI-SA-JI]⁰⁸ - YOU AS ME? OR ALL THE PEOPLE WHO CONSTANTLY TOLD US TO GET OUR NUNCHI BACK INTO POSITION? THE TEMPTATION OF SPEAKING STRAIGHTFORWARDLY IS SWEET. YOU DON’T HAVE TO LOOK AFTER WHAT THIS PERSON IS FEELING NOW AND HOW THEY WANT THE SITUATION TO PROCEED. IS THE PERSON YOU ARE TALKING TO YOUR ELDER, OR YOUR BOSS, OR SOMEONE IN AN UNCOMFORTABLE RELATIONSHIP? DOESN’T MATTER. PRACTICE MAKES IT BETTER. WE’VE LIVED OUT OF NUNCHI, SO WE SHOULD TRY A NEW METHOD.

IN <HOW TO DEAL WITH RUDE PEOPLE WITH A SMILE>, THE AUTHOR SUGGESTS SAYING “*I’ll do it in my own way.*” AS AN ANSWER TO UNNECESSARY INTERFERENCE. SO THE PEOPLE WHO ACT AS THEY HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO SAY WHATEVER, CAN FINALLY KEEP THOSE UNPLEASANT SUGGESTIONS IN THEIR MIND. THE WHOLE WORLD IS TELLING US TO SET BOUNDARIES FOR OUR OWN SAKE. IT LOOKS LIKE WE COULD ALL HAVE BEEN NIRVANA AT THIS POINT, IF ONLY IT WAS THAT SIMPLE. IT ISN’T EASY FOR MOST OF US TO MEASURE THE RIGHT DISTANCE AND RIGHT BOUNDARIES. BUT THE

07 Munjeong Jung, < How to deal with rude people with a smile>, 2018, Ghanah Publishing

08 억지사지[Yeok-Ji-Sa-Ji]: To think in opponent’s position. Put yourself in someone else’s shoes.

PLEASURE OF BEING DETERMINED IS SO GREAT, THAT THOSE WHO NEVER ROLLED UGLY IN THE LOOP OF INDIRECT COMMUNICATION CANNOT GAUGE IT.

NONETHELESS, WE ARE STILL TEACHING OUR CHILDREN TO BE INDIRECT. WE STILL READ BOOKS ABOUT NUNCHI AND HOW TO UNDERSTAND EUPHEMISM. STILL, WHEN YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND THE CODE, PEOPLE WOULD IMMEDIATELY THINK YOU DON'T HAVE NUNCHI. REMEMBER, OFTEN, A LOT OF COMMUNICATIONS ARE OPERATED BY THE PRINCIPLE OF THE LEAST EFFORT⁰⁹. YOU MIGHT THINK 'THE LEAST EFFORT' MEANS DIRECT. WELL, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN EASIER IF WE WERE TIRED ENOUGH TO MAKE IT THAT WAY, BUT WE HAVEN'T FELT TIRED ENOUGH YET. WE GOT USED TO SHORTER AND LAYERED EXPRESSIONS. BECAUSE OUR CULTURE IS MORE COLLECTIVISTIC THAN INDIVIDUALISTIC, OUR COMMUNICATION METHODS ARE BOUND TO FOCUS ON COMMUNITY MORE THAN ON ONE. IT ALREADY ASSUMES THAT YOU ARE INSIDE OF OUR GROUP AND HAVE CULTURAL BACKGROUND AND INFORMATION ABOUT THE GROUP.

THINK ABOUT SOMEONE THAT KNOWS WHAT YOU WANT AND UNDERSTANDS WHAT YOU NEED SO WELL, WHICH REQUIRES ZERO EFFORT FROM YOU TO ASK FOR IT. THAT'S WHAT NUNCHI IS. THAT'S WHAT WE, KOREANS ARE AIMING TO ACHIEVE IN COMMUNICATION. SADLY MOST OF THE TIME, AIMING IT DOESN'T PROMISE PRACTICAL CAPACITY OF IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN. AS WELL TO SET AN INNER RULE OF HOW FAR WE SAY IT DIRECT NEEDS ETERNAL PRACTICE.

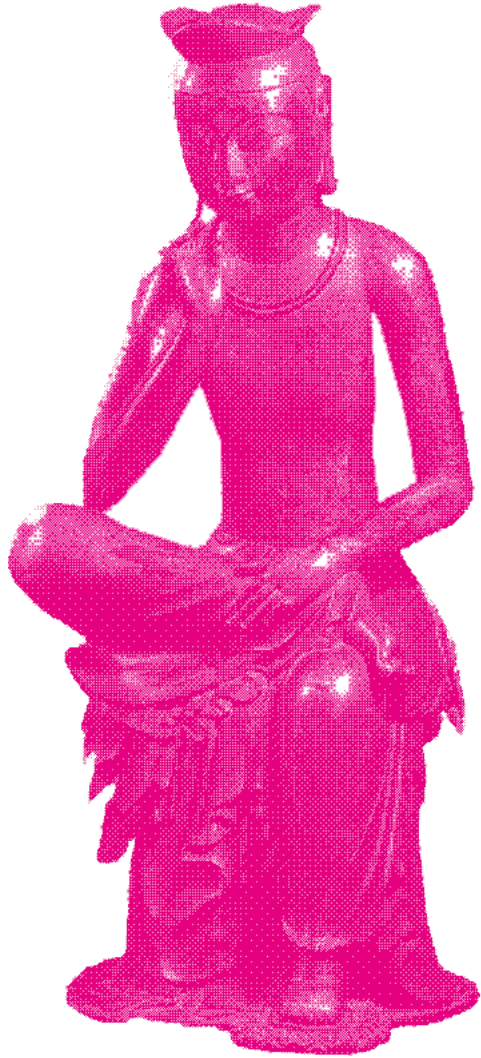
BUDDHA SAID *It is called middle way because there are no two sides, existence or non-existence*(離有無二邊故名為中道).¹⁰ IT COULD APPLY TO EVERYTHING WE SAY. IT'S ALL ABOUT HOW WE MANAGE TO CONVINCE PEOPLE OF THE CONNOTATION WE PUT IN. THE SUBTLE MANAGEMENT, THE MIDDLE WAY OF INDIRECTNESS.

AND ANYWAY,

09 The basic behavioral hypothesis that an organism will choose the course of action that appears to require the smallest amount of effort or expenditure of energy. Also called the law of least action; least effort principle.

10 中論 Vol.4-Chapter.24 觀四諦品

THE GIRLS THAT GET IT, GET IT
AND
THE GIRLS THAT DON'T, DON'T.



THE PENSIVE BODHISATTVA
SOUTH KOREAN NATIONAL TREASURE No.83

금동미륵보살반가사유상 金銅彌勒菩薩半跏思惟像







REMEMBER THAT ONCE, WHEN A RANDOM PERSON CAME TO YOU, RIGHT TO YOUR FACE, SPIT OUT RUDE WORDS? AND YOU CAN'T EVEN ACT BACK CAUSE THEY WERE SOMEONE YOU CAN'T BE RUDE TO? I'VE BEEN LIVING IN IT. SOME PEOPLE HAVE ENOUGH POWER TO EXPLORE FREELY WITH THEIR DIRECTNESS. THEY SAY *"You look bad on it"; "That's not true"; "NO"*; SO CASUALLY. AND MAKE ME SMILE LIKE A SHEEP, IN EMBARRASSMENT.

EVERYONE HAS AN EXPERIENCE OF LANGUAGE AS A POWER TOOL. IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYER AND EMPLOYEE OR AS LOVERS, A STUDENT, AND A TEACHER, ETC. WE'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT INDIRECT COMMUNICATION AND HOW WE USE IT AND THE RULES AROUND IT. SO MANY THINGS TO CARE ABOUT. IT LOOKS LIKE MOST OF THE TIME, INDIRECT COMMUNICATION IS A METHOD NOT TO OFFEND. A SOFT TACTIC. UNFORTUNATELY, THERE ARE CHOSEN ONES OF DARK FORCES WHO CAN ALTER THE METHOD IN A TIRING WAY AS THEY WANT.

ONCE MY EX-BOSS SAID LET'S HAVE LUNCH TOGETHER. HE SAID HE'S BUYING IT AND WE CAN ORDER WHATEVER WE WANT. THEN WE WENT TO THE RESTAURANT WHERE HE SAID IT LOOKS NICE. EVERYONE AGREED. HE CHOSE THE DISH FIRST. NOT SURPRISINGLY, ONE OF THE CHEAPEST DISHES. WE, EMPLOYEES, DIDN'T HAVE THAT MANY CHOICES LEFT UNDER THAT PRICE RANGE. WE ALL ORDERED THE SAME MENU AS HIM. I KNOW THAT MY COLLEAGUE DIDN'T WANT TO HAVE THIS MENU TODAY BUT WHAT CAN WE DO. CHOOSE A MORE EXPENSIVE DISH AND BE AN ASSHOLE? OR SAYING WE DON'T LIKE THIS RESTAURANT AND WE SHOULD HAVE EATEN IN ANOTHER ONE? IN THE CIRCUMSTANCE THAT WE ALREADY SAID YES TO HIS SUGGESTION, WE HAD NO OPTION BUT TO ACCEPT OUR DESTINY.

AS EUPHEMISM REQUIRES ATTENTION AND CONCENTRATION TO THE CONVERSATION, SPEAKERS HAVE TO BE DEDICATED TO INTERPRETING CONNOTATIONS INSIDE OF IT. HOWEVER, IN A POWER DYNAMIC SITUATION LIKE ABOVE, ONE WHO IS IN A HIGHER

POSITION DOESN'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT IT. THE OPTION VARIES TO THEM, THEY CAN FREELY CHOOSE TO BE DIRECT OR INDIRECT. IF THEY SPEAK DIRECTLY, NOBODY WILL COME UP TO COMPLAIN ABOUT THEIR RUDENESS. WHEN THEY CHOSE TO BE INDIRECT, IT'S EVEN WORSE. THE CHOSEN ONES' INDIRECTNESS IS NOT ABOUT EUPHEMISM. IT'S A) ABOUT THE ECONOMICS OF LANGUAGE WHICH ONLY WORKS FOR THEM. THEY WOULD SAY 'DO THIS' RATHER THAN 'FINISH THE DOCUMENT WORK FOR YOUR PROJECT AND BRING THE REPORT TO MY DESK TILL THE END OF THE DAY.' IT'S B) THE MINIMUM THEY TAKE TO BE 'A NICE PERSON' EVEN THOUGH THEIR BEHAVIOR DOESN'T MATCH WITH IT AT ALL.

WITH THE CHOSEN ONES, PEASANTS HAVE TO DOUBLE DOWN READING THE SIGNALS. UNLIKE BILATERAL INDIRECT COMMUNICATION, BETWEEN CHOSEN ONE AND THE OTHERS, CHOSEN ONE DOESN'T HAVE TO DO THEIR PART. UNDER A PATRIARCHAL, VERTICAL POWER DYNAMIC, THE EXCHANGE THEORY¹¹ DOESN'T WORK IDEALLY. ACCORDING TO THE SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY, EACH PARTY HAS GOODS THAT THE OTHER PARTIES VALUE. AND THE CALCULATION OCCURS DEPENDING ON HOW MUCH ADVANTAGE OR DISADVANTAGE THAT EACH PARTY WOULD TAKE. TO THINK ABOUT THE BENEFITS OF INDIRECT COMMUNICATION FOR THE CHOSEN ONES, THEY DON'T HAVE TO PUT AS MUCH EFFORT INTO COMMUNICATION AS 'THE LOWER CLASS.'



11 Social exchange theory is a sociological and psychological theory that studies the social behavior in the interaction of two parties that implement a cost-benefit analysis to determine risks and benefits. (Wikipedia)

boss: The project we talked about before, I think it needs more work.

Which project do you mean? We have three in hands now.

nooooooooooooooooooooo

Do you mean project B?
Which part of it do you think we should make up?

Oops, he will have impression that you are not so involved in this

I assume you meant project B. We have confirmed till the part 1-a and further on we haven't discussed. Do you want us to re-review all of them?

(You are an amazing worker that in real life doesn't exist :))

READING THE CHOSEN ONE'S MIND IS A SUPERPOWER FOR THE LOWER CLASS. THE CHOSEN ONES WOULD CONSIDER YOU THE BEST WORKER, BUT YOU SEE, IT'S HARDLY AN ACHIEVABLE GOAL. HOW CAN WE KNOW WHAT THEY WANT TO SAY AND WHAT THEY WANT US TO DO WITHOUT ANY CLUE GIVEN? UNDER SUCH PRESSURE, NOBODY CAN PERFORM AS THEY COULD HAVE.

MORE WEALTH PROVIDES MORE TIME. WITH MORE WEALTH AND MORE TIME, THE CHOSEN ONES CAN BE DISTANCED FROM URGENT AND IMPOLITE FORMS OF COMMUNICATION, WHICH IN THIS CASE, THE DIRECTNESS. THE DISADVANTAGE THAT THE LOWER CLASS WOULD TAKE IS HIGHER. AN UNSTABLE TASK, DETERIORATED WORK QUALITY, A STRESSFUL WORK ENVIRONMENT, CONFUSION, AND MISCOMMUNICATION. THEREFORE THE LOWER CLASS WOULD PUT MORE INVESTMENT ON COMMUNICATION; TIME, ENERGY, MENTAL CAPACITY, ETC. IT IS NOT AN EQUAL EXCHANGE. 'READING THE ROOM' FOR OPPRESSED ONES IS AN UNNECESSARY ASSIGNMENT THEY HAVE TO ENDURE TO EXECUTE THEIR RESPONSIBILITY.

NOT ONLY INTERPRETING THE CHOSEN ONE'S LANGUAGE BUT SPEAKING TO THE CHOSEN ONES IS ALSO AN AGGRAVATING FACTOR. THE WORD 쿠션어[COU SHUN UH], WHICH IS TRANSLATED TO 'CUSHION WORD', STARTED TO APPEAR IN THE LATE 2010S. TO NAME THE PHRASES POPULARLY USED TO PREVENT OFFENDING SOMEONE, CUSHION WORD IS NOW CLASSIFIED AND ABSORBED INTO FEMINISM AS AN IMPORTANT ARGUMENT. NOT SURPRISINGLY, USAGE OF CUSHION WORDS APPEARS MORE COMMON AMONGST FEMALE SPEAKERS THAN MALE SPEAKERS. GETTING RID OF CUSHION WORDS GAINED A FAIR AMOUNT OF ATTENTION AS A PART OF ESCAPING CORSET MOVEMENT IN SOUTH KOREA. THOSE CUSHION WORDS CAN BE ROUGHLY CATEGORIZED INTO 6 GROUPS:

- A). OVERLY POLITE FORM
- B). EXTRA-APOLOGY / EXTRA-APPRECIATION
- C). ASKING PERMISSION FOR FEELINGS
- D). THE HESITANCE OF MAKING AN OPINION
- E). UNNECESSARY MODESTY
- F). NON-VERBAL BEHAVIORS

SINCE THE POLITE FORM OF SENTENCES IS A MAJOR PART OF THE KOREAN LANGUAGE, IT IS SUBDIVIDED INTO VARIOUS LEVELS. FEMALE SPEAKERS TEND TO USE THE HIGHER FORM OF POLITENESS TO SOUND ATTENTIVE. SAYING ‘SORRY’ TOO MUCH, AND ‘THANK YOU’ FOR THINGS THAT WE¹² DON’T HAVE TO BE THANKFUL FOR. USING MODEST EXPRESSIONS OR EVEN DEVALUING ONESELF BEFORE ADMITTING THEIR SUCCESS AND TALENT. RESTRICTED MOVEMENT AND FIGURE WHEN STANDING, TALKING, SITTING, ETC., AS NON-VERBAL BEHAVIORS ALSO COUNT AS CUSHION WORDS. IT IS A WORLDWIDE ARGUMENT THAT FEMALE SPEAKERS ARE DEALING WITH REGARDLESS OF WHICH LANGUAGE THEY USE. MAKE COMFORT FOR EVERYONE NONETHELESS WHAT WE ARE TALKING ABOUT. NOT THE CONTENT, BUT THE ATMOSPHERE MATTERS.

“People say it is elegant not to speak directly. From what I have experienced, that is the speech of the people who have power. It is for those who are confident enough that the others would think twice for them to understand their inner thoughts.”¹³

DAHYE LEE, A FEMINISM ACTIVIST AND WRITER IS EXPLORING THE EXPRESSIONS TO ESCAPE CUSHION WORDS IN THE WORKSPACE. SHE IS CLAIMING TO TAKE THE DIRECTNESS BACK TO FEMALE SPEAKERS AND THAT WE NEED TO TRAIN OURSELVES TO GAIN POWER IN OUR LANGUAGE AGAIN. ESCAPE FROM CUSHION WORDS WOULD PROVIDE FRESH INSIGHT INTO OUR CAPABILITY. REIDENTIFY OUR VOICE, BEHAVIOR, MIND, AND BODY. THE LANGUAGE OF CONFUCIANISM MADE US AS A FIGURE OF TOLERANCE, LOVE, AND INFINITE UNDERSTANDING, BUT NOT SOMEONE HAS THEIR OWN OPINIONS. WE NEED TO RELEARN HOW TO CLAIM AND REJECT DIRECTLY.

WE DON’T HAVE TO BE THE CHOSEN ONES. WE DON’T WANT TO MAKE ANY POWER PLAY WITH THE BEAUTY OF INDIRECT COMMUNICATION. THOUGH WE WANT TO EARN THE FREEDOM OF DIRECTNESS TO STAND AT THE SAME LEVEL WITH ALL OF US

12 We, female speakers.

13 Dahye Lee, <출근길의 주문—일터의 여성들에게 필요한 말, 글, 네트워킹>
<The spell of commuting-writings and networking for women in workspace>, 2019, Hangeora

TOGETHER, EXISTING IN A HORIZONTAL RELATIONSHIP. SO TO OUR INDIRECTNESS
WOULD WORK AS IT INTENDED TO BE, CARING ABOUT EACH OTHER.



Scene #03

* R(52 male), L(56 male), and M(30 male) are smoking cigarettes with instant coffee in their hands on a rooftop.

* a gentle breeze is passing through them.

R(52 male): Did you hear that they are raising the tuition fee again?

L(56 male): Yeah, again.

R(52 male): I mean, if my son didn't go to the national university, it'd be so hard to pay them off.

(shaking his head slightly)

L(56 male): It's definitely better. These days, private unis just don't stop sweeping money into their pocket.

I hope my girl doesn't worry about it. You know, she's very sensitive.

(sighing and sipping coffee)

M(30 male): But didn't you say your daughter is getting a scholarship?

L(56 male): Yeah, which is good for me.

M(30 male): You must be so proud of her!

(acting very glad and leaning toward L)

L(56 male): I am, I am. She's my treasure.

Though recently, she's being just like her mom.

M(30 male): Yeah? How?

L(56 male): Well, she started to-

R(52 male): Mmmmmm.

* R is clearing his throat. He is making a little bit of an uncomfortable face.

* M is looking towards both R and L quickly and making awkward expressions. But nobody noticed it.

* R is looking at his watch and tapping it multiple times.

M(30 male): Oh, I think lunch break will be over soon.

L(56 male): True.
(raising his eyebrow and looking at R)

R(52 male): Well, we should head back in.

M(30 male): Give me the cups, I'll throw them away.

* L and R are handing over the coffee cups to M.

* There is some coffee left inside.

* M is holding it carefully and walking quickly to the trash can.

* L and R are talking to each other but M can't hear it. It sounds like murmuring from a distance.

* M is now running to catch up to them.

M(30 male): I'll quickly go to the toilet before we go in.

L(56 male): Don't be late.

M(30 male): I won't.

* M is turning back away from them, erasing his smile immediately at the first second, he looks tired.

* M is entering the men's toilet, hurries into the stall and sitting down on the toilet cover. He sighs deeply.

* a phone ringing shortly: his girlfriend texting him.

Are we meeting today?
12:52

Idk
12:52

Busy?
12:52

* M is looking at his watch & stretching his neck and shoulder.

* M is typing Yes busily and then erasing them.

* Texting continues.

I'll call you later. Is it okay?
12:53

If you are busy, it's okay.
12:55

No, no, I will.
12:55

Okay
12:56

* a flushing sound and sighing sound from different toilet stalls.

* people are opening the doors and walking out.

* M checks the time again. busy footsteps outside. everyone's coming back.

* a phone rings again.

Don't forget.
12:59

* M is almost running.

* L is slowly walking toward his seat with another coffee cup in his hand.

* M is bowing to him, and starting his desktop.

* he is sitting down. his chair is a little bit unstable.

* a desktop starting sound / chairs rolling on the floor loudly.

* people are typing busily.

* M is sneakily putting the messenger app up on the screen. It's Excel-looking version.

Ofc not. love you
13:15





if you go any ~~~~~ *further* →

WHAT IF WE GO MUCH MUCH FURTHER WITH INDIRECT COMMUNICATION? CAN WE EVER UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER? IF WE STILL USE THE SAME CODE WE SHARE, YES. THINK ABOUT PEOPLE A THOUSAND YEARS AGO, THOSE WHO HAD TO LEARN A NOBLE WAY OF SPEAKING TO SURVIVE AND EXIST AS HIGH CLASS. THIS EDUCATION WAS EXTREMELY LIMITED TO THESE HIGH CLASSES. AND EVEN INSIDE OF THE HIGH CLASS, THE INFORMATION WAS ONLY SHARED WITH CERTAIN PEOPLE. INDIRECT LANGUAGE BACK THEN WAS HIGHLY COMPLICATED AND LUXURIOUSLY SUBTLE TO UNDERSTAND. ONE HAD TO UNDERSTAND A JOKE REFERENCING PHILOSOPHY BOOKS, BE ‘CULTURED’ WITH POEMS, PAINTINGS, AND ALL SORTS OF HERITAGE FROM HIGH SOCIETY. SO EVEN THOUGH WE, MODERN GROWN-UPS THAT COULD APPROACH A FAIR AMOUNT OF EDUCATION, WOULDN’T SURVIVE A DAY IN THIS HIGH-CLASS NOBLE SOCIETY. HERE’S AN EXTREME EXAMPLE OF HOW A CONVERSATION BETWEEN FURIOUS ENEMIES UNFOLDS FROM <EMPRESSES IN THE PALACE>¹⁴, SET IN THE QING DYNASTY, CHINA DURING THE 18TH CENTURY.

ZHEN HUAN GIVES A PRESENT TO CELEBRATE AN LINGRONG’S PREGNANCY, WHO FRAMED HER TO END UP AS A MONK AFTER LOSING HER CHILD. NOW SHE’S BACK AS THE EMPEROR’S CONCUBINE AS HIS ONLY TRUE LOVE AND SHE WANTS TO CLAIM HER PLACE. SHE HANDS OUT A WHITE JADE FAN AND A JEWEL IN PIGEON BLOOD RED COLOR¹⁵. AN LINGRONG TAKES THE PRESENT BUT SHE’S AFRAID. SHE SAYS THANKS, YET SHE DOESN’T LOOK WELL. WHY IS THIS? A FAN, MADE OF WHITE JADE AND A HUGE RED JEWEL. THEY LOOK LIKE GOOD, EXPENSIVE PRESENTS, EXCEPT THEY ARE CRUEL AND FIERCE CURSES.

~~~~~  
14 <Emperors in the Palace> 后宫·甄嬛传  
The legend of Zhen Huan is a 2011 Chinese television series based on the Internet novel of the same name by Liu Lianzi.

15 Pigeon blood red is a unique naming of a certain red color among ancient Chinese dynasties, such as emperor green.

WHITE JADE.  
A FAN.

白玉 [BAI YU]  
扇子 [SHAN ZI]

BOTH CAN BE INTERPRETED AS ENTIRELY DIFFERENT WORDS. LET'S SEE WHITE JADE FIRST. 白玉[BÁI YÙ] SOUNDS LIKE 白育[BÁI YÙ]. 育 MEANS RAISING A CHILD. 白 WHITE MEANS NOTHINGNESS HERE. BY USING THE MATERIAL(白玉) THAT SOUNDS SO SIMILAR TO 白育, ZHEN HUAN IS SAYING HER EFFORT OF RAISING A CHILD WILL DISAPPEAR IN VAIN. OF COURSE, THE CURSE DOESN'T STOP HERE. LET'S LOOK INTO WHAT A FAN(扇子) MEANS NOW. IT'S A PRONUNCIATION GAME AGAIN. 扇子[SHÀNZI] IS SIMILAR TO 散子[SÀN ZI] IN PRONUNCIATION. THEN WHAT DOES 散子[SÀN ZI] MEAN? IT TRANSLATES LITERALLY TO; A BABY IS SCATTERED, WHICH MORE PRECISELY MEANS A MISCARRIAGE.

AS A RESULT, THE TRUE MEANING OF HER WHITE JADE FAN AS A PRESENT IS 白育 [BÁI YÙ] 散子[SÀN ZI]: A HORRIBLE CURSE SAYING *“Your baby will be miscarried and all the effort you are making to cherish and raise the baby is useless and wasteful.”*

IN ADDITION TO THIS, ZHEN HUAN DIDN'T FORGET TO GIVE A JEWEL IN PIGEON BLOOD RED, 鸽子血 [GE ZI XUÈ]. WITH CHINESE CONCUBINES, TRADITIONALLY WHEN A WOMAN GETS PREGNANT, IT IS STRICTLY FORBIDDEN TO HAVE ANYTHING WITH THE NAME OF BLOOD. ZHEN HUAN KNEW THIS SINCE SHE ALSO HAS EXPERIENCE OF BEING PREGNANT IN THIS PALACE. SHE'S WISHING AN LINGRONG WITH HER ALL HEART TO GET A MISCARRIAGE IN A BRILLIANTLY AMBIGUOUS BUT DEFINITE LANGUAGE.



더울 땀 백옥 부채가 최고야  
손에 쥐어도 안 덥고

ZHEN HUAN

AN LINGRONG



장인을 불러  
장식해 달라고 해

EVEN THOUGH WE HAVE A HUGE SIMILARITY IN CULTURE BETWEEN CHINA AND KOREA, THERE IS ZERO POSSIBILITY THAT I WOULD UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION WITHOUT REFERENCE. IT'S BECAUSE THERE'S NO CODE THAT WE ARE SHARING HERE. TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPLICATION OF SOMEONE SAYING *x*, WE WOULD NEED 1) *the meaning of x - both conventional and literal*, 2) *the time of utterance*, 3) *the context of utterance*, 4) *the position of the speaker*, 5) *relation between speakers and dozens more if we still can't reach the core*. UNDERSTANDING THE CONVERSATION BETWEEN ZEN HUAN AND AN LINGRONG ALREADY IS DIFFICULT FROM NUMBER ONE: KNOW THE MEANING OF *x*.

SINCE HIGH SOCIETY ALWAYS WANTED TO BE EXCLUSIVE, KNOWING THE MEANING OF *x* FOR SOMEONE WHO IS OUTSIDE OF HIGH SOCIETY IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT. AS AN ELEGANT LANGUAGE, INDIRECTNESS IS CONSIDERED AS THE ETIQUETTE OF HIGH SOCIETY, REVEALING THE TRUE MEANING OF CONVERSATION WAS ONLY ALLOWED FOR THE EXCLUSIVE COMMUNITY. FROM CURSING SOMEBODY TO GIVING COMPLIMENTS, THE LANGUAGE OF HIGH SOCIETY HAD TO BUILD MULTIPLE LAYERS BETWEEN WHAT THEY THINK AND WHAT THEY SAY. WE CAN FIND THE TRACE OF THIS CULTURE IN POEMS, PAINTINGS, NOVELS, ETC AS WELL THROUGH EASTERN TO WESTERN CULTURE, FROM THE DIALOGUES IN JANE AUSTEN'S NOVELS TO 杜甫[Dù Fu]<sup>16</sup>'S POEMS.

IN THE PAINTING STYLE CALLED 책가도冊架圖[CHAEK-GA-DO] WHICH WAS POPULAR IN THE JOSUN DYNASTY, KOREA DURING THE 18TH CENTURY, WE CAN SEE THE SUBTLE WAY OF BRAGGING. THE HUGE PAINTING THAT OFTEN ATTACHED TO 병풍屏風[BYEONG PUNG] (A TYPE OF FOLDING SCREEN), IS FULL OF RARE BOOKS AND VALUABLES. UNIQUE PIECES IMPORTED FROM FOREIGN COUNTRIES, CERAMICS WITH EXTRAORDINARY STYLE, LIMITED EDITIONS, ETC., THE OBJECTS DEPICTED IN THE PAINTING ARE ALL PRICELESS. NOBLES WOULD SET THIS PAINTING IN THEIR LIBRARY AND SHOW IT TO THEIR GUESTS. IT'S A WAY TO SHOW THEIR VALUABLE POSSESSIONS WITHOUT SHOWING OFF THEM IN REAL LIFE. SOMETIMES IT ALSO WORKED AS A WISH LIST. THE INTERESTING THING IS THAT THE PAINTING ALSO REQUIRED THE VIEWER TO HAVE THE DISCERNMENT TO RECOGNIZE THE OBJECTS. THE PAINTING WAS A SYMBOL

OF HIGH CULTURE AND SPIRIT THUS BOTH THE OWNER AND THE AUDIENCE OF THE PAINTING WERE DEMANDED TO HAVE A STRICT SENSE OF HIGH CULTURE. HAVING THE ABILITY TO JOIN THE CONVERSATION IN HIGH SOCIETY WAS MORE THAN BEING A MEMBER OF NOBLES. THE MORE YOU ARE GOOD AT IT, PROOVES MORE QUALIFIED YOU ARE AS NOBLE.

MOREOVER, BEING POLITICALLY ACTIVE AS A NOBLE ONE IN ANCIENT DYNASTIES MEANS THAT YOU ARE RISKING YOUR LIFE. DURING THE TIME OF KINGS AND QUEENS, EVERYONE HAD TO WATCH OUT FOR WHAT THEY SAID, OTHERWISE THEY COULD BE BEHEADED THE DAY AFTER. WITH THE FEAR OF DEATH AND POLITICAL SENSIBILITY, INDIRECT LANGUAGE HAS BEEN DEVELOPED MORE INTENSELY AND HAS REMAINED IN OLD CAPITALS SUCH AS SEOUL, KAESONG, KYOTO, AND BEIJING. ESPECIALLY KYOTO, THE THOUSAND YEARS OLD CAPITAL, IS STILL MAINTAINING ITS FAME OF EXTREME INDIRECTNESS. WE CAN FIND A GREAT INTRODUCTION TO THE CITY FROM <福家堂本舗, FUKUYADOU HONPO><sup>17</sup>, A MANCA ABOUT THE DAUGHTERS OF A TRADITIONAL TEA FOOD STORE IN KYOTO CITY;

**“One might smile and say “Thank you,” but you can’t simply judge it as acceptance or giving permission. Kyoto is a place where the locals dislike directness. “Thank you” can sometimes even mean refusal. To misinterpret it as acceptance might turn out to be a huge embarrassment on your part. The words of those from Kyoto can be contorted into a maze. Sometimes you can’t even be sure what they actually mean.”<sup>18</sup>**

THERE WOULD BE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CULTURES, BUT WE ARE CERTAINLY LIVING IN THE TRACE OF EXTREME INDIRECTNESS UP TO NOW.

---

17 Yuchi Yayomi, 福家堂本舗 Fukuyadou Honpo (Daughters of Fukuyadou), 集英社, 1995

18 Ibid. vol.1, chap.2, p.73-p.75



*read left to right*



Mr.  
Hinoyama!

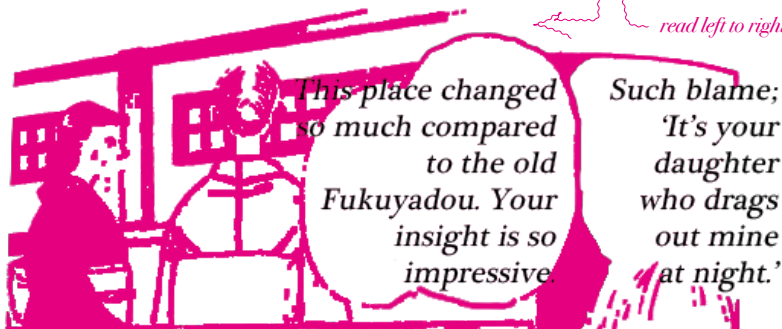


\*THESE IMAGES ARE EDITED FROM THE ORIGINAL COMIC









*Again, blaming that we abandoned the history and grace.*



*It means; Till when are you going to be stuck in that old cave?*



*Oh, everytime I visit <Kyokoku>, I'm blown away from your history and heritage.*



**Scene #04**

\* a creaking sound, a 13 yr old boy is sitting on a stool shaking his legs.

\* I am glancing at him and a lady, his parent. She is sipping her coffee.

\* I am looking at the test paper.  
85 out of 100.

\* smiling at a parent, I am putting down the papers.

me: Well, shall we look into it together?

parent: Yes. But before that, can I ask what's the average score of this test?

me: It really depends on the kids. You said that he didn't have any tutoring before, right? He's doing well considering he's doing it all by himself.

parent: Yeah, I mean, he's just so shy. And we don't really like to force him with anything... We'd like to let him do this in his own way.

me: Of course. That's the most important part. I noticed that he has good concentration.

parent: I know. He's such a sweet boy. He never made me concerned.

me: You must be so glad. So-

parent: So, is he gonna be in the first class?  
(satisfied smile, leaning back into the couch a little bit)

me: Um, I'm pretty sure he's really enthusiastic to follow all of our classes but with the test result, (pause and smile to the lady) he should be in the second one.

parent: (staring) Mmmmm.

me: Cut-line of the first class is 93. We do know that some students get nervous in a new environment, and make more mistakes. So we take new tests every two months to evaluate students and also adjust their level to an adequate class.

\* I am showing the cutline and class plan paper. Next to the class cutline, there is an average first class test score: 96.5

parent: No doubt, I believe you would plan this in the best way for him.

\* She is laughing with a hand gesture-waving her hand softly, similar to the 'saying No' gesture.

parent: You know, he's a shy boy. He gets nervous and sometimes he has a hard time asking questions or... you know.

me: It's totally fine. We'll work on it together. If he goes through one month cycle with us, I'm sure he'll

get back in his rhythm and we can also work more with him on dealing with the test surroundings and controlling his stress.

parent: Thank you.

me: No worries. Would you also look into our materials too? We have various options.

parent: Oh, you can maybe talk about it with him.

\* she is turning toward the window and waves to her son. The boy nods shortly. He immediately goes back onto his phone screen.

me: Sure.

parent: Would it be okay?

me: Yeah, I think it's a good idea.

parent: Then I should, hmm, say bye to him.

me: Yep. Do you want to bring your tea?

parent: Oh, no, thanks. It was good tea.

me: Thank you.

\* the clattering sound from low high heels resounds around the hallway. Ding- Elevator arrives. Footsteps sound disappears.

\* Inside of a room, the boy and I are sitting face to face. There are a bunch of books and paper piles in front of them.

me: So you are saying you went through this textbook already?  
boy: Yeah, with a previous tutor.  
me: Previous? I thought you didn't get any tutoring this year.  
boy: Who said that? My mom?  
me: Yes.

\* the boy biting his lower lip. He moves the chair back, further away from me.

\* nervous tapping sounds from shaking legs.

me: It's fine.  
boy: You believed that?  
me: Well...  
boy: She just says that. I mean, I did a study by myself the year before. Didn't work out so much.  
me: Um, Thanks for your honesty.  
boy: You're welcome.  
(stretching his arms and legs, the edge of his sneakers is hitting other chairs.)

me: Are you tired?  
boy: Yes. Can we do it next time?  
me: We should decide on this at least.  
boy: I'll just tell my mom that you need to talk to her. Actually, I'm in a hurry now.  
(watching the phone screen. There are message alerts on it.)

me: Do you have an appointment?  
boy: Yeah, I told my friends that I'm joining for football... like... 15 minutes ago. I'm late already.

me: Well, next time you have to make sure of your priorities.

boy: I didn't even know that I was supposed to come here today. Can I please go?

me: Alright. I'll have a phone call with your mom. Take the papers I marked and bring them all tomorrow. Don't forget.

boy: **Yes! Thank you!**  
(huge creaking sound. Chair almost falls down but he managed to catch it. Papers are crumpled under his hands.)

\* the boy is bowing and walking back at the same time.

\* papers are falling from his arms and I gather them again.

me: I said, don't forget!!

boy: Yep.

me: And watch out!

boy: Thank you, good evening!

\* I am sitting back down, sighing quietly.

\* a phone dial screen is glowing.

\* I am putting down the phone on a desk.

\* I am laying back deeply on the chair and my calves touch the floor.

\* The back support of the chair is making an unpleasant sound.





*how do you say*



NOW YOU HAVE A GLIMPSE OF US.

YOU MAY WONDER HOW DO WE TALK ABOUT LOVE, THE EMOTION THAT'S SO DEEP, COMPLICATED, UNNOTICEABLE, A SUDDEN SHOCK, QUIETLY SINKING UNDER ALL THE FEELINGS, SO YOU HAVE TO DIVE THROUGH LAYERS TO REACH TO ADMIT IT. WHAT MAKES TALKING ABOUT LOVE JUICIER, IS THE EXERCISE TO GET INTO THE RELATIONSHIP. THE WORDS, THAT WE HIDE OUR TRUE FEELINGS BEHIND CAUSE WE ARE A COWARD IN FRONT OF IT. THE NERVOUS TALK WITH A PERSON THAT YOU WANT TO SHOW THE BEST VERSION OF YOU. IT MAKES EVERY TALK, ACT, AND INTERPRETATION METICULOUSLY. YOU START TO GIVE TOO MUCH MEANING TO ONE WORD. YOU EVEN DECOMPOSE THE WHOLE TEXT MESSAGE INTO TINY, ATOMIC PARTS AND ANALYZE EVERY SINGLE OF THEM. THE BLANK SPACE BETWEEN WORDS AND EMOJIS HAS SOME MEANING NOW.

A LONG TIME AGO, NATSUME SOSEKI TRANSLATED "*I love you*" TO "月が綺麗ですね (*The moon looks beautiful.*)" DURING HIS EARLY YEAR AS AN ENGLISH TEACHER IN A HIGH SCHOOL. HE MENTIONED THAT IN JAPANESE, THEY DON'T USE SUCH EXPRESSIONS AS 'I LOVE YOU'. INSTEAD, HE CHOSE TO SAY THE MOON LOOKS BEAUTIFUL CAUSE THAT'S WHAT FITS INTO THEIR LANGUAGE. SUBTLE. LYRICAL.

SADLY THIS STORY IS MADE UP BY SOMEONE, DATING BACK TO THE 1970S. THERE IS THE LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS BETWEEN JAPANESE LANGUAGE AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE STRUCTURE SPECIFICALLY ABOUT "*I love you*" AND EQUIVALENT OF ONE ANOTHER, YET NONE OF THEM CONNECT TO THE EXACT STORY. AN OLD NEWS ARTICLE<sup>19</sup> CLAIMS

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19 Aritsune Toyota "You can't be a science fiction writer" [6] The Age of Translation VI "Kiso Tengai" November 1977 issue, Kiso Tengaisha, November 1st, 1977, pp. 4-5 || 豊田有恒『あなたもSF作家になれるわけではない』【6】翻訳の時代VI『奇想天外』1977年11月号、奇想天外社、1977年11月1日発行、4-5頁

IN THE 1970S, SOSEKI TRANSLATED “*I love you*” INTO “*Because the moon is so blue*”, BUT WIKIPEDIA’S RECORD OF THE SONG IN THE SAME TITLE BEING AT 1 MILLION HITS IN 1950 MAKES IT VERY UNRELIABLE. MOST OF ALL, NOBODY COULD FIND ANY CLUE OF HIM SAYING IT AMONG HIS OWN WRITINGS OR SOMEONE ELSE’S PUBLICATIONS ABOUT SOSEKI.

SOSEKI NEVER TRANSLATED ‘*I love you*’ TO ‘*The moon looks beautiful*’. AFTER ALL, THIS FAKE QUOTE HAS GAINED ITS FAME ALREADY AND SPREAD ALL OVER JAPAN AND SOUTH KOREA. SINCE THEN, PEOPLE FELL IN LOVE WITH IT, AND THE PHRASE BEGAN TO APPEAR IN VARIOUS FICTIONS AND POEMS. AROUND 2018 AND 2019, THE QUOTE REACHED ITS HIGHEST PITCH OF POPULARITY AND APPEARED FREQUENTLY ON SOCIAL MEDIA SUCH AS TWITTER, INSTAGRAM, ETC. STILL NOW, WHEN YOU SEARCH ‘*The moon looks beautiful*’ ON TWITTER, YOU WILL GET DOZENS OF RECENT TWEETS QUOTING THE PHRASE ROMANTICALLY.

AT THE BEGINNING OF 2019, THE PHRASE WAS AS WELL QUOTED IN <ROMANCE IS A BONUS BOOK><sup>20</sup>. AFTER GETTING USED ALL OVER TWITTER, ESPECIALLY THROUGH SUBCULTURAL COMMUNITIES, THE PHRASE FINALLY REACHED THE MOST POPULAR AND MAJOR ART PLATFORM: K-DRAMA. IN <ROMANCE IS A BONUS BOOK>, THEY ARE SHOWING AN EVEN MORE ROMANTIC VERSION OF THE PHRASE BY REFORMING THE PHRASE.

*\* A and B are standing on the terrace, drinking coffee.*

*\* It is snowing.*

*\* Snow falls on their hair, shoulder, and inside coffee mugs too.*

A: DO YOU REMEMBER THAT LAST TIME WE SAW THE MOON TOGETHER?

B: I DO. I TOLD YOU ABOUT SOSEKI THAT NIGHT.

A: AND I TOLD YOU, THAT THE MOON IS BEAUTIFUL.

B: *(silence, looking at B)*

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20 <Romance Is a Bonus Book> 로맨스는 별책부록, Netflix / broadcasted from 26/01/2019 to 17/03/2019 (tvN)

A: LOOK. THE SNOW IS FALLING EVERYWHERE. IT IS BEAUTIFUL.  
*(looking at B)*

*\*A and B are looking at each other.<sup>21</sup>*

FROM POEM TO POPULAR K-DRAMA, EVERYONE SEEMED OBSESSED WITH THIS PHRASE. PERHAPS IT'S BECAUSE OF THE LYRICAL SENSIBILITY CONTAINED INSIDE OF THE PHRASE. OR MAYBE IT'S FROM THE CONSTANT CHANGE AND DIMMING IMAGE OF THE MOON, THAT REMINDS PEOPLE OF SHY LOVERS. AS SOSEKI SAID IN THE RUMOR THAT IN HIS CULTURE I LOVE YOU HAS TO BE MORE SUBTLE, TALKING ABOUT LOVE IN OUR CULTURE IS ALSO SOMETHING HAPPENING VERY SLOWLY AND UNKNOWINGLY. IT'S COMMON FOR US TO SPEND A LONG TIME TO MAKE SURE THAT RELATED PARTIES ARE INTERESTED TO FALL IN LOVE. BUT THE PROCESS OF MAKING IT SURE IS NEVER DIRECT.

TO CONFIRM THE COMMON INTEREST OF LOVE FROM INVOLVED PARTIES, THE GETTING-TO-KNOW IS A RECOMMENDED ADJUSTMENT PERIOD FOR LOVERS. WE CALL IT AS 썸[SOME] IN KOREAN. SOME - LITERALLY SHORTENED FROM 'SOMETHING', MEANS THAT SOMETHING IS GOING ON BETWEEN US, BUT YET WE DON'T WANT TO DEFINE THE RELATIONSHIP. IT CAN BE BETWEEN SPECTRUM FROM A VERY LIGHT DATING TO AN EXCLUSIVE PRE-RELATIONSHIP. TILL SOMEONE MAKES A MOVE BRAVELY, 'SOME' REMAINS AS A LONG PROCESS OF GIVING EACH OTHER HINT OF STEP UP. DATE A FEW TIMES, TEXT OVERNIGHT, MAKE A CALL TO EACH OTHER TO SAY GOOD NIGHT AND GOOD MORNING, AND SO ON..... GOING THROUGH SOME CYCLES OF 'SOME' AND FINALLY WHEN WE ARE READY TO MAKE THE RELATIONSHIP SERIOUS, WE WOULD SAY SOMETHING THAT IS TRANSLATED INTO; DO YOU WANT TO MEET ME? MEET ME. IT'S A WISH MADE TO SEE A LOVER'S FACE EVERY DAY TILL WE FALL APART. IT'S A MEETING TO BE JOINED AS ONE WHOLE FROM TWO SEPARATED.

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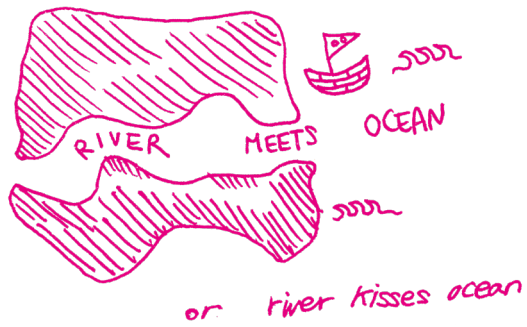
21 Ibid.

MEET [MI : T ] VERB

5

: TO TOUCH AND JOIN WITH OR CROSS SOMETHING ELSE  
THE POINT WHERE THE RIVER MEETS THE SEA

THE BRITANNICA DICTIONARY



MEET, SEE, FALL - WHEN WE THINK ABOUT HOW WE TALK ABOUT LOVE, IT'S OFTEN ABOUT HOW WE ACT RATHER THAN HOW WE FEEL. DESCRIBING HOW WE BEHAVE WHEN WE ARE IN LOVE IS THE WAY WE TALK ABOUT LOVE.

|         |                               |
|---------|-------------------------------|
| 만나다     | MEET                          |
| 눈길이 가다  | DRAW EYES ON                  |
| 떠오르다    | RECALL                        |
| 심장이 뛰다  | (HEART) BEAT                  |
| 바보같이 웃다 | GRIN LIKE A FOOL              |
| 콩깍지가 씩다 | WEAR A BEAN POD <sup>22</sup> |

LIKEWISE IN ENGLISH, YOU WOULD FIND SIMILAR EXAMPLES. IT'S UNIVERSAL TO EXPRESS 'I LOVE YOU' WITH MORE SUBTLE AND ANECDOTIC SENTENCES. ABOUT THE MOMENT WE SAW EACH OTHER, FIRST KISSED, MADE LOVE, ETC., WE<sup>23</sup> WRITE POEM AND LOVE LETTERS FOR IT. MAYBE WE FEEL IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO ONLY SAY I LOVE YOU. IT MIGHT FEEL TOO SIMPLE. SO MUCH LESS THAN WHAT WE FEEL. THROUGH VARIOUS MATERIALS, WE BUILD UP THE TENSION OF LOVE THICKER. LET'S LOOK INTO RUMI<sup>24</sup>'S POEM <COME TO THE ORCHARD IN SPRING>. YOU CAN FEEL THE SOFT INDICATION OF LOVE, TENDERLY CARVED IN IT.

**Come to the orchard in spring  
There is light and wine, and sweethearts  
in the pomegranate flowers**

**If you do not come, these do not matter  
If you do come, these do not matter**

22 Wearing a bean pod means that one is in love hopelessly and only seeing good part of their lover since they are wearing a bean pod on their eyes.

23 Universal we.

24 Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Rūmī(1207 ~ 1273), a 13th century Persian poet.

WHAT MAKES US FEEL 'LOVE' IS THE IMPLICATUM OF OUR BEHAVIOR. IT'S NOT WRITTEN DOWN, BUT WE CAN READ IT. WE WOULD LIKE TO SAY WE ARE IN LOVE IN A WAY THAT OUR LOVER CAN FEEL. SOMETIMES, IT'S THAT ONLY WE CAN UNDERSTAND BETWEEN US. LIKE THE MOON IS BEAUTIFUL, LIKE THE SNOW IS AS WELL SO BEAUTIFUL, AND LIKE THE ORCHARD DOES NOT MATTER. EVEN THOUGH SOMETIMES OUR LOVERS FAIL TO PERCEIVE, WE ONLY CAN HOPE THAT ONE DAY, AS TIME PASSES, WE ARE GONNA GET EACH OTHER'S LANGUAGE AS OUR MOTHER TONGUE.



## Scene #05



\* on a office desk, a bell is ringing.  
\* mom is walking towards the desk and picking up the phone.

mom: Hello?  
aunt: Did you call dad? I think he's not at home.

\* sound of clearing throat.

mom: What do you mean?  
aunt: I called him an hour ago and he said he's home.  
But it doesn't sound like it.

mom: Where else would he go?  
aunt: I don't know. But you know him when he's lying.  
mom: Right.  
aunt: Would you talk to him?  
mom: I will. I'll also ask if he has eaten.  
aunt: Alright. Thank you.  
mom: Bye.

\* mom is having a suspicious look.  
\* a loud ring tone.

\* grandpa is looking for his phone, he has too many pockets.  
\* first his vest, then his jeans pocket.

\* grandpa is slowly taking out the phone and putting the phone screen closer to check who has called.

mom: Hello?  
grandpa: Hello.  
mom: How is it going? Boring to be home alone?  
grandpa: Not really.  
mom: Did you eat?  
grandpa: Uh, mmm... yes.  
mom: Should I visit you? Are you doing alright?  
grandpa: No, no. I'm okay alone.  
mom: Are you sure?  
grandpa: Yes.  
mom: Anything fun on TV?  
grandpa: Not really. It's all the same thing.

\* grandpa is holding a remote controller.  
\* he is turning down the volume of TV.

mom: So you are not watching it?  
grandpa: No, yes, I'm watching.  
mom: Are you really at home?  
grandpa: What do you mean? Of course.  
mom: Okay. Take care, okay?  
grandpa: I will.  
mom: See you.

\* mom is calling aunt, but she doesn't pick up.  
\* mom is texting.

He's home. I got what you mean.  
He's acting a little bit off.  
18:30

Right? He should be worried about mom.  
Though he's doing better than I thought.  
18:32

Maybe he's just missing her.  
He's not used to this.  
18:33

True.  
I should check on him again.  
18:35

Good.  
18:40

- \* a ringtone is going on and off.
- \* mom is checking the watch, it's already quite late.
- \* a phone call is coming in again.

mom: Hello?  
aunt: He's not home.  
mom: What?  
aunt: He's not home.  
mom: Where did he go?  
aunt: I don't know. Did he tell you he's going somewhere?

- \* mom is sighing softly.

mom: No, no. Have you called him already?  
aunt: Not yet. I mean, once. He didn't pick up.  
mom: Okay. You should call him again. Maybe he went out for a walk.

aunt: I'll call you back.

\* a loud ringtone.

\* some light is flickering on grandpa's face.

grandpa: Hello.

aunt: Where are you, dad?

grandpa: Home.

aunt: You are not home. I am.

grandpa: Yeah?

aunt: Yes.

grandpa: Why bother? I'm good.

aunt: Come on dad, where are you?

grandpa: Visiting your mom.

aunt: What?

\* murmuring sound from the other side of the phone.

\* aunt is having confused look.

aunt: Are you talking to someone?

grandpa: Yeah. I asked a nurse here.

aunt: Wait, dad, are you really at the hospital? You know you can't meet her. It's not allowed now. You know that.

grandpa: Yes I know.

aunt: Then what are you doing there?

grandpa: I don't know. Didn't she say she wants something?

aunt: No. I brought some stuff today but they didn't allow me to bring things inside. COVID thing is getting

serious. You know.  
grandpa: Yes, yes...  
aunt: Oh, dad... You can't see her now.  
Did you call her? She can talk.

grandpa: What are you saying, she'd sleep  
now. It's late.  
aunt: Okay. I'll come soon. Stay there.  
grandpa: You don't have to.  
aunt: I will, dad.  
grandpa: I'm okay.  
aunt: Do you want anything?  
grandpa: Not really.  
aunt: I'll bring some food.  
grandpa: It's okay. I'm good.  
aunt: How about Hwatu? I have a blanket  
in my car.  
grandpa: Would you bring some Soju too?  
aunt: Dad. It's hospital.  
grandpa: I know. It was a joke.

aunt: Anything else?  
grandpa: It's okay.  
aunt: Alright. Then I'll bring some food  
and cards.  
grandpa: Up to you.  
aunt: See you soon.  
grandpa: Okay.

\* hospital lobby.

\* grandpa is sitting on a bench watching  
the big screen.

\* daily series is playing. a big proposal is  
happening.

aunt: So, how long have you been here?  
grandpa: Not that long.  
aunt: When I called you this afternoon,

were you home?  
grandpa: I don't think so.  
aunt: Well. That's really long, dad.  
Is this for mom?  
grandpa: I don't know.

\* grandpa is holding a plastic bag. Inside,  
there's some food.  
\* a rustling sound.  
\* aunt is looking into the bag and sighing  
silently, grandpa couldn't hear it.

aunt: Looks delicious. You should call her.  
grandpa: She can't have it anyway.  
aunt: But it's nice that you brought it.  
grandpa: Yeah?  
aunt: Yes. How about we play some games  
and wait for mom to call us?

grandpa: She's sleeping.  
aunt: You don't know that. We both don't  
know.  
grandpa: I asked the nurse.  
aunt: Yeah? Is she doing well?  
grandpa: I think so.  
aunt: Mmm.

grandpa: She doesn't sleep so well. It hurts  
her shoulders. How can she lie down  
comfortably? Huh.  
(his face looks uncomfortable)

aunt: Yeah... so you called her?  
grandpa: What do you mean? I heard you  
talking to her.  
aunt: Uh, you seemed not so interested  
back then.  
grandpa: Why bother her.

aunt: Okay.

\* next day, mom is on the phone.

\* laughing sound.

mom: You spent the whole night there?

aunt: Yes. He didn't want to leave.

mom: You should tell him that he can't visit her.

aunt: Can you make him leave? You know how stubborn he can be.

mom: How's mom? Did you call her this morning?

aunt: She didn't sound so well.

mom: Phhhhh- I hope dad's not gonna spend another night there.

aunt: He won't. I think he knows.

mom: Sometimes he's like a little kid.

\* home sweet home, grandma came back.

\* grandma is sitting in the armchair.

\* he is talking to mom and aunt.

\* grandpa is distracted by TV.

mom: Dad, Isn't it so good that she's back?

grandpa: Mmmhmm.

mom: You didn't miss her?

grandpa: Well...

mom: You spent a night in the lobby and you didn't miss her?

(giggling lightly)

grandpa: Don't do that.

mom: Isn't it good she's back now?

grandpa: Yeah. It's very nice.









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*colophon*



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*thank you, see you next time :)*



