

## EDITORIAL

This special issue of *Politeja – Korea from Various Perspectives: Scholarly Approaches to Her Past, Present, Future* – dedicated to a variety of issues regarding both history and contemporaneity of the Korean Peninsula, represents a pioneering initiative, marking the first collaborative editorial project undertaken jointly by scholars from the Korean Studies departments at three leading Polish academic institutions – the University of Warsaw, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, and the Jagiellonian University in Kraków (listed here in order of their historical engagement and length of involvement in Korean Studies, from longest-established to most recent). It stands also as a testimony to the thriving academic cooperation between Koreanists from various parts of the world, and a growing interest in Korean Studies, reflecting the dedication, enthusiasm, and scholarly commitment of all involved. We extend, therefore, our heartfelt gratitude to our colleagues from various international institutions, whose insightful contributions and invaluable expertise have greatly enriched this volume. Without their participation and generosity, our collective effort would not have come to fruition.

The thematic scope of the articles featured in this volume is notably extensive, illustrating the diverse and interdisciplinary nature of contemporary Korean Studies. To facilitate a structured exploration, we have thoughtfully arranged the contributions into three comprehensive thematic categories – politics, culture and society, language and literature – each interpreted broadly to encompass a wide range of scholarly perspectives, methodologies, and analytical frameworks.

In the section dedicated to politics, Olga Barbasiewicz critically assesses the complex reconciliation process between Japan and South Korea, analyzing why Japan's formal expressions of remorse during the 20th century consistently fell short of South Korean expectations and discussing the lasting impact on bilateral relations. Grażyna Strnad provides an insightful analysis of inter-Korean diplomatic dialogues during President Moon Jae-In's tenure, examining key initiatives such as the 2018 Winter Olympics diplomacy, summit meetings, and their broader implications for peace and regional stability. Tomasz Wilczyński draws a compelling comparison between the democratization processes in Poland and South Korea in the late 1980s, exploring shared geopolitical influences, strategies of political transition, and the critical roles played by economic conditions and international pressures in shaping these transformative movements. Seungik Lee offers a vivid portrayal of everyday life under Park Chung-hee's authoritarian regime after the implementation of the 1972 Yushin Constitution,

highlighting how citizens survived through political repression and maintained social resilience during this challenging period.

In the section dedicated to culture and society, with a particularly extensive thematic range, Angelika Funek examines traditional Korean beliefs and rituals related to death, providing an extensive analysis of the folklore and customs guiding the deceased's transition into the afterlife. Dominik Rutana and Roman Husarski explore contemporary Korean Buddhist death rites, specifically the tradition of 't'aea yōngga ch'ōndojae' at Kudam Temple, addressing social attitudes toward miscarriage and unborn children. Anna Piwowska discusses how early 20th-century Korean painting functioned ideologically, contributing significantly to shaping national identity during challenging historical times. Renata Czekalska revisits selected locations described by Polish traveler Wacław Sieroszewski, evaluating their continued significance in contemporary Korean cultural memory and identity. Ewa Rynarzewska investigates the rise and cultural importance of the 'makkan show,' highlighting its pivotal role in 1930s Korean entertainment theater as a platform for social commentary and satire. Joanna Guzik addresses the cultural and societal shift in South Korea from a traditional preference for sons toward a modern, pragmatic preference for daughters, exploring the resulting demographic implications. Finally, HyeonCheol Kim and Jeongbae Oh present an insightful, interview-based study exploring the features of Korean culture that both attract and repel Japanese youth, illuminating the nuanced intercultural dynamics between the two nations.

Among the papers addressing linguistic issues, Anna Borowiak investigates recent developments in Korean morphology, focusing specifically on the phenomenon of clipping, which has emerged significantly under global linguistic influence and English language interactions. Borowiak analyzes how these linguistic processes illustrate broader shifts within the Korean language structure and reflect cultural adaptations to globalization. Paweł Kida provides an in-depth historical overview of the early Western scholars, mainly missionaries and diplomats, who laid foundational contributions to the field of Korean linguistics. His detailed examination focuses on their influential grammatical works and the broader significance of their early linguistic interactions with Korea. Vladislava Mazana assesses language policy and planning in contemporary South Korea, paying particular attention to its impact on regional dialects. Mazana discusses the ongoing challenges in dialect preservation, revitalization efforts, and how technological advancements influence current linguistic management practices. Blanka Ferklová examines the practical use and limitations of contemporary technological tools, including artificial intelligence and machine translation, within Korean Studies. She critically evaluates their effectiveness and reliability, particularly through case studies involving South and North Korean newspaper texts.

Literary works form another significant area of exploration. Kamila Koziol focuses on the influential early text *Samgang haengsil-to*, examining the evolving historical narratives surrounding the assassination of philosopher Chōng Mong-ju. By investigating different portrayals and reinterpretations over time, Koziol sheds light on the dynamic processes of collective remembrance and identity construction within

Korean historical consciousness. Anna Diniejko-Wąs traces the profound ideological and personal transformation of Kim Wŏnju, detailing her journey from a pioneering feminist author advocating radical social changes in early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Korea, to becoming a deeply spiritual Zen Buddhist nun. This remarkable shift provides insight into broader societal changes concerning gender roles and spiritual identities. Justyna Najbar-Miller provides a critical analysis of Han Kang's novels *Here Comes the Boy* and *I Do Not Bid Farewell*, exploring how these literary works represent the historical traumas of the Kwangju Uprising of 1980 and the Cheju Uprising of 1948. Her study emphasizes literature's unique capacity to articulate collective memory, trauma, and pathways toward reconciliation.

The editors wish to express their sincere gratitude to all contributors for their valuable insights, dedicated research, and cooperation in the preparation of this volume. It was our conscious goal to allow each author as much freedom as possible in articulating their views, scholarly positions, and individual convictions. Consequently, we adopted a flexible approach regarding the romanization of Korean words and terms, permitting variations that reflect authors' preferences. The romanization conventions used by individual authors are clearly indicated in footnotes provided separately for each article. Additionally, Korean personal names are presented following the traditional Korean convention – surname preceding given names – to maintain cultural authenticity. To ensure clarity and prevent confusion, all given names are fully spelled out.

Ultimately, with warm affection and deep respect, the editors dedicate this special issue of *Politeja* to Prof. dr hab. Romuald Huszcza, as we approach the jubilee celebration of the Professor's birthday in July 2025. This volume is offered as a heartfelt gift to a remarkable scholar whose unwavering dedication, generous support, and inspiring mentorship have profoundly shaped Korean Studies in Poland. It is our sincere hope that this modest gesture will convey our collective gratitude and appreciation for the enduring impact he has had on our academic community. Many of us involved in Korean Studies in Poland are personally indebted to Professor Romuald Huszcza for continuous encouragement, generous assistance, and enduring inspiration, which have greatly enriched both our professional careers and personal lives. This gratitude extends not only from scholars professionally rooted in Korean Studies but also from those who have entered the field from other academic paths, reflecting the broad and inclusive influence Professor Romuald Huszcza has had across diverse areas of intellectual inquiry and personal growth. Professor Huszcza's warmheartedness, openness, and readiness to support both established scholars and newcomers alike have made him not just a respected Mentor but a cherished Friend and guiding Presence in our community.

Renata Czekalska  
Ewa Rynarzewska  
Grażyna Strnad  
Paweł Kida