



December 8, 2021 (Wednesday), 18:00 c.t.
Wilhelmstr. 133, Room 30

Prof. Chong Myoung Im (Chonnam National University)

The Historization of the Idea of Democracy in the Post-colonial/-War
South Korean Discursive Space

Abstract:

In South Korea, even military dictators such as Park Chung-hee (Pak Chŏng-hŭi) justified their authoritarian rule in the name of 'Korean democracy' while their nonconformists opposed the rule for the cause of 'democracy in Korea'. This suggests that 'democracy' occupies a shrine for even those South Koreans in politically diametrical opposition to each other. With this in mind, this lecture addresses the issue: the historical progress of sanctifying the idea of democracy in South Korea. In dealing with the issue, this lecture brings a focus on the post-colonial history of Korea, which witnessed the investiture of democracy with a national doctrine, and its constitutional institutionalization as such for the first time throughout Korean history. In those days, what granted the sacrosanct status of inviolable 'Zeitgeist' to the idea of democracy?

Chong Myoung Im

Chong Myoung Im obtained his Ph.D. at the University of Chicago, writing a thesis on the making of the Republic of Korea as a modern nation-state. Since then, he has been working as a professor at Chonnam National University's history department. He currently is a visiting professor at the Department of East Asian Studies at the University of Göttingen. His general research areas include modernism, nation-statehood in post-war/-colonial South Korea and East Asia, subject formation and its skills as well as international, national, and local politics and the cholera pandemic.