April Recap

Exploring Seoul, improving my Korean, and tying up loose ends

MAY 1, 2023



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안녕하세요~~

April was an incredible month for me, both in Seoul and here in the US. Instead of boring you with a journal of this month's adventures, I'll just post a few key pictures (mostly of food) and captions below!



I took the "limousine bus" from the airport to my hotel. Very convenient.



I spent some time each day going to different coffee shops to boost my confidence ordering things in Korean and to listen to all the customers. This was quite helpful!



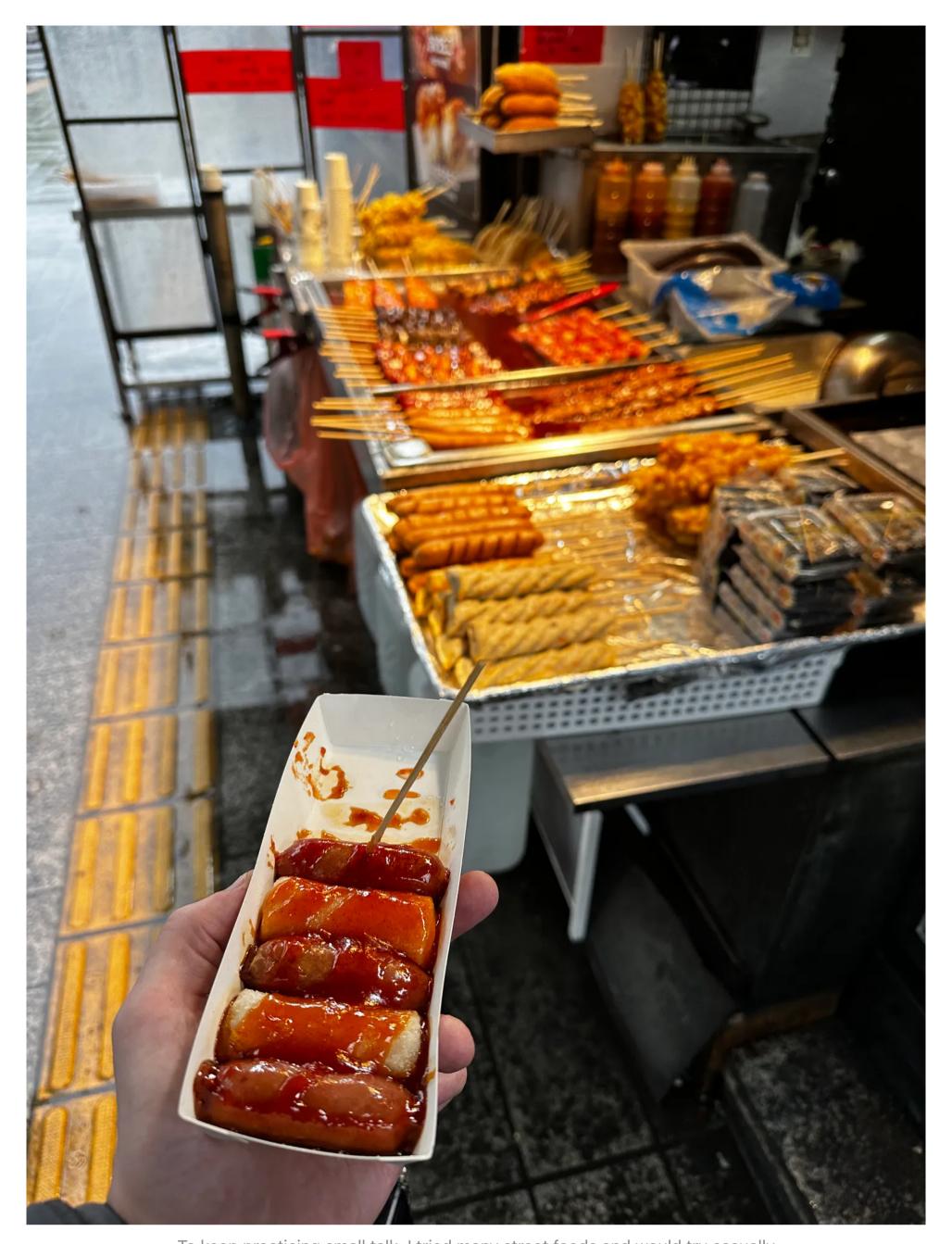
I toured all of the graduate schools I'm interested in and think I settled on Yonsei University?



I ate lunch at the Yonsei cafeteria and noticed so many interesting cultural differences during this one short experience.



Turns out these onion pancakes are my favorite thing...



To keep practicing small talk, I tried many street foods and would try casually chatting with the old ladies behind the counter to their great amusement.





I met up with some old friends in Hongdae and had a wonderful day!!



to move into.

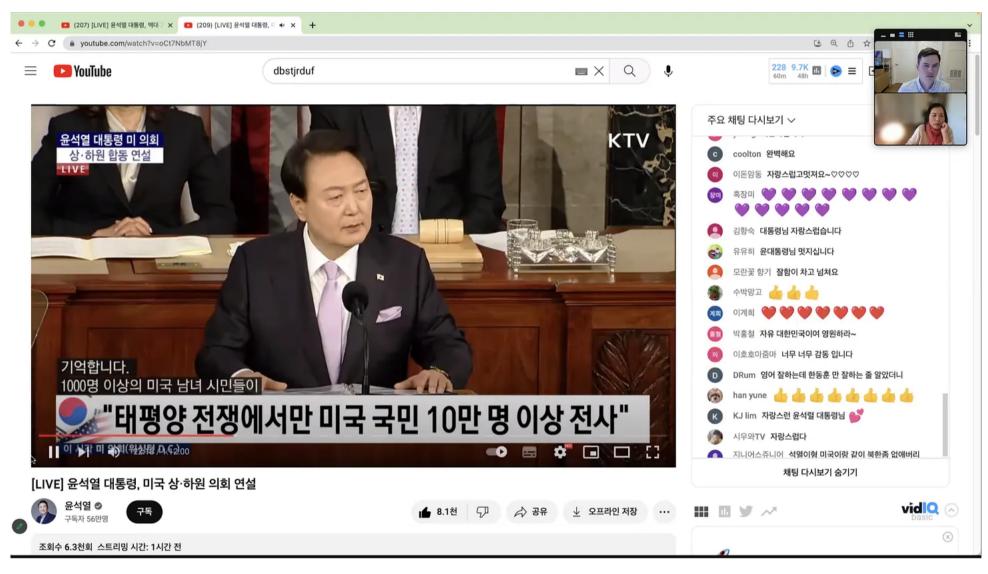
While in Seoul, I also took the TOPIK (Test of Proficiency In Korean) exam. The more advanced TOPIK II test filled up quickly while I was having trouble registering for the test a few months ago, so I had to take the easier TOPIK I exam. It was a very easy test, but I'm glad I took it for the logistics alone. Following test proctor instructions was much more difficult than the actual test, and I learned a few valuable lessons for when I take the TOPIK II and my score actually matters. It was quite strange being in a test room full of many different nationalities taking a beginner Korean test while test proctors give important instructions in fast Korean. Thankfully I was able to understand, but I can imagine if I was at the stage where the test was difficult, I would have no idea what was going on. The harder version of the test includes an SAT style essay, so once I'm in Korea, I plan on hiring a tutor to help me with writing Korean essays because that is the only scary part of the test for me.



Waiting in line for the TOPIK test

In addition to eating lots of delicious food and seeing important cultural sites in Seoul, I got some important business done at the US Embassy in Seoul and at the various graduate schools I'm interested in attending. The trip was over in a flash and I had to return to America until I move there for real in June $\pi\pi$

After returning to the US, I noticed Korean flags alongside American flags on hundreds of light posts in DC, only to find out that President Yoon was making a very important trip to the Capitol! I don't know enough about Korean politics to have an informed opinion on President Yoon yet, but I was very impressed with his speeches he gave to Congress and to other groups. He clearly tried hard to make a good impression in the US and I think he succeeded. In class, I watched some of the speeches live and listened to Korean commentary on his stateside agenda.



President Yoon came to DC and his visit sparked lots of good topics to talk about in class



Touristy things with my family!



Met up with old friends in Baltimore

In addition to the traveling and visits with friends and family, I feel that my confidence with Korean has jumped quite a bit this month! Actually using Korean in Korea and being understood felt so great and I have a newfound drive to study harder and speak more and more. In addition, I did a few practice Oral Proficiency Interview tests with several instructors and I notice improvement each time.

Finally, I tied up nearly every loose end with my upcoming move. My diplomatic passport and associated visa are ready, I have movers scheduled to pack and ship my household goods, and all of my military medical and training requirements are finally checked off. My out processing checklist is now complete besides a final virtual appointment before I leave. Now I just need to dig deep and focus on my final Korean language tests in a month!

Until next time, 안녕!

-Sean