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Ahn Jung-geun's unfinished 'Theory of Oriental Peace', let's complete it with Korean Sovereign AI Global Contribution Project

Park Gi-tae (Head of Cyber Diplomacy Organization VANK)

Great dreams in history never reach us in perfect form. On October 26, 1909, three gunshots rang out at Harbin Station in China. Bang. Bang. Bang. They were not just gunshots. When Ahn Jung-geun pulled the trigger on Hirobumi Ito, the chief architect of Japanese imperialism in Asia, he was opening something far larger: a bold blueprint for justice shared by all humanity and for a future East Asian community built on peace.

In the days before his execution in March 1910, Ahn was not a criminal on trial. He stood as a lieutenant general of the Korean Righteous Army, accusing Japanese imperialism of its crimes and judging it in the name of humanity and international law. When a Japanese prosecutor asked him, with thinly veiled hypocrisy, "Why did you kill Ito, who worked for peace in the East?", Ahn's reply struck like thunder. "I killed Ito for the sake of peace in the East. I did this not as a private individual, but as a lieutenant general of the Korean Righteous Army. Therefore, I should be treated as a prisoner of war under international law."

The charges Ahn laid against Ito read like a ledger of stolen sovereignty. He accused the Ito regime of orchestrating the assassination of Empress Myeongseong, deposing the Korean emperor, and forcing Japanese banknotes into circulation to throw the Korean economy into chaos. His sharp focus on "currency control" and the "destruction of national education" was strikingly prescient, warning—more than a century in advance—of the loss of economic sovereignty and cultural identity that colonized nations would later confront. The assassination was not an act of blind violence; it was a blood-written declaration against total domination.

A reporter for the British newspaper The Graphic wrote that "he finally left the courtroom proudly, wearing the crown of a hero." An American missionary recorded his hope that the killing of Ito would serve as "a final lesson to correct the wrongs of a nation." Ahn's dignity shook the conscience of the Western powers in the age of empire and punctured Japan's efforts to dress colonial rule in the language of progress.

Just before his execution on March 26, 1910, Ahn left a final message: "I hope Koreans and Japanese alike will join their hearts and strength, without distinction, and pray for peace in the East." It was a vision that rose above hatred and revenge. His unfinished manuscript, On Peace in the East, went far beyond calls for cooperation among Korea, China, and Japan. It proposed a shared economic community, including a joint bank and common currency—an idea that, in spirit, resembles today's European Union.

To complete this unfinished vision of peace in the East is not merely an academic exercise. It is a historical responsibility owed by the people of the Republic of Korea to Ahn Jung-geun's love for his country and his faith in humanity.

Ahn Jung-geun's unfinished 'Theory of Oriental Peace', let's complete it with Korean Sovereign AI Global Contribution Project

Park Gi-tae (Head of Cyber Diplomacy Organization VANK)

The New Colonial Order of the 21st Century: The Rising Fear of "AI Neo-Imperialism"

At the dawn of the 21st century—when we are called to carry out this historical mission—a massive new wave is rolling in. This time, it does not come with guns or battleships, but with data and algorithms as its weapons. It is a new form of domination: artificial intelligence-driven "neo-imperialism."

AI is no longer just a technology. It has become national infrastructure and, increasingly, power itself. A country's AI capacity is now a strategic asset that shapes its security and its future. Compared with the imperialism of the past, AI neo-imperialism is more subtle and more destructive in at least three key ways.

Where old-style imperialism seized sovereignty through physical occupation—land, armies, and flags—the loss of sovereignty in the AI age happens in invisible spaces. Data and algorithms quietly reshape a nation's culture and decision-making systems from the inside, faster and more deeply than any foreign army ever could.

First is the rise of AI superpowers. Countries that host giant AI corporations can, in just a few years, subordinate another nation's entire data ecosystem. Once leadership is lost, it becomes nearly impossible to build datasets that reflect one's own language and culture. The result is not just technological dependence, but cultural and economic colonization.

Second is invisible control through algorithmic bias. In the AI era, domination operates beneath the surface. When AI models developed by powerful nations come to define decision-making standards in finance, healthcare, and education across the world, our political, economic, and social systems are quietly shaped by values that are not our own.

Third is digital sovereignty under threat and the distortion of history. If we fail to develop our own AI and fail to reflect our own data within it, our history, culture, and values will be learned and disseminated in distorted form by the AI of powerful nations, reducing us to a digital colo

What is most serious and frightening here is invisible digital historical distortion. In a situation where AI becomes the center of global information, if a country does not possess data that reflects its own history, culture, and values, it has no choice but to fall into a digital colony incapable of defending its sovereignty. This is a sober warning that the painful experience of the late Joseon period—when Japanese imperialism stripped away territory, history, and culture— could be reproduced more quickly and more stealthily in the digital realm of the 21st century.

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Korea's Sovereign AI: Expanding "Peace in the East" into "Peace for Humanity"

 For this reason, Korea must stake its very survival on developing its own sovereign AI, rather than blindly submitting to the dominance of AI superpowers. Sovereign AI refers to a nation's ability to develop, operate, and control artificial intelligence independently—using its own data and infrastructure to reflect its national identity, without reliance on foreign powers. The Korean government's decision to pursue independent sovereign AI development as a national priority, under the goal of becoming one of the world's top three AI powers, is not a matter of ambition alone. It is a necessary choice for national survival and a decisive step to secure future sovereignty.

 This effort comes at a moment when Korea's standing on the global stage is rapidly rising. The country has been confirmed as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council for 2024-2025, the chair of the APEC Leaders' Meeting in 2025, and the host of the G20 Summit in 2028. This succession of roles as a "global architect" of international order marks a historic turning point, signaling to the world that Korea has matured into an active nation capable of leading efforts to solve shared challenges facing humanity.

 At this rare moment, as Korea stands at the peak of its international leadership, the task of completing a 21st-century vision of "Peace in the East" lies in expanding Korea's sovereign AI beyond a defensive shield for national interests. It must be elevated into a vision of global contribution. Just as Ahn Jung-geun once envisioned a joint bank for Korea, China, and Japan, we must now imagine a global data community built on shared AI sovereignty and cooperation.

Ahn Jung-geun's unfinished 'Theory of Oriental Peace', let's complete it with Korean Sovereign AI
Global Contribution Project

Park Gi-tae (Head of Cyber Diplomacy Organization VANK)

AI Built on Solidarity and Inclusion: Putting a 21st-Century Vision of Peace in the East into Practice

The direction we must now take is clear: building solidarity with countries across Africa, ASEAN, South America, and India—regions that have suffered historical and cultural distortion under imperial domination—and sharing sovereignty over AI technology, culture, and historical narratives.

Much as Korea's own existence was barely known to the international community a century ago in Ahn Jung-geun's time, and was even distorted or nearly erased by imperial powers, the histories and cultures of today's 54 African nations remain poorly recognized on the global stage. Their rich pasts and diverse cultures are often sidelined within the AI systems of powerful countries, or presented in distorted ways, filtered through English-language materials produced by the very powers that once colonized them.

ASEAN countries share similar wounds. After enduring colonial rule by Western powers, their unique histories and cultures were pushed out of mainstream narratives or, at times, described in distorted forms. Even today, some powerful nations continue efforts to absorb or reshape the histories and cultures of neighboring countries to expand their own influence. In this context, protecting sovereignty through nationally grounded data and algorithms is no longer optional—it is urgent.

South America bears a long and painful legacy of European colonialism. Indigenous civilizations and cultures were erased, while poverty, underdevelopment, and inequality became embedded in the social structure. Even today, the region's rich cultural heritage and history are filtered through a Western-centered lens, distorted in school textbooks, or judged by standards that are not its own.

India, too, is living through the wounds of historical distortion. References to Mahatma Gandhi's assassination have been removed from textbooks, while films are being released that reshape history to fit political narratives—such as romanticized stories between Muslim kings and Hindu queens that stray far from the historical record. Across the world, these distortions of history and culture point to a growing urgency in the age of AI: the need for sovereign AI built on a nation's own data and perspectives.

Ahn Jung-geun's unfinished 'Theory of Oriental Peace', let's complete it with Korean Sovereign AI Global Contribution Project

Park Gi-tae (Head of Cyber Diplomacy Organization VANK)

AI Built on Solidarity and Inclusion: Putting a 21st-Century Vision of Peace in the East into Practice (cont.)

Korea stands as one of the few advanced countries that has endured this pain and overcome it. Having lived through colonial rule, Korea carries both the historical legitimacy and the moral responsibility to help regions such as Africa, ASEAN, South America, and India secure genuine sovereignty over their AI technologies. Those who have known suffering, after all, are the ones most capable of understanding and easing the suffering of others.

If the sovereign AI we develop serves only as a defensive shield against U.S.- and China-centered technological hegemony, it risks becoming a "Galapagos" AI—isolated, inward-looking, and ultimately a waste of immense effort. But if Korea's sovereign AI is guided by a vision of inclusion and solidarity, embracing countries that share wounds similar to Korea's own past, then Korean AI can rise as a global standard—one rooted not in dominance, but in universal human values.

Ahn Jung-geun's unfinished 'Theory of Oriental Peace', let's complete it with Korean Sovereign AI Global Contribution Project

Park Gi-tae (Head of Cyber Diplomacy Organization VANK)

Korea's Path to Becoming a Global AI Hub: Time to Act on a Korean Sovereign AI Contribution Project

 Korea has reached a moment when it must carry forward Ahn Jung-geun's vision of peace—not in words, but in action. To that end, I strongly propose a "Korean Sovereign AI Global Contribution Project."

- Building a Coalition for the De-colonization of AI Data: Using Korea's AI technologies and expertise, support should be provided to partner countries—such as those in Africa and ASEAN—to develop independent databases that accurately reflect their own history, culture, language, and values. The objective is to help these countries develop AI systems that embody their national identities, rather than relying on AI shaped by the biases of major powers.

    For example, Korea can assist in building core language and culture datasets for partner countries. By transferring Korea's data labeling know-how, it is possible to establish a crowdsourcing-based system in which local youth and experts directly participate in data collection and refinement, while also creating employment opportunities. In addition, support should be offered for the development of a "sovereign data cloud system" based on Korea's public cloud technologies, enabling partner countries to store and manage their data securely without dependence on foreign cloud providers.

    By digitally converting and refining large volumes of high-quality, local-language datasets—covering indigenous languages, historical documents, oral histories, and cultural heritage information—partner countries can better preserve and protect their unique national identities.

- Launch of the "Accurate Information AI" Global Campaign: Just as Cyber Diplomacy Organization VANK achieved significant results in the past by correcting the Japanese-style name of marathon hero Sohn Kee-chung from the 1936 Berlin Olympics on Google—then the world's largest portal—and by leading campaigns to rectify distortions of Korean history in textbooks, encyclopedias, museums, and art galleries worldwide, it is now time to act in the era of artificial intelligence. We must take the lead in promoting the "Accurate Information AI" campaign to ensure that the histories and cultures of all nations are not distorted by AI training data, and to share and spread correct historical understanding globally. This effort represents a form of public diplomacy that leverages the Republic of Korea's strong soft power.

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Park Gi-tae (Head of Cyber Diplomacy Organization VANK)

Korea's Path to Becoming a Global AI Hub: Time to Act on a Korean Sovereign AI Contribution Project (cont.)

- AI Talent Development and Technology Transfer: The "Global AI Diplomacy Ambassador" training project, which VANK has carried out in cooperation with major central government agencies, local governments, and specialized institutions in Korea, should be expanded to partner countries. Through this expansion, joint AI education programs can be developed to help their adolescents and young people grow into key leaders of the AI era. At the same time, advanced AI technologies and data-processing infrastructure should be transferred to strengthen their capacity for independent AI development.

  VANK is already fulfilling its role as a "Global AI Diplomacy Ambassador" by correcting factual errors in Africa-related textbooks and online encyclopedias, and by building English-language websites and datasets that address biases and misconceptions about Africa, thereby promoting a more accurate and balanced understanding of the continent worldwide.

This represents the continuation of the unfinished vision of *On Peace in East Asia*, conceived by Ahn Jung-geun a century ago through a Korea-China-Japan community, now to be realized by the Republic of Korea in the 21st century through a global alliance in AI technology and culture. It is, in effect, the completion of Korea's Sovereign AI Global Contribution Project.

The spirit Ahn Jung-geun upheld until his final moments—a spirit of solidarity without hatred, embodied in *On Peace in East Asia*—must now be realized in the age of artificial intelligence. Beyond the technical ambition of becoming one of the world's top three AI powers, the Republic of Korea must rise as an AI leader that practices human-centered values through global contributions grounded in AI sovereignty.

Let us all become the Ahn Jung-geun of the 21st century and carry forward the *On Peace in East Asia* that he was unable to complete. Through Korea's sovereign AI and its global contributions, we must take the lead in advancing world peace. We possess both the historical legitimacy and the capability to do so. At this very moment, we stand at the starting point of this significant and far-reaching journey.

Topic Presentation

Kwon So-young, Researcher

21st Century Digital Imperialism and AI Information
Sovereignty: The Reality of Distortion through the case
of Korea

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Introduction

As artificial intelligence seeps into everyday life, the way we access information is being quietly but fundamentally reshaped. The convenience is undeniable. Yet beneath it lies a serious problem. Much of the data AI systems learn from is written from the viewpoint of global powers, and distorted narratives produced during the age of empire are now circulating once again—this time through digital networks.

For countries that once endured imperial domination, this amounts to a new form of sovereignty loss. A century ago, sovereignty was taken at gunpoint. Today, it is eroded through algorithms and data. Korea offers a clear example. This article examines how Korean history and culture are misrepresented in AI systems, why these distortions persist, and why this is not just Korea's problem but part of a broader global crisis of digital information sovereignty.

1. Korea Inside AI: What the Distortions Look Like

Across major AI platforms, representations of Korean culture, territory, and history often stray far from reality.

Take cultural heritage. Hanbok is frequently rendered to resemble Chinese qipao or hanfu. Gyeongbokgung Palace is depicted as a riverside fortress, oddly similar to Japan's Osaka Castle. The Buddha at Seokguram is placed outside the grotto, the exact opposite of its actual setting deep inside. Cheomseongdae, known for its distinctive cylindrical structure, is simplified into a generic stone tower.

Territorial issues are no better handled. Dokdo, which consists of two main islets—Dongdo and Seodo—is generated as a cluster of many small islands. In some cases, it is labeled as "Liancourt Rocks" or "Takeshima" and placed in the "Sea of Japan," echoing the position of Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs on sovereignty over the islands.

Historical distortion follows a similar pattern. When asked about the length of the Great Wall, AI systems often cite figures expanded after 1987, when China began including areas tied to Goguryeo and Balhae—kingdoms historically linked to Korea—rather than the length officially registered with UNESCO. This reflects China's "One China" narrative, which recasts neighboring histories as extensions of its own. Because this approach absorbs Korean history into Chinese cultural heritage, it becomes structurally difficult to challenge or even recognize the distortion.

2. Why These Distortions Persist

 AI systems learn from digitized textbooks, encyclopedias, academic papers, and online content. Errors in source materials are not corrected by AI; they are amplified. Four structural factors drive this problem.

 First is linguistic imbalance. Most internationally circulated information about Korea is written in English, and English-language sources dominate AI training data. The problem is that much of this material reflects Japanese or Chinese perspectives, leaving Korea itself absent as the main narrator of its own history.

 Second is the lingering influence of Japanese imperial historiography. During the colonial period, Japanese scholars developed theories—such as the Imna Japanese Headquarters theory and ideas of Korean stagnation and dependency—to justify colonization. These views were absorbed into Western academia and still surface today in AI-generated content, particularly in discussions of Dokdo and Korean sovereignty.

 Third is China's "One China" principle. To reinforce national unity among its 56 recognized ethnic groups, China promotes the idea that any history that occurred within present-day Chinese borders is Chinese history. As a result, Goguryeo and Balhae are reclassified as Chinese, while hanbok and kimchi are reframed as "Joseonjok culture," a subset of Chinese minority traditions. These narratives are translated into English and fed directly into AI systems.

 Fourth is the limited accessibility of official Korean sources. Reliable historical and cultural materials produced by Korean institutions are often insufficiently digitized or not fully open to the public. In that vacuum, biased sources are recycled and magnified by AI.

3. Digital Imperialism: How It Works

 This is not a simple technical glitch. It is the operating logic of 21st-century digital imperialism.

 Where imperialism once relied on military force to seize territory, today power is exercised through control of information. Whoever controls what AI learns ultimately shapes the version of history and culture the world comes to believe. This is digital imperialism.

 It operates through algorithms and data, and it has three defining features. First, it sets information priorities: search engines and AI systems elevate certain narratives over others. Second, it monopolizes cultural interpretation, allowing powerful actors to define other nations' histories and identities. Third, it shapes the worldview of future generations, as digital dominance today becomes common sense tomorrow.

21st Century Digital Imperialism and AI Information Sovereignty:
The Reality of Distortion through the case of Korea

Kwon So-young, Researcher

4. What the Case of Korea Reveals

AI has become one of the main gateways to information worldwide. A 2024 survey by Korea's Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism found that among adults in 25 countries, 54.1 percent accessed information about Korea through websites, and 83.3 percent of them relied on global AI-based search tools such as ChatGPT. In other words, AI is increasingly how the world understands Korea—and AI's answers become Korea's image.

What stands out is that even Korea, buoyed by the global popularity of K-pop, Korean food, and TV dramas, is poorly understood in terms of history and culture. According to the 2025 Overseas Hallyu Survey, the top associations with Korea were K-pop, K-food, and K-dramas. Traditional cultural markers such as Hanbok and Hangeul ranked far lower.

The implication is clear. If distortions of cultural heritage and territorial sovereignty occur even in a country as visible as Korea, the situation is likely far worse for local governments within Korea, and for Global South countries that experienced colonial rule but lack international cultural influence today.

This reveals the scale of the problem. In an era where AI is the primary gateway to knowledge, countries, regions, and cultures without a digital voice are effectively rendered invisible. That is the most dangerous aspect of digital imperialism.

5. From the Case of Korea to Global Sovereign AI

The case of Korea shows how distorted imperial narratives from Japan, China's "One China" principle, and the dominance of English-language sources converge in AI training data, undermining Korea's information sovereignty.

More broadly, it exposes the universal mechanics of digital imperialism. English-language materials written from the perspective of former imperial powers dominate AI systems. The voices of formerly colonized societies are sidelined, and distorted narratives are broadcast worldwide. That is how digital imperialism works.

While the details vary by country and region, the root cause is the same: a global information ecosystem shaped by powerful states, where AI mirrors existing data imbalances rather than correcting them.

Kwon So-young, Researcher

5. From the Case of Korea to Global Sovereign AI (cont,)

The solution, then, must also be structural. Confronting digital imperialism requires solidarity among countries that have experienced historical domination. The vision of "global sovereign AI," introduced in the keynote speech, begins here: sharing Korea's technological capacity and experience with other nations that suffered under imperialism, and jointly building a fair and inclusive digital information ecosystem.

The discussions that follow will explore how different regions and cultural heritages—within Korea and beyond—are represented in digital space. They will show that this is not merely a technical issue, but a question of justice; not the task of one nation, but a shared responsibility.

Building a fair and inclusive digital information ecosystem means more than protecting individual national narratives. It means enabling countries that have long been silenced to speak together— and to build a truly global, sovereign AI. That is the direction we must take.

Topic Presentation

Lee Sei-yeon, Youth Researcher

A New Frontier for Sovereign AI:
Gyeonggi Province's Local-Led Model
and its Global Promise

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Redefining Trust and "Sovereignty" in the Age of AI

In the 21st century, the information battlefield is no longer dominated by news portals or newspapers. People now turn to AI, ask a question, and often accept the answer as fact. A single search, a single line of text, can shape personal judgment—and ripple outward to influence public perception, local identity, and even policy decisions. We have entered an era in which invisible AI judgments quietly shape how policies are understood and how nations are seen.

There are no guns or armies involved. Yet flawed data and biased algorithms can define who we are faster and more subtly than any show of force. Our history, culture, and public information are constantly being reinterpreted through data and code, with a reach and speed that surpass any past institutional power. For overseas users with little exposure to Korea's history or regional identities, AI has effectively become the first—and sometimes only—window into the country. In that sense, AI now wields a new form of information power, one that directly affects national image.

This leaves us facing the following questions:

- Does the "Korea" described by AI match the real one?
- Who is shaping our information, and by what standards?
- Are we still in control of our own identity?

Sovereignty, it turns out, can no longer stop at borders. It must now include data, information, and algorithms—and that demands a fundamental rethink.

The Quiet Erosion of Local Sovereignty—and Why Gyeonggi Province Matters

Generative AI has become an invisible administrative partner, explaining not only national policies but also local government programs, daily services, cultural heritage, and regional identity. Yet reviews of AI-generated responses about local governments reveal a troubling pattern. Nonexistent policies are presented as real. Welfare criteria, subsidies, and administrative procedures are misstated. Cultural heritage names, timelines, and historical contexts are mixed up. Requests for images of designated cultural assets sometimes return completely unrelated visuals. In the case of intangible heritage, where written records are thin, AI has even been known to invent fictional origin stories.

A New Frontier for Sovereign AI:
Gyeonggi Province's Local-Led Model
and its Global Promise

Lee Sei-yeon, Youth Researcher

The Quiet Erosion of Local Sovereignty—and Why Gyeonggi Province Matters (cont.)

 This is not a minor technical glitch. It is a form of data sovereignty loss, where local identity and historical records are quietly rewritten by machines. In a world where AI provides first impressions to the international community, such distortions can easily spill over into misunderstandings and undervaluation of Korea's history, culture, and public institutions as a whole.

  Gyeonggi Province is particularly exposed. Home to 14 million people and 31 local governments, it is the largest regional authority in the country. Errors in its data do not stay local; they become a national burden. Worse still, AI systems tend to replicate mistakes across platforms, and repeated misinformation risks becoming the "standard" simply through familiarity. Given these stakes, it is no longer optional for local governments—especially Gyeonggi, with its scale and experience in digital administration—to take the lead. As the primary holders and certifiers of local data, they must build a proactive and systematic response.

A Way Forward: A Local-Government-Led, Citizen-Driven Sovereign AI

Historically, the defense of records, identity, and truth has often begun at the local level. During the Japanese colonial period, community-organized militias emerged even in the absence of a functioning central government, eventually fueling a nationwide independence movement. Small, local actions sparked large historical change.

The AI era is no different. In a new information order ruled by data and algorithms, local communities are uniquely positioned to preserve their identities and correct distortions. A stable form of sovereign AI can only be built where daily life, culture, and administration are best understood. Just as earlier generations defended sovereignty with organization and records rather than weapons, today's citizens who correct faulty data can be seen as modern "data volunteers" guarding the truth.

This model rests on two pillars.

First, a local-government-led structure. Local governments are the original producers of policy, cultural, and everyday administrative data. They hold the most accurate and up-to-date information on public systems. Their familiarity with regional specifics allows them to detect errors faster and more precisely than any centralized authority alone.

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A Way Forward: A Local-Government-Led, Citizen-Driven Sovereign AI (cont.)

 Second, a citizen-participation verification ecosystem. Residents act as the first line of oversight. Even without expert training, they are everyday specialists in their own communities, often the first to notice when AI gets something wrong. One citizen's report can strengthen the reliability of an entire region's data.

 To make this work, an institutional framework is needed: AI error-reporting and reward systems accessible through apps, websites, or QR codes; rapid verification by public offices; and incentives such as local currency or points. Participation by students could be recognized as volunteer service, while partnerships with local universities could offer "AI accuracy monitoring" programs. Combined with expert review and regular public data management, this creates a sustainable ecosystem in which governments, citizens, and specialists share responsibility.

From Gyeonggi to the Nation: A Networked Model of Sovereign AI

 The Gyeonggi model is more than a local policy experiment. It is a blueprint for a national public AI system. If local governments across the country systematically refine their policy and cultural data, share patterns of error, and adopt standardized formats, a three-layer partnership—local governments, citizens, and central authorities—can take shape.

In such a system, national public AI would reflect local realities with far greater accuracy. Korean-style sovereign AI would no longer rely on a single, centralized dataset but would function as a public infrastructure built from the everyday administrative, cultural, and social data of communities nationwide.

The Bigger Picture: Toward a Global Model of Sovereign AI

 The value of the Gyeonggi model does not stop at Korea's borders. Local governments worldwide face the same problem: regional data is structurally weaker than national data, and global AI firms struggle to capture the nuance of local administration, culture, and daily life. A local-government-based sovereign AI model, once proven, could become a globally replicable standard for public AI governance.

If Korea establishes a stable structure linking Gyeonggi, other local governments, and the national level, it could offer a template for overseas municipalities. In doing so, Korea would secure not only data and cultural sovereignty, but technological sovereignty as well.

A New Frontier for Sovereign AI:
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Lee Sei-yeon, Youth Researcher

From Gyeonggi to the World: A New Start of 21st Century Global Order

A century ago, Ahn Jung-geun's vision of peace in East Asia went beyond national independence, calling for cooperation among states to build a new order. In the age of AI, international order can likewise be reshaped—not by force, but by data; not by domination, but by shared technology and mutual verification.

The Gyeonggi model is more than a regional initiative. It is a practical example of sovereign AI that Korea can present to the world, and a reminder that local governments are not peripheral actors but central pillars of national sovereignty.

In the AI era, sovereignty cannot be defended by central government alone. Protecting local data, culture, and policy is inseparable from protecting the nation's future. If the changes begun in Gyeonggi spread across Korea and connect with local governments abroad, they could lay the groundwork for a new, data-based international order built on trust and cooperation.

Ultimately, sovereign AI is about more than technology. It is about empowering regions to shape the future information order themselves. If the Gyeonggi model succeeds in organizing local data into a system that can be shared globally, it will stand not just as a policy success, but as a living governance model—one that shows how local accuracy can build cross-border trust, and how that trust can form the foundation for a more peaceful and cooperative world.

Topic Presentation

Kim Ye-rae, Youth Researcher

APEC Gyeongju: When History, Culture,
and International Events meet AI Errors—
and How to Respond
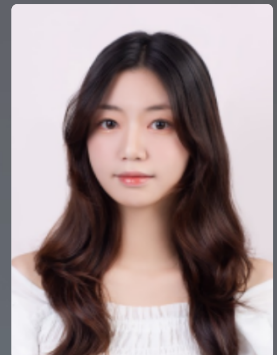
APEC Gyeongju: When History, Culture, and International Events meet AI Errors— and How to Respond

Kim Ye-rae, Youth Researcher

A Thousand-Year City Trapped in Faulty Data

Gyeongju has always told its story without words. The curve of Cheomseongdae, the stone reliefs of Seokguram, the grassy tombs of Daereungwon—these were records made of stone and earth, not sentences. Long before people read texts, they walked among ruins. Gyeongju was never a city that needed to be explained; it was history you could see.

But as Gyeongju prepares to host the 2025 APEC summit, the world's first encounter with this ancient city no longer comes through landscapes or ruins. It comes through a line of text on a smartphone screen, generated by AI. That line has become the first impression. The question is whether it carries a thousand years of history with any accuracy at all. What we found was unsettling: AI's version of Gyeongju is often wrong—and wrong in ways that are structural, not accidental.

How AI is portraying Gyeongju

We posed the same basic questions to several major global AI platforms: "Cheomseongdae image," "Seokguram visiting information," "APEC Gyeongju schedule." These are the keywords foreign tourists and international delegates are most likely to search. The answers, however, were consistently confused.

Images of Cheomseongdae resembled Chinese or Japanese monuments. Seokguram was reduced to a generic East Asian temple, stripped of its distinctive grotto artistry. Bulguksa appeared as just another interchangeable Buddhist site, its architectural meaning and symbolism erased. What emerged was a pattern: AI flattening the entire East Asian cultural sphere into a single average image, unable—or unwilling—to recognize difference and context.

The problems went beyond images. Tourist information listed incorrect entrance fees and opening hours. The same question produced different answers depending on the platform. Historical errors were even more serious. Silla's founding was wrongly traced to Chinese Qin exiles rather than Bak Hyeokgeose. Kim Yu-sin's royal ties and official posts were muddled. Nationally designated intangible heritage was misidentified, and family lineages preserving traditional crafts were incorrectly named. Context vanished, leaving behind short, shallow facts. Gyeongju was no longer a distinct historical capital but a generic "East Asian tourist spot," barely distinguishable from sites in China or Japan.

How AI is portraying Gyeongju (cont.)

The same confusion appeared in AI responses about the 2025 APEC summit itself. Hosting countries, schedules, and operational details were mixed up. Even performance and event information was inconsistent. For a mega-event where heads of state, global media, and international delegations converge, such misinformation is not trivial. It risks confusion on the ground and undermines trust in the host city and the credibility of a national event. At this point, it is hard to call this a simple technical error. It is a systemic failure in how information is produced and circulated.

These Errors Are Structural, Not Accidental

The problem cannot be explained by weak AI models alone. It lies in the information ecosystem itself. Global AI systems rely heavily on English-language online content. Compared with official government or local authority data, private travel sites, blogs, commercial platforms, and secondhand summaries on foreign portals are far more visible and easier to access.

Official data from Korea's heritage authorities, local governments, and tourism bodies is reliable, but often poorly structured, difficult to access via APIs, or restricted by copyright. From an AI's perspective, inaccurate summaries are simply easier to learn from than precise primary sources. Accuracy loses to visibility.

AI does not learn what is true first. It learns what is most exposed. In this system, Korean history and culture are not described by Korea's own public records, but by summaries compiled elsewhere. Our heritage is edited not through our own archives, but through someone else's algorithms.

Tourism Errors Cost Money, Historical Errors Cost Sovereignty

Mistakes in AI-generated tourist information quickly translate into economic losses. Incorrect hours disrupt travel plans. Recommending nonexistent facilities lowers visitor satisfaction. With APEC set to bring a surge of visitors, foreign media, and international delegations, such confusion can damage Gyeongju's overall image at the very moment it is under global scrutiny.

But the deeper issue is historical distortion. Korea has lived through this before. During the colonial period, cultural assets were taken, records erased, and the power to interpret history handed over to others. While many physical artifacts have been recovered, narrative control was never fully restored. AI's distorted version of Gyeongju may be the digital echo of that unfinished loss.

APEC Gyeongju: When History, Culture, and International Events meet AI Errors—and How to Respond

Kim Ye-rae, Youth Researcher

Tourism Errors Cost Money, Historical Errors Cost Sovereignty (cont.)

AI is no longer just a search tool. For much of the world, it is the starting point for fact-checking—a digital encyclopedia. Information repeated often becomes truth. Short explanations stand in for national identity.

A thousand years carved in stone may endure, but a single line of wrong data can shape the perceptions of millions in seconds. When history is misdescribed, cultural sovereignty is breached.

The moment our heritage is defined by someone else's summaries, we lose the right to explain ourselves. And now, the choice of whether to change this structure sits squarely in front of us.

What We Need is not Technical Fixes, but a Data Sovereignty Strategy

Correcting individual AI answers or filing takedown requests will not solve the problem. What is needed is a structural response.

First, Korea needs standardized, AI-ready public datasets for cultural heritage at the national level. Descriptions, operating information, visitor rules, and historical explanations must be structured in unified formats so global AI platforms can directly learn from official data.

Second, a credible verification dataset for AI must be built—a Korean fact-checking hub that continuously evaluates AI outputs and feeds corrections back into the system. This is not customer service; it is permanent oversight.

Third, cultural diplomacy must be linked with AI governance. Hosting APEC is not just an event—it is an opportunity to place Korea's data sovereignty on the global agenda. Agreements with major platforms on data accuracy, access routes for official datasets, and shared responsibility must be pursued alongside diplomacy.

But the goal should go beyond fixing errors. What Korea needs to build is not just a national response, but a global standard for sovereign AI—one that preserves each country's history, culture, and identity without distortion, free from the data dominance of a few states or corporations.

What We Need is not Technical Fixes, but a Data Sovereignty Strategy (cont.)

Protecting cultural sovereignty is no longer a domestic issue. It is about building a trustworthy global information system. Korea has the history and the conditions not just to catch up in the AI race, but to lead in setting the rules for AI ethics and information responsibility. The question raised in Gyeongju about data sovereignty points toward a direction the world must share. Accurate information is not a convenience; it is a shared asset of humanity. And the country that builds that system first will be the true leader of the AI age.

When a City of History enters the Age of Data

In the age of AI, the stage of history has shifted. It no longer sits only on ancient sites and stone ruins; it now lives on servers and in datasets. Gyeongju, long defined by a thousand years of visible history, is once again at a crossroads—this time where 21st-century diplomacy and technology intersect.

Whether the city becomes a testing ground for distorted information or the starting point for a sound model of digital cultural sovereignty depends on the choices we make now. In the era of AI, silence is no longer a form of protection. If we do not speak, others will speak for us.

That means we must tell our history ourselves, in the language that now matters most: data. Gyeongju is moving from a city of records to a city of search results. Standing at that boundary, we are forced to ask a simple but unsettling question: whose algorithm is telling our story?

Topic Presentation

Baek Si-eun, Youth Researcher

Korea's Global Contribution
through Sovereign AI:
What Africa's Misrepresentation Tells Us
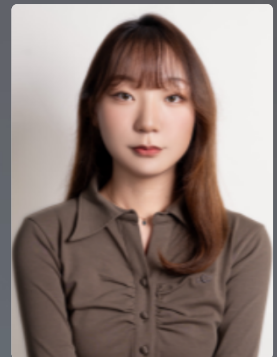
Korea's Global Contribution through Sovereign AI:
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Baek Si-eun, Youth Researcher

21st Century, The Arrival of a New Kind of Sovereignty

As Korea approaches a decisive moment in its ambition to become one of the world's top three AI powers, the question we should be asking goes beyond technical success. The real issue is whether that success reflects the deeper values at the core of Korea's AI vision.

Sovereignty today is no longer defined by borders or military strength. It is shaped by how a nation's language, data, and identity are represented inside AI models. We are standing in the middle of a new, largely invisible contest over sovereignty. Artificial intelligence has moved beyond being a simple tool for delivering information. It has become an unseen architect of how people understand the world.

AI decides how a culture or a history is described, which words are chosen, which images are shown, and which information is accepted as fact. And behind that design sit the languages, data, and narrative systems of only a handful of powerful countries.

The result is predictable. Countries without their own large language models are pushed to the margins. Their histories and cultures fade into the background. This is especially true for the Global South, where Africa's past, present, and future are often exaggerated, flattened, or reduced to clichés. The power to produce and interpret information is effectively locked inside the technical systems of a few states.

Why a Korean "Global" Sovereign AI, and Why Now?

While AI is consumed by people around the world, it is produced by only a few. This imbalance strengthens data monopolies and traps the world's understanding of other societies inside the lens of a small number of technology powers.

In this process, AI hallucinations and distorted information are no longer just technical glitches. They have become deeply political acts that reshape national identity, culture, and history. Responding to this data bias means that sovereign AI can no longer stop at "our own technology, talent, and capital." It must expand into a global effort to correct deep inequalities in how the world is seen and understood.

Korea's Global Contribution through Sovereign AI:
What Africa's Misrepresentation Tells Us

Baek Si-eun, Youth Researcher

Why a Korean "Global" Sovereign AI, and Why Now? (cont.)

This is where the distinctive value of a Korean global sovereign AI lies. Its purpose can extend beyond national competitiveness to the broader goal of reducing global perception inequality. Few countries are as well positioned as Korea to take on that role.

Korea is a non-Western country with a colonial past and firsthand experience of distorted representation. It has transformed itself from an aid recipient into a donor nation. And it now has the technical capacity and data resources to build its own large language models, while maintaining a perspective that is not fully bound to a Western-centered order. Together, these factors give Korea a unique advantage in proposing an alternative model of technological sovereignty.

Why Africa Should Be the Starting Point

There is a clear reason why Africa should be the first focus of Korea's global sovereign AI effort.

Africa is among the biggest victims of AI-driven bias and distortion.

In AI-generated text and images—maps, public figures, cultural heritage, modern cities, even young people—Africa is repeatedly reduced to a narrow set of images: poverty, civil war, deserts, and "primitive" tribes. Urban life, scientific progress, economic growth, and social dynamism are erased. Rich and diverse traditions are repackaged as exotic curiosities.

This bias is not just a misunderstanding. It has real consequences. It limits African countries' voice and influence in the international arena and reinforces unfair assumptions in policy decisions, investment flows, and global cooperation.

The reality is very different. Africa is a vast and diverse continent of 54 countries, with one of the youngest populations in the world. Digital economies, startups, urban culture, and creative industries—from art to sports—are rapidly evolving. Yet this reality rarely appears in global AI models. Instead, a continent full of future potential remains frozen in a dated image of the past.

This is a form of "colonization of perception," and it carries political weight. When a region is consistently misrepresented, its ability to speak and be taken seriously on the global stage is quietly but steadily eroded.

Why Africa Should Be the Starting Point (cont.)

Africa is the continent most conspicuously missing from the world of AI training data—even among the global majority.

One of the main reasons AI so often gets Africa wrong is simple: the raw data it learns from is already skewed. The Africa that AI describes is rarely drawn from local languages, sources, or debates. Instead, it is filtered through Western materials—largely in English, Spanish, and French—and shaped by perspectives produced far from the continent itself. At the most basic level of input, from globally influential textbooks and media to reports by international organizations, Western interpretations and narratives are already baked in.

Take American world history textbooks. Many still present Africa's past as a narrow, linear storyline: an "unknown land" before colonization, followed by colonial rule and the slave trade, and then decolonization and civil war. Along the way, they often rely on terms and expressions that echo an imperial gaze that has never fully disappeared.

Korea's own textbooks are not entirely free from this trap either. They have yet to fully escape the tendency to place Africa and the West on a vertical ladder of "development." In elementary social studies textbooks—the first point of contact where young students begin to form their view of the world—Africa is often reduced to images of poverty and hunger. In some cases, these narratives go further, labeling Africa as "underdeveloped" and reinforcing a Western savior story that frames the continent as an object of rescue rather than a subject of history.

Even the maps we grew up with play a role. World maps produced and widely circulated during the age of exploration, especially those based on the Mercator projection, have long visually shrunk Africa, imprinting a distorted sense of its scale and significance.

Given this legacy of biased texts, images, and cartographic systems, it may be unrealistic to expect AI trained on such material to generate fair and balanced knowledge. Gaps and distortions in input inevitably become gaps and distortions in understanding. Once again, Africa is being pushed to the margins—this time in the data landscape of the AI age.

Why Africa Should Be the Starting Point (cont.)

Korea stands in a unique position—one that could bridge the West and Africa.

Korea is neither Western nor a typical member of the Global South. Its history of colonization under Japanese rule left deep scars, including the experience of having its culture, traditions, and social structures represented and distorted by others. As a non-Western country and a former colony, Korea understands better than most how misrepresentation can wound a society's self-respect, identity, and sense of the future. That history gives Korea a rare moral credibility to argue for a fairer global knowledge system—beyond the usual logic of economics and security.

At the same time, Korea's transition from aid recipient to aid donor has earned it goodwill and interest across many African countries. Beyond sharing its development experience and providing assistance in education, health, and infrastructure, Korea now has an opportunity to propose new models of cooperation in digital technology, culture, and AI. In this sense, Korea can offer something the West often cannot: a partnership grounded in empathy and shared experience, not hierarchy.

The Direction of Korea's Sovereign AI

Until now, discussions of sovereign AI have largely started from a familiar premise: "our data, our technology, our language." But sovereign AI should not end at national borders. It is only complete when it grows beyond a single country into a new global AI ecosystem—one that respects multiple nations and world citizens alike. In other words, the goal should be a truly global sovereign AI.

So what, exactly, should a Korea-led global sovereign AI aim to do? To answer that, we must remind ourselves that a nation is not made up of presidents and governments alone, but of its people.

A country is defined not just by economic indicators, but by its history, culture, language, and stories. How the world imagines a country—what images and narratives come to mind—directly shapes its people's self-esteem, opportunities, and standing on the global stage. What citizens ultimately want is simple but profound: for their history, culture, and identity to be seen fully and accurately.

The Direction of Korea's Sovereign AI (cont.)

 A country is defined not just by economic indicators, but by its history, culture, language, and stories. How the world imagines a country—what images and narratives come to mind—directly shapes its people's self-esteem, opportunities, and standing on the global stage. What citizens ultimately want is simple but profound: for their history, culture, and identity to be seen fully and accurately.

 This is why Koreans celebrated the global rise of Hallyu. Beyond the popularity of K-pop and Korean dramas, something deeper happened: perceptions of Korea and Koreans were rewritten. The country stepped out of the shadow of being seen as weak or colonized and emerged as a cultural powerhouse.

 Now Korea must move beyond cultural diplomacy alone and create a new form of soft power that fuses technology and culture. At the center of that effort is AI. A Korea-led global sovereign AI would mean designing algorithms and data structures that genuinely respect the cultures and identities of countries long pushed to the margins. This is not merely about growing an AI industry; it is about restoring a voice to nations that are gradually being silenced in the global order.

 Development aid, infrastructure support, and the dispatch of experts are things many countries have already done. As the world enters a new chapter driven by AI, Korea must ask again what it can uniquely contribute to the international community.

AI for All

 The government's vision of "AI for All"—the idea that every citizen should be an active participant in the AI era—holds values that can naturally extend beyond national borders.

 AI for All means more than access. It points to a technological ecosystem that does not privilege one country's worldview over others, but respects all cultures and identities. In that sense, it aligns directly with the idea of global sovereign AI—so long as we resist the temptation to limit its scope by borders.

 The Korean model of sovereign AI is not simply about technological independence. It is a new international responsibility: restoring balance to the global knowledge system and enabling every country to represent itself as it truly is. An AI for All that excludes no nation. Through technology, Korea now has the chance to recover voices lost in the rush of globalization and to offer a new kind of leadership—one that brings the margins to the center.

Korea's Global Contribution through Sovereign AI:
What Africa's Misrepresentation Tells Us

Baek Si-eun, Youth Researcher

AI for All (cont.)

To make this real:

- Launch international joint dataset programs with African countries to build primary data and metadata together. The goal is not volume, but authenticity: datasets that reflect how each African country defines its own history, culture, and identity. Metadata should clearly state who created the data, in what context, and with what authority. Korea can provide hardware, platforms, and model technology, while sharing—rather than monopolizing—the power to define meaning with local African researchers.

- Offer a Sovereign AI package that allows African countries to adapt Korea's lightweight models (sLLMs) instead of bearing the massive cost of building sovereign AI from scratch. Alongside this, Korea should lead with ODA focused on building self-sustaining local tech ecosystems, so developers can modify and improve AI on their own. This would create a win-win model: new markets for Korean AI firms and genuine technological independence for African partners.

This partnership, beginning in Africa, would be the first concrete scene in which the values of Korea's global sovereign AI move from abstract ideals to lived practice.

General DIscussion

Koo Seung-hyun, Lee Jeong-woo,
Kwon Soon-gyu, Lee Sun-hee, Researchers

Korean AI Sovereignty Global Contribution Project
and Korea's Strategy

Building an AI Model Verification System, Developing AI Educational Content Together

Koo Seung-hyun, Researcher

- **Building an AI Model Verification System**

 To confront the growing problem of historical and cultural distortion in the age of AI, we need more than good intentions. We need a system that actually checks what AI models say— and holds them to account.

 Over the past two decades, VANK has built hands-on experience by identifying and correcting errors about Korea in textbooks, encyclopedias, and museums around the world. That work now needs to move into a new arena: the verification of AI models.

 The idea is to build an 'AI Error Monitoring Network' together with partner countries in the Global South—Africa, ASEAN members, Latin America, India, and beyond. This network would regularly test major generative AI systems using country-specific keywords and historical and cultural content. When distortions or inaccuracies are found, formal correction reports would be submitted to AI companies and international bodies such as UNESCO and the OECD AI Observatory.

 Importantly, this would not be a closed, technocratic process. It would operate as a citizen-participation AI watchdog campaign, bringing together international civil society groups, youth networks, and academic communities. In practice, it would function as a global civic monitoring effort that routinely checks how large language models portray the histories and cultures of partner countries—and demands corrections when they get it wrong.

 Such a system would push AI companies toward greater transparency and accountability, while laying the groundwork for real, enforceable AI ethics. In the end, an AI model verification system would become more than a technical fix. It would evolve into a framework for shared responsibility—one that clarifies who defines data, who bears historical responsibility, and how cultural imbalances between nations can be corrected through cooperation.

Building an AI Model Verification System, Developing AI Educational Content Together

Koo Seung-hyun, Researcher

- **Developing AI Educational Content Together**

Education in the AI era should no longer be about transmitting the knowledge of a few dominant countries. It should be about creating a learning environment where many civilizations and cultures coexist as data.

Korea, working with its partner countries, should jointly develop AI training content that reflects each country's own history and culture. This content should be released as a public good, freely accessible through international education platforms and public AI data hubs.

In practical terms, this means institutionalizing joint AI education content workshops in which young people, teachers, and researchers from partner countries take part directly. Their histories, cultures, languages, and source materials would be refined into AI-readable formats and converted into open-source, multilingual AI learning resources.

This kind of cooperation is not just about building technology. It is a concrete way of realizing the vision of mutual cooperation and coexistence that Ahn Jung-geun once imagined in his Theory of Oriental Peace in East Asia—updated for the age of AI.

In the AI era, competition is not defined by the speed of technology, but by the direction of our values. The "Korean AI Sovereignty Global Contribution Project" offers a model that shows how becoming an AI powerhouse can be aligned with universal human values.

The solidarity around AI sovereignty led by Korea could become a journey that expands Ahn Jung-geun's vision into a 21st-century AI Theory of Peace for Humanity.

In short, an AI model verification system is about correcting what is wrong in existing data. Joint AI education content development is about creating the right data together.

When these two pillars come together, the Korean AI Sovereignty Global Contribution Project can grow beyond technical cooperation into a global effort to redefine data, protect cultural diversity, and advance values shared by all of humanity.

Hosting a Global Forum for AI Sovereignty, Proposing International Standards on Dataset Bias

Lee Jeong-woo, Youth Researcher

- **Hosting a Global Forum for AI Sovereignty**

If Korea is serious about establishing AI sovereignty, global solidarity is not optional—it is essential.

Today, the countries that dominate AI technology are the United States and China. When AI systems shaped by these powers learn from biased data, there is a growing fear that the result will be a new form of "digital colonialism," where technological influence quietly replaces political control.

Korea, however, is far from a bystander; it is a country with significant AI potential of its own. According to the Critical and Emerging Technologies Index published by Harvard University's Belfer Center, Korea ranks ninth worldwide in AI competitiveness. This standing suggests that Korea has more than enough capacity to build sovereign AI through global cooperation.

That potential is already visible in the private sector. As Jeong Joo-hwan, an executive at Naver Cloud, noted at the 2025 Segye ASEAN Forum, Naver is working with countries such as Saudi Arabia, Morocco, and Thailand—places that lack strong sovereign AI capabilities. In doing so, Naver is positioning itself as a "sovereign AI enabler," helping other countries build AI systems that respect their own data sovereignty.

The fact that a leading Korean AI company is developing locally tailored AI solutions while respecting national data rights in countries across the Middle East and Africa points clearly to the role Korea can play in the global AI ecosystem.

This vision has also been echoed at the highest political level. During a visit to South Africa in late November, President Lee Jae-myung welcomed the G20's AI for Africa initiative, noting that technological progress should provide fair opportunities for all countries and people.

If countries with strong AI capabilities—like Korea—work together with those that lack sovereign AI capacity, they can build a shared front for global AI sovereignty. Done right, this would be a form of global stewardship without digital colonialism.

By hosting regular forums among partner countries and sharing quarterly reports on successful cases of data decolonization, Korea could help lay the groundwork for a sustainable and cooperative global model of AI governance.

Hosting a Global Forum for AI Sovereignty, Proposing International Standards on Dataset Bias

Lee Jeong-woo, Youth Researcher

- **Proposing International Standards on Dataset Bias**

Today, people turn to generative AI—ChatGPT included—not just to search for information, but to seek advice and guidance for decision-making. AI has become more than a tool; it is increasingly treated as an authority.

Yet serious doubts remain about the accuracy of the information AI consumes and reproduces. We live in an age of information overload, but much of what circulates online is unreliable.

An even deeper concern is what experts call "model collapse," sometimes described as "data inbreeding." This happens when AI systems repeatedly train on data generated by other AI systems, causing errors and distortions to accumulate over time.

Preventing this requires access to high-quality, trustworthy data. Official materials produced by governments, international organizations, and civic groups such as Cyber Diplomacy Organization VANK can serve as critical reference points.

If nationally verified, official data were systematically incorporated into AI training pipelines, it could help prevent model collapse and the spread of distorted information.

But this is not a problem any single country can solve on its own. What is needed is an internationally accepted system of standards for dataset reliability. Governments should provide trusted official data to major AI companies, and global standards and cooperation mechanisms should ensure that this data is actually reflected in training processes.

This would be a first step toward defining what "data credibility" means in the AI era—and it is another area where Korea could take the lead in making a meaningful global contribution.

Building a National Digital Heritage Vault, Developing an AI Coexistence Index

Kwon Soon-gyu, Researcher

- **Building a National Digital Heritage Vault**

 Most of what AI learns about the world comes from the internet. The problem is that some countries are well documented online, while others have scattered, incomplete, or fragile records. As a result, some nations are described accurately by AI, while others are misunderstood—or misrepresented altogether.

 A National Digital Heritage Vault is a way to close that gap. Think of it as a country-by-country data repository: a secure place where key materials on history, language, culture, and traditions are collected, organized, and stored in formats AI can actually understand. Korea, with its extensive experience in digital archiving and record management, is well positioned to help partner countries build these vaults and share the necessary technology.

 The stakes are high. The picture of the world that AI produces in the future will depend heavily on what goes into this vault. With a digital heritage vault in place, partner countries gain the ability to explain their own cultures on their own terms in the AI era. AI companies, in turn, gain access to reliable, well-structured source material they can trust.

 Just as important is the process itself. When people from partner countries are directly involved in building the vault, the project goes beyond storage. It strengthens local data skills and capacity. Over time, this becomes a powerful way to protect historical and cultural sovereignty.

 In this sense, a National Digital Heritage Vault functions as a safeguard for history and culture in the age of AI. By promoting this as an international cooperation project, Korea can position itself not only as a country that shares technology, but as one that helps preserve the cultural foundations of others—a meaningful contribution to humanity as a whole.

37

Building a National Digital Heritage Vault, Developing an AI Coexistence Index

Kwon Soon-gyu, Researcher

- **Developing an AI Coexistence Index**

 Most AI evaluations today focus on one question: how accurately does the model deliver the "right" answer? What they rarely measure is whose history and culture shape that answer in the first place—or how fairly different countries and civilizations are represented. This blind spot allows biased narratives to pass as neutral facts.

 The AI Coexistence Index is a proposed way to fix that. Put simply, it would be a scorecard that measures how fairly AI treats the world's diverse histories and cultures. It would assess, item by item, how accurately a country's history is described, how well regional cultures are reflected, and whether the model leans too heavily toward certain continents or cultural spheres.

 Once such an index exists, AI companies would be pushed to think beyond raw performance. Cultural and historical diversity would become part of how models are judged. From a business perspective, a high coexistence score could even become a new mark of competitiveness. Countries, meanwhile, would gain an objective way to see how their cultures are being handled inside AI systems.

 The index could also be improved collaboratively with partner countries. If AI consistently misrepresents or overlooks certain societies, fixing and enriching the underlying data would directly raise the coexistence score. In that sense, the index aligns closely with the broader goal of securing sovereignty in the AI era.

 Over the long term, the AI Coexistence Index could serve as a benchmark for international organizations and global AI policy discussions. AI companies would have little choice but to account for historical and cultural significance, and the risk of certain countries being pushed to the margins of AI-generated knowledge would shrink.

 At its core, the AI Coexistence Index shifts the terms of competition. It replaces a narrow focus on technical prowess with a broader standard: the fair and balanced representation of history and culture. If Korea takes the lead in developing this index, it can strengthen both its technological standing and its value-driven diplomacy at the same time.

Building an Alliance for AI Data De-colonization and Reclaiming Digital Sovereignty

Lee Sun-hee, Senior Researcher

- **'Building an Alliance for AI Data De-colonization'**

 This lays out a concrete plan for an initiative called Building an Alliance for AI Data De-colonization, a project that seeks to carry forward the spirit of solidarity embodied by Ahn Jung-geun into the 21st-century age of artificial intelligence.

 At its core, the project aims to turn Korea's strengths in data, AI technology, and ethical leadership into a new model of cooperation—one designed to help partner countries reclaim their digital sovereignty. The focus is on regions such as Africa, ASEAN, Latin America, and India, where historical experiences of colonial rule have left deep marks on cultural and historical data, where AI infrastructure remains fragile, and where there is strong interest in working with Korea.

 The idea is as follows: build a "digital sovereignty" cooperation model that helps these countries take control of their own data and narratives. Priority partners would include selected ASEAN countries and member states of the African Union—places where the risk of data distortion is high and the need for fair, locally grounded AI systems is urgent.

 To get this off the ground, the project calls for formal partnerships with organizations such as VANK, along with close cooperation with the Korean government. Memorandums of understanding would be signed among VANK, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, KOICA, and relevant ministries in partner countries—such as those responsible for digital policy, education, and culture—to give the initiative an official and lasting foundation.

- **Diagnosing 'AI Data Sovereignty' and Analyzing Gaps**

 There should be a thorough diagnosis of "AI data sovereignty".

 This means taking a hard look at the data currently used to train AI systems in partner countries, especially data related to history, culture, and language. How much of it is shaped—or distorted—by Western-centric sources? To answer that, the project proposes developing a bias index to measure exclusion and imbalance. At the same time, it would assess gaps in local capacity for collecting, storing, and processing data, including infrastructure, technology, and human resources. The outcome would be a tailored "data sovereignty roadmap" for each partner country.

Building an Alliance for AI Data De-colonization and Reclaiming Digital Sovereignty

Lee Sun-hee, Senior Researcher

- **Hosting 'Global AI Sovereignty Forum' and Sharing Results**

  Each year, under VANK's leadership, a Global AI Sovereignty Forum would bring together participating countries to present success stories in data de-colonization. Newly developed datasets and lightweight AI models would be made publicly available, allowing other developing countries to benefit as well.

  The goal is to spread the value of Korea-led AI solidarity worldwide and to establish this effort as a model for responsible technology sharing.

- **Proposing 'Dataset Bias International Standard'**

  Drawing on its experience and the newly developed "dataset bias international standard," VANK would push for international standards—such as through ISO—on historical and cultural inclusivity in AI training datasets. By doing so, diversity and inclusion would be built into AI systems from the very start, extending Ahn Jung-geun's spirit of justice and solidarity into a set of universal AI values.

- **Securing Project Sustainability**

  Over time, project management would be gradually handed over to partner governments and local experts, creating a self-reliant and durable operating structure. Follow-up consulting would help countries apply their own datasets and AI models to public services such as education, healthcare, and administration.

  Taken together, this plan links Korea's AI capabilities to a vision that goes beyond economic gain. It frames technology as a tool for peace, fairness, and the protection of sovereignty— and, in doing so, positions 21st-century Korea as a true AI leader, grounded not only in innovation, but in ethics as well.

제1회 VANK Sovereign AI Forum

글로벌 소버린 AI 포럼

25.12.10. —— WED

> 2025년 12월 10일 (수) 오후 2시~4시
> 일산 킨텍스 제2전시장 307A호

기조발표

> 반크 박기태 단장 (경기도 AI 위원)
<안중근의 미완성 '동양평화론', 대한민국 주권 AI 글로벌 공헌 프로젝트로 완성하자>

주제발표

> 반크 권소영 연구원
<21세기 디지털 제국주의와 AI 정보 주권: 한국 사례를 통해 본 왜곡의 실태>
> 반크 이세연 청년연구원
<주권 AI의 새 지평: 지자체 주도 경기도 모델과 글로벌 확산>
> 반크 김예래 청년연구원
<APEC 경주: 역사문화·국제행사 정보 왜곡과 대응 전략>
> 반크 백시은 청년연구원
<한국 주권 AI의 글로벌 공헌: 아프리카 편향·왜곡 사례 분석을 통해>

종합토론

> 반크 구승현, 이정우, 권순규, 이선희 연구원
<대한민국 AI 주권 글로벌 공헌 실행 프로젝트와 한국의 전략>

사이버외교사절단 **반크**
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