

# Recognizing and Accomplishing the Double Mission: A Short History of Studies on Japanese Politics in Korea

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**Abstract** | This paper examines the characteristics of studies on Japanese politics in South Korea, one of the leading fields of Japanese studies in the country, by focusing on their achievements and limits. Commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the Korea-Japan Normalization Treaty, this paper addresses the problems and missions of Japanese political studies in Korea to enable further development of the field. Through reviewing the history of the field and analyzing the activities of the Korea Association for Contemporary Japanese Studies, this paper illustrates that “establishing Korea’s own research methodology” and “achieving global validity” have been the double missions to be accomplished simultaneously. After Korea’s liberation, the American perspective emerged as a new “universal” approach to Japanese studies, creating a new tension with Korean scholars’ pursuit of critical Japanese studies. Since the late 1960s, while beginning to consider Japan as a model, Korean scholars came to recognize a gap between the model and the reality. The research achievements that began in the 1980s and radically increased in the 1990s inherited and then overcame this legacy.

**Keywords** | Japanese Studies, double mission, Korea Association for Contemporary Japanese Studies, *Korean Journal for Japanese Studies*

## Introduction

The research environment of Japanese studies in South Korea (hereafter Korea) has matured remarkably in the past twenty years, as reflected by the quantitative increase in the number of Japan-related disciplines. As of 2010, 105 out of 179 four-year universities in Korea have Japan-related departments, and approximately 20,570 students are currently enrolled in them (Jo Gwan-ja 2013, 43-45). In particular, a new Japan-related major program was established in 2012 in the undergraduate department of Asian Languages and Civilizations in the College

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of Humanities at Seoul National University (SNU).<sup>1</sup> In addition to major programs, the development of university research institutes and academic associations is also remarkable. Currently ten Japan-related university research institutes regularly hold academic conferences and issue scholarly journals. Among these ten, the Institute for Japanese Studies (IJS) at SNU and the Global Institute for Japanese Studies at Korea University (formerly known as the Japan Center at Korea University) have been participating in a major research project called the Humanities Korea (HK) Project, which has been supported by National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF) since 2007. In addition, since the establishment of the Korea Association of Japanology (*Han'guk Ilbon-hakhoe*, KAJ) and the Korea Association for Contemporary Japanese Studies (*Hyöndae Ilbon-hakhoe*, KACJS) in 1973 and 1978, respectively, the number of Japan-related associations has been gradually growing. Currently, twenty such associations issue Korea Citation Index-registered journals. As indicated by both the increase and the institutionalization of Japan-related departments and research institutions in universities, Japan-related researchers have secured positions in major research institutions.

The sharp increase in the number of both PhD degree recipients and researchers in Japan-related studies also reflects the quantitative growth of Japanese studies over the last twenty years. According to the search results from the National Assembly Library database (accessed January 7, 2016), a total of sixty-seven researchers have received their PhD degrees in the field of Japanese politics from domestic universities since Korea's liberation in 1945. Within these sixty-seven researchers, forty-six (nearly seventy percent) have received their PhD degrees in the past twenty years, between 1995 and 2015.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, 3,378 books were found under the keywords "Japanese politics," and 2,736 of these (roughly eighty percent) were published after 1995. Altogether, approximately seventy percent of research in this field was accomplished during the last twenty years in Korea.

In this sense, Japanese studies in Korea has achieved rapid quantitative development since the mid-1990s. This seems to be a very exceptional case because no other country has experienced such a dramatic increase in the

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1. SNU, formerly Kyöngsöng (Keijö) Imperial University founded under the Japanese colonial rule, made a fresh start as a national university in 1946. While fancying itself as the leading higher education institution in Korea, SNU opened many departments except for a Japan-related major. It is often ascribable to the prevailing anti-Japanese sentiment of the Korean people and the fact that the University of Tokyo has not established a Korea-related major.

2. This tendency is also reflected in the increase in the number of Japanese politics-related researchers as a whole (Chin Ch'ang-su 2007, 15; Yi Myön-u 2007, 34).

number of Japan-related researchers.<sup>3</sup> Commensurate with such quantitative growth, the field of Japanese studies in Korea now faces the need to reflect critically on its own history. In order to undertake such a qualitative approach, it is necessary to look back on previous Japanese studies, critically evaluate their achievements, and accurately recognize their problems and limitations. This paper, therefore, attempts to examine the characteristics of Japanese studies in Korea since Korea's liberation in 1945. By focusing particularly on studies on Japanese politics, which has been leading Korea's Japanese studies, this paper will discuss its achievements, limitations, and challenges.

This paper draws upon numerous studies that present valuable reviews and analyses of Japanese studies in Korea. This field has always been under social pressure to self-examine the necessity of its research and its social contributions, as well as to self-censor the research contents.<sup>4</sup> This implies that Japanese studies in Korea has an obligation to provide and accomplish more than any other field of area studies. Accordingly, a comprehensive examination of Japanese studies in Korea would be a useful subject of analysis because it can help us understand a sense of mission and social obligation for the times and outline new research objectives. Building on these premises, I will divide this paper into two parts. In the first part, I will provide a general overview and review of the history of Japanese studies. In section two, I will review studies on contemporary Japanese politics in Korea by comprehensively examining its developments, limitations, and main missions during different time periods.

In the second part, I will analyze the characteristics and trends of studies on Japanese politics in Korea, focusing on the KACJS and its academic journal, the *Korean Journal for Japanese Studies* (*Ilbon yŏngu nonchŏng*, *KJJS*). There are several reasons for choosing the KACJS and its academic journal as a subject of my study. First, the KACJS is the only research community that contains almost all Korean researchers of modern Japanese politics. Moreover, as a pioneer in the

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3. Even in Thailand and Vietnam, where traditionally researchers had greater interest in Japan than other Southeast Asian countries, there has been no rapid growth in the number of Japan-related researchers despite increased public interest (Iwai 2013, 9; Ho Hoang Hoa 2013, 39-42). Moreover, based on my experience in several meetings regarding international comparison in Japanese studies, there has been no dramatic increase in the number of Japan-related researchers in China either. In addition, according to Kim Sangjoon and Suh Seung-won (2010, 367-68), Japanese studies was declining in the field of international politics in Euro-American countries in the mid-1990s. Therefore, the sharp increase in the number of Japanese studies in Korea since the mid-1990s itself deserves to be a separate research subject.

4. Due to the colonial experience under Japanese rule, Koreans often found it unpleasant to take Japan as a research subject. The resulting reluctance to study Japan was also a bi-product of anti-Japanese sentiments. For these reasons, studies on Japanese politics in Korea had to first answer the question, "Why Japan, of all things?"

field of Japanese studies, the KACJS has developed by sharing awareness of the problem between old and new generations through smooth and active communication. For these reasons, the analysis of the KACJS alone will suffice to achieve the main goal of this paper—examining the characteristics of Japanese studies in Korea.

## The Research History of Japanese Studies since the 1990s

In the mid-1990s, when Japanese studies in Korea started to enter an era of rapid quantitative development, Kim Chang-gwŏn (1998, 46-51) reviewed Japanese studies at the time. Introducing and analyzing six existing studies, Kim offered the following conclusions.<sup>5</sup> First, he divided the period from Korea's liberation in 1945 to 1998 into three stages: The initial stage was the period between the liberation in 1945 and the normalization of diplomatic relations between Korea and Japan in 1965; the second stage was from 1965 to 1980; and the third stage was from 1980 to 1998. He explained that Japanese studies had been an underdeveloped academic field in Korea due to its poor internal and external research conditions but at the third stage it started to make progress. However, the author pointed out that despite quantitative development, Japanese studies still faced problems with the biased structure of the research topics and their overemphasis on practicality. Based upon such observation, he then analyzed 1,444 Japan-related theses and books published between January 1991 and June 1996.

Kim Chang-gwŏn (1998, 68-71) described the first six years of the 1990s as the “period of rapid growth” in Japanese studies. According to him, the rising scholars' enthusiasm for studies on Japan and general public interest were the main catalysts for this rapid growth. In addition, the increase in the number of researchers and research institutes, and the Korean government's subsidies to area studies programs were contributing factors as well. Social science, especially the field of political science, was leading the boom of Japanese area studies in Korea during that period. A remark from his analysis is that many studies during the period concentrated on Japan itself rather than on “relations” or “comparison.” Moreover, most studies at that time were introduction of foreign research or general survey books rather than original works that would offer

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5. Kim Chang-gwŏn's paper is based on a research report of the Institute for Area Studies (Chiyŏk Chonghap Yŏnguso), SNU published in 1996. The six existing studies that Kim analyzed in his paper include: Chungang Taehakkyo Chiyŏk Yŏnguso (1998), Kil Sŭng-hŭm (1990), Kim Yongdeok (1993), Han Sang-il et al. (1993), Pak Yong-gu (1994), and Chŏe Sang-yong et al. (1994).

Korea's own perspective. Last but not least, Kim described how claims of a "Korea's own perspective" and an "objective perspective" were in direct opposition with each other. The author argued that most studies in the 1990s were tilted toward the latter. In this regard, we saw Japanese studies during the period gradually disentangling itself from a unique Korean perspective, which was based on the distinct historical experience between Korea and Japan. In other words, Japanese studies in Korea was moving toward a more balanced perspective for the first time by actively introducing foreign studies and conducting new research based on these studies. Thus one can say that a "double mission" in Japanese studies in Korea emerged. More specifically, Korean researchers in Japanese studies during this period gradually realized two important missions: "establishing Korea's own research methodology" and "securing its global validity," or studying "Japan as a model (the Japanese model approach)" and "Japan in international relations (the international relations approach)."<sup>6</sup> The Japanese model approach aims at separating Japanese studies in Korea from colonial memories. Nevertheless, as the approach considers the peculiar needs of Korea in studying Japan, it can be understood as a version of the effort to establish Korea's own research methodology. On the other hand, the international relations approach lies within the scope of the effort to secure global validity for Korea's own research methodology.

According to Kim Yu-hyang's (2000) review of Japanese studies in the 1990s, post-1990s Japanese political studies became a subject of scientific analysis with the advent of new generations. At the same time, it began to show a "diversification of specialty areas" by encompassing a large number of specialists in various fields. However, even after the 1990s, Japanese studies in Korea still simply followed and emulated those conducted in Japan and the US. Accordingly, the main goal of Japanese studies was to establish research on Japan from the Korean perspective. With regard to such a goal, she offered an optimistic forecast by positively evaluating the ongoing trend that research based on primary materials and fieldwork was becoming routine. She claimed that Japanese political studies in Korea would soon be able to stand shoulder to shoulder with Japanese and American academia (Kim Yu-hyang 2000, 8).

As Park Cheol Hee's (2010) review of the history of the field suggests, studies on Japanese politics in Korea experienced the greatest boom between the mid-

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6. The Japanese model approach considers Japan as a realistic development model for Korea or as a target or standard of comparison. The international relations approach regards Japan as one manifestation of a particular type of nation that exists in the international order. The former tends to stress the particularity of Japan, and the latter the commonality of Japan with other nations.

1990s and the mid-2000s.<sup>7</sup> The boom was closely related to Japan's economic success. At that time, Japanese economic success intrigued many graduate students who were seeking topics for their theses. Furthermore, Japan attracted a large number of researchers by providing research funding and scholarships enabled by its powerful economy. In addition, driven by the mantra of globalization, financial support for area studies in Korea increased at that time as well. Japanese studies was a priority area for financial support amongst all area studies programs because the Japanese model was deemed the most successful. These various circumstances created the boom in Japanese studies in Korea at that time. Many third-generation scholars in the field of Japanese studies appeared during this period and shared ambivalent attitudes toward Japan. On the one hand, they unconsciously inherited the anti-Japanese sentiment from Korean society. Yet at the same time, they paid attention to Japan as a role model. Korean scholars in Japanese studies at that time held relatively less prejudice and bias against Japan than previous researchers in Korea. This was mainly driven by their active participation in the process of Korea's democratic transition since the 1980s. This helped them acquire elevated confidence about their own political and economic system and consequently allowed them to more critically analyze Japan. As a result of their elevated confidence, the third-generation Japan scholars achieved qualitative development by inheriting the traditional research topics, expanding the research horizon, synchronizing research agendas with the global academic community, and searching for new research areas (Park Cheol Hee 2010, 315-25).

In addition to the analysis of the third generation, Park Cheol Hee (2010, 326-27) examined the meanings of the advent of the fourth-generation Japan specialists. According to him, the fourth-generation Japan scholars received interdisciplinary training in the course of pursuing their degrees and are inclined to put Japan in a wider regional and global context. He argued that along with the advent of the fourth generation, Japanese studies faces a new challenge, which is "understanding Japanese society from an internationally-comparative perspective and a globally-valid theoretical framework" and simultaneously "developing Korea's own perspective." This challenge indeed

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7. After the liberation, a total of sixty-six doctoral theses on Japanese politics came out in Korea. The following lists the annual doctoral theses on Japanese politics: two in 1975, two in 1980, two in 1983, one in 1986, one in 1988, one in 1989, one in 1991, four in 1992, one in 1993, six in 1994, five in 1995, three in 1996, one in 1998, one in 2000, seven in 2001, one in 2002, five in 2003, one in 2004, one in 2005, four in 2006, four in 2007, three in 2008, one in 2009, three in 2010, two in 2011, two in 2013, one in 2014. With 2001 as the peak, the number of doctoral theses on Japanese politics increased from the mid-1990s to the late-2000s. Since then, it has been in decline (Park Cheol Hee 2010, 312).

deserves to be called the “double mission” of Japanese studies in Korea.

Meanwhile, according to Kim Sangjoon and Suh Seung-won (2010, 383-84), who reviewed Korea’s Japanese studies in the context of international politics, “Japanese international relations studies” (JIRS) in Korea, which remained largely limited until the 1990s, has achieved rapid development since the end of the Cold War. Nevertheless, “realistic nationalism” and “anti-Japanese sentiments” still persist in the intellectual worlds of JIRS. Moreover, JIRS in Korea has another problem: It has maintained inseparable relations with real-world political events. By pointing out these problems, Kim and Suh argued that JIRS scholars must free themselves from the historical legacies, secure relative autonomy of the intellectual community from politics, and develop indigenous theoretical models different from the dominant historical approach. They contended that the first step towards these goals is to overcome “the principle of existential determination.” To put it differently, JIRS in Korea needs to overcome the view that overemphasizes the legacy of Japanese colonialism and at the same time develop an indigenous Korean theory or model. In this light, one can say that they also raised a “double mission” in the field of Japanese studies.

Jo Gwan-ja’s (2013, 51-58) analysis of Japanese studies also indicates the dual reality that Japanese studies in Korea is facing, although her scope is not confined to politics. According to Jo, Japanese studies in Korea has become more closely intertwined with Korean studies, with numerous attempts to reinterpret modern Korean history from a global perspective since the 2000s. As a result, Japanese studies has progressed from “particularity” to “general validity.” Furthermore, she claimed that as Japanese society moves from an era of quantitative “growth” into one of a “mature” society, Japanese studies in Korea has the potential to move toward “maturity” as well. In this sense, her analysis also seems to imply that Japanese studies in Korea must make an effort to accomplish the “double mission” in this period of transition from quantitative development to qualitative maturity.

To sum up the trends of Japanese political studies in Korea, the field seems to be already entering the stage of “global validity,” moving away from a “distinctively Korean perspective.” In this paper, studies based on a “distinctively Korean perspective” include all studies that overemphasize the legacy of Japanese colonialism or view Japan as a model from the perspective of economic growth after Korea’s liberation (Japan as a model approach). On the other hand, studies pursuing “global validity” refer to the studies that approach Japan based on a global perspective while still linking it with Korea’s own unique context. In this regard, the double mission of incorporating “distinctively Korean experiences” with “global validity” is the main task that Japanese studies in

Korea must accomplish in the near future.

## Social Scientists in Korea: Building a Japanese Research Community

The following sections will examine the characteristics and potential of Japanese studies in Korea, with a particular focus on the activities of the KACJS, a leader of Japanese studies in Korea. The first institution for Japan-related studies was the KAJ, established in 1973. Although it is the largest Japan-related association and operates on a national scale, its main research foci are in the fields of language and literature. This association has only recently begun to apply social scientific methodology to Japanese studies. In contrast to the KAJ, the KACJS was established to conduct Japanese studies as a social scientific field of area studies from the beginning.

According to Hahn Bae-ho (2008, 232-33), the Korean Research Group for Contemporary Japanese Studies (*Hyöndae Ilbon Yön'guhoe*, KRGCJS), the predecessor of the KACJS, was established in September 1978. The ten founding members of the association gathered at an old Korean restaurant named *Kyöngnyang* in Anguk-dong, Seoul. Hahn, a political science and international relations professor at Korea University at that time, was elected president. Other main founding members' names and positions are as follows: Han Sang-il, political science and international relations professor at Kookmin University, and Kim Yong Seo, political science and international relations professor at Ewha Womans University, were elected as directors of general affairs; Ö Su-yöng and Yu Kün-ho were elected as directors of the research department; and Kil Süng-hüm and Pak Ch'ung-sök were elected as directors of the editorial department. According to Han Sang-il, the director of general affairs, the association was established in 1977 but did not start to officially use the KRGCJS as its title until 1978. The first president, Hahn Bae-ho, received his PhD degree at Princeton University and returned to Korea in 1970. In 1971, he became a professor at Korea University, as well as a research director at the Asiatic Research Institute of Korea University. These positions inspired his interests in Japanese studies.

Hahn had two major goals toward Japanese studies in Korea. The first one was to study Japan as a field of comparative politics and the other was to contribute to the bilateral relationship between Korea and Japan. At that time, apathy toward Japan was widespread in Korean academia. Most scholars considered Japanese studies unnecessary and useless. Even when scholars

discussed Japanese affairs, they mostly made simple comments on current topics or revealed their anti-Japanese sentiments. Under these circumstances, there was an urgent need to alter the direction of Japanese studies from a nonacademic approach to an academic and social scientific one. The founding members established the KRGCJS with this task in mind. By launching the *KJJS* in November 1979, the association began their activities, focusing on research designs and publications.

In addition to founding the academic journal, the members of the research group published the first textbook of Japanese politics in Korea, *Japanese politics (Ilbon chöngch'iron)*, in 1981. Meanwhile, the second, third, and fourth issues of the *KJJS* were published under the themes of “National Sovereignty Theory and Peoples’ Rights Theory (*Kukkwöllon kwa minkwöllon*),” “A Study on the Prolonged Rule of the Liberal Democratic Party (*Chamindang chöngkwön üi changgi chipkwön yön’gu*),” and “An Anatomy of Japanese Policymaking Process (*Ilbon üi chöngch’aek kyölichöng üi haebu*)” in 1981, 1982, and 1984, respectively. For the first time, proper course materials on Japanese politics became available in Korea.

At the time the KRGCJS was achieving their sought-after goals of publishing academic journals and textbooks, area studies in Korea were facing a serious crisis. Although the pro-democracy movement in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe brought short-term attention to area studies in the late 1980s, studies on the Communist bloc gradually faded away following the collapse of Soviet Union in 1991. This eventually placed the whole field of area studies in a difficult situation. However, the KRGCJS was not affected by these circumstances and could continue its research activities because it had not relied on outside funds since its establishment (Hahn Bae-ho 2008, 246).

Ironically, the KRGCJS’ crisis rose from internal struggles. In the mid-1990s, the core members of the KRGCJS were not able to concentrate on the association’s activities because they assumed important positions at their respective universities. It was the third-generation scholars who saved the KRGCJS from this crisis. Numerous foreign-trained third-generation scholars, who studied abroad during the late 1970s and 1980s, joined the KRGCJS as new members when they returned to Korea. In particular, most Japan-trained scholars, who continually held research meetings named “Japan Study” since their time in Japan, became new members of the KRGCJS. Eventually, by systematically integrating “Japan study” with the KRGCJS, the association was reborn under the name of the KACJS. Kim Ho-söp, one of the third-generation scholars who joined the association during this period, became the fourteenth president of the KACJS in 2006. His inauguration represented a transition of

generations in the KACJS. During his term as the president, he registered the KACJS as a corporation aggregate and secured funds for establishing the corporation.

## The *KJJS*: Designing Japanese Studies

The following sections closely examine the contents of the *KJJS*. From its first issue in 1979 to its twelfth issue in 2000, the journal published special issues and outlined its overall direction and purpose with a preface written by the president or publishing director. However, since the thirteenth issue was published in the summer of 2001, the journal became semiannual and adopted a peer review system, due to the rapid increase in the number of members since the mid-1990s. Along with the rapid membership growth, the association needed to change its closed system based on private membership into a more open system so that general researchers could join. In addition, the KACJS also needed to qualify for research funding from the NRF because the association was no longer able to rely on support from private organizations or donations. Although the quality of individual articles improved since the adoption of a peer review system, the journal became unable to set a unified direction. In this section, I will discuss the early years of the *KJJS* when it was published as a special issue. In doing so, I will analyze the early circumstances of modern Japanese studies in Korea and the difficulties that the members of the association faced under such conditions.

The first issue of the *KJJS*, which was published in 1979, clearly reveals Japan's unique image in Korea. From the perspective of ordinary Koreans, on the one hand, Japan had made Korea go through the painful experience of colonization. On the other hand, Japan had a close political, economic, and military relationship with Korea. Moreover, Japan was seen as a country that became the world's second-biggest economy through rapid economic development since its defeat in World War II. At that time of the first *KJJS* issue, Japanese studies in Korea was extending their academic and political breadth as a discipline within area studies by benefiting from public interest in the Soviet Union and China. However, at the same time, Koreans usually spoke "as though they knew everything about Japan." In order to raise awareness of this intellectual climate and "guide the younger generation to have a serious and objective attitude" toward Japan, the founding members published the first issue of the journal (Hahn Bae-ho 1979, i).

Seven members (Kil Sŭng-hŭm, Ŏ Su-yŏng, Kim Yong-sŏ, Sin Hŭi-sŏk, Han

Sang-il, Chang Ŭl-byŏng, and Yi Chŏng-bok) published articles in the first issue. The contents of their articles centered on different topics, such as postwar politics, modern political and diplomatic history, comparative politics, and political communication. Although the articles lacked an overall unity, they were on the cutting edge of Korea's Japanese studies at that time. The authors received their PhD degrees at the University of Michigan (Kil Sŭng-hŭm and Ŏ Su-yŏng), Claremont Graduate University (Han Sang-il), Washington University (Yi Chŏng-bok), University of Tokyo (Kim Yong-sŏ and Sin Hŭi-sŏk), and Sungkyunkwan University (Chang Ŭl-byŏng). According to the list of members at the end of the first issue, the number of members totaled twenty-six.

The second issue of the journal was a special edition. Under the theme of "National Sovereignty Theory and Peoples' Rights Theory" the authors analyzed how Western democracy took root in Japanese society in the process of modernization by interacting with Japan's traditional and indigenous factors (Yu Kŭn-ho 1981). The theme captured the main concern of the Korean political situation at the time. Ten members and three non-members, one Korean researcher and two Japanese researchers, wrote for the second issue. The third issue, which was also a special edition, covered "A Study on the Prolonged Rule of the Liberal Democratic Party." According to the issue, although "the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) is the longest ruling political party in any liberal democratic country," it "has never transformed into a dictatorship or autocratic party." Moreover, "the political structure of the party is operated in a democratic way." These characteristics of the LDP captured the attention of Koreans due to Korea's political situation in the early 1980s (Ŏ Su-yŏng 1982, 3). Similar to the second issue, the third issue was published with the purpose of analyzing the present and future of "Korean democracy" by studying Japanese politics. This issue also considered whether Japanese democracy was a suitable model for Korea. When the third issue was published, the association had a total of twenty-four members.

In 1984, five years after the foundation of the academic journal, the atmosphere surrounding Japanese studies in Korea still seemed to remain the same. In the preface of the fourth issue of the *KJJS*, president Yang Ho-min (1984, 5-7) explained the significance of the publication. The year 1984 marked the twentieth anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between Korea and Japan. Yang celebrated the anniversary, claiming that the Korean and Japanese governments had achieved a friendly relationship and diplomatic cooperation. In military terms, both governments came to recognize the important role that the other played on their own national security. However, mutual understanding between the public in the two countries "still remained a

utopian goal that was not easily attainable.” Based on this perspective, Yang argued that Japanese studies in Korea was still in its embryonic stage and that an accurate understanding of modern Japan was essential. He explained that steady efforts and considerable time of Japan specialists are necessary in order to thoroughly investigate Japanese problems from Korea’s own perspectives, based on scientific analysis, “rather than offering comments on current events or commonsensical knowledge of Japan.” In order to meet these goals, the fourth issue featured five articles about policy-making processes for domestic affairs, diplomacy, and defense. The total number of association members was still twenty-four at that time.

With the publication of the fifth issue of the *KJJS* in April 1986, mutual exchange and cooperation between Korean and Japanese researchers were undertaken for the first time. The fifth issue had ten articles on Korean foreign policy toward Japan and Japanese foreign policy toward Korea, including relations between Korea-Japan, North Korea-Japan, and Korea-US-Japan. Japanese researchers, such as Masumi Junnosuke, Sakamoto Yoshikazu, Fukushima Shingo, Watanabe Toshio, and Irokawa Daikichi, contributed to the issue. The fifth issue was the result of a closed-door academic meeting held under the theme “A Retrospect of the Past Forty Years of Korea-Japan Relations and Prospects for the Future” (*Han’guk kwa Ilbon: chǒn’hu 40-nyǒn ūi hoego wa chǒn’man’g*). In the fifth issue, phrases such as “clearing up past affairs” and “setting a direction for future-oriented bilateral relations,” appeared often. Moreover, the fifth issue mentioned that it was time to “discuss bilateral relations based on the postwar international order” because “the Asia-Pacific region had been the birthplace of the biggest change in the formation of the postwar international order” (O Ki-p’yǒng 1986, 4). In doing so, the fifth issue emphasized that the most important agreement between the countries is “the commitment to the value of liberal democracy,” and conveyed the importance of such recognition to its readers. While the two countries differed in their ways to pursue liberal democracy, each country’s distinct national interests have defended and justified the difference. Accordingly, in order to improve bilateral relations, people must realize that “they need to overcome the tendency to measure one country’s national interests by the other country’s standards and create common criteria.” To this end, Korea had to admit Japan’s political constraints caused by its parliamentary democratic system that emphasized openness based on pluralistic values. At the same time, Japan needed to deeply understand the political pressure that Korea faced due to national division. These circumstances and discussions provided the backdrop for the special theme of the fifth issue (O Ki-p’yǒng 1986, 3-6). At the time, the association still

had twenty-four members in total.

In 1989, discourses on Japan served as a mirror to Korean politics. The sixth issue of the *KJJS* mainly dealt with “The Progressives (*kakushin seiryoku*) in Contemporary Japan.” The members believed that understanding the progressives in Japan would be helpful to understand “the revolutionary change” of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe from a global context and to offer theoretic insights into social forces demanding progressive change and reform in the domestic context. From this perspective, they analyzed the Japanese progressives, labor movement, and the activities of the Japan Socialist Party and the Japan Communist Party, including their foreign policy (Yi Sang-hŭi 1989, 3-4). As of 1989, membership increased to thirty five. This signaled the emergence of the third-generation scholars.

### **The Third-Generation Scholars: Attempting a Paradigm Shift from the “Japan as a Model” Approach**

In the 1990s, discourses on Japan as an object of scientific analysis rather than a role model, emerged for the first time. The seventh issue of the *KJJS*, published in October 1991, shows signs of this change. In the preface, Pak Ch'ung-sŏk (1991, 3-4) explained the main theme and the purpose of the issue. According to Pak, the issue was written based on the argument that “Japan is cautiously attempting to make a leap forward as a military and political power by using its economic power as a stepping stone.” In particular, he described that the common perception of Japan as a “perpetrator” or a “loser” of World War II was gradually fading away, due to Japan’s rapid economic growth. He argued that it was necessary to analyze Japan’s economic miracle because it was the main factor that changed the world’s attitude toward Japan. More specifically, the significance of the seventh issue rested in its attempt to analyze Japan both politically and economically. Membership increased to forty one by the seventh issue. Since then, the journal began to include third-generation scholars, who studied in either the US or Japan, such as Kim Ho-sŏp (University of Michigan), Kim Chang-gwŏn (University of Tsukuba), and Kim Sŏng-chŏl and Yŏm Chae-ho (Stanford University). Following them, many scholars who graduated from a diverse range of universities joined as well. The universities from which new members graduated included Harvard University, University of Michigan, University of California, Berkeley, University of California, Los Angeles, Yale University, University of Chicago, Oxford University, University of Tokyo, and Hitotsubashi University. Because some of the new members had majored in

sociology or economics, interdisciplinary studies became possible.

The eighth issue of the journal, which was published in December 1993, basically followed the trends of the seventh issue. At that time, a coalition government had been established in Japan and the prolonged rule of the LDP collapsed. Moreover, Japan was seeking to change as its own unique characteristics had led to political, economic, and social problems. As a consequence of these circumstances, the articles published in the eighth issue mainly focused on Japan's prospects for the twenty-first century (Kil Sŭng-hŭm 1993, iii-iv). At that time, the membership count of the association increased to forty eight. Since 1995, which marked the thirtieth anniversary of the normalization of Korea-Japan relations, there was a growing need for building a new amicable bilateral relationship between Korea and Japan. To reflect this need as well as the increased membership, the association changed its title from the KRGCJS to the KACJS. The ninth and tenth issues of the journal reflected the changed attitudes and structure of the association. The ninth issue was published in 1997 under the theme "Korea-Japan Relations in the Twenty-First Century." The tenth issue was published in 1998 as a collection of papers presented at the academic conference "Leadership of East Asia in the Twenty-First Century" (*21-segi Tongasia ũi ridösip*), which was held in April 1997. The tenth issue was published in English for the first time. This issue attempted to analyze the Korea-Japan relationship in the broader context of the Asia-Pacific region. The authors of the tenth issue include Donald C. Hellmann, Chalmers Johnson, Fukui Haruhiro, Yi Chŏng-bok, Tani Satomi, Ichimura Shin'ichi, Kim Sŏng-chŏl, and Yŏm Chae-ho.

The third-generation scholars played a key role in publishing the eleventh issue of the journal in 1999. Apart from Kim Young-jak and Han Sang-Il, all the contributors to the eleventh issue were third-generation scholars. As a large number of Korean scholars studying in foreign countries returned to Korea, social scientific studies on Japan became available in Korea. This change allowed Hahn Bae-ho, the first president of the association, to look back on the activities of the association in the preface to the eleventh issue, entitled "The Reality of Academic Work and Politics: The Conflict and Coexistence between the Two Worlds" (*Hangmun kwa chŏngch'i hyönsil: kaltŭnghamyö kongjonhanŭn tu segye*). According to the preface, Hahn became interested in Japan when he was "exposed to Japanese studies while studying in the US." At that time, he was excited by the many associations for Asian studies in the US that conducted research on China and Japan as subjects of social scientific analysis based on objective methodology. In addition, in the preface, Hahn mentioned that in Europe and the US scholars and journalists conduct research on Japan, while in Korea, this same research is done by "literary critics with a literary imagination."

It seems that Hahn wrote this statement with Lee O-Young in mind, the author of *The Compact Culture: The Japanese Tradition of "Smaller Is Better"* (*Ch'ukso chihyanghyōng ūi Ilbonin*). Furthermore, Hahn Bae-ho (1999, 21-24) emphasized that studying Japanese politics is significant because it provides theoretic insights for understanding and analyzing Korean politics. In doing so, he described the relationship between academic research and real politics as "a strained relation of coexistence."

The eleventh issue of the journal featured Kim Young-jak's article "Japanese Studies in Korea after the World War II: Retrospects and Prospects of Japanese Studies in the Field of Politics and Diplomacy" (*Che2-ch'a Segye Taejōn ihu Han'guk esōi Ilbon yōngu tonghyang: chōngch'i oegyo punya rŭl chungsim ūro pon hoego wa chōnmang*). His article provided a comprehensive review of Japanese studies in Korea during the post-World War II period. In the article, Kim analyzed a large number of studies on Japanese politics and diplomacy, military and security, and Korea-Japan relations, which were published between 1945 and June 1999. More specifically, he reviewed 320 books, 380 Master's and Doctor's theses, forty articles in the *Korean Political Science Review*, forty-three articles in the *Korean Journal of International Relations*, and seventy-four articles in the *KJJS*. Kim Young-jak (1999, 39) divided the fifty-four-year period from 1945 to 1999 into four stages: the first stage is the "blank period" or "anti-conception period" in 1945-65; the second stage is the "cradle period" or "period of infancy" in 1966-80; the third period is the "childhood period," or "period of growth" in 1981-90; and the fourth stage is the "youth period" in 1991-99.

More than half of all studies on Japan were published during the nine years of the fourth stage. Approximately sixty percent of the books, sixty-three percent of the Master's and Doctor's theses, and forty-five percent of the academic articles were filed or published in the fourth stage (Kim Young-jak 1999, 43).

In terms of research themes, there were three important characteristics. First, although Korea-Japan relations was the most popular research subject in the initial stage, Japanese politics became the most popular topic in the fourth stage. In the case of books, almost seventy percent of books dealt with Korea-Japan relations in the initial stage, but only about fourteen percent in the fourth stage. On the other hand, about twenty-six percent of books focused on Japanese politics in the initial stage, but approximately forty-seven percent in the fourth period. These dramatic changes were also reflected in the research subjects of Master's and Doctor's theses and academic articles. The second characteristic was that a growing number of studies were focusing on military and security issues among various fields in Japanese politics. The third characteristic is that

apart from military and security issues, the subjects of interest in Japanese politics are gradually diversifying (Kim Young-jak 1999, 47-48).

Regarding the characteristics of each stage, it was impossible to conduct empirical research in the first period due to the poor academic environment and strong anti-Japanese sentiments. Because anti-Japanese sentiments continued to remain strong in the second stage, researchers still found it difficult to conduct research on Japan from a balanced perspective. However, through the experience of learning Japanese studies as a field of area studies in either Japan or the US during the 1960s, some Korean scholars began to proclaim the need for Japanese studies in Korea. One example of this is the founding of the KACJS and the *KJJS*. In the third stage, Korean scholars who received PhD degrees in Japanese studies from foreign universities started to play a central role. Furthermore, the establishment of Japan-related research institutes in universities and other research institutions provided the conditions for Japanese studies to progress during the third stage. In addition to this, in the third stage, scholars challenged social taboo by conducting research on specific issues related to Japan by using social scientific methodology for the first time. According to Kim Young-jak (1999, 50-63), Korean scholars at that time clearly understood the need for partnership with Japan. At the same time, they gained confidence in the growth of the Korean economy since the normalization between Korea and Japan in 1965. Consequently, Korean scholars in the third stage were able to start analyzing Japan from a relatively balanced standpoint by putting aside past memories. In the fourth stage, the number of Japan-related studies increased more rapidly, as the conditions for Japanese studies matured. At that time, there were several important external changes, such as growing interest in Northeast Asia after the end of the Cold War, Japan's increasing global status and extended role in international society, and signs of change in Japanese politics and society. In addition, structural transformation in Korea-Japan relations began to occur in the fourth stage, driven by the establishment of a civil government in Korea and the collapse of the prolonged LDP rule in Japan. The vision of Japan as a "normal country," which became prominent during this period, drew keen attention in Korea. Under these circumstances, Japanese studies in Korea achieved qualitative growth along with quantitative development through strong academic research in the fourth stage.

Based on his analysis, Kim Young-jak (1999, 63-72) suggested four main tasks for Japanese studies in Korea. First, he assessed that there was still a need to broaden and deepen Japanese studies in terms of both quantity and quality. This assessment was predicated upon his perception that the number of studies on Japanese politics was still insufficient compared to other fields of political

science. The second task was to integrate and systematize Japanese studies in Korea. Kim argued that, in order to further develop Japanese studies, there was a need to create a “big picture” of Japanese politics by combining both systematic and issue-oriented studies on Japan. The third task was to initiate activity for research institutions and academic associations, as well as to secure financial support. Most importantly, the last task was to create a new paradigm of Japanese studies in Korea in order to contribute to building an amicable relationship between the two countries. Traditionally, there were three major paradigms in Japanese studies in Korea: “a negative paradigm,” “a positive paradigm,” and “a mixed paradigm.” The mixed paradigm acknowledges the effectiveness of the Japanese model, but at the same time points out its limitations and problems. Kim claimed that it was time to move away from these three traditional paradigms, each of which reflected the Korean mentality toward Japan in which the animosity against and the admiration for Japan coexisted. Kim argued that it was imperative to create a new paradigm from a perspective of regional partnership and open nationalism.

The above argument was not only a personal assessment of Kim Young-jak, but also reflected the perspective shared by Korean researchers shortly before the twenty-first century. In consideration of the aforementioned four main tasks of Japanese studies in Korea, the twelfth issue of the *KJJS* was published in 2000 under the theme “The Reform of the Japanese Diet in the Twenty-First Century” (*21-segi Ilbon ūi kukhoe kaehyök*). In November 2001, Pae Song-dong became the president of the KACJS and designed a book entitled “State Reform in Japan in a Transitional Period” (*Chōnhwan’gi Ilbon ūi kukka kaehyök*). In preparation for the publication, Pae Song-dong held three workshops and one international academic conference in August 1999. The twelfth issue was the collection of the papers presented in these academic events. Along with several junior scholars, thirteen Korean researchers and four Japanese researchers, Yamaguchi Jirō, Fukui Haruhiro, Mabuchi Masaru, and Tsujinaka Yutaka, contributed to this issue. Among the thirteen Korean contributors, apart from Pae Song-dong and Yun Chōng-sök, who co-wrote the introduction, and Kim Young-jak, who wrote the conclusion, all others were third-generation scholars.

## Japanese Studies as a Profession: Keeping the Double Mission in Mind

Beginning with the thirteenth issue, which was published in the summer of 2001 under President Yi Chōng-bok, the *KJJS* adopted a new system. Up until

the twelfth issue, each issue was published biennially, and there had been no peer-review system. However, from the thirteenth issue, the KACJS started to publish its journal twice a year and adopted the peer-review system. These two changes were made mainly to increase the opportunity for scholars to publish their articles and to simultaneously improve the journal's academic standard. Due to the changes in the system, the design of the journal's cover and title page changed, as did the composition of authors. Apart from Yi Chŏng-bok who wrote the preface as one of the founding members, all other seven contributors (six wrote articles and one wrote a book review) were third-generation scholars. Among the contributors, three received their PhD degrees in the US, and four received theirs in Japan. The main topics of their articles were postwar Japanese political history, contemporary politics, the politics of financial reform, welfare policy, and China-Japan relations. In his article, Yi Chŏng-bok (2001, 1-3) explained the three different generations of the KACJS. According to Yi, the first-generation scholars of the association received their education during the colonial period and did not major in Japanese studies. The second-generation scholars, who were born in the 1940s, either received their PhD degrees in Japan-related studies in the US or had experience studying abroad in Japan, but they did not receive any education in Japanese. Lastly, the third-generation scholars, who were born in the 1950s and 1960s, received their PhD degrees in Japanese studies in Korea, Japan, or the US. In contrast to the previous-generation scholars, who did not necessarily major in Japanese studies, the third-generation scholars were Japan specialists. In this regard, one can conclude that "Japanese studies as a profession" became possible only after the third-generation scholars took a central role. In the fourteenth issue, seven articles, one essay, and one book review were published.

In the fifteenth issue, published in summer 2002, Han Sang-il offered a full review of Japanese studies in the KACJS entitled "'Japanese Studies' at the KACJS: Retrospects and Prospects" (*Hyŏndae Ilbon Yŏn'guhoe ūi 'Ilbon yŏn'gu': hoego wa chŏnmang*). According to Han Sang-il (2002), the association started with a realistic yet future-oriented outlook. To be more specific, the association intended to contribute to the reinvention of Korea-Japan relations through a balanced understanding of Japan and analysis of the country's political and social changes, rather than merely following the prevailing tendency in Korean society at the time that focused on criticizing Japanese colonial rule. In short, the founding members of the association had two goals in mind: "intellectual work" and "objective study" on Japan (Han Sang-il 2002, 3).

Moreover, Han Sang-il (2002, 4-5) provided detailed information about the early members of the association. According to him, there were twenty-six

members involved in the first issue of the *KJJS*. Among the twenty-six members, twelve were in their thirties, eleven were in their forties, and three were in their fifties. Members who majored in political science were the overwhelming majority. Twenty-one members majored in political science, three in economics, one in law, and one in sociology. Five received their PhD degrees in Korea, thirteen in the US, seven in Japan, and one in England. Among the twenty-six members, only nine wrote their PhD dissertations on Japan. Han Sang-il described four major characteristics of early members of the association. The first characteristic was that most members at that time were in their thirties or forties, and thus were born around the tenth anniversary of Korea's liberation from Japanese rule in 1945. The second characteristic was that a large number of these members were educated in the US. When the members in their thirties or forties studied in the US throughout the late 1960s and 1970s, area studies was emerging as one of the fields of social science in the US. Accordingly, the members who studied in the US during that period could take advantage of this new development. The third characteristic was that only small number of the members who studied abroad wrote their PhD dissertations on Japan. In this regard, Japanese studies was new to most of the founding members of the KACJS. The final characteristic was that the majority of these members majored in political science.

By 1999, the number of members had increased to 106, and the number of researchers specializing in Japanese studies also grew. Han Sang-il (2002, 13-21) presented new tasks for Japanese studies in Korea as it evolved along with the increased number of researchers. According to Han, Korean scholars needed to curb the disproportionate interests in politics, pursue social scientific studies, reflect deeply on the lack of interest in history and thought, and integrate history and literature into the fields of social science, thereby designing new Korea-Japan relations beyond the framework of the nation-state. In addition, Han argued that in order to gain appreciation from the global academic community, scholars must conduct research projects on Japan from Korea's own perspective by modeling their work on the Princeton University series, "Studies in the Modernization of Japan," a milestone in the history of Japanese studies in the US. Han posed these tasks to the upcoming generations.

In his article "A Proposal for Strengthening the Status of the KACJS" (*Hakhoe ūi wisang kanghwa rūl wihan cheōn*), which was published in the seventeenth issue in summer of 2003, Kim Young-jak (2003, 2-8) presented similar opinions. Assessing that the KACJS had fallen into a serious crisis, Kim analyzed the fundamental problems and suggested several potential solutions. According to Kim, the number of Japan scholars and the number of available spots for them

in universities have increased. Furthermore, various research projects on Japan had been actively pursued, driven by increasing financial support for Japanese studies. He explained that such changes were positive for Japanese studies in Korea because they reflected the improvement of the research environment and the development of infrastructure for the field. However, Kim pointed out that these changes also had negative effects because they shifted the research focus in the association away from KACJS-related activities to activities funded by the government, foundations, and other external groups, thus lowering the participation rate of the association-related activities. Kim argued that in order to overcome this dilemma, the KACJS must carry out research projects centered on the association itself and improve the quality of its academic journals by gaining support and funding from the Korean government.

### **Recent Japanese Studies: Changing from “Japan as a Model” to “Japan in International Relations”**

As explained above, the *KJJS* has stopped publishing special issues once it shifted to the peer-review system in the thirteenth issue. Since then, university research institutes have led joint research projects among Japan-related researchers instead of the KACJS. After the system change, the *KJJS* began publishing articles that responded very promptly to the changing political situations in Japan. As a result, the articles published in the journal show the trends of research interests among Korean scholars. Table 1 shows the trends in the research subjects published in the *KJJS* from 2005 to 2014.

First, studies on domestic politics were evenly distributed across various fields. Overall, the number of studies on domestic politics peaked in 2009 and 2010, and then returned to pre-2009 levels. Second, interest in international politics is generally bigger than in domestic politics, with the exception of 2012. Although the number of studies on international politics had been gradually decreasing during 2005-10, it seems to show signs of a revival in 2011. Thirdly, in 2011, the number of studies on Korea-Japan relations was much higher than that of studies on other areas.

These trends demonstrate several characteristics of studies on contemporary Japanese politics. First of all, researchers' focus is slightly shifting from Japanese domestic politics to Japan's foreign policy or Japan's role in international politics. In addition, the number of studies on Korea-Japan relations increased dramatically in 2011 and again in 2014. The sharp increase in the number of studies on the bilateral relations in 2011 and 2014 reflects the regime changes in

**Table 1.** Research Subjects of Articles Published in the *KJJS*, 2005-14 (Unit: the number of articles)

Research Subjects		2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Domestic Politics	Political History, History of Thought	3	1	2	5	3	3	3	3	2	1
	Domestic Politics	0	4	3	4	3	4	2	4	2	6
	Economic Policy	3	4	1	3	6	5	3	3	1	1
	Sociocultural Policy	0	1	8	3	2	3	1	2	1	2
	Administration, Local Government	2	4	2	0	3	1	0	1	0	0
	Other Policies	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	0
	Total	8	14	16	15	17	17	10	13	8	10
International Politics	Foreign Relations	10	8	11	10	8	5	4	2	6	6
	Korea-Japan Relations	7	7	2	4	1	1	13	1	4	6
	Total	17	15	13	14	9	6	17	3	10	12
Others	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	
Total	26	30	30	29	26	23	27	17	19	24	

Source | *KJJS*, 2005-14.

Japan in 2009 and 2012, respectively. This shows that Korean scholars pay attention to how Japanese foreign policy toward Korea shifts according to the changing political environment in Japan.

Nevertheless, the fact that analyses of Japanese domestic politics immediately follow these changes to foreign policy seems to reflect the trend that Korean scholars attempted to understand Japan's intrinsic politics as well. From this trend, we can also see that researchers of contemporary Japanese politics became aware of the double mission. However, when referring to the double mission here, one should pay attention to the fact that the focus generally moves away from Japanese domestic politics toward Japanese foreign policy, as explained above. In other words, between the two distinctive approaches of the

double mission, “Japan as a model” and “Japan in international relations,” the significance of the former has been in relative decline in Korean academia. Accordingly, Korean researchers on contemporary Japanese politics try to redefine the double mission from the perspective of “Japan in international relations,” an attempt to understand Japan in the context of international politics.

## Conclusion

This paper briefly examined the history of Japanese studies in Korea, focusing on the field of politics. It was a history of overcoming the skeptical attitudes towards Japanese studies, a result of Korean resentment against Japan’s colonial rule. In the beginning, due to the colonial experience, a “fundamentalist” criticism of Japan, lacking any thorough or empirical analysis, unquestioningly received credit in Korean society. Consequently, Japanese studies always had to find an excuse to criticize Japan. The harder researchers tried to offer a balanced explanation and a positive assessment, the stronger criticism they had to express as a prerequisite, just like *fumie* (a ritual for verifying ideology). Therefore, a balanced understanding of Japan was deemed justifiable only when it met the subjective need, thus there always had to be a conscious understanding of purpose. These issues provided the background for the double mission of Japanese studies in Korea.

Ironically, Japanese studies in Korea became aware of the double mission only when the subjective need was no longer a precondition in 1990s. At that time, area studies in Korea was being promoted under the slogan of “globalization.” Also at that time, studies on Japanese politics started to grow rapidly. Accordingly, the balanced understanding of Japan was reframed as a new mission of the field for securing global validity and became mainstream. Immediately responding to this change, a group of Japan scholars in the KACJS played a leading role in improving the quality of Japanese studies in Korea by drawing upon the accumulated results of their previous studies. After that, Japanese studies in Korea entered an era of qualitative maturity, while moving away from quantitative growth.

Yet, there are also problems caused by the paradox of securing global validity. Considering Japan in an international relations context is important to bring perspective to Korea-Japan relations. Yet, paradoxically, regarding Japan’s relations with other countries except Korea as the norm makes Korea-Japan relations appear unique. In these circumstances, I argue, the more important

task for studies on Japanese politics in Korea is to achieve global validity by conducting research from broader and more international perspectives, instead of returning to the “uniqueness” of Korea-Japan relations.

There are several issues that Japanese studies in Korea must address. First of all, it is necessary to understand the changing perspectives on regions themselves, which have appeared in the course of area studies’ global development. The impetus for area studies in the nineteenth century was policy concerns for imperial management and imperial geopolitics. In the second half of the twentieth century, the US and the USSR-led area studies emerged. Area studies in the post-cold war environment of the twenty-first century is conducted by local people as part of their effort to understand themselves. Accordingly, the focus of area studies has shifted from policy studies to social science, then to humanities such as literature, history, and philosophy. To put it differently, the developments are related to the processes in which the focus of area studies has changed from application to explanation, then to comprehension.

The emerging interest in “East Asia as method” is based on the changing expectations for area studies, which I mentioned above.<sup>8</sup> Japanese studies in Korea has been tasked with understanding Japan in the context of the transnational Asia-Pacific region and to conduct transdisciplinary studies. In this sense, Japanese studies in Korea seems to face another double mission. The first task of the new double mission is to take a balanced position and make Korea a primary producer of Japanese studies that differ from studies in Japan. The second mission is to integrate the network of Japan specialists in Korea with the network of other Asian scholars, including Japan scholars in Japan. The main goal of this double mission is to position Korea as the originator of Japan-related research while disseminating it within the networks of Asian scholars. It aims to use Japanese studies as a means of communication within East Asia. In other words, through Japanese studies, scholars must supplement the content in the academic discourse on East Asia, which fluctuates between the two opposing claims, “there is no East Asian uniqueness,” and “East Asian uniqueness is real.” At this point, political science can play a significant role in preventing the latest postmodern area studies from becoming too abstract by keeping it within the boundary of policy studies. In this sense, “Japan as method” can take a leading role in contributing to the stability and prosperity of East Asia in the twenty-first century. “Japan as method” will also pave the way for accomplishing the double mission of Japanese studies in Korea by overcoming “Japan as a model” approach and “Japan in international relations” approach simultaneously.

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8. I borrowed insights from Takeuchi (1961), Sun Ge (2005), and Chen Kuan-Hsing (2010).

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