

# DECODED X

July 6 2017

## GAP

There is a word in Korea that is treated like public enemy: Gap.

No, it's not the clothing brand GAP. The Korean word "gap" means being in a higher position than someone else, but not in an appropriate fashion. When someone is depicted as acting like a "gap," it means that the person is abusing whatever upper hand they have to coerce them into doing things at their bidding.

To give you an example, ex-Korean Air executive Heather Cho was being a "gap" when she forced a pilot to turn back over a bag of nuts. More recently, the Mr. Pizza brand founder was acting like a "gap" when he forced his suppliers to buy cheese from companies run by his relatives. Hosigi Chicken chairman was also being a "gap" when he forced his secretary to have dinner with him.

And for every "gap," there is an "eul," indicating the person to whom the abuse is being served.

The new Fair Trade Commission chairman – well-known crusader Kim Sang-jo – has said he would do his best to "wipe the tears of the eul."

Here's to all the "eul" of the world.

Read on for this week's DECODED X.

## WHO DUNNIT

[Samsung weeds out suppliers who leaked to the press]

Samsung Electronics was mighty upset when a number of scoops appeared in English news recently. It's now conducting a full-fledged investigation, calling on suppliers to come clean on who leaked to the press. Most suppliers have NDAs with Samsung, which should keep them from spilling the beans, but there is always going to be someone who talks.



## MISTAKEN IDENTITY

[Choi Soon-sil pounced on for mispronouncing Samsung heir's name]

Former president Park Geun-hye's ex-confidante Choi Soon-sil was once again caught in the crossfire for mispronouncing the name of none other than Lee Jae-yong, the heir to the Samsung Empire.

It wasn't really a big deal, but to the spectators of this great saga that is the Choi Soon-sil gate – rapidly losing steam, if we may add—it was a funny sort of incident that can only happen to someone like Choi who was branded as a woman who doesn't bother with names.

## LESS IS BETTER

[SK hynix wary about too much media coverage on Toshiba deal]

In a deal, even if it's 50-50, it's always about who gets the spotlight. In the deal in attaining a stake in Toshiba's chip unit, a consortium that does not directly include SK hynix – the Korean company is taking part indirectly by lending funds to Bain Capital that's in the consortium – SK hynix is getting too much of that spotlight from the Korean press. SK hynix has expressed that it feels like the attention is a bit too much. There is, however, some speculation that those opposed to the deal are trying to turn the Japanese press against SK hynix by forcing it into the limelight.

## TRUE INTENTIONS

[Mirae Asset and Naver partnership more about money than partnership]

From the outside, it looks like a "grand deal," but the recent deal between Mirae Asset Daewoo and Naver to cross-purchase 500 billion won (US\$440 million) worth of stocks are really nothing more than a shrewd move to maintain control.



Under the slogan of pursuing “grand digital finance supported by AI,” the leaders of the two firms swapped the stocks to keep their respective control intact. So it was purely a business deal, and one that will likely lose its sheen because the two leaders have already gotten what they want out of it. At most, a couple of employees from each company is going to be assigned to taskforce team to work out the details.

## SAVE OUR LEADER

[MCM struggles to stop the bad press against chairwoman]

MCM Worldwide, yes the German brand that was bought out by Korea’s Sungjoo Group, is having a bit of trouble trying to get the press to like its chairwoman Kim Sung-joo.

In many, many aspects Kim is something of a visionary, having bought the brand from Germany and turning it into a mega enterprise. It’s not well-known, but her company also contributes to around 60 NGOs and she is a devout Christian who took her previous job at the Korean Red Cross as a sign that she must do something for the North Korean public at large.

But because of her insistence that MCM is a global brand that doesn’t disdain to promote in Korea, and her close ties to former president Park Geun-hye, she’s not on great terms with the Korean media.

On top of that, her firm is under investigation for shortchanging suppliers – the famous “gap” strikes again. The results will be out next month.



## DECODED X

Thanks for reading. Below are 7 things you should know about DECODED X.

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