

Recognition and Representation of North Korea

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The publication of the September 2021 issue (Vol. 7, No. 2) of *S/N Korean Humanities* coincides with the 30th anniversary of the simultaneous admission of South and North Korea into the United Nations (UN) and the signing of the Inter-Korean Basic Agreement in 1991. These milestones set in motion a new type of peace-driven relations between the two Koreas sustained by a shared desire for mutual recognition and cooperation. Despite all the ups and downs over the last thirty years, there is no doubt that the events of 1991 against the backdrop of the end of the Cold War fundamentally transformed the institutional grounds shaping inter-Korean relations. That said, there remain many issues that continue to compromise the spirit of mutual respect and understanding stated in the Inter-Korean Basic Agreement. The September 2021 issue focuses on one such challenge, namely, the influx of North Korean migrants and the questions they have raised over the years about citizenship, nationalism, social inclusion, and unification.

The first article by Jay Song (University of Melbourne) draws from Shin Gi-Wook's conceptualization of ethno-nationalism and Seol Donghoon's theory of hierarchical nationhood to examine the evolution of a new South Korean nationhood analyzed over the past few decades. Military conflict, foreign intervention, political bifurcation, and globalization have been fundamental elements that shaped the past seventy years of evolving Korean identities on the Korean peninsula. Principally, this analysis is studied with respect to the influx of North Korean refugees and other foreign migrants into South Korea. This article scrutinizes the intersectionality of nationality, class, gender, and ethnicity between co-ethnic North Korean refugees, Korean Chinese (Chosŏnjok immigrants, non-Korean migrant wives, and non-Korean workers). It is found that unlike the intellectual trends of post-nationalism advocated by former democratic and peace activists in South Korea, younger South Koreans instead show a tendency towards a new South Korean nationalism. In this respect, modern South Korean society is still in the process of coalescence towards this new conception of nationalism.

The second article by Suik Jung (University of Turku) examines the resettlement of North Korean refugees in South

Korea and the obstacles to their building good relationships with South Koreans. The study proposes a new approach to addressing the failure of existing studies to account for the difficulty of North Korean refugees' integration into South Korea. Early studies demonstrated that social capital and resources accessible through social networks generated benefits; they played a crucial role in the integration processes of refugees. However, as indicated in previous research, North Korean refugees had poor relationships with South Koreans. It is necessary to identify the reasons for the poor relationships to address them. Therefore, this study explores the obstacles preventing the refugees from building good relationships with South Koreans. This study conducted semi-structured interviews with eight participants consisting of seven North Koreans and one South Korean. Findings showed that the refugees' relationships with South Koreans were hindered by their different mindsets and frequent job changes. Their relationships were also hampered by South Koreans' ignorance and cultural and linguistic differences. This study provides valuable indications for how to improve the refugees' relationships with South Koreans.

The special theme articles are followed by Mikyoung Kim's (Former Tenured Faculty, Hiroshima City University) study entitled "Korean-American Community's May 18 Gwangju: From Collective Action to Social Movement." There has been very few research on the Gwangju May 18 Democratization Movement analysed from the transnational perspective. This study aims to fill the void of existing studies by posing two specific questions. First, why and how Korean-Americans, who were non-politicized minorities, participated in the Gwangju May 18 movement? And second, what were the impetuses behind its transformation from collective action to organized social movement? The early responses of the Korean-Americans took on the characteristics of collective action, which later transformed into organized social movement. This article argues that Yoon Han-bong, the last fugitive of May 18 and the first Korean political asylum grantee in the United States, was the main impetus behind such transformation. The transformative mechanisms include Yoon's charismatic leadership, national pride fostered by

consciousness-raising education, organizational culture that provided a comfort zone to alienated Korean immigrants, and empowering activist experiences. As democratization was progressing in Korea in 1987, confusion and conflict arose over the future directions of Korean-Americans' May 18 Gwangju movement. The morale and sense of direction deteriorated greatly in part due to Yoon's permanent return to Korea, which resulted in organizational demise leaving the legacies of transnational May 18 in disarray.

Hae Eun Shin (University of Hawai'i) contributed a book review of Harrison Cheehyung Kim's *Heroes and Toilers: Work as Life in Postwar North Korea, 1953–1961* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018). In this book, Kim examines how industrialism helped rebuild the nation in North Korea after the Korean War. Presenting various historical evidence, Kim shows that the North Korean state has controlled the people to increase industrial efficacy and educate people ideologically in everyday life through work. He also pays attention to individual subjectivity and agency resisting the state's plan in daily life. What is enlightening about Kim's research is that it defines those features of North Korea's postwar industrialism not only as the ones applicable to North Korea, but also as the universal aspects of industrialism itself. That is, he opens the possibility to understand North Korea, not as a peculiar country, but just as another example of the countries which experienced industrialism to rebuild the nation pursuing modernity at the global level. In this sense, industrialism provides a connecting point between capitalism and socialism, which is an essential finding of this book. Kim's book may attract people who have an interest in subjects like postwar North Korea, socialist industrialism, and the relationship between capitalism and socialism.

The September 2021 issue is concluded with an interview section, which was launched in March 2020. These interviews are translated from the Institute of Humanities for Unification's (IHU) 2018 publication titled *Han'guk chisöng-gwaüi t'ongil taedam* [Unification Discussions with Korea's Erudite Scholars], which contains our conversations with some of the most

influential thinkers, researchers, and policy makers committed to the study and/or management of inter-Korean relations based on the humanities. So far, luminaries such as Kang Man-gil, Paik Nak-chung, and Han S. Park have graced the pages of our interview section. In the current issue, Dr. Jeong Se-hyun, former Minister of Unification, discusses the international context of Korean unification. Dr. Jeong has been a long-time champion of engaging North Korea with the cooperation of relevant countries toward a well-coordinated solution to the Korean question. His perspective aligns well with the IHU's vision for communication, healing, and integration.

Currently, the relations between the two Koreas are mired by a whole range of issues that were not yet full-fledged at the timing of the simultaneous UN entry and the signing of the Inter-Korean Basic Agreement. These include denuclearization, marketization, Sino-American hegemonic rivalry, and *namnam kaltŭng* (South Korea's internal polarization regarding North Korea policy). Regardless, the IHU remains convinced that the search for mutual respect and understanding through our framework of communication, healing, and integration must proceed with a view to achieving peace and prosperity for all Koreans, both in South and North Korea as well as in diaspora. Sustained efforts toward these goals, to which the IHU has committed itself for more than a decade, will enhance the way both Koreas recognize and represent each other at sociocultural levels. In the future, *S/N Korean Humanities* will continue to highlight cutting-edge research that will contribute to redefining Korean unification as a process involving pluralism, mutual understanding, and coexistence and to rallying overseas scholarly interest behind bridgebuilding between South Korea's *han'gukhak* and North Korea's *chosŏnhak*.

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