

Recent Books from South Korea – Feb 2023

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History

The Master from Mountains and Fields : Prose Writings of Hwadam, So Kyongdok / Isabelle Sancho
Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 2022
xvi, 246p.

Includes Index ; Bibliography
9780824893637

Korean Classics Library: Philosophy and Religion

1. Neo-Confucianism – Korea – Early works to 1800.

\$ 68.00 / HB
554gm.

The Master from Mountains and Fields is a fully annotated translation of the prose texts from the “collected works” of Sŏ Kyŏngdŏk (1489–1546), an influential Confucian scholar from the early Chosŏn period (1392–1910). A native of Songdo (also known as Kaesŏng) in present-day North Korea, Sŏ has loomed large in the Korean cultural imagination and appeared as an exceptional sage and popular hero in numerous tales, dramas, and films, yet his writings are little known outside the academic milieu.

Also called Master Hwadam, Sŏ embodied an archetype of the secluded scholar who remains hidden in “mountains and forests” to devote himself to his studies. Held in esteem in both South and North Korea today (a notable exception in contemporary studies on Chosŏn Neo-Confucianism), Sŏ and his ideas about Vital Energy influenced the great Korean Neo-Confucian debates of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries surrounding the psychophysiological origins of morality as well as various non-orthodox intellectual trends in the late Chosŏn. His thought is fundamentally rooted in the cosmology based on the exegesis of the *Book of Changes* and follows the teachings of various early Chinese Neo-Confucian thinkers; it presents a vivid example of the eclectic nature of ideas and intellectual trends coexisting within what is generically called Neo-Confucianism out of convenience.

This volume presents the first English translation of all prose writings attributed to Sŏ and most of the peritexts from his posthumously published collection *Hwadam chip*. It reflects the importance of literary compilations (*munjip*) in the intellectual history of Chosŏn and the complex process of the making of Confucian masters in Korea. Sŏ’s prose works are concise and diverse and offer a glimpse at an author who thwarts stereotyping; an introduction and annotations provide further context. The lengthy endnotes that accompany each text make this a useful handbook for anybody interested in Chosŏn Korea and Confucianism, from students in East Asian and Korean studies to specialists in literary Chinese (*hanmun*) or East Asian intellectual history.

<http://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=842620>

Literature

Blood and Bones Vol.1. / Yang Seok-II; (Translator) Adhy Kim
Irvine, CA, USA: Seoul Selection U.S.A. Inc., 2022
480p.

Korean Diaspora Literature Series
9781624121494
\$ 22.99 / PB
630gm.

<http://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=842621>

Blood and Bones Vol.2. / Yang Seok-II; (Translator) Adhy Kim
Seoul / Irvine, CA, USA: Seoul Selection U.S.A. Inc., 2022
460p.

Korean Diaspora Literature Series
9781624121500
\$ 22.99 / PB
610gm.

Tale of the violent and twisted life of a flawed man.

It is Osaka in the 1930s. Kim Shunpei, a migrant from Jeju Islands, works at a fish cake factory and is widely feared for his physical strength and brutality. He moves through life in the only way he knows how: by terrorizing those around him.

A bestseller in Japan, this harrowing, kaleidoscopic novel portrays the violent and eventful life of a flawed man modelled after the author's own father.

Winner of the Yamamoto Shugoro Prize.

<http://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=842623>

Death of a Crow / Kim Sok-Pom; (Translator) Christina Yi
Seoul / Irvine, CA, USA: Seoul Selection U.S.A. Inc., 2022
496p.

9781624121470
Korean Diaspora Literature Series
\$ 24.00 / PB
650gm.

1st Collection of Short Stories on Jeju April 3 Incident Published in 1957 as a Way of Informing the World.

Kim Sok-pom has devoted his writing career to raising awareness of the Jeju April 3 Incident through literature. Death of a Crow (1957) marked the beginning of his campaign as his leading work and the one that earned him recognition. By writing about the uprising, he delved into history and human problems. Chronicling a variety of lives in the event was also how he gained understanding of this world.

"Bak-seobang, Jailer," "Death of a Crow," and "Gwandeokjeong," a series of closely intertwined works in this book, depict Jeju amid the massacre that lasted for about a year from summer 1948; "Death of a Crow" and "Gwandeokjeong" are about the same person. Though "Feces and Freedom" and "A Tale of a False Dream" did not deal with the uprising directly, they show why the author studied the massacre and his opinions of it.

<http://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=842624>

A Mark of Red Honor / Jang Young-Jin (Translator) John H. Cha
Seoul: Mulmangcho Books, 2022
336p.
9791187726258
\$ 17.99/ PB
454gm.

Jang Young-jin is a Korean writer, born in North Korea. His sensibilities and views on life transcend the political division that has persisted in the Korean Peninsula for the past several decades. His debut novel A Mark of Red Honor is a testimony to his all-encompassing humanity, and is based on his life journey that begins in North Korea and continues in South Korea. – John H. Cha
<http://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=842649>

Nabi T'aryong and Other Stories / Lee Yangji (Translators) Cindi Textor & Lee Soo Mi.
Seoul/ Irvine, CA, USA: Seoul Selection U.S.A. Inc., 2022
430p.
Korean Diaspora Literature Series
9781624121517
\$ 22.99 / PB
578gm.

An Ethnic Korean Woman in Japan Struggles to Find Her Identity.
When she utters "our country", which does she mean, Korea or Japan? Lee Yang-ji's short stories "Yuhi" and "Nabi T'aryong" portray the agony and inner conflict of Zainichi (ethnic Koreans residing in Japan) who find themselves considered strangers both in Korea and Japan. "Yuhi" features the eponymous protagonist going to Korea in search of her roots as does Aiko, the main character of "Nabi T'aryong". Both women grow frustrated after realizing that they are considered marginal persons who can be neither Korean nor Japanese. The two works vividly show traces of the writer's agonizing search for her identity and feelings of ambivalence as a second-generation Zainichi. Through these autobiographical stories, she uses her personal problems to brilliantly explore the realm of ethnic identity and language.
<http://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=842653>

Chunhyang / Jin Renshun (Translator); Allan H. Barr
Seoul / Irvine, CA, USA: Seoul Selection U.S.A. Inc., 2022
336p.
Korean Diaspora Literature Series
9781624121456
\$ 19.99 / PB
450gm.

Central to the Korean pansori musical storytelling tradition is Chunhyangga, an eighteenth-century love story involving the romance between Yi Mongryong, heir to a noble family, and Chunhyang, daughter of a courtesan. In Chunhyang, novelist Jin Renshun reimagines that romance, challenging its premises and taking it in a radically new direction. Chunhyang is the story of a mother and a daughter's quests for independence and self-worth in a world where women are too often confined and devalued. Beautifully told, blending lyricism with humor, Chunhyang introduces us to a memorable cast of characters—from powerful officials to orphaned children — and carries us toward a dramatic and poignant conclusion.
<http://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=842657>

Chunja's Nanjing / Kim Hyeok (Translator) Stella Kim
Seoul / Irvine, CA, USA: Seoul Selection U.S.A. Inc., 2022
396p.
Korean Diaspora Literature Series
9781624121463
\$ 21.99 / PB
450gm.

Chunja's Nanjing explores in depth the tragic events of the 1930s dubbed the "Tragedy in Deer Valley" in Jiandao, a historical border region along the north bank of the Tumen River in China's Jilin Province with many ethnic Koreans, in the beginning of the novel and the "Rape of Nanjing" in Nanjing, China, at the end. The novel also discusses the plight of women forced into sexual slavery by the Japanese imperial army before and after World War II. Though a novel, this book intertwines the truth and pain of the past to create a story based on historical materials such as statements from Chinese women forced into sexual slavery by Japan, archival documents about the relevant incidents, and a variety of reports.

<http://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=842684>

The Trial of Pak Tal and Other Stories / Kim Tal-Su (Translator) Christopher D. Scott
Seoul /Irvine, CA, USA: Seoul Selection U.S.A. Inc., 2022
336p.
Korean Diaspora Literature Series
9781624121487
\$ 20.99 / PB
454gm.

Kim Tal-su (1920–1997) was one of the first and leading writers of the Korean Diaspora in 20th-century Japan. The stories in this collection include the critically acclaimed novella "The Trial of Pak Tal" and cover a range of periods and topics like the struggles of Koreans in wartime Japan, the Korean War and its aftermath, and the layers of Japanese and Korean history on the island of Tsushima. Full of the writer's unique blend of humor and pathos, these stories offer a moving and multifaceted look at how Koreans fought to find their voice and identity in Japanese culture and society.

<http://www.marymartin.com/web?pid=842685>
