

The Han Dong-hoon Story

Table of Contents, Prologue, Chapters, Epilogue



Kim Kyung-jin

English PDF edition

The Han Dong-hoon Story

Kim Kyung-jin

The Han Dong-hoon Story is an online AI Library book by Kim Kyung-jin. It traces Han Dong-hoon's life, public career, political choices, and the changing landscape of South Korean conservative politics.

Table of Contents

Prologue: A Man Who Chose Our Country, Not His Own Side

Chapter 1: December 3, 2024, 10:30 PM

Chapter 2: A Man Standing Before the Gun Barrel

Chapter 3: South Korea Steps Back from the Brink of Civil War

Chapter 4: The Cross Named Betrayer

Chapter 5: Banished to the Wilderness for the Crime of Protecting the Constitution

Chapter 6: The Only Man to Speak Harsh Truths to the Presidential Couple

Chapter 7: Unbroken by Four Demotions

Chapter 8: A Philosophy of Investigation

Chapter 9: The Single Principle That Runs Through Han Dong-hoon

Chapter 10: An Investigation That Staked His Life

Chapter 11: The Defense Argument That Resurfaces Twenty Years Later

Chapter 12: Han Dong-hoon's Decisive Move

Chapter 13: Six Trillion Won Entirely Nullified

Chapter 14: A New Normal in Legal Administration

Chapter 15: War Against Crime

Chapter 16: Preparing for the Population Cliff

Chapter 17: Laws for the Weak

Chapter 18: The One-vs-180 Battle

Chapter 19: The Declaration Not to Run in the General Election

Chapter 20: Privilege Relinquished by His Own Hand

Chapter 21: Vigilance Against Preferential Treatment of Former Officials

Chapter 22: The Language of New Conservatism

Chapter 23: Generational Change After the 586 Generation

Chapter 24: We Must End the Imperial Presidency

Chapter 25: The AI Revolution and the State's Role

Chapter 26: We Need to Reconstruct the Myth of Success

Chapter 27: The 3-4-7 Vision, Hope Contained in Numbers

Chapter 28: Han Dong-hoon, Altar Server at Sudong Cathedral

Chapter 29: The Unpretentious Mul-ssi

Chapter 30: From The Beatles to Crying Nut

Chapter 31: A Regular Visitor to Secondhand Markets

Chapter 32: Moby Dick, Oe Kenzaburo

Chapter 33: Cats and Cup Noodles

Chapter 34: The Elevator, the Umbrella, and Protocol

Chapter 35: The Gaze Toward the Weak

Chapter 36: "Thank you. I'm sorry. I love you."

Epilogue: Winter in the Wilderness, and the Spring to Come

Prologue: A Man Who Chose Our Country, Not His Own Side

See every chapter

Next Chapter →

January 29, 2026, I was sitting in front of the television.

Breaking news came across the screen: the party had voted to strip former party chairman Han Dong-hoon of his membership. Reporters on screen moved about busily, and political commentators delivered commentary in heated voices. I set down the remote. A hollow ache settled in my chest.

That night, I decided I must write this book.

I am a lawyer. I have spent over thirteen years as a prosecutor and more than fifteen years as an attorney in the legal profession. I served four years in the National Assembly, and now I research law and policy in the age of artificial intelligence. I belong to the same political party. I serve as party committee chairman for a specific region. So why have I written this book contrary to my party leadership's decision?

Because of the man named Han Dong-hoon.

December 3, 2024, 10:30 p.m. When the president declared martial law, the ruling party chairman was first to cry out: "Unconstitutional." It was a choice against the president he had worked alongside for nearly twenty years, the man who had led him into the world of politics. He did not hesitate. He rushed to the National Assembly. He took fellow members' hands and entered the plenary chamber. One hundred ninety votes, unanimous among those present. The martial law was revoked.

And he lost everything.

Has such a thing ever happened in South Korea's constitutional history? A ruling party chairman who risked his political life to protect the constitution, only to be expelled from his own party for that very reason?

I am someone who studied law. I know Article 1 of the Constitution: "The Republic of Korea is a democratic republic." That night, Han Dong-hoon defended this clause with his entire being. When soldiers surrounded the National Assembly, when arrest threats hung in the air, he did not step back. He chose country over faction. And that man was branded a "traitor" and expelled from his party.

I want to ask: what on earth was this betrayal of?

This book does not paint Han Dong-hoon as a hero. He is not a perfect man. He made mistakes and had shortcomings. I partly agree with criticisms that he showed limits in communication during his time as party chairman, and observations that he lacked political flexibility.

Yet one thing is clear. At the crucial moment, he made the right choice. He made a choice that worked against himself. A choice that appeared foolish for a politician but was the proper one for a citizen.

How many such people are there in our society?

I was born in 1966. I am of the generation that witnessed the birth of the 1987 system. I spent my youth in the fervor of democratization and walked alongside democracy's maturation. Yet that December night in 2024, I realized how fragile the democracy we took for granted truly was.

What would have happened without Han Dong-hoon?

If the ruling party chairman had supported martial law, or remained silent, would the National Assembly have revoked it so swiftly? Would constitutional order have been restored without bloodshed? I believe South Korea stood on the edge of civil war that night. Han Dong-hoon seized the country back from that precipice.

Writing this book, I read countless materials. Newspaper articles, full interview transcripts, National Assembly records, court judgments. I traced the path Han Dong-hoon walked as a prosecutor. The names he investigated were those at the pinnacle of South Korea's business world. He showed no partiality by faction. He was strict with the powerful and upheld principle.

"Strong to the strong, warm to the weak." This was his philosophy.

That philosophy shone in the Lone Star case. As a young prosecutor in 2006, he investigated Lone Star's foreign exchange card stock price manipulation and secured a guilty verdict. Twenty years later, as Justice Minister, he led the reversal of a six trillion won international arbitration award. Everyone said it was impossible. A 1.6 percent chance of winning. Yet he pushed ahead. And he won.

Now this man has been expelled from the party and wanders alone in the wilderness.

I wanted to tell the story of one man.

A man who did not step back before injustice. A man who chose the public good over self-interest. A man who did what he believed right without clinging to results. And a man who lost everything in return.

The story of Han Dong-hoon is the story of us all. It is a story that shows how difficult it is to live by principle, yet why it still matters. Some will ask: why now, at his darkest hour, publish this book? I answer: precisely because it is now.

It is easy to praise Han Dong-hoon when he was advancing. To speak of him now, when everyone condemns him and he faces crisis, is the truly meaningful work. South Korea in 2026 remains in turmoil. The wounds of martial law remain unhealed, and politics rush toward extremes. What do we need in such times? I believe the answer is the spirit of "strong to the strong, warm to the weak."

Politics firm with the powerful and warm with the vulnerable. The courage to choose country over faction. The resolve to do right even when the outcome is uncertain. Han Dong-hoon showed the possibility of such politics. Though he now stands expelled from his party, the possibility he showed does not disappear.

I hope this book offers a small help in remembering that possibility.

Finally, I make this request of you, readers.

As you read this book, set aside the name Han Dong-hoon for a moment. Let go of political prejudice. Follow one man's life and experience with him the moments of choice he faced.

And ask yourself: what would I have done? If I had been there that night of December 3, 2024, what choice would I have made?

The answer to that question will be the true meaning of reading this book.

Kim Kyung-jin, February 2026

Note: This book is written by author Kim Kyung-jin based on Han Dong-hoon's media interviews, campaign promises, and other materials, analyzed and written from Kim Kyung-jin's perspective.

This was not done in consultation with Han Dong-hoon, nor did he review, edit, or provide oral testimony. I wish to clarify in advance that the book's account reflects Kim Kyung-jin's thoughts and may differ from Han Dong-hoon's own position. Thank you for your understanding.

If this book has stayed with you, even for a moment, please support the publication of the next story.

(Voluntary donation account: Nonghyup 302-1096-0948-81, Account holder: Kim Kyung-jin)

See every chapter

Next Chapter →

Attorney · Former Member of the National Assembly · AI Policy Researcher

kimkj.com

© 2026 Kim Kyung-jin. All rights reserved.

#KimKyungjin #AILibrary #TheHanDonghoonStory

Chapter 1: December 3, 2024, 10:30 PM

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

PART 01 The Night He Chose the Nation Over Faction · Original Text 01

Han Dong-hoon was expelled from the party.

On January 29, 2026, Jang Dong-hyeok, chairman of the People Power Party, expelled Han Dong-hoon from the party. The conduct in question was the charge.

Yet history will record it differently. It will say it was the cost of protecting the Constitution. The seeds of tragedy were sown exactly one year and two months earlier. It was a winter night when South Korea held its breath.

On December 3, 2024, at 10:27 PM, President Yoon Suk-yeol began an emergency address from the presidential office in Yongsan.

Many citizens expected North Korean provocation or a diplomatic matter. But the word from the President's mouth was "martial law." "I declare martial law to eradicate pro-North forces and protect the free constitutional order." For the first time in 44 years, the hands of constitutional history turned backward.

At that moment, Han Dong-hoon, chairman of the People Power Party, was watching the broadcast.

He was a man who had spent his entire life dealing with the Constitution and the law. In the President's address, he could not find the conditions for martial law as stipulated by the Constitution. The phrase "wartime, armed conflict, or a state of national emergency equivalent thereto" appeared nowhere.

Han Dong-hoon made an immediate judgment. It was wrong.

Though the Democratic Party had abused its authority to the point of nearly paralyzing the presidency, such matters should be judged through elections. The notion of branding political opponents as anti-state forces and deploying the military to eradicate them was incompatible with the spirit of the Constitution, he believed.

There was no hesitation.

The moment the President's address ended, Han Dong-hoon was the first politician in South Korea to break the silence. He sent an urgent message. "The President's declaration of martial law is wrong. We will stop it together with the people." At the end of the message, he clearly signed it: "Han

Dong-hoon, Chairman of the People Power Party." It was an unprecedented declaration in constitutional history: the ruling party officially rejecting the President's decision.

Right after sending the message, he headed to the National Assembly. Warnings poured in from those around him. "It's dangerous to go to the Assembly now." "The military is moving in." A phone call came. "You must not get caught. Hide for about a day." Years later, Han Dong-hoon would recall that moment this way: "Frankly, I thought, I'm finished." Fear gripped him. Yet he did not turn the car around. He was afraid, but heading to the Assembly was a choice made for the nation.

He was certain. Only if he was present at the scene, only if he stood there with the constitutional weight of being the ruling party's chairman, could he place political pressure on the martial law forces and prevent bloodshed. That certainty sustained him.

That night, when everything he had might be ending, Han Dong-hoon drove his car through the darkness toward Yeouido.

If this book has stayed with you even for a moment, please support it so that the next story can reach the world.

(Voluntary support account: Nonghyup 302-1096-0948-81 Account holder: Kim Kyung-jin)

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

Attorney · Former Member of the National Assembly · AI Policy Researcher

kimkj.com

© 2026 Kim Kyung-jin. All rights reserved.

[#KimKyungjin](#) [#AILibrary](#) [#TheHanDonghoonStory](#)

Chapter 2: A Man Standing Before the Gun Barrel

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

PART 01 The Night He Chose Country Over Faction · Text 02

When Han Dong-hoon arrived at the National Assembly, the situation was indistinguishable from wartime.

Armed martial law troops were attempting to enter the National Assembly. The sound of breaking glass mixed with helicopter noise created pandemonium.

Word came from various quarters that his name, as the ruling party leader, appeared on the arrest list. Martial law troops had infiltrated even the room adjacent to the People Power Party leader's office.

The situation was so severe that testimony later emerged about threats of being shot during the arrest and transfer process.

With the help of opposition lawmakers, Han Dong-hoon was able to enter the main chamber. It was a matter of protecting the constitution that transcended partisan divisions.

Lawmakers gathered inside the main chamber. Ruling party members were scarce. Han Dong-hoon urged the People Power Party lawmakers to assemble in the National Assembly. He persuaded them via Telegram and phone. "We must block martial law for conservatism to survive," "We must fulfill our duty as constitutional institutions." As a result, 18 People Power Party lawmakers converged in the main chamber. Had only opposition lawmakers voted to lift martial law, the president might have dismissed it as 'incitement by anti-state forces.' The 'trans-partisan rejection' carried out together by the ruling party leader and lawmakers gave it constitutional legitimacy that no justification could conceal.

At that moment, Lee Jae-myung, then leader of the Democratic Party, was in hiding, evading arrest and waiting to see how events unfolded. Han Dong-hoon was standing in the very center of the National Assembly main chamber. He later recalled it this way: 'Leader Lee Jae-myung came in only an hour later. I went in right away, risking my life.'

At 1 a.m. on December 4, a resolution demanding the lifting of emergency martial law was presented, with National Assembly Speaker Woo Won-shik presiding.

Numbers appeared on the electronic board.

Members present: 190. Votes in favor: 190. It was unanimous passage, with all present members voting in favor. It was the moment the distinction between ruling and opposition parties vanished. Among those 190 votes were Han Dong-hoon and 18 ruling party lawmakers who followed him. The votes they cast were not mere affirmative votes. They were a declaration that they would not abandon democracy, even before gun barrels.

Only then did Han Dong-hoon let out a sigh of relief.

That very moment divided the fate of the Republic of Korea. He said this: 'Had we failed to lift martial law that night, a horrific bloodbath would have broken out between citizens and young soldiers who took to the streets the next morning.'

Right after the vote, Han Dong-hoon stood before the reporters. His voice was firm: 'By the National Assembly's decision, the unconstitutional and illegal declaration of martial law that occurred last night has lost its effect. Any exercise of public authority by the military and police based on the current martial law order is illegal.'

This declaration became clear guidance for the military, police, and civil servants who were in chaos. It played a decisive role in preventing further illegal conduct.

He bowed his head. 'As the ruling party, I deeply regret that such a situation arose.'

If this book stayed with you, even for a moment, please support the publication of the next story.

(We welcome voluntary support. Account: NH Bank 302-1096-0948-81, Account holder: Kim Kyung-jin)

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

Attorney · Former Member of the National Assembly · AI Policy Researcher

kimkj.com

© 2026 Kim Kyung-jin. All rights reserved.

[#KimKyungjin](#) [#AllLibrary](#) [#TheHanDonghoonStory](#)

Chapter 3: South Korea Steps Back from the Brink of Civil War

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

PART 01 The Night He Chose the Country over His Own Side · Original Text 03

That night was far more dangerous than we imagined.

South Korea had come to the very brink of the word 'civil war' and pulled back. Within the military itself, chaos had reached its extreme over whether to follow orders.

Had the National Assembly not immediately lifted martial law, firebombs would have been hurled at the presidential office in the heart of Seoul, gunfire would have erupted, and soldiers, police, and citizens would have turned their guns on one another in tragedy.

Han Dong-hoon saw the edge of that cliff.

He understood that taking sides with 'our side' at this moment was the path to destroying the nation. Had he stood blindly with the president, he might have become a hero to the conservative base.

But he chose 'our country, not our side.'

"Without a nation, there is no conservatism. When citizens shed blood, politics loses its reason to exist." This is how he later reflected on his feelings that night. He wagered his political career to prevent South Korea from being destroyed, even knowing that his own camp would collapse.

Han Dong-hoon's action was not calculated. Facing the terror of insurrection at his doorstep, it was a historic decision born from the urgent need to save the people. That night, he did what was most natural yet most difficult, not as a politician but as a citizen and a public official.

His decision transcended the simple preservation of constitutional order. It prevented the conservative party from being branded in history as a seditious force and destroyed. When the Democratic Party attacked the People Power Party as a 'martial law-supporting party' and a 'party complicit in rebellion,' Han Dong-hoon could stand firm.

"The People Power Party is the party whose chairman led the effort to stop martial law." While Lee Jae-myung, the opposition leader, hid away concerned for his own safety, Han Dong-hoon, as the ruling party's chairman, was first to point out its unconstitutionality and held the ground, proving the moral strength of conservatism.

In an interview later, he said: "Had we not lifted martial law that night, the people would have risen up to bring down the government, and the People Power Party would have been annihilated. There was

an urgent need for conservatives to take the lead in stopping martial law."

President Yoon Suk-yeol and Han Dong-hoon. Their relationship spanned two decades. As prosecutors, they were senior and junior colleagues who trusted each other more than anyone else. They would review investigation records through the night and speak of justice. They could read each other's thoughts with a glance.

From investigating various cases to enduring four demotions and harassment during the Moon Jae-in administration, the two were symbols of a 'bromance' that shared both hardship and joy. Yoon Suk-yeol praised Han Dong-hoon as someone who 'conducted investigations with the dedication of an independence fighter.' Trusting Yoon, Han Dong-hoon accepted the position of Justice Minister and fought alone against the massive 180-seat opposition.

But on the night of December 3, 2024, Han Dong-hoon found himself forced to sever that 20-year bond in the face of his public duty.

"Why would I not have suffered as a human being? It was truly painful."

He later reflected: "The president and I had long helped and trusted each other. But just because the president declared martial law, should that stop us from opposing it? No, that would be wrong."

Han Dong-hoon stood at the boundary between the public and the private.

He asked himself: 'To whom should loyalty be directed? To a 20-year relationship, or to the people of South Korea?'

After that night, he could never again speak with the president in the old way, laughing together. It was not betrayal. It was the pain of preserving a greater loyalty, a duty to the people. He solidified his belief that 'public office is neither a personal gift nor a personal possession, and loyalty is owed to the nation, not to an individual.'

"Loyalty to South Korea and its people comes before personal loyalty."

If this book has stayed with you even for a moment, please support us so that the next story can reach the world.

(Voluntary support account: Nonghyup 302-1096-0948-81 Account holder: Kim Kyung-jin)

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

Attorney · Former Member of the National Assembly · AI Policy Researcher

kimkj.com

© 2026 Kim Kyung-jin. All rights reserved.

#KimKyungjin #AllLibrary #TheHanDonghoonStory

Chapter 4: The Cross Named Betrayer

← Previous Chapter

See every chapter

Next Chapter →

PART 01 The Night He Chose the Nation over Faction · Original Text 04

Once martial law was lifted, the political current surged.

Han Dong-hoon initially tried to avert disaster by proposing an "orderly departure" for the President. He feared that the impeachment trial would fracture public opinion and deepen the chaos.

But when President Yoon made clear in his address to the nation that he had no intention of stepping aside and instead defended the legitimacy of martial law, the situation shifted dramatically.

Han Dong-hoon was engulfed in a torrent of fierce accusations of "traitor" from the conservative base. At the Gwanghwamun Taegeuk flag rallies, his name was torn to shreds. Party message boards were plastered with curses against him. In some regions, voices rose to denounce him. Far-right YouTubers shouted: "Traitor Han Dong-hoon." "A leftist stooge." People who just yesterday had hailed him as the next presidential candidate suddenly hurled stones at him. He was completely isolated within conservative circles.

Han Dong-hoon bore all this criticism with his whole being. He offered no excuses. "If I must be a traitor, then I will be one. But I will be the traitor who saved the nation." He understood.

Had the conservative party defended martial law and opposed impeachment, conservatism would have vanished forever from South Korea's history. The people would never forgive a force that threatened democracy.

By accepting the stigma of "traitor" upon himself, he prevented the ship of conservatism from sinking entirely.

"Had I not stood in the way, the nation would have fallen and conservatism would have been destroyed."

These words were no arrogance. They were an anguished confession that only someone who had gripped a pillar in a burning house and refused to let go could have uttered.

To prove that conservatism's value lay not in defending tyranny but in protecting the Constitution, he walked into the flames himself.

In an interview years later, he spoke about the "traitor" narrative this way.

"In reality, I barely sense the 'traitor' narrative. When I visited Daegu's Seomun Market, the merchants there told me they had suffered massive losses after martial law was declared. The people endured great hardship because of martial law. There is no way this could be dismissed as a 'two-hour incident.'"

If this book has remained with you even for a moment, please support us so that the next story can reach the world.

(Voluntary support: Nonghyup Account 302-1096-0948-81 Account Holder: Kim Gyeong-jin)

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

Attorney · Former Member of the National Assembly · AI Policy Researcher

kimkj.com

© 2026 Kim Kyung-jin. All rights reserved.

[#KimKyungjin](#) [#AllLibrary](#) [#TheHanDonghoonStory](#)

Chapter 5: Banished to the Wilderness for the Crime of Protecting the Constitution

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

PART 01 The Night He Chose Country over Faction · Original Text 05

On December 16, 2024, shortly after the impeachment resolution passed, Han Dong-hoon stepped down as party chairman. With senior officials resigning en masse and the leadership in collapse, there was no place for him to stand. At a press conference, he lowered his head. "I sincerely apologize to the people who suffered from this emergency martial law crisis."

"I tried to find a better path than impeachment, but ultimately failed. All of this is my fault for my shortcomings."

He took full responsibility for the party's division and the constitutional tragedy of the presidential impeachment.

But he added, "Though it grieves me to think of my disappointed supporters, I still have no regrets. I made a promise never to betray the Republic of Korea or its sovereign people, no matter what."

After his resignation, he withdrew from public life.

But the trials were not over. Those who had seized party control, the pro-Yoon faction, hardline supporters, and forces centered around far-right YouTubers, attacked him relentlessly. They branded Han Dong-hoon as a "traitor who colluded with the left."

Two seasons passed, and January 2026 arrived. The storm did not subside. It only grew fiercer.

On January 29, 2026, National Power chairman Jang Dong-hyuk passed a resolution for Han Dong-hoon's expulsion from the party. The executive council took only twenty minutes to ratify the decision.

To the man who had blocked martial law to defend the Constitution of the Republic of Korea and voted for impeachment to preserve conservative values, the party delivered the harshest punishment: expulsion.

It would be the final throes of those hostile to the Constitution.

Seoul Mayor Oh Se-hoon, sixteen lawmakers, and some out-of-office party chapter heads issued a statement. "This is an anticonstitutional and undemocratic expulsion. The leadership must resign." Most editorial pages called it "Yoon running wild again." The Chosun Ilbo's commentary criticized it,

saying, "After losing power through the self-destruction of martial law, are they now destroying the party itself?"

On the day they drove Han Dong-hoon out, the people finally understood clearly who the true conservative was and who was the counterfeit. Han Dong-hoon lost his party affiliation but won the people's hearts. Now he is cast out beyond the walls, forced to walk alone into the harsh wilderness. The man who did not flinch before a gun barrel on that winter night now stands alone in the freezing cold, stripped of all titles and bare-bodied in the wilderness. The burden of that night when he had to turn his back on colleagues of twenty years, the stigma of being called a traitor, and the expulsion from the party, all of these weigh upon his shoulders.

But history will remember.

It will remember who first said, "This is wrong," on the night when the country faced its greatest peril. Who was the person who chose our country over our side, knowing he would lose everything.

This is not the end. It is the beginning of a new story.

If this book has rested with you for even a moment, please support it so the next story can reach the world.

(Voluntary support account: Nonghyup 302-1096-0948-81 Account holder: Kim Gyeong-jin)

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

Attorney · Former Member of the National Assembly · AI Policy Researcher

kimkj.com

© 2026 Kim Kyung-jin. All rights reserved.

[#KimKyungjin](#) [#AIBLibrary](#) [#TheHanDonghoonStory](#)

Chapter 6: The Only Man to Speak Harsh Truths to the Presidential Couple

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

PART 02 Strong and Weak (□□□□) Han Dong-hoon · Original Text 01

It was a weekend afternoon on January 21, 2024.

In that moment when winter sunlight slanted through the window, Han Dong-hoon's phone rang. The name that appeared was a key figure from the Presidential Office. Before he even answered, he already knew what this call meant.

The conversation was brief. The voice acting on behalf of the President was direct. "Mr. Chairman, I hope you will consider your resignation."

Han Dong-hoon fell silent for a moment. This was not an unexpected call. He knew that just days earlier, the twelve words he had uttered had shaken Yongsan. Regarding the allegations that First Lady Kim Keon-hee had received luxury handbags, he had said:

"Measures that match the public's expectations are necessary."

Only twelve words. But those twelve words had directly touched the line that the Presidential Office at Yongsan had been desperately trying to defend with their life. What the President was willing to stake everything on defending was First Lady Kim Keon-hee.

Han Dong-hoon held the phone to his ear and gazed out the window.

Someone might have lowered their head at that moment. Someone might have offered excuses. Someone might have tried to find a compromise.

But Han Dong-hoon's answer was different.

"I came forward before the people. I will do what needs to be done."

The conversation ended that way.

The next day, January 22, Han Dong-hoon stood before reporters. The rumor of his resignation had already spread through the media. Countless camera flashes exploded.

He spoke calmly, yet firmly.

"My term continues until after the general election."

He made clear his intention not to resign.

Tension hung thick between Yongsan and Yeouido. Political circles began to speak of 'Yoon's heart' and 'Han's heart' as the gap between these two men who once looked in the same direction began to widen, a rift opening up between them.

Two days later, on January 23, a fire broke out in Seocheon, South Chungcheong Province. A traditional market was reduced to ashes. President Yoon Suk-yeol visited the scene, and Han Dong-hoon was also there. The two men faced each other.

Han Dong-hoon bowed deeply before President Yoon.

That bow was captured entirely by the press cameras. Some read it as surrender. Others read it as courtesy. Han Dong-hoon himself said this about that day: "My respect and trust for the President have not changed."

He rode the presidential train with the President. On the surface, it seemed to be resolved. A key figure in pro-Yoon circles, Representative L M, moved to mend relations, saying "there was a misunderstanding in the conversation." This was not the first time Han Dong-hoon had clashed with the Presidential Office.

Since his time as Justice Minister, he had been known as 'the minister who speaks hard truths.' He did not know how to flatter, and he did not know how to read the room.

It was the same when the medical crisis erupted.

On February 6, 2024, the government announced the confirmed expansion of medical school enrollment by 2,000. Resident physicians submitted collective resignation letters. Hospital emergency rooms began to shut down one by one. Patients waiting for surgery trembled with anxiety. The lives of the people were at risk. The Minister of Welfare argued for gradual expansion. It was the voice from the field. But the President wanted a comprehensive expansion. In the end, 2,000 was confirmed.

On April 1, 2024, at a campaign rally in Busan, Han Dong-hoon took the microphone in that heated venue ahead of the general election and said something many did not expect.

"I regret insisting on the 2,000 figure. A more flexible approach is necessary." And he added:

"Today the government also made clear its position to discuss without adhering to the 2,000 figure."

The party chairman publicly expressed disagreement with government policy. And on no less a stage than a nationally broadcast campaign rally.

Yongsan made no effort to hide its displeasure.

Words like "Why is the party doing this?" circulated.

But Han Dong-hoon did not back down.

"Since I took the lead in the People Power Party, have I failed to change any of the points I raised?"
His question went unanswered.

On September 6, with Han Dong-hoon's mediation, a consultative body comprising the ruling party, opposition, medical professionals, and the government was proposed. The Presidential Office finally took a step back.

"We will discuss if you bring a reasonable plan without being bound by the 2,000 figure." "The door to dialogue has opened through Chairman Han Dong-hoon's mediation."

Representative Ahn Cheol-soo proposed: "Let us discuss a plan to gradually increase numbers while examining proposals such as 1,004 new positions over ten years."

But a fundamental resolution was not achieved.

Later, on November 27, 2025, the Board of Audit and Inspection released its audit results. The conclusion was harsh. "The basis for the 2,000 expansion is insufficient, and the logical consistency is lacking."

The Board went further in its statement:

"The Ministry of Welfare calculated the necessary number of doctors to align with the directives of former President Yoon Suk-yeol."

It was precisely what Han Dong-hoon had been concerned about from the beginning. He was not wrong. He was simply right too early, ahead of his time.

The night of December 3, 2024.

That night, forever inscribed in Korean constitutional history, an emergency martial law was declared.

Han Dong-hoon did not hesitate.

He rushed to the National Assembly. Though martial law forces attempted to seal it off, he gathered with other lawmakers in the main chamber. And he led the repeal of martial law.

Martial law was lifted.

Democracy was preserved.

But the price was severe.

On December 14, the impeachment motion against President Yoon Suk-yeol passed. Five senior party members resigned en masse. The party leadership collapsed.

On December 16, Han Dong-hoon stepped down as party leader.

"All of this is due to my shortcomings."

Those were his final words.

January 13, 2026, 11:45 p.m.

In the dead of night, the People Power Party's Ethics Committee suddenly convened. The agenda was to vote on his expulsion.

On January 29, the Supreme Council met.

The expulsion was confirmed.

Han Dong-hoon issued a statement.

"I will return without fail."

He reflected. From that day in January 2024, when he received the call from the presidential office demanding his resignation, to this moment. Exactly two years had passed.

He had offered frank criticism to the presidential couple. He had called out their stubbornness in the medical crisis. And he had stopped the emergency martial law.

For that, he was expelled from the party.

But Han Dong-hoon had no regrets.

"There were those who fawned around power. I sought to correct the problems." These were his words in an interview years later. And he continued.

"They boasted endlessly while dining with the president. Yet why did they say nothing then? Why did they not offer candid advice? I believe they must answer for what they were doing at that moment."

Strength against strength, weakness against weakness.

Be firm with the strong, be gentle with the weak.

This was Han Dong-hoon's philosophy. And because of this philosophy, he became the only cabinet member able to offer harsh truths to the strongest person of all, the president, and his wife.

Even if the price was expulsion.

If this book has stayed with you for even a moment, please support bringing the next chapter of this story to the world.

(Voluntary support account: Nonghyup 302-1096-0948-81 Account holder: Kim Kyung-jin)

← Previous Chapter

See every chapter

Next Chapter →

Attorney · Former Member of the National Assembly · AI Policy Researcher

kimkj.com

© 2026 Kim Kyung-jin. All rights reserved.

#KimKyungjin #AIBLibrary #TheHanDonghoonStory

Chapter 7: Unbroken by Four Demotions

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

PART 02 Strong and Weak by Turns (□□□□) Han Dong-hoon · Original Text 02

It was an evening in July 2019.

Han Dong-hoon heard the news that he had been appointed chief of the Anti-Corruption and Organized Crime Division at the Supreme Prosecutors' Office. It was the pinnacle of special investigation in the prosecution service. He was forty-six years old. From passing the judicial examination to reaching that position, it took exactly twenty years.

Did he feel as though he had reached the summit?

But fate was preparing another test for him.

In August of the same year, a prosecution investigation into Cho Kuk, the former Justice Minister nominee, began. Han Dong-hoon took overall charge of this investigation. Suspicions of irregularities in his daughter's university admission, suspicions of private equity fund investment misconduct, suspicions of family-related impropriety. The investigation target was a major figure who had served as the presidential secretary for civil affairs under the Blue House, and behind him stood the entire Moon Jae-in administration.

Han Dong-hoon did not hesitate.

"It must be legitimate."

It was something he always said to junior prosecutors. He believed that the standard should be the principle of law, not the magnitude of power. Whoever the opponent was, illegality was illegality. The investigation was successful. Former Minister Cho Kuk was referred to trial. Later, he was even sentenced to prison by the Supreme Court.

But the price was steep.

In January 2020, Choo Mi-ae was sworn in as Justice Minister. Han Dong-hoon's name was called in the first prosecution personnel reshuffle announced shortly after her inauguration.

Deputy Chief Prosecutor of the Busan High Prosecutors' Office.

Being transferred to a provincial post less than six months after serving as a division chief at the Supreme Prosecutors' Office was unprecedented in prosecution history. To anyone's eye, it was a demotion.

It was his first demotion.

"It's all right."

Han Dong-hoon calmly packed his belongings. As he boarded the KTX headed for Busan, he gazed out the window. The Seoul cityscape grew farther and farther. What must it have felt like to be pushed out overnight from a position he had climbed to over twenty years? Yet his eyes did not waver.

His time in Busan did not last long.

On March 31, 2020, MBC aired a shocking report. It said that a Channel A reporter and prosecutors had colluded to fabricate criminal charges against Yoo Si-min, former chairman of the Roh Moo-hyun Foundation. The so-called allegation of collusion between prosecution and press. Han Dong-hoon was said to be at the center of it.

"I have never done such a thing."

Han Dong-hoon refuted the allegations. But public opinion was already in turmoil. The frame that prosecutors and media had conspired to defame an opposition figure was powerful. His name filled the news day after day. He was treated as a criminal.

In June 2020, his second demotion was announced.

Research fellow at the Judicial Training Institute.

It was a position known within the prosecution service as a "place of exile." It was a sinecure that completely excluded him from direct investigation or command. In a quiet training institute in Yongin, Gyeonggi Province, he was reduced to writing research papers.

He was once a prosecutor who had detained chaebol executives and investigated state manipulation.

But this was only the beginning.

On July 29, 2020, prosecutors executed a search and seizure at Han Dong-hoon's residence. It was part of the investigation into the collusion allegations. That day, an investigating prosecutor led the search team.

The incident occurred during the search and seizure.

During the search and seizure, Han Dong-hoon suffered injuries with three weeks of incapacity. The prosecution investigators present at the time testified that Han Dong-hoon had done nothing that would suggest evidence tampering at that moment. Yet such a thing happened.

An active prosecutor had been assaulted by another active prosecutor.

Becoming a victim of assault by an official, Han Dong-hoon filed a complaint. In the first trial, the assaulting prosecutor was sentenced to four months in prison with a one-year suspended sentence. It

was a guilty verdict.

But on July 21, 2022, the appellate court acquitted him, saying "intent and injury are difficult to prove," and the Supreme Court dismissed the appeal.

"Are you wronged?"

Someone asked. Han Dong-hoon shook his head.

"Whining is unseemly."

It was his habitual saying. Even when wronged, he does not complain. Even when treated unfairly, he does not resent. He walks his path in silence.

In June 2021, his third demotion was announced.

Deputy Director of the Judicial Training Institute.

On the surface, it seemed better than being a research fellow at the Judicial Training Institute, but the reality was different. There had never been a single prosecutor serving as Deputy Director of the Judicial Training Institute. It meant that this was not a position for prosecutors.

From one training institute to another. From the center of the prosecution service to the periphery. Han Dong-hoon walked that path in silence. He did not complain. He did not resent. He simply did what he could in his position.

And on April 9, 2022.

A reversal arrived.

The prosecution decided not to indict in the case involving media collusion. The prosecution itself acknowledged that the suspicions that had gripped Han Dong-hoon for two years were unfounded.

It was a fabricated allegation.

It was a false charge.

One month later, on May 17, 2022, the Yoon Seok-yeol administration took office. And on that same day, Han Dong-hoon was appointed as the 69th Minister of Justice.

After four demotions, he rose not to the position of prosecutor general, but to a seat above the prosecution. Years later, Han Dong-hoon reflected on that time and spoke these words.

"Power can make mistakes. But what matters in the success or failure of a regime is what corrective force emerges when that power has gone astray. Even at personal cost, I tried to set things right."

Justice sometimes takes a long time.

But truth eventually finds its place.

Only those who believe in it can continue walking even through darkness.

If this book has stayed with you even for a moment, please support us so that the next story can reach the world.

(Please consider voluntary support - NH Bank Account: 302-1096-0948-81 Account Holder: Kim Kyung-jin)

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

Attorney · Former Member of the National Assembly · AI Policy Researcher

kimkj.com

© 2026 Kim Kyung-jin. All rights reserved.

[#KimKyungjin](#) [#AIBLibrary](#) [#TheHanDonghoonStory](#)

Chapter 8: A Philosophy of Investigation

← Previous Chapter

See every chapter

Next Chapter →

PART 02 Strong Against the Strong, Weak Against the Weak (□□□□) Han Dong-hoon · Original Text
03

You must be able to explain it in three lines.

This was what Han Dong-hoon most frequently told junior prosecutors.

It meant that no matter how complex a case, its essence must be simple.

He believed that what the suspect did and why it was wrong had to be understandable to ordinary citizens, not legal experts, with just three lines of reading.

It is easy to explain things in a complicated way. It is difficult to explain them simply. Only by piercing to the core can something become truly simple.

There was another principle.

Even when stripped of embellishment, the investigation must have legitimacy.

The legitimacy of an investigation does not come from political circumstances or reading the intentions of power. The standard should be whether it is fair before the law and whether it protects the weak and corrects the illegality of the strong. Han Dong-hoon maintained this principle throughout his life.

There is a keyword that runs through Han Dong-hoon's life.

Strong Against the Strong, Weak Against the Weak.

Strong against the strong, weak against the weak. It was a philosophy that the law must be applied even more strictly against the illegality of those with power and money.

Many people in the world live the opposite way. They bow their heads before the strong and raise their voices before the weak. They think that is realistic, that it is clever. Han Dong-hoon was different.

In 2003, thirty-year-old Han Dong-hoon was appointed as a prosecutor in the Central Investigation Division of the Supreme Prosecutor's Office. That same year, he took on a major conglomerate ranked third in Korea's business world.

The SK Group stock improper trading case.

Evidence emerged of improper gains worth around 80 billion won and instructions for off-the-books deals. Investigating conglomerate corruption was never easy, then or now. Media attention, political pressure, corporate lobbying. Invisible hands made the investigation difficult. Han Dong-hoon remained unmoved, gathered evidence, and indicted those involved for arrest. The trial concluded with a guilty verdict confirmed.

Three years later in 2006, Han Dong-hoon faced another conglomerate.

The Hyundai Motor Group slush fund case.

Han Dong-hoon, handling this case in the Special Investigation Division 2 of the Seoul Central District Prosecutor's Office, traced the suspicion of slush fund creation. As a result, those involved were arrested and sent to trial on charges of breach of duty and embezzlement. In 2007, a public official became the target.

The National Tax Service Commissioner misconduct case.

That the highest-ranking public official overseeing the nation's taxes had committed misconduct was a betrayal of the people. Han Dong-hoon pursued this case to the end and brought charges.

There is something to note here.

The targets of Han Dong-hoon's investigations were not biased toward any particular political faction.

Regardless of faction, more strictly against the illegality of the powerful.

This was his consistent principle.

In 2015, Han Dong-hoon proved his abilities on the international stage.

An international economic case.

Tracking and punishing companies that had engaged in collusion worldwide required high-level expertise and international cooperation. Han Dong-hoon successfully led this case and received the 2015 Economic Prosecutor of the Year Award.

In particular, one of the cases he handled during this period would become the key to saving Korea twenty years later. The Lone Star foreign exchange card stock manipulation case.

At that time, Han Dong-hoon obtained a guilty verdict with a three-year prison sentence against the Lone Star representative. This criminal judgment would later become the decisive weapon that led Korea to victory in an international investment dispute worth 6 trillion won. That story will be addressed in Part Three.

There is another expression that captures Han Dong-hoon's investigative philosophy.

An evil person is someone who exploits others.

This is his definition of an evil person.

Whether someone has power or money, if they use it to trample on the weak, that person is evil. It does not matter if their status is high or low, if their education is good or bad. The moment they use their strength to exploit others, they become evil.

Han Dong-hoon did not back down before such evil people.

To the powerful, he was a feared name. To the people who had suffered harm, he was a name of hope.

Whether it was a conglomerate or the Supreme Court, if illegality had been committed, he would pursue it to the end and bring it before the bar of justice, they said. For the powerful, that name was an object of fear.

But Han Dong-hoon himself did not like that nickname.

He did not think of himself as particularly strong. He thought he had simply kept to his principles.

More strictly against the illegality of the strong.

That was the principle he had kept throughout his career as a prosecutor. The greater the power, the more money one had, the more strict the standard had to be applied to their illegality, he believed. After the investigation into state affairs manipulation ended, Han Dong-hoon moved to become the head of the Anti-Corruption and Violent Crimes Division of the Supreme Prosecutor's Office. And it was there that he came to lead the investigation into former Justice Minister Cho Guk. The storm that investigation brought about is as I described earlier.

A prosecutor who stands against power. A prosecutor who refuses to tolerate the unlawful acts of the powerful.

Such a prosecutor inevitably becomes a target of power.

But he chose that path himself.

And he never regretted that choice.

If this book has remained with you even for a moment, please support the publication of the next story.

(Request for voluntary support. Account: Nonghyup 302-1096-0948-81. Account holder: Kim Kyung-jin)

← Previous Chapter

See every chapter

Next Chapter →

Attorney · Former Member of the National Assembly · AI Policy Researcher

kimkj.com

© 2026 Kim Kyung-jin. All rights reserved.

#KimKyungjin #AIBLibrary #TheHanDonghoonStory

Chapter 9: The Single Principle That Runs Through Han Dong-hoon

← Previous Chapter

See every chapter

Next Chapter →

PART 02 Strong to the Strong, Weak to the Weak (□□□□) Han Dong-hoon · Original Text 04

While writing this essay, I held one question: if there is a single principle that runs through Han Dong-hoon, what could it be? At thirty, he arrested a chaebol chairman.

At forty, he executed a search warrant on the Supreme Court.

At fifty, he prevented martial law.

And for all of that, he was demoted, beaten, falsely accused, and eventually cast out from his party.

Why did he do it?

There was an easier path.

He could have looked the other way. He could have bowed his head.

He could have dined and laughed with the powerful.

Then there would have been no demotions, no beatings, no expulsion.

But why did he not take that path?

The answer was surprisingly simple.

Strong to the Strong, Weak to the Weak (□□□□).

Be strong before the strong, gentle before the weak.

These four characters explain his entire life.

Most people live by the opposite. They shrink before the powerful and grow bold before the weak. They bow to superiors and bully their inferiors. They call it the way of the world, a survival strategy, reality itself.

Han Dong-hoon flipped that convention on its head.

The greater the power, the more strictly he questioned it. The higher the rank, the more thoroughly he pursued truth. The mightier the force, the more boldly he stood. So he did not back down before the

chaebol. He did not back down before the Supreme Court. He did not back down before the President or the First Lady.

For that, he was demoted four times. He was beaten. He was caught up in fabricated allegations. In the end, he was cast out from his party.

But he did not regret it.

"Complaining is beneath us."

This is what he habitually says.

Even when wronged, he does not grumble. Even when treated unjustly, he does not make excuses. Even when he loses, he does not complain. He simply walks his path in silence.

That is Han Dong-hoon.

We all face moments of choice, great and small. Before the powerful, do we close our eyes or open them? Before the weak, do we raise our voice or lower it? Do we do what is right and take the loss, or do we take the easy path and gain the reward?

Han Dong-hoon offered one answer.

Do what is right, even at a loss. Stand by your principles, whatever the cost. Face expulsion without regret.

And he said this:

"I will return."

Strong to the Strong, Weak to the Weak.

These four characters brought him down, and these four characters will lift him back up. Truth finds its place in the end. Justice simply takes time. Only those who believe in this can keep walking even in the dark. Han Dong-hoon is such a person.

And that belief will write the next chapter of a story not yet finished.

If this book has stayed with you, please support the next story so it may reach the world.

(Voluntary support account: Nonghyup 302-1096-0948-81 Account holder: Kim Kyung-jin)

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

Attorney · Former Member of the National Assembly · AI Policy Researcher

kimkj.com

© 2026 Kim Kyung-jin. All rights reserved.

#KimKyungjin #AIBrary #TheHanDonghoonStory

Chapter 10: An Investigation That Staked His Life

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

PART 03 Lone Star: Han Dong-hoon Who Protected 6 Trillion Won in National Interests · Original Text 01

One late night in 2006.

The lights were on in the windows of the seventh floor of the Central Investigation Division of the Supreme Prosecutors Office in Seocho-dong. Seoul's dazzling nightscape glimmered against the glass, but the thirty-three-year-old prosecutor in the office had no time to notice it.

On the desk lay stacks of documents totaling tens of thousands of pages. Cold instant coffee cups filled the trash can. Prosecutor Han Dong-hoon spent the night wrestling with figures, highlighter in hand.

The case he was investigating was 'Lone Star.'

The massive private equity fund headquartered in Texas, USA, acquired Korea Exchange Bank for 1.3834 trillion won in 2003. In the days when the scars of the foreign exchange crisis had not yet healed, the government had to quickly sell off the ailing Korea Exchange Bank, and Lone Star seized that opportunity.

The problem came next.

As Lone Star merged Korea Exchange Bank with Korea Exchange Card, to cut merger costs it spread rumors of capital reduction in the market. Capital reduction causes share prices to fall. Terrified investors dumped Korea Exchange Card shares, and the stock price collapsed. Lone Star then merged Korea Exchange Card at a pittance based on those depressed stock prices.

Everyone could see it coming. But no one could easily prove it. Lone Star could simply claim it was a business decision and that the capital reduction plan was withdrawn later.

They had the world's best legal advisers, and their logic seemed impenetrable. The materials from the Financial Supervisory Service contained only suspicious circumstances, with no decisive evidence to prove guilt in court.

Prosecutor Han Dong-hoon had just completed the Hyundai Motor Group investigation and was preparing to return to his assigned office. His superiors entrusted him with another task. He took on the Lone Star case alongside fellow prosecutor Lee Dong-yeol, who would later become the head of Seoul Western District Prosecutors Office.

When he first received the case file, he felt despair. He had circumstantial suspicion but no physical evidence.

But Han Dong-hoon did not back down. He had intuition.

'No matter how complex the packaging, a crime is a crime.

I cannot let someone who did wrong benefit from it.'

He slept in the prosecutors office five days a week.

He would cover himself with newspapers on the sofa, sleep, wake at dawn, and go through the files again. No one asked him to do this.

It was a chosen ascetic practice.

His decisive move was a search and seizure at Citigroup (then Salomon Smith Barney), Lone Star's adviser.

A compulsory investigation into a foreign investment bank was a taboo at the time.

His superiors, concerned about diplomatic friction, urged caution. Some voices warned that touching this could bring international embarrassment.

But Han Dong-hoon convinced the court. The warrant was issued.

And that dawn, in tens of thousands of seized emails, Han Dong-hoon finally found the smoking gun.

At the very moment Lone Star announced the capital reduction plan, an email exchanged between staff contained this sentence:

"Capital reduction is off the table."

'Capital reduction is not on the table.'

Outwardly creating panic in the market by appearing to review capital reduction while internally having already abandoned the plan, it was clear evidence of intentional false information dissemination, stock price manipulation.

Han Dong-hoon recalls that moment like this:

"I wanted to show justice against their arrogance in taking Korea lightly." Based on this evidence, he continued his relentless investigation. He summoned foreign executives and extracted confessions through logical questioning.

But it was not easy.

The court rejected the arrest warrant for Lone Star Korea CEO Paul Yu four times. Invisible tension between the judiciary and the prosecution, hints of outside pressure coming from somewhere. Yet he did not give up.

The trial proceeded over ten years.

Even after receiving a transfer order to the Busan District Prosecutors Office, Han Dong-hoon returned to Seoul twice a week to attend court proceedings. For him, this case was not mere work. It was a matter of Korea's pride.

In 2011, the Supreme Court finally confirmed Lone Star's guilt on stock price manipulation charges. The CEO was sentenced to three years in prison.

This verdict was not simply the punishment of one criminal.

It was a historic moment when Korea's judiciary officially confirmed that Lone Star was immoral capital that committed crimes.

That night, Prosecutor Han Dong-hoon likely sighed with relief as he packed away his belongings. But no one knew at the time.

That one guilty verdict Han Dong-hoon uncovered and obtained would become the sole weapon to save Korea from an astronomical 6 trillion won lawsuit twenty years later.

If this book has spent any time with you, please support the next story so it can reach the world.

(Voluntary support requested: NH Bank Account 302-1096-0948-81 Account Holder: Kim Gyeong-jin)

[← Previous Chapter](#)

See every chapter

[Next Chapter →](#)

Attorney · Former Member of the National Assembly · AI Policy Researcher

kimkj.com

© 2026 Kim Kyung-jin. All rights reserved.

[#KimKyungjin](#) [#AllLibrary](#) [#TheHanDonghoonStory](#)

Chapter 11: The Defense Argument That Resurfaces Twenty Years Later

← Previous Chapter

See every chapter

Next Chapter →

PART 03 Lone Star, Han Dong-hoon Who Protected 6 Trillion Won of National Interest · Original Text
02

In November 2012, Lone Star filed a lawsuit against the South Korean government with the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) under the World Bank.

The claim amount was 4.6795 billion dollars.

At the exchange rate at that time, it was over 6 trillion won.

The largest international lawsuit in Korean constitutional history. If the scale is difficult to grasp, think of it this way.

Six trillion won is enough to provide free meals to all elementary school students nationwide for ten years. It is a budget that could build an entirely new subway Line 2 in the Seoul metropolitan area.

Lone Star's logic was as follows.

"We intended to sell Korea First Bank to Hana Financial in 2012. But the South Korean government, watching public opinion, unreasonably delayed approval of the sale. As a result, we suffered enormous losses. The South Korean government must compensate us for those losses."

On the surface, it appeared to be a plausible argument.

In fact, at the time in Korean society, there was intense controversy over Lone Star's abandonment of responsibility after profiting. The government delayed approval of the sale, mindful of public opinion. Lone Star dug into precisely that point: after acquiring the bank at bargain prices and pocketing enormous profits, it was now attempting to extract additional trillions of won by claiming the sale approval was delayed.

This was the true face of speculative capital.

Bureaucrats were flustered. They hired law firms and drew up countermeasures, but lacked confidence. Defeatism began spreading through government offices. "Let's settle and reduce the amount" became the common refrain. International arbitration experts predicted that the South Korean government would have to pay substantial compensation. But the key to changing the course of this fight already existed.

It was the criminal guilty verdict that the young prosecutor Han Dong-hoon had obtained in 2011. International law contains a principle called the 'Clean Hands Doctrine,' which means those with dirty hands cannot seek the protection of the law. In other words, only the just can make just claims.

Lone Star had committed the crime of stock price manipulation. The Supreme Court of the Republic of Korea had confirmed it as guilty. Therefore, it could be argued that the South Korean government's delay in approving the sale was not unfair interference, but rather a legitimate response to the criminal investigation.

The logic was, "You cannot grant sales approval to a criminal, can you?" The single line from an email that Han Dong-hoon had discovered twenty years ago, "Capital reduction is off the table," had now returned as the defensive argument protecting 6 trillion won of taxpayer money.

Throughout his time as a prosecutor, Han Dong-hoon carried the records of this case like the 'burden of his life.' Each time he moved, he made sure to bring a truck-load of copies.

Regardless of his position at the Ministry of Justice or the Supreme Prosecutors' Office, he provided behind-the-scenes support for Lone Star ISDS response. Most civil servants who understood the lawsuit well had retired. He was nearly the only practicing official who remained and could see the full picture of this case from beginning to end.

In 2015, as head of the Fair Trade and Tax Investigation Division at the Seoul Central District Prosecutors' Office, Han Dong-hoon achieved outstanding results and earned the reputation of 'economic prosecutor of the year.' Some media outlets called him a 'viper,' meaning that once he bit, he did not let go.

In May 2022, Han Dong-hoon became Minister of Justice.

And in August that year, the decision from the first arbitration award was announced.

The arbitral tribunal rejected most of Lone Star's 6 trillion won claim. However, it ordered South Korea to pay approximately 216.5 million dollars (approximately 280 billion won) in compensation.

The majority opinion acknowledged Lone Star's stock price manipulation while partially accepting South Korea's responsibility for the delay in approval.

But the dissenting opinion differed.

It stated explicitly, "Because Lone Star engaged in stock price manipulation, South Korea's compensation liability is zero won." This was proof that the verdict of guilty for stock price manipulation that Han Dong-hoon had designed and proven held up on the international stage.

At this time, some quarters were steeped in defeatism.

"This is a satisfactory outcome." "An appeal would have no chance of success." "Interest accrues 100 million won daily, so it is better to pay quickly."

Such voices were dominant. In particular, the Democratic Party, then in opposition, was even more hardline. "You are offering false hope by pursuing a hopeless battle." "Minister Han Dong-hoon is dragging out the suit due to personal stubbornness." Some did not hesitate to launch cursed attacks, saying, "If we lose, Han Dong-hoon should pay out of his own pocket."

But Minister of Justice Han Dong-hoon thought differently. He said this: "Even if the probability of success was not 100 percent, it was a situation where the government had to work around the clock to make it 100 percent. How could I turn a blind eye to a criminal who engaged in stock price manipulation taking taxpayer money as precious as blood?"

He knew better than anyone the criminal facts about Lone Star that he himself had investigated and proven. Using the acknowledgment of Lone Star's stock price manipulation in the first award as a 'bridgehead,' he judged that there was ample chance of success if procedural illegality was exposed.

The single piece of evidence discovered twenty years earlier while working through the night had now become the final move to save South Korea.

If this book has remained with you even briefly, please support us so that the next story can be brought to light.

(Voluntary support requested. Account: NH Bank 302-1096-0948-81, Account holder: Kim Kyung-jin)

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

Attorney · Former Member of the National Assembly · AI Policy Researcher

kimkj.com

© 2026 Kim Kyung-jin. All rights reserved.

[#KimKyungjin](#) [#AILibrary](#) [#TheHanDonghoonStory](#)

Chapter 12: Han Dong-hoon's Decisive Move

← Previous Chapter

See every chapter

Next Chapter →

PART 03 Lone Star: Han Dong-hoon Protected 6 Trillion Won in National Interest · Original Text 03

In August 2023, Justice Minister Han Dong-hoon established an International Legal Affairs Bureau within the Ministry of Justice. This was not merely a matter of adding another department.

Until then, responses to international litigation had been handled by a small division-level organization. The staff was minimal, and coordinated long-term response was difficult. Han Dong-hoon elevated it to bureau-level status. He expanded specialized personnel and brought in lawyers who specialized in international litigation.

He said the following:

"To protect national interest, we need a system where experts can enter public service and deploy their capabilities."

This International Legal Affairs Bureau became a central base for defending South Korea not only in the Lone Star case but also in successive international disputes involving Elliott and Mason.

The process of deciding was a solitary struggle.

Statistically, the probability of reversing an ICSID arbitral award was less than 10 percent. Even legal experts advised that "annulment is highly unlikely." Realistically, paying 280 billion won and ending the matter seemed like the safer choice.

But Han Dong-hoon did not yield to the odds.

He reportedly made the following statement in an internal meeting:

"If this goes wrong, I will take responsibility. But let's not say we're not doing it." He was equally firm with his working staff.

"Do not try to protect me. I will protect you."

It was a declaration that he would bear all responsibility. What civil servants fear most is being held accountable for failure. Han Dong-hoon took that fear upon himself. The opposition's assault was fierce.

Representative Yang Kyung-sook said that if Han Dong-hoon were put forward in a low-probability appeal process, that would be high treason.

Broadcaster Kim Eo-jun said, "With interest accumulating, shouldn't Han Dong-hoon be held responsible?"

Lawyer Song Ki-ho argued for replacing the law firm representing the government. His reason was that Pacific had previously issued opinions unfavorable to the government in Lone Star-related cases. Song Ki-ho, who had been critical of the appeal at the time and applied pressure, now serves in the presidential office of the Lee Jae-myung administration. It is a senior secretary position, considered a key post known as the "president's eyes and ears." It is ironic that he, who once urged the abandonment of the fight saying "there is no chance of winning," now holds a post in the Lee Jae-myung administration.

Han Dong-hoon flatly rejected the call to replace Pacific.

Pacific was the only law firm with prior experience winning against Lone Star. He protected his working team and legal representatives with the principle of "not changing generals in the middle of war." In August that year, Han Dong-hoon took the podium at a press conference.

His expression was solemn, but his voice was calm.

"This is hard-earned tax revenue, the precious wealth of the people. The Ministry of Justice will not accept the ruling and will file a suit for annulment. We have grounds to win."

Many shook their heads. They called it "cracking a rock with an egg." But he held the hammer that could crack the rock. It was a conviction he had carried for twenty years. What is striking is the response of Chung Sung-ho, the current Justice Minister, who was then an opposition member. Despite standing on opposite political ground, he would later say of Han Dong-hoon's decision that it was "a good move and a decision that will be remembered as one made with conviction."

Setting aside party politics, he acknowledged that Han Dong-hoon's steadfastness for national interest was right. Without that bold move, South Korea would have faced the shame of submitting to a criminal and surrendering hundreds of billions of won in public funds.

If this book stayed with you even for a moment, please support us so that the next story can come to light.

(Voluntary support account: Nonghyup 302-1096-0948-81 Account holder: Kim Kyung-jin)

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

Attorney · Former Member of the National Assembly · AI Policy Researcher

kimkj.com

© 2026 Kim Kyung-jin. All rights reserved.

#KimKyungjin #AllLibrary #TheHanDonghoonStory

Chapter 13: Six Trillion Won Entirely Nullified

← Previous Chapter

See every chapter

Next Chapter →

PART 03 Lone Star: Han Dong-hoon's Protection of 6 Trillion Won in National Interest · Original Text
04

November 18, 2025. At last the final ruling came down.

The International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) Annulment Committee fully annulled the original decision requiring South Korea to compensate Lone Star.

Compensation amount: 0 won.

Lone Star's initial claim of 4.6 billion dollars (roughly 6 trillion won) was reduced to 216.5 million dollars in the first arbitration award. But following the annulment petition led by Han Dong-hoon, the case ended in a 'complete victory' where Korea owed nothing at all.

Moreover, South Korea recovered approximately 7.2 billion won of the litigation costs it had expended. This was a dramatic reversal without precedent in the history of international arbitration.

Around 5 PM that day, Han Dong-hoon saw an announcement that Prime Minister Kim Min-seok would personally announce the Lone Star litigation results. In that moment, he knew. They had won.

When the result was announced, those who had criticized Han Dong-hoon and opposed the appeal either fell silent or changed their stance.

"The oral arguments in this case were concluded in January 2025, before the Lee Jae-myung administration took office. The current government did nothing. If we had lost, they would have tried to destroy me politically. Yet since we won, for them to claim credit is too brazen, is it not?"

Watching those who had opposed the appeal attempt to claim credit without shame, he pointed out this was "a matter of human decency before it is a political issue."

The irony is that attorney Song Ki-ho, who pressured to change law firms and opposed the appeal, now holds a key position in the Lee Jae-myung administration. The fact that someone lacking sound judgment is placed in a key position within the presidential office itself reveals much about President Lee's personnel judgment. In an interview, Han Dong-hoon made this comparison:

"The ruling party adding their spoon to the government's victory is like a coach cursing his players for 90 minutes, then rushing onto the field when the team wins to lift the trophy. A bizarre spectacle." This case stands as the most dramatic example of how Han Dong-hoon's expertise, principle, and

courage protected South Korea's national interest.

From the 2003 investigation through the 2025 victory, for more than 20 years he fought against the great evil that was Lone Star.

And in the end, he won.

6 trillion won.

This astronomical figure with 12 zeros is not simply an amount of money. It was the pride of South Korea.

It was a confident declaration by a sovereign nation, preventing global speculative capital from treating South Korea as a 'cash machine.'

On the day his victory was confirmed, Han Dong-hoon did not raise a celebratory toast.

Instead, he calmly offered his thoughts.

"I only did what I was meant to do. This money is not mine but the people's money."

He had no desire to become a hero. He simply used the tools given to him, law and logic, to faithfully perform his role as a guardian protecting the community.

His steadfast determination, sustained from that night in Seocho-dong in 2006 through the 2025 victory, protected a vast national interest of 6 trillion won.

This case leaves us with an important lesson.

Justice does not protect itself. It is protected through someone's courageous decision and fierce effort.

A man who said 'No' when everyone urged surrender, who fought to the very end. His story transcends a mere legal victory, becoming a landmark showing us the attitude with which we must face life and nation.

"Because it was not my money but the people's money, I fought until the end."

If this book has been with you even for a moment, please support so the next story can reach the world.

(Voluntary support account: Nonghyup 302-1096-0948-81 Account holder: Kim Kyung-jin)

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

Attorney · Former Member of the National Assembly · AI Policy Researcher

kimkj.com

© 2026 Kim Kyung-jin. All rights reserved.

#KimKyungjin #AIBrary #TheHanDonghoonStory

Chapter 14: A New Normal in Legal Administration

← Previous Chapter

See every chapter

Next Chapter →

PART 04 Han Dong-hoon Seeking Answers in the Lives of Ordinary Citizens - Original Text 01

May 17, 2022, morning, Gwacheon, Gyeonggi Province.

In the main conference room of the Ministry of Justice at the Government Complex in Gwacheon, a gathering of some of the ministry's 33,400 employees had assembled. It was the day of the inauguration ceremony for the new administration's first Justice Minister. Han Dong-hoon, forty-nine years old, stood at the podium.

The necktie worn by the incoming Justice Minister drew everyone's attention.

In Hunminjeongeum script, it read: "Bulhwi gipeun namu." These were the opening lines of Yongbi eocheonga. The meaning was that a tree with deep roots does not sway in the wind.

Some saw it as fashion; others read it as a message. Han Dong-hoon stepped to the microphone.

"My colleagues in the Ministry of Justice, public servants, welcome."

He used the word "colleagues."

It was uncommon for a minister to address over thirty thousand ministry employees as "colleagues." With that single word, the air in the conference room changed.

"At this moment, when the people are struggling with real estate, inflation, COVID-19, and other challenges, I feel the responsibility to conduct rule-of-law administration that gives strength and comfort to the people." Strength and comfort.

The word "comfort" appearing in a Justice Minister's inaugural address was itself unusual. The Ministry of Justice handles investigation and prosecution, corrections and immigration. It is the ministry that holds the blade of state power. The head of such a ministry spoke of "comfort." The hand holding the sword was the first to extend a handshake.

He continued.

"Since the founding of the Republic of Korea, the Ministry of Justice is one of only two ministries whose names have never changed. The other is the Ministry of National Defense."

He paused for a moment.

"The English name of the Ministry of Justice is 'Ministry of Justice.' Let us not forget this. We who work at the Ministry of Justice must always find the path to 'justice' within the system." Justice.

It was a word he had always cherished during his time as a prosecutor.

Whether investigating SK, Hyundai Motor, the National Tax Service, or Samsung, he never lost sight of this word. Firm against the strong, lenient toward the weak. That was his belief in justice.

That belief became the reason for his reassignments, but ultimately it was the force that carried him to this position.

After the inauguration ceremony ended, the video was posted on YouTube. It exceeded one million views. A prime minister's or minister's inaugural address video reaching one million views was unprecedented. People became curious about him.

A prosecutor reassigned four times under the Moon Jae-in administration. A central figure in the investigation of Cho Kuk. A victim in the frame-up case involving collusion between prosecutors and media. A man who had been accused of abuse of authority. And now, the second-youngest Justice Minister in constitutional history.

It was a scarred record. But those scars made him shine all the brighter. That afternoon, Han Dong-hoon issued his first order.

"Resurrect the Securities Crimes Joint Investigation Task Force."

His staff asked, "Tomorrow right away?"

"Yes. Tomorrow right away."

The Securities Crimes Joint Investigation Task Force had been disbanded in 2019 under Justice Minister Choo Mi-ae. It was the organization that exclusively handled crimes such as stock price manipulation, unfair trading, and accounting fraud. It was the very organization in which Han Dong-hoon had investigated the Lone Star stock manipulation case.

The reason for its disbandment was never made clear. However, after its dissolution, investigations into securities crimes noticeably decreased. The shadows over Yeouido grew deeper still.

The next day, May 18th, the Financial and Securities Crimes Joint Investigation Task Force was launched at the Seoul Southern District Prosecutor's Office. The media called it "the return of Yeouido's grim reaper."

Two days into his tenure, Han Dong-hoon executed a major reshuffle of high-ranking prosecutors. The prosecutors general who had been favored under the Moon Jae-in administration stepped down en masse. Inside and outside the Ministry of Justice, people spoke of "a purge of the past." Han Dong-hoon was unmoved.

"Personnel matters are everything. Placing the right people in the right positions is how you revive an organization." On June 14th, he issued another order.

"From now on, do not use the honorific suffix '-nim' in internal Ministry documents. Write 'Justice Minister' instead of 'Justice Minister-nim.'"

It seemed like a small change. But it was a declaration of break with authoritarianism. A single form of address changes culture. When culture changes, the organization changes.

Han Dong-hoon said,

"Holding a high position does not mean one should receive honorific language.

We are all public servants working for the people."

That summer, Han Dong-hoon's face flooded online communities. Memes were created, his quotes circulated, and fan pages appeared. The term "Han Dong-hoon phenomenon" even emerged.

One political analyst offered this assessment:

"The middle class is responding well.

He is earning passing marks in appearance and speech, calligraphy and judgment, and in morality."

Sineonseopan (□□□□) - the four standards used when selecting officials: appearance, speech, calligraphy, and judgment.

Han Dong-hoon drew people's attention in all four areas. Yet he did not let popularity go to his head.

"Rule of law based on justice and common sense.

That is what I must do.

Every morning he arrived at the office at seven o'clock.

He left work past eleven at night as a rule.

He reduced the use of official vehicles and took public transportation whenever possible.

In the elevator, he pressed the buttons himself.

When an aide tried to hold an umbrella over him, he waved him away. 'On rainy days, everyone gets wet.'

That was how Han Dong-hoon understood justice.

That holding a high position did not grant one the right to escape the rain. That everyone lived under the same sky.

A minister caught in the rain.

That image remained in people's hearts.

That was how the era of Justice Minister Han Dong-hoon began.

If this book has stayed with you, even briefly, please support the publication of the next story.

(Voluntary donations requested. Nonghyup 302-1096-0948-81 Account holder: Kim Kyung-jin)

← Previous Chapter

See every chapter

Next Chapter →

Attorney · Former Member of the National Assembly · AI Policy Researcher

kimkj.com

© 2026 Kim Kyung-jin. All rights reserved.

#KimKyungjin #AllLibrary #TheHanDonghoonStory

Chapter 15: War Against Crime

← Previous Chapter

See every chapter

Next Chapter →

PART 04 Han Dong-hoon Finding Answers in Citizens' Lives · Source Text 02

In 2022, when Han Dong-hoon took office as Minister of Justice, South Korea was suffering under the terror of voice phishing.

Hundreds of billions of won in damage occurred yearly. Most victims were elderly. People losing their lifetime savings overnight became the norm.

Some victims took their own lives.

A voice on the other end of the line was destroying lives.

Han Dong-hoon clenched his teeth as he read the report.

"Why can't you catch them?"

The official answered.

"Most perpetrators are abroad. They operate from China, Southeast Asia, and other places. The only ones in the country are money collectors."

"Then catch all of them."

In July 2022, the Ministry of Justice launched the 'Voice Phishing Joint Investigation Task Force.' The prosecutors' office, police, Financial Supervisory Service, and mobile carriers participated together.

Han Dong-hoon led the effort directly.

"Focus on recovering damages.

Catching the perpetrators is important too, but returning the victims' money is more urgent."

It was someone's retirement savings. It was someone's housing deposit.

It was someone's child's tuition. Restoring that money was true justice. By year end, the voice phishing damage recovery rate had more than doubled compared to the previous year.

Of course, damages still occurred, but

at least the message was delivered that the state had not abandoned the issue. Securities crime investigations also intensified.

The Financial and Securities Crime Joint Investigation Task Force, nicknamed 'Yeouido's Grim Reaper,' began tracking stock manipulation rings. Crimes that devastated retail investors (thematic stock schemes, chatroom fraud, unfair trading practices) came under investigation.

Han Dong-hoon urged the investigation team.

"Remember the tears of retail investors. They bought stocks with money they had saved their whole lives. You must bring those who stole that money before the courts of justice." The National Finance Crime Joint Investigation Task Force was also launched. It was to prevent the leaking away of citizens' tax money. The targets were crimes eating away at national finances, subsidy misappropriation, fraudulent claims, improper benefit claims.

Han Dong-hoon repeated the same thing in every meeting.

"You must be able to explain it in three lines.

Why this person needs to be investigated,

explain it in three lines so any citizen can understand.

If you can't do that, don't conduct that investigation."

The three-line principle.

It was a philosophy he had held since his days as a prosecutor.

It meant not to hide behind complex legal principles and technical jargon.

Any investigation the public cannot accept

is merely an exercise of power, not justice. That was his belief.

"Even stripped of embellishment, there must be legitimacy."

He always added this remark to the investigation team.

That embellishment. It was the will of power, political intent, factional logic, and the like. It meant you should be able to say 'This person deserves punishment' even after setting all that aside. It was an order to increase the integrity of investigations.

In 2023, Han Dong-hoon's prosecutors conducted investigations without discriminating by political affiliation. Cases involving opposition party figures and ruling party figures were treated identically. There was no 'us versus them.' Only equality before the law.

Complaints broke out in some quarters.

"Why are you investigating our people?"

Han Dong-hoon answered.

"We do not discriminate by faction.

We apply the law more strictly to the powerful. That is why prosecutors exist."

That was ganggangyakyak.

Firm with the strong, fair to the weak. This principle was prosecutor Han Dong-hoon's creed and became Minister Han Dong-hoon's philosophy. It was not the easy path. It was a path that earned enmity from both sides. Yet if it was the path of justice, he walked it willingly.

If this book has stayed with you even for a moment, please help bring the next story to the world.

(Voluntary Support Request: Nonghyup 302-1096-0948-81 Account Holder: Kim Kyung-jin)

← Previous Chapter

See every chapter

Next Chapter →

Attorney · Former Member of the National Assembly · AI Policy Researcher

kimkj.com

© 2026 Kim Kyung-jin. All rights reserved.

#KimKyungjin #AllLibrary #TheHanDonghoonStory

Chapter 16: Preparing for the Population Cliff

← Previous Chapter

See every chapter

Next Chapter →

PART 04 Han Dong-hoon Finding Answers in the Field of People's Livelihoods · Source Text 03

On May 28, 2022, Han Dong-hoon stood before the press.

"We will consider establishing an Immigration Service."

The reporters stirred. An Immigration Service? In Korea? In a nation that had long taken pride in being a homogeneous people? Han Dong-hoon explained calmly.

"South Korea is hurtling toward a population cliff. In 2020, births numbered 270,000. In 2021, 260,000. The numbers keep falling. If we continue on this path, Korea will face severe labor shortages within twenty years."

He recited the numbers. Behind the cold figures lay an urgent sense of crisis. "Currently, approximately 2 million foreign nationals reside in Korea. Of these, more than 400,000 are undocumented. If order in residency collapses, immigration policy itself becomes unstable. The prerequisite for flexible immigration is strict residency management."

Flexible immigration requires strict residency management.

This sentence distilled his philosophy of demographics and national governance. It meant: open the doors, but not without order. It was a balance between welcome and principle.

In 2023, the Ministry of Justice expanded the E-7-4 visa quota. The E-7-4 is a skilled worker visa. It is a system granting long-term residency status to foreign workers who have worked for a set period in manufacturing, agriculture, fishing, and other sectors.

Han Dong-hoon said this:

"These are people who have labored quietly in our workplaces. It is right to open a path for them to remain legally."

At the same time, enforcement against undocumented residency was strengthened.

"Tolerance without principle breeds chaos. To protect those who entered legally, we must be strict with those who entered illegally."

Criticism emerged from some quarters: "If we increase immigration, jobs will decrease." "Foreign crime will rise."

Han Dong-hoon responded:

"Look at the data.

The crime rate among foreign nationals is lower than among citizens.

The job issue is the same.

Foreign workers are employed in the 3D jobs that citizens avoid.

Without them, our industries cannot function."

He visited worksites across the country.

Factories, farms, fish markets. He went wherever foreign workers labored. He listened to their stories.

One Vietnamese worker spoke:

"I came to Korea and worked for ten years. Now I have built a house in my hometown. My parents live comfortably. I am grateful to Korea."

Han Dong-hoon nodded.

"These people are our fellow citizens.

They sweat alongside us, pay taxes alongside us,

and build this nation alongside us."

The same sweat, the same taxes, the same sky. What mattered more than nationality was the spirit of living together. The Immigration Service officially launched. It was an external agency under the Ministry of Justice. Han Dong-hoon spoke at the launch ceremony:

"South Korea now begins its transition to an immigration nation. There is no reason to fear. The United States, Canada, Australia, all were built by immigrants. So can we." Of course, not everything went smoothly. Conflicts arose between departments over the Immigration Service's establishment, and securing budget was difficult. But the seed had been planted.

Han Dong-hoon reflected:

"The tree I plant will bear fruit ten or twenty years from now. I do not know where I will be then, but if this nation survives beyond the population cliff, that is enough." He believed that was the meaning of politics. Not immediate votes, but decisions for future generations. Doing what must be done even if it brings criticism. The one who plants the seed may not be the one who harvests it. Still, someone must plant.

If this book has remained with you, even briefly, please support so that the next story can reach the world.

(Voluntary support requested: Nonghyup 302-1096-0948-81 Account holder: Kim Kyung-jin)

← Previous Chapter

See every chapter

Next Chapter →

Attorney · Former Member of the National Assembly · AI Policy Researcher

kimkj.com

© 2026 Kim Kyung-jin. All rights reserved.

#KimKyungjin #AIBLibrary #TheHanDonghoonStory

Chapter 17: Laws for the Weak

← Previous Chapter

See every chapter

Next Chapter →

PART 04 Han Dong-hoon Seeking Answers in the Field of People's Livelihoods - Original Text 04

On August 17, 2022, Han Dong-hoon attended a cabinet meeting with a bill in hand: a strengthened Stalking Punishment Act.

It involved placing electronic anklets on stalkers. At the time, stalking victims lived in fear. Even with restraining orders in place, perpetrators appeared without fail. There were cases where victims were killed. A sheet of paper with an order could not save lives.

Han Dong-hoon spoke at the meeting.

"Stalking is a precursor to murder. If the state cannot protect victims, it has no reason to exist."

The bill passed.

That November, another bill was announced for legislative notice.

Lowering the age of criminal liability for juveniles.

Juveniles with criminal immunity refer to young people under an age that cannot be held criminally responsible. At the time, the standard was under 14 years old. No matter how serious a crime a 13-year-old committed, the maximum punishment was placement in a juvenile reformatory.

The problem was that crimes exploiting this loophole were increasing. There were reports of adult organized crime members using teenagers to commit crimes.

It was a matter of saying, "You do it since you won't be punished anyway." The shadow of the law was becoming a breeding ground for crime.

Han Dong-hoon pushed for a bill to lower the age to 13.

Criticism poured in.

"Are you trying to make children into criminals?" "Rehabilitation should come first, not punishment." Han Dong-hoon responded.

"I don't want to punish children either. But what about the other children who are harmed by those children? Where should the parents of an 11-year-old girl beaten by a 13-year-old boy turn for help?"

He viewed the law from the perspective of victims.

"Protecting the weak is why the law exists. The victim's suffering does not decrease simply because the perpetrator is a minor."

Who does the law exist for?

Han Dong-hoon's answer was clear.

For those who are crying.

The push for Jessica's Law came from the same understanding.

Jessica's Law originated in the United States. It involves disclosing the personal information of child sex offenders and restricting their residence near facilities for children. It was created following the 2005 murder of 9-year-old Jessica by a convicted sex offender in Florida.

Han Dong-hoon pushed for a Korean version of Jessica's Law.

"Children cannot protect themselves. The state must step in."

Improving the working conditions of correctional officers was also his concern.

Correctional officers are public employees who work in prisons and detention centers. They manage inmates, operate rehabilitation programs, and prevent escapes. It was dangerous and difficult work, yet their conditions were poor. They were also someone's father, mother, or child.

On May 25, 2022, just eight days into his tenure, Han Dong-hoon ordered improvements to the working conditions of correctional officers. "Chronic staffing shortages, inadequate conditions, aging facilities. I will address these three issues." On June 4, a plan to improve salaries and benefits for correctional staff was finalized. It included raises in hazard pay, realistic adjustment of overtime compensation, and the introduction of psychological counseling programs.

Han Dong-hoon visited prisons in person. He shared meals with correctional officers. One correctional officer said,

"Minister, this is the first time we've ever shared a meal with you like this."

Han Dong-hoon laughed.

"I'm not a minister but a colleague. We are the same civil servants, are we not?"

On October 28, at the Correction Day commemoration ceremony, Han Dong-hoon spoke.

"I will provide correctional services at the highest world standard. Inmates are people too. It is the state's duty to help them return to society through rehabilitation."

He also pursued policies for inmates.

Expansion of vocational training programs, employment linkage after release, and increases in reintegration support funds. There were also criticisms asking, "Why help criminals?"

Han Dong-hoon responded.

"If an inmate commits another crime after release, who suffers? Another victim is created. Preventing reoffending is how we reduce victims."

That was his philosophy.

Protect the weak, but do not let perpetrators become weak themselves. Break the cycle. He believed this was the role of the law. Recovery, not revenge; reconstruction, not punishment. That was true justice.

If this book has remained with you even for a moment, please support it so that the next story can reach the world.

(Voluntary support requested - Account: Nonghyup 302-1096-0948-81 Account holder: Kim Kyung-jin)

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

Attorney · Former Member of the National Assembly · AI Policy Researcher

kimkj.com

© 2026 Kim Kyung-jin. All rights reserved.

[#KimKyungjin](#) [#AILibrary](#) [#TheHanDonghoonStory](#)

Chapter 18: The One-vs-180 Battle

← Previous Chapter

See every chapter

Next Chapter →

PART 04 Han Dong-hoon Finding Answers in the Lives of the People · Original Text 05

One day in January 2023, Han Dong-hoon's phone was bombarded with text messages. "Minister, a photo from a dinner gathering is spreading."

A photograph was circulating online.

It appeared to show Han Dong-hoon at a drinking gathering with young women. The opposition party immediately launched an attack.

"The Justice Minister received entertainment in Cheongdam-dong." "He has a moral flaw." "He should resign." Democratic Party members attacked Han Dong-hoon relentlessly in the National Assembly, on broadcast, and on social media. Former Democratic Party Chairman Yoo Si-min appeared on television to criticize him as well. The onslaught poured in. Han Dong-hoon did not remain silent.

"I will stake everything."

He held a press conference.

"That photograph is fabricated.

I was not at that gathering. I will present evidence."

Han Dong-hoon disclosed his phone records, credit card statements, and vehicle movement records. He was elsewhere on the date in question. The lie crumbled before the numbers. It did not take long for the truth to emerge. The photograph was a composite. Someone had created it with deliberate intention to damage Han Dong-hoon.

He filed a defamation suit.

The trial proceeded. The result was a victory for Han Dong-hoon.

He said:

"This is a battle against fake news. This is not just my personal problem. It is standing against attempts to destroy people through falsehoods."

Truth is slow, but it arrives eventually.

In 2023, a greater struggle awaited.

The arrest warrant request for Lee Jae-myung, the Democratic Party leader.

The prosecution requested an arrest warrant for Lee Jae-myung over allegations of special favors in the Daejangdong development project and allegations of sponsorship funds for Seongnam FC.

The opposition party protested.

"This is political oppression." "This is prosecutorial autocracy under the Yoon Suk-yeol administration."

The arrest consent motion was presented to the National Assembly. A member of the National Assembly cannot be arrested during the session without Assembly consent. If the arrest consent motion failed, the warrant would be worthless. The Democratic Party held an overwhelming majority. 168 seats. The People Power Party held 108 seats. If it came down to numbers, defeat was inevitable. The calculator already showed the answer. But on September 21st, something unexpected happened.

The arrest consent motion passed. Ayes 149, noes 136, abstentions 6, invalid votes 4. Members of the Democratic Party had voted against their own party.

Han Dong-hoon sank into thought that evening.

"This is the power of the common good."

There were people who transcended factional divides to call what was right, right. There were people who followed public common sense rather than party logic. Conscience broke through the wall of numbers. As Justice Minister, Han Dong-hoon fought a battle of one against 180. He faced the entire opposition party. He also received criticism from some members of his own party asking "why stir up this fight?" But he did not back down.

"If it is a fight for the common good, you must fight regardless of the outcome. There are times when you must fight even if you lose."

Fighting not to win but because it was right. That was Han Dong-hoon's way. In December 2023, Han Dong-hoon stepped down from his post as Justice Minister. It was a 19-month term. Short, if you measure it by time. Yet in that period, he changed much.

Revival of the Securities Crime Investigation Unit. Voice Phishing Joint Investigation Team. National Finance Crime Joint Investigation Team. Establishment of the National Immigration Service. Strengthening of the anti-stalking law. Lowering the age threshold for juvenile criminal liability. Improvement of the treatment of correctional officers.

And above all, the principle of strength to the strong, weakness to the weak.

Strong against the strong, weak against the weak.

As Han Dong-hoon left the minister's office, he reflected.

"Now the next fight waits."

He understood. The Justice Ministry was not an ending but a beginning. A larger stage awaited him.

There he would have to fight another battle of one against 180. Or perhaps one against 190.

Yet he was not afraid.

"If it is the right thing to do, you must do it. The outcome is a separate matter." A deep-rooted tree does not sway in the wind.

That was Han Dong-hoon.

If this book has remained with you even for a moment, please support it so that the next story can come to the world.

(Voluntary support requested to: Nonghyup 302-1096-0948-81, account holder: Kim Kyung-jin)

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

Attorney · Former Member of the National Assembly · AI Policy Researcher

kimkj.com

© 2026 Kim Kyung-jin. All rights reserved.

[#KimKyungjin](#) [#AILibrary](#) [#TheHanDonghoonStory](#)

Chapter 19: The Declaration Not to Run in the General Election

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

PART 05 Han Dong-hoon Relinquishing Privilege · Original Text 01

December 21, 2023, People Power Party headquarters on Yeouido, Seoul. Han Dong-hoon sat facing the party's floor leader, who was also serving as acting party chairman.

Days earlier, the party chairman had abruptly resigned, leaving the party without leadership four months before the general election. His name was being mentioned within party circles.

The request was for him to step down as Minister of Justice and take over the party.

"Minister, you must take over the party."

Han Dong-hoon gazed out the window for a moment.

During his tenure as minister, an invisible rift between the ruling party and the presidential office had been deepening.

His candid comments on the Kim Keon-hee matter, harsh words about the medical crisis, and questions raised about the Myung Tae-gyun incident: he had already become an 'inconvenient minister.'

Entering politics would mean walking into the heart of that rift. Five days later, on December 26, an online national committee meeting was held.

Of 824 eligible members, 650 participated, and with 627 in favor and 23 opposed, the motion to appoint Han Dong-hoon as emergency countermeasures chairman passed. It was overwhelming support of 96.46 percent.

That night, however, the words Han Dong-hoon spoke upon taking office astonished people both inside and outside the party.

"I will not run in a regional constituency.

I will not run as a proportional representative either."

By the standards of the political establishment, it was a declaration that was difficult to comprehend.

The post of emergency countermeasures chairman typically leads either to returning as party chairman after a general election victory or to becoming a stepping stone for a presidential bid. A top

spot on the proportional representation list or a nomination in a metropolitan constituency where victory was highly likely was considered a natural reward.

Instead, he declared, "I will do whatever it takes for victory, but I will not take the fruits of that victory for myself."

Some interpreted it as a calculated move aimed at a direct path to the presidency.

The reasoning, they said, was that becoming a lawmaker would actually tie his hands. Others shook their heads, calling him a political novice who did not understand the grammar of Yeouido politics. Former Representative Yu Seung-min criticized him, saying, "Not running in a difficult or competitive district is irresponsible." But that day, from the podium, Han Dong-hoon said this:

"Rather than 'before party, after self,' it is 'before people, after self.'

The people come before the People Power Party."

'Before party, after self' is an old maxim among partisan politicians.

It means putting the party first and setting aside personal interests. But Han Dong-hoon inverted even that maxim. The people come before the party, he said.

As a party politician, it was a risky statement.

But he made clear that what he was looking toward was not Yeouido but the people beyond it.

After announcing he would not run, his schedule became grueling.

He woke before dawn and traveled the country. He sought out competitive districts and shook the hands of candidates. "I would be pleased to win, but more important is the party winning." Some candidates were moved to tears by his words.

A politician speaking of his party's victory rather than his own election was not something commonly heard on Yeouido.

Emergency Countermeasures Chairman Han Dong-hoon staged a rare scene in Korean politics.

A person who could have grasped the fruits of power voluntarily declared he would set them aside.

"I will not follow the grammar of Yeouido."

His words were both declaration and challenge. A rejection of how Yeouido operates and an experiment in new political culture.

If this book has remained with you for even a moment, please support its continuation so that the next chapter can reach the world.

(Voluntary support account: Nonghyup 302-1096-0948-81 Account holder: Kim Kyung-jin)

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

Attorney · Former Member of the National Assembly · AI Policy Researcher

kimkj.com

© 2026 Kim Kyung-jin. All rights reserved.

[#KimKyungjin](#) [#AIBLibrary](#) [#TheHanDonghoonStory](#)

Chapter 20: Privilege Relinquished by His Own Hand

← Previous Chapter

See every chapter

Next Chapter →

PART 05 Han Dong-hoon Relinquishing His Privilege · Original Text 02

After taking the position of emergency committee chairman, Han Dong-hoon stirred tensions within the party once more during the nomination process. The condition he set was straightforward.

He would establish renouncing parliamentary immunity as a prerequisite for nomination.

Parliamentary immunity is a constitutional right granted to members of the National Assembly.

It is the right not to be arrested without Assembly approval during a session, except when caught committing a crime. It is an institution designed to protect the freedom of legislative activities.

Yet this privilege had often become a shield for lawmakers accused of crimes. It was for this reason that the public began mocking it as an "all-powerful golden badge." Han Dong-hoon asked the candidates: "Will you give up parliamentary immunity?" Some candidates showed reluctance. There was pushback: "Why should only we do this?" But Han Dong-hoon did not back down. "A party the public does not trust cannot win. We must start by relinquishing our privilege."

He did not stop at parliamentary immunity. He also advocated reducing the number of National Assembly members from 300 to 250. He put forward the return of legislative salaries as a nomination standard. It meant lawmakers would return a portion of their compensation.

"The public does not demand sacrifice from politicians.

Rather, they hope to share the same hardship from the same perspective.

Only if we relinquish our privilege first will the public listen to what we say."

Of course, not all these proposals came to pass.

Politics is the art of compromise, and it does not change by the will of a single person. Reducing the number of National Assembly members required constitutional amendment, and the pledge to renounce parliamentary immunity carried no legal force. Critics said it was "nothing but performance."

Yet the question he raised remained valid. Why could politicians not relinquish their privilege on their own? While demanding that the public share the burden of hardship, why did they cling to their vested interests? What Han Dong-hoon posed was not mere electoral strategy.

It was a question about the nature of politics itself.

Does elected power exist to serve the public, or does it exist for the benefit of those elected?

He spoke these words:

"Politicians must change first. Politics that waits for the public to change is not politics."

If this book has stayed with you, even for a moment, please support it so the next story may reach the world.

(Voluntary support: NH Bank 302-1096-0948-81 Account holder: Kim Kyung-jin)

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

Attorney · Former Member of the National Assembly · AI Policy Researcher

kimkj.com

© 2026 Kim Kyung-jin. All rights reserved.

[#KimKyungjin](#) [#AIBLibrary](#) [#TheHanDonghoonStory](#)

Chapter 21: Vigilance Against Preferential Treatment of Former Officials

← Previous Chapter

See every chapter

Next Chapter →

PART 05 Han Dong-hoon Relinquishing Vested Interests · Original Text 03

July 2024, a forum for candidates to become party leader.

The moderator asked.

"If you had not pursued politics, what would you be doing now?"

Han Dong-hoon paused to think, then answered.

"When my public service ends, I decided I will not practice law.

I think I would have become a professor teaching criminal law and criminal procedure at a law school in my region." This answer revealed a long-held conviction of his.

Preferential treatment of former officials (□□□□). This refers to the practice by which former prosecutors or judges who enter legal practice use past connections to exert influence over cases. It has been identified as a chronic abuse in the legal profession.

Han Dong-hoon had been wary of preferential treatment for former officials since his days as a prosecutor.

Those who knew him said, "He does not even meet with lawyers who engage in such preferential treatment." He accepted no entertainment, no gifts, no requests. Within the prosecution, he earned a reputation for "being unusually strict about public and private distinctions." Some called that principle; others criticized it as inflexibility. For someone who rose to prosecutor general level, refusing the benefits of preferential treatment was no trivial matter. In Korean legal circles, such a choice requires considerable resolve.

After ending his career as a prosecutor, if one enters a large law firm, one can earn tens of billions of won annually. Relationships with junior colleagues and peers from the past play a decisive role in taking on cases. Han Dong-hoon ruled out that path from the start.

"If I leave politics, I will not practice law."

This statement also meant that politician Han Dong-hoon was cutting off his own escape route. Even if pushed out of politics, he would not take the path of using legal connections to get by. In a sense, it was burning his bridges.

Critics asked: If a politician cuts off his escape route, is that not more dangerous? Does a person without a fallback cling to power more desperately?

Han Dong-hoon answered this way.

"Which is more authentic politics: politics where you have a way out and can withdraw easily, or politics where you have no way out and look only to the people?"

There is an anecdote from his days as a prosecutor.

When investigating a major case, the defendant's attorney was a retired senior prosecutor. Ordinarily, a junior prosecutor would show respect to a senior. But Han Dong-hoon made no exception.

He investigated according to law and principle and secured a guilty verdict.

After that case, he earned the nickname "viper." It meant that once he bit, he did not let go. To some, that was praise; to others, a cause for caution. Being wary of preferential treatment for former officials is not simply a matter of integrity.

It is a question of where to position oneself within the network of power. Han Dong-hoon was an insider in the prosecution, an organization wielding state power, yet he resisted being drawn into its practices.

That choice isolated him at times, but it also created a different kind of trust.

If this book has remained with you for even a moment, please support us so that the next story can reach the world.

(We welcome your voluntary support. Account: Nonghyup 302-1096-0948-81, Account holder: Kim Kyung-jin)

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

Attorney · Former Member of the National Assembly · AI Policy Researcher

kimkj.com

© 2026 Kim Kyung-jin. All rights reserved.

[#KimKyungjin](#) [#AILibrary](#) [#TheHanDonghoonStory](#)

Chapter 22: The Language of New Conservatism

← Previous Chapter

See every chapter

Next Chapter →

PART 05 Han Dong-hoon Who Let Go of Vested Interests · Original Text 04

There is an expression Han Dong-hoon frequently uses in politics.

It is the term "Fellow Citizens."

In Korean politics, voters are typically addressed as "honored citizens" or "the people."

A more familiar way to address them is "fellow citizens."

Yet the expression "fellow citizens" was unfamiliar.

It was a deliberate attempt to erase the hierarchy that existed between politicians and the public. "I am not your leader.

I am your fellow citizen."

This expression contained his political philosophy.

Politicians are not rulers above the people but those who walk alongside them. It was the same philosophy that Jon Favreau pursued in President Obama's speeches. The idea was that politicians are not heroes leading the people but advocates who speak on behalf of their stories.

Han Dong-hoon also frequently mentioned "clearing out the democratization movement faction."

The activist movement faction he spoke of did not refer only to the democratization movement forces of the 1980s.

What he criticized was the force that monopolized the legacy of the democratization movement and became a new vested interest.

"We must prevent Representative Lee Jae-myung and the Democratic Party from colluding with privileged activist factions and destroying the nation for their own survival."

It was a direct expression.

In Korean politics, the activist movement faction had long held moral superiority.

This was because there was historical legitimacy in having fought against dictatorship.

Han Dong-hoon criticized that this legacy had degenerated into new privilege.

His language differed from conservatism's traditional rhetoric.

Past conservatism prioritized "anti-communism" and "growth."

Anti-communism was a legacy of the Cold War era, and growth was the slogan of the industrialization era.

Yet the Cold War ended, and the era of high growth has passed.

For younger generations, that language became outdated.

Han Dong-hoon found different language.

He spoke of "fairness."

He spoke of "common sense."

He spoke of "equal opportunity."

These words were concepts originally monopolized by progressive camps.

But Han Dong-hoon sought to redefine them as conservative concepts. "Fairness is not the exclusive domain of the left.

Fair competition is the essence of market economy.

A society where those who follow the rules are rewarded, that is the society conservatism pursues."

His new language was not accepted by the entire conservative support base.

Some criticized him as "disguised progressive."

Others called him "an unprincipled opportunist."

Yet what he attempted was clear.

It was to break free from old factional logic and create language that could communicate with the new generation.

"I believe in conservative values.

But the era of explaining those values in outdated language has ended."

5 General Election Defeat and Reflection

The night of April 10, 2024. The ballot count broadcast began. As time passed, the gap widened. The Democratic Party won 175 seats, the People Power Party 108 seats. The Cho Kuk Innovation Party

took 12 seats and successfully formed a negotiating group in parliament.

It was a crushing defeat.

"I do not regret politics.

However, I am coming to feel that politics is truly difficult work."

If this book has been with you, please support us so that the next story can reach the world.

(Voluntary donation account: NH Bank 302-1096-0948-81 Account holder: Kim Gyung-jin)

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

Attorney · Former Member of the National Assembly · AI Policy Researcher

kimkj.com

© 2026 Kim Kyung-jin. All rights reserved.

[#KimKyungjin](#) [#AIBLibrary](#) [#TheHanDonghoonStory](#)

Chapter 23: Generational Change After the 586 Generation

← Previous Chapter

See every chapter

Next Chapter →

PART 06 Han Dong-hoon Pledges to Open a New Era · Original Text 01

It was spring 2024, in a coffee shop in Yeouido. With cherry blossoms scattering outside the window, Chairman Han Dong-hoon sipped an iced Americano and gazed quietly out at the street. At the end of his line of sight stood the round dome of the National Assembly building. Beneath that dome, the vast current that had dominated the Republic of Korea for nearly thirty years continued to swirl. It was the generation known as the '586 activist movement.'

They were youths who, in the 1980s, took to the streets armed with stones and Molotov cocktails to resist military dictatorship. It was their courage that allowed us to win a democracy where we could elect our president with our own hands.

That contribution is a history no one can deny.

Yet as mountains and rivers changed three times over, that 'courage' had become a 'privilege.' The medal of democratization became a shield protecting their exclusive cartel, and moral superiority turned into arrogance that would not permit criticism from others.

Just because a father fought against dictatorship does not mean his son can inherit that merit forever. No matter how great the sacrifice of the first generation of democratization, it cannot become a permanent free pass for the second and third generations.

Han Dong-hoon was born in 1973, a member of what people call the 'X generation.' The X generation is a unique cohort. In childhood they experienced the prosperity of freedom from absolute poverty thanks to industrialization, and in adolescence they breathed the air of liberty as they received the blessing of democratization. They do not take it for granted to sacrifice the individual for the collective. They respect personal taste, valuing skill over ideology and results over justification.

In his presidential campaign declaration, Han Dong-hoon recalled the emergence of Seo Tai-ji in spring 1992. 'At first he received harsh criticism from established critics, but he became a cultural president who changed the times. The transition of an era happens in an instant, like an explosion.' His invocation of Seo Tai-ji was not mere nostalgia. It was a will to recreate in politics that cultural shock of refusing existing order and grammar while setting new standards.

Just as Seo Tai-ji changed the grammar of music videos by crying 'I know,' Han Dong-hoon declares 'I am different' and seeks to change the grammar of politics.

The attitude Han Dong-hoon displays captures the essence of this generation's character. He approaches citizens dressed in a shirt without a necktie.

Rather than shouting grand slogans, he considers specific bills to address the problems citizens face.

What matters to him is not the past story of 'who fought for democracy.' It is the present question of 'who can improve citizens' lives right now.' He states this plainly.

"Now it is time for 586 politicians to make room so that the post-586 generation, which forms the backbone of our society, can forge their own fate."

This is not blame. It is a respectful goodbye to a generation that has played its part on history's stage. Just as a father passes the family business to his son, it is a natural request for generational transition where one era hands the torch to the next.

He is of a generation that experienced the IMF currency crisis with his whole being as a young professional and felt the profound truth that 'the age of rapid growth is not eternal.'

In 1997, what did young prosecutor Han Dong-hoon think as he watched news of the 'gold collection campaign' on television? The shock of witnessing a country that had boasted of the 'Miracle on the Han River' the day before suddenly receive an IMF bailout. That must have carved deep into his heart the lesson that 'no success is permanent.'

Therefore, rather than blind ideological struggle, he focuses on solving practical problems: immediate livelihood, youth employment, and sustainable pension reform. He confesses to feeling 'sorry' toward the 20-30-year-old generation. In an age where opportunities for rapid growth have vanished, he refuses pension reform that exploits youth or populist policies, instead making it the top priority of politics to build a 'ladder' that allows young people to accumulate assets.

The world the 586 generation passed through was an era of 'political excess.'

The side effect of political excess was that everything came to be divided by factional logic, and the struggle where 'my side is always right and your side is always wrong' became everyday.

A country where even while eating at a restaurant or when family gathers for holidays, the question 'Who did you vote for?' freezes the air. This is the bitter legacy left by 586 politics. Yet the world Han Dong-hoon seeks to open is different.

He dreams of a world ruled by common sense, fairness, and practicality. A world where children are not judged at school by their parents' profession rather than their grades. A world where you are rewarded for your hard work. A world where family is not torn apart by politics.

Han Dong-hoon's emergence is not mere 'player substitution.'

It is 'generational transition' that changes the rules of the game. It is a declaration to tear down the playing field of outdated factional logic built by activist predecessors and build a new playing field

where future, science, and citizens' common sense breathe. The age of ideology is waning and the age of competence is dawning. Han Dong-hoon is the gatekeeper opening that new morning.

If this book has stayed with you even for a moment, please support it so the next story can come out into the world.

(Voluntary support account: NH Nonghyup 302-1096-0948-81 Account holder: Kim Kyung-jin)

← Previous Chapter

See every chapter

Next Chapter →

Attorney · Former Member of the National Assembly · AI Policy Researcher

kimkj.com

© 2026 Kim Kyung-jin. All rights reserved.

#KimKyungjin #AILibrary #TheHanDonghoonStory

Chapter 24: We Must End the Imperial Presidency

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

PART 06 Han Dong-hoon Commits to Opening a New Era · Source Text 02

December 3, 2024, 10:30 p.m. The Republic of Korea lay buried in pitch-black darkness. At the moment emergency martial law was declared on television screens, many citizens doubted their own eyes and ears.

We never dreamed that in our nation, a 21st-century Korea that took pride in being an economic powerhouse ranking in the world's top ten and a cultural power, the military would seal off the National Assembly.

That night, countless parents must have trembled with anxiety as they gazed at their sleeping children's faces. "Can the country where my child will live really be like this?" It was a fear that seemed to resurrect the nightmare of Gwangju in 1980.

That night, Representative Han Dong-hoon did not hesitate.

He rushed to the National Assembly while crying out, "It is unconstitutional and illegal."

This time he raised a shield to protect democracy. Without his swift judgment and action, we might have faced a tragedy we cannot bear to imagine.

This incident threw a fundamental problem at us that cannot be dismissed merely as one president's aberration.

It was the limit of the "1987 system," namely the imperial presidency. In 1987, we drove out dictatorship and won direct presidential election. That was a great victory. But that system concentrated far too much authority in one person, the president. It gave power to rule like a king. A structure where the winner takes all and the loser loses everything. That was precisely the essence of the "87 system."

Think about it.

The moment our country's president enters the Blue House, he appoints the prosecutor general, the commissioner of the National Tax Service, and the chairman of the Korea Communications Commission.

He can fill thousands of positions with his people. And all this power rests on the judgment of one person. Whether drunk at dawn or in a state of lost reason due to anger, when that one person

presses the button, the military moves.

Han Dong-hoon found the current Korea crisis in the "institutional limits of the 87 system" and the "absence of political restraint."

Han Dong-hoon says this: "Throughout the 87 constitutional system, there were impeachment and martial law clauses, but there was a spirit of 'restraint' where political forces refrained from using them. However, through the Moon Jae-in administration and the Cho Kuk affair, that dam collapsed."

Within this structure, politics could only become war.

When they win an election, they seize the Blue House and the executive branch and try to crush their opponents completely. Conversely, when they lose, they cry out for impeachment and take to the streets for five years until the next election to bring down the president. "Martial law" and "impeachment." These terrible words threaten the Republic of Korea in tragic alternation. This is the sad self-portrait we have witnessed over the past thirty years. Look back just once. The impeachment of President Roh Moo-hyun, the impeachment of President Park Geun-hye, and even the impeachment of President Yoon Suk-yeol. Over thirty-seven years since democratization, we have experienced three impeachments. This is not what normal democracy looks like. This is a warning light that the system has broken down.

The declaration of emergency martial law on December 3, 2024, the presidential impeachment that followed, and the opposition party's habitual impeachment proceedings reaching thirty times showed that the 87 system had ceased to be a mechanism for managing conflict and had become a "tool of civil war" where one must kill the opponent to live.

Han Dong-hoon defined this as "an era where one side presses the nuclear button of martial law and the other presses the nuclear button of impeachment recklessly," and warned that if things continued this way, only alternating power transfers would repeat and the people's lives would be ruined.

Han Dong-hoon seeks to break this cycle of vicious repetition.

He says, "Now we must close the door on the 87 system." This is not about simply fixing a few constitutional clauses. It is about dividing the power concentrated in one president and creating a system where people can watch and check each other.

It is a call to create politics of compromise and dialogue rather than fighting to the death. He declared that he would become "the gatekeeper closing the door on the 87 system."

In the 2025 presidential election, he staked his political life on a decisive move to end the evils of the imperial presidency. He promised, "I will reduce the president's term to three years to align the timing of the 2028 general election and presidential election, and I will complete the constitutional amendment for a four-year renewable term." How many leaders in history have come forward saying they would reduce their own power? When George Washington refused a third term and stepped down, it became the cornerstone of American democracy. Han Dong-hoon's resolve will become a

new milestone for Korean democracy.

His blueprint for the Seventh Republic is clear. Through a "four-year renewable term distributed presidential system," he will disperse presidential powers and introduce a "bicameral system" in the National Assembly to prevent majority party dictatorship. He proposed concrete alternatives, saying, "I will abolish proportional representation and introduce a senate, with the senate elected through large electoral districts, thereby preventing regionalism and factional logic from dominating the legislative branch."

Han Dong-hoon's constitutional amendment theory differs from existing political circles' discussion in that it is a constitutional amendment to relinquish power rather than to extend it.

He said, "Constitutional amendment discussion of the type 'let me do this much and then change from next time' cannot gain public consent," and proved his sincerity through the practical promise: "If I become president, I will reduce my term."

The constitutional amendment he envisions is not a collusion of the powerful.

It is to create a safeguard to protect the people's lives. It is to ensure that no power holder can ever again point a gun at the people, and that no majority party can ever again abuse parliamentary power merely to eliminate political enemies.

When our children grow up and hold a presidential election, not a country where they sneer, "He'll get impeached this time too?" but a country where they take pride, saying, "Our nation's system is really well designed." That is the Seventh Republic Han Dong-hoon envisions.

Han Dong-hoon must have felt deeply that night.

"If we do not change the system, this fear will someday cover our children again." So he resolved to fight the monster of the imperial presidency. To end this wearisome state of civil war where martial law and impeachment alternate. That is the calling of the age that Han Dong-hoon carries.

If this book stayed by your side even briefly, please support it so that the next story can come into the world.

(Voluntary support requested. Account: Nonghyup 302-1096-0948-81 Account holder: Kim Gyeong-jin)

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

Attorney · Former Member of the National Assembly · AI Policy Researcher

kimkj.com

© 2026 Kim Kyung-jin. All rights reserved.

#KimKyungjin #AllLibrary #TheHanDonghoonStory

Chapter 25: The AI Revolution and the State's Role

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

PART 06 Han Dong-hoon Pledges to Open a New Era: Original Text 03

I am referring to 18th-century England, when the steam engine was first invented. People no longer had to rely solely on their own muscle power to work. Machines allowed humans to transcend their physical limitations. That was the First Industrial Revolution, a revolution of overcoming physical constraints. Factories that adopted the steam engine flourished, and the craftspeople who had hand-spun looms vanished into history.

Countries that rejected change became colonies, and countries that drove change dominated the world. There was no neutrality in the face of technological revolution. You either climbed aboard or were swept away.

Now we stand before another great wave.

It is the artificial intelligence revolution.

Han Dong-hoon defines this as a revolution of overcoming intellectual constraints.

If machines of the past replaced human arms and legs, AI extends the human brain. What would take us a lifetime to read, AI analyzes in mere seconds. Problems we could not solve, AI instantly provides solutions for.

If your child is studying sleeplessly to enter medical school, ask this question: Will doctors still diagnose the same way ten years from now? AI's accuracy in detecting cancer from X-ray images has already surpassed human doctors.

Lawyers, accountants, translators, all the professions once considered safe are now trembling.

Han Dong-hoon says this:

The age of general artificial intelligence will come within three to five years. This is not science fiction about a distant future. It is the reality unfolding before our eyes right now. The speed of this change is so rapid that even a moment's hesitation could leave us permanently behind.

Then what must the nation, the government, do?

Han Dong-hoon's answer is clear: The nation must lay the infrastructure.

Do you remember when President Park Chung-hee built the Busan-Seoul Expressway and established Pohang Iron and Steel? At the time, criticism poured in: What is a highway for when there are no cars? There was ridicule too: What will we build with a steel mill?

But because that expressway existed, the automobile industry emerged, logistics flowed, and the Korean economy could surge forward. Because of Pohang Iron and Steel, Hyundai Shipbuilding could construct ships, and Samsung could build semiconductor factories.

What is the expressway for the AI era?

Data centers and power grids. Running AI requires tremendous amounts of electricity. For semiconductor factories to operate without stopping, stable power supply is vital. Han Dong-hoon argues that the government must step forward to build nuclear power plants, erect transmission towers, and establish large-scale data center complexes. The state must take the lead in solving projects too vast and too risky for private companies to bear alone.

Right now, America's major tech companies are acquiring entire nuclear power plants for their AI data centers. Microsoft has secured Three Mile Island, and Amazon has secured a Pennsylvania plant. We have entered an era where electricity is the lifeblood of AI, the source of national power. But what about us? Are we wasting time trapped in debates about abandoning nuclear energy? He challenges the conservative establishment's traditional dogma of small government and raises the need for strong and capable government. Today's global competition transcends competition between companies and takes on the character of total nation-to-nation struggle. Trump and Xi Jinping both roll up their sleeves for their own companies, but our government cannot simply stand with folded hands and regulate. The state must take on the dirty work, the difficult work.

The United States is pouring \$52 billion through the Chips Act. China has declared a state-led AI rise and is investing astronomical sums. Japan is now mobilizing all national resources for semiconductor revival. What happens if we step back saying let the market handle it on this battlefield?

His thinking on regulation is equally firm: Everything should be permitted except what cannot be. Until now, whenever new technology emerged, we first tried to regulate it. Drones appeared: you cannot fly them there. Autonomous vehicles came: you cannot drive them here. AI arrived: you cannot use this. The regulator's first instinct is no. Why? Because if they say yes and an accident occurs, they become liable. Can innovation happen in such a structure?

But AI competition is a race against time. We cannot tie sandbags around the ankles of runners scrambling to keep pace. Han Dong-hoon wants to create a playground where AI can run freely. He has put forward an audacious pledge: Invest 150 trillion won in AI infrastructure, 50 trillion won in ecosystem development, for a total of 200 trillion won. This is an approach where government primes the pump to draw out private investment.

On data regulation too, he is bold.

Government must loosen data restrictions even if it means accepting some side effects. The fact that even the European Union, which strictly regulates personal information, is loosening restrictions shows that this is not ordinary times. He also says that military exemptions should be actively applied to AI talents so that overseas students can return to Korea.

Military exemptions for AI talent should apply not just to small companies but to large corporations as well. Do you know how many Korean geniuses are researching AI in Silicon Valley right now? Many of them cannot return to Korea because of military service obligations. If they return, they cannot conduct AI research for two years. In the AI world, two years is a generation. So they acquire U.S. citizenship and work for American companies. How long will we tolerate this irony, where talent nurtured by the Republic of Korea works for our competitors? This is not simply about earning money. It is a matter of Korea's survival. The nation that masters AI technology will seize the future.

Han Dong-hoon hopes Korea will be that protagonist. The future he envisions is a world in which the Korean people, holding the powerful tool of AI in their hands, live more prosperous and wiser lives than anyone else in the world.

We must also pay attention to global bloc formation.

In the AI competition era, will we go alongside North Korea, China, and Russia, or will we align with the United States and Japan? Han Dong-hoon's answer is clear. One of the achievements of the Yoon Suk-yeol administration was properly integrating into the Korea-US-Japan bloc.

He warns: If a pro-China administration takes power, Korea will face a difficult situation in a blocalized international environment, affecting both the political system and the economy.

In 1950, because the Republic of Korea stood with the free world, we have been able to enjoy today's prosperity. What would our fate have been if we had sided with North Korea then?

The choice of bloc in the AI era is the same. This is not merely a diplomatic question; it is a civilizational choice that determines the fate of our descendants for generations to come.

He is now turning the first spade for the expressway to the future.

Did those who attended the groundbreaking ceremony for the Busan-Seoul Expressway in 1970 know that it would change Korea's fate?

In 2025, when Han Dong-hoon is opening the AI expressway wide, fifty years from now people will remember it this way: that decision made Korea an AI superpower. This is precisely the national model for the AI era that Han Dong-hoon envisions.

If this book has remained with you even for a moment, please support us so that the next story can reach the world.

(Voluntary support account: Nonghyup 302-1096-0948-81 Account holder: Kim Kyung-jin)

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

Attorney · Former Member of the National Assembly · AI Policy Researcher

kimkj.com

© 2026 Kim Kyung-jin. All rights reserved.

[#KimKyungjin](#) [#AIBLibrary](#) [#TheHanDonghoonStory](#)

Chapter 26: We Need to Reconstruct the Myth of Success

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

PART 06 Han Dong-hoon Pledges to Open a New Era · Source Text 04

I read through Han Dong-hoon's campaign pledges from the recent presidential election carefully. Among them, there was a part that stood out, and I will introduce it.

The history of South Korea has been a succession of miracles that turned the impossible into the possible.

From battlegrounds reduced to ashes, we achieved two decisive leaps. In 1953, when the Korean War ended, our nation's per capita income was 67 dollars. We were the world's poorest country, worse off than Ghana and Zimbabwe in Africa. The international community called South Korea "a nation without hope." Yet seventy years later, we have become an economic power ranked in the world's top ten. No nation in human history has achieved such a leap. The first leap was President Syngman Rhee's "land reform."

It gave tenant farmers who had lived as sharecroppers the chance to own "their own land." The hope that "now what I earn from my work becomes mine" awakened the people, ignited their hunger for education, and laid the foundation for capitalism. It was the event that placed the cornerstone of the house called South Korea. Until then, most farmers had to borrow land from landowners and turn over more than half their harvest to them. No matter how hard they worked, they could not escape poverty. But when land reform created "their own land," the light in the farmers' eyes changed. "With rice from my land, I will educate my children." This hope became the starting point of South Korea's passion for education.

The second leap was President Park Chung-hee's "development of heavy and chemical industries."

A nation that had manufactured and sold wigs

declared it would build steel mills, manufacture ships, and produce automobiles.

The world laughed, but we did it. Because of that resolve, we were able to leap over the middle-income trap and reach the threshold of an advanced nation.

At the time, the World Bank assessed Korea's steel mill construction as "a country with no technology, no capital, no experience building a steel mill, that's insane."

Japanese steel companies also ridiculed the idea.

Yet Pohang Iron and Steel produced its first molten steel in 1973 and became the world's number one steel company within twenty years. That "insane" undertaking built today's South Korea.

Now Han Dong-hoon speaks of a "third miracle," that is, a "second leap."

Currently, South Korea's engine of growth is cooling.

The nation is losing its vitality to low birth rates and an aging population.

Young people are giving up, saying "effort does not pay off."

Will we settle for this, or will we leap again?

Han Dong-hoon chooses the leap without hesitation.

Two paths lie ahead of us.

One is the path of falling into stagnation like Japan's "lost three decades." The other is the path of leaping once more on the wave of the AI revolution. Han Dong-hoon asks: "Our parents' generation created miracles with bare hands. Is there any reason we cannot inherit that spirit of challenge?"

What he calls the "second land reform" and "second development of heavy and chemical industries" is not about imitating the past.

It is about inheriting that spirit and writing a new success myth with AI and cutting-edge technology. Just as land reform created "assets" for the people, now we must ensure that the people can possess new assets called data and technology.

Just as heavy and chemical industries made us a manufacturing powerhouse, we must now nurture AI, semiconductors, and biotechnology to become a technological hegemon.

His role model is the drive behind President Park Chung-hee's Five-Year Economic Development Plan. However, because the pace of change in the AI era is incomparably faster than before, he has proposed a "Two-Year Future Growth Plan" instead of a five-year one.

"Five years is too long. We must establish, review, and implement plans in one-year and two-year cycles. The president will directly serve as the situation room commander and direct the economic war." Just as President Park Chung-hee reviewed export dashboards each dawn, President Han Dong-hoon will review AI technology developments and global competitive conditions every day.

The economy is war, and the president is a commander. He promises not a president standing idle reading reports, but a president directing operations from the front lines.

The core of this plan is "strategic focus and concentration."

Linked to the five megacity strategy, he announced he would strategically distribute and concentrate industrial capacity currently concentrated in the capital region across five hub cities nationwide.

By designating "regulation-free zones" and introducing "tax-free funds" in each hub, he aims to create the conditions for companies to move to provincial areas and innovate freely.

This is the twenty-first-century version of the state-led development strategy that created heavy and chemical industrial zones and led industrialization in the past.

Ulsan did not become a city of automobiles and shipbuilding by chance. Gumi did not become the center of electronics by chance. It happened because the state strategically located and supported industries.

Han Dong-hoon aims to upgrade this strategy for the AI era. One city as a hub for AI semiconductors, another as the center for biotech AI, another as a testbed for autonomous vehicles. The vision is to make all of South Korea an experimental laboratory for AI innovation.

Han Dong-hoon speaks with confident conviction: "We can do this. We have the genes for it."

Scientists researching through the night, startup youth who challenge without fear of failure, talented people who lose out to none in the world. These are precisely the sources of South Korea's inner strength in which Han Dong-hoon believes.

Encoded in our DNA is the gene that says "we can."

A nation that rose from the ruins of war, a nation that overcame the IMF crisis through gold collection campaigns, a nation that astonished the world with K-quarantine during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We have grown stronger with each crisis.

Before this great challenge of the AI revolution, we will surely succeed. He believes the government must serve as a priming pump.

Cutting taxes so companies can invest freely, removing unnecessary regulations, creating a safety net so they can recover from failure. Thus creating a virtuous cycle where companies grow, good jobs emerge, and the fruits return to the people. This is the second leap Han Dong-hoon envisions.

He emphasizes that amid the trend toward a bloc-based global economy, "Korea-US-Japan cooperation" must serve as the springboard for economic leaps.

In an age when "capital has a nationality," the strategy is to forge a technology alliance with the United States and establish an "economic NATO" with Japan, Australia, and others to jointly address supply chain crises. He warns against wasting time trapped in tired ideological debates. While we are shackled to the past and tear each other down, the world is racing ahead at the speed of light.

Some people criticize cooperation with Japan, calling it 'pro-Japan.' But consider this. Samsung Electronics could produce the world's best semiconductors only because Japanese materials, components, and equipment were essential. Building our pride means not dwelling on past wounds, but surpassing Japan in the future. Han Dong-hoon calls us to run toward that future.

Han Dong-hoon takes our hands and points to the future. 'There lies a land of new opportunity. Let us go there together.' His eyes carry the same fire that burned in those who dreamed the 1970s Yeongil Bay miracle.

If this book has sat with you at all, please support the next story so it can reach the world.

(Voluntary contributions welcome. Account: Nonghyup 302-1096-0948-81 Account holder: Kim Kyung-jin)

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

Attorney · Former Member of the National Assembly · AI Policy Researcher

kimkj.com

© 2026 Kim Kyung-jin. All rights reserved.

[#KimKyungjin](#) [#AIBLibrary](#) [#TheHanDonghoonStory](#)

Chapter 27: The 3-4-7 Vision, Hope Contained in Numbers

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

PART 06 Han Dong-hoon Pledges to Open a New Era - Original Text 05

A politician's language sometimes sounds like grasping at clouds.

"A better tomorrow," "a future we build together," "the happiness of our citizens"... beautiful words that slip through our fingers. Promises forgotten once elections end. The people are exhausted. "That same line again?" But during last year's presidential campaign, Han Dong-hoon presented specific goals.

The '3-4-7 Vision.' Within these numbers lies the blueprint for the Korea he wishes to create.

Numbers do not lie.

Numbers can be verified and held accountable.

First, '3' stands for 'AI G3.'

It is the ambition for Korea to become a G3 power, the world's third-strongest nation in AI technology, while positioned between two great powers, the United States and China (the G2). This is no idle dream. We are already manufacturing the world's finest semiconductor memory. Internet and smartphone penetration rates are among the world's highest. The hardware and infrastructure are in place. Add our excellent minds and creativity to this, and AI G3 becomes an entirely achievable goal.

Consider this: AI cannot operate without semiconductors. And more than 60 percent of the world's memory semiconductors are produced in Korea. We already hold the key to the AI age. Opening the door to third place in the world with this key is not impossible. Through this, Han Dong-hoon seeks to raise Korea's national standing to the next level. He says: 'We stand at a crossroads in the AX (Artificial Intelligence Transformation) era: do we place our spoon in, or do we pull our finger back? Government and private sector must unite to invest 200 trillion won, build AI infrastructure, establish an innovation ecosystem, and grow again.'

Second, '4' means 'per capita national income of 40,000 dollars.'

For a long time, we have been trapped in the swamp of 30,000 dollars per capita. Prices rise, but paychecks remain frozen in place, a frustrating reality. Han Dong-hoon wants to break through this wall. Reaching 40,000 dollars means more than earning more money; it means a transformed quality of life. What changes at 40,000 dollars? You can leave the office at 6 p.m. and share dinner with your family. You have the means for weekend trips with your children. You need not lie awake worrying

about academy fees. You never postpone medical treatment because of hospital costs. The 40,000-dollar era Han Dong-hoon promises is the restoration of that abundant daily life.

Third, '7' stands for 'restoring 70 percent to the middle class.'

This is the heart of Han Dong-hoon's vision and its warmest part. Korea was once a nation where people believed, 'If I work hard, I can live well.' It was a sturdy nation with a thick middle class forming the backbone. But as polarization deepened, the middle class collapsed. 'A dragon born in a creek', that saying is now ancient history, and the ladder of upward mobility has been cut. In the 1980s, if your father worked in a factory, you could send your children to university. Hard work could bring home ownership. But what about now? Even working two jobs, buying a single apartment in Seoul is nearly impossible. With a child, education costs bend your back. Despair, the feeling that 'effort does not help', is consuming our young people.

Han Dong-hoon wants to rebuild that broken ladder. A society where 70 percent of all citizens feel they belong to the middle class. A society where even after falling, you do not hit bottom and can try again. A society where your parents' wealth does not decide your children's future. The world of 70 percent middle class he envisions is precisely such a just world.

He explains: 'The middle class is the waist of the economy. A healthy democracy also depends on the middle class. We must open an era of the growing middle class, where anyone with will and effort can become middle class.'

This '3-4-7 Vision' is not merely an election campaign promise. It is a goal that will make Korea's heart race again. Han Dong-hoon does not see the cold numbers on a blackboard; he sees the sweat, tears, and laughter of each individual citizen behind those numbers.

Remember 3-4-7. This is Han Dong-hoon's promissory note to the nation. If this promise is not kept, you may hold him accountable at any time.

This 3-4-7 Vision is no empty slogan but a blueprint grounded in reality, backed by concrete investment plans (200 trillion won) and implementation strategies (establishment of the Future Strategy Department, regulatory reform). He showed strong confidence, saying, 'Presenting numbers means taking responsibility for results.' He will walk steadily toward this goal, hand in hand with the people.

Many ask: 'Is growth more important or welfare?' Political circles have battled over this question for years. Conservatives call for growth; progressives call for distribution. But Han Dong-hoon shakes his head. 'Growth and welfare are not different things. Growth is the most powerful tool for welfare.'

The growth Han Dong-hoon speaks of is not growth that benefits only a handful of conglomerates. It is growth that distributes the vast fruits of the AI revolution fairly among all citizens. He calls this an 'ascending nation.' As the total wealth of the nation grows, those benefits flow like water to the weakest points, the lowest places.

He points out: 'Conservatives focused on growth and progressives on welfare alone, so the middle class was left out. There has been no conservative party that put the middle class front and center. Japan is an advanced nation, yet are its people happy? For the people to be happy, we must bring the working class into the middle class.' Here appears a groundbreaking idea: the 'Lifelong Welfare Account.'

Our current welfare system is far too complicated.

Child allowance, youth allowance, unemployment benefits, old-age pension... dozens and hundreds of programs scattered about, making it hard to even know what benefits you can receive.

If you do not apply, nothing is given.

Some starve in welfare gaps while others subtly exploit the system.

The 'Lifelong Welfare Account' binds all of this together into 'a secure wallet for my entire life.' From the moment of birth, the state opens an account in my name. When I fall ill, when I lose my job, when I retire, the state fills that account with necessary funds. I need not visit government offices collecting papers; AI understands my circumstances and provides needed support.

Imagine this: you suddenly lose your job. In the old way, you would go to the employment center, stand in line, submit paperwork, and wait for weeks. But with a Lifelong Welfare Account? The next morning, unemployment benefits appear in your account. Your child falls ill? Hospital costs are covered automatically. No complex applications, no humiliating documentation.

This account is not merely financial aid; it is the 'foundation of freedom' that lets each citizen take charge of designing their own life.

So that worry over living costs does not force you to abandon your dreams, so that hospital costs do not delay your treatment, the state becomes steady ground beneath you.

Han Dong-hoon says:

'Strict with the strong, warm with the weak.' This is his 'strong-strong-weak-weak' philosophy. Build a strong nation through growth, and use that strength to protect the weak even more thickly. The Lifelong Welfare Account is the most concrete promise bringing that warm philosophy to life.

He pledged to pair tax cuts filling the middle class's 'glass wallet', earned income tax reductions and expanded child tax credits, with robust welfare for the vulnerable. Rejecting populism like 'cash payments to all citizens' as 'fake welfare,' he promises to realize 'genuine welfare' through sustainable systems of growth and welfare. Yet every election season brings such promises: 'I will give every citizen one million won.' Tempting words. But where does that money come from? In the end, it is our taxes and our children's debt. This is not welfare but exploitation of future generations. Han Dong-hoon refuses such 'candy politics.'

He promised: 'I will return the fruits of the AI revolution to the people.' The productivity gains and economic growth from AI must not merely swell corporate profits; those gains must be captured as state revenue and become the source of welfare funding. 'AI has no vote. You hold the vote.' This reveals his philosophy that the benefits of technological innovation must be distributed fairly to citizens as sovereigns.

Many worry that AI will steal jobs. True words. AI will certainly replace many jobs. Yet simultaneously, AI creates enormous wealth.

Han Dong-hoon says that wealth must not belong to a few corporations but to all citizens. Channeling the wealth AI creates into citizens' welfare accounts. This is the new social contract of the AI age.

The fruits of the AI revolution will not fill the pockets of particular companies but will flow into your own 'welfare account.' This is the future of the 'growing middle class' that Han Dong-hoon promises. Through growth, he fills the nation's granary; with that granary, he dreams of being a warm economic president who gives without measure for the people's happiness.

If this book has rested beside you for a moment, please support so that the next story can reach the world.

(Voluntary support account: NH Bank 302-1096-0948-81, Account holder: Kim Kyung-jin)

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

Attorney · Former Member of the National Assembly · AI Policy Researcher

kimkj.com

© 2026 Kim Kyung-jin. All rights reserved.

[#KimKyungjin](#) [#AIBLibrary](#) [#TheHanDonghoonStory](#)

Chapter 28: Han Dong-hoon, Altar Server at Sudong Cathedral

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

PART 07 Han Dong-hoon the Man · Original Text 01

One Sunday morning in the early 1980s, the bell of Sudong Cathedral in Cheongju City, North Chungcheong Province, rings out across a quiet village. A boy in a white vestment stands before the altar, helping with mass. This child with close-cropped hair and eyes as clear as an angel's is called a "boksa," a young altar server who assists the priest during mass.

The boy stands with hands clasped together, devout and reverent.

A different kind of seriousness settles in his gaze, distinct from that of other children his age.

This boy is none other than young Han Dong-hoon.

Han Dong-hoon was born in Seoul in 1973. His childhood memories are filled not with the glittering streets of Seoul, but with the humble landscapes of Chungcheong.

The family moved to Cheongju due to his father's work transfer. His father was the head of the Korean division of AMK, then a global manufacturer of magnetic recording heads, and the factory was located in Cheongju.

His life in Cheongju remained an indelible memory throughout his life. Raised in a devout Catholic family, he worked as an altar server at Sudong Cathedral in Cheongju, assisting Father Gerald Hammond.

This blue-eyed priest, known by his Korean name Father Ham Je-do, came to Korea in the 1960s and devoted his life to missionary work in North Korea and tuberculosis eradication programs.

For young Han Dong-hoon, helping with mass beside Father Ham was not merely a religious ritual. It was a process of learning dedication to community and warmth toward others. Later, he would compare this time to Toto, the protagonist of the Italian film "Cinema Paradiso." Just as Toto learned about film beside the projectionist, Han Dong-hoon learned how to live beside Father Ham.

His father too was deeply faithful, having attended seminary to become a priest in his youth. This family environment became the soil in which Han Dong-hoon naturally acquired the value of "public good" from childhood.

The fact that he later sought out Father Ham Je-do, now over ninety years old, to share old memories shows that even amid a brilliant elite life, he treasured his roots and connections.

When he moved to Jampyeong-dong, Seocho-gu, Seoul in the fifth grade of elementary school, he entered the life of Gangnam's prestigious academic district. His trajectory through Shindong Elementary School, Gyeongwon Middle School, and Hyundai High School, culminating in admission to Seoul National University's School of Law, represents the typical course of South Korea's mainstream elite. Throughout his school years, he never dropped from the top ranks of his class and served as class president, a model student.

With his tall stature, fair complexion, and excellent grades, he was popular among his female classmates and commanded deep respect among his male peers.

However, the Han Dong-hoon his classmates remember was not merely a top student who excelled at academics. He was an outsider possessed of a contrarian spirit, one who stood within the mainstream order yet resisted injustice.

An anecdote from his middle school years illustrates this. A teacher instructed students to sign a farewell note only for a top student who was transferring schools. Han Dong-hoon, then class president, raised the issue publicly: "Why must we sign only for that student? It violates fairness."

The word "fairness" from the mouth of a fourteen-year-old boy. It was the seed of a value he would guard with his life.

He mixed freely with so-called "problem students" and those with lower grades. Even rebellious children, it is said, acknowledged and followed him when he was class president. He did not bow to authority or hierarchy but possessed a horizontal sense of fellowship.

He enrolled at Seoul National University's School of Law in 1992. At age 22, while still a fourth-year student, he passed the 37th National Judicial Examination.

During his university years, he served as a founding member of Seoul National University's amateur orchestra club SNUPO, where he also played the flute. As a law student, he did not abandon his artistic sensibility.

During his time at the Judicial Research and Training Institute, he could not drink alcohol, which concerned his classmates. Instead of being swept up in drinking gatherings, he kept his own time and saved money. He had learned from childhood how not to be swept along by the crowd.

The sense of the "marginal person" who belonged to the mainstream while not falling into its logic. This became the driving force that would later allow him to direct his efforts toward living power. He loved his organization, yet he was an "eternal outsider" who did not surrender to its logic.

If this book has remained beside you for even a moment, please support us so that the next story can come into the world.

(Voluntary support account: Nonghyup 302-1096-0948-81 Account holder: Kim Kyung-jin)

← Previous Chapter

See every chapter

Next Chapter →

Attorney · Former Member of the National Assembly · AI Policy Researcher

kimkj.com

© 2026 Kim Kyung-jin. All rights reserved.

#KimKyungjin #AIBLibrary #TheHanDonghoonStory

Chapter 29: The Unpretentious Mul-ssi

← Previous Chapter

See every chapter

Next Chapter →

PART 07 Han Dong-hoon the Person · Text 02

Walking the streets of South Korea in 2024, you often encounter men in their fifties wearing red scarves or horn-rimmed glasses. It is what we call the "Han Dong-hoon Phenomenon." It is not simply a matter of fashion. It is a matter of "attitude."

Born in 1973, Han Dong-hoon is an icon representing South Korea's "Generation X." He grew up enjoying the fruits of industrialization and received the cultural baptism of freedom following democratization during his university years. At a time when the 586 generation dominated the political arena, the emergence of Han Dong-hoon, born in the 1970s, was like a symbol of an era shift that went beyond mere generational succession. In his announcement of candidacy for the 2024 presidential election, he mentioned Seo Taiji's emergence in 1992. Speaking of "revolutionary change that transforms the world in steps," he recalled that he felt the times changing as he witnessed both harsh criticism from established critics and public enthusiasm at the time of Seo Taiji's emergence.

The descriptor "Young Fifty" attached to Han Dong-hoon does not simply mean that he looks young for his age.

Rather, it represents a new middle-aged lifestyle that rejects the authoritarianism and pretense of the older generation, valuing practicality and taste.

He has become a topic of discussion by displaying refined fashion sense at parliamentary sessions and official events, horn-rimmed glasses, scarves, dimpled ties, and well-tailored suits. The Oliver Goldsmith and Cutler and Gross glasses he wore, along with 1970s-era vintage watches, attracted considerable public attention and even caused shortages.

However, this style is not for show but rather a manifestation of the natural, unpretentious aesthetic he has pursued.

"I've been buying and wearing my own clothes since I was a child."

The word that best reveals his sensibility is "Mul-ssi." "Mule" is South Korea's largest secondhand musical instrument trading site.

Han Dong-hoon enjoyed buying and selling guitars and amplifiers there.

A politician who served as minister conducting direct transactions on a secondhand instrument site?

It is a sight difficult to imagine for conventional high-ranking officials who prioritize social standing and public image. Before his face became well known, he himself went to direct transaction sites to inspect items and conduct deals.

Calling himself a "bedroom guitarist," his image of playing a Fender Stratocaster in his living room embodies the ideal of the modern person who, after leaving work, returns to being a complete individual rather than a cog in the organization, immersing himself in his own hobbies.

Unable to drink alcohol even a single glass due to his constitution, he instead prefers drinking zero cola and values personal time over company gatherings.

"I am not the kind of person to go to someone else's drinking gathering and play the tambourine." This statement reflects Generation X's work ethic of prioritizing professional substance and balance between work and personal life over organizational socializing.

When asked why he does not prefer wearing black shirts, he answered as follows.

"Because cat hair sticks to it and it's bothersome to remove."

It is an unadorned and candid way of speaking. He has a cat at home, and he is an ordinary person who finds it bothersome even to remove hair stuck to black clothes.

As such a "Young Fifty," Han Dong-hoon has played a decisive role in shedding the "old fogey" image of conservative politics. He is a conservative leader who understands young people's thirst for fairness and common sense, and can communicate through their language and cultural codes. Rather than authoritative admonishment, he uses the horizontal language of "fellow citizen." He adopts a stance of seeking to learn from the people rather than teach them.

In April 2025, during a YouTube live broadcast titled "An Ordinary Day," he communicated with viewers while eating shrimp crackers. A politician who served as minister and party leader sharing everyday conversation while eating snacks. That is the true nature of "Young Fifty" Han Dong-hoon.

Han Dong-hoon's style and taste are not mere gossip. They are evidence of the libertarian and individualistic political philosophy he pursues embodied in his everyday life.

If this book has stayed with you for any moment, please support it so that the next story can be brought into the world.

(Voluntary support account: Nonghyup 302-1096-0948-81 Accountholder: Kim Kyung-jin)

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

Attorney · Former Member of the National Assembly · AI Policy Researcher

kimkj.com

© 2026 Kim Kyung-jin. All rights reserved.

#KimKyungjin #AllLibrary #TheHanDonghoonStory

Chapter 30: From The Beatles to Crying Nut

← Previous Chapter

See every chapter

Next Chapter →

PART 07 Han Dong-hoon the Man - Original Text 03

In Han Dong-hoon's study, or in the space where he spends time alone, music always flows. Music is not a simple hobby for him. It is a refuge that allows him to endure a harsh reality, and the source of strength he draws to face the world again.

His love of music traces back to his elementary school days.

In his writing class, he wrote an essay titled "Playing with an Audio System." According to the testimony of his 35-year-old friends, he had been absorbed in music since childhood.

If we were to peek at his playlist, we would be surprised.

The Beatles' lyrical melody flows, then suddenly Jimi Hendrix's raw electric guitar sound tears through the space. He sinks into Led Zeppelin's intense rock spirit, but before long finds himself lost in John Coltrane's difficult and profound saxophone performance.

During the 2024 Chuseok special, he appeared as a guest DJ on CBS Radio's "Park Jae-hong's One Game" and revealed his "lifetime playlist."

That playlist clearly shows his inner self.

First, he introduced Tom Waits' "Way Down in the Hole." He cited the American drama "The Wire," into which this song was inserted, as his life drama. The theme of not losing humanity even amid harsh and dark reality resonates with his life, lived fiercely as a prosecutor.

Jimi Hendrix's "Bold As Love" symbolizes the solitude and consolation of the time when he was demoted to deputy head prosecutor at the Busan High Prosecutor's Office. He recalled that he often played this piece on guitar back then.

On nights spent alone in an unfamiliar city after his transfer, Jimi Hendrix's melody flowing from his guitar connected to an amplifier was his only companion. In that era, pushed down by power, he confirmed his existence on the guitar strings.

His affection for 1960s-70s rock music from Led Zeppelin, The Beatles, and The Doors shows his belief in the essential power that timeless masterpieces convey. He selected The Beatles' "Come Together" as his final song and said this:

"I hope we all take responsibility and solve problems together."

He has deep knowledge of jazz. He loves John Coltrane's music, and when introducing the song "I'm Old Fashioned," he described himself as "old-fashioned." It reveals his inclination to pursue unchanging values rather than chase trends.

By selecting "Myeongdong Calling" by the Korean indie band Crying Nut, he evoked memories of young Han Dong-hoon who frequented the Hong-dae club "Drug" in the 1990s.

Though a law student, he spent his nights absorbing the energy of the Hong-dae indie scene. Perhaps the spirit of punk rock, which rejects formality and authority, was engraved in his DNA.

The fact that he collects various versions of Richard Strauss' art song "Im Abendrot" (In the Evening Glow) proves his deep love of classical music and delicate sensitivity.

"Good music transcends time."

By introducing Green Day's "Wake Me Up When September Ends" and British band Nothing But Thieves' "Lover, Please Stay," he showed that his musical spectrum is not confined to the past but continues to expand. Radiohead's "Creep" and Lynyrd Skynyrd's "Free Bird" are also on his favorite music list.

His attendance at American musician Beck's performance at the 2024 Pentaport Rock Festival also became a topic of discussion. The sight of a former government minister standing in the audience at a rock festival. It was a scene that proved he remains a music-loving young-fifty-something.

Music is the "sanctuary of the heart" that allows him to maintain his composure and not lose himself even amid the complex political reality and intense work. The rock music he loves carries the spirit of "resistance," and jazz holds the soul of "freedom."

Perhaps the reason Han Dong-hoon could speak his mind without yielding under the pressure of power is because the spirit of rock and roll resistance flows in his blood.

If this book stayed beside you for even a moment, please support us so that the next story can reach the world.

(Voluntary support account: NH Bank 302-1096-0948-81 Account holder: Kim Kyung-jin)

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

Attorney · Former Member of the National Assembly · AI Policy Researcher

kimkj.com

© 2026 Kim Kyung-jin. All rights reserved.

#KimKyungjin #AllLibrary #TheHanDonghoonStory

Chapter 31: A Regular Visitor to Secondhand Markets

← Previous Chapter

See every chapter

Next Chapter →

PART 07 Han Dong-hoon the Person · Source Text 04

"When all this is over, I'm thinking I might return to my 'Mule ahjusshi' life again." This remark by Han Dong-hoon during a YouTube live broadcast in April 2025 became a major topic of conversation among his supporters.

'Mule ahjusshi'. This word is slang for middle-aged men who are active on 'Mule', Korea's largest used musical instrument trading site.

Han Dong-hoon owned a Fender Stratocaster and Jazzmaster, and enjoyed collecting and trading used amplifiers and effects pedals.

He enjoyed not merely purchasing instruments, but the process of direct trading itself, checking the condition of items and conversing with sellers.

However, when Han Dong-hoon became Minister of Justice and his face became widely recognized, this modest hobby ran into obstacles.

"After my face became known, whenever I went out to do secondhand trading, people would recognize me."

And what followed drew laughter from the viewers.

"They would ask for such steep discounts that I thought I shouldn't go anymore. Asking me to cut the price in half, that's not right, is it?"

An ordinary politician would have sent a staff member or concealed his identity.

But he went to the trading site himself, and while bewildered by the unreasonable price haggling, he took it in stride with humor.

This anecdote contains the full measure of Han Dong-hoon's character.

He is modest about his guitar skills, saying he plays only at a "bedroom guitarist level." Yet from anecdotes like spending time playing Jimi Hendrix songs during his days in Busan, and the way he explains slide guitar technique in detail, it is evident he possesses considerable knowledge and ability.

An acquaintance asked him.

"Why didn't you just ask for a discount on a used item?"

Han Dong-hoon replied this way.

"Someone who knows the value of this item is selling it because of circumstances. If I were to ask for a reduction, wouldn't that be wrong? That is not proper conduct."

His character is contained in this brief exchange.

He does not seek to profit from others' hardship. This is how he treats those in a weaker position when he holds the stronger one. Even with a secondhand trading partner he had never met, he tried to uphold 'fairness' and 'respect'.

The guitars he collected are not merely pieces of wood. They are evidence of his respect for others' stories and their worth.

Late at night, when he plugged his guitar into the amplifier and quietly plucked the strings, he forgot the world's noise and faced himself completely. A sanctuary where he could breathe as the private 'Han Dong-hoon' rather than the public one. That is what guitar and 'Mule' mean to him.

His firm yet endearing protest of "No discounts allowed" is a moment where his principle-centered character shows through in his hobby.

If this book has stayed with you even for a moment, please support us so the next story can come to the world.

(Voluntary donation account: NH Bank 302-1096-0948-81 Account holder: Kim Kyung-jin)

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

Attorney · Former Member of the National Assembly · AI Policy Researcher

kimkj.com

© 2026 Kim Kyung-jin. All rights reserved.

[#KimKyungjin](#) [#AIBrary](#) [#TheHanDonghoonStory](#)

Chapter 32: Moby Dick, Oe Kenzaburo

← Previous Chapter

See every chapter

Next Chapter →

PART 07 Han Dong-hoon as a Person · Original Text 05

"Herman Melville's Moby Dick is the book of my life."

In several interviews, Han Dong-hoon unhesitatingly cited Moby Dick as the book of his life.

Most people remember this novel as a revenge tale against a great whale. Han Dong-hoon reads it differently.

He focuses not on Captain Ahab's madness, but on the human will to stand against overwhelming fate. Like the crew of the whaling ship Pequod, people from different backgrounds came together and moved toward a shared goal. He felt profound resonance in the image of those who continue their own path to the very end, even in the face of unavoidable catastrophe.

This happened in August 2023, shortly after he resigned as Minister of Justice.

An elementary school student sent him a letter with a Squirtle sticker.

Words of encouragement written in a child's handwriting, crowded on the page. Despite his busy schedule, Han Dong-hoon replied to this letter written in such delicate, childlike script.

And he sent her a book as a gift.

It was Moby Dick. Of course, it was an edition adapted for children. "This book tells a story about hunting whales, but it is truly a story about the courage to move toward the goals of life. When you read it in the future, it will be helpful to you."

Even in the uncertain days following his resignation as minister, he replied to a young fan's handwritten letter and gave her the book that had shaped his life. When this story spread through fan communities, Moby Dick rose to number one on the bestseller lists of Kyobo and Yes24.

His bookshelf contains works by Oe Kenzaburo, the Japanese Nobel Prize-winning author: A Personal Matter and Bitten by a Hippopotamus. Through these works depicting his life with his son Hikari, who had a brain function disorder, Han Dong-hoon felt deep resonance with the attitude of overcoming suffering and adversity while maintaining human dignity.

"The Oe couple found caring for their son Hikari to be a central pillar of their lives. Through their works, I gained insight into how personal experience and social responsibility are intertwined."

Raymond Carver, the American short story writer, is also among his favorite reads. Carver's stories depict loss and loneliness hidden in the everyday lives of ordinary people with a dry yet warm gaze.

What stands out is that among Carver's works, he prefers the versions edited by Gordon Lish. When asked why, he answered this way:

"They are more concise, more compressed, and more moving."

This reflects his long-standing principle that "a criminal investigation should be explainable in three lines."

His personal motto comes from the ancient Greek philosopher Democritus.

"The world is nothing but atoms and empty space; the rest is opinion."

It reveals his clear worldview: one that prioritizes fact and truth, unmoved by public judgment or criticism.

He even adopted Sydney Carton, the lawyer from Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*, as an online ID. Sydney Carton is a character of self-sacrifice, ascending the guillotine in place of someone he loves. Why he was drawn to this figure, we can infer from his own life.

Han Dong-hoon speaks about reading this way:

"I find happiness in catching glimpses of other people's lives and discovering those whose sensibility aligns with mine." Literature is a place to train in empathy toward others' pain. It is a compass that keeps us from losing our way, even within complicated political realities.

When seeking to understand the human lives concealed within legal statutes, he always gazes into the mirror of literature. What is reflected there is not merely Captain Ahab's madness. It is the human will to continue one's own path to the very end, even in the face of overwhelming fate.

That is why Han Dong-hoon loves Moby Dick.

And it is also why he gave that book as a gift to a young elementary school student.

If this book has remained with you, even briefly, please support the publication of the next story.

(Voluntary contributions appreciated. Nonghyup Bank Account: 302-1096-0948-81, Account Holder: Kim Gyeong-jin)

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

Attorney · Former Member of the National Assembly · AI Policy Researcher

kimkj.com

© 2026 Kim Kyung-jin. All rights reserved.

#KimKyungjin #AllLibrary #TheHanDonghoonStory

Chapter 33: Cats and Cup Noodles

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

PART 07 Han Dong-hoon the Human · Original Text 06

One late night in 2024, after finishing his campaign for the general election, Han Dong-hoon entered a convenience store near Suseo Station alone.

In his hands were a cup of instant noodles and a bottle of zero cola.

Sitting by the window, he poured hot water and waited three minutes, his eyes tightly shut. The exhaustion from running all day without rest wrapped around his entire body.

According to his aide's testimony, that day's lunch was only kimbap eaten in the car. When people recall the name Han Dong-hoon, they typically first picture the image of a "fighter" armed with cold logic and sharp tailoring, standing unflinching against the opposition in the National Assembly. Former chief of the Anti-Corruption and Organized Crime Division of the Supreme Prosecutor's Office, the youngest Justice Minister. Imagining him armed with cool reason and logic, one would expect to see him raising a wine glass at an upscale restaurant.

But the image of the "natural Han Dong-hoon" who sheds that armor and returns home is quite different. His most private spaces are not filled with grand symbols of power, but rather two cats, instant noodles, and zero cola.

He is what everyone recognizes as a devoted cat owner.

When he first opened Instagram in 2024, the subject of his first post was not the politician Han Dong-hoon. It was two cats: "Tani," with black fur, and "Yangyi," with long hair. Tani is a large cat, weighing nearly eight to nine kilograms.

He introduces Tani as a strong, large cat with surprisingly excellent athleticism. In contrast, Yangyi weighs just over four kilograms and was adopted from an animal shelter for abandoned cats. Though they differ in weight by a factor of two, these two rely on each other and get along well.

On a live broadcast, he spoke about the cats like this.

"Tani is large, but he looks after Yangyi and knows how to share treats." He added, "If Tani were just two or three times bigger, he would probably eat me." Though said in jest, his words carried deep affection for his pets.

When he lies down in bed after work, the two cats burrow to his side as if by agreement and settle down to sleep.

He confessed, "Watching the cats live carefree lives in free happiness makes me envious, and their simply being by my side when I am tired brings me great comfort."

No matter how important his position outside, the moment he opens the front door, he becomes an ordinary servant, feeding the bundles of fur and cleaning the litter box.

Behind the refined suit fit he typically wears, there are unspoken difficulties.

The reason he rarely wears black shirts is simple: "Cat hair sticks to it so much that it's too annoying to remove." In the way he laughs it off, saying that white hair from Yangyi is fatal on black clothes, we discover not the face of a perfectionist prosecutor, but that of a clumsy and tender "servant."

His tastes in food are so plain they border on elementary school palate. The Korean prosecution service is traditionally a place with strong drinking culture epitomized by "bomb shots." Within a culture where raising shots of soju with colleagues after all-night investigations was almost a ritual, Han Dong-hoon was an exception. He is unable to drink alcohol at all due to his constitution. Being congenitally lacking in alcohol-metabolizing enzymes, he would attend company dinners drinking cider or cola while still keeping his place at the table.

In the past, he once got caught up in the manga "Drops of God" and tried to drink fine wine, only to pass out immediately. It is well known that during a state dinner at the Yongsan Presidential Office, President Yoon Suk-yeol said, "Get me zero cola." Even the president knew and was considerate of his constitution. He spoke candidly during a live broadcast.

"I have no complaint about not being able to drink, but if I were born in my next life, I wonder if life might be somewhat more colorful if I could drink a bit."

The anecdote of him struggling on the way back after reluctantly sipping some makgeolli offered by elders he met after his victory in the Geumjeong by-election shows his human side. As a politician, it was difficult to refuse voters' goodwill. But his body was honest. His "soul food" is cup instant noodles.

His noodle preferences are specific: "Dosirak" and "Neoguri Spicy." The practicality of Dosirak noodles with their lid preventing broth from splashing, the warming taste of Neoguri with its spicy kick. Perhaps that flavor, which soothed his hunger during his prosecutor days when all-night investigations were routine, remains his greatest comfort. On a live broadcast, he revealed his own recipe, saying "a soft-boiled egg is the best with Neoguri."

His snack preferences are equally firm. When eating shrimp crackers, he sticks to his own method of mixing regular shrimp crackers with spicy ones.

When his energy dips, he reaches for banana-flavored milk. As someone who says "I've bought and worn my own clothes since childhood" with such conviction about his tastes, he pursues familiar and

comfortable flavors over formality or fanciness when it comes to eating.

Cats, cup instant noodles, and zero cola. These are small but certain happinesses that allow Han Dong-hoon to step away from the complex and ruthless world of politics and return to being wholly himself.

Han Dong-hoon always emphasizes, "I will protect the very ordinary days of my fellow citizens." Perhaps the "ordinary day" he wishes to protect is not so different from his own peaceful evening hours, listening to his cats' purring as he empties a bowl of cup instant noodles after work.

If this book remained by your side even for a moment, please support its publication so that the next story can reach the world.

(Voluntary support requested: Nonghyup Bank Account 302-1096-0948-81, Account Holder: Kim Kyung-jin)

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

Attorney · Former Member of the National Assembly · AI Policy Researcher

kimkj.com

© 2026 Kim Kyung-jin. All rights reserved.

[#KimKyungjin](#) [#AIBLibrary](#) [#TheHanDonghoonStory](#)

Chapter 34: The Elevator, the Umbrella, and Protocol

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

PART 07 The Human Han Dong-hoon · Original Text 07

May 2022, outside the Ministry of Justice building. It was the day Han Dong-hoon reported to work as Minister of Justice for the first time. When the minister's vehicle arrived, staff members lined up. Their hands were ready to open the car door. It was a practice that had continued for decades.

But that day, an unfamiliar scene unfolded. In front of the staff members waiting to open the car door, Han Dong-hoon opened the door himself and stepped out.

Shortly after taking office, he issued an order.

"Please do not perform the protocol of opening my car door going forward."

This single statement was announced on the Ministry of Justice internal network with the phrase "The minister does not wish it." The "protocol" that had become entrenched as a long-standing practice disappeared in this way.

His belief was that authority does not come from who opens a car door, but rather from the weight and authenticity of a person's work.

Han Dong-hoon made another request to staff members. "Please drop the honorific suffix and simply call me 'Minister.'" An order was also issued that documents such as reports should not include honorific suffixes when referring to executives.

This news was shared on Blind, an anonymous workplace community, and became a topic of discussion. It was read as a message: "Remove authority."

It was a bold attempt to crack the strict hierarchical organizational culture of the Ministry of Justice and the Prosecutor's Office.

Regulations that had been maintained for 38 years in correctional facilities were also abolished. A rule requiring subordinates to shake hands when a superior requested it, another requiring subordinates to report if they left work before their superior. These kinds of rules disappeared.

His philosophy of 'strong-strong-weak-weak' was not performative theater but an ingrained habit. The way he behaved in elevators symbolized this. Despite holding the title of minister or party leader, he did not enter the interior of the elevator first. He was seen multiple times standing in front of the doors, gesturing to staff members and colleagues to board first while pressing the 'open' button

himself.

His attentiveness in asking about the department and names of staff members he encountered in the hallway, remembering them, and greeting them first when they met again made a deep impression. Not "a person of high rank" but "a person who works with us." That was the kind of leader he wanted to present.

On a rainy morning in June 2023, a scene caught on the way to the National Assembly became a topic of discussion online.

When high-ranking officials commute to work, it is typical for an accompanying secretary to hold the umbrella for them. But that day, Han Dong-hoon carried his umbrella himself.

That was not all. The camera captured him tilting his umbrella to cover a staff member standing beside him.

He set aside the sense of privilege that said "I deserve special treatment" and demonstrated through action the horizontal perspective that "we are colleagues working together."

His consideration shone in questioning sessions against the government and standing committee meetings in the National Assembly.

When Assemblyperson Kim Ye-ji, who is visually impaired, asked questions, he paid special attention. He took care to ensure she could safely reach the speaker's podium, and before beginning his answer, he always said this.

"Assemblyperson Kim, Han Dong-hoon, Minister of Justice, speaking to answer your question."

This brief remark identifying his position and presence might seem trivial to some, but it was an action that could not emerge without the empathy to understand another person's position deeply. An effort to be the eyes for someone who cannot see. That was his practice of what he believed 'strong-strong-weak-weak' to be.

"Be stricter with the strong, warmer with the weak." He did not merely talk about this principle. When investigating 'strong' figures like chaebol chairmen and the National Tax Service director during his time as prosecutor, he was an uncompromising "grim reaper."

Before any great power, Han Dong-hoon did not back down. But before his colleagues, subordinates, and the socially vulnerable, he willingly chose to be a "neighbor" who holds umbrellas and presses buttons.

On the occasion of his 100th day as People Power Party chairman in 2024, he declared: "The substance of our conservatism is strong-strong-weak-weak."

This was not merely a political slogan.

It was a summary of the actions he had demonstrated throughout his entire life.

Han Dong-hoon's approach of 'transcending authority,' as demonstrated, set a new standard of leadership for young generations tired of old-fashioned hierarchical culture and citizens yearning for horizontal communication. Authority does not come from status but from the attitude toward others. That was the message conveyed by the elevator button and the umbrella in the rain.

If this book stayed with you even for a moment, please support its continuation so that the next story can reach the world.

(Voluntary support account: Nonghyup 302-1096-0948-81 Account holder: Kim Kyung-jin)

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

Attorney · Former Member of the National Assembly · AI Policy Researcher

kimkj.com

© 2026 Kim Kyung-jin. All rights reserved.

[#KimKyungjin](#) [#AllLibrary](#) [#TheHanDonghoonStory](#)

Chapter 35: The Gaze Toward the Weak

← Previous Chapter

See every chapter

Next Chapter →

PART 07 The Human Han Dong-hoon · Original Text 08

"What is an evil person?"

When asked this question in an interview, Han Dong-hoon answered without hesitation. "An evil person is someone who exploits others."

His worldview is condensed within this simple definition.

This passage reveals why he pursued abuses of power so relentlessly and why he insisted on the term 'fellow citizen' rather than 'the weak.' For him, an evil person was not simply someone who broke the law. It was the powerful using and trampling the powerless. That was the adversary he had fought against his entire life.

He emphasizes, "We must see the community through the eyes of the weak."

But there is a caveat.

"The weak are not automatically right compared to the strong. But when polarization deepens, society must care for the weak." Not unconditional sympathy, but creating a fair starting line. That is what he means by 'the common good.'

This philosophy became clear during his time as chairman of the Emergency Response Committee of the People Power Party. One day in January 2024, a small luncheon was held at the People Power Party headquarters in Yeouido. The attendees were not members of the National Assembly or party executives. They were cleaners, security guards, and building managers who worked at the headquarters. It was something no conservative party leader in history had done.

Rather than an elaborate hotel meal, he shared a warm home-cooked meal and listened to their stories.

"You work hard, but you must be cold."

Following his words, a promise came immediately. Provision of winter padding vests and support for necessary supplies. It was not simply an event where they ate a meal.

It was a concrete measure to safeguard the dignity of 'fellow citizens' who worked quietly in unseen places and to improve their treatment. One attendee testified: "He's giving us padding and replacing the refrigerator."

Holiday traditions changed too. As Lunar New Year approached, the budget for expensive gifts sent in the name of the party chairman was entirely eliminated.

Instead, 72,000 briquettes were purchased with that money. Han Dong-hoon personally carried a jigae up the narrow alleys of Baeksa Village in Nowon-gu, Seoul. He did not mind getting soot on his face as he carried the briquettes.

When a Democratic Party member criticized it as a "show," he answered thus.

"We must help." And he quietly carried the briquettes. His decision to redirect taxpayers' money that would have gone to gift exchanges among politicians to neighbors who truly needed help was a refreshing shock that broke the stale conventions of the political world.

For Chuseok, a 50-million-won gift budget was used to provide meals for children without adequate food. Han Dong-hoon personally put on an apron and packed the meals. As he filled containers with side dishes and closed the boxes, he must have thought: a politician's job is not to engage in grand debates but to provide a meal for a child who might go hungry today.

His gaze always turned toward victims who had suffered unjustly and fallen heroes. Kim Han-na, the wife of Sgt. Han Sang-guk, a casualty of the Second Battle of Yeonpyeong, whom he met at a West Sea Guard Day event. Even after the event ended, Han Dong-hoon sent her encouragement messages consistently.

He continued meaningful communication that was not one-off, such as promoting a children's book project for the families of fallen soldiers.

He also listened to the appeals of the victim in the 'Busan Back-kick Incident.'

His improvements to crime victim support systems and updates to the Ministry of Justice systems so that victims could access trial records reflected his principle that "the state should side with victims, not criminals."

Han Dong-hoon's gaze toward the vulnerable is not charitable sympathy. It is a sense of 'responsibility' to protect the dignity and rights they should rightfully enjoy as members of the community. He puts it this way: "Preventing the powerful from breaking rules and exploiting the weak. That is the duty of a public servant."

His efforts for the weak continue. The path of politics he walks always points toward the concrete realities of people's lives. The narrow alley where he carried briquettes, the meal box he handed to a child without food, the rice he shared with a cleaner. Within those small actions lies the vision of Korea he dreams of.

If this book has stayed with you for even a moment, please support it so that the next story can come into the world.

(Voluntary donation account: Nonghyup 302-1096-0948-81 Account holder: Kim Gyeong-jin)

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

Attorney · Former Member of the National Assembly · AI Policy Researcher

kimkj.com

© 2026 Kim Kyung-jin. All rights reserved.

[#KimKyungjin](#) [#AIBLibrary](#) [#TheHanDonghoonStory](#)

Chapter 36: "Thank you. I'm sorry. I love you."

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

PART 07 Han Dong-hoon the Human · Source Text 09

Politics is a battlefield of words.

People believe that to survive in a place where sharp criticism, mockery, and crude language are exchanged, you must suppress your opponent with a louder voice and more inflammatory speech.

During parliamentary questioning time in the National Assembly, raised voices and personal attacks abound. "A gangster with glasses," "A snake-like bastard." These are the criticisms hurled at Han Dong-hoon.

Yet his language was different.

One day after parliamentary questioning ended. Han Dong-hoon approached an opposition party member who had just been hurling raw criticism at him.

He bowed respectfully and offered a handshake. The other legislator showed clear signs of confusion. It was a completely different response from the heated atmosphere just moments before. After the December 3 emergency martial law was lifted, when Democratic Party members approached him for a handshake in the National Assembly, he also responded courteously. "Even in conflict, we must follow the rules and not lose respect for human beings." This was what he believed was the basic standard of a politician.

He also made this request of his supporters.

"When the other side conducts themselves poorly, we must not also conduct ourselves poorly.

We must maintain our dignity."

Han Dong-hoon's way of speaking uses 'honesty' and 'humility' as weapons.

Faced with rough attacks from opposition party members and illogical arguments in the National Assembly, he responds with logic.

"I will stake everything. What will you stake?" His counterattack regarding the suspicions about drinking gatherings in Cheongdam-dong had the power of a precise stroke. Logic that struck at the exact weak point of the opponent. That was his weapon.

But when the fierce debate ends, he shows a completely different side.

At the end of interviews and speeches, he habitually adds these words.

"Thank you. I'm sorry. I love you."

These three short phrases are not mere conventional greetings.

They are an expression of sincere gratitude toward the people who support him, reflection on his shortcomings, and affection toward fellow citizens. One columnist described these three phrases as 'the foundation of a moral human being.'

He does not hesitate to acknowledge his mistakes. After the April 10 general election defeat, he took full responsibility himself. "All responsibility lies with me." Even in circumstances where it would be easy to blame others or circumstances, he did not make excuses.

The same was true after the December 3 emergency martial law incident. "I sincerely apologize to the Korean people for failing to prevent martial law in advance." He repeatedly lowered his head. "Everything is due to my own shortcomings." It was an attitude that stood in contrast to established politicians who consistently made excuses.

He also has a humorous side. Here is an anecdote from the used musical instruments trading site 'Mule'. He went to a direct transaction to buy a guitar effect pedal, and after his face became known, the other party recognized him. When the other party requested a discount, he answered like this.

"You shouldn't ask someone to negotiate on the price, should you?"

According to reports, he declined with a smile but eventually gave a discount anyway. A person who maintains common sense and fairness not only in public principles but also in private transactions. At the same time, a human charm that is not inflexible. In this anecdote we discover both sides of him.

Han Dong-hoon believes that 'words are not meant to be released but to be kept.' He emphasizes that 'politicians cannot teach the people; they must learn from the people,' and he always makes an effort to communicate with a humble attitude.

His words carry weight.

Strength does not come from flowery rhetoric or a loud voice. It comes from respect for the other person, the will to keep promises, and the human dignity he never loses in any situation. That is what gives weight to his words.

In a 2025 Sisakdosi Journal interview, he said this: "I may ultimately fail. However, if private interests did not influence public decisions, I can take responsibility for the results. Nothing is free. If you have gained something, you must also accept losing something." And he added: "Courage is not the absence of anxiety and fear, but acting despite feeling them."

"Thank you. I'm sorry. I love you."

When these most ordinary three phrases come from Han Dong-hoon's lips, they become not merely a greeting but a passionate declaration to the people. A person who possesses both cool reason and a warm heart. A person who knows how to empathize with others' suffering and to feel anger at injustice. That is the true face of "Han Dong-hoon the human" that we have discovered.

A boy who served as an altar boy at Cheongju Cathedral. A young man absorbed in punk rock at clubs in Hongdae. 'Mule-ssi' who conducts private sales of secondhand guitars while saying 'no bargaining.' A reader who gifts 'Moby Dick' to elementary school students.

All these fragments come together to complete the puzzle that is 'Han Dong-hoon the human.'

He is a person with warmth hidden behind an impressive resume. A person who values principle while not losing his sense of humor. A person who stands at the pinnacle of power yet cherishes his own time by playing guitar.

Perhaps the strength that allowed him to rush without hesitation to the National Assembly on the night of martial law came from this inner resolve.

The spirit of resistance from rock and roll. The capacity for empathy learned from literature. And the value of the common good learned at Cheongju Cathedral.

That is the root of 'Han Dong-hoon the human.'

If this book has stayed with you even for a while, please support it so that the next story can come out into the world.

(Voluntary support requested. Account: NH Bank 302-1096-0948-81, Account Holder: Kim Kyung-jin)

[← Previous Chapter](#)

[See every chapter](#)

[Next Chapter →](#)

Attorney · Former Member of the National Assembly · AI Policy Researcher

kimkj.com

© 2026 Kim Kyung-jin. All rights reserved.

[#KimKyungjin](#) [#AIBrary](#) [#TheHanDonghoonStory](#)

Epilogue: Winter in the Wilderness, and the Spring to Come

← Previous Chapter

See every chapter

Seoul in February 2026 is unusually cold.

The snow that fell days ago has not yet melted. The streetside trees bare their skeletal branches, swaying in the cutting wind. Looking out the window, I think of one person. At this moment, where is he and what is he doing?

Han Dong-hoon.

Days have passed since his expulsion from the party. Within these walls, countless people watch him with an unspoken ache they cannot voice. Though they cannot openly stand with him, their hearts turn as one toward the wilderness.

I know this: the winter will not last forever.

Han Dong-hoon stands in the wilderness now.

It is cold there. The wind is fierce. And yet he is not alone. Many within these walls cannot join him openly due to their circumstances, but their hearts support him. They pray quietly yet fervently that his suffering will not be in vain, that his ordeal will finally bear fruit.

The wilderness is not an ending but a beginning.

As I wrote this book, I examined closely the life of a man named Han Dong-hoon: the boy serving as an altar attendant in a cathedral in Cheongju; the young man studying quietly at Seoul National University's law school; the young jurist who did not yield before the illegal acts of the powerful; the prosecutor who bent to no principle even through four transfers to lesser posts; and the ruling party leader who stood against martial law proclaimed by his own party's president.

There is a consistent thread through his life.

Not stepping back from what he believes is right. Doing what must be done even when the outcome frightens. Choosing principle over convenience.

I recall again the night of December 3, 2024.

That day Han Dong-hoon could have chosen otherwise. He could have remained silent. He could have bought time with vague words: "I will observe the situation." Had he considered his friendship with the president, his own political future, his standing within the party, such a course would have seemed wise.

But within 23 minutes of the martial law proclamation, he declared it "unconstitutional."

Twenty years of friendship must have flashed before him. Remorse for the benefactor who had promoted him must have flooded in. Fear of what this choice would bring must have been present. And yet he chose his country.

South Korea now sits in darkness.

The spirit of anti-constitutionalism still roams around us. It oppresses the rightness of South Korea represented by Han Dong-hoon, the values the constitution seeks to protect.

It brands the man who defended the constitution a "traitor" and frames the decision that saved the nation as "treason."

But I believe this: ghosts cannot rule the world forever.

One day, those who think wrongly will open their eyes.

There will come a day when we stand before history's mirror to see what was truly right on the night of December 3, 2024, and who truly protected South Korea. I hope that when that day arrives, they will face their wrongs squarely and change with the goodness to embrace what is right.

Thoughts and judgments can change. I believe that.

The people of South Korea will not forget.

On the night of martial law, who ran to the National Assembly. Who defended the constitution. Who prevented bloodshed. Those memories may fade in the current political turmoil. But as time passes, truth emerges. History ultimately stands on the side of truth.

I believe Han Dong-hoon will return.

When he returns, South Korea will need him. A leader firm against the powerful's excesses and tender toward the weak. A visionary who will ride the wave of the AI revolution and propel South Korea forward once again.

We within these walls watch his steps and pray. That light will accompany his path. That his suffering will return as South Korea's prosperity.

The winter outside the window is still cold.

But plum blossoms bloom in the harshest winter. When darkness is deepest, dawn is near. I will wait. We will all wait.

Waiting for spring. For him to return from the wilderness. For the day when we will build a warm and thriving South Korea together.

Han Dong-hoon.

The wilderness is not an ending. The wilderness is a beginning.

I await your spring.

South Korea awaits you.

February 2026, Kim Kyung-jin

If this book has stayed by your side even for a moment, please support the next story to be shared with the world.

(For voluntary support: Nonghyup Account 302-1096-0948-81, Account holder: Kim Kyung-jin)

← Previous Chapter

See every chapter

Attorney · Former Member of the National Assembly · AI Policy Researcher

kimkj.com

© 2026 Kim Kyung-jin. All rights reserved.

#KimKyungjin #AIBLibrary #TheHanDonghoonStory

Support This AI Library Book

If this book was useful, you can support future translations, public editions, and open AI knowledge projects through PayPal.



PayPal

<https://paypal.me/kimkjkj>

Scan the QR code or open the link above.