

## Note from the Editor

As of this issue, I will be taking over as editor-in-chief from Milan Hejtmanek, who is retiring from Seoul National University (SNU) this summer. Prof. Hejtmanek became editor in 2010, and his wisdom and steady hand have ensured that the journal has continued to flourish. I would like to thank him for his efforts, and wish him a happy and productive retirement.

This year also marks the 30<sup>th</sup> volume already of the *Seoul Journal of Korean Studies*. It started in the Olympic year of 1988, and initially was dedicated especially to introducing the research achievements of SNU professors to an English-language audience. Published by the Institute of Korean Studies at SNU, it provided translations of original research articles that were representative of the latest research trends in the humanities in Korea, and as such provided an invaluable service to the international academic community. Following the merger of the Institute of Korean Studies and Kyujanggak in 2006, the journal was reorganized under the editorship of Cho Eun-su. Henceforth it was published twice a year, and invited contributions from Korean Studies scholars from across the globe.

While most of the authors who contribute to the journal are now based outside of Korea, we continue our efforts to serve as a bridge between scholars in Korea and abroad. We continue to actively seek contributions from Korean scholars at SNU and beyond, while many foreign scholars who have spent a period of research at the Kyujanggak Institute of Korean Studies publish the outcome of their research with us. In the constantly shifting and evolving world of academic journal publishing, we try to maintain the highest possible standards of scholarship. Also, we aim to provide a platform for detailed, source-based forays in archives and libraries that are often longer and more substantial than the average academic article. At the same time, we continue to emphasize the importance of an interdisciplinary spirit, in that articles should appeal to and be accessible to Korean Studies scholars across various

disciplines.

The contributions in this issue attest to that. Although one of the slimmest volumes published so far, this is the outcome of a strict review process and the fact that some research needs more gestation than the quick “turnover cycle” of academic publishing these days allows for. The articles in this issue are diverse in their approach and subject matter, but have in common that they explore previously underutilized sources. Michael Kim’s article delves into the world of colonial ginseng production and consumption, and by mining a wide variety of media from the colonial period uncovers the fascinating links between pharmaceutical research and creative entrepreneurs. The article by Vladimír Hlásny and Jung Byung Joon is a detailed exploration of the interlocking fates of eleven Korean activists who tried to make it to North Korea via Czechoslovakia in the post-war period. Finally, Luis Botella and Antonio Doménech reconstruct how archeology as an academic discipline and a profession was built virtually from scratch in the same post-war period. The careful reader will notice interesting links between the articles; for example there is the link between the European-trained archeologists Kim Chaewon and Han Hungsu, the former contributing to the development of archeology as a discipline in the south, the latter making initial forays in the north before his purge in the 1950s. Although the former appears in the context of a review of the field of archeology and the latter as a key figure for political activism, they show the merit of reading outside one’s own discipline to discover new perspectives.

Sem Vermeersch  
*Editor-in-chief*