Note from the Editor

This issue of the *Seoul Journal of Korean Studies* presents a wide range of studies on Korean religions, literature, and politics. I am excited in particular by four articles that deal with different Korean religious traditions, and how each of those traditions has reacted to the challenges of a changing society.

In the first article (as usual, articles appear in chronological order), Jang Jiyeon attempts a periodization of Korean geomancy. Although grave geomancy (*ŭmt'aek p'ungsu*) is the form that most people associate with Korea, this is in fact a fairly late development in the history of Korean geomancy. The author argues that there are at least three distinct periods: in the first, geomancy was dominated by theories revolving around capital cities; in the second period, geomancy's bond with Buddhism was broken, and instead Neo-Confucian ideas were inserted into geomancy books; finally, in the third period the focus shifted to grave geomancy and prophecies, although the state tried to suppress the latter. Thus, Korean geomancy adapted to shifting political realities, yet at the same time played an important role as one element in the toolbox of statecraft of premodern governments.

The second article, by Park Jeongeun, revisits the problem of how a married Buddhist clergy emerged during the colonial period. While this is commonly thought to have been facilitated by the colonial government, the author points to a weak ordination tradition as a contributing factor. Attempts to revive both Vinaya ordination and bodhisattva ordination in the late Chosŏn period arguably failed to completely remedy this weak ordination tradition, and thus monks looked to the "practical Vinaya" embodied in the colonial government's Temple Laws for guidance. Despite the fact that these were intended to prevent ordained monks from marrying, their lack of clarity on this point led to confusion, and this was exploited by monks who had secretly married.

The third article on religion is the fifth in this issue. In this article, Choe Yong Un draws attention to the fierce competition among Protestant churches

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in Korea. Due to a complex nexus of factors, many pastors are obsessed with expanding their church buildings, and in their quest for bigger churches often take enormous financial risks; in quite a few cases, this has led to bankruptcy of the church followed by court sale. The author points to the work of Han Byung-Chul for an explanation. Applying Han's concept of "surplus of positivity," i.e. the constant demand for positive results, combined with cultural factors specific to Korea, Choe points out that success is defined solely in terms of numbers. However, this has led to burnout symptoms among both pastors and congregations, and has created a counter-movement towards smaller churches and a focus on "healing" practices.

The final article of this issue, by Kim SungSoon, looks at the problem of gender in Won Buddhism. Although Won Buddhism is probably the religion with the greatest number of female clergy in Korea, ironically they are treated differently from men. The author shows how this phenomenon has emerged historically, and through interviews with both members of the Won Buddhist clergy and ordinary believers, reveals some of the deep-seated biases that prevent open discussion of this issue. However, changes in society, specifically changing attitudes towards gender division and sexual minorities, is putting pressure on the Won Buddhist establishment to change its rules for female clergy.

Among the two articles that do not deal with religion, the third one in this issue, by Kim Han Sung, revisits Kim Kirim's *The Weather Map*, a famous experimental poem that imagines the destruction of Shanghai by a typhoon and the potential for renewal after destruction. By comparing it with Yokomitsu Riichi's novel *Shanghai*, which shares some of the same themes as well as its modernist sensibilities, the author shows how Kim Kirim had a somewhat different view on the struggles between Western powers, Japan, and the Chinese over Shanghai. Rather than simply wallowing in the chaos, Kim sees the opportunity of removing obsolete and oppressive cultural norms and starting with a clean slate.

Finally, in his revisionist look at Park Chung Hee's defense policies, Peter Banseok Kwon shows how President Park skillfully adapted to changing US policies on defense assistance to South Korea, and ensured the creation of domestic capabilities to replace or complement arms provided by the US. Rather than following the ever changing directions of his "patron state," Park effectively set the agenda in terms of what kind of hardware South Korea should develop.

I would like to thank all the contributors, reviewers, and board members for their hard work in bringing another issue to fruition. Also, the efforts of

editorial staff remain crucial in ensuring that articles often first conceived in Korean language get transformed into articles that conform to the highest standards of English academic style, a process that is often stressful and far from straightforward, and does not often receive the credit it deserves.

Sem Vermeersch
Editor-in-chief