

A Word from the Editor

The *Seoul Journal of Japanese Studies* aims to expose Japan-related research published in Korea to the global academic society. Since its first publication in 2015, the *SJJS* has drawn much positive attention from Japan specialists around the world. I am happy to learn that the *SJJS* is making a meaningful contribution to the development of Japanese studies.

Every volume of the *SJJS* features special issues. This volume presents the Japanese economy in the zero-growth era as its focus topic. The low-growth Japanese economy after the bursting of Japan's economic bubble was regarded as the new normal until Abenomics turned a deflationary economy into regrowth. After a long period of high growth during the postwar period, the low growth economy had established itself as a natural feature, resulting in the Japanese naming the era the "lost two decades." Though Abenomics is leading to a new stage, it is the proper time for us to look back and analyze what the low growth period was like.

We have invited two Japanese authors this time. Takeda Haruhito argues that, unlike the perception that the economic growth of the past can never be sustained, the lost two decades have been a time of trials and errors in which Japanese citizens attempted to maintain their quality of life. Ishii Kanji takes the same period as a time of failure, when efforts for innovation and changing long-term employment practices did not bear fruit. Yeo Inman claims that Abenomics, which tackled the low-growth problem from a new angle, produced positive results by reversing deflation in a short period of time. However, he remains critical to the possibility of changing aggregate demand.

This volume also introduces rare research that one can hardly find in Japanese studies circles in other countries. Kim Taejin links Herbert Spencer's concept of organism to the introduction of the representative system in modern Japan. Oh Eun Jeong empirically investigates the records of Korean atomic bomb survivors, a long-silenced issue, even in Korea. She emphasizes the socio-cultural embeddedness of the problem, particularly within the interpersonal networks of family and local communities. Lee Hyoung-sik also reveals rare primary materials: postwar compilations of the history of governing Korea by

the Japanese ruling elites during the colonial period. These historical archives are the collective memories of colonizers that had rarely been introduced to the general public. The final article by Jung Ji Hee also shows that the ruling LDP actively reinterpreted the existing regulatory framework to advance the logic of the neo-conservative agenda at NHK.

The *SJJS* may ring a new alarm bell for the Japanese studies community around the world by finding and revealing rarely touched upon materials in Western or Japanese academia. I hope every reader enjoys this volume, as they did in the past.

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