

Shifts in South Korean Anti-Communism

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The feature articles in the March 2025 (Vol. 11, No. 1) issue of *S/N Korean Humanities* add a new complement to the historical study of South Korea in the Cold War era with a focus on the political and cultural manifestations of anti-communism.

The first article by Sunkyung Choi (Korea Peace Institute) examines the 1967 spy incident called the East Berlin (Tongbaengnim) Incident against the backdrop of North Korea becoming an increasingly contentious political issue in 1960s South Korea. The spy incidents of the 1960s occurred as South Korean public opinion became divided over North Korea's reality and prospects. During this period, as the international political order was becoming multipolar and the North Korean regime was consolidating, while theories predicting North Korea's collapse significantly weakened, existing unification policies and anti-communism ideology needed revision. As a result, the targets of spy accusations expanded beyond just political opponents of top leadership to include ordinary citizens, and their scope widened to encompass students and workers abroad rather than remaining limited to domestic cases. The 1967 East Berlin Incident occurred as the Park Chung-hee regime selectively accepted new changes emerging at three levels—international politics, inter-Korean relations, and North Korea's realities—while blocking and limiting discussions that crossed certain boundaries. This can be seen as the government's attempt to monopolize and control the pursuit of nationalist unification policies while accepting contemporary changes in anti-communist bloc policies, the Hallstein Doctrine, and unification approaches.

The second article entitled "Spies on Screen: Representations of Espionage in Korean Film" by Cho Eun Hee (Soongsil University) analyzes the portrayal of spies in Korean cinema. Spies have been a significant theme in Korean films, reflecting the ideological division of the Korean Peninsula into North and South. Having experienced war amid intense ideological conflict, spies represented a tangible threat in everyday life. Even today, 80 years after the division, controversies about spies continue. Given this social context, it was natural for Korean films to feature spies as a central subject. However, the cinematic portrayal of spies has evolved over time. Until the 1980s, spies were depicted as serious

threats to South Korean society. After 2000, they began to be portrayed as ineffectual. This shift in representation reflected changing inter-Korean relations. Subsequently, spies were depicted less realistically and more as imaginary villains or heroes with dual identities.

The feature articles are followed by Yu Im-ha's (Korea National Sport University) book review of *Puk-ŭro kan ōnōhakcha kimsugyōng* [Kim Su-gyōng: The Linguist Who Went North], written by Itagaki Ryūta and translated by Ko Young-jin and Lim Kyoung-hwa. The recently published biography of Kim Su-gyōng is a book many readers have been waiting to read in Korean. It delves into the life of this remarkable linguist, exploring why he "went North," his pivotal role as the architect of North Korea's "Juche Korean linguistics," and the poignant events that marked his life. Among these are the heartbreaking separation from his family when his journey south to Chindo for educational work during the Korean War intersected with their path as refugees, his rehabilitation after a long period of disgrace, and his eventual reunion with family members who had emigrated to Canada. This compelling narrative evokes a profound mix of sadness and curiosity, revealing the dramatic turns of one individual's extraordinary life.

The March 2025 issue is concluded by an interview with Dr. Lee Jong-seok by Professor Jeon Young-sun (Konkuk University). A leading expert on North Korea and Sino-North Korean relations, Dr. Lee served as Minister of Unification in 2006 and currently is an emeritus research fellow at Sejong Institute. In the interview, Dr. Lee discusses the geopolitics of the Korean question, arms race in East Asia, inter-Korean conflict, Sino-US relations, and the US–ROK alliance and emphasizes the need for multilateral cooperation in East Asia to pave the way for regional peace and prosperity. The interview was originally published in Korean in *Han'guk chisōng-gwaŭi t'ongil taedam* [Conversations on unification with Korean intellectuals] (Seoul: Paradigm Book, 2018).

Since its establishment in 2009, the IHU has pioneered the concept of "humanities for unification" as a unique framework for thinking about unification as a process of communication, healing, and integration of all Koreans in

South Korea, North Korea, and diasporic communities. As the IHU's English-language Korean Studies journal, *S/N Korean Humanities* has played a unique bridge-building role between the worlds of Han'gukhak and Chosŏnhak in the promotion of "integrated Korean Studies." Despite the present deadlock in inter-Korean relations, we believe that a consistent search for innovative ways to maintain scholarly dialogue between the students of Han'gukhak and Chosŏnhak will serve as an important stepping-stone for promoting mutual understanding between the two Koreas. With that hope dear to our hearts, *S/N Korean Humanities* will continue to reinvent itself as a forum of debate for a humanities-based approach to unification and Korean Studies.

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