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(eds.)

Space and Location in the
Circulation of Knowledge
(1400-1800)

Korea and Beyond

Preface

Circulation of Knowledge as Theme and Method in Korean Studies

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In the course of the last decade the theme of knowledge, be it knowledge production, knowledge transfer or epistemic changes, has gained ever more prominence in the (historical and contemporary) study of cultures – a development that closely mirrors the increase of interdisciplinary work in this field and the ensuing willingness to no longer study societal sub-systems like literature, arts, academia, and politics in isolation, but to look at the larger systems of knowledge that inform them all, albeit in different ways. This volume of essays is one of the outcomes of a research project which, being part of this wave, sees its task in testing, and therefore temporarily privileging, the heuristic metaphor of *knowledge circulation*, as it encapsulates a number of useful ideas and notions:

- It helps to conceive of knowledge as constantly in motion. Knowledge can be realized as such only when it is communicated, be it linguistically or by putting it to use; in a fundamental sense, knowledge can be stored, but not immobilized.
- The constant transfer thus posited as a defining element of knowledge is visualized by this metaphor as a non-linear, process in which the roles of donor and receiver of knowledge are constantly in flux and potentially interchangeable.
- Although it is not expressly part of the linguistic image, the idea of knowledge being inevitably transformed in the process of circulation has become part and parcel of the metaphor's academic usage. Speaking of the circulation of knowledge thus entices the study of the intricate processes by which social communities constantly re-formulate their intellectual underpinnings in the act of integrating or rejecting new items of knowledge.

Under the paradigm of circulation, the production, consumption and dissemination of knowledge are looked at as a single, close-knit process which invariably leads to dynamic transformations of both objects of knowledge and their (social and intellectual) context, and which unfolds both within and beyond circumscribed social communities. Using the metaphor of knowledge circulation as a heuristic tool in the study of culture therefore tends to lead to certain methodological

preferences. The most conspicuous among these is the tendency towards flexibility of scale: Knowledge circulation can be perceived as taking place between states and nations, but also between individuals; it is best studied when asking questions pertaining to both levels, as well as those in between. Research along these lines, while not leading towards disregarding national or state borders, strengthens resistance against allowing the latter to define or even limit one's scope of inquiry. These methodological pre-configurations seem to us particularly useful for the study of Korea, both past and present.

Putting these assumptions to the test, the Korean Studies institutes at Ruhr Universität Bochum and Freie Universität Berlin have jointly conducted a research project titled "Circulation of Knowledge and the Dynamics of Transformation: Korea and Beyond", funded by the Academy of Korean Studies, since 2009.¹ The present volume builds on the project's first conference, held in May 2011 under the title "Social Networks and Location in the Circulation of Knowledge" at Ruhr Universität Bochum. In this conference we explored the intertwined aspects of physical and social spaces in the spread, use, and transformation of knowledge, asking "where" and "by whom" knowledge is set in motion. Subsequent conferences have focused on the metaphor of translation as a heuristic device to describe the way in which knowledge is transformed during the transfer process, thus asking about the "how" of knowledge circulation ("Lost and Found in Policy Translation", Berlin 2012), and on the ways in which knowledge is accepted, digested, re-distributed and re-configured, inquiring into the results and effects of the processes in question ("Integration processes in the circulation of knowledge", Bochum 2013). Naturally, these different aspects of the knowledge circulation process cannot be neatly distinguished in individual contributions that study specific cases, using a methodology rather than reflecting on its implications. Still, the focus of this volume on spatial and social aspects can be clearly recognized. To further provide for coherence, we have decided to include only pre-modern case studies in this publication.

We are grateful to those conference participants who presented papers on modern and contemporary themes and greatly enriched our discussions with their insights; they are Eric Ballbach (Berlin), Sukman Jang (Seoul), and Eun-jeung Lee (Berlin). Special thanks are due to Catherine Jami (Paris) who served as a discussant and from whose insightful comments we have all learned very much. The same holds true for Dagmar Schäfer who, in addition to her own paper, also served as a discussant.

1 AKS Overseas Leading University Program for Korean Studies, AKS-2009-MA-1001.

Without the support of the Academy of Korean Studies (AKS), neither the conference nor this publication would have been possible. For further institutional support, we are grateful to the Center for Religious Studies (CERES) at Ruhr University.

My personal thanks go to Dennis Wuerthner and Felix Siegmund (both Bochum), who bore the brunt of the organization work for the conference, were the driving force behind the publication of this volume, and took upon themselves the arduous task of providing it with an introduction. This volume is, first and foremost, their achievement.

Introduction

Knowledge as a Subject of East Asian History

Felix Siegmund/Dennis Wuerthner

Starting from the general assumptions about processes of knowledge transfer and transformation as outlined in the preface, this volume aims at highlighting the spatial dimension of knowledge circulation, in conjunction with the social dimension. Thus, our main questions concern the sociology of knowledge. Who are the most important actors in the physical circulation of new knowledge (importers of books, art objects, technical appliances), who are the main transformers (interpreting the items of knowledge in the light of the known and in the light of societal and intellectual needs), who are the main distributors, and how are these (different or not so different) actors connected? Can we describe local, regional or trans-regional networks in the exchange and dissemination of knowledge? How do local experiences and specific needs impact on the circulation process? To what extent is spatial disjunction a barrier to knowledge circulation, and can the latter be better understood by delineating the limits of social networks? What role do aspects of social status and gender play in these processes?

Knowledge is a very broad category which can include all aspects of social existence and it cannot exist in any other context than a social one. As the Chosŏn literatus Chŏng T'ak (1526–1605) remarked: “Books do not travel by themselves. They depend on humans to make them travel.”¹ Social contexts on the other hand are necessarily bound to specific spaces and locations – even in our age, where the term “social network” has begun to take another meaning. But social networks existed long before the development of worldwide communications that allowed for the creation of a global village of the more privileged layers of the world population (again, location here is a compelling reality). This volume is about the workings of knowledge in North East Asia – mostly Korea – in times when travel was difficult and restricted, when communication was done either orally or by writing on inconvenient materials, and when knowledge was nevertheless circulated quite vibrantly over long spatial distances, developing under different conditions in different locations, and both crossing and constructing social separations.

1 *Nakpo sŏnsaeng munjip*: 481d.

The articles in this volume illustrate the importance of spatial factors, both large-scale and small-scale, in the circulation of knowledge and, from different academic angles, show that the flow of knowledge in Korea and beyond was not simply in one direction from donor to recipient, but that specific choices were consciously made by actors on all sides. Furthermore, the authors demonstrate that there were not merely two parties involved in the processes of circulation, but that multiple external factors as well as a variety of actors influenced decision making, events, structures and innovations. Change was then not merely the product of a process of transfer, resulting in the passive reception of some elements of knowledge. Far from it, knowledge was actively transformed and appropriated by all parties involved in the circulation process. Development in Korea was not sealed off from the dynamics of development and change in the rest of the world and – vice versa – change in Korea did not go unnoticed outside of Korea. Either freely or by force, connections in knowledge and practice certainly did cross borders. This could take the form of individuals or groups physically crossing the border, but it could also be the exchange of knowledge via written media. The role of books and letters written in Literary Chinese had an important function in the circulation of knowledge. Being written in what was then the *lingua franca* in both technical as well as artistic usage, they could easily be understood by learned people throughout East Asia. The role of Literary Chinese has often been compared to that of Latin in medieval and renaissance Europe, but the East Asian case differs in that it tips the balance even more towards the written language, as the pronunciation of the script was not mutually intelligible. This made books a medium that could cross (proto-) national borders very easily and increased their relative importance as a medium of knowledge. Written book knowledge overcame linguistic barriers and was thus a trans-national factor.

Regarding Korean Studies in the West, it is true to say that the research situation concerning the workings and movements of knowledge is still in an early stage of development. In contradistinction, a considerable amount of research on the circulation of knowledge, especially in terms of science and techniques, has been published in the Korean language, represented by the works of scholars such as Chŏn Sang'un (Jeon Sang-woon) and Pak Sŏngnae (Park Seong-Rae). Here, the majority of research in this field still appears to be closely connected to questions of national traditions of knowledge and thus national identity. It can be said that the bulk of Korean scholarship has thus far only paid minor attention to the modes in which knowledge circulated in the context of networks. However, as recent publications suggest, there seems to be a growing awareness of the relevance and importance of this aspect. In this context, the compilation *Munhwa-ro ponŭn Han 'guksa*

vol. 1: *Sahoejŏk net'ŭwŏk'ŭ-wa konggan* (Korean History viewed through Culture: Social Networks and Space), which assembles a number of articles that touch on and discuss some of these research themes, is a good example of this development. Articles like “Yangban kwallyo Ryu Hŭich'un-ŭi kwangyemang” (“The yangban official Ryu Hŭich'un's networks”)² by Ko Yŏngjin explore the intertwining of different layers of established and newly developing social networks as different as those of blood-ties, regional and local networks, broad academic networks and bureaucratic networks. Taking as an example Yu Hŭich'un,³ a 16th century scholar official and member of the *Honam sarim* (湖南 士林), the article bears witness to the fact that increasing importance is being ascribed to the study of knowledge circulation within pre-modern social networks. These research trends definitely deserve further development.

In the light of this, our main objective was to put to the test a trans-regional perspective on Korea, which could ultimately help overcome the obvious limitations of research within national boundaries. Moreover, by trying to pinpoint location as well as specific social networks in the circulation and diffusion of knowledge, we aimed at shedding light on questions as to who were the most important actors in the physical circulation and distribution of knowledge (such as importers of books, art objects, technical appliances or cultural practices), who were the main drivers of transformation, and how these actors were connected with one another.⁴

We are grateful that distinguished and internationally renowned scholars from different fields of East Asian Studies heeded the call and agreed to participate in our conference to address and discuss these issues from various angles and perspectives of East Asian Studies.⁵ The broad scope covered by the articles implies

2 Yi T'aejin 2009: 137–156.

3 Yu Hŭich'un (柳希春, 1513–1577) was a scholar-bureaucrat from the middle part of the Chosŏn dynasty. One of the leading figures of the *Honam sarim*, he was exiled in 1547 and sent to Cheju Island for almost 20 years, before he was again called to serve in public office by King Sŏnjo in 1567. The *Miam Il'gi* 眉巖日記 (*Diary of Miam*), Yu Hŭich'un's most prominent piece of writing, features letters and exchange poems written in Literary Chinese which Yu received from his now likewise famous wife Song Tŏkbong (宋德峯, 1521–1578).

4 It has long been suggested that knowledge is a social activity and should be analyzed as a collective act. McCarthy 1996: 65. This has, however, not been reflected in most of the work done so far on the topic of knowledge and society.

5 For further information on the conference's speakers, see “AKS-RUB International Conference 2011” in the category “News & Events” on www.bb-koreanstudies.de. Furthermore, we would like to especially emphasize the contributions made by the conference's two discussants, Catherine Jami (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique,

that the volume also offers an overview of the typology of knowledge in pre-modern Korea as part of the Sinosphere.

East Asian art historian **Burglind Jungmann** (University of California at Los Angeles) presents an article on literary and cultural knowledge: *Early Chosŏn Painting, Social Reorganization, and the Knowledge of Chinese Literati Arts*. Stepping away from the hitherto largely accepted theory of Korean artists merely standing inactively on the receiving end of the line of knowledge transfer, of their being utterly dependent on the inspirational trends in art passed on to them from their Chinese counterparts, whose level they were said to be incapable of ever reaching, Jungmann primarily focuses on the Korean artists as actors who consciously selected particular trends and styles on the basis of their specific needs and cultural surroundings. In order to dissociate herself from a mindset which merely centers on notions of an innovative original and its defective adaptation, she roughly applies the concept of “cultural translation”, pointing out that the grey spots of misunderstanding and vagueness which arise in the act of rendering one work – whether it be of a theoretical or artistic nature – into another, must necessarily be regarded as the initial points from which innovation in Korean art stemmed. Though her main sources constitute the acclaimed court-painter An Kyŏn’s (安堅, ?-?) renowned hand-scroll-painting *Mongyu towŏndo* (夢遊桃源圖, *Dream Journey to the Peach Blossom Land*) as well as Sin Sukchu’s (申叔舟, 1417–1475) treatise *Hwagi* (畫記, *Record on Painting*), she furthermore examines several examples of early Chosŏn literati art within their political, socio-economic, and cultural contexts, thus demonstrating how iconographic elements and symbols closely linked to Confucian ideals were employed to further political and social agendas during a time of radical social reform.

The Diffusion of Military Techniques in Seventeenth Century Korea by **Felix Siegmund** (Ruhr-Universität Bochum) discusses how military knowledge was disseminated in Korea and for which reasons this was done. Importantly, the subject is approached by concentrating on the north-eastern border region of the Korean peninsula and its specific circumstances on the one hand, and by raising the question as to how regional characteristics influenced the development

Paris) and Dagmar Schäfer. Since both scholars are acclaimed experts on the history of science in China, their experience and expertise in tackling the problems of science in China was a great help in drawing comparisons and putting the situation in the field of Korean studies into perspective. The inclusion of specialists on China proved helpful in highlighting how careful, comparative studies of localized cases reveal both the disconnection and the intertwining of such cases from national history at large.

of military knowledge on the other. Special attention is paid to questions such as which military manual texts and handbooks were actually circulating and in use in 17th and 18th century Korea, which Chinese texts from the realm of the military formed the foundation of a Korean military training system, and which of these texts were consciously selected and purposely transcribed to serve the specific needs of Korean soldiers of vastly different ranks, educational backgrounds and living/fighting conditions, as well as which regional and local circumstances and preconditions influenced the publication, selection, distribution and practical application of certain military knowledge. By doing so, Siegmund offers insights on aspects of knowledge circulation and transformation which have thus far been all but neglected in Korean Studies in Western languages.

A Study on the Accommodation of Qing Military Technologies in Chosŏn during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries by the acclaimed expert on Korean military history **Kang Seok Hwa** (Gyeongin National University of Education) revolves around the modes of acquisition, evaluation, utilization and enhancement of military knowledge and technology during the latter half of the Chosŏn dynasty. Here, Kang lucidly demonstrates the learning processes which the court and those in charge of the Korean army underwent during and after the all-out wars with Japan and Qing China, explaining the reasons why they either accepted or rejected the practical application of knowledge pertaining to issues of military technology, the (sometimes secret) means by which they actually acquired the knowledge about certain technologies considered vital to the survival of the dynasty when faced with imminent threats from outside, and illustrates the role played by specific geographical, strategic and social conditions when Korean actors strived to develop military technology according to their own specific needs, as well as how the transfer and diffusion of military knowledge took place between Chosŏn Korea and Qing China in the wake of easing mutual postwar relations. By gearing his research towards topics like the development and enhancement of various kinds of firearms, the hardships Koreans faced when attempting to produce gunpowder, or the motivation which lay behind the construction of massive fortifications that constituted a cornerstone of Chosŏn's defense policy, Kang addresses issues hitherto rarely tackled in Western Korean Studies and underpins vital and generally relevant questions concerning knowledge transfer and knowledge implementation with plausible examples.

The article by **Dagmar Schäfer** (Max-Planck Institute for the History of Science) is titled *Media and Migration: Qing-Imperial Approaches to Technological Knowledge Circulation*. In her study, she describes how the Chinese emperor and his court used the tribute system to gain control over certain arts and crafts, as well as how this undertaking was complicated by the lack of standardization and

by the difficulty of communicating expectations, ultimately leading to a dynamic process of transformation starting with the original plans, which were then gradually changed into workable and realistic artifacts. Knowledge is connected to material forms. As Schäfer notes in her article, material artifacts can act as media of knowledge. Yet precisely these material forms constitute a major obstacle in our quest to gain access to the sources, for only if these material forms are extant can we hope to gather enough information to arrive at meaningful results. Access to knowledge, in the form of information, has been discussed by the sociologist and scholar of communication Herbert Schiller, who pointed out that the change to modern information technology is not universal, that there are huge differences in access to technology and thus to information.⁶ In another form, this is likewise true of the prominence given to historical facts in research: The degree of attention that events and structures receive is closely related to the question of whether information is actually available and how intense its circulation is.

The article on *Text and Orality in the Early Reception of Western Learning within the Namin faction. The example of Sin Hudam's Kimunp'yŏn* by **Marion Eggert** (Ruhr-Universität Bochum) addresses the role played by oral discourses, in addition to “books and objects as carriers of knowledge”, in bringing Western knowledge to Korea. In this context, the intellectual circles in the Namin faction, centered around Yi Ik, must be understood as a social network in which actors worked on their assessment of the new knowledge. In the time before widespread use of printing, most knowledge discourses were oral and are thus not traceable. The article looks at a case where material has been handed down in the form of records of dialogues between scholars in the early 18th century. Oral discourse seems not only to have been a means of disseminating knowledge, but also a powerful incentive for acquiring knowledge to be able to participate in debates. Conservative arguments of legitimacy played an important role in these debates, but at the same time the presence of heterodox knowledge in the discourse meant that it would be spread through discussion. Also, discourse on new astronomical and religious knowledge led to new arguments and new perspectives on both old and new problems. Fascination with the scandalous new knowledge and its implications for traditional systems of belief was also a factor in attracting interest.

Pierre-Emmanuel Roux (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales) has contributed an article on *The Prohibited Sect of Yaso: Catholicism in Diplomatic and Cultural Encounters between Edo Japan and Chosŏn Korea (17th to 19th Century)*.

6 Schiller 1981.

His article examines the introduction of Catholicism to Korea and the early history of Catholicism in Korea from the perspective of the circulation of knowledge. By emphasizing the significance of the experience of Catholic texts and practices by Koreans in Japan, he throws new light on the role that these channels played for the knowledge of Catholicism in Late Chosŏn Korea. He shows how networks made the spread of knowledge possible and how these networks worked to locate knowledge in spatial contexts. He also highlights the problem of conflicting knowledge from differing sources, Chinese and Japanese forms of the Catholicism debate in this case, and its interpretation in the discussion in Korea.

The Sociology of Knowledge (“Wissenssoziologie”), led by Georg Simmel and others, has long argued - and this basic assumption has become a kind of commonplace - that spatial and social proximity condition the actual forms of interaction.⁷ They create the environment for knowledge. In modern terms, this has led to the discussion of networks and their role in knowledge. In fact it seems that the diffusion of knowledge can hardly be thought without the assumption of some kind of network.

With regard to the theme of location, some of the issues we inquired about were local, regional and trans-regional networks of knowledge exchange, the interaction between individuals and institutions in the process of knowledge circulation, as well as the extent to which local experiences and needs played a role in the knowledge distribution and diffusion processes. We tried to trace the ways in which knowledge was created, distributed and received, with a close look at the social and spatial preconditions for these processes and the role of individuals, intellectual, political, religious or technical groups within and beyond certain social strata, their mutual influence, and the geographical distribution of knowledge through these networks.

In this context, knowledge is a factor of difference between social groups and defines those social groups.⁸ It can also be a factor that holds groups and networks together, in fact knowledge and networks seem to be mutually dependent. In short, knowledge can construct and inform perception of self and others.

Information and knowledge are politically sensitive categories in which actors in politics and the economy are highly interested.⁹ Historical research, which is at the basis of all the articles in this volume, has unfortunately thus far not played a significant role in the development of these trends. However, there is good reason

7 Pries 2008: 97f. The discussions that led to the formation of the contemporary Sociology of Knowledge are documented in Meja/Stehr 1982.

8 Bourdieu 1979.

9 Knoblauch 2010: 264.

to assume that historical research can matter with respect to the formulation of general theories – and that it should be done this way rather than the other way around.

Thus, the articles in our volume bear witness to a large spectrum of formations and re-configurations of knowledge in pre-modern societies: We find examples of derivative knowledge, condensed knowledge and encoded knowledge. Knowledge in action can be observed “in the field” in the different forms and shapes it takes according to the environment in which it appears. Educational texts use a more condensed and more basic form of knowledge, while more specialized, advanced forms of texts¹⁰ tend to require knowledge of the principles of decoding which have to be applied in order to make sense of the respective texts. In the Korean case, coding is very well illustrated by the problem of **diglossia**, which obviously constituted an important factor in Chosŏn Korea, as the dichotomy between Literary Chinese (*hanmun* 漢文) texts and those written in the (Korean) vernacular is very visible. The skills required to decode such information certainly posed a significant problem. On a non-language, but nevertheless communicational level, this is taken up by Burglind Jungmann’s explanations of the function of translation in art and its role in the creation of Korean painting as evolving out of a culturally Chinese (Sinic) environment, but translating it into an idiom informed by other influences, which ultimately evolve out of different structures in the field of knowledge.

According to Berger and Luckmann, knowledge is not necessarily linked to **experience** by the subject, but exists somewhere in the structure of social reality as constructed by the society the subject lives in. They compare it to the build-up of sediment which sinks in the water and then forms a new layer on the seabed. This layer can then be examined.¹¹ Thinking along these lines, knowledge can be understood as a pool of common experience, shared by social groups and transcending individual actors. This, however, is not to deny the **actor**, but rather to grasp knowledge as a statistically relevant and thus socially meaningful factor. Individual knowledge only becomes meaningful when socially processed, i. e. when it is put into action and then incorporated in a common pool of knowledge. This means that there can be no such thing as dead knowledge, because dead knowledge would imply that it was non-existent in society, thus effectively non-existent. The social philosopher Hans Otto Apel described a similar model of communicative ethics by pointing out that heuristic principles must be based on

10 “Text” could be substituted with “medium” or “practice” here.

11 Berger/Luckmann 1966.

communicative interaction.¹² The basis for all communication is interaction, in the process of which knowledge becomes social, as it is shared. How such a sharing of knowledge works in practice is part of what is described and discussed in the articles in this volume. Communication could have taken the form of direct conversation – and it undoubtedly did so most often. However this form of contact has left only few traces in written records.¹³ But in some cases it is possible to reconstruct part of the process of **oral communication** from written sources. The case of Sin Hudam shows how such communication can even result in scandals in knowledge, as Marion Eggert points out. These can then lead to interest in new ideas and even to a challenge to orthodoxy.

One could then raise the question as to which role knowledge plays in reality, or, from a radical constructivist viewpoint, how knowledge works in **constructing reality**.¹⁴ Besides his ideas about epistemology, discursive power is the other area of Foucault's theoretical work that has proven useful far beyond what Foucault envisioned and will continue to do so. Even if Foucault's extreme structuralist position and his aversion to the existence of actors is rejected, thinking about epistemological functions of knowledge is worthwhile. We have not gone to the extreme, but still the question of the construction of social entities through networks of knowledge features prominently in this volume's articles. "Reality" as a social consensus is connected to questions of validity and validation – a point which arose in the course of the conference discussion and can be regarded as a connecting link between the different talks and articles. The importance of validation in the circulation of knowledge is stressed perhaps most prominently in the article by Dagmar Schäfer, who, among others, described the dilemma faced by the various actors in search of the production of knowledge, plans, and goods – and their quest to benefit from this. But the need for reinforcing the validity is also visible in other areas touched upon in this volume. In art, validation becomes an aesthetic as well as a social determinant.

In which frames is knowledge contained? Erving Goffmann has presented **framing** as an analytical tool capable of understanding situations in everyday life.¹⁵ Framing is also a powerful tool in understanding knowledge, which likewise is situational and is put into certain frames to make sense of it. We can see numerous examples of approaches to the problem of framing in the articles in this

12 Apel 1976.

13 That it has left traces at all is due not to any spoken language but to written Chinese, the lingua franca in conversations between East Asian intellectuals of different linguistic backgrounds.

14 Sahlins 1976.

15 Goffmann 1974.

volume. In Pierre-Emmanuel Roux's article, Catholicism seems to be framed into both the frames that the reports from above convey and into the image that is then put forth by this in a new context. This kind of context-sensitive scholarship is important, as there is an obvious interest on the part of both Catholics and various nationalists to frame early images of Christianity in Korea in a way that furthers their discursive dominance.

People play an important role in the circulation of knowledge – be it in the form of competency bearers whose resettlement shifts the distribution of knowledge, or in the form of social status groups, such as literati who generally find painting below their standing and thus isolate themselves from knowledge associated with it. **Power** surely is closely connected with the making of culture. Knowledge has been understood as culture, constituting and perpetuating all that we call “culture”.¹⁶ In a narrower (and thus perhaps more useful) sense the articles in this volume touch on the subject of knowledge and culture. The most obvious example of this is Burglind Jungmann's article, which describes the connection between knowledge, art and social status. Complex structures have been described, and within these actors have been revealed that were unknown before and known actors have been re-interpreted in their respective roles. Such a (re-) interpretation was socially layered. There is a social dimension to knowledge in which the influence of local and non-elite actors manifests itself. Artisans, soldiers, and painters are just some examples of groups of people outside the core elite who could influence the circulation and application of knowledge. To refer to Antonio Gramsci, non-elite persons were actively involved in reshaping the framework of the hegemony of knowledge.

Finally, it should be mentioned that in the discussion of knowledge, **non-knowledge** (as in “to not know”) is a recurring theme which is stressed with regard to modern society (as “risk society” in Beck's coinage) and the importance of knowledge in it. Hence, forms of non-knowledge (“Nichtwissen” in German) play an important role in understanding knowledge. While the workings of pre-modern societies and their problems are quite different from today's problems treated by contemporary sociologists, the dynamics of knowledge and the effects of non-knowledge as presented in our cases may still be worth taking note of. The articles by Dagmar Schäfer and Felix Siegmund show how there was a dimension of non-knowledge in pre-modern societies. This is evidenced by a lack of the spread of knowledge and willful ignorance of knowledge and information. This could be interpreted as a phenomenon similar to what has been described as

16 McCarthy 1996. Also see Knoblauch 2010: 356.

typical of modern risk-societies.¹⁷ Apparently, such phenomena are not a unique feature of modernity.

The articles in this volume show that the circulation of knowledge in Korea was a multi-faceted process that has significantly affected locations and people at different times in history. Knowledge was an important factor that brought together or divided people and that shaped the social landscape. We hope that something can be gained from our overview for the study of societies outside Korea and outside East Asia. The development of knowledge is in practice always initially a regional issue, but it exceeds the boundaries of the locale. It is the study of such regional knowledge on which the history of trans-regional, trans-national and global knowledge – yet to be written – will have to be based.

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17 Ulrich Beck has described these factors for modern societies. Beck 1996.