

“Seventy Years of the Struggle to Remember the Jeju 4.3 Events”

This year marks the seventieth anniversary of the Jeju 4.3 Events. To honor the victims and in hopes their true healing, the special feature articles of *S/N Korean Humanities* (Vol. 4, No. 2) examine “Seventy Years of the Struggle to Remember the Jeju 4.3 Events.” The establishment of a separate government in August 1948 was preceded by vehement protests against national division. In 1947-1948, the island of Jeju saw the most intense of such resistance. The insurgency and the anti-communist suppression campaign involved a brutal massacre perpetrated against civilian populations. The tragedy, however, was subsequently erased from public memory under decades of military dictatorships. As the commemoration and truth-finding could not begin until after the late 1990s, the Jeju 4.3 events still remain underspecified as a subject of academic inquiry. Each of the four special feature articles add significant new depth and perspectives to our understanding of the Jeju 4.3 Events from policy, historical, political, philosophical, and international ethical standpoints.

The first article by Chansik Park (National Committee on the Seventieth Anniversary of Jeju 4.3) discusses the limitations of the previous efforts for commemoration and truth-finding and suggests specific points for improvement. This year, as Jeju 4.3 met its seventieth anniversary, a wide array of events and activities are designed to inform the general public of Jeju 4.3 on a national scale, finally transforming Jeju 4.3 into a historical narrative that must be remembered by all Korean people. Furthermore, empathy for amendments of the Special Act aimed at a just settlement and healing including damage compensation spread, and the US responsibilities for the massacres of Jeju residents entered the sphere of public opinion. Along with such advances, various attempts to liberate the 4.3

discourse were forwarded, in the form of re-situating the Jeju residents at the time of 4.3 from victims to sovereign subjects in their community as well as in history. Now, the movement for truth and justice of 4.3 must move forward, with the seventieth anniversary as its foundation, by meeting the following challenges: search for specific methods for just settlement and healing; continuation of the success of nationalization; establishment and propulsion of mid-to-long-term plans for addressing US responsibilities; establishment of a system and activities that will continue the 4.3 movement through the coming generations; and locating the relevance of the spirit of 4.3 vis-à-vis liaison between this spirit and key issues at the current historical juncture.

The second article by Jeong-Sim Yang (Ewha Womans University) focuses exclusively on the question of American responsibility in the Jeju 4.3 Events. The study argues that more and more people have started to raise their voice calling for the United States to be also held accountable and for it to make an apology. People have started to critically view the American role in the Cold War, its policies regarding the Korean peninsula and its responsibilities related to the tragic massacres on Jeju Island. This essay seeks to go along side this movement by reviewing some historical facts. The U.S. Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK), in order to successfully hold the south-only election to advance US interests, sought to strongly clamp down on the Jeju 4.3 Uprising. However, it avoided becoming directly involved in the actual suppression. The USAMGIK, through various reports, intelligence sources or witness testimonies, knew that punitive forces composed of the police and the military were indiscriminately massacring civilians. The military advisors reported on the excessive brutality shown by the punitive forces but did not do anything to stop it even though they had enough authority to do so. On the surface, the United States called for American-style democracy and criticized the barbaric violence committed by Koreans. The study shows how the United States abetted or even instigated the massacres in Jeju.

The third article by Ñusta Carranza Ko (Ohio Northern University) is a study of the Jeju April 3 Commission and the state's compliance record with the truth-seeking process. Specifically, the study examines the status of state

compliance with the list of recommendations and article provisions from the Special Act for the Investigation of the Jeju April 3 Incident and recovering the Honor of Victims and the National Committee for the Investigation of the Truth about the Jeju April 3 Events, which established the Jeju April 3 Commission (2003). This research finds that while on truth-seeking and symbolic reparations the state reflected a good record of compliance with the recommendations, on other fronts, including that of monetary and medical reparations and criminal accountability for victims of human rights violations, the state was comparatively less proactive in pursuing compliance. By engaging in an overarching analysis of the state’s compliance for the post-truth-seeking period, this study sheds some insight as to how South Korea has engaged in selective levels of compliance that diminish the respect for truth-seeking efforts, the conditions that may have influenced these results, and the importance of examining the post-policy implementation period of truth commissions in understanding the impact of truth-seeking.

The last special feature article by Hope Elizabeth May (Central Michigan University and the Graduate Institute of Peace Studies, Kyung Hee University) presents an analysis of the Jeju incident through the framework of international ethics. The analysis is also historical as May perceives a connection between the “trail of injustices” of foreign powers, to the factionalism and ideological violence that was involved in the Jeju incident. She sees this trail as beginning in 1905 and including the international conference which organized the United Nations in April 1945, to which the Provisional Government of Korea submitted a grievance (May includes that grievance or “Memorial” in its entirety in the Appendix of her paper). In addition to reviewing this history, May also draws from select passages from the G-2 weekly summaries and periodic reports of the U.S. Military Forces in Korea. In reviewing some of these reports, she argues that both cognitive errors as well as vices of affect are relevant to a proper understanding of the Jeju incident, and that we need to guard against this “cocktail of vices” as we pursue the peaceful unification of the two Koreas.

In addition to the special feature articles, the September issue of *S/N Korean Humanities* also presents an article by Benjamin R. Young (U.S. Naval War

College), which examines North Korea's historical relations with the African nation of Zimbabwe from 1976 to 1988. Based on emotional bonds as both leaders were guerilla fighters-turned-postcolonial dictators, Kim Il Sung and Robert Mugabe formed a close comradeship as the newly independent nation of Zimbabwe took developmental guidance from North Korea in the 1980s. Mugabe viewed North Korea as a model of discipline, collectivism, and socialist modernity for his nascent African state. Using emotions as the framework, this article investigates the ways in which the two governments admired and trusted one another and shared fear tactics in order to consolidate domestic power. This article is the first study to use British archival materials in order to explore this diplomatic relationship and views the Harare-Pyongyang alliance as one unified under the rubric of anti-imperialism and militant socialism.

The study by Chinmi Kim (Korea University of Japan) aims to examine the history and era experienced by Korean residents in Japan through popular songs written in Korean, which is their mother tongue but not their first language. In particular, the article focuses on how Korean residents in Japan who are members of the General Association of Korea Residents in Japan (*Chongryon*) and who were born in South Korea but who chose the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) as their homeland and lives in Japan built their identities through national education through researching popular songs. Pop songs made by Korean residents in Japan who were affiliated with *Chongryon* clearly reflect political circumstances that defined their sense of existence and livelihood. In the stage of the struggle for the right to education, and in the process of forming the definition of homeland and recognizing their hometown, and in a special education space called *Chosŏnhakkyo* (schools operated by the *Chongryon*), the struggle for postcolonialism and the struggle to overcome national division by singing such songs is a process that made Korean residents in Japan a member of Korean people.

Robert Lauer (University of North Korean Studies) and Jin-hwan Kim (Institute of Unification Education) contributed book reviews for this issue. In commemoration of the seventieth anniversary of the Jeju 4.3. Events, Lauer reviewed *The Massacres at Mt. Halla: Sixty Years of Truth Seeking in South Korea* (Hun Joon Kim). Kim's study examines the broad narratives that exist about the events in

Jeju and the factors that allowed the Jeju Commission to come into existence years after South Korea’s official transition to democracy in 1987. Kim does not readily assume that South Korea could have established the Jeju Commission with the coming of democracy. Kim argues that a range of factors allowed South Korea to establish a commission on the Jeju events, but considers the most important factor to be “persistent local activism.” He points to the importance of local activists throughout the authoritarian period who worked to seek “the truth” and that their ceaseless efforts through the 1990s was the required ingredient that ensured the success of efforts to form the commission once other factors, such as democracy and the presence of leaders willing to challenge the status quo, became a reality.

Jin-hwan Kim (Institute of Unification Education) reviewed *Han'guk Chisǒnggwaŭi T'ongil Taedam* [Conversations on Unification with Korean Intellectuals], a recent book published by the Institute of Humanities for Unification (IHU). Kim credits the IHU for having established an important foundation for popularizing unification discourses and making them more accessible to the general public. *Han'guk Chisǒnggwaŭi T'ongil Taedam* represents the latest commitment of the IHU to engage in wider discussions on unification discourses, consisting of interviews of intellectuals (Vladimir Tikhonov, Fujii Takeshi, Sǒ Chae-Chǒng, Pak Myǒng-Lim, Chǒng Kyǒng-Mo, Pak Mun-II, Pak Han-Sik), academics who provided the conceptual foundations of humanities-based unification discourse” (Kang Man-Kil, Paek Nak-Chǒng, Song Tu-Yul), and high-level policy-makers (Yim Tong-Won, Chǒng Se-Hyǒn, Yi Chong-Sǒk). There are three points on which all these figures converge. First, they emphasize that South Korea must increasingly play a leading role in overcoming Korean division. Second, they support the ideas of “*de facto* unification” and “unification as a process.” Third, they urge the two Koreas to consider each other as mutually-complementary equals, rather than competitors.

The history of the two Koreas is fraught with ideological division and mutual confrontation. The Jeju 4.3 Events resulted from the excesses of state power that was committed to consolidating the anti-communist South. This happened in the context of rapid Sovietization in northern Korea. However, the Korean people at large, including the Korean diaspora worldwide, have always remained hopeful for

a more peaceful future on the Korean peninsula. As the leaders of South and North Korea are engaging each other again to achieve peace and common prosperity, and in anticipation of the communication, integration, and healing that these auspicious times will promote, the IHU will further strive to enrich a humanities-based approach to the study of unification and inter-Korean relations in supporting the publication of *S/N Korean Humanities* with a view to building integrated Korean studies of *Hangukhak* and *Chosŏnhak*.

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