

## “Literary Portrayal of Korean Diaspora”

The September 2017 issue of *S/N Korean Humanities* focuses on the representation of Korean diaspora in literature. In order to highlight previously under-recognized or unknown authors in the field, the editorial committee of *S/N Korean Humanities* invited scholars from diverse disciplines and backgrounds whose research masterfully celebrates the artistry and history of Korean writers. For the special theme entitled “Literary Portrayal of Korean Diaspora,” the Fall 2017 issue of *S/N Korean Humanities* features authors from Yanbian University, Korea University of Japan, Ocean University of China, and Universität Tübinge.

The first article by Jin Jinying and Jin Huxiong (Yanbian University) explores the life and work of Kim Hak-Ch’öl, one of the most significant figures in the world of Korean-Chinese literature. His works remained under-recognized in South Korea because of Kim’s move to North Korea. However, his writing activities in Beijing and Yanbian garnered attention from critics and he came to be noted for his uniqueness. The article provides a good review of the existing research on his life and literature in Korea, Japan and China, and proposes some areas that need to be researched further in the future.

The second article by Son Jiwon (Korea University of Japan) discusses the works of Hō Nam-ki, one of the most prominent poets of the twentieth-century Korean-Japanese literature. The poet portrayed the hopes and lives of the Koreans living in Japan. In addition to poetry, Hō also wrote plays and film scripts. Until his death at the age of seventy, Hō Nam-ki remained a prolific writer, leaving behind him more than thirty opuses. The poet harbored a deep love of the Korean language through which he sought to create simple, effortless expressions. Hō

Nam-ki was a poet of patriotism—a poet of the Korean nation and its people—who left vivid footsteps on the historical trajectory of poetry written by Korean residents of Japan. The publication of Son Jiwon's research on Hō Nam-ki provides a rare opportunity for the readers to see the Japanese-Korean (North Korean) appreciation of the poet and Japanese-Korean literature.

The third article by Ren Qiule and Li Haiying (Ocean University of China) offers new insights on how Korean, Japanese, and Chinese writers have portrayed the Wanpaoshan Incident of 1931. Writers in Korea, China and Japan fictionalized the event concurrently or a few years after the incident. This article, using four novels—Ito Einosuke's *Manpozan*, Li Huiying's *Wanpaoshan*, Yi T'ae-Chun's "Farmer", and An Su-Kil's *Rice Plant*—as main texts, analyzes the ways in which writers from Korea, Japan and China dealt with the Wanpaoshan Incident from different perspectives. Ren Qiule and Li Haiying show how the varying representations from three countries reflected the writer's national identity, ideology in the fictionalization process of a literary work.

The fourth article by Jérôme de Wit (Universität Tübinge) examines how South Korean author Yi Munyŏl portrays the Chinese city of Yanji in "An Appointment with his Brother" (*Auwa-ŭi mannam*), published in 1995. Yi tries to find a means through literature to reach common ground with the other side (North Korea) for a possible future unification. He chose the Chinese city of Yanji as the setting for his story, a place where the majority of its population is ethnic Koreans who from 1992 onwards, have had connections with both North and South Korea. Jérôme de Wit shows that the city and its inhabitants serve as a liminal space where Yi Munyŏl can explore possibilities for reconciliation and to give shape to an imagined Korean unification.

In addition to the four special theme articles, the Fall 2017 issue also presents an article by Oum Hyun Suk (Center for Korean Unification Education in Seoul). The article examines the current status of North Korean teaching method according to the changes in the content deployment in textbooks which were published after Kim Jong-un assumed power. Oum elaborates on the changes in the content

deployment of first-year textbooks for elementary, middle and high schools which were published after Kim Jong-un took power and analyzes how such changes affected the teaching method. For this, the research reviews periodical publications on North Korean education which were published around 2012 to examine the evaluation of the teacher's group which is directly affected by the supplementation of the teaching method.

In addition, Luong Tran Thi Thu (Vietnam National University) discusses the similarities and differences in Korean and Vietnamese cultural features with a view to promoting cultural humanity for guidance on reducing conflicts and increasing harmony in Korean Companies operating in Vietnam. The research uses the findings from social surveys conducted as part of the project "Compiling, Publishing and Disseminating the Handbook of Korean-Vietnamese Behavior" by South Korean Studies Center, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University with the support of the Academy of Korean Studies (AKS) from September to October 2016.

Lee Ki-Hong (Kangwon National University) and Ria Chae (Indiana University) contributed book reviews for this issue. In his review of Kim Myung-Hee's *The Possibility of Integrated Human Sciences: Revisiting Marx and Durkheim via Critical Realism*, Lee recommends the book as highly noteworthy for advocating the idea of integrated sciences that confront social suffering while raising the issue of the scientificity of social science. This, according to Lee, promises to have an important corrective role in an era when social sciences seem to be focused only on superficial and fragmented subjects while overlooking history and society.

Ria Chae (Indiana University) regards Sheila Miyoshi Jager's *Brother's at War: The Unending Conflict in Korea* as a welcome addition to the extremely small pool of literature on history of inter-Korean relations in English. Jager contends that the armistice agreement did not terminate the war, which explains why tensions persist on the Korean peninsula to this day. The book offers a middle ground between the interpretations concentrating on the autonomous, self-generating

power of the Korean conflict and the vision of it as an embodiment of the conflictual relationship of the United States, Soviet Union, and China, where Seoul and Pyongyang have little say. It thereby avoids oversimplification and testifies to the complexity of the Korean problem.

The articles on the special theme “Literary Portrayal of Korean Diaspora” and other works published in the Fall 2017 issue of *S/N Korean Humanities* promise to enrich our understanding and appreciation of Korean diaspora and division from the humanities perspective and contribute to our ongoing efforts to build integrated Korean studies of *Hangukhak* and *Chosŏnhak*. The Institute of Humanities for Unification at Konkuk University will further strengthen our engagement through the journal with scholars from diverse regional and disciplinary backgrounds so that the studies of inter-Korean division and unification may be well grounded within humanities.

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