

Translation and Manchukuo Nation-Building: A Case of Korean Authors, Japanese Texts, and Chinese Translations

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On July 7, 1941, *A Selection of Korean Short Stories* was published in the Japanese puppet state of Manchukuo by a Chinese editor named Wang He. The collection features eight short stories by prominent literary figures from the Korean peninsula, all of which were written in, or translated from, Japanese into Chinese. Yet several Manchurian Korean writers were at the same time trying to expand their readership, and they wrote in Korean, not Japanese. Some even began to work with well-known local Chinese writers on translations.

What is the significance of the collection's *mélange* of writers from the Korean peninsula when local Korean writers were present and willing participants in cross-cultural exchange? Who translated the Korean texts for the collection and what were their motives?

Scholars have contended that ethnic nationalism was the key factor in bringing Korean writing to the attention of Chinese writers. In contrast, this study demonstrates how ideological differences among Chinese literary coteries—not ethnic competition or commiseration between Chinese and Koreans—determined how and why Korean works were read. I argue that translation, especially its utility in nation-building, led to the publication of *A Selection of Korean Short Stories*. By considering the uniqueness of the Manchukuo experiment and experience, this paper also elucidates the less apparent cultural productions and exchanges that contribute to large-scale nation-building projects.