



Tübingen Korean Studies Lecture Series

Winter Semester 2023/24, Wednesdays 18:00 C.T., Wilhelmstraße 133, Room 30

Dancing to Korean Hierarchy: An Idea of Value Kept in View

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Elizabeth Rauchholz just published her doctoral thesis in Sociocultural Anthropology, which she defended with magna cum laude at Heidelberg University within the Faculty of Behavioural and Cultural Studies. She is a German-American anthropologist with life and work experience among Protestants of Micronesia, the USA, Germany, the UK, and South Korea. Currently, she is in the process of publishing articles, including “Misunderstanding Equality, Power, and Vulnerability: Elevating the Individual over Cohesion in Hierarchy as a Value” and “An Ethnographic Analysis of the Korean Concept of Nunch’i (눈치): Adjusting Oneself in Response to Noticing Social Cues of Hierarchy as an Idea of Value.”



This lecture presents the results of her ethnographic analysis of Korean hierarchy as a value kept in view for catalysing continuity and change, exemplified in Korean Christian practices and relationships. These findings evolved from analysing comparative discourses and participatory observations while following Korean Christians of the clergy and laity in eighteen British and subsequently in twenty-five Korean Protestant church communities. Her interlocutors described conceptualisations of Korean hierarchy as a value orientation realised in asymmetrical social communication and relationships. This realisation involved encompassing subordinated logics, emotions, ritualised conventions, and relationships within superior representations of an idea or social relation to form a cohesive whole, albeit in hierarchy (wigyejilseo 위계질서).