



# Tübingen Korean Studies Lectures

## 튀빙겐 한국학 특강

### Post-Colonial, Cold War Development: Japanese Engineers and the Construction of South Korea's Hydropower Infrastructure

Professor Aaron Stephen Moore

Arizona State University, USA

May 24, 2017 (Wednesday) | 6:00-8:00 PM

Wilhelmstraße 133 | Room 30

**Abstract:** Until now, work on Japan's colonial legacy of industrialization in Korea has focused on whether or not Japan laid the foundation to South Korea's post-war economic growth. Much of this work, however, has largely been defined by a nation-based understanding of economic development (e.g. the "miracle on the Han" narrative), which either asserts discontinuity or continuity with Japan's colonial past. Largely missing from such accounts is an analysis of the transnational flows of capital, ideas, people, goods, and technology that formed the basis for post-war Korean development and the new international power relationships that were formed within these flows, which emerged out of entangled histories of Japanese colonial rule and the rise of the US Cold War order in East Asia. By focusing on Japan's management of several hydropower projects such as Soyanggang Multi-Purpose Dam Project—a prominent symbol of post-war Korean development— this lecture instead examines the history of Korean developmentalism as a transnational process of dynamic exchange, negotiation, and conflict between Japanese and Korean experts. The supervising company of many of these projects, Nippon Kōei, was established by former colonial engineers who had earlier worked in Korea. These same engineers were contracted by the Park Chung-hee government to manage the construction of South Korea's hydropower infrastructure. I examine how the visions, policies, expertise, and networks from their colonial experiences were reconfigured after the war at large-scale infrastructure projects such as Soyanggang Dam into a new, postcolonial technical aid network linking Japan, South Korea during the cold war.

**Aaron Stephen Moore** is Associate Professor of modern Japanese history in the School of Historical, Philosophical, and Religious Studies at Arizona State University. He is the author of *Constructing East Asia: Technology, Ideology, and Empire in Japan's Wartime Era, 1931-1945* (Stanford University Press, 2013). His current project, *Engineering Asian Development: The Cold War and Japanese Post-Colonial Power in Asia*, examines the history of Japan's overseas development system in East and Southeast Asia from its origins in Japan's colonial rule over much of Asia before 1945 to its rise into the world's leading aid donor by the Cold War's end in 1989.