

# M | NAM CENTER FOR KOREAN STUDIES

2024-2025 NEWSLETTER





LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends of the Nam Center,



Since 2010 when the Nam Center became the first named Korean studies center in the United States, our mission has been to establish “Korean Studies with a Michigan Difference.” Community-building, agenda-setting, and the pursuit of scholarship that is both critically relevant and transformative in its impact have been the guiding components of that mission, to which we added another in 2024-2025: forging solidarity. In the aftermath of the declaration of martial law by the South Korean president, U-M students, staff, and faculty came together to lead various efforts to support the struggle to restore democratic order in Korea. In solidarity with Korean citizens, the Nam Center community proudly emerged as a center of overseas activism for Korean democracy. The Michigan Difference is also characterized by innovation. In the pages of this report you will find lively descriptions of the rich slate of Nam Center’s annual programs that serve undergraduate and graduate students, faculty and staff, and the larger community beyond the campus. From the Undergraduate Fellows Program to Michigan Korean Studies Summer Institute, from BTAA Korean Studies e-School to Korean Cinema Now, many of these programs started out as novel experiments that the Nam Center was the first in the nation to adopt. They are now successful institutions whose reach extends beyond U-M to the Korean studies field at large. In 2025, the Nam Center launched its newest experiment called PANx, a performing arts initiative inspired by the traditional Korean stage. The initiative highlights the participatory nature of Korean performing arts, and aims to break down the barrier between the performer and the audience as well as between different performative traditions. A multi-year partnership with the School of Music, Theatre, and Dance, PANx has received support from the U-M Office of the President and the Arts Initiative, in addition to alumni gifts. It is our hope that the initiative will bring exciting possibilities encoded in the letter “x” (i.e., extension, expansion, and crossing) to the space of traditional Korean performing arts, and activate a new pan in the process. Finally, on a personal note, I would like to express my deep gratitude as I end my term as the Nam Center Director. It has been my singular honor and joy to serve as the leader of a community so talented and united in purpose. I am thrilled to be passing the baton to Dr. Juhn Y. Ahn, a renowned scholar of Buddhism and Koryo history. Dr. Ahn is also a true blue Wolverine who received both his BA and MA at U-M, and whose dedication to the Nam Center and Korean studies knows no bounds. With anticipation for what the future holds for the Nam Center under Dr. Ahn’s leadership, I write one last time, Go Blue!

**Youngju Ryu**



Since Prof. Nojin Kwak’s departure in 2021 the Nam Center for Korean Studies and its community have benefitted from the tireless and inspiring leadership of Prof. Youngju Ryu, and it goes without saying we owe her our deepest gratitude. It is our great fortune that Prof. Ryu will be able to continue to look after the Center and offer her guidance as the new Director of the International Institute when she returns from her much-deserved sabbatical leave in January. We are also fortunate to have the Nam Center core faculty and staff who will, as always, help the Center steer its way through what is turning out to be a very eventful year. Last but not least, the Nam Center also owes a great deal to the actively involved Korean Studies community here at the University of Michigan. Serving this wonderful community is and will continue to be one of the key missions of the Center. As the incoming director, I feel deeply honored and humbled. It does not seem an exaggeration to say that the Nam Center is the one of the most well-recognized and active centers for Korean Studies in the US. Many look to our Center for leadership and inspiration and it is my sincere hope that we continue to live up to these expectations. The Nam Center is also the embodiment of the hopes, dreams, and dedication of a large number of people. This seems to give our vibrant Center an unmistakable heartbeat. At the source of this heartbeat we, of course, find Elder Nam. I can still vividly recall my encounter with Elder Nam who came to my job talk in 2010. I think no one reading this message will be surprised to learn that Elder Nam was the most engaged member of the audience. He asked the toughest questions and embraced me with the widest and most welcoming smile. During our short but powerful encounter, Elder Nam’s desire, dream, drive, and determination to make his love and passion for Korean Studies endure, spread, and inspire were all too evident. I promise to do whatever I can to help the Nam Center’s heartbeat, Elder Nam’s legacy, grow stronger than ever. Challenges such as leadership transitions provide us with opportunities to demonstrate strength and resolve. I am certain that the Nam Center is ready for any challenge. The Center will continue to build on our great accomplishments and offer a rich variety of new events and initiatives that promise to be nothing short of awesome. So please join us! I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you for your continued support. Hail to Michigan the leaders and best!

**Juhn Young Ahn**

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About Us

The Nam Center for Korean Studies (NCKS) is the seat of Korea- related research, education, and public outreach at the University of Michigan. Established in 2007 and renamed the Nam Center in 2010, it is now one of the nation’s most vibrant centers devoted to promoting a deeper understanding of Korea, past and present. At NCKS, we provide research support for faculty, award scholarships and fellowships for students, and host leading experts in the field as guest lecturers and visiting scholars. We hold international conferences, manuscript workshops, and a graduate summer institute in interdisciplinary Korean Studies annually. We also oversee a wide range of innovative programs tailored for different audiences ranging from K-14 educators to established scholars in the field, and sponsor public events in Korean culture and the arts, including exhibitions, film festivals, and performances. We coordinate collaborations with campus departments, schools, and academic units, and comprise one of the three centers that together make up the East Asia National Resource Center at Michigan, selected and supported by the Department of Education from a nationwide competition. NCKS’ external collaborations include the Big Ten Academic Alliance Korean Studies e-School, which it has led over the last twelve years. The Center’s many initiatives are supported by major external grants from the Korea Foundation and the Academy of Korean Studies among others. These programs encourage cutting-edge interdisciplinary research, cultivate historically situated knowledge, and facilitate nuanced conversations about Korea’s traditions and transformations within the U-M community and beyond.

About Elder Sang-Yong Nam

The Nam Center for Korean Studies was created in 2010 with a generous gift from SangYong and Moon-sook Nam. Sang-Yong Nam, from Daejeon, Korea, dreamed of rebuilding his war-torn country. After majoring in architecture at Seoul National University, he came to the US to study at the University of Michigan and received a master’s degree in City Planning. He worked as a senior city planner in Washtenaw County for 13 years and built a successful business. A strong believer in community engagement, Nam was active in the Korean Church of Ann Arbor and Ann Arbor Rotary Club, and his gifts supported educational institutions in China and the Ann Arbor Korean School. He advised The National Unification Advisory Council, taught in China, and received an honorary doctorate from Chung-Ang University. His awards include Distinguished Service recognitions from U-M and the Rotary Club of Ann Arbor. At U-M, he was determined to build a world-class Korea center. He passed away a year after the establishment of the center that bears his name, leaving behind an enduring legacy of desire, dream, drive, and determination.



Elder Sang-Yong Nam and Mrs. Nam



NAM CENTER FACULTY & STAFF

Director

**Juhn Young Ahn**, Associate Professor of Asian Languages and Cultures (ALC)

Nam Center Core Faculty

- YuhJoo Byun**, Lecturer, ALC
- David Chung**, Professor, Art and Design
- Jeehyae Chung**, Lecturer, ALC
- Jungah Han**, Assistant Professor of Theatre & Drama
- Ji Yeon (Jean) Hong**, Associate Professor, Political Science
- Hunjin Jung**, Lecturer, ALC
- Hwa-Jin Kim**, Professor, Law
- Jaeeun Kim**, Associate Professor, Sociology
- Jiyoung Kim**, Lecturer, ALC
- Jong-Jin Kim**, Associate Professor, Architecture and Urban Planning
- Soyeon Kim**, Director, Korean Language Program, ALC
- Dae Hee Kwak**, Associate Professor, Kinesiology
- Se-Mi Oh**, Associate Professor, ALC
- Doo Jae Park**, Lecturer, Kinesiology
- Youngju Ryu**, Professor, ALC
- Na Ri Shin**, Assistant Professor, Kinesiology
- Jordan Siegel**, Professor, Ross School of Business
- Matthew Thompson**, Clinical Assistant Professor, Music

Affiliated Faculty

- Barbara Anderson**, Professor, Sociology
- Micah Auerback**, Associate Professor, ALC
- Benjamin Brose**, Professor, ALC
- Scott Campbell**, Professor, Communication & Media
- Kevin Carr**, Associate Professor, History of Art
- Pär Cassel**, Associate Professor, History
- Joseph Lam**, Professor, School of Music, Theatre & Dance
- Donald Lopez**, Professor, ALC
- Julie Ma**, Associate Professor, Social Work
- Ramaswami Mahalingam**, Professor, Psychology, Women’s Studies
- Abé Markus Nornes**, Professor, ALC, Film, Television & Media

News

Nam Center staff members **Minyoung Song** and **Eva Fall**, along with KLP director **Soyeon Kim**, contributed to the creation of *Honest History*’s Korea-focused issue, titled “Between Republics,” published in February 2025. *Honest History* is a magazine designed specifically for young readers aged 6–12, aiming to present engaging and accessible historical content. Minyoung Song served as both advisor and writer, authoring the features “People You Should Know” and “Seollal & Chuseok.” Eva Fall contributed the article “The History of Kimchi,” and Soyeon Kim wrote “King Sejong the Great and the Invention of Hangul.”

Library & Museum Affiliates

- Bohyun Kim**, Library Information Technology
- Myung Hee Kim**, Asia Library
- Liangyu Fu**, Asia Library
- Natsu Oyobe**, UMMA
- Yunah Sung**, Asia Library
- Jungwon Yang**, Stephen S. Clark Library
- Jisu Han**, Korea Foundation library intern

Staff

- Eva Fall**, Center Administrator
- Suyun Lee**, External Relations Coordinator
- Peggy Rudberg**, Administrative Assistant
- Minyoung Song**, Outreach Coordinator

Podcast Host

**Rory Walsh**

Student Assistants

- Jinny Kim**, Office Assistant
- Ting Shu**, Graphic Designer
- Stella Peng**, Graphic Designer

FACULTY NEWS



**Juhn Ahn** returned from a sabbatical leave in Korea where he conducted research on early Joseon history for his second book. He recently published a chapter on Buddhism in the *Routledge Handbook of Early Modern Korea*, which is also being translated into Spanish for an edited volume on Korean history scheduled to be published soon in Argentina.



Masks from **Y. David Chung’s** “Seoul House” will be on permanent display at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts which houses one of the most significant collections of Korean art in the country. “Seoul House” is an exhibition and opera performance. “The Mr. Choi and Salesman character masks were featured in Seoul House (Korean Outpost), an electronic rap opera and drawing installation about a Korean-owned grocery store in a Black neighborhood, underlining the entanglement of economic inequality and racism in American cities brought bare in



high-profile conflicts in both Los Angeles and New York in the nineties.” Professor Chung is also pleased to announce that the Smithsonian Archives of American Art will be adding his materials to their collection. “The Archives of American Art is the world’s preeminent and most widely used research center dedicated to collecting, preserving, and providing access to primary sources that document the history of the visual arts in America. The Archives collects primary source materials—original letters, writings, preliminary sketches, scrapbooks, photographs, financial records and the like—that have significant research value for the study of art in America.”



From April 29 to May 14, 2025, Assistant Professor **Jungah Han** led Study Abroad in Korea: Discovering Traces of Korean Cultures and Performing Arts, a faculty-directed program offering students immersive exposure to Korea’s cultural heritage and contemporary performing arts. The program emphasized interdisciplinary learning through site visits, workshops, and academic collaboration.



Partnering with leading institutions such as the National Dance Company of Korea, Korea National University of Arts, Gangneung-Wonju National University, and

the National Changgeuk Company of Korea, students engaged with performance, design, and cultural studies through curated experiences. Highlights included visits to the National Museum of Korea, Seoul Museum of Craft Art, Gyeongbokgung and Changdeokgung Palaces, and Haslla Art World. This June, Professor Han will present her set design and production *My Onliness*—originally premiered in New York—at the Sibiu International Theater Festival (FITS 2025) in Romania. In July and August, she will return to Korea to conduct research on production and design practices in Korean performing arts, supported by a Creative Works Projects (CWPs) grant.



**Ji Yeon (Jean) Hong** published a research article titled “Can a Sense of Shared War Experience Increase Refugee Acceptance?” (coauthored with Cecilia Hyunjung Mo at UC Berkeley and Christopher Paik at NYU Abu Dhabi) in the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, a leading academic journal on conflict studies. It used a survey experiment to understand whether the family history of the Korean War increases Korean people’s openness toward refugees fleeing conflict and persecution today. The study provides novel empirical evidence that intergenerational narratives of wartime hardship can foster empathy and a greater willingness to accept refugees. By showing how Korea’s own memories of war can lead people to care more about refugees today, the paper offers important insights into why history still matters for how we treat others in need.



## FACULTY NEWS



**Jaeun Kim's** 5-year tenure as a non-resident permanent fellow at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin (Institute for Advanced Study, Berlin) began in Fall

2024. She was a regular fellow at Wissenschaftskolleg in AY 2020–2021 and selected as a non-resident permanent fellow in 2024. Permanent fellows play a key role in selecting fellows and running the institute. Kim also became one of the senior editors of the journal, *Theory and Social Inquiry* (previously, *Theory and Society*) in January 2025. She served as a visiting professor at the École des hautes études en sciences sociales (EHESS) in Paris from March 2025 to May 2025. Lastly, she contributed a chapter to an edited volume, *South Korea and the Politics of Ethnic Nationalism*, edited by Timothy C. Lim and published by Lynne Rienner Publishers in 2025.



**Dae Hee Kwak**, Associate Professor of Sport Management, Director of the Center for Sport Marketing Research, and Graduate Program Director,

was invited to deliver the keynote address at Augusta University's annual "Research Day" and participated as a panelist in the Korean American Association for Sport Management Colloquium, "Interdisciplinary Conversation with Journal Editors." He was appointed Associate Editor of the *Journal of Sport Management* and joined the Executive Committee of the Nam Center for Korean Studies in January 2025. Over the past year, he published multiple



peer-reviewed articles on topics including athlete mental health, DEI pledges by sport team owners, and social desirability bias in athlete activism research.



**Se-Mi Oh's** book *City of Sediments* received an Honorable Mention for the James B. Palais Book Prize from the Association for Asian Studies.



**Doo Jae Park**, a lecturer in Sport Management at the School of Kinesiology, has published several articles. He co-authored an article with NaRi Shin, entitled "It

Is Our Space: The Formation of Diasporic Families' Community Cultural Wealth Through Ethnic Sport Participation," published in the *Journal of Sport Management*. This article explores the complex

meanings of immigration, identity politics, and Taekwondo as an ethnic capital to highlight powerful but underrepresented narratives of Korean Americanness.

Together with NaRi Shin and Dae Hee Kwak, Park co-organized a seminar in March 2025, titled "Sport in Korea 2.0: Navigating Sport's Boundaries: Racial Identity, Migration, and Social Mobility." Park gave several invited talks, including one at the University of California, Davis, titled "Asian Racialization in/through Sport and Physical Culture, and another at Clemson University, titled "Humanizing Asian Americans through Qualitative Methodology."

At the University of Michigan, he was invited to speak at the Spring Formal, organized by the Korean American Scientists and Engineers Association, on "Racial Triangulation: Model Minority, Minor Feelings, and Self-Determination." He also presented his ongoing projects at international sports conferences, focusing on topics such as gender and the growing number of women baseball fans in Korea, depopulation and resilient-sustainable sport development in Korea, and Asian racialization and code-switching in U.S. tennis.



In 2024–2025, **Youngju Ryu** published an article on the work of the Nobel laureate Han Kang in the Korean journal *Changbi*, and gave media interviews for news outlets including *Hankyoreh* and *Voice of America*. Continuing work on her forthcoming monograph, a cultural history of US-Korea relations, she gave invited talks at Cornell University, Rutgers University, and University of Virginia, and spoke on the subject of politics and culture more broadly in Korea, UK, and Chile.



**NaRi Shin** During the 2024–2025 academic year, her research and service focused on the intersections of Korean diaspora, sport, and gender. Shin

co-authored the article, "It is our space": Diasporic families' community cultural wealth development through ethnic sport participation, published in the *Journal of Sport Management*, which explores how Korean immigrant families in the U.S. engage with Taekwondo to build community and cultural capital. She also contributed to *Are we (in)visible: Toward a critical understanding of Asian women faculty experiences in U.S. sport management*, published in *European Sport Management Quarterly*, which critically examines the experiences of Asian women faculty in the field. She received a SUCCEED Grant (\$8,500) from the University of Michigan ADVANCE Program to support her ongoing research on Korean immigrant women's soccer clubs in the U.S., focusing on how these organi-

zations can be sustained as empowering community spaces for their participants. Findings from this work were presented in the presentation, "Challenges and strategies of managing immigrant women's sport organizations," at the 2025 North American Society for Sport Management Conference in San Diego. She also presented "Understanding sport-based migration at the non-elite level: The case of Korean Taekwondo masters in the United States" at the 2024 European Association for Sport Management Conference in Paris, a project supported by the Korean Studies Grant given by the Academy of Korean Studies. In addition to her research activities, Shin concluded her four-year tenure as Director of Service (2021–2025) for the Korean American Association for Sport Management, reflecting her continued commitment to the Korean community in the sport management field.



During 2024–2025, **Dr. Matthew Thompson** was honored to be added as a member of the Nam Center Core Faculty. In September, he was an intro-

ductory event speaker for George Mason University's – "Korean ArtPop Storytelling Workshop." Thompson then dedicated himself for the remainder of the semester to preparing for a joint co-teaching collaboration with Dr. Youngju Ryu, "K-Pop and Beyond: Vocal Music Edition," offered Winter semester 2025.

In February, Dr. Thompson performed Dr. Texu Kim's Sonata Amabile in conjunction with Dr. Kim's Colloquium Center presentation and moderated the Nam Center Q&A with Dr. Kim and Earl Lee, conductor of the Ann Arbor Symphony. The Carolyn Mawby Chorale, a community choir based in Flint of which Dr. Thompson is conductor and artistic director, performed Ji-Hoon Park's Lightning Bug Mass at their annual spring concert. In May, Thompson was a judge for the Boston Conservatory at Berklee Korean Art Song Competition. In July, he performed with daegeum player, Min Jung Shim, and long time collaborator and recent graduate, baritone Jack Morin, in Grand Rapids as part of "A Celebration of Classical Korean Culture: Poetry, Art Song, Performance," which focused on the life and poetry of Nansorhon.



Composer Texu Kim, violinist Matt Albert (SMTD), and Nam Center core faculty member and pianist Matthew Thompson (SMTD) on piano discussed Kim's "Sonata Amabile" after performing it in February.



STUDENT NEWS

Nam Center Graduate Fellows Program

The Center continues to strengthen graduate commitment to Korean studies through its Graduate Fellows program. The group is now a registered student organization with the sponsorship of the Nam Center. This network of students meet monthly throughout the academic year. They are connected by a common interest in Korea, but their areas of study range greatly.

- Sunhong Kim, Committee Chair, Musicology
- Adelina Pinzaru, Asian Languages and Cultures
- Hanna Lee, Political Science
- James Kiselik, English
- Jane Lee, Asian Languages and Cultures
- Jieun Oh, Political Science
- Kaeun Park, Asian Languages and Cultures
- Ok Ji Lee, Asian History (visiting from Seoul National University)
- Seohyung Kim, Anthropology
- Sonia Singh, Asian Languages & Cultures

AKS Graduate Student Fellowship

Sunhong Kim, PhD Candidate in Musicology

“Leading a graduate student conference (NEKST2025) in Korean Studies significantly expanded both my scholarly insight and my broader vision of interdisciplinary scholarship. Supported by the AKS Graduate Student Fellowship, this experience deepened my understanding of the potential contributions that future scholars can make to the field—far beyond the scope of knowledge I had previously acquired in South Korea. I gained exposure to diverse methodologies, research frameworks, and subject matters, as well as their possible impact within academic communities and in the public sphere. As someone trained in Musicology and Ethnomusicology, this experience helped me learn how to better shape my ideas to engage with a range of disciplines. The mentorship, administrative support, and institutional resources provided by the Nam Center for Korean Studies have been important in cultivating a vibrant learning environment for my development as a regional scholar and as an artist at Michigan. Lastly, the center’s support for fostering an art-friendly environment made me feel a strong sense of belonging within the Ann Arbor community—where the production and consumption of art are deeply intertwined with the humanities, rather than treated as separate spheres.”



NEKST Graduate Student Conference



The 12th International Conference of NextGen Korean Studies Scholars (NEKST) was held in Ann Arbor on May 9-10, 2025. The conference organizing committee, comprised of ten graduate students at the University of Michigan, was led by committee chair Sunhong Kim. The conference featured panel presentations, workshop sessions for dissertation chapters and advanced papers, and a professional development workshop led by Dr. Mike Solomon, the Dean of Rackham Graduate School. The event commenced with an exquisite performance of “Hyang,” composed by Kim Kibeom, skillfully played by Sunhong Kim on p’iri, Oliver Sung on piano, and Martin Curtis on cello. Panel themes included: 1) Korean studies and global community after December 3, 2024, 2) reconfiguring Japanese colonialism in archeology, and music, 3) flow of Koreanness within time, space, text, and media, 4) traversing national boundaries: sources & methods. Faculty discussants were: Eric Chang (MSU), Hillary Vanessa Finchum-Sung (University of Michigan), Juhn Ahn (University of Michigan), Jodi S. Kim (Dartmouth College), Youngju Ryu (University of Michigan), Chan Yong Bu (Harvard University), Ji Yeon Hong (University of Michigan), Jeong Eun Annabel We (Northwestern University), and Sanghoon Kim-Leffingwell (University of North Texas).



Undergraduate Exchange Conference



The Nam Center Undergraduate Research Fellows traveled to Los Angeles to take part in the 13th Annual Undergraduate Exchange Conference, hosted by the Korean Studies Institute at the University of Southern California. The Michigan Fellows presented the findings of their year-long research projects while competing for prestigious awards recognizing excellent papers and presentations along with their counterparts from USC. Students received feedback on their research from faculty discussants and their peers.

- Best Paper Award:**  
Toby Buckfire, University of Michigan  
“KBO, A Sports League Designated for Fans”
- Best Presentation Award:**  
Maeviss Rosengart, University of Michigan  
“The Paradox of the First Lady: The Edifice of Public Domesticity”

Nam Center Undergraduate Fellows Program

The Nam Center Undergraduate Fellows join a tightly knit community of students committed to advancing their understanding of Korean history, society, and culture while gaining firsthand experience as intercultural ambassadors and global citizens.

Research Fellows	Skyla Park	Outreach Fellows
Toby Buckfire	Leah Phillips	Sydney Jones
Michael Delphia	Maeviss Rosengart	Lydia King
Colin Janak	Nicole Siembieda	Samantha Smith



FELLOWSHIPS & AWARDS



# 2025 Sang-Yong Nam Memorial Lecture

This year's Sang-Yong Nam Memorial Lecture was given by Luke Kang, President of the Walt Disney Company, Asia Pacific. He joined Disney in 2011 as Managing Director of Korea, and in 2021, his role expanded to oversee the entire Asia Pacific region. Under his leadership, Disney+ successfully launched and expanded across the region. Luke holds an M.S. in Management from Stanford University's Graduate School of Business and a B.A. in History from the University of Michigan. His lecture titled "Evolution and Future of Hallyu,"

traced the rise of Hallyu, its global influence, and its evolving role within the entertainment industry.

The lecture took place at the University of Michigan Alumni Center and was co-sponsored by the Program in International and Comparative Studies (PICS) and the U-M Alumni Association. The event drew a distinguished audience, including the Dean of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, the Director of the International Institute, members of the Nam family, and students, faculty, and alumni.



The Sang-Yong Nam Award is a \$3,000 scholarship given each year to a graduating senior. The award honors students whose academic achievement, citizenship, service to the community, and commitment to Korean Studies exemplify the values to which Elder Sang-Yong Nam dedicated his life. The recipient of the 2025 Sang-Yong Nam Award was Skyla Park.

Skyla is an International Studies major and Asian Studies minor writing an honors thesis on torture rehabilitation in South Korea. She has been involved with the Nam Center since 2022 as an Outreach Fellow and since 2023 as a Research Fellow. She holds leadership roles in Liberty in North Korea, the Asian American Association, and the Michigan Journal for Asian Studies, and has been part of the Korea Leadership Group and the Korean American Student Association. Skyla is also the President of the International Studies Honors Society, a Donia Human Rights Fellow, and the Undergraduate Representative on the Wallenberg Medal Committee.



The Nam Center supported students to participate in the second year of the Pungmul Fellowship Program. The aim of this program is to nurture student leaders, who are expected to take an active role in cultivating a flourishing pungmul/samulnori culture at the university after their participation in the program, particularly through their participation in Sinaboro. Selected students participated in a 1-week training camp that took place at Imsil Pungmul Training Camp in Jeollabuk-do, South Korea, with their tuition and travel covered by the Nam Center.

This year's recipients were:  
**Eunice Lee**, Business Administration  
**Seongjin Shyn**, Biophysics  
**Oliver Sung**, Jazz & Contemporary Improvisation (SMTD)

## Conference Travel Grants

The following graduate students received funding to present at or attend conferences during the 2024-25 academic year:  
**Seohyung Kim**, Anthropology, AAS 2025

**Sunhong Kim**, Musicology, AAS 2025  
**Paper:** "Sonic Routes to an Ancestral Homeland: The Bi-polarized Timbre of Kayagŭm by Virtuosoic Zainichi Musicians in ROK"

## SeAH Haiam Arts & Sciences Scholarship

The SeAH Haiam Arts and Sciences Scholarship provides awards each year to support graduate student research projects for academic purposes. This scholarship can be used to fund research travel, data collection, or fieldwork related to Korean studies.

- 2025 Recipients:
- Seohyung Kim**, Research Title: Beyond the Forest Canopy: Thinking Trees Outside of the Forest
- Sunhong Kim**, Research Title: The Flavor of Chibang (provinces): Mastery of Korean Instruments in Folk Music Ensemble Practices in the Republic of Korea
- Hanna Lee**, Research Title: State-Building or Stolen Development? A Counterfactual Analysis of Japan's Colonial Legacy in Korea
- Kaeun Park**, Research Title: Aerial Photography and State's Mapmaking Projects in 1970s South Korea

## Summer in Korea

A gift from alumnus Chairman Dae-Won Moon (MBA, '78) provides annual awards on behalf of the Nam Center to support travel to Korea to attend Yonsei International Summer School. Students spend six weeks in the heart of Seoul to improve their fluency in Korean and deepen their knowledge of Korea. The scholarship also funds tuition, fees, field trips, and travel expenses, making a summer in Korea possible for any U-M undergraduate. In 2025, three students were selected to receive this prestigious award.

- 2025 Recipients:
- Alyssa Bird**, '28
- Emileigh Jackson**, '28
- Yixin Zhang**, '27



ASIA LIBRARY & RESOURCES

Asia Library

**Yunah Sung**, Korean Studies librarian/project manager  
**Myung Hee Kim**, Korean Cataloger  
(Vacant), Korean Acquisition Specialist  
(Vacant), Korea Foundation library intern



Yunah Sung



Myung Hee Kim

Staff Updates

■ Yunah has developed a comprehensive library research guide on Digital Humanities in Korean Studies (<https://guides.lib.umich.edu/KoreanStudiesDH>). This guide provides an introduction to Digital Humanities (DH) practices and an overview of DH tools and resources pertinent to Korean Studies. Any inquiries regarding Korean Digital Humanities (K-DH) can be sent to ask-KoreaDH@umich.edu.

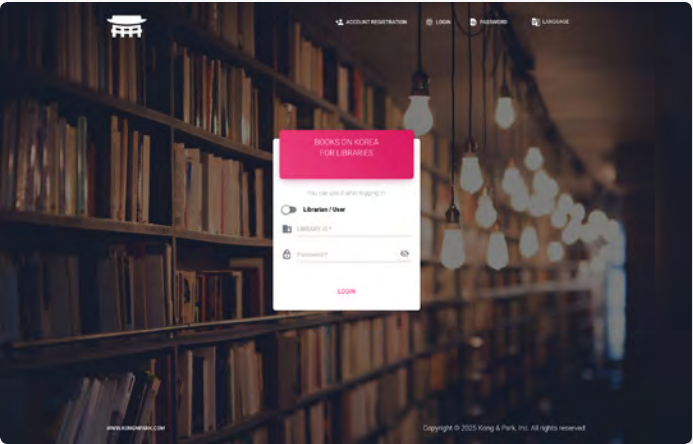


Home page for library research guide on Digital Humanities in Korean Studies developed by Yunah Sung.

■ Soojin Lee accepted a new position within another unit of the library in June 2025. During her 22-month tenure as the Korean Acquisition Specialist, Soojin made significant contributions by efficiently processing and managing shipments of print materials from Korea and reducing our backlog, ensuring these resources were readily available to our patrons. Her dedication played a crucial role in streamlining our acquisition processes. At the Asia Library, a temporary plan is in place to address the workflow gap, and discussions about a long-term plan are ongoing.

New releases available at the library within a month!

The Korean Studies Collection is delighted to offer expedited service for new book releases published in Korea. Selected titles from major Korean studies-related publishers are available at the library just one month after their publication. This service has been developed in collaboration with Kong & Park, which acquires new releases, creates library records in OCLC/WorldCat, completes physical processing, and ships them via DHL. Please submit book purchase requests through the Books on Korea site (<https://lib.bookson-korea.com>). The books will be available to you within just a month!



Home page for booksonkorea.com



VISITING SCHOLARS

Visiting Scholars and Faculty Maru

The Nam Center offers affiliation to scholars and fellows visiting the University of Michigan for an extended period. Visiting scholars and fellows participate in various Nam Center events and present their research at ‘Faculty Maru,’ a monthly luncheon attended by a community of scholars at U-M interested in Korea. During the 2024-2025 academic year, Nam Center hosted three scholars from Korea.



**Kyung Hwa Hong**, Artistic Director, Kyung-Hee University  
**Research Topic:** Korean Fan Dance and American Modern Dance: Exploring the Intersection through AI Technology

**Suyeon Ko**, Deputy Director, Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism  
**Research Topic:** Analysis of Spatial Structural Changes Due to Regional Development Policies and Private Investment in South Korea and the United States



**Sungze Yi**, Assistant Professor, Department of Architectural Engineering, Hongik University  
**Research Topic:** A Comparative Study of the Living Lab Approach for Sustainable Design and Evaluation of Energy-Independent Communities in the United States and South Korea

COLLOQUIUM SERIES

The Nam Center Colloquium Series is supported by the US Department of Education Title VI National Resource Center grant. The series brings Korean studies faculty and other scholars from around the world to Ann Arbor. The 2024-2025 series was held in-person and hybrid. The speakers also participated as featured guests in the center’s podcast series “Korea in Maize & Blue,” discussing their scholarly journeys in an informal, intergenerational conversation with Nam Center Undergraduate Fellows.



**October 1, 2024**  
**Jamie Doucette**, Reader in Human Geography, University of Manchester; “The Postdevelopmental State: Dilemmas of Economic Democratization in Contemporary South Korea”  
**October 22, 2024** **June Hee Kwon**, Associate Professor, Sacramento State University;

“Borderland Dreams: the Transnational Lives of Korean Chinese Workers”

**October 29, 2024** **Steven Lee**, Associate Professor of History, University of British Columbia; “Britain and the United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea, 1947-1948”

**November 19, 2024** **Theodore Hughes**, Korea Foundation Professor of Korean Studies in the Humanities, Columbia University; “The Enemy’s Property”

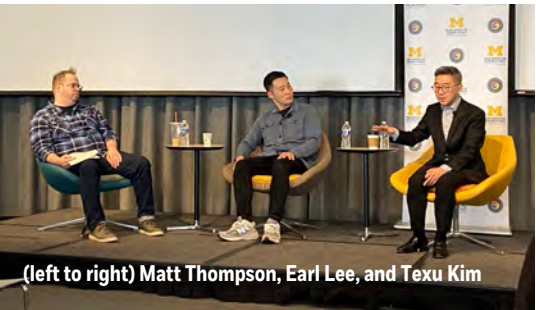
**February 18, 2025** **Texu Kim**, Associate Professor of Music Composition and Theory, San Diego State University, and **Earl Lee**, Music Director of the Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra; “Artist Talk with Texu Kim & Earl Lee”

**March 25, 2025** **Hye-Sook Wang**, Associate Professor of East Asian Studies, Brown University; “Korean Language Education in America 30 Years: Retrospect and Prospect”

**April 8, 2025** **Nicholas Harkness**, Modern Korean Economy and Society Professor of Anthropology, Harvard University; “Korean Waves before the Wave”



Theodore Hughes



(left to right) Matt Thompson, Earl Lee, and Texu Kim



KLP Faculty



**YuhJoo Byun** received her M.A. in Korean language and literature from Ewha Womans University and has been teaching at the University of Michigan since 2022. Her teaching draws on communicative and meaning-focused approaches.



**Jeehyae Chung** received her Ed.D. in bilingual and bicultural education from Teachers College, Columbia University. Her research interests include Korean language teaching pedagogy, specifically interactive and content-based approaches, as well as teaching Korean as a heritage language.



**Hunjin Jung** received an M.A. in curriculum and instruction from the University of Minnesota (Twin Cities) in 2010, specializing in second language acquisition. She also earned a TESOL certificate from the University of Utah. Since joining the University of Michigan in 2011, she has taught Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, and 4th-year Korean. Her

research interests include culture-based language learning, particularly the integration of cultural content into language instruction. She is also interested in effective approaches to teaching writing for both heritage and non-heritage learners, including the use of technology to support writing instruction.



**Jiyoung Kim** holds a Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction from the University of Washington. She taught in Korean elementary schools for eight years and has been teaching Korean language courses since 2014. Her research focuses on using technology in language teaching and learning, as well as on supporting language learners at various levels.



**Soyeon Kim, KLP Director**, holds a Ph.D. in applied linguistics from the University of California, Los Angeles. Her research interests include discourse analysis, corpus linguistics, and language pedagogy. She teaches Korean at all levels and is particularly interested in integrating authentic media, digital tools, and community-based learning to help students connect language study with their lives beyond the classroom.

KLP Events



Language Tables

Hosted by KLP faculty and student staff, language tables help students deepen their experience with the Korean language, culture, and society in a participatory setting. This year’s language tables included a game day, a Pepero night, a Lunar New Year’s celebration, and a ramen; movie night, in addition to three conversation tables covering a variety of topics.

Seoul National University Exchange



KLP students engage in online exchanges with students at Seoul National University (SNU) throughout the year. In 2024–2025, students enrolled in Third-Year Korean and a brand new minicourse titled “Cross-Cultural Connect: Virtual Language Exchange with Korea,” along with several student volunteers, participated in these exchanges. Additionally, SNU hosted its 5th study-abroad program on the U-M campus in July 2025, with KLP and the Language Resource Center providing curricular and logistical support as a partner institution, including recruiting KLP students for in-person exchange sessions.



Community Connection

In Winter 2025, students enrolled in ASIAN-LAN 479, an experiential community engagement course titled “Teaching Korean in the Community,” organized two special events for the Korean adoptee community in collaboration with the Nam Center. At the first event, students introduced Korean language and culture through the theme of food, covering Korean table manners and customs, popular recipes, and how to order in Korean at restaurants. The second event offered useful tips for traveling in Korea, including reading and understanding signs and using public transit, followed by traditional Korean games. Both events were well-attended and highly appreciated by adoptees and their families.

6th Midwest Speech Contest



At the 2025 Midwest Speech Contest, held at the Korean Education Center of Chicago in April, three KLP students, Felishia Tian, Margaret Elfring, and Adiba Chaudry, participated as contestants at different levels. Felishia and Margaret both received honorable mentions in the beginner and

intermediate levels, respectively. In addition to competing, the students enjoyed cultural performances and attended the regional preliminary of the 2025 Quiz on Korea Chicago as audience members. The event featured fun and informative questions about Korean history, culture, and language.

99th Test of Proficiency in Korean (TOPIK)

Since 2019, KLP has served as the only testing center in Michigan for TOPIK, the standardized exam administered by the Korean government. Over 30 test takers utilized the Michigan testing center this year, including 15 KLP students who were fully funded by the Nam Center to take the test free of charge. It was an excellent opportunity to measure KLP students’ proficiency on an objective scale, with results ranging from Level 1 to Level 4.

Faculty Professional Development Trip

With generous support from the Nam Center, all KLP faculty members traveled to Atlanta, Georgia, on February 27–28 for the 1st Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTL) Workshop. This event was organized by the Atlanta Global Studies Center, the Center for Urban Language Teaching and Research, the World Languages and Culture Department, and the Downtown Library at Georgia State University. The KLP team gave a presentation titled “Integrating Virtual Reality (VR) into Korean Language Classes” and also visited Parsons Elementary School to learn about its successful English-Korean dual language immersion program.

2nd Nam Speech Contest

The contest honors the memory of Elder Sang-Yong Nam, a benefactor whose generosity and dedication helped create momentum for KLP’s establishment in the early 1990s. After more than twenty years of successfully running the Nam



Essay Contest, the contest transitioned to a speech format in 2024. This year, all KLP students—totaling over 130—participated in the preliminary round as part of their course requirements. The finalists were reviewed by KLP faculty, and the winners were recognized with scholarships of up to \$300 at the KLP End-of-the-Year Celebration in April.

2024–2025 Awardees:

- 1st Place**  
*Beginner Level:* Felishia Tian  
*Intermediate Level:* Margaret Elfring  
*Advanced Level:* Brian Georgis
- 2nd Place**  
*Beginner Level:* Vivian Liu,  
Muhammad Aniq Abdul Rahman  
*Intermediate Level:* Kaiyan Li  
*Advanced Level:* Toby Buckfire

KLP Faculty Workshop with Professor Wang

Professor Hye-Sook Wang at Brown University offered a special workshop for KLP faculty in March during her visit to U-M for the Nam Center Colloquium Series. Addressing a variety of questions from KLP faculty, Professor Wang spoke on the current state of Korean education in the US, including heritage language teaching, Korean textbooks, and curriculum and program development.



## SIGNATURE PROGRAMS

## Korean Studies e-School

In 2024–2025, the Big Ten Academic Alliance (BTAA) Korean Studies e-School program entered its twelfth year and Phase V with continued support from the Korea Foundation (KF). The program enables the fourteen member universities of the Big Ten Consortium to share Korea-related courses across campuses in real time through video conferencing technology, removing geographic barriers to access. It enhances and diversifies Korean Studies course offerings, expands student enrollment across the Midwest, and fosters collaboration in teaching and curriculum development.



Faculty liaisons and hosts at the annual Korean Studies e-School meeting, held at York University.

### Fall 2024 Courses:

**Introduction to Korean Linguistics**, Hyo Sang Lee, *Indiana University*

**Cultural Fusion: Korean Pop Culture in a Globalized World**, Sang-Seok Yoon, *University of Iowa*

**Contemporary Korea through the Lens of International Migration**, Jaeun Kim, *University of Michigan*

**Spectacular History of Korea**, Se-Mi Oh, *University of Michigan*

**Language and Society of the Two Koreas**, Hangtae Cho, *University of Minnesota*

**Performing Korean Diasporas: Korean and Korean American Experiences from the 20th Century to the Present**, Hayana Kim, *Ohio State University*

**Imagining Disaster: Korea and the Apocalyptic Modern**, Jae Won Chung, *Rutgers University*

### Winter 2025 Courses:

**Korean Politics**, Ji Yeon (Jean) Hong, *University of Michigan*

**English in Korea: Globalization, Symbolic Values, Policies, Challenges, Opportunities**, Susan Strauss, *Penn State University*

**Readings in Modern Korean History / Historiography of Modern Korea**, Alyssa Park, *University of Iowa*, Charles Kim, *University of Wisconsin*



Student presenters together with Yonsei University student representatives.

In 2025, the Korean Studies e-School held its inaugural **Korean Studies Research Symposium and Competition** on July 5. Ten students enrolled in e-School courses were nominated to conduct independent research on Korea-related topics. In addition to presenting their papers at the symposium, these students also participated in the Yonsei International Summer School (YISS). Carina Geissler of Ohio State University received the Grand Prize, while Michael Delphia (University of Michigan) and Destiny Kanning (Michigan State University) were recognized with the Outstanding Paper Award. The event was a meaningful opportunity for students to share their scholarship, learn from one another, and form lasting connections and friendships. The symposium was co-sponsored by the Big Ten Academic Alliance (BTAA), the Korea Foundation, and the Underwood International College of Yonsei University.

**Michael Delphia**, University of Michigan, *Baseball in Colonial Korea: Whimoon High School's 1923 Cinderella Run and Media Identities Under Empire*

**Carina Geissler**, Ohio State University, *Fishing for (Im)possibilities: A Deep Dive into Cheon Myeong-kwan's Whale and the Cresting Wave of Korean Magical Realism*

**Ramya Govardhan**, Ohio State University, *India and Korea's 인연 (Fateful Connection)*

**Christyanna Ibarra**, Rutgers University, *The Hierarchical Hitlist: The Effects of K-pop on Asian Bodies and Ethnicities*



Award winners with the judges of the inaugural Korean Studies Research Symposium and Competition



(Left to right) Sharon Yoon, Angie Heo, and Gil-Soo Han.



**Colin Janak**, University of Michigan, *The Male Gazed: Understanding Hegemonic Masculinity in the Context of Plastic Surgery in South Korea*

**Destiny Kanning**, Michigan State University, *Policy Addendums to Resolve South Korea's Emergency Room Admission Crisis*

**Tin Myat Myat Khine**, Penn State University, *K-pop Catering to Global Audiences Via English Incorporation*

**Audrey Maier**, Penn State University, *Korea-English Code-Switching within K-Pop Lyrics*

**Nicole Siembieda**, University of Michigan, *The South Korean Surveillance State: Breaking Down ROK Intelligence Agencies*

**Jobin Terranova**, University of Iowa, *The Chart Success of All-English K-Pop Songs Compared to K-pop Songs with Korean Lyrics in Different Global Markets*

## Perspectives on Contemporary Korea Conference

The Nam Center held its fourteenth annual conference on contemporary Korea: "The Politics of Migration, Diaspora, and Race in Transnational Korea." The event was co-organized by Professor Jaeun Kim, Korea Foundation Professor Korean Studies and Associate Professor of Sociology. The conference featured a wide range of panels with twenty presenters from three continents. There was also a featured keynote by Pei-Chia Lan, Distinguished Professor of Sociology at the National Taiwan University.

Over two days and six panels, participants explored the politics of migration, diaspora, and race in transnational Korea with an interdisciplinary and comparative approach, and with broader East Asia as a comparative horizon. Following the interdisciplinary approach of the conference, panelists came from a range of different backgrounds ranging from sociology, anthropology, political science, and media studies.



## SIGNATURE PROGRAMS

## Michigan Korean Studies Summer Institute



The Nam Center held its third Michigan Korean Studies Summer institute (MiKSSI) from June 22 to June 27, 2025, with a grant from the Academy of Korean Studies. This one-week residential intensive program focuses on collaborative learning, collective thinking, and interdisciplinary agenda-setting around a key critical issue central to Korean Studies, which was “Literature and Korea’s Twentieth Century” this year. Thirteen graduate students from institutions throughout North America brought their own projects and disciplines into conversation with faculty instructors. The seminar leaders included Kyeong-Hee Choi of University of Chicago, Sunyoung Park of University of Southern California, and Youngju Ryu of University of Michigan. The week also included talks from Young-Chae Seo (Seoul National University), Bodurae Kwon (Korea University),

Hye Ryoung Lee (Sungkyunkwan University), Youkyung Son (Seoul National University), and Dong Ho Kang (Inha University).

“Participating in the MiKSSI felt like a dream come true. I was surrounded by brilliant minds who shared the same passion for and commitment to the future of Korean literary studies. It was the best of both worlds, where academic and professional growth went hand in hand with the formation of genuine friendships. In an incredibly collegial and supportive environment, we listened to riveting lectures, engaged in productive discussions, and gave one another incisive feedback to improve our own scholarly work.” - 2025 MiKSSI Participant

## Podcast

The Nam Center published the fourth season of its podcast series, “Korea in Maize and Blue: How Did You Get Here?” This podcast focuses on the journey that leads scholars to Korean studies. The series is hosted by Dr. Rory Walsh, who is joined by an undergraduate fellow to interview an established scholar. The informal, intergenerational conversations that result trace the guests’ lives as researchers and highlights their advice for younger scholars.

This season’s episodes include interviews with:

**Jamie Doucette**, Reader in Human Geography, *University of Manchester*

**June Hee Kwon**, Associate Professor, *Sacramento State University*

**Juhn Ahn**, Associate Professor, *University of Michigan*

**Texu Kim** (Associate Professor, *San Diego State University*) & **Earl Lee** (Music Director of the Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra)

**Nicholas Harkness**, Professor of Anthropology, *Harvard University*

**Se-Mi Oh**, Associate Professor, *University of Michigan*



## Summer in Michigan

The Summer in Michigan Program in English Language (Su:M) ran for the third year under a partnership with the Youth Ladder Program of the Gyeonggi Provincial government. The program is an intensive four-week academic English and American cultural experience for 30 Gyeonggi-do youth residents. This year was the first year of the program run solely by the Nam Center for Korean Studies. The program is enriched by the participation of ten U-M students who serve as cultural liaisons, providing peer mentoring in language practice and university life. The program features a curriculum focusing on developing students’ communication skills, art and performance, and culminates in a performance by students. In addition, students experienced student life at the University of Michigan, while participating in cultural and volunteer activities in and around Ann Arbor and Detroit, including volunteering at local preschools.

## 2025 Cultural Liaisons:

Toby Buckfire	Nicole Kim	Terraya Salter
Neha Gundala	Theodore Koch	Matthew Yeh
Ndidi Igbozuruike	Heami Oh	
Sarah Jin	Ami Petcavage	



## OUTREACH

## Korean Cinema NOW



Director Dong-il Shin meeting with the audience after the screening of *Mungyeong: More Than Roads*.

Each winter term, the Korean Cinema Now series brings the finest contemporary popular Korean cinema to Ann Arbor, showcasing films released in Korea over the past few years. Screenings are presented in Korean with English subtitles at the historic Michigan and State Theaters. The 2025 lineup attracted an audience of about 1,000 attendees. At each screening, the renowned chef Ji Hye Kim of Miss Kim generously provided Korean-style snacks, promoting Korean food and culture within the community. After the screening of the final film, *Mungyeong: More Than Roads*, director Dong-il Shin met with our audience in person for a Q&A session.

**January 18** 서울의 봄  
(12.12: *The Day*, Sung Soo Kim, 2023)

**January 25** 길 위에 김대중  
(*Kim Dae-Jung Must Not Die*, Min Hwanki, 2024)

**February 8** 파묘  
(*Exhuma*, Jang Jae-hyun, 2024)

**February 22** 노랑  
(*Noryang: Deadly Sea*, Kim Han-min, 2023)

**March 8** 베테랑 2  
(*I, The Executioner*, Ryoo Seung-wan, 2024)

**March 15** 보스톤  
(*Road to Boston/1947*, Kang Jekyu, 2023)

**April 12** 하얼빈  
(*Harbin*, Woo Min-ho, 2025)

**April 19** 문경  
(*Mungyeong: More than Roads*, Shin Dong-il, 2024)



Ji Hye Kim of Miss Kim Restaurant providing snacks at the Korean Cinema NOW screenings



## Korea from a Single Shard



The “Korea from a Single Shard” program is based on the novel *A Single Shard* by Linda Sue Park. The program provides Michigan teachers with the opportunity to expose their students to Korean culture through literature and art. Students take a field trip to the umma for a docent guided tour focused on Korean celadon located throughout the Woon-Hyung lee and Korea Foundation Gallery.

The trip also features a hands-on Shipwreck dig activity, where students work in teams to excavate model shipwrecks, putting together clues to track the ancient trading routes of celadon. The activity brings the locale and travel of Tree-ear, the main character of the book, into reality for the students. This year, ninety 5th grade students from Eberwhite Elementary School and Our Lady Queen of Martyrs Catholic School participated in this program.



## East Asia NRC Teacher Workshop

On May 4, 2025, as a member of the University of Michigan’s East Asia National Resource Center (NRC), the Nam Center held a workshop for educators at Weiser Hall. The workshop attracted 18 educators from various grade levels across Michigan. Attendees received free books, resources, and were eligible for State Continuing Education Clock Hours (SCECH) credits. The workshop was structured around three content blocks (Korea, China, Japan), with the title ‘Connecting Family and the World: Using East Asian Children’s Literature in the Classroom,’ and concluded with an author talk (Kyunghee Kim of *See Us Bloom*) and discussion. The key session presented by the Nam Center, “Classroom Hands-On Teaching Kit: Korean Art, Culture, & History,” highlighted the children’s novel *A Single Shard* by Linda Sue Park. Dr. Rory Walsh introduced the background and the design of the hands-on activity she designed for students based upon the book, and Maria DeRosia, the 5th grade teacher at Eberwhite Elementary School, presented how she has incorporated the book and the field trip to the UMMA and Dr. Walsh’s hands-on activity in her curriculum.





## SPECIAL EVENTS

## Seollal Party

The Nam Center celebrated Seollal, the Lunar New Year's Day with traditional Korean holiday foods and festive games, creating a "home away from home" for our faculty, affiliated faculty, staff, and fellows. Through these events, we strive to foster a warm and inclusive environment—one that builds connections and provides a sense of belonging for our members at the University of Michigan.



Participants learning Korean dance movements with visiting scholar Kyung Hwa Hong.



## Ambassadors' Dialogue: U.S.-Korea Relations in the Indo-Pacific Era



On Sep 9, 2024, the Nam Center for Korean Studies and the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy's Weiser Diplomacy Center hosted a panel discussion at the University of Michigan Ann Arbor, featuring South Korean Ambassador to the U.S. Hyundong

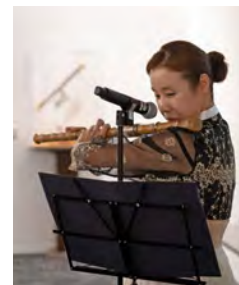
Cho and U.S. Ambassador to South Korea Philip Goldberg, moderated by former U.S. Ambassador to Brunei Dan Shields and introduced by Weiser Diplomacy Center Director Susan Page. Over the past seventy years, the United States and the Republic of Korea built a strong security alliance, economic partnership, and people-to-people connections, further strengthened by recent U.S.-Korea-Japan trilateral cooperation and ongoing tensions with China, Russia, and North Korea. The ambassadors discussed the significance of the U.S.-Korea alliance and its impact on the Indo-Pacific region, economic ties, and Michigan, as part of KEI's Ambassadors' Dialogue Program, which aimed to highlight the importance of U.S.-Korea relations.



## Mid-Autumn Full Moon Festival



The Nam Center for Korean Studies, along with the Lieberthal-Rogel Center for Chinese Studies, U-M Astronomy, and the Center for Japanese Studies, hosted a Mid-Autumn Moon celebration at the Judy & Stanley Frankel Detroit Observatory on September 17, 2024. The event featured a traditional Korean Daegeum performance by MJ Shim and included presentations on Chinese lunar astronomy and exploration, as well as Japanese lunar celebrations. Attendees participated in observatory tours and telescope viewing of the Moon. Registration covered all activities, while walk-ins could join in on tours and patio telescope observations on a first-come, first-served basis.





## SPECIAL EVENTS

## Chuseok Party

The festival marked the thirteenth annual celebration of Korean Thanksgiving at the Nam Center on September 15, 2024. More than 1,000 attendees—including U-M students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members of all ages—had the opportunity to experience Korean culture, cuisine, and arts through a variety of hands-on activities. The festival's main highlight was a series of performances by seven student groups, along with a special haegeum performance by Abin Kim, an eighth-grade student from Meads Mill Middle School. Many families with children especially enjoyed engaging in traditional Korean games and crafts.



## Election Double Feature: *First Vote* and *Chosen*

In collaboration with the Lieberthal-Rogel Center for Chinese Studies (LRCCS), the Nam Center hosted a film screening event on November 3, 2024, highlighting Asian American perspectives on electoral politics. The program featured the following two films:

*First Vote* (2020, 60 minutes), directed by Yi Chen, examined Chinese American electoral organizing in the swing states of North Carolina and Ohio between 2016 and 2018. The screening featured a virtual guest appearance by documentary participant Kaiser Kuo, host and co-founder of The Sinica Podcast, with LRCCS postdoctoral fellow Yukun Zeng serving as discussant.

*Chosen* (2022, 89 minutes), directed by Joseph Juhn, chronicled five Korean Americans with a wide range of political views as they ran for the US Congress in 2020. Director Joseph Juhn, a lawyer-turned-filmmaker passionate about diasporic narratives, made a special in-person guest appearance.



Joseph Juhn and Yukun Zeng

## Special Webinar: Democratic Crisis in South Korea & Its International Implications

Following President Yoon's declaration of martial law on December 3, 2024, and the subsequent political crisis in South Korea, this webinar brought together seven distinguished political scientists specializing in comparative politics and international relations to share their perspectives. The event, co-sponsored by the Nam Center and the Department of Political Science, had approximately 160 registrants.



**Moderator:**

**Ji Yeon (Jean) Hong** *University of Michigan*

**Panelists:**

**Inbok Rhee** *Yonsei University*

**Stephan Haggard** *UCSD*

**Yeilim Cheong** *UCSD*

**Joan E. Cho** *Wesleyan University*

**Joshua Byun** *Boston College*

**Boram Lee** *London School of Economics and Political Science*

## Transpacific Marxism: Theory, Practice, Solidarity

East Asia and Latin America have an intertwined history of experimentation with Marxist theory and practice, which has informed past and present efforts to build solidarity across the Pacific. The symposium, held on April 25, 2025, "Transpacific Marxism: Theory, Practice, Solidarity" brought together leading scholars from East Asian and Latin American Studies for a day of panel presentations and roundtable discussions exploring the multifaceted phenomenon termed transpacific Marxism. The program was composed of three themes: Thinking the Transpacific, East Asian Elective Affinities, and Latin American Correspondences.





SPECIAL EVENTS

Pan-tastic: Korean Singer of Tales Meets Jazz

The Nam Center’s dynamic programming continues to bridge diverse cultures and artistic forms at the University of Michigan. “Pan-tastic: Korean Singer of Tales Meets Jazz” beautifully exemplified this mission by uniting the improvisational, participatory traditions of jazz and Korean Pansori in a collaborative performance held across all three U-M campuses—Ann Arbor, Dearborn, and Flint. Drawing inspiration from the philosophy of “PAN” (판)—which in Korean signifies a vibrant artistic gathering and, as the prefix “Pan-,” suggests inclusivity—the event created a unique space for genres and audiences to truly come together. The concert featured an acclaimed roster of artists: Lisa Sung (U-M DMA candidate and 2022 John Stites Jazz Award winner), Hee-Won Park (nationally celebrated Pansori master), Tom Knific (renowned bassist and composer), Kevin “Bujo” Jones (versatile percussionist and MSU faculty member), and Andrew Bishop (distinguished saxophonist, multi-instrumentalist, and professor at U-M’s School of Music, Theatre & Dance). Together, these musicians seamlessly blended jazz and Korean traditional music, breaking down the barriers between performers and audience, and fully embodying the participatory and boundary-crossing spirit of “PANx.”



On February 17, 2025, Matt Albert (violin) and Matthew Thompson (piano) performed Texu Kim’s Sonata Amabile, featuring interactive discussions with the composer about the piece and his compositional process between movements. Composer Texu Kim, recognized for his vibrant and culturally connected music, is an associate professor at San Diego State University and received international honors, with works performed by major orchestras worldwide. Dr. Thompson, Assistant Professor of Music at U-M and a Nam Center core faculty, is acclaimed for his collaborative work with renowned artists and his new book on video game music, as well as his influential research on Korean art song. Matt Albert, Chair of Chamber Music at U-M, is a Grammy-winning violinist and violist known for his work with ensembles such as Eighth Blackbird and Nu Deco Ensemble.

Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra’s 2024-2025 Season Opener

The Nam Center proudly sponsored world-renowned Korean pianist Sunwoo Yekwon as the featured performer for the Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra’s season opener on September 27, 2024. In 2017, Yekwon became the first Korean pianist to win the gold medal at the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition and has since continued to lead a distinguished international career as a soloist.



STUDENT GROUPS



**Daebak 3** is all-male K-pop/Hip-Hop dance crew at the University of Michigan. They actively perform in major dance and cultural events around campus year-round and occasionally create dance covers. Korea is currently a world-renowned country for its progress and achievements in breakdancing. **Element 1** is the only breakdancing club at U-M.



**Female Gayo** is a female K-pop dance team under the Korean American Student Association.

**The Korea Leadership Group** aims to connect the various Korean communities at the University of Michigan by increasing interactions with alumni, hosting social networking events, and serving as a stepping stone for those interested in developing professional skills and personalized career opportunities. They focus on spreading awareness of Korean culture and the recognition of influential Korean leaders in and out of Michigan through various career fairs and an annual leadership Summit. **Konnect** is a co-ed K-pop dance group that aims to provide a space for all those interested in dance to come together and have fun. They provide opportunities for all interests and levels to showcase dance. They host K-pop dance tutorials at the mason hall posting wall, post member spotlights on instagram, and have a performance subunit that performs at various events around campus. **The Korean International Student Association** is an organization that promotes the unity and well-being of Korean students at U-M. KISA organizes a series of cultural and social events that bring incoming and current students together. **K-motion** is a Korean pop dance group that performs at various events held on campus. Their purpose is to create lasting relationships through dance as they participate in these events. The group specializes in popular Korean pop songs. **The Korean American Student Association** promotes Korean and Korean-American awareness and culture through academic, political, and social activities by interacting with surrounding communities. **The Korean-American Scientists and Engineers Association** was established to give young, intelligent students opportunities to connect with professionals and develop a broader career foundation as scientists and engineers.

**The Korean Student Association - Graduate** is for Korean graduate students, visiting scholars, research fellows, and the faculty community on campus to generate greater interaction within the community and to increase awareness about the Korean culture outside the community. **The Korea Business Club** at Ross School of Business is a graduate student organization open to all MBA students who are interested in Korean cultures, communities and businesses. **Liberty in North Korea’s** purpose is to foster leadership development through the understanding of refugees and the North Korean people. **Seoul Juice** is a Korean American singing and instrumental cover group.



**Michigan Taekwondo Club** is a student-run club that teaches the fundamental aspects of taekwondo. The team competes across the country as well as locally.



**Sinaboro** is a Korean traditional drumming group, founded in 1998, and has had members of all backgrounds learn and perform *Samulnori*. Sinaboro seeks to share Korean culture with the Ann Arbor community and beyond through *Samulnori*.





2024 Chuseok Party student volunteers, undergrad fellows, staff, and faculty of the Nam Center

# You Can Help!

Gifts to the Nam Center for Korean Studies help support research, teaching, the Korean language program and the Korean Collection in the Asia library. The Center also helps student organizations, provides graduate fellowships, and sponsors visiting scholars, public lectures, our film series and many other special events. Your gift will also help us recruit and retain the finest students and faculty.

For information about ways to support the Nam Center for Korean Studies, please scan the QR code:



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