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Over the past decade, the Firm has represented clients in more than 800 merger and acquisition transactions with an aggregate value of over $4.5 trillion.

Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP

Jin-Kyu Baek, Partner—Corporate

Jin-Kyu Baek is a partner in Cravath's corporate department who focuses his practice on M&A, corporate governance, and general corporate matters.

In 2025, Jin was included among Bloomberg Law's 40 Under 40, and he has also been recognized by Lawdragon as one of the 500 Leading Lawyers in America and 500 Leading Dealmakers in America.

Jin is from Seoul, Republic of Korea. He received an A.B. cum laude from Harvard College in 2008 and a J.D. from Harvard Law School in 2015. He joined Cravath in 2015 and was elected a partner in 2022. Prior to joining Cravath, he served as an officer in the Republic of Korea Air Force, including at the Air Force Operations Command and Ministry of National Defense.

Describe your practice area and what it entails.

I advise public and private companies, as well as boards of directors and special committees, in connection with a wide variety of significant transactions. My M&A practice touches on all aspects of dealmaking from start to finish including mapping potential outcomes, communicating potential risks, drafting transaction agreements, reviewing terms with clients, negotiating with counterparties, and preparing the necessary materials to close a deal. Much of my time is spent liaising with clients on corporate governance and other day-to-day matters and being available to them as a trusted advisor.

What types of clients do you represent?

I represent M&A clients across a wide range of industries, including in healthcare, consumer, technology, shipping, telecommunications, and insurance. Each has different business needs and goals, and this variety is what makes coming to work every day interesting and fulfilling. Clients who hire Cravath do so because they want us as long-term strategic partners whether they are pursuing a specific transaction or striving to meet a certain business objective. For me, building this relationship means getting to deeply know my clients and their industries so that I am able to provide meaningful support for whatever arises.

What types of cases/deals do you work on?

In terms of deals, some examples include working with acquirers, sellers, and companies entering into combinations and joint ventures. As a firm, we pride ourselves on handling clients' highest stakes and most complicated transactions. Some notable matters in which I have been part of the deal team include representing Kenvue in its pending $48.7 billion acquisition by Kimberly-Clark, Johnson & Johnson in its $14.6 billion acquisition of Intra-Cellular Therapies, Aon in its $13 billion acquisition of NFP, and CyrusOne in its $15 billion acquisition by KKR and Global Infrastructure Partners.

How did you choose this practice area?

I was elected partner after a somewhat atypical path as an associate through the firm's rotation system: I started in capital markets and then did four straight M&A rotations with different partner groups. The fact that I trained with so many of the M&A groups at Cravath and worked as an associate with basically all of our M&A partners provided important lessons on how effective people with different working styles can be. It really helped me picture myself stepping into these shoes and prepared me to hit the ground running.

What is a "typical" day like and/or what are some common tasks you perform?

A "typical" day varies, but something initially surprising to me is the amount of time I spend as a partner with my clients just being a general advisor and sounding board. I stress to associates in my group how much the client relationship really underpins our M&A practice here at Cravath: Knowing the issues our strategic clients have to deal with day in and day out enables us to be most effective in providing advice. Of course, when we're in the middle of a transaction, things tend to be focused more on the deal details, but we also very much add value between deals; this is something that we pride ourselves on as a firm.

What training, classes, experience, or skills development would you recommend to someone who wishes to enter your practice area?

For those in an M&A or a corporate practice, there is a particular language that you must speak to understand how the business world works. I think a big part of that is simply having an interest in and wanting to follow up on these subjects. One piece of advice I tell people interested in M&A is that, especially over the past couple of years, Delaware jurisprudence has really been fascinating. There have been a number of cases that have had an impact on how we practice, so even as a law student, paying attention to aspects of these cases can be especially valuable.

What is the most challenging aspect of practicing in this area?

The sheer breadth of M&A. People might think: "You're buying and selling companies. Isn't it all the same?" But there is so much you have to know not only about M&A itself but also how it overlaps with other areas in which we practice, including tax, executive compensation and benefits, and intellectual property. Having a general knowledge of all these areas so that you can best advise your client through the transactional process is key, and I believe the firm's rotation system of training prepares our associates well for this type of work.

What do you like best about your practice area?

Because M&A overlaps with so many other practice areas, I get to work with a lot of new people. Law ends up being a very social occupation, especially with how we train our associates through the rotation system and practice collaboratively in teams across the firm. We are constantly talking to clients and constantly discussing with colleagues in the corporate department and across Cravath. I value the opportunities to not only create professional relationships but also to get to know people personally. I think it's great for our collegial culture and workflows, especially given Cravath's size compared to that of some of our peer firms.

What kinds of experiences can summer associates gain in this practice area at your firm?

We pride ourselves in giving our summer associates substantive experience from day one. Cravath's approach is that since our summer associates will be first-year associates soon enough, we want to give everyone an experience they can utilize as a platform to hit the ground running once they start full-time. Given how our practice groups are organized, we are really able to ensure that our summers have close contact with partners throughout their entire time here.

How do you deal with the fast-paced nature of your work in M&A, especially given the high stakes for your client?

The fast-paced nature of this work is a feature that I particularly enjoy. I gravitated toward M&A because it keeps you on your toes and keeps you constantly learning; as a result, you are really focused given the high stakes. At Cravath in particular, we try to find and nurture people who are drawn to this aspect of practice, emphasizing both accuracy and creativity in our training.

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