

Shifts in Policies towards Korean Diaspora

Kim Sung-Min
Editor-in-Chief

The March 2023 (Vol. 9, No. 1) of *S/N Korean Humanities* highlights recent scholarly discussions on the “Shifts in Policies towards Korean Diaspora,” introducing research presented at the Humanities for Unification World Forum (hereafter the World Forum) held in December 2022 at Korea University of Japan. Since 2016, Institute of Humanities for Unification (IHU) has hosted the World Forum as an innovative forum of debate for “Integrated Korean Studies” by bridging the worlds of *han’gukhak* and *chosŏnhak*. Over the years, the World Forum has been held in various countries in which Korean diaspora reside, such as China, Japan, and Kazakhstan. In particular, hosting the World Forum at Korea University of Japan, an institution of higher education supported by the Democratic Republic of Korea (DPRK), made it possible for a timely interaction between *han’gukhak* and *chosŏnhak* and enabled *S/N Korean Humanities* to publish an article affiliated with Korea University of Japan.

The first article by Ri Thae Il (Korea University of Japan) discusses the contents of the newly adopted law in North Korea protecting the legal rights of overseas Koreans. The Act on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Overseas Koreans was adopted as Decree No. 15 of the Ordinance of the Supreme People’s Congress (SPC). The Act, consisting of 54 articles divided into five chapters, comprehensively regulates the overseas North Koreans’ rights protection project, including the basic principles of the law as well as social politics, culture, and economic rights of overseas North Koreans, in addition to guidance control and penalties for overseas North Koreans’ businesses. In particular, the article discusses the significance of the Act from the perspective of Korean residents in Japan who identify with the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan.

The second article by Chenglong Gao (Yanbian University) examines the Chinese government’s policy towards ethnic Koreans. The establishment of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and its socialist system created a new opportunity for friendship and solidarity between various ethnic groups, put on display the massive centripetal force and cohesiveness

of the Chinese nation, and embodied its infinite sense of confidence and self-esteem. The Yanbian Korean Autonomous Region, which was established under the PRC's Regional Ethnic Autonomy System, brought leadership to the various ethnic groups in the Yanbian region and transformed the region into a pleasant place to live while settling the conflict and misunderstandings that had been formed between different ethnic groups due to historical issues. Over the past 70 or so years, the various ethnic groups of China have held up the great values of national unity under the correct leadership of the PRC and struggled in unity with one another to overcome difficulties, live together in harmony, and bring about harmonious development.

Bomin Ko (Incheon National University) contributed a book review of *Decoding the Sino-North Korean Borderlands*, edited by Adam Cathcart, Christopher Green, and Steven Denny. The March 2023 issue is concluded by an interview with Chung Kyung-mo, a prominent unification activist who sought asylum in Japan back in 1970 in opposition to Park Chung Hee, by Professor Kim Jong-gun (IHU).

Since its establishment in 2009, the IHU has pioneered and expanded on 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.” In our commitment to this mission, *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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