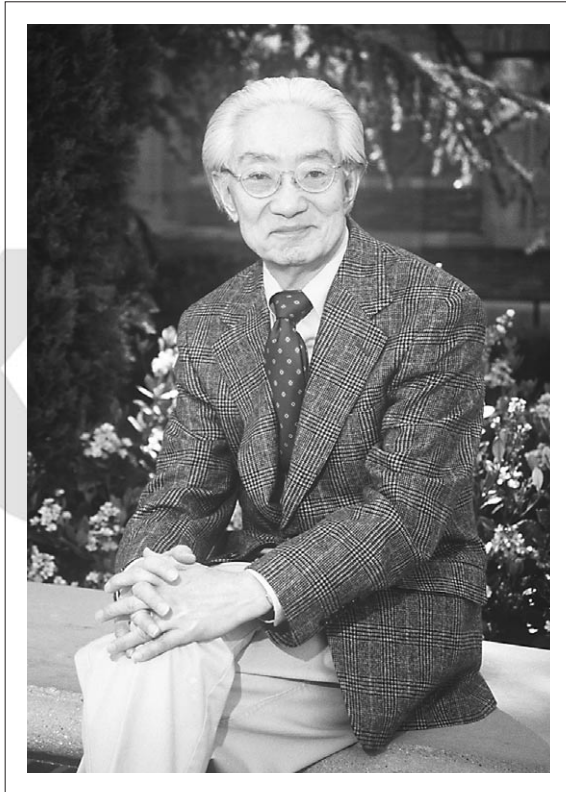


AN INTERVIEW WITH
PETER H. LEE



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K C I

The *Review of Korean Studies*, in cooperation with *Jeongsin munhwa yeongu* (Korea Studies Quarterly) features interviews with eminent Korean Studies scholars worldwide. In this sixth interview, we introduce Prof. Peter H. Lee, Professor of Korean and Comparative Literature, UCLA, USA. The interview was conducted by Prof. Catherine Ryu, Assistant Professor of Japanese Language and Culture, Michigan State University. The article featured in this volume was reformatted by Prof. Ryu, based on her interview with Prof. Peter H. Lee.

The Board of the *Review of Korean Studies* would like to express our deepest gratitude to Prof. Peter H. Lee for graciously agreeing to the interview. Further thanks go to Prof. Catherine Ryu for her kind cooperation and contribution.(Editor)

Peter H. Lee: Envisioning the Future of Korean Literature in the Global Context*

Beginning is always difficult.

Beginning from scratch is even more difficult—Peter H. Lee

Catherine Ryu
Michigan State University

It is likely that Dr. Peter H. Lee requires no introduction to those who are familiar with Korean Studies in the West and, in particular, in the United States. Scholars, critics, translators, poets, novelists, and students whose intellectual lives are engaged in any aspect of Korean culture—literature, religion, art, drama, folklore, history, or language—have all benefited from Dr. Lee’s prodigious scholarship over the last four decades. It is no exaggeration to say that since 1960 he has not only paved the way for the emergence of Korean Studies as a viable academic field, but he also continues to shape this field at the dawn of the twenty-first century.

Dr. Lee is a pioneer in the true sense of the word. Forging the field of Korean Studies in the United States was no ordinary undertaking, especially within the decade following the Korea War (1950-53). Ironically, it was the media depiction of the war that opened the eyes of ordinary Americans to recognize that there exists, somewhere in Asia, a country called “Korea” that is different from China or Japan. Yet the American cultural imagination could not see Korea beyond the media-generated images of a war-torn, poverty-stricken, and backward country—a country that was “saved” by the U.S. from the aggression of communist North Korea. The possibility that Korea might be a nation with a rich cultural heritage of its own, despite its modern tragedy, was beyond the grasp of most Americans, even as Korea began to attract the attention of the academic world during and after the War. Moreover, due to the political instability and volatility that plagued the Korean peninsula even after 1953, both the American and the South Korean governments routinely placed the utmost priori-

* Any Korean words romanized by the author based on the McCunn-Reischauer system are left unchanged.(editor)

ty on affairs of a military nature. The task of pioneering the new academic field of Korean Studies under such culturally, politically, and economically dire circumstances called for that fabled being, the Renaissance man. Dr. Lee's dedication to the advancement of Korean literary studies in the U.S.—together with his competency in Japanese, Chinese, German, French, and Italian (in addition to his principle languages, Korean and English), his mastery of both the Western and Eastern intellectual and cultural traditions, and his critical competency in poetry, prose, drama, philosophy, and religion—undoubtedly accelerated the maturation of Korean Studies in the United States.

The story of Dr. Lee's contributions to Korean Studies as scholar, critic, teacher, author, translator, compiler, and editor is woven into the narrative history of the field. This essay attempts to provide an overview of Dr. Lee's scholarship as it illuminates and amplifies the intersections among his personal life, Korean national history, and world history at large. This portrait of Dr. Lee, painted from the critical palette of current major players in the Korean Studies field in the U.S. and from an interview I had with him (August 20, 2003), will thus bring into relief his multifaceted critical endeavors vis-à-vis Korean Studies. It will also attempt to delineate the historical significance of his life-long contributions to Korean Studies in the United States.

Personal History

Peter Lee is an intellectual whose scholarship has been shaped by his relentless pursuit of knowledge—a pursuit, which, at first glance, seems to transcend the geopolitical boundaries and realities of his native land, but is ultimately defined by them. Lee appears to have been groomed from childhood to become what he is today—an internationally renowned scholar of Korean literature, who has been able to integrate successfully, both in his research and teaching, the literary traditions of the East Asia and the West. Born in 1929 to a family of distinguished lineage, which includes such luminaries as, according to the dynastic history of Koryŏ (1451), a Silla ambassador to the Tang court (ca. 9th c.), and the twelfth-century poet-essayist Yi Illo (1152-1220), Lee began his academic training in the classical Chinese language at the age of four. Under the watchful eyes of his grandfather, a scholar-official who oversaw Lee's Chinese studies and calligraphy practice, Lee immersed himself in the world of classical Chinese literature and thought. A mere child, he did not fully grasp the profound wisdom and

knowledge contained within the texts he studied, but he committed them all to memory through repeated recitations. He recalls of these lessons, “I read each line out loud one hundred times and more.”

His early academic training allowed Lee to experience a world that was one remove from the everyday reality of most children, the world of pure fun and play. Imagine a diligent young boy spending each day of his summer vacation practicing calligraphy on the pile of newspaper sheets prepared by a manservant. The boy could hear the voices of children happily playing just beyond the walls of his study, but he was not allowed to go out and join them. When he grew tired from studying, he would retire to his father’s living quarters decorated with antique works of art and calligraphy. There, he would rest, gazing at works of art or trying to decipher the Chinese graphs brushed on the scrolls displayed there. Lee’s life-long interest in Korean art and his mastery in calligraphy are rooted in his early exposures to them.

More importantly, from the outset of his youth, Lee tasted the sweetness that is unique to the fruit of hard intellectual labor. He recalls:

In the very beginning, I memorized four Chinese graphs a day from *One Thousand Sinograph Primer*, the first textbook of the Chinese curriculum. After 250 days, I was able to recite from memory the entire text from the first line to the last. Then, when I walked outside, to my surprise and delight, I could read *all* the signs written in Chinese. Suddenly, my eyes were opened to a completely new world! (Ryu 2003: Interview)

For Lee, the rich Chinese cultural tradition thus acquired beginning in his childhood has become simply a part of his consciousness and his memory, and, as such, it later served as the backbone of his scholarship. Lee has also kept alive throughout his life this sense of wonderment he experienced in his earliest studies.

Lee’s early training in the classical Chinese language, however, constitutes only one aspect of his education during his formative years. In fact, his academic training, which also includes Korean, Japanese, English, and French, carries a historical significance far beyond its immediate relevance to his family legacy and to his personal goal of self-cultivation. Born in early twentieth-century Korea, Lee represents the very last generation of Korean scholars who were thoroughly trained in classical Chinese literature. Viewed from this perspective, Lee is a rightful heir to the Korean literary tradition, whose long history cannot

be accessed without linguistic facility in classical Chinese. Lee's early formal education in Japanese, likewise, has exerted a life-long impact on him, but unlike his Chinese training, it represents the ineradicable residue of Japan's colonial transgression upon Korean culture. To borrow his words, "I learned Japanese in elementary school. I acquired it absolutely painlessly. I don't even remember how." Japanese was thus his primary academic language until 1945. From the first year of elementary school, Lee recalls, he studied Korean only as one of the many subjects he learned. Linguistically, Lee was thoroughly trilingual—in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean, which was spoken at home—when he was in elementary school. This linguistic competency enabled him to reside simultaneously in the cultural realms of the classical and the modern. Lee's initial encounters with the Western world and its literary traditions occurred when he started to learn the English language in middle school. Just as the classical Chinese language revealed new vistas for him at the age of four, English led him at the age of thirteen to a world hitherto unimagined. "The English language opened yet another entirely different world to me," reminisces Lee. "I was extremely intrigued by the new life, the new mores, and the new sensibilities this world presented to me." Lee's first English teachers were Koreans who had studied at prestigious imperial universities in Japan. In this sense, even his first exposures to the West can be seen as an extension of Korea's colonized modernity. Once introduced to the English language, Lee, an avid reader, voraciously read and studied works of English and American literature, including those of Shakespeare, Wordsworth, and Wilde, among others.

By the time he entered the former Preparatory School of Keijō Imperial University, Lee's knowledge and proficiency in English far surpassed not only those of his peers but also of his teachers. He continued to study English as well as French on his own. After Liberation (1945), Lee, then a student at Seoul National University, actively sought out authors, poets, and intellectuals of the time to broaden his horizons. Guided by his spirit of inquiry and his thirst for knowledge, he met with professors of major universities to discuss literature and poetry. Lee recalls the years from 1945 to 1948—the time before the political and ideological divide of the Cold War took concrete forms in Korea, with the establishments of The Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the North and the Republic of Korea in the South—as a particularly vibrant time intellectually for Korean society as well as for himself.

Lee's first-hand experience of Western culture started in 1948 when he accepted a scholarship to study at the College of St. Thomas in St. Paul,

Minnesota. Even this personal journey to the West in pursuit of knowledge carries the distinct hue of modern Korean history, a history upon which America has exerted its weighty influence. To American missionaries, for instance, Korea represented, as did Meiji Japan, a new frontier over which to exercise their religious authority and influence, especially through education. Already by early 1900, Korean students were often sponsored by missionaries in Korea to study at denominational colleges in the Midwest (Cumings 1997: 438). It was thus not by chance that Lee came to study at a Catholic school in the Midwest. However, what clearly distinguished Lee from his predecessors, many of whom were closely associated with Seongman Rhee (1875-1965, first president of the Republic of Korea 1948-60, Cumings 1997: 438), is that Lee, in his late teens, was already well versed in the Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and English literary traditions. At the College of St. Thomas, Lee pursued his studies in English and French literature, while also learning Italian and Latin.

His first decade abroad was a period of intellectual preparation and exploration for his future life as a scholar-teacher. After earning a BA from the College of St. Thomas in 1951, Lee went on to Yale University where he concentrated in the literatures of Japanese, Chinese, and the West. He also learned German during his graduate studies there. In 1953, he obtained his MA in comparative literature. While studying at Yale, Lee conceived, following the suggestions of his advisor, the late Professor René Wellek (1903-95), the idea for his dissertation project on classical Korean poetry. Before attaining his doctoral degree (Ph. D. dissertation, “Studien zum Saenaennorae: Altkoreanische Dichtung: ein Beitrag zur Wertung der Japanischen Studien über Altkoreanische Dichtung” [Studies on the Saenaennorae: Old Korean Poetry: A Contribution toward the Evaluation of Japanese Studies of Old Korean Poetry], 1958) from Ludwig-Maximilian University in Munich, Germany, Lee studied from 1954 to 1956 at several prestigious universities in Europe: first at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland (1954-55), then at the University of Milan, the University of Florence, and the University of Perugia in Italy (1955-56). In 1959, Lee carried out postdoctoral research at Wadham College, Oxford University, in England.

Regarding his advanced graduate studies in Europe, Lee explains, “When I was growing up, it was the dream of every literary youth in Korea, as in Japan, to go to Europe, the cradle of Western civilization.” Viewed from the perspective of the twenty-first century, the fact that Europe represented the pinnacle of culture—intellectual and otherwise—to youth in Asia is poignant, for this innocent

longing for the West is, in the final analysis, a reflection of the entrenched modern cultural hierarchy of the West and the East. Nevertheless, Lee's first-hand experiences in Europe have exerted a profound influence on the shaping of his global perspectives on literature and life.

During the 1950s, Lee became acquainted with numerous scholars, critics, authors, and intellectuals both in Europe and in the States. Many of them were polyglots, to be sure. Several spoke more than ten or even twenty languages. But, to Lee, they were the very emblems of cultural refinement, sophistication, and knowledge, as he saw that they held the entire field of the humanities, both Western and Eastern, under their commands. Lee recalls his initial astonishment upon encountering such intellectuals: "Then, I realized that there are people like this in the world. So, I tried to meet and get to know them as much as possible." His personal acquaintances with important intellectuals of the time—Constantin Regamey, I.M. Bochenski, Marie-Dominique Philippe, Pierre-Henri Simon, Giuseppe Billanovich, and Sir Maurice Bowra, to name a few—thus formed the core of his preparation and exploration for his future life as a scholar.

The eloquent words of the American poet Wallace Stevens (1879-1955), on the other hand, provide a glimpse into how Lee himself might have appeared to his mentors. While studying at Yale, Lee, a young Korean man of twenty-one, initiated an acquaintance with the world-famous poet Stevens by sending some of his own poems. This endearing yet bold gesture resulted in a lasting friendship between the two. In the essay, "The Whole Man: Perspectives, Horizons" (1955), Stevens fondly speaks of Lee:

Last week I received a letter, greetings on my seventy-fifth birthday from a young scholar, a Korean. When he was at New Haven, he used to come to Hartford and the two of us would go out to Elizabeth Park, in Hartford and sit on a bench by the pond and talk about poetry. He did not wait for the ducks to bring him ideas but always had in mind questions that disclosed his familiarity with the experience of poetry. He spoke in the most natural English. He is now studying in Switzerland at Fribourg, from where his letter came. It was written in what appeared to be the most natural French. Apparently they prize all-round young men in Korea, too (Bates 1989: 285).

The Lee depicted in this passage is a young man in his mid-twenties, and Stevens's appreciation of Lee as "the all-around young man" already points to

the unique qualities with which Lee would later pioneer Korean Studies in America.

In 1960, Lee returned to the United States to take his first teaching position, as an assistant professor of Korean and Japanese, at Columbia University. His appointment at Columbia is significant not only as the beginning of his distinguished academic career. It was the very first tenure-track position ever created for Korean Studies at an American university. Moreover, given that America's racial exclusion laws ended only in 1965 (Cumings 1997: 442), Lee's initial appointment at this prestigious university in 1960 marks an important occasion in the history of Korean Americans as well. Even as late as the mid-1970s, only five percent of all Korean Americans were professionals, while about eighty-five percent belonged to the working class (Cumings 1997: 443). Within the context of modern Korean history, the year 1960 also marks a watershed—the demise of the Rhee autocratic regime. The world, however, had yet to see the unprecedented rise of the Korean economy, which would be orchestrated under the military regime of Park Chung Hee (1961-79). Thus, the negative images of Korea held by Americans in the United States, as well as Americans living in Korea, remained largely intact for the following two decades, if not longer.

Beginning his academic career in the U.S. as a specialist of Korea at such a historical juncture when the ignorance, prejudice and biases against Koreans were still rampant and even legally sanctioned, Lee has devoted his entire life to the advancement of Korean literary studies through research, teaching, and writing. After his start at Columbia University, Lee subsequently taught at such major institutions as the University of Hawaii (1962-69; University of Hawaii at Manoa, 1970-87) and the University of California, Berkeley (1969-70). He is currently a professor in the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures at the University of California, Los Angeles (1987-present).

The series of academic posts Lee has held over the years is also intimately connected with the collective experience of Korean Americans. Hawaii is the first U.S. territory to which Koreans emigrated in the beginning of the twentieth century. Not surprisingly, the Center for Korean Studies at the University of Hawaii (established in 1972) is home to the oldest and largest Korean Studies program outside of Korea. Los Angeles, on the other hand, has held, over the past several decades, the largest concentration of Korean American population in the United States. Not coincidentally, both the UCLA and UC Berkeley campuses, where Peter Lee has taught, house a Center for Korean Studies. The Center at UC Berkeley (established in 1978) has a program for Korean humani-

ties and social sciences, while the Center at UCLA (established in 1993) offers the biggest Korean Studies programs on the mainland of the U.S. Given the prominence of Los Angeles as the strongest foothold of Korean Americans, Peter Lee's current position at UCLA as a full professor of Korean literature, training the next generations of scholars through rigorous graduate training, thus carries a historical significance different from that of his initial position at Columbia University in 1960, the first tenure-track position ever created for Korean Studies at an American university.

Lee continues, even after four decades, to be a pioneer in different ways at the forefront of Korean Studies in the United States. Some highlights among the international recognitions and awards that have been conferred upon Lee include being a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellow (1975); being awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship (1982-83), The Order of Merit, Republic of Korea (1982), a Presidential Award, Republic of Korea (1994); and a Nomination for the Faculty Research Lectureship 1999-2000 by the UCLA Academic Senate.

Lee's Critical Visions and Practices

Since his entry into the academic scene in 1960, Lee's agenda vis-à-vis Korean culture and literature has been shaped largely by the urgent need to establish Korean Studies as a viable curriculum within East Asian programs at major American universities. By 1960, the fields of Chinese and Japanese literature had planted their roots down into American academic soil, with their representative works of prose and poetry translated and studied at major institutions. The field of Korean literature, at the time, was a different story. Lee reminisces about his experience of thrill as well as trepidation in his early teaching days at Columbia University:

When, in 1960, Columbia asked me to offer courses in Korean culture and literature, I was both pleased and worried. Pleased because it was the first time in Columbia's history that any formal courses on the subject were included in the curriculum. Worried because Korean Studies in the United States began only after the Korean War and there were few materials that could be used as texts (Ryu 2003: Interview).

The sense of excitement and urgency, apparent in Lee's assessment of the situation of Korean Studies of the time, seems to have served as the initial driving force behind his subsequent Herculean efforts ("I worked day and night," recalls Lee) just to meet the basic needs for teaching a course on Korean culture and literature. From the outset, Lee identified translation and interpretation as the two areas of most pressing need, and over the next four decades, he published some twenty critical and translated works specifically designed to meet those needs. His scholarship therefore has been indispensable not only for laying down the foundation for Korean Studies but also for producing the basic materials for the foundation itself.

The late arrival of Korean Studies as an academic field, however, is not uniquely an American phenomenon. In France, for instance, the first time the Korean language was formally taught at the Sorbonne was in 1956, even though instruction for Chinese and Japanese was established in 1840 and 1863, respectively (Li 2002: 4). Korea was certainly known to Americans in the latter half of the nineteenth century, but Korea, even as a sovereign nation then, was not seen to have a standing in world affairs. Such sobriquets as "Hermit Kingdom" or "Land of the Morning Calm" (Lowell 1888) by which Korea came to be known in America reflect the non-threatening status of Korea, or its lack of status altogether, in the international arena. The imperialist contest between China, Japan, Russia, and America among others, which was carried out on Korean soil during the last years of the Chosŏn dynasty (1392-1910), further marginalized and subsequently erased Korea completely from the world map during the years of Japanese colonial rule (1910-45). When Korea re-emerged at the end of World War II and the Korean War, it was only as a third-world country that the U.S. could not afford to ignore because of its strategic geopolitical importance in the ongoing Cold War.

To understand the history of Korean Studies in the U.S. against such a grim international historical backdrop, it is productive to retrace Lee's firm and measured steps that have ultimately led to the publication of his latest edited work, *A History of Korean Literature* (Cambridge University Press 2003), which is the first comprehensive narrative history of Korean literature from its inception to the present day. Without Lee's years of painstaking efforts to reach and educate Western readers through, in particular, what have become his nine anthologies of Korean literature in English, there would have been a far smaller number of informed, appreciative readers for this monumental work. These nine anthologies represent both Lee's dedicated scholarship and the collaborative efforts of

major scholars in the field who have together undertaken the mission of bringing to the West high-quality translations of canonical works from classical and modern Korean literature. This cultural mission has, in fact, not only aimed at ameliorating the debased image of Korea in the international mind but also resisted the marginalization of Korea as a third-world country based solely on its lack of economic and political power.

Anthology of Korean Poetry: From the Earliest Era to the Present (New York: John Day, 1964) is Lee's first anthology of Korean poetry in English, whereas *Kranich am Meer: Koreanische Gedichte* [Crane at the seashore: Korean poetry] (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1959; reprint, Munich: Wilhelm Heyne, 1987) is his first anthology of Korean classical poetry in German. The fact that the revised edition of *Anthology of Korean Poetry* was published a mere decade later (1974) speaks for the interest that Lee's pioneering endeavor generated among Western readers. The revised edition, *Poems from Korea: A Historical Anthology* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1974), includes 292 poems in total. Doo Soo Suh assesses the ground-breaking significance of this seminal volume:

Thanks to this reliable new translation, we are now able to speak of the Korean poetic heritage with pride and confidence. *Poems from Korea* invites the reader to enjoy and contemplate the beauties of Korean poetic achievements. The book has opened a new path to the understanding of Korean poetry in particular and Korean literature in general (Suh 1974: 210).

To measure the significance of Lee's academic publication of Korean poetry at this particular time, we only need to keep in mind that the 1970s was the era of M*A*S*H, a popular TV program that still circulated an image of war-torn Korea (Cumings 1997: 445) and that can still be viewed in re-runs. In this context, Lee's introduction of Korean poetry takes on new meaning as a necessary cultural corrective to the Korea of the American imagination.

Flowers of Fire: Twentieth-Century Korean Stories (University of Hawaii, 1974, revised edition, 1986) is, on the other hand, the first culmination of Lee's efforts to anthologize the representative works of modern Korean fiction. The significance of this anthology, which features twenty-one stories written between 1925 and 1968 by nineteen novelists, is self-evident. Beongcheon Yu praised the collection in clear terms: "All considered, the editor succeeded

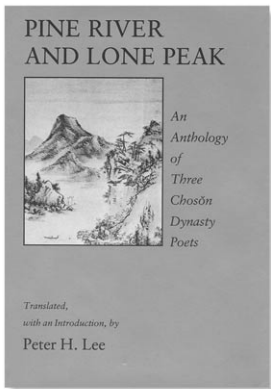
admirably in what he set out to accomplish: to bring Korea and her stories closer to the English audience” (Yu 1975: 128). David R. McCann underscores the authoritative status of this anthology as a core text for Korean literary studies, when he mentions the book in his 1981 review of *Meetings and Farewells* (St Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1980), edited by Chung Chong-wha:

Add this book [*Meetings and Farewells*], then, to Peter Lee’s *Flowers of Fire*, and to the now out-of-print but invaluable *Listening to Korea*, edited by Marshall R. Pihl (New York: Praeger, 1973) and you will have what you need to provide a meaningful, comparative view of Korean literature in a modern Japanese or Chinese literature course; or even—O hasten the day!—to form the nucleus for survey courses on modern Korean literature (McCann 1981: 163).

In fact, what appears to have been McCann’s merely wishful thinking in 1981 became a concrete reality in 1990 with the publication of *Modern Korean Literature: An Anthology* (University of Hawaii Press, 1990), again edited by Peter Lee. JaHyun Kim Haboush, in a review of this volume, proclaims a breakthrough for Korean literary studies in terms of having adequate teaching resources:

This anthology, a sequel to *Anthology of Korean Literature* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1981) also edited by Peter Lee, heralds a new era for Korean literature on campuses in English-speaking countries. Now, Korean literature is not only a legitimate course but there also exist adequate anthologies from which the course can be taught. A substantial number of selections included in this volume come from *Flowers of Fire* and *Silence of Love*—both edited by Peter Lee—anthologies, respectively, of short stories and poetry written in the twentieth century until late in the 1960s. The new anthology, however, is an attempt to be far more comprehensive and representative (Haboush 1991: 710).

The *Anthology of Korean Literature* mentioned in the above citation is a historical anthology from early times to the nineteenth century (revised edition, 1990), and *The Silence of Love* (University Press of Hawaii, 1980) is an anthology of modern Korean poetry from the twentieth century. The effectiveness of



PINE RIVER AND LONE PEAK University of Hawaii Press 1991

Modern Korean Literature: An Anthology as a textbook cannot be better expressed than through the reviewer's own testimony:

Peter Lee should be congratulated for producing this superb volume, which attests to his unerring taste, his enormous erudition, and his admirable dedication. The anthology is indispensable reading for anyone interested in Korean literature or modern Korea. I used it as a textbook for both of my courses and my students loved it (Haboush 1991: 711).

JaHyun Kim Haboush is correct to speak of a new phase for Korean Studies in connection with Lee's *Modern Korean Literature*. Scholars concur that, as a field, Korean Studies had come of age in the late 1980s and the early 1990s, which coincides with Lee's publication (1991). At this particular juncture, Korean Studies entered a new era not only in terms of having adequate teaching materials but also in terms of having adequate financial means with which to sustain Korean Studies as a viable field. I am, of course, referring here to the establishment of the Korean Foundation in December 1991. By 2003, the academic programs, events, and publications sponsored by the Foundation have become so ubiquitous that it is almost impossible to imagine a time when the field did not enjoy the largess of the Foundation's coffers. Even though the effectiveness of the programs sponsored by the Foundation remains an issue, the Foundation, since its inception, has served an indispensable role in providing the much needed financial support that accelerated the establishment and expansion of Korean Studies not only in the U.S. but throughout the world.

Even after having achieved his initial goal of providing to Western readers an adequate, comprehensive purview of Korean literature and culture, Lee continued to expand his range of coverage with *Pine River and Lone Peak* (University of Hawaii Press, 1991), a collection of poetry in the vernacular by three major poets, Chŏng Ch'ŏl, Yun Sŏndo, and Park Illo, of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Another anthology, *Myths of Korea* (Somerset and Seoul: Jimoondang International, 2000), includes seven Korean foundation myths, ten shamanist myths from the Korean mainland, and nine shamanist myths from Cheju Island.

To date, *The Columbia Anthology of Traditional Korean Poetry* (Columbia University Press, 2002) represents Peter Lee's latest anthologizing effort to introduce traditional Korean poetry, including folk and shamanist songs, to the West.

This brief publication history of Lee's anthologies may be read as a coming-of-age tale for Korean Studies in the United States. With each publication, Lee broke new ground in the field. Yet, what is perhaps equally important in reflecting the development of Korean Studies is the publication history of the revised editions. Lee has, over the years, revisited, cultivated, and expanded ground he first broke. The result has been the markedly enhanced visibility and viability of Korean Studies at major universities in America. In the process of tending the field of Korean Studies, Lee has been able not only to define and refine the configuration of canonical Korean literature rendered in English. He has also added new and different voices by including the works of other translators and scholars—Mark J. Belson, Kim Chongun, Kim Yongch'ŏl, Kim Uchang, David R. McCann, Paek Nakch'ŏng, Marshall R. Pihl, Charles Rosenberg, Richard Rutt, Song Yoin, and Sang Yu, to name a few—to his edited publications. In this sense, the nine anthologies mentioned here reflect the history of Korean Studies and the current state of the field.

On the other hand, Lee's anthologies, together with his other critical works, tell a story that is uniquely his own—a story of his scholarly endeavors, which can only be characterized in one way: high standards. If scholarship lies in details, Lee's work embodies that critical virtue, which can be attained and polished only through arduous work. His meticulous attention to detail is legendary, whether translating an entire text or verifying the biographical facts of the author involved. A translator, by definition, must remain vigilant over potential errors that may creep in through the work of countless handlers and years of transmission, such as conceptual misinterpretations, factual errors, dates, or even Romanization. Since English translations serve as the medium of initial encounters between the original Korean texts and Western readers, the role of a competent translator can hardly be exaggerated. The nine anthologies translated, com-



*THE COLUMBIA ANTHOL-
OGY OF TRADITIONAL
KOREAN POETRY*
Columbia University Press
2002

piled, and edited by Peter Lee have effectively served as what Doo Soo Suh calls “a model of literary translation from Korean literature, at once accurate, readable, and authoritative” (Suh 1974: 209).

Lee’s Major Scholarly Contributions

Over the last four decades, Peter Lee has endeavored to present to the West Korean literature that is not only readable but also comprehensible. As a result, what has emerged from his scholarship is a unique kind of clarity that effectively communicates the complexity of the relationships among the various parts that make up the whole of the Korean cultural tradition. Lee has been able to shed light on the intrinsic complexity of Korean literature, which is by nature “inter-disciplinary,” to use modern parlance. All Korean poetry, for instance, is meant to be sung, whether it is *hyangga*, *yŏyo*, *sijo*, *kasa* or *p’ansori*. In other words, literature, music, and oral tradition must be considered together in order to gain a proper understanding of the Korean poetic heritage. Moreover, without an in-depth understanding of Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and shamanism, one cannot even begin to speak of Korean literature. Similarly, without a firm grasp of Chinese social, religious, and intellectual traditions, one cannot fully assess the significance of Korean literature. In the same vein, Korean literature, both classical and modern, must be contextualized within Korean history, Japanese history, and world history.

In addition to his anthologizing efforts, Lee, through his comparative approaches to literature in general, has been able to situate Korean literature not only within the context of East Asian traditions but also within that of world literature. In this sense, René Wellek’s prophetic words in 1960 best describe the significance of Lee as the pioneer of Korean Studies. To Wellek, Lee’s books represent “an important contribution to that dreamed-of ultimate, general poetics and history of poetry, in which all nations would be represented” (Wellek 1960: 377). Lee’s scholarship has contributed to this particular task of making Korean literature resonant with Western audiences and has directed the currents of critical discourse that have shaped the field of Korean Studies.

When Peter Lee published *Lives of Eminent Korean Monks* (Harvard University Press) in 1969, he broke new ground in more ways than one. Lee’s translation of the *Haedong kosŭng chŏn* with critical annotations is the first attempt in any language to make accessible Korea’s oldest extant Buddhist

hagiography (original compilation in 1215). Chong Sun Kim explains the significance of this historical undertaking:

There are very few works in English on early Korea. Because of the need for mastery of the classical Chinese, Korean, and Japanese languages, the study of ancient Korea presents major difficulties for Western scholars. Professor Lee, who is fluent in all of these languages, deserves our appreciation for having translated the *Haedong kosŭng chŏn* into English (Kim 1970: 707).

Moreover, Lee's work represents his effort to reconstitute the original text from the textually corrupt fragments that are included in the *Taishō Tripitaka* and from other pertinent publications in the twentieth century. In the process of achieving this goal, as the reviewer also observes (Kim 1970: 707), Lee clarified the major Buddhist concepts, historical dates, localities, and particularities of ancient Buddhist communities in Korea. Furthermore, this publication, which features eighteen exemplary lives, uncovers the textual strategies behind the production of biography as part of the ideological apparatus of the time.

Songs of Flying Dragons: A Critical Reading (Harvard University Press, 1975) is Lee's seminal study of the Confucian heroic ethos as embodied in the person of General Yi Sŏnggye (1335-1408), the founder of the Chosŏn dynasty. The original text, *Yongbi ŏch' ŏn ka* (1445-47), literally "songs of dragons flying to heaven," represents King Sejong's first attempt to eulogize the founding of the Chosŏn dynasty by employing, in addition to the Chinese script, the Korean alphabet that he himself invented in 1443-44. *Songs of Flying Dragons*, which consists of 248 poems in 125 cantos, is, in Lee's words, "a manifesto of the policies of the new state, a mirror for future monarchs, and a repository of heroic tales and foundation myths of China and Korea" (Ryu 2003: Interview). By focusing on a number of topoi analogous to Western epics, Lee's study illuminates the image of the Confucian soldier of Chinese origin against that of the archetypal epic hero of Western culture. C. H. Wang has the following words of praise for Lee's approach to the *Songs*:

Professor Lee employs a certain comparative approach to the reading of the *Songs*. The approach is compellingly effective and convincing, judging from the simple fact that the cantos were originally composed in two languages. In addition to Chinese materials, he brings in parallels and

contrasts from Greek, Latin, English, French, German, Old Norse, and several other sources (but, surprisingly, none from Japanese) to illuminate his subject. Consequently, he has placed the *Songs*, the most stately work in Korean literature, among the masterpieces of world literature (Wang 1976: 338).

As such, Lee's critical translation of the *Songs* made an invaluable contribution to Korean Studies, while advancing the existing Western scholarship on this major Korean heroic narrative poetry. Prior to the publication of Lee's monograph, Gari Ledyard and James Hoyt undertook their studies on the *Songs* respectively in "The Korean Language Reform of 1446: The Origin, Background, and Early History of the Korean Alphabet" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1966) and *Songs of the Dragons Flying to Heaven* (Unesco Collection of Representative Works, Korean Series, Seoul, 1971), which represents the first attempt to translate *Yongbi ōch' ōn ka* into English (McCann 1978: 187).

Celebration of Continuity (Harvard University Press, 1979) is the culmination of Lee's years of critical engagement with two millennia of the Korean poetic tradition. As a comparative study of East Asian poetry and Western poetry, this monograph not only identifies major motifs, thematic patterns, and principal topoi in East Asian poetry but also elucidates the poet's method of composition, the interplay between tradition and individuality, the vital link between the old and the new, and changes in poetic sensibility in relation to views on life and the world. Moreover, this volume illuminates the conventions of heroic, nature, and love poetry in East Asia and the West. Marsha L. Wagner states the overall import of Lee's work:

Though more descriptive than analytic, the book is refreshingly organized around such major themes and large topics that they will resonate with significance for every reader. *Celebration of Continuity* provides an ideal introduction to Asian poetry for students of Western backgrounds. It is an important and useful book in which specialists and general readers have spread out before them a stimulating broad context in which to place each particular cultural tradition (Wagner 1983: 470).

Celebration of Continuity thus serves as a reflection on philosophical, political, moral, and aesthetic concerns in the East and the West.

Another of Lee's major works is *A Korean Storyteller's Miscellany* (Princeton University Press, 1989), the first annotated translation of *The P'aegwan chapki* by Ŏ Sukkwŏn (fl. 1525-54), who is known for having visited China at least seven times as an interpreter. Lee's work throws, in particular, new light on the hitherto neglected genre *chapki* (literary miscellany) within Korea's own critical tradition. Earl Miner observes the significance of Lee's volume:

Only Peter H. Lee commands Korean, Chinese, and Japanese culture sufficiently to understand and translate this "Miscellany" as literature, and only he among those who understand the literature knows Western criticism sufficiently well to make it a new experience for those who wish—who need—to extend their horizons of prose literature (Miner 1989: 44).

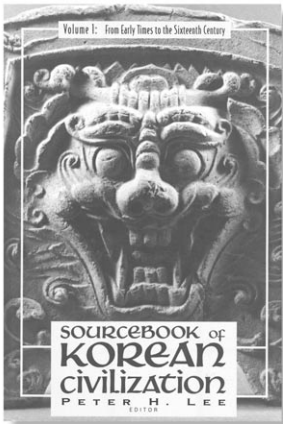
Lee recounts the years he devoted to this first critical study of the *chapki* as being occupied by a task akin to that of an archeologist:

My first reading of the 1909 modern edition indicated that we desperately needed a critical edition. I then began to track down earlier manuscript versions and parallel texts. Moreover, situating the text in history called for a reading of examples that preceded and followed my text. That the genre known as the literary miscellany was excluded from a writer's collected works, even in the case of a high state minister, demonstrates its low status in the hierarchy of prose genres.... After several years of archaeological research, I was able finally to write a theoretical essay on the literary miscellany as a genre, together with the first annotated translation of the text (Ryu 2003: Interview).

Lee's several years of research made available to Korean Studies the literary miscellany, which he defines as "anti-genre." Lee explains, for example, that the author Ŏ Sukkwŏn, a secondary son without access to political power, was able to formulate, by employing the literary miscellany, a critical stance of his own vis-à-vis the convention of formal prose genres. Moreover, this anti-genre, a flexible literary medium, enabled the author to challenge the hegemonic discourse that supported officially sanctioned views of life and experience.

David R. McCann situates the historical and critical significance that this particular work of Lee embodies within the development of Korean Studies:

The modest hope expressed in the preface, that its “attempt to comprehend Ŏ Sukkwŏn’s cultural and hermeneutical situation will offer inspiration for further investigation of later examples in Korea, and of kindred forms elsewhere,” is a formidable and timely challenge. Formidable because until recently so much that has been written about Korea has tried so hard to argue its unique qualities; timely because the field of Korean Studies does at last seem to be coming to life in the United States and must engage in the theoretical and comparative discourse that colleagues in Chinese and Japanese studies have been pursuing (McCann 1990: 422).



SOURCEBOOK of KOREAN CIVILIZATION Columbia University Press 1993-96

In the late 1980s and the early 1990s, the Korean Studies field had not only “come to life” in the United States, as previously discussed, but also had come to possess the means with which to sustain its life and to flourish. *Sourcebook of Korean Civilization* by Columbia University Press (vol. 1, 1993; vol. 2, 1996), together with an abbreviated version, *Sources of Korean Tradition* (vol. 1, 1997; vol. 2, 2001), is precisely that new critical means. The Columbia University Press had already published and revised the series of sourcebooks dealing with the traditions of Japan (1958; 2nd ed., 2001), India (1958; 2nd ed., 1988), and China (1960; issued in 2 vols., 1964; vol. 1, 2nd ed., 1999; vol. 2, 2nd ed., 2000). The publication of the Korean

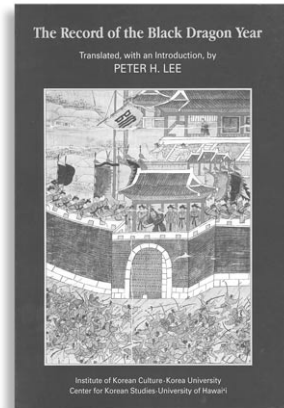
sourcebooks thus signified a momentous development of Korean Studies in the West, as Donald N. Clark observes:

Access to documentary material has long been a problem for teachers of Korean history and civilization in the West. The publication of this set of sources in translation therefore represents a giant step forward for the Korean Studies field. The editor [Peter Lee], who is well recognized for his mastery of classical Chinese and Korean sources, worked with a team of assistant editors, who were leaders in special areas of Korean tradition. They in turn recruited specialists who provided documents from their

own particular areas of research. The resulting sourcebooks thus comprise anthologies of the best Western scholarship on traditional Korea, and are ready to serve as supplements to many kinds of courses on Korea and East Asia in general. The field is grateful to have this invaluable resource to open new windows on Korea's past (Clark 1998: 238-39).

With the publication of Korean sourcebooks, Korean Studies had finally achieved some degree of parity with other Asian studies fields, and, as Clark recognizes, Peter Lee's role in this achievement cannot be overemphasized.

The publication of *The Records of the Black Dragon Year* (Institute of Korean Studies, Korea University, and Center for Korean Studies, University of Hawaii, 2000) represents yet another important moment for Korean Studies. Needless to say, Lee's translation and introduction of the first popular tale that captures Koreans' collective experience of the Japanese invasion of Korea in 1592-98 are remarkable in many ways. What is, however, particularly notable about this monograph is his use of an unprecedented format. Unlike his previous critical studies with annotated translations, the *Records* includes the original text in its entirety. In other words, for this monograph, Lee does not take his usual role of the privileged translator and interpreter for Western readers who have otherwise no access to the original text in Korean. Rather, Lee presents his translation and interpretation to Western readers with the recognition that they may not only be able to read the original text but also assess his rendering of the source. The particular format used for the *Records* is thus a clear reflection of the advances that Korean Studies has made over the last four decades. Korean Studies, as a field, has produced a new generation of competent Western readers of Korean culture and literature.



*The Record of the Black
Dragon Year Korea
University and Hawaii
University 2000*

Lee's Scholarship and Its Historical Significance

Lee's publication history alone cannot represent his contributions to the mak-

ing of Korean Studies as an academic field in the United States. Equally meaningful are Lee's contributions to ongoing critical discourse, in the form of reviews, among Korean scholars in the West. Lee's early publications, in particular, were important in generating rigorous critical debate among specialists in Korean culture and literature. While Lee is the acknowledged pioneer in the field, his scholarship did not start in a vacuum. It is important to keep in mind that when Lee's early publications appeared, there were scholars of Korean Studies in the West who were able to assess, appreciate, and promote them. Although Lee initially published, while studying at Yale, his *sijo* translations in the *Hudson Review*, which were reprinted in *East and West* (Rome, 1956), it is his first publication, *Kranich am Meer: Koreanische Gedichte* [Crane at the seashore: Korean poetry] (1959), together with its English version (*Studies in the Saenaennoraë: Old Korean Poetry*, Rome: Istituto Italiano Per Il Medio Ed Estremo Oriente, 1959), that made the presence of Korean literature visible in the West.

For example, Gari K. Ledyard's description of *Kranich am Meer* for *The Journal of the American Oriental Society* in the section "Brief Notices of Books" is one of the earliest instances where a publication on Korean literature was noted along with other volumes on Asian literature such as *The Classic Noh Theater of Japan* by Ezra Pound and Ernest Fenollosa (New York: A New Directions Paper Book, 1959), *Zen and Shinto: The Story of Japanese Philosophy* by Chikao Fujisawa (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1959), and *Chinese Thought: From Confucius to Mao Tsê-tung* by H. G. Greel (New York: The New American Library, 1960). The following is Ledyard's introduction of Lee's book, reproduced in its entirety:

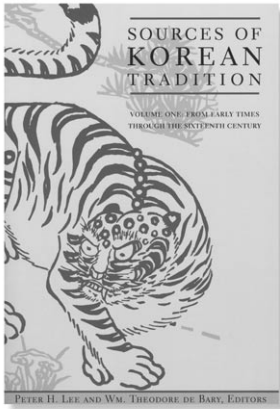
Kranich am Meer: Koreanische Gedichte. Herausgegeben von PETER H. LEE. Auf Grund der Übertragungen des Herausgebers bearbeitet von FRANZ WILHELM und ALBERT VON SCHIRNDING. Pp. 132 and 6 plates. München: CARL HANSER. Verlag, 1959. Sensitive translations of eighty-six Korean poems, representative of various genres and poets, and covering the period from the 7th to 18th centuries. This attractive little volume is also provided with a short summary of Korean history, notes on poetical forms, bibliographical sketches of the poets translated, textual notes and a chronological table, the whole graced by six tastefully chosen reproductions of Korean paintings (Ledyard 1960: 189).

Subsequent reviews of the same volume and its English versions, by Doo Soo Suh (1960: 113), by Doo Soo Suh and Hellmut Wilhelm (1961: 385), and by James Hoyt (1961: 74-76), have situated Lee's critical achievement vis-à-vis the academic tradition established by scholars of the previous generation, such as Ogura Shimpei (*Kyōka oyobi rito no kenkyū*, 1929) and Yang Chu-dong (*Koga Yōngu*, 1942). The excitement stirred by Lee's early scholarship is remarkable as these reviewers unanimously agreed on one particular point: Lee's works have opened a new window into Korean literature and a new phase for Korean Studies in the U.S. and the West. As noted previously, Lee's publications over the following years have served as the focal points of critical dialogue among scholars as they discussed in earnest the current state of Korean Studies and its future course.

At the same time, the significance of Peter Lee's reviews of other scholarly achievements should not be overlooked. Over the last four decades, Lee has reviewed a wide range of works, including translations of modern literature, art history, language, library studies, and literary history. Richard Rutt's "Preface" to the Ann Arbor Paperbacks Edition (1998) of *Bamboo Grove: an Introduction to Sijo* demonstrates the amicable spirit with which scholarly exchanges have taken place within Korean Studies, and acknowledges Lee's specific contribution to such exchanges:

Soon after *The Bamboo Grove* appeared [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971], I began to regret that I had not taken the subject more seriously. The most helpful review of the book was by Peter Lee, in the *Journal of Asian Studies* (1972), where he drew attention to a number of errors, most of which could easily have been avoided. Peter stated the facts without rancor—in later years he included some of my work in books he compiled—but even Yi Hou's little book [*Kogŭm myōngsijo chōgnhae*, 1954] would have helped with some of them. I am glad to apologize now for them and a few others. Very likely there are more, as yet unsignaled (Rutt 1998: xvii).

Yet another valuable contribution of Lee's to Korean Studies consists of his collaborations with major figures in other fields of East Asian literary studies in the United States: Donald Keene, Wm. Theodore de Bary, James J. Y. Liu, Earl Miner, Masao Miyoshi, Makoto Ueda, C. T. Hsia, and Leo Ou-fan Lee, to name a few. To a large extent, their personal acquaintances with Lee and their admira-



SOURCES OF KOREAN TRADITION Columbia University Press 1997-2001.

tion for his scholarly integrity have not only stimulated their collaborative critical inquiry into comparative approaches to East Asian literature but also facilitated the publication of such monumental works as *Sourcebook of Korean Civilization* (1993-96) and *Sources of Korean Tradition* (2000-2002). Similarly, Korean Studies in the United States has also benefited from Lee's collaborative efforts with Korean scholars in Korea. As Lee himself points out, *The Columbia Anthology of Traditional Korean Poetry* (Columbia University Press, 2002) is based on the first of a four-volume anthology of Korean literature compiled by his colleagues at Seoul National University.

According to Peter Lee, the field of Korean Studies still has a long way to go, even though it came of age in the United States already a decade ago. He believes that there are three important issues that must be fully addressed before we can speak of the future of Korean Studies. The first is the clarity of vision that will determine the direction of the field and buttress its scholarly endeavors. It is too easy to point to external factors, such as the marginality of Korea and its colonial history, as the reasons for the tardy development of Korean Studies in the West. What is equally responsible for the current state of the field is the Korean government's lack of a coherent cultural policy concerning overseas Korean Studies. As mentioned before, the Korea Foundation has played a vital role in providing financial support to the field, but, in the final analysis, what is most important is not the number of publications, conferences, or centers for Korean Studies. Rather, it is the quality of work produced by the field as a whole. Therefore, the available financial resources should be applied to concerted efforts to produce well-trained scholars and high-quality publications. For this task, we cannot simply rely on ad hoc decisions or short-term goals but on clearly defined long-term plans, which take into consideration the state of the international academic field and its relation to Korean Studies.

As for Korean literary studies, what is now most urgently needed is the critical awareness that we cannot simply apply postmodern theories of the West to Korean and East Asian literatures. We should not ignore the ideological and political underpinnings of these theories, which have grown out of the specific

cultural contexts of the West. What we need instead is a viable methodology that will facilitate a study of Korean literature in its entirety. Such a study would take into account literary developments in China and Korea, the status of a literary work, the emergence of poetic systems and narrative forms, literary genres, generic codes, social norms, and the writer's social and cultural conditions. In other words, we must develop critical theories that will reflect Korean and East Asian literary experiences. This task would require a tremendous amount of time and work, since, as Lee asserts in *A History of Korean Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), "one cannot build a theory without intimately knowing the literary texts that constitute a tradition. Only after reading extensively and acquiring standards by which to evaluate the works can one begin to acquire a sense of that tradition."

If we wish to take our dialogues on Korean literature with scholars, critics, and students of Western literature to yet another level, Lee argues that we need to re-examine the significance of traditional commentary, and investigate contemporary epistemes. To accomplish successfully this critical task, it is necessary to foster new generations of scholars who possess the linguistic facility to gain historical, global, and critical perspectives on Korean, Asian, and Western literary traditions. As Lee's career has demonstrated, even after having attained all the necessary critical tools, only with uncompromising courage, steadfastness, perseverance, and dedication, can one achieve excellence in scholarship. There is neither money nor fame to be gained from this arduous life of a scholar. It is practically the life of a religious order, not to be taken lightly without a strong sense of conviction and commitment.

Finally, what we need is a renewed understanding of the significance of Korean literature within Korean Studies. Korean literature is a minor field in terms of the number of Ph.D.s and publications, especially compared to those in the field of history. To specialize in literature takes additional years to gain the required linguistic proficiency in classical Chinese, especially for those who study premodern periods. Currently, the number of Ph. D. students in classical Korean literature is much smaller than that in modern Korean literature, and this situation needs to be altered. Otherwise, there will be even fewer qualified scholars than now who can teach and undertake research on classical Korean literature, which actually constitutes more than ninety-percent of the Korean literary tradition. Moreover, we need to recognize the intrinsic value of literature as that which, as Preminger and Brogan state in *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, "does not impose a controlling uniformity of outlook on us,

but instead through its sheer diversity challenges our imagination; in this it provokes and moves us in unexpected ways that broaden our intellectual, emotional, aesthetic, and moral horizons” (Preminger and Brogan 1993: 128a, 129b). In short, literature is that which will make us, in Wallace Stevens’s words, “the whole man.” The three major concerns Lee has expressed for the future of Korean Studies in the U.S., are, in fact, the reflections and the extensions of the main objectives of his own scholarship over the last four decades.

Anyone who is serious about understanding the history of Korean Studies and grasping the historicity of the current state of the field in the United States and the West would do well by reading through all of Lee’s published works from the last four decades. Only then can one truly understand the magnitude of Lee’s scholarship, his passion for Korean literature, his life-long dedication to making Korean literature readable and accessible to Western audiences, his commitment to shed new light on both the merits and demerits of Korean literature through comparative approaches to East Asian and world literatures, and his sheer love for literature and, in particular, poetry. To hear Lee say, “I have rarely taken a weekend off,” is not surprising, for he has dedicated his entire life to redressing the marginalized position of Korean literature in world literature. David R. McCann recognizes the achievement of Lee’s hard work when he appraises Lee’s latest publication, *A History of Korean Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 2003) as exemplary scholarship, which “will be the standard for many years to come. Peter Lee deserves our thanks, and has earned our admiration once again” (McCann 2003). With this latest project accomplished, Lee is now preparing to undertake a study on the figure of Ch’unhyang—the archetypal female that has gripped the cultural imagination of Koreans over centuries. “Beginning is always difficult; beginning from scratch is even more difficult,” Lee says. He, however, boldly embarks on a beginning yet again, even with such a well known subject as Ch’unhyang.

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Chronology

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Education:

- 1951 B.A., College of St. Thomas, St. Paul, MN
1953 M.A., Yale University
1954-55 Studies at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland
1955-56 Studies at the Universities of Milan, Florence, & Perugia
1958 Ph.D., Ludwig-Maximilian University in Munich
1959 Studies at Wadham College, Oxford

Employment:

- 1960-62 Assistant Professor of Korean & Japanese, Columbia University
- 1962-69 Assistant & Associate Professor of Korean, University of Hawaii
- 1969-70 Visiting Professor of Oriental Langs, University of California, Berkeley
- 1970-87 Professor of Korean & Comparative Literature, University of Hawaii (Chair, 1972-75, 1984-87)
- 1987- Professor of Korean & Comparative Literature, UCLA (Chair, 1988-95)

Fellowships:

- 1956-58 Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung, Germany, Fellow
- 1962-63 Bollingen Foundation, Fellow
- 1968 American Council of Learned Societies, Fellow
- 1975 Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung, Fellow
- 1975-76 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, Fellow
- 1982-83 National Endowment for the Humanities, Fellow

Awards:

- 1982 Order of the Camellia, Republic of Korea
- 1985 Distinguished Scholar at Peking University, under the auspices of National Academy of Sciences
- 1993 Daesan Foundation Translation Prize
- 1994 Presidential Award, Republic of Korea
- 1995 Honorary Citizen, Metropolitan City of Seoul
- 1999 Nominated for the Faculty Research Lectureship for 1999-2000, UCLA Academic Senate

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Encyclopedia of Asian History; Encyclopedia of World Literature in the 20th Century; Hudson Review; Journal of the American Oriental Society; McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia of World Biography; Monumenta Serica; Oriens Extremus; Penguin Book of Modern Verse Translation; Poetry (Chicago); Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics; and T'oung Pao.

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