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Studying Drugs from a Korean Perspective: The Importance of East Asian Genealogies

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these seemingly disparate substances. As 19th century inventions, *miwŏn* (monosodium glutamate, a food additive) and hiropon have circulated at the ends of social reception, alternately characterized as miraculous and reviled substances. 20th century advertisements cheerfully heralded *miwŏn* for fostering childrens' health and domestic happiness while hiropon was seen as a wonder drug that increased national productivity; public advocates later condemned both for harming the family and the health of the body politic. As products of Japanese origin that were introduced under imperial aegis (1910-1945), *miwŏn* and hiropon also index a problematic colonial modernity, operating as technological answers that address failings of (Korean) nature.

Abstract: Informed by the counterfactual question, "what would the study of drugs look like if Western histories didn't exist?" this paper offers a story of manufactured substances "made strange" by assuming that position. Juxtaposing twentieth-century Korean narratives of *miwŏn* (MSG), and hiropon (*hiroppong*; methamphetamines) against regulatory discourses of opium and morphine reveals surprising continuities across the aesthetics of consumption for

Dr. Saeyoung Park works on political subjecthood, financialization, and warfare in East Asia (1600-present). A concern that unifies her work is a desire to excavate plural, non-Eurocentric genealogies of political theory, thought, and practice in order to expand and diversify the range of possible futures that we can currently theorize. She is the editor for a forthcoming special issue in the *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* (Winter/March 2016) on the resurrection of the East Asian tribute system and its challenges. Currently she is a University Lecturer/Asst. Prof in Modern Korean Studies at Leiden University.