



### Past Forward

Essays in Korean History

*By Kyung Moon Hwang*

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“Kyung Moon Hwang’s collection of essays is a delightful mix of contemporary commentary informed by a rigorous historical mindset. Particularly with Korean history, it is necessary to cut through politicized narratives facetly applied to everyday events and current political passions. Hwang does this in spades with penetrating historical insight leavened by humor. A wonderful read for those interested in Korea’s present and past.”

—Michael Robinson, Professor Emeritus, Korean History, Institute for Korean Studies, Indiana University, USA

“This collection of illuminating essays reveals how complex and ordinary historical events shape the story and meaning of the present. Written in a lively and entertaining style, Professor Hwang’s book is indispensable for anyone who wants to understand what is going on in the two Koreas today.”

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A wide-ranging collection of concise essays, *Past Forward* introduces core features of Korean history that illuminate current issues and pressing concerns, including recent political upheavals, social developments and cultural shifts. Adapted from Kyung Moon Hwang’s regular columns in the *Korea Times* of Seoul, the essays present interpretative points concerning historical debates and controversies to generate thinking about the ongoing impact of the past on the present and vice versa: how Korea’s present circumstances reflect and shape the evolving understanding of its past. In taking the reader on a compelling journey through history, *Past Forward* paints a distinctive, fascinating portrait of Korea and Koreans both yesterday and today.

### About the Author(s) / Editor(s)

Kyung Moon Hwang is professor of history and East Asian languages and cultures, University of Southern California, USA, where he teaches courses on Korean history, East Asian studies and world history. He is the author of 'A History of Korea—an Episodic Narrative' (2016), 'Rationalizing Korea: The Rise of the Modern State, 1894–1945' (2015) and 'Beyond Birth—Social Status in the Emergence of Modern Korea' (2004), and co-editor of 'Contentious Kwangju—the May Uprising in Korea’s Past and Present' (2003).

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