

Note from the Editor

This issue again presents both continuity and change. As any discipline, humanities research naturally reflects the changes in society, both in terms of new topics of research and new research methodology, and in the different ways research is accessed and used. Continuity can be seen in two articles that reflect the academic activities taking place at Kyujanggak, the intellectual home of our journal. This issue contains two papers from our annual Symposium on Korean Studies. This year the 12th edition of the Symposium was held on November 1 and 2, and though for once it did not have a specific conference theme, since it coincided with a special exhibition on King Chǒngjo, both the keynote address and a panel were devoted to King Chǒngjo's legacy.

The keynote address by Prof. Kim In-geol, a former Director of Kyujanggak and emeritus professor of Korean history, analyzes the evolution of research on King Chǒngjo. Reproduced here as a special essay, it offers a cautionary tale on how not to read the present into the past. Having devoted much of his career to the history of late Chosŏn society, Professor Kim is uniquely placed to dissect the intricacies of eighteenth-century political discourse, and through a close reading of key passages shows the importance of a correct interpretation of the terminology of the day. Although I do not normally introduce the book reviews, in this case it is worth drawing the reader's attention to the first English-language book on King Chǒngjo, by Christopher Lovins, reviewed here by Prof. Kim Paek-chol. This work takes a macroscopic view, and for the first time brings late Chosŏn into fruitful dialogue with modern European history.

Another paper from this year's symposium is Mark Caprio's "The Politics of Trusteeship." It formed part of a panel revisiting the immediate post-liberation period; while the influence of colonial legacies is often debated, the impact of this brief period is often overlooked. The trusteeship issue was one of the most divisive political issues of the time, around which the positions of north and south gradually hardened. This article focuses especially on the precedents of

trusteeship (or mandate system) that helped to shape the policy choices for Korea. Hopefully we can present more papers from the symposium in following issues.

Rounding off the ‘traditional’ part is an article by Sem Vermeersch on the founding of the Ch’önt’ae Order by Ŭich’ön. Although he agrees with the general consensus that Ŭich’ön was indeed the founder of a new Buddhist order, he draws attention to the precarious situation in which he left it. Ŭich’ön is still heralded for his vision of a unified Buddhism, yet crucially he never provided the template through which Ch’önt’ae might achieve this. This left the disciples who had to implement the new school in a quandary. This article also draws attention to Pure Land societies as a crucial missing link in the success of the new school.

Representing newer trends in academic research is the article by Jung A Choi and Han Sung Kim on Na Hyesök. Rather than focusing on her pioneering activities as a “new woman” artist, the authors focus on how her feminism was received by male contemporaries. By focusing on the image of Ibsen’s Nora she projected through her poem “A Doll’s Song,” the authors reveal the different expectations and iterations of modernity and feminism in colonial Korea.

For the first time, we are also including a section on “materials in translation.” Yulgok’s *Kyöngmong yogyöl* (Essential instructions on rectifying folly) is a well-known primer in Confucian education. It has been translated many times in different languages, but here the translator, Sanghoon Na, reveals the discussions that took place between Yulgok and Song Ikp’il, who urged Yulgok to revise several passages. In the end Yulgok seems to have ignored most of his friend’s suggestions, yet the correspondence between the two shows how important the project was to them; it also reveals something of their personalities.

We are hoping to present more materials in translation in future issues. There is now more awareness of the importance of translation as a discipline, and with more students engaging in both literary translation and the translation of sources, it is important to present them with a forum to publish their translations. At the same time, it is becoming apparent that the proliferation of publication venues combined with the decline in the number of researchers (at least in South Korea) will lead to a reduction in the number and quality of submissions. In a research environment driven by the statistical demands of citation indices and databases, I think it is all the more important to look for alternative ways of presenting knowledge, even if it does not fit the narrow category of “research article.”

Finally, it is my great pleasure to welcome to the editorial board Professor Todd Henry of the University of California, San Diego, a specialist in the history

of colonial Korea and also of queerness in South Korea. We look forward to his contributions in further developing the range of themes and approaches covered in our journal!

Sem Vermeersch
Editor-in-chief

