

## A Chicken Sexer and Byul-Yi Sa

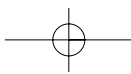


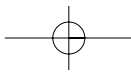
At one time, a patent attorney was highly regarded due to the fact that only one or two persons were admitted to the patent bar each year. Although the number admitted to the patent bar was increased to 202 in 2002, only 11 new patent attorneys were admitted when I passed the patent bar examination.

The number of persons taking the patent bar exam has increased dramatically in the recent years. In 2002, the 39th Patent Bar Session, there were 8,500 candidates vying for 202 spots on the patent bar membership. The passing rate is 42 to 1.

Why is becoming a patent attorney so popular? I think that it has to do with a better appreciation of IPR among the general public, leading to the popularity of the patent attorney profession. It also has to do with the fact that the economic difficulties, including the current trend of early forced retirement, have forced students, graduates as well as ordinary salary men to seriously consider preparing for the patent bar.

Although a patent attorney is born from such fierce competition, most do not have any idea as to what a patent attorney actually does. They simply conjecture that it is similar to other types of legal professions, such as an attorney at law or legal scriveners. Some do not even know that a patent attorney undertakes legal representation of patents, designs, utility models, trademarks





and other IPR in applications and litigations.

B.J. Kim is a young man who just passed the patent bar. This news was spread quickly in his hometown. The town's elderly, gathered in the townhall, all were exasperated.

“That kid who finished the graduate school only became a chicken sexer?”

“His father sent him to law school to make him a judge or a prosecutor, and I feel sorry for him.”

I don't know how the rumor started, but a patent attorney had been misunderstood as a chicken sexer in some circles.

At the time when passing the patent bar was as difficult as leading a camel through a needlehole, the response to the news that B.J. Kim had just survived the stiffest of competitions to become a patent attorney from his relatives in his hometown was only lukewarm. One lady even quipped that the family should consider emigrating now that B.J. has become a chicken sexer. Instead of congratulations, scorn and disdain were waiting for him. Perhaps this was a story concocted by those seeking humor. However, it does reflect the fact that many people have no clue as to what a patent attorney does.

While traveling abroad, an older gentleman from Kyungsang-do asked me what profession I was in.

“What do you do?”

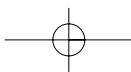
“I'm a patent attorney.”

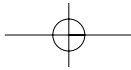
“What? Byul-yisa?”

“No, Byun-li-sa.”

I tried to explain to the best of my ability, but he was still unsure. I didn't have my business card with me at the time, so I wrote down my name and address on a note and gave it to him. The same gentleman, whom I befriended and with whom I even took photographs together during the trip, wrote me upon return to

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Korea. I could not stop laughing while reading his letter that accompanied with the printed photographs. His letter started, Ho Hyun Nahm Byul-Yi Sa, hi. He had understood that I was some sort of a special director (Yisa) in a strange company. Or, maybe he thought that I was a general in the military (Byul=star).

Even though the patent attorney system in Korea was established with the enactment of the Patent Act one year after the Korean Independence Day, it is not uncommon to find people who are still not familiar with a patent attorney. We, the patent attorneys, are primarily to blame for that. We failed to communicate how valuable and potent IPR is in this increasingly fierce and competitive environment. We were caught up in self-importance with voluminous law books and incomprehensible vocabularies.

IPR, including patents, is not exclusive to patent attorneys. They can be yours, and you can be the patent attorney. There is only one thing that will allow you to prevail in today's competitive world: you need to stand in the shoes of a patent attorney, and make your own potent and valuable IPR. If your son or daughter has ever participated in the national science fair, he or she surely has surpassed the level of a chicken sexer.

Whether a chickern sexer or Byul-yisa, I intend to start on an interesting and fun-filled journey. If we're going to taste the thrill and excitement of success in this war of knowledge, you will need to lace up your shoes tightly before we embark on this trip.

As long there are people who complain of headaches at the sight of patent law or IPR, I will continue taking journeys of this nature. My heart is already pounding, excited at the endless and enjoyable possibilities that this journey will bring. Just imagine a person, who was always the last in his class ever since his first days of school, all of a sudden graduating as the first in class. Wouldn't that be exciting? Now that you've started this journey with me, I would be privileged to assist you or your loved one change the world in this fashion.

