

3rd series
(2020)

28 February
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24 April
Between

Nostalgia and Nausea

 Attitudes towards the Past
in Contemporary Korea

 7 guests,
7 lectures
**Research-based
teaching**

Katedra asijských studií, Křížkovského 14, KC 2.07, 11:30-14:45

28 February Agnieszka Smiatacz (Wrocław) **Park Chung Hee in Collective Memory and the (Politicized) Nostalgia after the “Spirit of Mobilization”**

The nostalgia after president Park Chung Hee tends to resurge in moments felt by the Korean society as moments of collective vulnerability. After all, the two decades of rapid change his government authored have been remembered and cherished by at least two generations who can paint their own individual experience into one bigger picture, be it of economic success – or staunch resistance against the authoritarian rule. The politicization of collective sentiments is nothing new across the world. What makes the Korean case particularly interesting is that the leader of the transformation, Park Chung Hee, is an object of nostalgia in very diverse social and political circles, not necessarily only the conservative ones. This phenomenon has been already described in the academic field as “the Park Chung Hee syndrome”. The central theme that unifies those very different views is the transition from a passive, self-doubting nation into one with a can-do spirit (hameyon doenda). The question I would like to ask here is why and how the techniques of social mobilization which were applied in the past, under Park Chung Hee’s regime, have produced an unexpectedly unifying pattern in collective memory, and in what ways this nostalgia is politicized time and again in different spots within the sociopolitical landscape of Korea. In order to understand that “spirit of mobilization” as a thread that connect the past and the present, I present historical images that point at a common identity springing from a consistent, top-to-down mobilization techniques with their pervasiveness and longevity. Agnieszka SMIATACZ is a lecturer in Korean history and language at the University of Wrocław, Poland. She is also a PhD candidate at Leiden University’s Korean Studies Department. She spent eleven years in the Republic of Korea, which included participation in a joint MA/PhD programme in Korean Studies at AKS, two years as an exchange student in the History Department at SNU, and participation in an Academic Korean Programme at the Inter-University Center for Korean Language Studies at SKKU. Witnessing the rise of the New Right movement in Korea, particularly in some academic circles, she decided to focus her doctoral dissertation on Korean anticommunism and social mobilization programs under Park Chung Hee government.

6 March Patrick Vierthaler (Kyoto) **1948 as Division or Foundation? The New Right Movement and South Korean Cultural Memory: A Mnemohistorical Approach**

This lecture will provide students with a methodological and systematic framework for evaluating and analyzing disputes over historical memory. Introducing theoretical concepts such as Cultural and communicative memory (Aleida/Jan Assmann), commemorative culture (Astrid Erll) and Cultural Trauma (Jeffrey Alexander), we will approach South Korean mnemonic disputes as struggles over hegemonic Cultural memory, manifesting themselves in attempts to change certain aspects of commemorative culture. In a Korean context, this lecture will focus on the rise of the so-called New Right movement. Against the background of historical fact-finding, reconciliation, and a conservative fall from political power since the 1990s, in 2004, the New Right movement emerged. Politically aiming to provide a vision for a disillusioned Korean conservatism, the New Right also demonstrated a strong discontent at dominant historical narratives in South Korean society. New Right scholars proclaimed South Korean historical memory to have fallen into a “masochistic”, “leftist” condition. Aiming to revise high school textbooks, memorial days and historical perceptions in South Korean society, the appearance of the New Right led to the intensification of mnemonic disputes over South Korean modern and contemporary history, leading some South Korean scholars so far as to call these disputes “history wars”. As a case study, the lecture will center on the dispute on how to narrate and commemorate the 1948 division of the Korean peninsula into two states. The New Right aimed to shift the focus of the dominant narrative away from “division” as a catastrophic event to the ROK “foundation” (kôn’guk) as the fundament for economic success. This dispute manifested itself in the 2008 Foundation Day Dispute, and in three recently built museums of contemporary history, all of which exhibit a very different functional memory. Patrick VIERTHALER holds a BAs in Korean studies and Japanese studies from the University of Vienna and an MA in contemporary history from the University of Kyoto and is currently preparing his PhD thesis for submission at the University of Kyoto. His current and previous research interests include East Asian history and memory of the early Cold War; Japanese and Korean memory disputes in a global, post-colonial/Cold War context, informal Austrian-Korean relations. He has published, among others, in the Vienna Journal of East Asian Studies and Twentieth Century Studies.

13 March Mario E. Caprio (Tokyo) **Challenging Korean and Japanese Historical Memories of Their Colonial Narratives as Presented in**

YouTube This lecture will compare and analyze how both Japanese and Koreans use visual Internet material to argue their separate versions of Japan’s thirty-five year period of colonial subjugation of Korea. It will focus primarily on two English-language YouTube presentations, one where Japanese develop justification for its annexation and administration of the peninsula, and the other where Koreans argue the illegitimacy of this action. Whereas the Japanese presentation tries to demonstrate a helpless Korean in need of foreign power (Japanese) assistance in order to develop, the Korean presentation insists that Japan’s decision to invade Korea was calculated, an action long planned by these aggressive invaders. While the former strives to refute claims of Korean victimization (such as “comfort women”), the latter highlights these claims as evidence of Japanese criminal behavior. Both sides build their cases from kernels of facts that they manipulate to fit a grander narrative as absolute, but incomplete, truth. The lecture focuses on discussing techniques employed by the presentation and analyzing the claims that Japanese and Korean make through combining truth, exaggeration, and falsehood to argue their side of this controversial history. With this in mind, it aims to accomplish the following goals: 1) to acquaint participants with issues that Koreans and Japanese include in their collective memories of this history, and how differences in their understandings impede their resolution of colonial-related issues; 2) to elicit participant understanding on how these issues affect not only contemporary Korean-Japanese relations, but those of the Northeast Asian region, as well; 3) to encourage participants to consider this dispute within a grander picture through comparison with the legacies of other colonizer-colonized relations; and 4) to consider how the Internet can be exploited for partisan agendas, and the importance of critiquing the “facts” they employ before accepting their validity. Mark E. CAPRIO is professor in the College of Intercultural Communication at Rikkyo University in Tokyo, Japan. He is the author of Japanese Assimilation Policies in Colonial Korea, 1910–1945. Focusing on Korea’s twentieth century, his research topics, on which he published widely, have included a wide variety of colonial-era topics, as well as Koreans in Japan, Korea’s post-liberation history, and contemporary North Korean issues such as its nuclear weapons history. He currently is researching Korea’s quest for postcolonial liberation and sovereignty in the wartime and post-liberation periods.

20 March Sungju Park-Kang (Turku) **A Child Who Climbed the Snow Flower Mountain: Past Issues and Transitional Justice in Korea**

The lecture aims to explore the historical context of transitional justice in Korea and its current situation. Transitional justice is concerned with a society’s attempt to deal with a legacy of large-scale past abuses. Related to this, truth commissions seek to uncover something that was erased and hidden from official accounts. After long periods of authoritarian and military regimes, for the first time in South Korea’s modern history, the power shifted from the ruling party to the opposition when Kim Dae-jung was elected as president in 1997. This first democratic government, formed by the opposition, was succeeded by another democratic politician, Roh Moo-hyun, in 2002. In August 2004, on National Liberation Day, President Roh laid out some basic ideas about how to clear up past incidents in his commemoration speech. In the past, it was immensely difficult to investigate the wrongdoings of the state as these efforts were fiercely blocked by the ruling political establishments. With democratic transitions largely achieved by civil movements, however, there was now enough space for those seeking the justice and truth that had been suppressed by the past, authoritarian regimes. Against this backdrop, the lecture examines civil society’s involvement in the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in 2005 and afterwards. The TRC was dissolved under a conservative president in 2010. Following the ‘Candlelight Revolution’, the election of Moon Jae-in as a new liberal president in 2017, a revival of the Commission is now on its way. The lecture also offers an autoethnographic account of an exhumation project organised by non-state actors. I participated in a project to exhume the human remains of civilian victims massacred during the Korean War. It was organised around the Snow Flower Mountain in Chungcheong Province. Sungju PARK-KANG is Adjunct Professor at the Centre for East Asian Studies, University of Turku, Finland. His research interests include inter-Korean relations, transitional justice, memory, narrative, gender, methodology and International Relations. Park-Kang was Assistant Professor of International Relations and Korean Studies at Leiden University, the Netherlands and the University of Central Lancashire, UK. His work has appeared in Review of International Studies and Millennium: Journal of International Studies, among others. He is the author of Fictional International Relations: Gender, Pain and Truth (Routledge, 2014).

3 April Eunhee Park (Kaunas) **A Secret Fund (pijagūm) Is Not a Secret: How the Present Remembers the Cold War South Korean Family, Gender, and Excess**

Based on the story of baby boomers’ sacrifices for their families and children, the box-office tear-jerking hit film, Ode to My Father (2014), aroused nostalgia for President Park’s authoritarian era and many forgotten stories of overcoming poverty, along with families’ collective efforts of discipline, thrift, and diligence. Such longing not only glorifies baby boomer generation’s dedication to the nation’s rapid national economic growth but also stirs the nostalgia for who they were and the way they maintained strict work ethics and economic prudence. Baby boomers were familiar with praising the nation’s success but not with boasting about their personal wealth. At this time, revealing your affluence was considered unvirtuous or vulgar, so many kept it secret. The late 1990s’ financial crisis and socioeconomic changes were brought about by neoliberalism, and individuals adapted to challenging situations, such as the collapse of lifetime employment and revisions to the welfare system. As social media content about money and economics increases today, many Koreans are learning about various strategies for healthy consumption, investment, and saving with the purpose of strengthening their financial stability and ability to prepare for an uncertain future. Their perspectives on status, class, and values are also transforming, along with their view of money. Although this new generation appreciates materialistic stability, they are reluctant to follow their parents’ paths of unconditional sacrifices for families, higher status, and success. Instead, they endeavor to fulfill each goal in life and are not afraid to openly talk about money. To them, money is one of many other choices in life. Knowing this, how can we understand the different attitudes toward poverty and excess? Between the nostalgia of the old and the disgust of young, what does the South Korean Cold War era tell us about the way people perceived abundance and dealt with money? Did mothers and fathers each need a pijagūm (secret fund) because they did not trust each other? Unfortunately, the reality was not simple. Collective goals of “let’s be better off” that implied an egalitarian dream of affluence did not happen in real life. State propaganda, public campaigns, and rhetorical languages were aimed at educating the public about how to abstain from squandering resources and instead practice financial prudence in everyday life. However, authoritarian regimes created pijagūm through collusion with businesses and instead pressured workers to accept low wages. That same word, pijagūm, within individual families was not the illegitimate accumulation of wealth. Struggling to make ends meet, wives worked hard to turn p’undon (a small amount of money) into mokton (a large amount of money) through diverse economic practices, such as installment purchases, microfinances, and sideline businesses. Conversely, husbands hid secret funds inside socks or books for spending on drinking. The domestic sphere was where conflicts and compromises over money took place every day. Women navigated the structures of patriarchal capitalism and cultivated their own financial acumen. A pijagūm was one of numerous financial tools that allowed individual families to direct their economic lives and practices to fulfill prosperity on their own. Eunhee PARK is a Korea Foundation visiting professor at the Department of East Asian Cultures and Languages at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, Lithuania. Her research examines Cold War era economic history and economic development at the level of the family unit and reveals the often overlooked, but vital, contributions that women made to that history.

17 April Luis Botella (Malaga) **The Periodization of Korean Archaeology in the Context of Reimagining a Collective Ancient Past**

The Korean peninsula was colonized by the Japanese Empire, leaving a large shadow over Koreans. In addition, the decolonization of the peninsula happened in the rarified environment of the incipient Cold War, resulting in the division of Koreans in two political entities. These two aspects have joined to define in a great degree the postcolonial reality of South Korea, where the questions of how to consider and measure the colonial legacy have clear implications even for current political affairs. As an example, debates about collaborationism or the inclusion/exclusion of colonial buildings as part of national heritage have been quite alive all the way up to 21st century. Many of these debates have been fueled by the idea that colonialism was not just a political period, but also a system that imposed cultural and intellectual categories that would reinforce such colonial control. From that perspective, the continuation of colonial categories would be an important aspect in the decolonization, and for the coining of the term ‘postcolonial’. One of the academic disciplines involved in the configuration of such system was archaeology. Korean archaeology started under the colonial period, being instrumental in the articulation of justification for the colonial rule over the peninsula. Thus, one of the tasks of Korean intellectuals after the Liberation focused on the decolonization of such discipline. This lecture will look at some of the attempts at decolonizing Korean archaeology in South Korea after 1945. In order to do so, the lecture will look at the transition of the National Museum of Korea and its role in Korean archaeology from its earlier life as colonial museum to its new life as national museum. Luis BOTELLA received his PhD from the University of Malaga, Spain. His interest in Modern Korean history and historiography focuses on the social and intellectual history of archaeology in South Korea, and how this can inform us about the complex process of Korean decolonization and the relationship between the state and intellectuals. His recent research projects are related to the historiographical relationship between ancient Korean history and Korean archaeology and the configuration of a historical region in the larger area of Northeast Asia during the Iron Age and the Three Kingdoms Period.

24 April Andrew M. Logie (Helsinki) **The Tide Turns? Recent South Korean Critiques of Ancient Pseudohistory**

South Korean pseudohistory of early Northeast Asia imagines ancient Korea as an expansive continental empire centered on Manchuria, its territory further incorporating much of China, with still deeper origins located in a prehistoric “lost civilization.” Framed against recent history wars with China, authors of pseudohistory interweave an emotive polemic denouncing the academic establishment as national traitors who promote colonial-era Japanese historiography to the detriment of Korea and benefit of China. During 2014-2015, this popular discourse gained enough influence within the National Assembly to impact critical scholarship, causing the termination of two major projects, the international Early Korea Project and a domestically developed digital historical atlas. Under an atmosphere of rightwing historical revisionism and rumours of government blacklists the initial response from academics was silence. Within a couple of years, however, a series of critiques authored by a mix of emergent generation and peripheral scholars, appeared in popular history format, deconstructing the claims of pseudohistorians and exposing their problematic origins. This talk surveys the framing of these counter-critiques while questioning if the tide can ever fully turn. Andrew M. LOGIE, PhD, is assistant professor of Korean Studies at the University of Helsinki. His research interests include popular historiography of northern East Asia, comparative and world history approaches to early Korea and mainland Southeast Asia, and 20th century Korean cultural history. A graduate of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, he completed his doctoral studies at the University of Helsinki with a postdoctoral period spent at Leiden University. He is currently researching the intersectionality of Korean new religion and pseudohistory.