

Entertainment

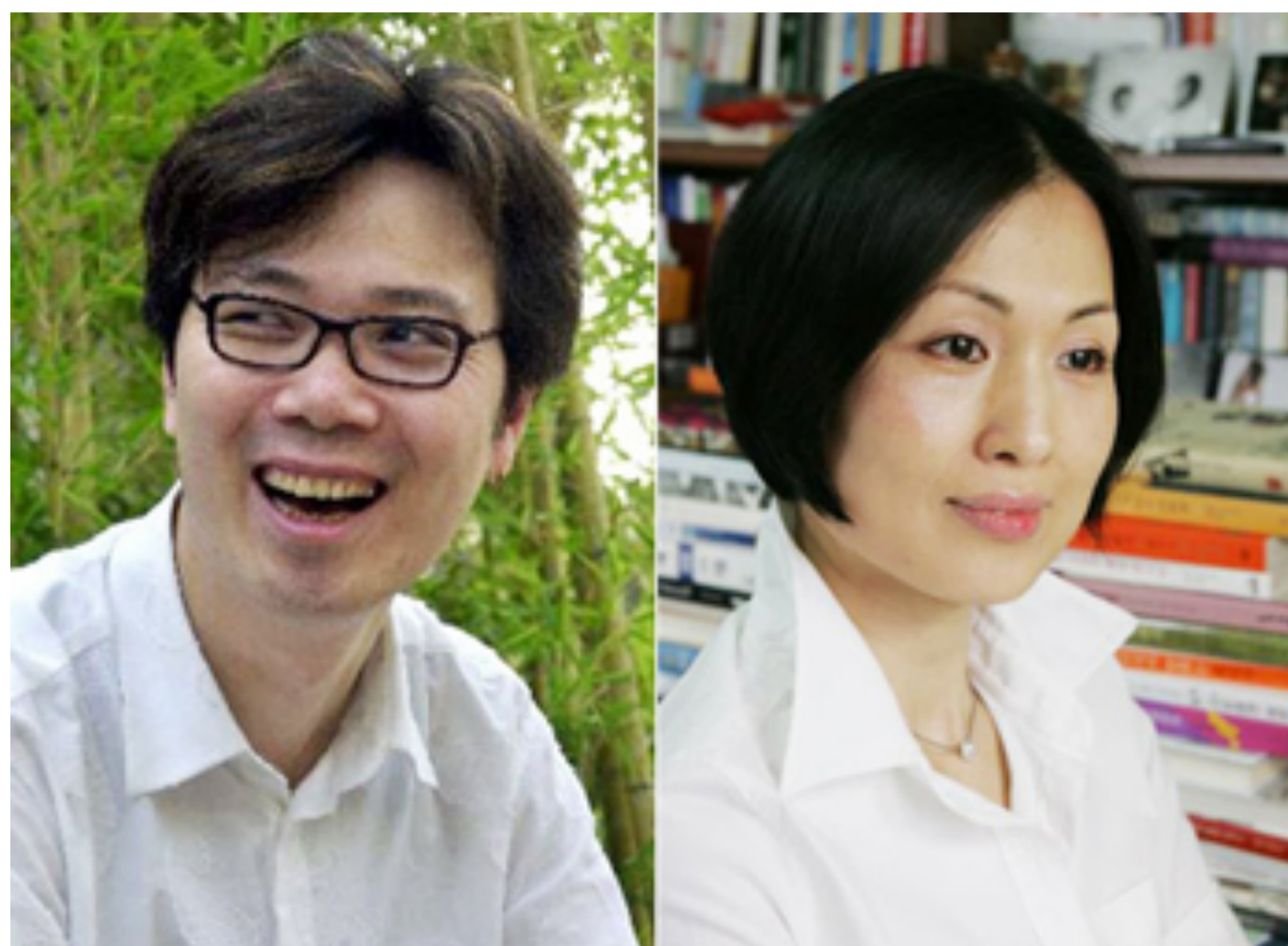
## 2 Korean Novelists Eyeing Global Success

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Works by Korean novelists Kim Young-ha (40) and Cho Kyong-nan (39) are getting a wider audience, earning them tens of thousands of dollars of advance deals with prominent U.S. and European publishers.

"Harry Potter" publisher Bloomsbury recently bought the U.S. and British rights to Cho's novel "Tongue," which will hit U.S. bookstores next spring.

The advance is reportedly significant. Director Lee Koo-yong (Joseph Lee) of Imprima Korea Agency, which brokered the overseas publication, says, "We can't divulge the exact amount due to relations with other writers but the figure is similar to the level of the Korean copyright for a Michael Crichton novel." "Tongue" has also been sold in the Netherlands and Israel.



Kim Young-ha (left) and Cho Kyong-nan

Kim Young-ha, who made his U.S. debut with his novel "I Have the Right to Destroy Myself" last July, says royalties from abroad have surpassed domestic proceeds.

The book, published by Harcourt Trade Publishers, sold over 10,000 copies in a year. "Harcourt first published the book as an investment, but witnessing the success, it proposed to also publish 'Empire of Light' next year," says Kim. The two books have been published or are scheduled to in eight other countries including Germany, France and Turkey.

The success of Cho and Kim is a positive stimulus for writers aspiring to go global. So far, Korean literature has been available if at all in translations sponsored by state or private grants aid and with a promotional rather than commercial aim. Publishers were small firms with little clout in the market.

The two writers' success is seen as owing to their strategic advance with a global theme. Barbara J. Zitwer Agency of the U.S. which negotiated the sale of "Tongue" to Bloomsbury said the novel, themed on love, eroticism and obsession, feels like a horror but with a literary quality. Germany's Suddeutsche Zeitung called Kim's "I Have the Right to Destroy Myself," which features a suicide helper, "cool, urbane and highly intellectual."

Another breakthrough is that Cho and Kim signed exclusive contracts with agencies and stepped out of the general practice of their own publishers securing both domestic and overseas copyright. Imprima Korea Agency's Lee says the global practice of writers advancing abroad through agencies will also spread in Korea.

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