



Center for Korea Studies  
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# Tackling Stigma: Leprosy and the Case of Yi Ch'ŏngjun

**Karen Thornber**  
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“Tackling Stigma” draws from a chapter in one of my current book projects *Global World Literature and Health: Moderating Expectations, Creating Possibilities*. I’ll be focusing on the Korean writer Yi Ch’ŏngjun’s (이청준) *Tangsindŭl ūi ch’ŏnguk* (*Your Paradise*, 당신들의 천국, 1976) in the context of Korean literature, leprosy literature, world literature, and, most importantly, the medical humanities. After introducing the larger book project, I’ll be examining such topics as: how does *Your Paradise* relate to other works by Yi Ch’ŏngjun and other Korean writing on disease; how does *Your Paradise* relate to global leprosy literature, a genre that has proliferated from ancient times; how has *Your Paradise* been translated – of most interest is the Urdu translation; and, especially, what insights does *Your Paradise* offer into the stigmas and implicit biases surrounding leprosy and other diseases, especially their impact on patient health and well-being.

**Karen Thornber** is Professor of Comparative Literature and of East Asian Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University. She is author of two multiple international award-winning books: *Empire of Texts in Motion: Chinese, Korean, and Taiwanese Transculturations of Japanese Literature* (Harvard 2009) and *Ecoambiguity: Environmental Crises and East Asian Literature* (Michigan 2012) and the award-winning translator of *Tōge Sankichi’s Poems of the Atomic Bomb*. Thornber works in 14 languages and is the author of more than sixty articles and book chapters on diaspora, gender, postcolonialism, translation and transculturation, trauma, and the environmental and medical humanities.

**4:00-5:30 PM, Communications 202**

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