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PREFACE

This collection of articles constitutes a sample of research on Korea undertaken in Europe. The field of Korean studies is still a very young one, and there are few specialists who devote themselves exclusively to the subject of Korea. In 1977 the Association for Korean Studies in Europe (AKSE) was founded for the purpose of stimulating interest in things Korean and of facilitating scholarly exchange. In collaboration with the Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Asienkunde, AKSE has directed the two editors to collect articles that would reflect major trends of Korean studies in Europe and to prepare a special Korea issue.

The articles presented in this special issue of *Asiatische Studien* are all original contributions and represent various disciplines: intellectual history, anthropology and religion, literature, and historical linguistics. Because this issue is a multilingual production, each author is responsible for the language quality of his own article. Thanks are due both to the Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Asienkunde and to AKSE for supporting the publication of this issue financially.

It is our pleasure to dedicate this issue to Professor Frits Vos of Leiden University on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday. Professor Vos is one of the first European scholars to pay close attention to the history and literature of Korea and has distinguished himself by the far-sighted manner in which he has embedded his research into the wider framework of Far Eastern studies. Moreover, through his elegant translations of Korean literature, Professor Vos has contributed significantly to the introduction of Korea to a non-specialist public. The dedication of these articles to Professor Vos is intended as a small token of our appreciation of his contributions to Korean studies, both as scholar and teacher.

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