

Publishing the First Issue of *S/N Korean Humanities*

Generally speaking, Korean studies denotes studies relating to all dimensions of the people living in Korea, from their politics, economy, and law to ideology, history, and culture. However, most of existing Korean studies have taken as their object of study South Korea only. Currently Korea is divided into two states, South and North, and Korean studies itself is divided in the same way. While South Korea calls Korean studies “*kukhak*” or “*han’gukhak*”, North Korea calls it “*chosŏnhak*”. Hence, hitherto Korean studies, albeit its name, cannot be considered Korean studies in the full sense. The project of S/N Korean Humanities has begun in this reality of division.

First, *S/N Korean Humanities* intends to promote Korean studies in the full sense that includes the two Korean studies in division. Each has its own merit. For instance, South Korea is a region where *Shilla* and *Chosŏn* dynasty existed, while North Korea is a region where *Koguryŏ* and *Koryŏ* dynasty existed as well as where dynamic relations were formed in modern times with old socialist countries such as USSR and China. Therefore, Korean studies can realize itself fully only by embracing the two Korean studies, which South and North Korea have developed independently in different environments.

However, it is not simply due to the fact that there are two Korean studies that this journal wants to cover both. Korean studies, of course, should include both in its extension. But it cannot become Korean studies in the full sense simply by including the two, for the division of Korean studies is not just a division in names but of contents of their scholarly researches themselves. For example, South Korea wants to construct Korean history centered on South Korea by excluding any historical fact that appears to support values and positions of North Korea. This is why the history of South Korea is not a full but just a half-told Korean history.

Secondly, Korean studies ought to escape from the structure of scholarly production characterized by mutual hostilities and exclusions that the two Korean states in division activate. This does not just concern history but all disciplines such as philosophy, literature, political science, economics, law, etc. In order to become a regional study in a proper sense, Korean studies should not stop at collecting the two Korean studies but must first investigate the system of mutual hostilities and exclusions of the division of Korea that operate beneath the two. This is why this journal titled itself *S/N Korean Humanities* by inserting a slash (/) between the S and N put in front of Korean Humanities.

A hyphen (-) would have been enough if only to include South and North Korea. But this journal wants to go further and bring to light the internal structure of Korean studies determined by a logic of mutual hostilities and exclusions between the two Koreas. The slash mark thus expresses the structure of the reproduction of such hostilities and exclusions. Therefore, *S/N Korean Humanities* will try to develop Korean studies in the full sense by comparing (and not just including) the South and North Korean studies and examining the mechanism of hostility operating between them.

Thirdly, we think Korean studies in the full sense has to begin from humanities studies. Usually the division of Korea is considered a division of the two state systems and not of people in South and North Korea. But the latter is as important as the former. In order to institute a political community, the state attempts to capture people living in its territory as its subjects by means of symbolic capitals and ideological apparatuses that it monopolizes. Thus the division does not stop at a division of the two states but leads to a division of people, a division of values, sentiments, and cultures between South and North Korean populations. In fact, the division of South and North Korea is reproduced through such a popular division.

This is why one must start from humanities, for humanities is a study of humans (humanness and human values). Korean humanities does not simply mean the two Korean humanities studies put together; it studies values, sentiments, desires, and cultures that reproduce the division of South and North Korean populations. By trying to show how the reality of division has distorted and degenerated Korean studies of South and North Korea, Korean humanities should open up a way of

overcoming it.

The feature articles under the heading of “Unification Discourses in Korea” are selected to show such intentions of the journal. The first feature article is Park Min-Cheol’s “Thoughts on Reunification by a Historian of Praxis: Kang Man-Kil’s ‘Reunification Nationalism’ and ‘Theory of Equitable Reunification’” and discusses problems in Korean studies spawned by the division of Korea. Arguably Kang is the first South Korean humanities scholar who investigated the problems and distortions that the division produced in history studies of South and North Korea and indicated a new way to proceed for Korean history studies. He argues for a ‘reunification nationalism’ while disclosing how both the colonial view of history transplanted by the Japanese imperialism and the nationalist view of history erected against it resulted in a ‘divisionist statism’.

Park’s article uncovers three historical meanings of Kang’s reunification nationalism as follow: 1) it is “an ‘alternative historiography’, in which the national united front movement based on negotiations between left and right wings”, 2) it is “an ‘anti-divisionist historical perception’ that considers all Peninsula citizens to be agents of historical development”, and finally 3) it is “a ‘reunification theory’ based on peaceful, reciprocal and equitable methods”. Kang urged Korean history studies to turn into “humanities that can surmount the wounds of division and ideological animosity”.

The second feature article is Lee Byung-Soo’s “A discussion on Paik Nak-Chung’s Division System Theory” and discusses Paik’s unique theory of the division system in Korea. Though his major is English literature, Paik has tried to combine his reflections on the national literature of the 1970s and 80s with the question of division contractions. Connecting the structure of the division between South and North Korea to Wallerstein’s world system theory, Paik showed that the division system should be understood as a subsystem of the world capitalist system, one that exists relatively independent of the two states in division and has its own mechanism of reproduction. Moreover, he developed, as strategies for overcoming the division system, a number of “practical directions and methods, such as transformative centrism, a citizen participation model of unification, and a double mission of adapting to and overcoming modernity”.

Nevertheless, Lee points out that Paik's division system theory lacks "a detailed analysis of the mutual hostility, mistrust, and fear of the people of South and North Korea", and argues that it is necessary to analyze the socio-psychological ground on which the division system operates. It is because the division system is reproduced through the mass psychology and social bodies of the division retained by the populations living in South and North Korea. Still, it can be said that Paik's theory provides an important theoretical frame within which the mechanism underlying the mass psychology and social bodies of the division can be analyzed.

The third feature article is Park Young-Kyun's "Thoughts of Song Du-Yul, a Unification Philosopher, on the Border of the South-North Division" and discusses Song's philosophy that fully engaged with the question of the reunification of Korea. Song is a philosopher currently residing in Germany, who is treated as a pro-North Korean, anti-systemic figure and even stigmatized as a spy. But Song's philosophy is a philosophy that, refusing the alternatives of South or North Korea, tries to think about the meaning of their border. The South Korean government's stigmatization of him as a pro-North Korean figure rather results from its limited viewpoint that a philosophy required by the reality of the division should be one which is able to choose its side and pursue an identity. But Song rejects such a logic of identity and the excluded middle and holds onto the position of a 'border man' as 'a third something'.

Park's article shows that the essence of Song's reunification philosophy consists in taking the whole reality of the Korean peninsula into consideration and standing on the border between South and North Korea rather than choosing a side. Such a positioning as a border man, he argues, constitutes a 'productive force for reunification' which can produce 'a third something'. But, while highly appreciating the epistemological turn Song's philosophy made, Park simultaneously pays attention to its limit: namely, that the idea of the other Song tries to set forth is 'the other inside oneself' incarcerated in an internal monologue. Park proposes an alternative strategy for reunification which "starts from the 'philosophy of the two'", "accepts the dissimilarities in 'values, sentiments, and culture' as 'differences' borne by 'otherness of the other'", and thus produces a 'national commonality'.

Therefore, the feature articles basically portray *S/N Korean Humanities*' point

of departure and its direction of pursuit. Through an examination of Kang Man-Kil's history study, the first article raises the necessity to critically reflect upon the inside of the field of Korean studies distorted and degenerated by the division of Korea. The second article discusses Paik Nak-Chung's division system theory and raises the necessity to study the reproductive system of the division relatively independent of the two states from the perspective of humanities. Finally, the third article explore Song Du-Yul's reunification philosophy and proposes an alternative strategy that can turn the heterogeneity of South and North Korea into productive differences for generating their national commonality.

Beside the three feature articles, there are two original articles and two book reviews included in this issue. The first original article is Immanuel Kim's "North Korean Comedy of Manners: Day at the Amusement Park" and analyzes a comedy film as a representative case revealing the codes of operation of the culture dominating North Korea's everyday life. Kim examines a North Korean comedy film, *Day at the Amusement Park*, and claims that "comedy of manners is a theatrical genre that satirizes the manners and mores of pretentious characters from the upper class". People in the amusement park, according to him, "allow cultural practices to dictate their behavior more than having the political ideology control them". Hence, "the social 'game' the characters play in comedy films provides a different understanding through which North Korean cinema is analyzed". Kim urges Korean studies scholars to pay attention to comedy as well as dramas or melodramas.

The second original article is Jeong Ae-Ran's "Traversing the Crossroads: Voice and Music of Song Myōng-Hwa and the Artistic Troupe *Kūmgangsan kagūktan* in Japan's North Korean community", which contains a concrete aesthetical evaluation of the *Kūmgangsan kagūktan* that has been active since it was found in Tokyo in 1955. Jeong shows, through the case of Song Myōng-Hwa, that *Chosōnins* (Koreans residing in Japan) have been able to discover new creative forces within themselves by receiving North Korean *minyo* (songs of the people). This is because they are neither North Korean nor South Korean. Jeong says in her conclusion, "Perhaps the instincts of the *sōdo minyo* singer in Japan will bring to light the "untranslatable" *changdan*. The negotiated voice of an active practitioner of a music rooted in *aesthetics of differentiation* will approach "like a friend" the music on the peninsula.

Korean *minyo* will “reveal its secret” to a *Kūmgangsan kagūktan* artist traversing the crossroads.”

Suh Yu-Suk reviews the book *Ideology and Reality* by Park Chi-Woo, who was a representative Marxist philosopher during the Japanese colonial era. This book comprises three parts. Suh discusses the first two, leaving the third aside because it only contains Park’s miscellaneous contributions to newspapers and magazines. Suh examines Park’s philosophy, humanism, and his views on classical works and generations in the first part, while discussing Park’s philosophical justifications of Chosŏn Communist Party’s theory of democracy and national cultural theory.

For the second book review, we have Park Myung-Kyu’s review of *The National Commonality Series* written by the Institute of the Humanities for Unification at Konkuk University (IHU), which comprises four volumes containing the IHU’s research results at its first stage (2009-2012). According to Park, the IHU’s researches succeeded in overcoming the dichotomy of the national and the post-national and in connecting the question of Korean diaspora to that of the reunification of Korea. He demands the IHU to go further into studies for healing traumas caused by the division.

I would like to deeply thank all the contributors to the first issue of *S/N Korean Humanities* and hope this issue is used as a stepping stone for establishing Korean studies in the full sense. But we cannot achieve this goal on our own not only because our capacities are limited but also and ultimately because it requires an overcoming of the reality itself of the division of South and North Korea. This is why we want to form as broad and profound relationships as possible with Korean studies scholars all over the world. Together, we may be able to build Korean studies in the full sense in the future.

Kim Sung-Min

Chief Editor

S/N Korean Humanities