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Editorial Note

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Editorial Note

This October 2022 special issue, “Textual Materiality in Korea, Premodern to Postmodern,” brings together nine articles that use textual materiality as a lens to explore the cultural practice of textual production and transmission. The first three articles cover premodern Korea, from the thirteenth to the nineteenth century. By analyzing the materiality of the *dhāraṇī* text, Seunghye Lee illuminates the Buddhist visual culture of the Koryŏ dynasty (918–1392) and demonstrates the performativity of enshrinement and ritual practice. The materiality of Buddhist sutras analyzed in Lee’s article is associated with various components such as visual designs, material forms, and modes of replication. The author argues that it is essential to consider the texts’ material, ritual, and spatial dimensions beyond the hermeneutic reading of the sutras. Moving on to the Chosŏn period (1392–1910), Hwisang Cho examines how funerary texts were produced for T’oegye Yi Hwang (1501–1570) and continues the discussion of performativity in ritual practice. In particular, Cho focuses on the issue of *addressivity* in the production of funerary texts and demonstrates diverse textual materialities that traverse various media forms. Shifting from the textual analysis in the first two articles, Jeongsoo Shin examines the two Korean steles, Mujangsa and Hwangch’oryŏng, and the significance of inscriptionality. In doing so, Shin examines how Kim Chŏnghŭi played a critical role in promoting dialogue between Korea and China in making sense of the materiality of the steles. Shin demonstrates how Korea and China exchanged conversations on the calligraphic style of the inscriptions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Moving on to the early twentieth century, Deborah Solomon uses Korea’s *tŭngsap’an* mimeography as a lens to explore textual materiality during the Japanese occupation period (1910–1945). This article examines the technology of a duplicator that reproduced images and scripts to demonstrate how the *tŭngsap’an*

technology was deeply associated with Japanese expansionism in Korea because it enabled the colonial authority to control knowledge production and strengthen their surveillance. The material object of *tungsap'an* duplication offers a meaningful site to examine textual practice to demonstrate how power in colonial Korea was enforced, contested, and negotiated.

The next five articles cover the post-Korean War period to the present. In Anna Jungeun Lee's article, she traces South Korean propaganda leaflets during the Park Chung Hee period (1961–1979), known as *ppira*, that were produced to target the North Korean population to advertise South Korea's material comfort and their "everyday life of consumption." In the Cold War context, these leaflets were used as a tool to visualize consumerist modernity, generating the desire of North Koreans to defect to South Korea. Lee uses the leaflets as a site to explore the textual materiality and the daily economic life of consumption during the Park Chung Hee period. Shifting our focus to North Korea, Ksenia Chizhova's article utilizes North Korean calligraphy to explore textual materiality. This article demonstrates how the ruling Kim family used calligraphy as a mechanism to mobilize national unity and construct a charismatic image of the family. Chizhova pays special attention to the Ch'ŏngbong style of writing to demonstrate how calligraphy was closely intertwined with political intimacy, somatic discipline, and political representation in North Korea's inscriptional and hermeneutic practice.

Returning to contemporary South Korea, Dahye Kim's article focuses on the textual materiality of South Korean science fiction, which Kim refers to as "techno-fiction," that flourished in digital space among the new generation of middle-class tech-savvy youth. Kim investigates how the practice of digital writing, perceived as a sign of "postmodernity," challenges conventional literary writing. At the center is the rise of computer technology and the middle-class youth that contributed to the rise of production and consumption of techno-fiction. Literary critics in the 1990s were concerned with the shift to digital space and the transformation of the cultural landscape of everyday practice. Continuing the conversation of the changing literary field in the 1990s, Jae Won Edward Chung discusses how globalization, neoliberalism, and technology changed and shaped the materiality of the cultural production of South Korean literature both abroad and at home. By using the framework of "literary materiality," Chung delves into the case of Yun Ihyŏng to demonstrate how Yun attempted to act against the culture of literary commodification to fight for her moral autonomy. This kind of resistance was a manifestation of the ongoing struggle against the South Korean literary system in the age of neoliberal globalization.

In the final article, Olga Fedorenko traces the shifting culture of *taejabo* from the 1980s to the 2010s. *Taejabo*, or big-character posters, were used as a medium for student activism during the democratization movement in South Korea. *Taejabo* were posted throughout university campuses to share social and political issues that demanded attention. This article explains *taejabo*'s transformation from analogue to digital adaptations and the return of *taejabo* as a postdigital medium

in the 2010s. In doing so, Fedorenko theorizes intermediality to explain the practice of “old” and “new” media. By demonstrating the material performativity of *taejabo*, the article illustrates how this medium provided a space to publicly express ideas that transformed campuses into a site of contestation. Situated between paper and digital platforms, contemporary *taejabo*’s intermediality appropriates online media to continue its social practice.

This special issue of interdisciplinary articles sheds new light on our understanding of the textual materiality of Korea’s past and present, from the practice of writing with a brush to that of typing on a computer. In particular, it contributes by providing various historical and theoretical approaches to textual materiality in exploring literary and nonliterary texts, including Buddhist sutras, Confucian funerary texts, steles, mimeograph, propaganda messages, literary texts, and campus posters.

The *Journal of Korean Studies* inaugurated the *JKS* Outstanding Article Prize in 2021. Each year the *JKS* awards an Outstanding Article Prize to an author who deserves special recognition for the article’s contribution to Korean studies based on its originality and depth of analysis. I am pleased to announce that the committee selected our first winners, Howard Kahm and Dennis Lee, for their article “Begging for Rain: Economic and Social Effects of Climate in the Early Koryŏ Period,” which appeared in volume 26, issue 1. By examining the environmental history of the Koryŏ period, this article offers a fresh perspective that investigates how climatological phenomena reinforced existing power hierarchies and exposed diverse political and economic agendas. To hear directly from the authors about the contribution of this article, please refer to the *JKS* Author Spotlight Interview Series in the GW Institute for Korean Studies YouTube Channel: <https://youtu.be/bwktlZGtjA>.

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