

## Note from the Editor

This issue again presents a wide spectrum of research on Korean Studies, ranging from premodern worldviews to queer literature in the 2010s. Also included are reviews of three recent books and a review article of two recent studies of Korean protest movements.

The issue opens with Kanghun Ahn's article on Practical Learning (*sirhak*). But rather than focusing on what is still commonly considered the "classical" period of this supposed intellectual revolution, i.e. the eighteenth century, the article takes us back to the late Koryŏ period to show that Korea had always been open to knowledge about the outside world. In this sense, rather than a forerunner or precursor to classical *sirhak*, Yi Sugwang (1563–1629) is shown to be more of a link between the intellectual climate of late Koryŏ and early Chosŏn on the one hand, and the renewed interest in connecting with outside epistemologies through embassies to the Qing court that characterized late Chosŏn on the other hand.

If this article deals with what may be termed the positive view of the world outside Chosŏn, the second article highlights the fact that border areas (and what lies beyond) were also seen as a security threat, and hence border magistracies were a central concern to Chosŏn policy makers. Alexander Martin has analyzed the appointment of magistrates to key border counties between 1623 and 1894, and his research shows the discrepancy between policy goals and reality. While the state was looking for competent officials with unblemished records, in fact it was difficult to find such people for all magistracies in the border region, forcing the government to focus instead on the key locales of Kanggye, Hoeryŏng, and Ch'angŏng, in the hope that these could keep adjacent locales in check.

The remaining three articles all deal with modern Korea. Nan A Lee's article focuses on the Turkish contribution to the Korean War. While most Western studies still focus on the main Cold War powers' role in the conflict, the

participation of other countries in the war should not be overlooked. However, rather than reevaluating Turkey's role, this article provides the tools to do so. It provides an overview both of the available archival sources, and of the state of the field of Korean War studies in Turkey.

Yoo Yohan's study of the *neokdeurim* ritual on Jeju Island turns our attention to the rich shamanistic heritage of the island. Based on recent fieldwork research and an analysis of oral literature, this study shows how the ritual offers a unique window into a prevalent worldview of traditional Jeju. It has been performed whenever someone was thought to have lost part of his soul as a result of personal trauma. Aimed at restoring the victim's soul to its original state, although the ritual and its attendant practices seems to refer to several souls, the author argues that these reflect to the fact that the soul was thought to have become incomplete or damaged, and had to be restored to its original state.

Finally, Hyunhui Choe takes us back to metropolitan Seoul in the last decade. Despite still widespread societal suspicion of anything related to queerness in contemporary South Korea, there is now a flourishing queer literary scene. By focusing on three recently published stories, the author shows that it is not so much the fact that queer experience is highlighted in these stories that is important, but the way the authors of these stories destabilize heteronormative perspectives.

Between the articles and the review section, our editorial board member Nan Kim reviews two recent works on Korean youth activism, one dealing with the April 19 revolution that led to Syngman Rhee's resignation later that year (1960), the other with the protest dynamics of a new generation, the so-called candlelight demonstrations of 2002 and 2008. Though very different in nature and aims, the reviewer notes the importance of April 19 as a model for noninstitutional political culture. As the 2016–2017 protests against president Park Geun-hye showed, the new generation of protesters mobilized chiefly through internet and social media can also be rallied for political causes.

As Korean Studies continues to develop, it is becoming more varied yet also more fragmented. I hope that the research presented here, which spans the fields of history, intellectual history, literature, and religious studies, is both a testament to that diversity yet also a stimulant for inter-disciplinary reading and research.

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*Editor-in-chief*