

# Preface

The East Asian saying, “narrow strip of water,” 一衣帶水 (*ichi i tai sui*) means a community sharing one destiny, even though seemingly divided by a narrow strip of water. The saying is still worthy and perhaps has still greater value these days in reminding us when peoples in regions face serious events occurring in a narrow strip of water.

The Danube is a narrow strip of water in Central Europe, especially between the Slovaks and the Hungarians. In the socialist era, the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Dam project over the Danube River started as a symbol of friendship between the two nations, but the peoples, in reality, divided the Danube in the end. It seems that the Danube was no more than a narrow strip of water.

The Danube, however, insists that the river is still a narrow strip of water between the peoples, requiring them to participate in joint operations such as monitoring the underground water system and dredging the sludge on the riverbed of the reunited Danube to meet their common international mission. This is much more the case when a new EU strategy started to develop the potentiality of the Danube since 2012 (the EU Strategy for the Danube Region).

Realizing deeply the Danube to be a symbol of a “narrow strip of water,” we verified the undividable destiny of the Slovaks and the Hungarians from various perspectives, such as an emerging complex identity among the young generation based on not only ethnicity, but also locality and societal conditions; the roles of religious organizations over ethnicities or borders; cross-national scientific and academic relations and collaborations; the long histories as well as the current natural resources shared by the peoples; the joint efforts to create a common school textbook of the histories; cross-border participation in civic movements; and so forth.

This volume is the result of international cooperation with trilateral—Slovakia, Hungary, and Japan—approaches to the Danube borderland, with seven papers.

The first paper is “A Reflection on the Names of a City in the Borderlands—Pressburg/Pozsony/Prešporok/Bratislava (I),” written by Su-

sumu Nagayo. Nagayo's paper is the first part of a toponymical study devoted to the name of Bratislava, the capital of the Slovak Republic. The author discovered, from investigation of previous studies, that this name had been (re)constructed in the 1830s and 1840s according to place names mentioned in medieval chronicles. This toponymical study of Bratislava is a good introduction to the volume, because it suggests the long and interactive history and stories of the nations or peoples involved along the Danube River.

The second paper is "Slovak Perspectives on the Hungarian Minority: The Possibility of an Ethnographic Approach to Nationalism and Multi-ethnic Experiences" contributed by Yuko Kambara. Her paper is concerned with the ethnic problem relating to the Hungarian minority in Slovakia, examining it from the Slovak perspective. The results of ethnographic research reveal that the Slovak and Hungarian minority tend to deny the existence of ethnic hostility in their heterogeneous communities in order to live peacefully together. Kambara's conclusion is shared by the other authors of the volume, who have been engaged in borderland studies of the Danube River for decades, in spite of the general statements that emphasize the antagonistic feeling between the peoples divided by the border.

The third paper is entitled "The Religious Factor in Symbiosis in the Hungary-Slovakia Border Region," written by Tadaki Iio. This paper discusses the role of "traditional churches" in the relationship between Hungary and Slovakia. The churches of both countries seem to have the potential to become a promising infrastructure for cross-border dialogue and civil activity. To utilize this capacity, however, there are some thorny problems to solve on the question of religious and ethnic minorities. Religion had new functions in the eastern part of Europe in the post-communist regimes, though secularization prevails in Europe. Iio's paper pays attention to the bridging factor of the churches over the borders.

The fourth and fifth papers focus on a city whose population is mixed Slovak and Hungarian. The city is Komárno in Slovak or Komárom in Hungarian. Komárno/Komárom is one of the most representative amongst towns that were literally divided into two parts as a result of the state border change after World War I. One of the Komárno/Komárom papers is "The Komárom/Komárno Case or From the 'Iron Curtain Feel-

ing’ to a ‘No-Border Feeling,’” written by Barnabás Vajda. This paper is an evaluation of historical research that deals with the state border regime between the towns of Komárno and Komárom from the 1950s to the 2000s. The main aim of the research is to analyze the influence of the physical and virtual/mental state border on people’s behavior and mentality. Another paper on Komárno/Komárom is “Boundary Mechanisms in the Formulation of National Identity: A Case Study of Students in the Hungarian Department at Selye János University,” contributed by Tatsuya Nakazawa. The primary purpose of the paper is to analyze the structure and dynamic nature of the identities of Hungarian students in the Hungarian Department at Selye János University in Komárno, Slovakia. This investigation demonstrates that differences in living environments create boundaries between national identities and require different resources for upholding identity.

The last two papers are dedicated to the environmental issue of the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Dam construction in the 1980s. The issue is active even now since the 1970s, starting as a symbol of cooperation over the Danube River between the two socialist states of Czechoslovakia and Hungary. However, the dam construction became the seeds of strife between them in the 1980s. The strife developed into a lawsuit at the International Court in Hague in the 1990s. The two papers focus on the 1980s and analyze the activists and the governments on the Hungarian and Slovak sides. “From Monologue to Trialogue among Party, Academy, and Society: Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Dam Issue in Socialist Hungary in the 1980s,” written by Osamu Ieda, outlining the history of the dam construction, suggests the key role of the Academy of Sciences in Hungary, which bridged the gap between the government and the civil activists. “The Anatomy of the Slovak-Hungarian Underground Protection of the Danube in the Eighties,” written by Judit Vásárhelyi gives an inside view of the civil activists on both sides. Dr. Vásárhelyi herself was a leader of the Danube Circle in the 1980s.

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The editor