

Institute for Korean Studies Lecture Series

Cosmopolitan and Vernacular in the Sinographic Cosmopolis and Beyond: Traditional East Asian Literary Cultures in Global Perspective

2020-2021

IKS
LECTURE
SERIES



Ross King

University of British Columbia

Thursday, March 4

2:30-4:00 pm EST

Online

The study of traditional East Asian literary cultures from a comparative perspective has been hampered by a pernicious combination of sinocentrism, uncritical notions of script, writing and reading, and modern literary historiographies held hostage by the nation and the vernacular. I begin by challenging the uncritical use of certain terms, and present arguments against what I call “Sphere-speak” and “Sino-speak,” and in favor of “Cosmopolis” and “Sinographic Cosmopolis.” The second half of the talk concerns the reception of Pollock’s conceptualization of cosmopolitan and vernacular beyond south (and southeast) Asia and what he calls the “Sanskrit Cosmopolis,” beginning with a brief discussion of Latinitas, then highlighting recent research on the Persianate and Babylonian cosmopoleis, before concluding with a brief summary of the contributions in our forthcoming volume.

Ross King is Professor of Korean at the University of British Columbia. His research focuses on the cultural and social history of language, writing, and literary culture in Korea and in the Sinographic Cosmopolis more broadly, with a particular interest in comparative histories of vernacularization.

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