

Call for Papers

The Return of the Pre-Digital World? Digitally Mediated Nostalgia in Korea

August 27–28, 2026 | Olomouc, Czech Republic

Palacký University Olomouc, Department of Asian Studies

In recent years, South Korea has seen a marked surge in retro and “newtro” phenomena across popular media and consumer culture. Nostalgic references are no longer confined to marginal or subcultural contexts. In particular, the late twentieth century has come to serve as a major point of reference. Television dramas set in this period, revived musical styles (often summed up by the labels “70/80” or “80/90”), analog-looking technologies, and vintage design have become staples of contemporary Korean popular culture — bringing the material culture and lived experience of pre-digital everyday life back to the fore. One of the most striking expressions of this trend is the growing number of dramas and films that revisit earlier decades via science-fiction time travel (rather than by means of flashbacks or straightforward period settings), thereby creating emotionally immersive encounters with the past that often engage in dialogue with the present.

We invite contributions that examine nostalgia in contemporary Korea as a mediated cultural phenomenon. This mediation takes place not only through representational forms, but also at the level of infrastructure: streaming services, social media, online archives, and digital marketplaces have made earlier cultural materials widely available and continually accessible, enabling new forms of remembering, collecting, and reusing the past. We seek to explore why and how the digital media environment contributes to this proliferation of references to the past and facilitates their production and circulation.

We welcome empirically grounded case studies, comparative perspectives, and theoretically informed analyses. In terms of subject matter, proposals should relate to one or more of the following key dimensions of the conference theme: retro aesthetics in television and film; the circulation, archiving, and curation of nostalgic content; generational differences in how pre-smartphone everyday life is remembered, rediscovered, and reinterpreted; the significance of material objects and analog technologies from the pre-digital era in contemporary culture. The aim is not to impose a single theoretical framework but to bring together a wide range of contributions that clarify why and how nostalgia has become such a visible and persistent feature of cultural life in South Korea.

Submission Guidelines

Please submit your abstract (300–500 words) by **15 April** to dhks@upol.cz (cc andreas.schirmer@upol.cz). Include a short bio (max. 150 words). If you would like us to consider you for travel support, please briefly indicate this in your message and outline the circumstances. Notifications of acceptance will be sent by **30 April**. Accepted presenters will be asked to submit a short paper (approx. 2,000 words) by **31 July**.

Travel and Accommodation

For accepted presenters, we provide three nights of accommodation in a hotel near the venue. We also provide meals on the two conference days (Thursday–Friday). Budget permitting, we will offer full or partial travel support to a limited number of participants for whom such support is essential. We nevertheless anticipate that many participants will be able to cover their travel expenses through their home institutions or project funds.

Contact

For inquiries, please contact andreas.schirmer@upol.cz.

Acknowledgement

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