

# NEWSLETTER

## Korean Studies Working Group in Heidelberg



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**Volume 4 (Winter 2022/2023)**

The newsletter “Korean Studies Working Group in Heidelberg” aims to share information around Korea-related teaching and research activities, such as lecture series, workshops, and publications at Heidelberg University. In addition, we consider how the university is connected to Korea by introducing individuals in various sectors, such as research, politics, economy, and culture, in the section “Individual in Focus”. The newsletter will be published twice per year.

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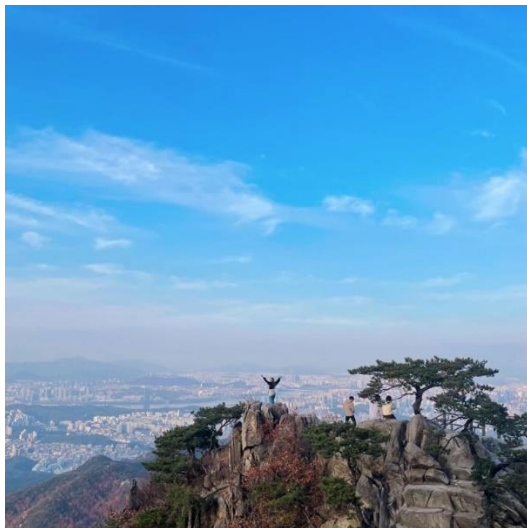
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## 1. Korean Studies Working Group in Heidelberg

Heidelberg University has maintained a longstanding reputation as a prominent hub for East Asian Studies in Europe. While there might not yet be a formal institution solely dedicated to Korean Studies at the university, the academic interest in Korea has consistently thrived, encompassing disciplines such as social sciences, politics, and art history. The Korean Studies Working Group in Heidelberg was informally established in 2011, serving as a platform for scholars to exchange ideas on Korea-related teaching and research endeavours within the university. Since 2014, the role of the Chair of Contemporary Chinese Studies has been expanded to encompass social science research pertaining to Korea and Japan. This expansion has significantly enriched research and instructional undertakings focused on contemporary Korea. Furthermore, the inception of the Centre for Asian and Transcultural Studies (CATS) in 2019 has fortified the aspirations for advancing research on Korea. This establishment has facilitated an interdisciplinary and transcultural approach, thereby enhancing the East Asian Studies landscape in Heidelberg.



In terms of teaching initiatives, the Korea Foundation has graciously supported a lecturer position for language courses since 2012. This contribution has allowed for the offering of four distinct levels each year: Korean I and Korean III, typically offered during winter semesters, and Korean II and Korean IV, generally available in summer semesters. From 2016 onward, the university has enriched its curriculum with a variety of Korea-related courses and seminars, spanning sociological, political, and historical viewpoints, and led by esteemed researchers and professors (Photo above by Leonie Wagner, Heidelberg University).

Furthermore, commencing in 2019, financial backing from the Academy of Korean Studies (AKS) has held a pivotal role in broadening the range of teaching activities. This support has enabled the university to extend invitations to distinguished guest professors, thereby greatly enriching the academic journey for students. During the Winter Semester of 2022/2023, several significant seminars focused on Korean Studies were conducted. "Youth in East Asia" was led by Dr. Jaok Kwon & Xiaoying Jin, and another seminar titled "East Asian International Order in Historical Perspective: Korea and its Neighbours" was instructed by Dr. In Young Min.

## **2. *Ostasien Aktuell* (East Asia Today)**

“East Asia Today” (*Ostasien Aktuell*) is a regular series of lectures and discussions organised by Prof. Dr. Anja Senz and her team at the Institute of East Asian Studies at the Heidelberg University on political, economic, and social developments in the Chinese-speaking world as well as in Japan and Korea. Further information about the upcoming lectures can be found on our website: <https://ostasien-aktuell.uni-heidelberg.de/index.php/coming-lectures/>.

### **Winter Semester Lecture Series (WiSe 2022/2023)**

- Adnan, Shapan. “Rural Development, Agricultural Modernization, and Social Change in China: Comparative Perspectives in Relation to South Asia”, November 16, 2022, SOAS, University of London, UK (Hybrid).
- Gowe, Anna and Shimin Yan. “Governing Chinese Mega-city Relations: Organizing Spatial Development or Resigning in the Face of Size?“, November 23, 2022, Heidelberg University, Germany (Hybrid).
- Lee, Yewon. “Occupying Shops to Defend Rights to Spaces of Livelihood: From Tenant Shopkeepers’ Fragmentation to Collective Consciousness in Seoul”, December 12, 2022, Eberhard Karls University Tübingen (Online).
- Taube, Markus. “Chinas Volkswirtschaft im Krisenmodus: Neuorientierung in turbulenten Zeiten“, December 14, 2022, University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany (Hybrid).
- Kwon, June Hee. “Ethnic Borderland: The Un/Homeliness of Korean Chinese in Yanbian China”, January 18, 2022, California State University, Sacramento, USA (Online).
- Arnold, Thomas and Anja Senz. “Zur (Un)Sachlichkeit in politischen Debatten über China“, January 25, 2022, Heidelberg University (On-site).
- Andrijauskas, Konstantinas. “The Restraining Belt: Physical Infrastructure as China’s Means of Territorial Control“, February 1, 2022, Department of International Relations, Vilnius University (Hybrid).
- Kim, Youngmi. “The 2022 Presidential Election in South Korea: The Politics of Resentment and Revenge Confirms Older Trends and Cleavages and Reveals New Ones“, February 06, 2022, University of Edinburgh (Online).

### ***Ostasien Aktuell Working Paper Series***

The East Asia Today Working Paper Series serves as a forum for discussing innovative research approaches and current political, economic, and social developments in East Asia as well as different exchange processes and entanglements between the region and other parts of the world. The aim of the Working Papers is to share the results of current research and to create an opportunity for further exchange. All working papers are available in PDF format and can be downloaded free of charge via the website: <https://ostasien-aktuell.uni-heidelberg.de/index.php/oawp/>.

- Kim, Chun-Shik. "Die 4. „industrielle Revolution und die Übertragbarkeit des deutschen Berufsbildungsmodells auf das höhere Berufsbildungssystem in Südkorea“, *Ostasien Aktuell Working Paper*, Februar 2023.
- Shi, Bi. "China's Impact on Formulating the UN Human Rights Council's Resolutions", *Ostasien Aktuell Working Paper*, December 2022.

### 3. Academic Activities

#### Publications

- Lee, Hyojin. 2023 (forthcoming). "The Current Hanja Textbook for Foreign Students and Hanja Education in Europe," *EAKLE 2023 Nonmun-jip*, Kong and Park, 2023. (In Korean)
- Min, In Young. 2022 "Seeking status and ontological security in hierarchy: Korea in the historical East Asian order," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, lcac014, <https://doi.org/10.1093/irap/lcac014>.
- Min, In Young. 2023. "2023: SOUTH KOREA AND NUCLEAR AMBITIONS," 9DASHLINE, Jan. 27, 2023 (<https://www.9dashline.com/article/2023-south-korea-and-nuclear-ambitions>) (Commentary).

#### Presentations and Events

- Kwon, Jaok. "The Aspiring Middle Class: Housewifization, Rural Women and the Developmental State of South Korea in the 1960s-1970s", December 17, 2022, Korean Association of Women's History, Ewha Womans University, South Korea.
- Kwon, Jaok. Discussant for David Oh, "Western Disciplining of Korean Counter-Flows: A Case Study of Family Guy's Candy, Quahog, Marshmallow and the Web Drama World", December 20, 2022, Seoul National University, South Korea (online).
- Kwon, Jaok. "Becoming 'Good' Working Mothers: Mothering Experiences of Highly Skilled Female Migrants from Korea in Germany", January 21, 2023, Goethe University Frankfurt am Main Workshop: Korean and German Encounters and Interactions", Goethe University Frankfurt am Main, Germany (online).
- Kwon, Jaok. "Skilled Migrants and their Encounters with different Care and Employment Regimes: Childcaring among highly skilled female Migrants from Korea in Germany", March 19, 2023, Boston MA, Association for Asian Studies (AAS), USA (online).
- Lee, Hyojin. "The Imperial Way of Confucianism (*kōdōjudō*) and the Insul Units: Medical Mobilization during Wartime", December 6, 2022, Guest speaker, Jeonbuk National University.
- Lee, Hyojin. "*Insul* (A Benevolent Art): Creating Identity of Korean Medicine during Modern Korea", December 16, 2022, East Asia Young Scholar Forum, Yeongnam University.
- Lee, Hyojin. "The Formation of Modern Medical Ethic in Korea and the Implication of *Insul*", February 17, 2023, Guest speaker, Yeongnam University.

- Lee, Hyojin. “Introduction of Korean Hanja Text Book, EASY HANJA 500 per la lingua coreana (Cafoscarina, 2022)”, August 30, 2023, EAKLE, Olomouc University.
- Min, In Young. Invited discussant at “Roundtable Discussion: ROK-China Relations in the 3rd Term Era of Xi Jinping”, February 3, 2023, FU Berlin Korean Studies Institute.

### **Visiting scholarship**

- Lee, Hyojin. November 2022 to December 2022: Visiting Scholar, Institute of Younghan Culture Research, Kyungpook National University, Republic of Korea.
- Lee, Hyojin. August 2022 to October 2022: Visiting Scholar, Center for Languages and Literature, Lund University, Sweden.

#### 4. Individual in Focus

안녕하세요 여러분!

Hello everyone! My name is Leonie, and I have just completed my third semester of MATS at Seoul National University in South Korea. Over the past 7 months, I've had the unique opportunity to not only learn about the culture, language, and people of South Korea, but also to gain new experiences that have significantly expanded both my professional and personal horizons. I hope that my attempt to condense all these experiences into four pages can help illustrate just how valuable a semester abroad can be for your academic and personal development. If you have any further questions, feel free to reach out to me (@leowa399). Let's get started!



Perhaps I should begin by explaining why I chose South Korea. While I have always been intrigued by the rich history and extensive cultural landscape of East Asia, my fascination with South Korea didn't take root until 2020 (during the lockdown period), when my mother and I were drawn into the South Korean

wave of K-pop, K-dramas, and all the associated cultural aspects. I started learning the language and encountered my first cultural shocks, including Confucianism and ageism.

As I embarked on my Transcultural Studies journey, I naturally found myself drawn towards the East Asian region, with a particular focus on the Korean peninsula. Being German, I was captivated by the historical similarities and differences between our two countries. I aimed to delve deeper into topics such as South Korean public diplomacy, the prevailing nationalism in both countries, the impacts of American and Chinese influence on politics, inter-Korean migration and conflicts, as well as the global repercussions of these dynamics.

Thankfully, for students like me at Heidelberg University, we are fortunate to have a partnership with Seoul National University (SNU). This collaboration not only provides various exchange programs but also offers scholarships for a duration of six months. So, when this time last year arrived, I didn't hesitate for a moment to apply for a semester abroad at SNU. Looking back, I'm immensely grateful that my application was accepted, and I'm thankful to all the spirits for making it possible.



A few months later, I found myself gathering all the necessary documents, packing (bringing way too many things...), bidding farewell to my family (my parents had generously already booked their flights to visit me in October), and embarking on a 12-hour journey to this incredible adventure. After deciding to spend at least two weeks as a tourist, I finally arrived in Seoul on August 15th - exhausted, sweaty (due to the South Korean summer), yet incredibly excited.

Unfortunately, while there are available slots for exchange students at SNU, securing a place in a dormitory is not guaranteed. This information is only provided at the end of July, leaving very little time to arrange accommodations - especially considering that much of the housing had been damaged by the annual record-breaking floods. It was during this challenging situation that Dr. KIM Hyun-Mee (a visiting professor at Heidelberg and originally from Yonsei) graciously allowed me to stay in her apartment. She not only offered me a place to stay but also introduced me to some of the country's iconic experiences, such as the Hangang Sunset Walks, the vibrant Hongdae area, Korean karaoke culture, and delightful local cuisine. At this juncture, I'd like to express my heartfelt gratitude to her - without her assistance, I would have faced a difficult time during the initial phase of my journey.



When the semester began, I found myself immersed in a new academic environment, which brought along a multitude of challenges. Despite SNU's reputation as a welcoming university for international students, I encountered difficulties due to the language barrier (the English materials provided were not the most comprehensive) and the overall communication with fellow international students left much to

be desired. However, one of the invaluable aspects of a semester abroad is that each new challenge presents an opportunity for personal growth. One area that saw significant growth was my social network. The presence of many other international students who were facing similar issues, along with the opportunity to connect with new South Korean friends and fellow students who were willing to assist, proved to be incredibly beneficial. This experience greatly enhanced both my student life and my personal development.

It's widely acknowledged that engaging with individuals from diverse backgrounds, each with their unique perspectives, can broaden one's understanding of issues that might not have otherwise crossed one's mind.

Interacting with people from different countries and fully immersing myself in a distinct culture played a pivotal role in refining my intercultural communication skills and diplomatic sensibilities. Naturally, it wasn't always simple to express my own thoughts in a manner that wouldn't unintentionally upset my colleagues and friends. Continually reminding myself of my own biases and prejudices was also a challenge. Yet, these experiences continually reinforced the importance of honesty, respect for everyone's background and humanity, even when faced with contrasting viewpoints, and the recognition that disagreements are acceptable.

Experiencing various culture shocks and actively participating in intercultural discussions has provided me with what I believe is the most effective preparation for my current and future roles in international settings. Furthermore, exposure to diverse ways of thinking greatly aided me in reflecting on my academic interests and considering my future career path from a more multifaceted perspective. At SNU, students are not confined to courses solely within their own department. This flexibility enabled me to enroll in the Graduate School of International Studies while also participating in seminars offered by the Department of Education. Engaging with topics such as international educational cooperation, South Korean education, and national development unveiled a clear direction for my life's work: peace education. This concept harmoniously merges my personal interests, academic knowledge, and practical experience. It's astonishing to ponder that had I not taken part in those seminars, which expanded my academic horizons, I might still be uncertain about which job opportunities to pursue this coming summer.

Spending several months within the country that is the focal point of my academic interests also provided me with the advantage of conducting on-site research. Since I arrived in South Korea shortly after our semester ended in Heidelberg, I found myself not only writing papers for the SNU semester while on location, but also continuing to work on assignments from back home. Thankfully, Seoul, being the capital of the country and home to 25 million people, boasts a multitude of museums, cultural sites, and historical monuments that served as wellsprings of inspiration.

Given my interest in the evolution of national identity and global citizenship education, I was taken aback by how frequently the underlying theme of national pride (sometimes verging on propaganda) surfaced in South Korean educational institutions. It proved truly fascinating to witness how, as dictated by the prevailing narrative, this national pride was either exclusively inclusive to South Korea or encompassed the entire Korean peninsula. The culmination of this experience was my visit to the DMZ, which spurred my deep intrigue in South Korea's positioning within the Inter-Korean conflict. This interest subsequently led me to delve into Reunification Education, a mandatory



curriculum for all South Korean students, initiated by the Reunification Ministry. It was this research journey that directly steered me toward the field of Peace Education, the focus of my current master's thesis.

Fortunately, my extended time spent among South Koreans and the six hours of intensive Korean classes I attended each week substantially improved my language skills. Not only was I able to conduct research directly

on-site, but I also gained insights into the sources commonly used by South Korean students and learned how to interpret them. The distinction between studying a language or culture in Heidelberg and being wholly immersed in it is one of the compelling reasons why a semester abroad holds such immense value.

I must express that these past few months have not only afforded me a broader social network, encompassing knowledgeable professors, experts, challenging individuals, and supportive friends, but they've also endowed me with an enhanced set of skills and knowledge that I wouldn't have acquired otherwise. Residing in a foreign country and fully immersing myself in its culture has granted me the ability to comprehend my own origins and the factors that have influenced my perspectives on the world. It has cultivated cultural awareness and sensitivity toward the viewpoints of the people I've encountered during my time here.

Were there challenges, including culture shocks, academic hurdles, and administrative complexities? Undoubtedly. Does South Korea perfectly align with my worldviews? Not entirely. However, the impact of this experience on both my academic and personal growth has been resoundingly positive, with a certainty of 100 percent. Would I recommend this experience to anyone seeking to expand their intercultural horizons, language proficiency, or social connections? Absolutely. Am I already planning to return here in six months, driven by the immense wealth of sights to see, research to conduct, and experiences to embrace? (Apologies to my friends and family) Most certainly.