

Note from the Editor

As SJKS approaches publication of another issue, we continue to develop common themes from our June 2023 issue, offering a combination of original articles, along with the second half of a special issue. In the latter case, organized by Professor Jackie J. Kim-Wachutka, we are extremely pleased to offer a rich set of papers concerning broad themes of Zainichi culture. The contributors to these special issues come from fourteen different countries, a point emphasizing the broad academic networks and international range of scholarship.

Together these papers consider issues of identity and the complex circumstances in which these groups negotiate, live, and develop their own communities. Although I will not develop these themes here, leaving that for Dr. Kim-Wachutka's introduction as special edition editor, I would like to add that this theme is currently proving extremely important within Korean Studies, not only in North America, but also in Japan and throughout East Asia. Indeed, along with Zainichi, the broader Korean diaspora and its implications for a diverse range of communities continues to hold significance as the two Koreas and Koreans continue to journey to new places, with migration shaping new patterns in terms of both the domestic and international contexts.

For our regular issue, the three papers (two papers and a review essay) here offer a range of topics, with a common element expressed in terms of probing the place of Korean content across different languages and contexts. Heeyoung Choi's paper takes up an English-language drama on the stage in early twentieth century Hawaii, meaning that it represents another site of Korean identity in flux. Many will know that Hawaii represented one of the first sites of international recruitment for Koreans in the late nineteenth century, and that it played a role as a special kind of interstitial space, with multiple Asian populations brought there for agricultural labor, shipping, and similar kinds of arduous work. Alyssa Park's contribution takes up the migratory patterns of Koreans at another point of time, considering 1945 and the period of post-*haebang*

repatriation (1945–1950), which forced numerous Koreans to re-evaluate their links to “home,” along with their conception of personal identity. These repatriates, refugees, and returnees placed pressure on existing categories, and of course, intersected with the process of division, as North and South Korea were each in the course of formation, although still very much contingent. In looking at this period, Park seeks to complicate Cold War binaries, and presumably the standard periodization.

The third paper, a review essay of Japanese-language historiography, looks at Joseon history through the eyes of Japan scholars, here a group effort assembled by several scholars, headed by Ilsoo Cho. The politics of this work prove challenging, as obviously Japanese scholars saw the period differently from the domestic scholarly community, and this factor also links with the changing relations between the two. In terms of the previous two papers just addressed, this gives us Korean–language content in three different linguistic settings, and this move away from older, strictly national narratives hints at a growing trend, especially as Korean Studies becomes a field of interest in new places. This is not to elide the nation, to be clear, but to place it in context, and to locate migratory Koreans in their distinct settings.

Three book reviews, featuring Erik Mobrand, Keewoong Lee, and Hojin Song complete the regular issue, taking up new work, including that of Seoul National University’s own Olga Fedorenko. As we near the close of 2023, and bring this special edition to fruition, it is worth noting again the growing subfields emerging within the broader scope of Korean Studies, here including diaspora, migration, music, and religion, just to name a few. Indeed, the challenge of keeping up with this body of literature is formidable, and we at SJKS welcome inquiries about future special editions, reviews, and newer and innovative forms of scholarship (translations, commentaries, forums).

John P. DiMoia
Editor-in-chief