

**Hesung Chun KOH**

*East Rock Institute, New Haven, CT, United States*

Welcome to the Third Conference on the Korean Diaspora and Strategies for Global Networking, which is co-sponsored by the East Rock Institute (ERI) and the International Research Center for Japanese Studies (Nichibunken). It is with great pleasure that I return to Nichibunken, where my experiences as Visiting Professor in 1999 were truly memorable.

It is also gratifying for me to continue our collaboration with Nichibunken through the co-sponsorship of this special conference on the Korean Diaspora by our respective institutions. I would like to thank Director-General Yamaori Tetsuo and Professor Suzuki Sadami, both of whom so willingly undertook the task of organizing today's conference with the help of Professors Matsuda Toshihiko, James Baxter, and others from the Nichibunken community.

Thank you to all of you at Nichibunken who worked so hard to ensure the success of this conference. It brings me joy to see dear friends and new colleagues in force here today. This excellent gathering of scholars holds the promise and excitement of lively discourse and new insight into a broad range of topics.

As you may know, the Korean Diaspora is the fourth largest diaspora in the world. And Koreans in Japan comprise one of the largest and most complex diaspora communities among over 175 total diasporas scattered globally.

### **The Goals of the Conference are:**

- \*To analyze and theorize about, from a global perspective, the experience of the Korean Diaspora in major areas of the world.
- \*To collect new data and ideas toward the development of a web-based, decentralized network of diaspora scholarship under the name of 'Academy in Diaspora.'

It is hoped that this third international conference on the Korean

Diaspora, held jointly by ERI and the International Research Center for Japanese Studies (IRCJS), will also achieve the following:

- \* Identify noteworthy characteristics of the Korean Diaspora in Japan through in-depth analysis of literature on the subject where literary expression has been especially abundant;
- \* Further the existing knowledge on central characteristics of the Korean Diaspora through the compilation of new comparative data and its analysis in cross-cultural context;
- \* Seek international collaboration toward the development of an "Academy in Diaspora" via the decentralized information portal with a new and dynamic diaspora thesaurus; and
- \* Promote international collaboration and exchange of ideas toward an improved methodology of studying Japanese and Korean culture that fully considers the interdependent nature of the diaspora community and its homeland culture.

Four years ago, ERI compiled four special issues on the Korean Diaspora as part of its bi-annual journal publication of the Korean and Korean American Studies Bulletin, made possible in part by the Overseas Koreans Foundation. The last session of this conference will offer excerpts from this volume so as to provide common ground for our discourse and collaboration. This special volume has also been digitized and into the KOCIS-KD website and database.

May I at this time introduce a generous donor, Mr. Ki Soo Koh, President of Kodensha, Osaka, Japan, who is sponsoring the closing reception at Arashiyama. Thank you for your generosity, which gives us something to look forward to at the end of our hard work.

Please do have a productive and enjoyable conference here in Kyoto! I thank you once again to Dr. Suzuki and all of you at Nichibunken, for your dedicated service and hospitality.

I look forward to getting to know each and every one of you, and to learn from your insights. May this conference also serve to deepen cultural understanding between the East and West.

Thank you.