

소국의 한국학: 동감, 교류, 대화

Korean Studies in a small country: Empathy, exchange, dialogue

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국문요약

본 논문에서 본인은 공감, 교류 및 대화라는 주제를 바탕으로 슬로베니아에서 한국학의 중요성에 대하여 논의하려고 한다. 국제화는 본래 “서구 세력”을 중심으로 확산된다. 이것은 유럽 대 비유럽, 혹은 더 일반적으로 문화와 사회를 “지배하는 쪽”과 “지배당하는 쪽” 사이의 인식 차이를 야기했다. 19세기 이후, 민족 중심 연구의 전통이 있어왔다. 이러한 연구의 목적은 타문화의 이국성을 지배하거나 탐닉하거나 혹은 지배하면서 탐닉하는 쪽에 맞추어져 있었다. 그 결과, 비교 문화 연구는 일방적 관점에서 이루어졌으며 토착적인 목소리들은 연구에 반영되지 않았다. 20세기 중반 이후, 더 상호 참여적인 방향으로의 점진적 변화가 일어났다. 비교 문화 연구에서는 세 종류의 대화가

예견되었다: 인적 대화, 사회적 대화 그리고 문화적 대화. 또한, 다음과 같은 세 가지 요소는 상호참여적인 비교문화연구를 이루기 위하여 필수적인 것으로 여겨진다: 호기심, 호기심을 올바른 방향으로 이끄는 방법론, 그리고 상호주의, 다시 말하면, 교류이다.

한국학은 오늘날의 슬로베니아와 어떤 관련을 가지는가? 두 나라에 대하여 어떤 종류의 대화가 가능할까?

두 나라는 19세기 중반에 시작된 근대화 이전까지 역사적으로 매우 다른 길을 걸어왔다. 한국에서는 국가의 건설이 일찌감치 일어났지만 슬로베니아에서는 국가의 건설이 매우 늦게 시작되었다. 식자율에 있어서는 유사성을 보인다. 일반인들의 식자율은 두 나라에서 모두 근대 초기인 15세기에서 16세기 사이에 널리 퍼져나가기 시작했다. 또 다른 유사점은 설화나 민요에 반영되어 있는데 한국의 임진왜란, 그리고 슬로베니아의 30년 전쟁과 나폴레옹 전쟁에 대한 설화와 민요가 특히 그러하다. 19세기부터의 현대 국가 건설 기간 동안, 두 나라의 길은 다시 같았다. 슬로베니아는 행정적 및 문화적 자치, 이후에는 준국가적 형태의 수립과 독립을 향해 천천히 나아가고 있었다. 반면, 이웃 국가들에 의해 잠식당했던 한국은 일본의 지배 아래 독립국 지위 뿐만 아니라 문화적 민족적 정체성 또한 박탈당했다. 그러나 20세기 전반에 두 나라의 역사는 다시 놀랄 만큼의 유사성을 보인다. 서부 슬로베니아는 세계 2차 대전 후 이탈리아에 이양되어 25년간 외국에 지배당하게 되는데, 이를 통해 한국이 35년간 일본 식민지배 하에 겪었던 폭력적인 동화 정책, 언어권의 박탈, 그리고 창씨개명, 군수권의 강제적인 이양, 차별, 이민, 그리고 추방 등의 경험을 공유한다. 이러한 억압적 상황들은 두 나

라에서 무장투쟁을 야기하였으나, 동시에 국민의 일부는 식민지배자들의 체제에 순응하는 결과를 가져오기도 하였다. 두 나라는 2차 대전 이후의 발전을 겪으며 또 다른 길을 걷는다. 한국은 외세의 이익에 희생되어 남과 북으로 갈라져 결국 한국 전쟁이라는 끔찍한 결과를 맞게 된 반면, 슬로베니아는 유고슬라비아의 준자치적인 구성체가 되었다. 그러나 1970년대와 1980년대 슬로베니아와 한국은 새로운 유사점을 맞는다. 비교적 온건한 공산주의 통치하의 슬로베니아에서, 그리고 군사 독재하의 대한민국에서 민주화 운동이 일어난 것이다. 두 나라 모두에서 1980년대에 보이는 하나의 뚜렷한 공통점은 법적으로 보장되어 있었으나 드물게 실천되었던 자유의 실질적 실행을 위한 법적 투쟁이었다. 이 과정을 통하여 두 국가에서 민주주의는 새롭고 견고한 기초 위에 수립되었다.

교류의 기본적 형태로서의 대화는 이처럼 역사적 유사성과 상이성을 발견하는 것을 통해, 두 국가 사이에 서로 다른 역사적 배경을 통해 서로를 이해하는 것을 통해, 마지막으로 서로의 사회와 그 역사의 맥락에 비추어 자신을 성찰하는 과정을 통해 이루어진다. 각자의 사회적, 역사적 그리고 문화적 배경에 대한 이해가 깊어지면 공감 역시 탄생하게 된다. “상대화”라 불리는 이러한 과정은 “외국학”의 학술 프로그램들의 목표가 되어야 한다.

어떻게 이러한 목표를 달성할 수 있을까? 해답은 두 갈래로 나뉘어진다. 류블랴나 대학교의 한국학 과정은 철저한 언어 교육과 역사 문화에 대한 전반적인 이해를 제공한다. 그러나 그러한 일반론적 접근으로는 충분하지 않다. 다른 문화 및 사회와의 대화를 진행하는 방법론적 기초작업이 더불어 필요하다. 이를 달성하기 위하여, 문화 및 사회에 대한 연구는 기본적으로 복수 전공 식으로 이루어진다. 한국학과 함께 수강 가능한 조합은 인류학에서 음악학에 걸쳐 50여 개의 과정을 포함하고 있다. 이 접근법은 아주 성공적이었으며 한국학은 가장 인기있는 과정이 되었다.

그렇다면, 슬로베니아와 같이 작은 나라에서 한국학 혹은 다른 동아시아에 대한 연구가 정말 필요한 것인가? 그 대답은 확실히 “그렇다”이다. 슬로베니아는 작은 국가이기 때문에 외부와 대화하고 관계 맺기 위하여 항상 노력해야 하기 때문이다. 다른 문화에 대한 편협한 관점과 편견을 극복하고 세계에 열린 태도를 갖기 위하여, 유럽의 이웃만이 아니라 한국, 더 넓게는 동아시아와 같이 멀리 떨어져 있는 사회 및 문화에 대한 연구에 적극적으로 나서야 할 필요가 있다. 이것이 국제 공동체에서 책임 있는 자립적 구성원이 되기 위한 유일한 방법이다.

*핵심 단어: 공감, 교류, 대화, 상대화

Abstract

In this paper I am arguing for the importance of Korean Studies in Slovenia based on

empathy, exchange and dialogue. Globalization spread in a way suiting originally “western powers”. This engendered a perception gap: European vs. non-European, or more generally, “dominating” vs. “dominated” cultures and societies. Since 19c there is tradition of ethnocentric research - its goal being either domination or indulging in exoticism of far-away cultures, or both. As the result, supposedly cross-cultural research was often one-way, indigenous voices were not heard. Since mid-20c gradual shift to dialogic engagement happened. In cross-cultural research three kinds of dialogue can be envisioned: human dialogue, social dialogue, and cultural dialogue. In addition, the following three elements are essential in order to realize cross-cultural research as dialogue: curiosity, methodology for directing curiosity correctly, and reciprocity, or in other words exchange.

How are Korean studies relevant to present day Slovenia, what kind of dialogue can be expected? Both countries historically took very different paths until modernization processes began in mid-19c. Early nation-building in Korea vs. very late in Slovenia. More parallels are in literacy - vernacular literacy in both countries started spreading with 15c-16c, early modern era. Additional parallels from this time are reflexes in folk stories and folk poetry of Imjin Wars in Korea and Thirty Years War and Napoleonic wars that touched Slovenia. During the modern nation building from 19c on the paths differ again. Slovenia was slowly advancing to administrative and cultural autonomy, later to semi statehood and independence. On the other hand, Korea - encroached upon by neighbors, was gradually denied nationhood, under Japanese rule it was also denied cultural and ethnic identity. Yet in the first half of 20c - there are again striking parallels. Western Slovenia ceded to Italy after WWI shares history of 25 years under foreign yoke with Korea's 35 years of Japanese colonial rule: aggressive assimilation policy, denial of language rights, changing of personal names, forceful mobilization into army, discrimination, emigration, exile, etc. In both cases, these circumstances led also to armed resistance, and by a part of population also to collaboration with the oppressor. Developments after WWII took different paths again. Korea, for the benefit of outside powers, was split into North and South which led to devastating Korean war, while Slovenia was a semiautonomous constituent of Yugoslavia. But in the 1970' and 1980' there are new parallels between Slovenia and the Republic of Korea. Democratization movement, in

Slovenia under the comparatively benign communist rule and in the Republic of Korea under the military dictatorships. In both countries, one conspicuous parallel in 1980' is legal struggle aiming at actual implementation of legally guaranteed but seldom implemented freedoms. Through this process, in both cases, democracy on new solid foundations was established.

Dialogue as a basic form of exchange emerges through discovering such similarities and differences, through understanding them in their different historical contexts and, finally, through their reflection in the context of one's own society and its history. With deepening of understanding of respective social, historical and cultural contexts, empathy is also born. This, process, called "relativization", should also be the goal of academic programs in the field of "foreign studies"

How can these goal be achieved? The answer to is two-fold. Korean Studies program at the University of Ljubljana gives a thorough background in language and general understanding of history and culture. But such generalistic approach is not sufficient. It is also necessary to have a methodological framework in which to conduct the dialogue with another culture and society. To achieve this, study of cultures and societies is basically conceived as a double major study. Possible combinations with Korean Studies include about 50 other programs ranging from anthropology to musicology. This approach was very successful and Korean Studies became on of the most popular programs.

So, are Korean studies and other East Asian studies really necessary in a small country like Slovenia? The answer is definitely "yes"! It is precisely because Slovenia is a small country that it must always make efforts to engage in external dialogue. In order to overcome narrow perspectives and prejudice against different cultures and open to the world, it is necessary to engage actively in study not just of its European neighbors, but also, societies and cultures as far away as Korea and more widely, East Asia. This is the only way to become a responsible self-reliant member of the global community.

*Key words: Empathy, exchange, dialogue, relativization

1. Background

Globalization since 19th century (or even 18th) spread in a way suiting originally “Western powers”. This engendered a perception gap: European vs. non-European, or more generally, “dominating” vs. “dominated” cultures and societies. Since 19th century there is tradition of ethnocentric research - its goal being either domination or indulging in exoticism of far-away cultures, or both. As the result, supposedly cross-cultural research was often one-way enterprise, imposing the dominant view, indigenous voices were not heard. Situation started to change since mid-20th century with the gradual shift to dialogic engagement. In cross-cultural research three kinds of dialogue can be envisioned: human dialogue, social dialogue, and cultural dialogue. In addition, in order to realize cross-cultural research as dialogue the following three elements are essential: curiosity, methodology for directing curiosity correctly, and reciprocity, or in other words exchange. In the light of what was said above, in this paper I am arguing for the importance of Korean Studies in Slovenia based on dialogue.

2. Korea and Slovenia: Parallels and differences in development

Both countries historically took very different paths until modernization processes began in mid-19th century. Early nation-building in characterizes Korea while in the case of Slovenia the situation is more complex, finally resulting in an independent state only about 30 years ago. A bit more detailed examination would find a kind of parallel even here, but not a long-lasting one. At about the time of the end of the three Kingdoms in Korea, in 7th-8th century, centered on Eastern Alps, there emerged an ethnically mixed mediaeval polity, Samo's Realm, later Carantania, with Slavs as the main group and Slavic as the main language, one of the sources of later modern Slovene. Unfortunately, it did not last more than about 100 years. After losing independence Carinthia was ruled by the Frankish Kingdom and then Carolingian Empire. More parallels can be found in literacy. While actual historical circumstances were of course quite different, vernacular literacy in both countries started spreading with the arrival of early modern era, i.e. from 15th -16th century on. Additional striking parallels from this time are reflexes in

folk stories and folk poetry inspired by the devastating wars in the 17th, and in Slovenian lands, also in early 19th century: Imjin Wars in Korea and Thirty Years War and Napoleonic wars.

As for the modern nation building from 19th century on, the paths differ again. Slovenia was step by step advancing towards administrative and cultural autonomy, first in Austro-Hungarian Empire, and later to semi statehood in Yugoslavia and finally to independence in 1991. On the other hand, Korea - encroached upon by neighbors, was gradually denied nationhood, and under the 35 years of Japanese rule it was also denied its cultural and ethnic identity.

Yet in the first half of 20th century - there are again striking parallels. Western part of Slovenia that was ceded to Italy after WWI by the allied powers shares the bitter history of 25 years under foreign yoke with Korea during 35 years of Japanese colonial rule. Both experienced aggressive assimilation policy by the ruling power, limiting and denying language rights, changing of personal names, forceful mobilization into army, discrimination, emigration, exile, etc. Indeed, experience of my mother who is from the western part of Slovenia and of her generation, such as one day suddenly having a new teacher coming to school and speaking only Italian, is reflected by the experience of pupils in the whole of Korea under the Japanese rule. The same goes for changing names. My mother's family name, "Mo nik", was forcibly Italianized into "Mocenigo", the counterpart in Korea's case is Sōshi-kaimei (창씨개명 創氏改名) policy of Japan in the late 1930'. Under the pressure, many people from Western Slovenia emigrated to Slovene part of the then Yugoslavia, or to North and South America. For Koreans, the choices were more limited as there was no Korean motherland waiting for them outside the occupied Korea. And last but not least, these oppressive circumstances led in both cases to armed resistance, and, sadly, by a part of population also to collaboration with the oppressor. And even more sadly, these are divisions that seem not to be healed even today.

Development after WWII took again different paths. Korea - for the benefit of the outside powers - was split into North and South, the division resulting in devastating Korean war and oppressive regimes. On the other hand, Slovenia emerged from the World war II as a semi-autonomous constituent republic of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which since the break-up with the Soviet bloc in 1948, started looking for a "third way",

neither allying with the East bloc nor the West. The solution was equidistant foreign policy and “non-alignment”, solidarity with the developing countries, a trend reflected also, if not in building exactly liberal democracy, then at least in progressively more open borders and comparatively less suffocating political system.

But in the 1970’ and 1980’, with the globally spreading quest for democratization, there again emerged parallel developments. In both countries, it was younger generation that was in the center of the process, standing up for more rights. Democratization movement in Slovenia was developing under the comparatively benign communist rule in Yugoslavia, with free traveling regime, people being able to travel abroad both mostly visa free in the West (preferable), in Soviet bloc (officially not very friendly after the Czechoslovakia invasion in 1968). And most important of all, Yugoslav regime did not shoot their citizens in mass when they were protesting. On the other hand, while Republic of Korea under military dictatorships was also trying to open to the socialist countries (for example, the present author travelled there for the first time in spring 1973, just a few months after October Restoration [siwol yusin]), the repression, as exemplified by the Kwangju massacre, was much harsher.

Parallels go even further - to the strategy of struggle for the democratization of society. Thus, in 1980’ one conspicuous parallel is the legal struggle. The strategy is in principle very simple - subverting the legal system of the country by taking it seriously. In other words, following to the end its own professed, but often conveniently repressed, values and stipulations. In both countries, it took a lot of courage from activists who were putting this kind of struggle in practice and thus risking their futures for the common cause. The same holds also for those honest personnel of the legal branch, i.e., judges, prosecutors etc., who believed in the professed values and did not bend before the political pressure when they were aiming at actual implementation of the formally guaranteed but seldom implemented freedoms. It was through this process that democratic society on the new solid foundations, and in the case of Slovenia - also independence, firmly took hold in both countries.

3. Dialogue and empathy as the basic form of exchange

Empathy, leading to dialogue as the basic form of exchange, emerges through discovering such similarities and differences, through understanding them in their different historical, social and cultural contexts. I call this process “relativization”. “Relativization” should here be understood as “to reconstruct views about oneself and the society or culture to which one belongs by gaining knowledge regarding others.” Or, to put it more concisely, “relativization” means endeavoring to “understand oneself through the eyes of others.” This kind of relativization takes place on various levels, from the individual, personal, to social, cultural and historical. This reflection of the “other” in the context of one’s own society and its history, and oneself in the context of the “other” leads to the deepening of understanding of respective social, historical and cultural contexts, pertaining to both, the “other” and to oneself. Through this process, based on incessant exchange, the scope of dialogue grows and empathy becomes more profound.

At this point we can ask ourselves how can this “relativization” process be implemented? Here I am limiting myself to talk about what was done in one particular case, Korean Studies, and more widely, East Asian Studies at the University of Ljubljana, to shape the academic program that would have implementation of the “relativization” process as its goal

At the University of Ljubljana, Asian studies began 25 years ago with Chinese and Japanese Studies. Because of the lack of teachers and funds (it was immediately after Slovenia became independent), Korean studies followed almost a decade later, first with language courses and then expanded to full-fledged academic program in 2015. Traditional Euro-centric approaches, exemplified in disciplines such as Indology, Sinology, Koreanology etc., and also isolated one-country “language and literature” or “language and civilization” study approaches were found to be problematic. The problem being that they have no specific methodology or methodologies. As such, they did not conform to the aforementioned goal and had to be avoided. Therefore, a lot of thinking had to be devoted to how to conceive our programs to achieve this goal.

The answer we found was to conceive all East Asian Studies programs as the study of cultures and societies. To avoid the “subject” to create its “object” through its studies

without any active contribution of the “object”, the study of cultures and societies itself had to be an engaged, two-way relationship between the “subject” and the “object”. The chosen approach was therefore to be based on implementation in practice of the dialogue, empathy and exchange.

One of the inspirations that lead us to the goal and to its implementation came from the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure and from Russian literary theoretician Mikhail Bakhtin. As de Saussure (1966) has powerfully argued for, language must be understood in the context of relationships, extending also to their specific social context, and being based on not only linguistic but also more widely, social exchange. And the exchange is the aspect of language that was viewed as primary by Bakhtin (1981), i.e., the dialogic nature of language. Language is thus indispensable in any social exchange, and is as such the prerequisite also for the study of other cultures and societies. By engaging in language learning that focuses on relationships and thus dialogue it is possible to understand the perspectives of others, and to establish the possibility of looking at one’s own social and cultural situation from an external perspective, thus to achieve “relativization” in practice. In language learning for the purpose of dialogue it is thus not adequate simply to view the language as a tool for communication. Another inspiration was Douglas Lummis. In one of his essays (Lummis 1982), he points out that it is only when you first make a true friend in a different country that you will have been there. If you replace the word “friend” with “dialogue,” the necessity of reciprocity, or exchange, becomes self-evident.

From the above, the starting point for the implementation of the dialogue based cross-cultural approach in the case of East Asian Studies programs, came to be based on four pillars: (i) language ability, (ii) contextualization of particular historical, social and cultural developments, (iii) exchange and reciprocity, and (iv) methodological considerations and interdisciplinarity.

Strong emphasis on building language ability.

Korean Studies program at the University of Ljubljana gives a thorough background in language, enabling students to consult primary and secondary sources in Korean at an

early date. In such framework, Korean voices, Korean perceptions, conveyed in Korean and by Koreans, form an important integral part of the curriculum from an early stage. One very important aspect of this approach is early familiarization of students with Korean literary works in original Korean and translating of literary works in Slovene, not only as an exercise but also as a goal, i. e., as the beginning steps in the dialogue of Slovene public with an important part of Korean cultural heritage. So far, translation of Ko Un's poetry has already been published and work is proceeding on several other translation projects.

Emphasis on contextualization of particular historical, social and cultural developments.

The goal is general understanding of Korea's history, society and culture in its interaction with the wider regional and historical context from an early stage. Lectures where students can familiarize with wider aspects of particular issues are devised for this purpose, such as for example "Methodology of East Asian Studies", "History of East Asia", etc.

Exchange and reciprocity.

Especially at present, with easy access to any kind of information over internet, the direct human contact is of extreme importance. Results of student exchange shows that internet is indeed important as a source of all sorts information but it cannot be a substitute for sending students to spend a semester or a year at a partner university in Korea, and also for hosting Korean students at the University of Ljubljana. Exchange is especially lively with the Keimyung University from Daegu. Since 2017, every year five to ten of their students come to the Faculty of Arts and during their four-weeks stay actively participate in various cultural events organized by the Department of Asian Studies, including getting familiar with various aspects of Slovene culture and language, and, to make the dialogue complete, also presenting from their own point of view various

aspects of Korean culture and language for Slovene students. Student exchange is further supplemented by the exchange of teachers and researchers. And, last but not least, by the courtesy of the Arts Council Korea, every year since 2013, resident authors or authoresses, younger poets, playwrights, writers, are hosted at the Faculty of Arts. This is a tremendously successful program, direct contact with Slovene students is a very stimulating experience to both sides.

Methodological considerations and interdisciplinarity.

Yet, the above three components do not seem to be sufficient. As has already been mentioned, traditional approaches were not deemed to be suitable because of the lack of clear methodology. It is thus also necessary to have a methodological framework in which to conduct the dialogue with another culture and society. For this purpose, study of cultures and societies, such as Korean Studies, and also other programs in the framework of East Asian Studies, are basically conceived as a double major study with the stress on interdisciplinarity. Thus, to assure methodologically sound interdisciplinarity, Korean Studies is a double major program and can be combined with about 50 other double major programs, ranging from anthropology to theology, offered by the Faculty of Arts and some other faculties. This way, combining profiles, i.e., necessarily more generalist-oriented Korean Studies with another more profiled discipline result at an early stage in specialists in a particular discipline, able to engage in her/his field of expertise, in Korea-related issues. For example, Korean Studies combined with General Linguistics train at an early stage in methodologically well-endowed linguists specializing in Korean linguistics, Korean Studies combined with Comparative Literature result in profiles that can devote their work to translation, become literary scholars focusing on Korean literature, etc.

As the result, it is not surprising that Korean Studies are one of the most popular programs at the University of Ljubljana Faculty of Arts. Notwithstanding the falling birth rate (another parallel!), and consequently, ever-shrinking new student population, the entrance competition to Korean Studies program has since the establishing of the pro-

gram constantly hovered at about 2:1, which is close to the top in the humanities and social sciences programs at the University of Ljubljana.

The chosen approach seems to be reflected also in seriousness of topics students choose for their graduation theses and the quality of their work. Reinforced with methodological insights based on the combination with the other double major subject that they have chosen, just this year, a graduation thesis on compound verbs in Korean received the “Dean of the Faculty of Arts Award”. Also prominent are methodologically sound, well-argued and objective treatments of very difficult issues such as comfort-women, North-South conflict, literary figures conforming to the Japanese politics under the Japanese rule, to mention just a few.

4. Does Slovenia really need Korean Studies and other East Asian Studies?

In a small country like Slovenia, the answer might easily be “no”. And in fact it was, for a long time. Every academic program focusing on topics outside Europe and possibly Americas, has for a long time been considered “exotic”, and therefore unnecessary and wasteful. This perception has changed with the independence in 1991. Suddenly, Slovenia was not anymore just a semiautonomous region in a bigger country, with relatively narrow intellectual horizons, but has suddenly become an independent country, a member of world community, the fact that required a new, wider approach to the world. And indeed, with the new winds blowing, both, Ministry of Education and the University of Ljubljana suddenly started to support the idea of introducing a completely new field, East Asian Studies.

In 25 years of its existence, East Asian Studies, including Korean Studies, amply proved that the answer is definitely “yes”, they are necessary. It became clear that it is precisely because Slovenia is a small country that it must incessantly make efforts to engage widely in external dialogue. In order to overcome narrow perspectives and prejudices against different cultures, in the present global context it is necessary to engage actively in getting to know better not just its European neighbors, but also, among others, societies and cultures outside Europe, including Korea, and more widely East Asia. This is

the only way to become a self-reliant member of the global community.

5. Conclusion

At the time of Slovenia's independence it was not clear yet, but with the advent of globalization new nationalisms began to grow, surprisingly, in rich countries that actually contributed to the spread of globalization. Developments in the USA with the advent of the president Trump and his slogan of "America first". Or in Europe. In Norway, Anders Breivik, a far-right terrorist, who in 2011 killed 77 participants of Workers' Youth League summer camp, the reason being that the parent organization, Norway Labor Party was soft on immigration. Or, in Central Europe, Hungary under PM Orban and other Visegrad Group countries, promoting exclusionary policies against refugees and immigrants and at the same time dismantling liberal democratic framework, which is the prerequisite for the membership in EU. Or, still in Europe, "Brexit", based on the artificially instigated phobia against membership in EU in Great Britain. The list could continue ad infinitum... Empathy, dialogue, exchange, the realization of the importance of these endeavors at every stratum of society everywhere in the world is of utmost importance if we wish our children and grandchildren to live in a decent, conflict free world. Hopefully, the endeavors at the Korean Studies program and more widely East Asian Studies at the University of Ljubljana, are a small contribution in a small country in this direction.

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