

Developing Social Science-based Chinese Studies in East Asia: Geopolitics, Discipline, Knowledge

*Claire Seungeun Lee**
Inha University

Abstract

For its neighbouring countries in East Asia, China has always played a vital role not only in politics, economics, trade, and cultural exchanges, but also in the development of the discipline of Chinese Studies. This paper, focussing particularly on social science studies on China, explores how geopolitical contexts play a significant role in constructing Chinese Studies as a discipline in Japan and South Korea. This study primarily argues that geopolitics influence both the development of Chinese Studies and its intellectual cohorts. This paper further argues that the field of Chinese Studies generates knowledge not only for scholars within the university domain, but also for public audiences in the non-academic public domain.

***Keywords:** Chinese Studies, South Korea, Japan, geopolitics, generations, knowledge*

1. Introduction

The continued rise of China is widely recognized in tropes that point to its massive economy, high export levels, and deep interconnectedness with other countries; in particular, this is well recognized by its two East Asian neighbours – South Korea and Japan. Dynamic China, transformed from a developing socialist country to a growing post-socialist *global* power in the twenty-first century, is symbolically and materially important to both South Korea and Japan across history. The growing political and economic influences of China beyond this sphere have allowed Chinese Studies to develop as a prominent field in many more countries, as well (Ngeow, Ling, & Fan, 2014, p. 103). With the interconnected rise of China and emerging geopolitical shifts, the study of China has become particularly popular in East Asia.

This study argues that geopolitically-significant relations serve as a force behind the development of Chinese Studies in Japan and South Korea, and shape corresponding intellectual cohorts who influence the development of this field through the generation and distribution of knowledge. In this paper, “Chinese Studies” is defined as the field of social science-based area studies on China, excluding the humanities.¹ Focusing upon China vis-à-vis social science enables us to understand the inseparability of the discipline from geopolitics and the dynamics of current events. This article, in particular, investigates how local and geopolitical contexts play a significant role in constructing and disseminating Chinese Studies as a discipline in these two East Asian societies. The following questions are examined in the paper: first, how geopolitics influence the development of the discipline and its intellectual cohorts and, second, how knowledge about China and the field of Chinese Studies is understood and utilized as a public commodity. This study contributes to the burgeoning literature on the origins and development of Chinese Studies in Asia. Recent contributions in this area advance our knowledge of how Southeast Asian countries conceptualize Chinese Studies (Ngeow et al., 2014; Shih, 2014; Shih, Chou, & Nguyen, 2014); however, the East Asian context continues to merit serious examination.

Based on publications, documents, websites, as well as interviews with Chinese Studies scholars in Japan and South Korea, this article attempts to answer the two questions posed. This paper argues that the discipline of Chinese Studies is not only developed by geopolitics; geopolitics influences the scholars in the field and their training.

What are unique characteristics of Chinese Studies in Japan and South Korea? First, in terms of academic disciplines, these two countries possess strong Area Studies traditions and boast long histories of studying foreign countries. This particular context for Area Studies, which itself is not only an academic discipline but also an applied science and a public commodity, serves as an important base for the development of Chinese Studies as a disciplinary subfield. Second, as China’s two nearest neighbouring countries to the east, Japan and South Korea can easily be framed as witnesses to China’s dramatic transformations and economic upgrades. In addition, Japan and South Korea have shared cultural proximity and history, as well as high connectivity in regards to trade, economics, business, culture and education with China. Trilateral relations are inevitable; the three countries are economically interdependent. China is the largest trading partner for Japan and South Korea. Perhaps the most salient factor, geographical proximity has influenced the ways in which Japan and South Korea cope with China’s rise. For example, Japanese and Korean factories moved to China’s East Coast in the 1990s and 2000s to access China’s market and low-cost production.

With increases in labour wages, their factories recently relocated to western China, or even to other countries, for cheaper labour (Kim & Lee, 2016). As key informational sources, Chinese Studies in Japan and South Korea were expected to provide solutions for addressing such changes in bilateral economic dynamics with China. Another factor that illustrates the strength of these connections is the flow of Chinese international students and tourists to Japan and South Korea being larger than those to any other country (Lee, 2013). Third, in the era of China's rise, it is important for neighbouring South Korea and Japan to prepare for and actively respond to developing geopolitical shifts. Under such conditions, "understanding contemporary China" along the field of Chinese Studies is particularly important for China's neighbours. As such, prime geographical position has given rise to the predictable development and dissemination of Chinese Studies.

This article is organized as follows. The research opens with an examination of data on Chinese Studies, first as a humanities subfield and more recently as a social sciences-based discipline. With two analytical lenses on the field, examining (a) disciplines and intellectuals and (b) knowledge as a public "good", discussion then addresses the ways in which geopolitics shape Chinese Studies as one of the largest and most influential foreign country disciplines in Japan and South Korea. Key similarities and differences are highlighted. The paper closes by discussing implications for Chinese Studies against the rise of China, and shifting geopolitical relationships along the "Taiwan factor".

2. The Emergence of Chinese Studies in Japan and South Korea

2.1. Social Science-based Chinese Studies and Area Studies

In the early production of scholarship on China as a field of knowledge, or discipline, a large number of scholars in South Korea and Japan tended towards concentrations in literature and linguistics.² This led to the creation of a Department of Chinese Literature and a Department of Linguistics, rather than a Department of Chinese Studies, in many South Korean and Japanese universities. Designated Chinese Studies departments, however, tend to include diverse social science disciplines, such as Political Science, Economics, Management and Sociology with a particular focus on China. Unlike the cases of Chinese literature and Chinese linguistics, the Chinese Studies departments with a social science base can be categorized into two strands: one is explicitly grouped with the China-related departments (i.e. stand-alone Chinese Studies Department); another is located under the traditional social science disciplines (i.e. sub-departmental branches of formal

disciplines like political science and economics). In the case of Japan and South Korea, Chinese Studies is often associated with the former, as most of the social science departments in Japan and South Korea primarily centre on local societies.

Inheriting such traditions, Chinese Studies in Japan and South Korea initially emerged as studies of the humanist traditions of Chinese language, literature and culture, which are often understood in global context as “Sinology”, and a social sciences-based domain for Chinese Studies developed later.

The social science-based school of Chinese Studies, on the other hand, can be better explained in the context of the development of Area Studies. Asian Studies departments,³ offering interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary programs, can be found in many universities, particularly those located in the United States.⁴ This is by and large a legacy of an intellectual curiosity in Asia and Asian societies as “exotic others”, and, to a certain extent, a reflection of western colonial tradition. By contrast, Asian universities that have not inherited a western colonial legacy lack a tendency to maintain “Asian Studies” as a separate discipline.⁵ Area Studies programs by region and country, however, exist in East Asian universities; in part due to the general academic influence of the United States, but also due to the development of Area Studies⁶ as a colonial legacy of systematizing research on other countries and colonial “possessions”. The study of foreign countries as a social science, however, is a rather new phenomenon because traditional social science disciplines, including political science, economics and sociology, are still primarily home to the study of local societies.

In Japan and South Korea, Area Studies have followed similar footsteps. On the one hand, Area Studies⁷ (地域研究) in Japan started to appear in the 1950s, as an inquiry of knowledge about others during the Cold War period, and the discipline expanded in the 1980s and 1990s along with Japanese economic development. Tokyo University of Foreign Studies was the first university to offer such programs (Takeuchi, 2012, p. 10). On the other hand, in South Korea, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies has language- and area-based departments, and is home to foreign language and country studies program. Later, the Kim Young Sam government of South Korea (1993-1998), which rapidly embraced globalization (*segye-hwa*) as a tenet of the state agenda, established a set of nine graduate schools for International/Area Studies in 1997.⁸ In addition, a shortage of experts on trade and international political economy provided the impetus to establish more Area Studies programs. These graduate schools have received substantial funding to foster a pool of talent with international capital, and over the years have become significant sites of knowledge production.

2.2. Existing Scholarship on the Development of Chinese Studies

Despite the impetus for the creation of the discipline of Chinese Studies in Japan, a systematic study of the trajectory of Chinese Studies from local researchers has yet to be found.⁹ Only one exception, an overall reflection on the status of Chinese Studies in Japan, has been offered by Kokubun (Kokubun, 2001). Otherwise, few Japanese scholars have attempted to discuss issues and problems encountered by those engaging with Chinese Studies in Japan (Ushijima, 2008; Yumino, 2009); rethinking Chinese Studies or scholarly work on China as a discipline has yet to be fully explored. However, unlike domestic Japanese scholars, Chinese scholars based in Japan working in Chinese Studies appear to focus on specific economics, politics or other issues to investigate the overall development of Chinese Studies. Several of these scholars have commented on the development of Chinese Studies in Japan: Yan (2009) made a speech on the future of Chinese Studies in Japan in the context of Japan-China cooperation; Shu (2012) offers an extensive account of the Japanese Association of Chinese Studies as an example of investigating Chinese Studies developments in post-war Japan.

In contrast with Japan, Chinese Studies in South Korea have been analyzed extensively, both in general and with respect to specific subjects, because Korean scholars were urged to become China experts within a short period of time after the normalization of relations between Seoul and Beijing in 1992. First, general overviews of the discipline of Chinese Studies were investigated by Chun (1998) and Kim and Chun (1996). These two scholars observe the origin and development of Area and International Studies in Korea. Second, the development of Chinese Studies is particularly well-discussed in the context of Chinese politics, arguably because a majority of these scholars come from relevant social science backgrounds. In addition, geopolitics plays a critical role in the emergence of Chinese politics as a prominent area of inquiry in South Korean academia. This is in accordance with the distribution of Korean scholars who study China's international relations and politics. Along the line of post-Cold War thinking, it became imperative for Korean scholars to learn more about socialist China to manage foreign relations with China. Studies on Chinese politics have also benefited from South Korea's understanding of North Korea (A8, Interview, December 2016).¹⁰ As a result of this, a large number of such Korean scholars have conducted research on China's international and domestic political issues. For instance, Chung (2000) investigated Chinese political science as a method and area of research. Chung et al. (2005) further investigated Chinese political science studies in South Korea by comparatively analyzing *Sino-Soviet Studies* (in Korean) – one of the most prominent journals on China – and *The China Quarterly* for sources, method and writing. In a similar vein,

Kim (2006) explored Chinese Studies vis-à-vis politics in South Korea by interviewing a number of scholars. It is noted that the abstract and title of Kim's article may give the impression that the paper attempts to focus on Chinese Studies in general. However, her discussion is restricted to Chinese politics, and only those that are in line with the investigation of Chinese Studies in South Korea. In a nutshell, Korean scholars subsume both macro level reviews of Chinese Studies and studies on Chinese politics are subsumed under "Chinese politics".

2.3. Intellectual Generations and Knowledge as a Public "Good"

Karl Mannheim's concept of "generations" as generational units is useful for understanding the multigenerational lineage of Chinese Studies intellectuals in Japan and South Korea. Mannheim notes, "The sociological phenomenon of generations is ultimately based on the biological rhythm of birth and death ... it possesses certain characteristics peculiar to itself, characteristics in no way borrowed from the basic phenomenon" (1952, p. 290). In this regard, "intellectual generations" are composed of people born in a same period with shared experiences of social, geopolitical and historical changes in society, that shape a similar basis for their scholarly training, production of knowledge, expertise, and sense of mission to address public needs. These interlinked factors contribute to ways in which Chinese Studies develops as a discipline, and how knowledge is produced as a public "good", or commodity. Intellectuals in the same cohort recognized the idea of being located generationally. This is echoed by "The fact of belonging to the same generation or age group, have this in common, that both endow the individuals sharing in them with a common location in the social and historical process, and thereby limit them to a specific range of potential experience, predisposing them from a certain characteristic mode of thought and experience, and a characteristic type of historically relevant action" (Mannheim, 1952, p. 291).

Chinese Studies with a social science focus is understood not only as an academic discipline, but more importantly it is also perceived as an applied science that offers a public good to local Japanese and South Korean societies. This is an established view of Japanese and Koreans scholars, universities and think tanks. For example, Tokyo University specifically indicates data and research projects that are tailored to be available for "public use". (Contemporary China Research Base, University of Tokyo, n.d.). The Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) of Japan, the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA) and the Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP) of South Korea aim at producing publically available knowledge and information on China.

Chinese Studies as a public good and a form of practical knowledge can be understood along characteristics of a “public good” – non-rivalrousness and non-excludability (Stiglitz, 1999). By nature, research centres at universities and public and private domains provide publications and information through free-of-charge services. No matter whether they are from a public domain – semi-governmental and government-funded organizations – or private organizations that do not receive government funding, this information contributes strongly to these societies. In Japan and South Korea, Chinese Studies programs are often understood as a type of public good, with regard to their contemporary and interactive characteristics. On the one hand, more like an area study field than a social science discipline, Chinese Studies needs to be synonymous with contemporariness. Rapidly changing Chinese society and its connections to those of Japan and South Korea are highly important for all three of these countries, not only for academic purposes but also for negotiating everyday state-to-state interactions with China and person-to-person interactions with Chinese communities. On the other hand, interaction, which serves as the base of a public good, illuminates the fact that some mutual understanding is required in order to link the “local” and the “foreign”. In a related vein, understanding Chinese people in South Korea and Japan, and Koreans and Japanese in China, is vital. These linkages are produced by university research centres and think tanks – public and private organizations – researching China.

The following two sections examine the development of Chinese Studies in Japan and South Korea, respectively. Focussing on the social science-based Chinese Studies, each section elaborates upon the ways in which Japanese and South Korean intellectuals have formed their generational cohorts, resulting in geopolitical shifts with China, and how Chinese Studies is produced as a public good in these two countries.

3. Chinese Studies in Japan: Forming the Discipline and Intellectual Cohorts

Japan is home to a long tradition of studying China as an academic discipline, from early Sinology (支那学, *Shinagaku*) to more contemporary Chinese Studies (中国研究). This could be attributed to the common use of Chinese characters in Japanese and Chinese written text. Due to this common feature of using Chinese characters (*Kanji*), Japanese scholars have enjoyed an easier understanding of Chinese texts than scholars from other countries.

Sinology in pre-war Japan was particularly associated with the literature, history and philosophy of China. In the early post-war period, the scholarly publication “支那学” from Kyoto Sinology Centre was discontinued. A

transition from “Sinology” to “Chinese Studies” (中国研究) was a rather gradual movement. Due in part to this, the Society of Contemporary China Research (日本現代中国学会, later The Japan Association for Modern China Studies),¹¹ which is the oldest and probably the most comprehensive association in this field, was established in 1951. The existence of such organization implies that research on China attracted a substantial number of Japanese scholars at the time, and also signals the continuation of Sinology from a different research angle. Scholars who benefited from partaking in the pre-war research tradition of Sinology are considered members of the first generation of a Japan-based Chinese Studies tradition (A1, Interview, December 2014).¹² The first generation also includes those who were involved in projects including the Manchuria Railway Research Team (旧満鉄調査部) and returned back to Japan, such as Amate Motonosuke (天野元之助).

As members of the Japan Association for Modern China Studies focus on post-1949 “contemporary” China (Sasaki, 2005), the generations of Chinese Studies scholars that follow are considered to be predominantly social science-based, and much more so than the first generation. The second generation consists of those who had an intellectual curiosity about socialist China, the Chinese Communist Party, the political transformation of China, and went to study in the US in the 1950s and 1960s (Sasaki, 2005).

The third generation consists of those who started studying China after the Sino-Japanese diplomatic normalization in 1972 (Takagi, 2004). Not only has the diplomatic relationship fielded an increasing number of Japanese scholars, but it has also encouraged Japanese scholars to go to China, learn the Chinese language, and pursue approaches to contribute their knowledge to Japanese society as a public good. Due to these numerous paths of opportunity, Chinese Studies in Japan matured much earlier than in South Korea. Although it was the initiative of Japanese Ph.D. graduates from American universities that started Chinese Studies in Japan (Oksenberg, 1993), local training in prestigious Japanese institutions also contributed to the advancement of the field. This connection to a western educational model also explains how the study of Taiwan as one of Japan’s colonies was leveraged as a motivation for establishing Chinese Studies in Japan.¹³

In the 1980s and early 1990s, the relaxation of tensions between Taiwan and the mainland, and democratization of Taiwan, coupled with the return of U.S.-trained Ph.D.’s and the rise of a new generation of scholars, stimulated contemporary Chinese Studies in Japan, which included the study of Taiwan. In the 2000s and 2010s, young scholars went to China or Taiwan to study Chinese language before continuing their study in prestigious universities in Japan or abroad. Like the case of South Korea, their scholarly training

is diversified. Due to the influx of Chinese students to Japan, an increasing number of Chinese graduate students started to participate in academic conferences and publish in Japanese and Chinese in the Japan-based Chinese Studies community. We can similarly observe this trend in South Korea with the inflow of Han Chinese and Korean Chinese students who travel either to study Korean language, or even to study their country of national origin (China) in South Korea.

Although Chinese Studies has long existed and contributed to Japanese society by introducing new information on China, Chinese Studies has only been institutionalized as a public good in recent years. Many universities in Japan have research centres that foster China scholars, but a recent move plays a particularly concerted role in developing Chinese Studies in Japan. In 2007, the Contemporary Chinese Area Studies of the National Institutes for the Humanities under the Institute for Research in Humanities at Kyoto University was established with another six distinguished centres on China. The institutional effort was made by Keio, Tokyo, Aichi, Kobe and Hosei universities and Tōyō Bunko (Tōyō Publishing House) (Contemporary Chinese Area Studies, National Institutes for the Humanities, n.d.). Each institute has its own specific focus to produce a comprehensive Chinese Studies network for the public good. For example, Tokyo University has a focus on China's economic development. Hosei University works on grassroots movements and civil societies of China. The Research Institute for Humanity and Nature has an environmental and food safety focus. Tōyō Bunko has had a special relationship with the Contemporary Chinese Studies group since 2003 and continues to publish issues on China that are important additions to scholarship and pragmatic knowledge about the country (A3, Interview, November 2015).¹⁴

In Japan, think tanks, which include public organizations such as IDE and JETRO, and private research bodies, such as NIRA and Mitsubishi, usually conduct research on economic issues. JETRO has been particularly strong in producing pragmatic public goods for scholarly communities, as well as practical ones for those in need of such knowledge for business and everyday applications. JETRO has eight offices across China, in Beijing, Chengdu, Dalian, Guangzhou, Qingdao, Shanghai, Wuhan and Hong Kong. JETRO's research has been published in China's *Business News*, *Research Report*, and *Market Information*, and is a trusted legal information source. Not only business people, but also students and scholars benefit from obtaining information on a fast-changing Chinese society (A5, Interview, November 2015).¹⁵ Whereas JETRO provides economic, trade, business and legal information on an up-to-date basis, Mizuho, NIRA and Mitsubishi usually publish on the banking and economic sectors of China.

Table 1 Japan's Main Research Centres

<i>University-based research centres</i>	<i>Year established</i>	<i>Think tanks</i>	<i>Type</i>
Contemporary Chinese Area Studies, National Institutes for the Humanities	2007	Institute of Developing Economies (IDE, アジア経済研究所)	Public
Institute for Research in Humanities at Kyoto University	2007	Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO)	Public
Center for Contemporary China Studies at Keio	2007	National Institute for Research Advancement (NIRA)	Private
Contemporary China Research Base, Institute of Social Science at the University of Tokyo	2007	Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA)	Public
RIHN-Initiative for Chinese Environmental Issues, Research Institute for Humanity and Nature (RIHN), NIHU	2007	Institute for International Monetary Affairs (国際通貨研究所)	Public
Documentation Center for China Studies (DCCS), Tōyō Bunko	2003	Japan Institute for National Fundamentals	Public
International Center for Chinese Studies (ICCS) at Aichi University	2002	Mitsubishi Research Institute (三菱総合研究所)	Private
Institute of Grassroots China, Hosei University	2005	Asian Development Bank Institute (ADB I)	Public
Contemporary China Research Base, Kobe University Interfaculty Initiative in the Social Science	2012		

Sources: Contemporary China Research Base, the Institute of Social Science at the University of Tokyo <web.iss.u-tokyo.ac.jp/kyoten/>, retrieved 1 March 2017; Contemporary Chinese Area Studies, National Institutes for the Humanities <<http://china-waseda.jp/english/>>, retrieved 1 March 2017; Documentation Center for China Studies (DCCS), Tōyō Bunko <www.tbcas.jp/ja/>, retrieved 1 March 2017; Institute for International Monetary Affairs (国際通貨研究所) <<http://www.iima.or.jp/en/index.html>>, retrieved 10 March 2017; Institute for Research in Humanities at Kyoto University <<http://china-waseda.jp/english/research-centers/kyoto-university/>>, retrieved 10 March 2017; Institute of Developing Economies (IDE, アジア経済研究所) <<http://www.ide.go.jp/English/>>, retrieved 1 March 2017; International Center for Chinese Studies (ICCS) at Aichi University <<http://ices.aichi-u.ac.jp/en/>>, retrieved 10 March 2017; RIHN-Initiative for Chinese Environmental Issues, Research Institute for Humanity and Nature (RIHN), NIHU <www.chikyu.ac.jp/rihn-china>, retrieved 5 March 2017; Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) <www.jetro.go.jp>, retrieved 1 March 2017; Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA) <<http://www2.jiia.or.jp/>>; Japan Institute for National Fundamentals <<http://jinfn.jp/>>, retrieved 10 March 2017; Mitsubishi Research Institute (三菱総合研究所) <<http://www.mri.co.jp/index.html>>, retrieved 1 March 2017; National Institute for Research Advancement (NIRA) <www.nira.or.jp>, retrieved 10 March 2017.

4. Chinese Studies in South Korea: Forming the Discipline and Intellectual Cohorts

Chinese Studies is organized according to the internal and international surroundings of China. In particular, research on China was inherently conflated with scholarship on a “communist” country, which led scholars to focus on Chinese politics and diplomacy. In the early postwar period, in the 1950s and the 1960s, foreigners could not go to Communist China to conduct research and the only choice was for them to go to Taiwan. In Japan, the tradition of studying China began earlier than in South Korea (see the later section). The normalization of Sino-Japanese relations in 1972 also contributed to Japanese interest in China. In contrast with Japan, South Korean travel to China was also prohibited prior to the diplomatic normalization with China, because of the tension and ideological disparity between the two Koreas. Those who had attempted to read or have documents on communism could be seen as “anti-democratic” or undermining the South Korean government. It was only after the establishment of diplomatic relations between South Korea and China in 1992 that South Koreans were able to go to China to study. It also gave them liberty and freedom to not only travel in and out of China, but to also research the country. Going into the field is important for Korean scholars and students to get firsthand information and find material. Prior to this, scholars either use published works in Japan or Hong Kong as alternative, but arguably the only accessible, data sources (A4, Interview, October 2015).¹⁶ Dominant research traditions, which emerge concurrent to the development of intellectual cohorts, have changed over time. The following is a chronological order of the different cohorts of Chinese Studies scholars in South Korea, based upon internal and external contextual factors in the development of Chinese Studies in Japan and South Korea,

The first generation of Korean Sinologists consists of those who studied in the 1970s (or even earlier in the immediate post-war period). In the 1970s and 1980s, when China was still under the communist regime and North Korea was still a clear ideological “enemy”, it was rather difficult for South Koreans to study China. At that time, studying China – one of the biggest and most isolated communist countries – had a negative connotation for Korean scholars who were often accused of leaning “left” and treating China as a cover to get closer to North Korea (A5, Interview, December 2015).¹⁷ Ideological differences in the post-Korean War period have impeded Korean scholars to engage academically with China. Along with such sensitivity towards China as a research object, South Korean scholars were simultaneously encouraged to learn about communist “others” – both China and North Korea. This is underlined by the knowledge that doing so could result in better preparation for the present and future. For that reason,

studies on the politics and international relations of China were popular and encouraged. Bringing research on the foreign relations of China, rather than domestic politics, to South Korea was seen as beneficial and important, particularly for the Korea Central Intelligence Agency (*jungang jeongbobu*) (A6, Interview, December 2015).¹⁸ Some scholars should have training before travelling to or conducting research on China, depending upon the requisite sensitivities and urgency of the research topic (A3, Interview, August 2015).¹⁹

Prior to the establishment of Sino-South Korean diplomatic relations, South Korean scholars could only enter “Free China” (Taiwan) and study in Taiwan. Given the aforementioned context, among the first and second generations of South Korean China scholars, the politics and international relations of China and Taiwan were the most popular areas of study. Economics²⁰ and sociology (and culture) were likely to be missing areas of research. The second generation, in particular, began conducting research in the mid-1980s and the majority studied abroad in Taiwan due to political circumstances.

In the 1990s, after the diplomatic normalization between China and South Korea, the third generation’s postgraduate destinations were diversified. In addition, major research areas within Chinese Studies began to diversify as economics and domestic politics became emerging areas of study. South Korean scholars who went to Taiwan and those who went to China began to coexist. Others chose training in South Korea, the US, the UK, or elsewhere. It is still important to note that diplomatic ties between South Korea and China have influenced the post-graduate choice of China over Taiwan for an increasing number of South Korean scholars. This is a significant change from the previous generation, for both the intellectual cohorts and the development of Chinese Studies. The disciplines of economics, finance, management and business emerged with the second cohort and enrolment numbers increased in the third and fourth generations of scholars.

The fourth generation consists of those who studied in the 2000s with a more diverse background than the previous generation. In the 2000s, politics and economics were still dominant areas of study among Korean scholars in Chinese Studies. In the past decade, many recent Ph.D. graduates have obtained academic positions in economics programs as Korean universities realize the need for experts on the Chinese economy. Whereas education was primarily focused on economics in the 2000s and 2010s, some young scholars have started to turn their attention to Chinese sociology. Social science scholars in the second and third generation cohorts have studied the society and culture of China, yet they form a very limited minority. Therefore, the “sociology of China” subfield of Chinese Studies in South Korea almost always diverges into subcategories, under “other” or “leftover” domain labels (A2, Interview, April 2015).²¹

In recent times, “China” has appeared as a subject of study not only in the Chinese Studies community, but also among the social science disciplines. For example, scholars without Chinese language training, or specific educational backgrounds in the country or region, have also started to select China as the research subject of their postgraduate degrees. Such scholars have begun to close the gap between country-specific scholars and those with general social science training.

Taken together, Chinese geopolitics have influenced the ways in which Chinese Studies has developed. Through early engagement with China, Japan’s Chinese Studies field has been developed comprehensively, aided by local and international scholarly training as well as diversified research areas. In contrast with Japan, South Korea’s Chinese Studies field emerged more as a result of the state’s geopolitical relations with China. The discipline in South Korea has undergone criticism of being tied to ideological inclinations, which were often (mis)represented as a doorway to studying North Korea, before it vastly expanded research domains, from international relations and politics to economics. The ways in which Chinese Studies is managed and taught in Japan and South Korea have their commonalities as well as differences, producing disciplines and intellectual cohorts that are strongly influenced by geopolitical situations.

The China Research Institute at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies and the Institute of Chinese Studies at Hanyang University are the oldest China-focused research centres in South Korea. Latecomers Kookmin University and Sungkyunkwan University have extensively developed their own comprehensive domains of knowledge about China through programs that educate students on Chinese politics and diplomacy, respectively. The second-generation scholars are the main contributors to universities’ research centres, extended by the recent contributions of third-generation scholars to the production of fresh academic capital in Chinese Studies. As the development of Chinese Studies has been disproportionately heavy on politics and economics, many academic functions and publications are largely centred on these issues.

Public organizations and think tanks, such as KIEP, KOTRA, KDI, KITA and IIT, are more concerned than university research centres with issues of economics and trade. This shows that South Korea’s economic interdependence with China is high, not only in terms of China’s import and export markets, but also in terms of China’s role as an overseas production base (Kim & Lee, 2016). KIEP has two teams focused on China – one addresses macroeconomic issues and the other regional issues. KOTRA has 18 offices across China in Beijing, Changsha, Chengdu, Chongqing, Dalian, Hangzhou, Guangzhou, Nanjing, Shanghai, Shenyang, Shenzhen, Tianjin, Wuhan, Qingdao, Xiamen, Xi’an, Zhengzhou and Hong Kong. These field offices in China, as well as a main office in Seoul, publish information on

Table 2 South Korea's Main Research Centres

<i>University-based research centres</i>	<i>Think tanks</i>	<i>Type</i>
China Research Institute, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies	Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP)	Public
Sungkyun China Research Institute	Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA)	Public
Academy of Chinese Studies, Incheon University	Korea Development Institute (KDI)	Public
China Humanities Research Institute, Kookmin University	The Institute of Foreign Affairs & National Security (IFANS)	Public
Institute for China Studies, Seoul National University (Asia Center)	Korea International Trade Association (KITA) Institute for International Trade (IIT)	Public
Institute of Chinese Studies, Hanyang University	East Asia Institute	Private
	Korea Institute for National Unification (KINU)	Public

Note: Research centres on China with a humanities focus are not included for the scope of this paper.

Source: Homepages of each institute's website. Academy of Chinese Studies, Incheon University <www.aocs.inu.ac.kr>, retrieved 15 March 2017; China Research Institute, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies <www.china114.or.kr>, retrieved 15 March 2017; East Asia Institute <www.eai.or.kr>, retrieved 17 March 2017; Institute for China Studies, Seoul National University (Asia Center) <<http://snuac.snu.ac.kr>>, retrieved 17 March 2015; Institute of Chinese Studies, Hanyang University <<http://ics.hanyang.ac.kr/index.php?userAgent=PC&>>, retrieved 15 March 2017; Sungkyun China Research Institute <www.sicsdev.skku.edu>, retrieved 15 March 2017; The Institute of Foreign Affairs & National Security (IFANS) <www.knda.go.kr>, retrieved 17 March 2017; Korea Development Institute (KDI) <www.kdi.re.kr>, retrieved 17 March 2017; Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP) <www.kiep.go.kr>, retrieved 17 March 2017; Korea Institute for National Unification (KINU) <www.kinu.or.kr>, retrieved 17 March 2017; Korea International Trade Association (KITA) <www.kinta.net>, retrieved 17 March 2017; Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA) <www.kotra.or.kr>, retrieved 17 March 2017.

trade, investment and business. Regional offices in China serve to offer valuable and up-to-date data to intellectuals and the public, which KOTRA publishes online as part of *China Window*, the *China Investment News* series and informational handbook. KITA and IIT, with a specific focus on trade, offer sector-specific informational products with potential value and trade information. These organizations produce survey and statistical analyses that provide avenues for discovering new research topics with high value (A7, Interview, December 2016).²²

As discussed earlier, North Korea is another factor in the development of Chinese Studies in South Korea that cannot be ignored. The negative connotation that was once associated with studying China does not exist now, but China continues to be viewed implicitly (or explicitly) as a window into investigating North Korea, and potentially touches upon controversial topics such as Sino-North Korean issues and the unification of the Korean peninsula. KINU, which is under the South Korean Ministry of Unification, has a research division on China-North Korean issues for this reason.

Mobility, exchange and collaboration between academic and public domains occur at a high frequency. Quite a substantial number of researchers from other organizations, particularly scholars of Chinese business and economics, have transferred to universities to co-produce work in Chinese Studies with educational institutions and think tanks as a public good. Scholars who study China and other foreign countries are expected to produce publications and up-to-date current affairs reports (A6, Interview, December 2015).²³ This is not only the case of think tanks, but also of universities; the time-sensitive “contemporariness” of a public good in Chinese Studies is important.

5. Conclusion

This research traces developments of Chinese Studies in its neighbouring countries to the east – Japan and South Korea – by exploring the connections between geopolitics, intellectual cohorts and knowledge capital. As the top trading partner of both Japan and South Korea, and being their largest neighbouring country, China is important not only at the state level but also at the societal level. I argue that these countries perceive Chinese Studies as a valuable channel for institutionalizing accumulated knowledge on China.

In both Japan and South Korea, the field of Chinese Studies started by and large from studies on language and literature, and later expanded to include the social sciences. Such a commonality between these two countries largely mirrors other countries’ experiences and research traditions, as well as demands for information at the public and state levels. The key points of this paper can be summarized as follows. First, the *development of disciplinary*

configuration explains the development of Chinese Studies in Japan and South Korea as processes of knowledge production and dissemination, which are underlined by geopolitical events and institutional support. In the case of Japan, the field of Chinese Studies was established earlier, by way of reflection upon a longer history of Sino-Japanese relations. In South Korea, due to the ideological “war” with neighbouring North Korea, the study of China faced significant criticism prior to the normalization of diplomatic relations between Seoul and Beijing. In both countries, the process of studying China has witnessed both change and continuity as the number of dedicated researchers and institutions increases. Second, *geopolitics and intellectual generational cohorts* are two factors that have powerfully mobilized Chinese Studies. In the case of Japan, rather than studying in China, academic training at prestigious domestic Japanese institutions has been the mainstream approach. In the case of South Korea, educational migrations along geopolitical shifts are well represented in scholars’ backgrounds. In other words, many Korean scholars who are current faculty members at universities have benefited from academic training in Taiwan. Yet, due in large part to China’s rapid economic growth and geographic proximity most scholars produce knowledge on China for pragmatic reasons, regardless of their training environments. Third, the paradigm of *Chinese Studies as a public good* is evidence by the institutionalized production and public application of information about China. In Japan and South Korea, university-based research centres, public and private research organizations, and think tanks on China-related topics produce knowledge not only for public consumption, but for intellectual communities, as well.

In a nutshell, developments in Chinese Studies in Japan and South Korea demonstrate the ways in which knowledge is produced and managed along geopolitical shifts. The discipline of Chinese Studies in these countries will be sustained and even expanded as China continues to rise and develop. The study of China is in demand proportional to its continuous economic rise and social development, as well as to the scale of its potential impact on Japan and South Korea.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the editor Chow Bing Ngeow and reviewers of the article.

Notes

- * Dr. Claire Seungeun Lee 李承恩 is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Chinese Studies in Inha University, Incheon, South Korea and a visiting research fellow at the University of Massachusetts Boston. Her research areas include

digital and economic sociology, international migration, and a global-local connection between China and its neighbouring countries. She can be reached at <clairelee@inha.ac.kr>; <drclaireselee@gmail.com>.

1. A humanities-tradition of Chinese Studies is mentioned in order to give a better history of developing Chinese Studies in Section 2.
2. It is noted that this is a general trend in other area studies disciplines in Japan and South Korea.
3. See Goh (2011) on Southeast Asian Studies.
4. Asian Studies Programs and Centers in the United States can be found at <<http://aas2.asian-studies.org/programs/general.shtm>>. Retrieved 15 March 2016.
5. It is noted that research institutes on Asia in general are available.
6. In this regard, the British tradition of Developmental Studies is noted here as a similar reasoning.
7. Area Studies started in the 1950s Cold War era in the United States.
8. The list of nine graduate schools with International (Area) Studies that opened with the government's funding in 1997 include: Chungang University, Ewha Womans University, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Hanyang University, Seoul National University, Sogang University, Korea University, Kyunghee University and Yonsei University (alphabetical order). The first round of setting up these graduate schools was in 1997, to receive government funding for five years, with a total amount of 760 billion Korean Won (Lee, Shin, & Song, 2010, p. 16).
9. On the contrary, the discipline of area studies in journals focuses on research traditions, methods and practices (Kajitani, 2007), but not on the development of Chinese Studies in Japan.
10. Interview with a Korean scholar who studied Chinese politics in Taiwan in the early 1990s.
11. The Japan Association for Modern China Studies (formerly Society of Contemporary China Research). Retrieved 15 September 2013 <<http://www.genchugakkai.com/gakkaigaiyou.html>>, in Japanese.
12. Interview with a Japanese scholar who studied Chinese economics.
13. The scope of this paper is restricted to Chinese Studies, I do not explicitly pay attention to Taiwan as a separate subject matter. Yet, there is a difference in treating Taiwan as a subject matter in the context of Japanese and South Korea academies that stems from their geopolitical relations and local academic culture. In Japan, Taiwan, as a former colony of Japan, is continuously studied to a certain extent. In South Korea, although many scholars went to Taiwan to study largely due to the lack of access to China, they have a tendency of studying China through the lens of Taiwan during and after their degrees.
14. Interview with a Japanese scholar who studied Chinese Studies.
15. Interview with a Japanese scholar who studied Chinese economics.
16. Interview with a Korean scholar who studied Chinese economics.
17. Interview with a Korean scholar who studied Chinese politics.
18. Interview with a Korean scholar who studied Chinese politics.
19. Interview with a Korean scholar who studied Chinese politics.
20. For convenience, "economics" here includes economics, business, commerce and finance.

21. Interview with a Korean scholar who studied Chinese society.
22. Interview with a Korean scholar who studied Chinese economics.
23. Interview with a Korean scholar who studied Chinese economics.

References

- Academy of Chinese Studies, Incheon University. (n.d.). <www.aocs.inu.ac.kr>. Retrieved 15 March 2017.
- China Research Institute, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies. (n.d.). <www.china114.or.kr>. Retrieved 15 March 2017.
- Chun, S.-H. (1998). Korea's Chinese Studies: Trends and issues. In S.S. Lee & T.H. Kwon (Eds.), *Korea's Area Studies: Trends and issues* (pp. 3-41). Seoul: Seoul National University Publisher (in Korean).
- Chung, J.H. (Ed.). (2000). *Researching Chinese politics: Areas, issues, methods and interactions*. Seoul: Nanam.
- Chung, J.H., Ahn, C.-y., Park, M.-j., Chang, Y.-m., Cha, C.h., & Park, B.-k. (2005). Reassessing Chinese Political Studies in Korea: On source materials, methodologies, and discourse structures. *International Politics Studies*, 45(2), 103-129 (in Korean).
- Contemporary China Research Base, the Institute of Social Science at the University of Tokyo. (n.d.). <web.iss.u-tokyo.ac.jp/kyoten/>. Retrieved 1 March 2017.
- Contemporary Chinese Area Studies, National Institutes for the Humanities. (n.d.). <<http://china-waseda.jp/english/>>. Retrieved 1 March 2017.
- Documentation Center for China Studies (DCCS), Tōyō Bunko. (n.d.). <www.tbcas.jp/ja/>. Retrieved 1 March 2017.
- East Asia Institute. (n.d.). <www.eai.or.kr>. Retrieved 17 March 2017.
- Goh, B.-L. (Ed.). (2011). *Decentering and diversifying Southeast Asian Studies: Perspectives from the region*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- Institute for China Studies, Seoul National University (Asia Center). (n.d.). <<http://snuac.snu.ac.kr/>>. Retrieved 17 March 2015.
- Institute of Chinese Studies, Hanyang University. (n.d.). <<http://ics.hanyang.ac.kr/index.php?userAgent=PC&>>. Retrieved 15 March 2017.
- Institute for International Trade (IIT). (n.d.). <www.iit.kita.net>. Retrieved 17 March 2017.
- Institute for Research in Humanities at Kyoto University. (n.d.). <<http://china-waseda.jp/english/research-centers/kyoto-university/>>. Retrieved 10 March 2017.
- Institute for International Monetary Affairs (國際通貨研究所). (n.d.). <<http://www.iima.or.jp/en/index.html>>. Retrieved 10 March 2017.
- Institute of Developing Economies (IDE, アジア経済研究所). (n.d.). <<http://www.ide.go.jp/English/>>. Retrieved 1 March 2017.
- Institute of Foreign Affairs & National Security (IFANS). (n.d.). <www.knda.go.kr>. Retrieved 17 March 2017.
- International Center for Chinese Studies (ICCS) at Aichi University. (n.d.). <<http://iccs.aichi-u.ac.jp/en/>>. Retrieved 10 March 2017.
- Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO). (n.d.). <www.jetro.go.jp>. Retrieved 1 March 2017.

- Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA). (n.d.). <<http://www2.jiia.or.jp/>>.
- Japan Institute for National Fundamentals. (n.d.). <<http://jinfn.jp/>>. Retrieved 10 March 2017.
- Kajitani, K. (2007). Thinking about area studies in globalization. In S. Nishimura & T. Hitoshi (Eds.), *Rethinking "area studies" in globalization: The new perspective of modern China Studies. Contemporary Chinese Studies*, 21, 130-139 (in Japanese).
- Kim, D.H. (2006). The Chinese Studies of Korea: Issues and idea. *East Asia Studies*, 50, 55-89 (in Korean).
- Kim, I., & Chun, B.K. (1996). The current situation and issues of Chinese Studies. In Area Studies of Hankuk University of Foreign Studies (Ed.), *The current situation and issues of Area Studies* (pp. 167-202). Seoul: The Hankuk University of Foreign Studies Press.
- Kim, Y. & Lee, C.S. (2016). Kankoku chūshōkigyō no chūgoku tekiō senryaku (Coping Strategies of Korean Small and Medium-Size Companies in China). In S. Sonoda & H.-H. M. Hsiao (Eds.), *China risuku to ika ni mukiau ka: Nikkantai no kigyō no chōsen (How to cope with China risk: The challenges of Japanese, Korean, and Taiwanese firms)* (pp. 111-147). Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press.
- Korea Development Institute (KDI). (n.d.). <www.kdi.re.kr>. Retrieved 17 March 2017.
- Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP). (n.d.). <www.kiep.go.kr>. Retrieved 17 March 2017.
- Korea Institute for National Unification (KINU). (n.d.). <www.kinu.or.kr>. Retrieved 17 March 2017.
- Korea International Trade Association (KITA). (n.d.). <www.kinta.net>. Retrieved 17 March 2017.
- Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA). (n.d.). <www.kotra.or.kr>. Retrieved 17 March 2017.
- Kokubun, R. (2001). Four contradictions of Chinese Studies of Japan. *World*, 685, 117-121 (in Japanese).
- Lee, C.S. (2013). China's leap forward from 'brain drain' to 'brain gain': Its international student recruitment strategy and the decision-making process of foreign students. *Journal of Modern China Studies*, 14(2), 319-361 (in Korean).
- Lee, S.H., Shin, Y.H., & Song, J.M. (2010). *Developing the support programs for foreign area studies and education*. Seoul, South Korea: National Research Foundation of Korea.
- Mannheim, K. (1952). The problem of generations. In P. Kecskemeti (Ed.), *Essays on the sociology of knowledge* (pp. 276-320). London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Mitsubishi Research Institute (三菱総合研究所). (n.d.). <<http://www.mri.co.jp/index.html>>. Retrieved 1 March 2017.
- National Institute for Research Advancement (NIRA). <www.nira.or.jp>. Retrieved 10 March 2017.
- Ngeow, C.B., Ling, T.S., & Fan, P.S. (2014). Pursuing Chinese Studies amidst identity politics in Malaysia. *East Asia*, 31(2), 103-122.
- Oksenberg, M.C. (1993). The American study of modern China: Toward the twenty-first century. In D. Shambaugh (Ed.), *American studies of contemporary China* (pp. 315-343). Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press/M.E. Sharpe.

- RIHN-Initiative for Chinese Environmental Issues, Research Institute for Humanity and Nature (RIHN), NIHU. (n.d.). <www.chikyu.ac.jp/rihn-china>. Retrieved 5 March 2017.
- Sasaki, N. (2005), '現代中国研究の動向 - 現代中国学会の動向を中心にして', アジア情報室通報第3巻第1号. アジア情報室通報 第3巻第1号(2005年3月). <<https://nnavi.ndl.go.jp/asia/entry/bulletin3-1-1.php>>. Retrieved 20 March 2016.
- Shih, C.-y. (2014). Introduction: Humanity and pragmatism transcending borders. *East Asia* 31, 93-101.
- Shih, C.-y., Chou, C.-c. & Nguyen, H.T. (2014). Two intellectual paths that cross the borders: Nguyen Huy Quy, Phan Van Cac, and humanities in Vietnam's Chinese Studies. *East Asia* 31, 123-138.
- Shu, H. (2012). Chinese Studies in the Second World War: Focusing on the contemporary Chinese Association of Japan. Retrieved 29 August 2013 from <http://www.qsttheory.cn/zz/hwxs/201208/t20120822_177103.htm> (in Chinese).
- Stiglitz, J. (1999). Knowledge as a global public good. In I. Kaul, I. Grunberg, & M.A. Stern (Eds.), *Global public goods: International cooperation in the 21st century* (pp. 308-325). New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sungkyun China Research Institute. (n.d.). <www.sicsdev.skku.edu>. Retrieved 15 March 2017.
- Takagi, S. (2004). *Chinese Studies in Japan: Developments and issues* (in Korean).
- Takeuchi, S. (2012). Area studies and discipline: The perspective from Africa. *Asia Economy*, 53(4), 6-22 (in Japanese).
- Ushijima, Y. (2008). Contemporary Chinese Studies: The current stage and prospects. *Asian Culture*, 30, 90-98 (in Japanese).
- Yan, S. (2009). 日本の中国研究の今後を考える <<https://www1.doshisha.ac.jp/~shyan/200901forSCMS.htm>>. Retrieved 17 March 2014.
- Yumino, M. (2009) Contemporary Chinese Studies: China's present and China's turning point. *Waseda Asia Review*, 6, 90-93 (in Japanese).