



Tübingen Korean Studies Lecture Series

Wednesday June 21th, 2023, 18:00 c.t., Wilhelmstraße 133, Room 30

Historiography and the Remaking of North Korea's Ideology from the Cold-War Era to the Age of Globalization: Comparatively Interpreting the First & Revised Edition of Dictionary of History (*ryeoksa sajeon*)

Prof. Dr. Young Soo Yook

Young Soo Yook is a History Professor at the Chungang University. He graduated from Hanyang University in English Literature and from University of Colorado Springs in the US in History. He obtained a Master's and Doctoral degree in Modern European Intellectual History at the University of Washington (Seattle). His focus lies on exploring the origin and the topic of Historical Characteristics of Modern History concentrating on Post-Colonialism and Transnationalism. He taught in different Universities such as Leiden University in the Netherlands, Catholic University of Leuven in Belgium. He is the author of the book "Architects of Modern European System: Saint-Simonism in the Remaking, 1800~1870" published in Korean last year and many more articles.

Abstract

The lecture aims to understand and reappraise the DPRK (North Korea) ruling class 'mentalité' from 1971 to 2000 by comparatively interpreting the original Dictionary of History (1971, DH1) and its revised version (DH2) published almost 30 years later. At the peak of the Cold War Era, historical materialism and anti-Americanism are two indisputable backbones and guiding ideologies of the dictionary. By highlighting and often exaggerating the perceived threat and hostility of Western imperialism, the DH1 has contributed to the endorsement and propagation of the ideological legitimacy of the Juche-Idea, that is, of the indispensability of self-reliance vis-a-vis foreign powers. However, the DH2 embodies how desperately and earnestly North Korea has struggled to remake its own national identity in order to cope with a series of crisis after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the death of Kim Il Sung in 1994.

Are the two core ideologies socialism founded on Marxism-Leninism and strong antipathy to U.S. imperialism, which are penetrating the first edition, still unconditionally respected in the the revised edition? Does the revised edition indicate an important ideological transformation taking place among the ruling elite of North Korea? And would rewriting history guarantee a safer and more promising future for the North Korean people in the age of globalization? These are questions that Prof. Dr. Young Soo Yook will answer in the lecture.

