

Building K-12 Global Competencies Program

In Partnership with
Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS)

Presented by:
Immanuel Kim, PhD & Nobuyuki Okumura



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Rockville, Maryland

East Asia National
Resource Center

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY



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Speaker Profile



Immanuel Kim, Ph.D.

Immanuel Kim is Korea Foundation and Kim-Renaud Associate Professor of Korean Literature and Culture Studies. Prior to working at the George Washington University, he was Assistant Professor in the Department of Asian and Asian American Studies at Binghamton University (SUNY). Dr. Kim received his Ph.D. from the University of California, Riverside. He is an authority on North Korean literature and film and is the author of a recent book on North Korean literature, *Rewriting Revolution: Women, Sexuality, and Memory in North Korean Fiction* (University of Hawaii Press, 2018).



Nobuyuki Okumura

Nobuyuki Okumura is currently a Fulbright visiting scholar at the Sigur Center for Asian Studies. He is also a professor at Musashi University in Tokyo. He was originally a news producer/reporter at TV Asahi mainly covering politics and diplomacy. He has been actively covering various issues in journalism since he started his academic career as a professor at Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto in 2005. His research topics range from journalism storytelling to telecommunication policy and he has been contributing various web news sites. He holds an M.A. degree from Sophia University in International Relations. He was also awarded the Fulbright Journalist Program award in 2002-03 and conducted research at SAIS, Johns Hopkins University.

Immanuel Kim

Weaponizing Memory: Shifts in North Korean Literature

Abstract

The Korean War, or the Victorious Fatherland Liberation War as North Korea calls it, was arguably the most traumatic moment in modern Korean history. The DPRK insists that the Americans started the war and proudly asserts its victory over the Americans at the end of the war. Despite the air of triumph in national discourse, North Korean literature has been accentuating the harrowing experience of the war, keeping the nation in “a constant state of emergency.” Literature has shown that the historical event puts the country in the state of emergency and requires a redefined devotional connection with the leader. Such publication of war stories in North Korea is the ideological trajectory that creates, unites, and solidifies collective memory to persist in the present. However, starting from the 1980s, literary representations of the war shift from a unifying state discourse to individual memory that questions or even undermines the prevailing political ideology. In fact, war in literature is not the only theme that questions, disrupts, and subverts state discourse. Family problems, marital disputes, workplace problems, and gender inequality are but a few other themes that emerged in the 1980s to show a more dynamic literary landscape in North Korea. In the end, North Korea literature goes beyond a simple formulaic plotline of characters revering the leaders, Party, and state ideology.

Weaponizing Memory: Shifts in North Korean Literature

Immanuel Kim

George Washington University





Collective Memory

Monument to the Victorious Fatherland Liberation War









Entrance to the central hall

North Korea's Literary Context and Tropes

- KAPF members and influence
- Marxist-Leninist class struggle
- Colonial suffering
- Korean War trauma
- Collective power
- April 15, 1967 Plenary Meeting changed everything

- Constant state of emergency

- No counter-narratives
- No counter-historiographies
- Collective Memory: Kim Il Sung's revolutionary past

Immortal History/ Immortal Leadership

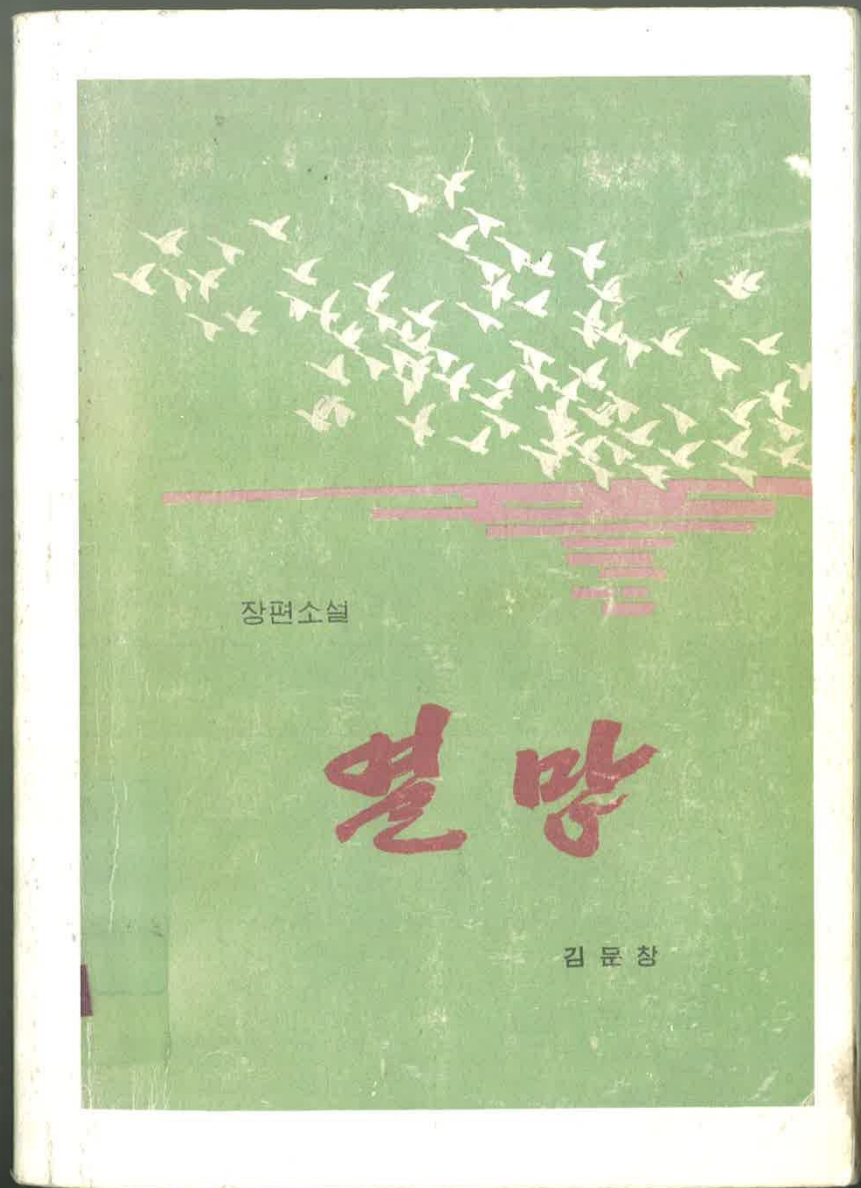




장편소설



장편



장편소설

별망

김문창

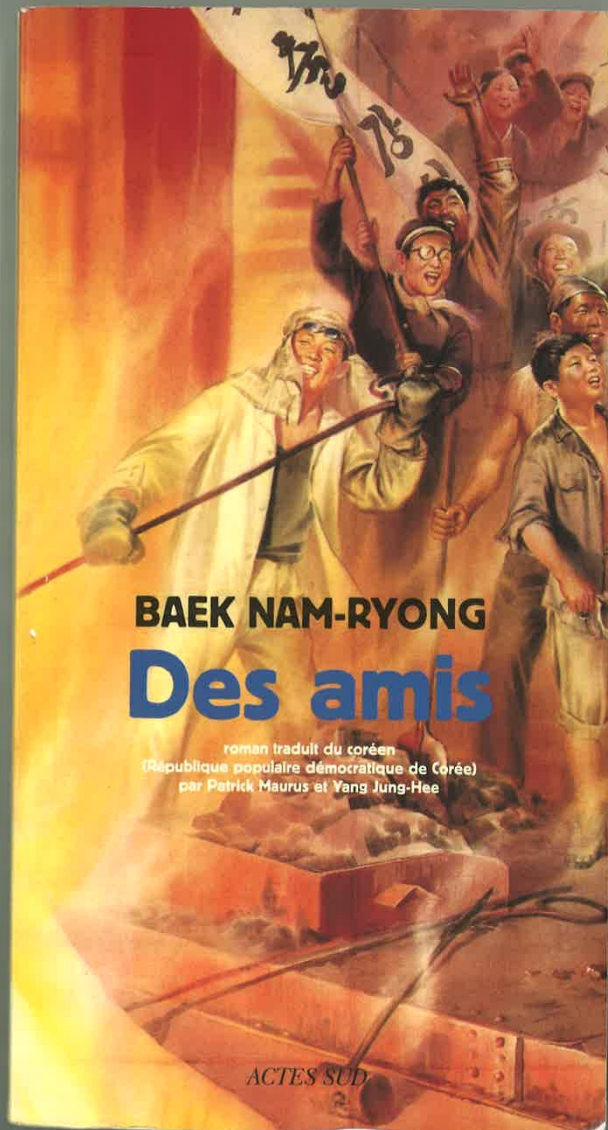
중편소설

생활의 연



김

문예출판사 1984



BAEK NAM-RYONG Des amis

roman traduit du coréen
(République populaire démocratique de Corée)
par Patrick Maurus et Yang Jung-Hee

ACTES SUD

벗

백 남 룡

문예출판사
1988

My Family's Problem



Nobuyuki Okumura

Sumo Diplomacy for President Trump How it was Contrived and Reported Analysis of the U.S. – Japan Summit in May, 2019

Abstract

The presentation discusses how Sumo Wrestling, one of the world-famous cultural heritage of Japan has been perceived by people and how Japanese government has been taking advantage of the spectator sport as powerful diplomatic tool, introducing how the President Trump's visit to Ryogoku Kokugikan stadium in Tokyo in May as a part of the U.S - Japan summit meeting was reported and described on social media as a gateway.

The video clip released by the White House and went viral from the Potus Twitter account was a good example of political advertisement, that it looks as if everything in the stadium was prepared and presented for the President Trump's visit. However, the reality is the President watched the final hour of a day-long games, and although the crowd in the stadium greeted him with smartphones at first when the President arrived, they did not care very much about the VIP's, they were rather frustrated as Secret Service blocked the sight from their seats and all the vending machines for beverages in the stadium were also sealed owing to security.

There was also a reason for Prime Minister to promote the news of Sumo watch, for it somewhat conceals another important issue, the shocking report publicized several days before the President's visit that the Japanese government would not be able to maintain the pension system in the near future, which it kept on saying maintaining more than a century. Still, Sumo makes good pictures to make foreigners recognize Japan with a sort of exoticism and that is the reason why Japanese government has been clinging to demonstrate Japanese culture. However, Sumo has been losing popularity among Japanese in these twenty years, because of complicated ticket sales system as well as high-priced seats. The strict tradition of men-only on the Dohyo ring represents backwardness, and various scandals of close relations with Yakuza, Japanese mafia and violent bullying in Sumo stables made the matter worse. Despite those circumstance, Japanese government still provides concessions of financial aid and tax exemption.

Prime Minister Abe was reported adamantly pressured the Sumo Association for unprecedented arrangement for the President Trump. He demanded making special sofa seats on the first floor of arena, although there is a Loyal Box where former French President Chirac frequently used. Another extraordinary request was to let the President hold trophy presentation opportunity on the Dohyo ring. Japanese government arranged a new Presidential Trophy to accommodate the President.

Such government railroading raised the public sentiment that somewhat sacred tradition had been violated and despite ambivalence, those feelings were shared among media and also on social media. The issue was furthermore highly politicized. And some scholars and journalists started discussions revisiting the value of Sumo culture for Japanese society at present that could people to decide whether even the President of the United States should follow it without exception.

The discussion moreover extended if Sumo business should be promoted and protected by the government in terms of the social cost to preserve diplomatic device, whether the costs of all the Japanese government's efforts to fete the President meet the diplomatic goals which Abe administration was unwilling to clarify, that meant unclear.

The lecture pointed out that on some of the main issues, such as free trade negotiation and dealing with threats of nuclear missiles from North Korea, the outcome was not announced officially at the press conferences, and the news came out from the President's Tweets instead. That might be a symbol of transformation of the relations between politics and media, in the era of internet, smartphone and social media.