

MEDIEVAL STUDIES AS A MILESTONE FOR TOMORROW

The 20th Anniversary Congress
The Japan Society for Medieval English Studies
11-12 December 2004

Abstracts of Special Lectures

Fifty years of Medieval English Studies in Korea: Retrospect and Prospect

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The history of medieval English studies in Korea, unlike that of Japan, is a relatively short one. During the 1940s and 1950s we have observed a certain wilderness of interest on Old and Middle English language and literature and medieval English did not occupy an important place in English studies before 1960s. The university courses on Old and Middle English language and literature have been limited to a very few universities, most of which were located in the big cities like Seoul. Nevertheless, there have been some pioneers as distinguished philologists during the early periods who encouraged and stimulated students to direct medieval English studies on a futile soil. Their pioneering efforts eventually made substantial contributions towards the founding of two societies related to medieval English studies in the early 1990s with a number of promising scholars who have devoted themselves to the study of medieval English language and literature in the universities across the country. In this lecture I will give a brief account of the history of medieval English studies in Korea from the late 1950s up to the present day and also explain how the two societies have taken shape with a shared interest in medieval English studies and the history of English as well.

Language, Class and Region in Late Medieval England

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The focus of this lecture is the interplay of linguistic form and linguistic function in late medieval England. Developments in all levels of language -- lexicon, grammar and transmission (speech and writing) -- during the late medieval and early modern periods are traced by means of three case studies: Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, the poetry of John Lydgate, and Caxton's *Eneydos*. My aim is to capture something of the "dynamic" -- or "chaotic" -- processes which underlay the elaboration of the English language on the cusp between the medieval and modern worlds.