**Hyung Il Pai**

Hyung Il Pai, professor of East Asian Languages and Cultural Studies at the University of California at Santa Barbara, passed away May 28, 2018, after a long battle with cancer. Her husband Alex Jose, her brother Hyung Min Pai, her dog Yoda, and other family members and friends were at her side. Everyone who knew her agrees that she left us far too soon. She brought light into whatever room she entered. And she still had much to contribute to the field of Korean Studies through both her teaching and her writing.

I have known Professor Pai since she was an undergraduate at Sogang University in Seoul. She was a student in a class I taught there in 1980 on how Korean history and culture were portrayed in English-language writing. She was, of course, the best student in that class. I remember her from that time as both bright and enthusiastic about learning. She was a joy to teach. She went on to graduate with a degree in History from Sogang in 1981. By that time I had returned to the US and lost touch with her until 1992, when we ended up on the same panel at a conference in Hawaii. When she saw me there, she addressed me as “Father,” since she assumed that a white guy teaching at Sogang in 1980 must have been a Jesuit priest!

By the time we met again at that conference, she had gone on to earn a Ph.D. in Anthropology at Harvard in 1989 and had already begun teaching at UCSB and working on her first book, a multi-faceted study of the role of the Han dynasty Korean-peninsula outpost of Lelang in the Korean national imagination. *Constructing “Korean” Origins: A Critical Review of Archaeology, Historiography, and Racial Myth in Korean State-Formation Theories* appeared in 2000 and immediately sparked controversies. She used her expertise in archaeology to demonstrate that not only was Lelang a Han dynasty settlement, something nationalists in Korea deny, it served as a stimulus to state formation on and around the peninsula, which angered nationalists even more since they insist that there were states in Korea long before the Han dynasty had emerged in China. Furthermore, drawing on her training in physical anthropology, she challenged the nationalists’ insistence the peoples living in and around the peninsula two thousand and more years ago constituted a Korean “race,” despite the lack of evidence that they formed a single biologically-defined ethnic group.

Undeterred by the criticism her first book received from nationalists, Dr. Pai then moved almost two thousand years ahead into the twentieth century. Refusing to be restricted by the straitjacket of ethnocentric ideology, she drew on her ability to work with Japanese-language materials to analyze the role Japan played in the construction of modern Korea’s cultural identity. She had already foreshadowed this new research interest by co-editing *Nationalism and the Construction of Korean Identity* with Timothy R. Tangherlini in 1998. In 2013 she published *Heritage Management in Korea and Japan: The Politics of Antiquity and Identity.* Again showcasing her ability to draw from a wide variety of sources (including postcards and guidebooks for tourists), she laid out an argument that Japanese scholars searching for the continental roots of Japanese civilization and Japanese tourists looking for an “exotic” experience close at hand together stimulated and shaped the modern Korean vision of Korea’s cultural heritage. She traced the roots of South Korea’s current cultural heritage management policy back to the colonial period and showed that many of the buildings and other objects Koreans today point to with pride as evidence of the creativity of their ancestors were first identified as cultural treasures by the Japanese.

Professor Pai had planned to continue her exploration of Korea’s modern construction of its cultural identity. There was much she had learned on her Fulbright, Japan Foundation, and Korea Foundation research fellowships that she was not able to include in her two books and numerous articles. She had many more writing projects on her “to-do” list. It is a real loss for the field of Korean Studies that she left us too soon. It is even more of a loss for her family, her colleagues, and her many friends who will miss not just her insights into Korean culture and history but her smile and her sense of humor as well.

Here are just some of the publications of Hyung Il Pai:

Monographs:

2000 *Constructing “Korean” Origins: A Critical Review of Archaeology, Historiography, and Racial Myth in Korean State-Formation Theories* Harvard University Asia Center

2013 *Heritage Management in Korea and Japan: The Politics of Antiquity and Identity* University of Washington Press

Co-edited book:

1998 With Timothy R. Tangerlini. *Nationalism and the Construction of Korean Identity* Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley.

Scholarly articles:

2016 “Visualizing Seoul’s Landscapes: Percival Lowell and the Cultural Biography of Ethnographic Images,” *Journal of Korean Studies* 21:2, 355-384.

2013 “Staging “Koreana” for the Tourist Gaze: Imperialist Nostalgia and the Circulation of Picture Postcards” *History of Photography* 37:3, 301-311.

2011 “Navigating Modern Keijō: The Typology of Reference Guides and City Landmarks” *Sŏulhak yŏn’gu* (Seoul Studies) 8, 1-40.

2001 “The Creation of National Treasures and Monuments: The 1916 Japanese Laws on the Preservation of Korean Remains and Relics and their Colonial Legacies” *Korean Studies* 25:1, 72-5.

1992 "Culture Contact and Culture Change: The Han Dynasty Commandery of Lelang and

the Korean Peninsula." *World Archaeology,* 23:3, 306-319.

Book Chapter:

2011 “Travel Guides to the Empire: The Production of Tourist Images in Colonial Korea” in Laurel Kendall, ed. *Consuming Korean Tradition in Early and Late Modernity* University of Hawaii Press. 67-87.

Respectfully submitted by Don Baker, University of British Columbia