



## Tübingen Korean Studies Lecture Series

*in cooperation with the King Sejong Institute Tübingen*

Online via Zoom



July 7, 2021 (Wednesday), 18:00 c.t.

Zoom Meeting ID: 985 1558 0335 | Passcode: 099331

### **Jun.-Prof. Nadescha Bachem (University of Bonn)**

Female Subjectivity and Colonial Memory: Multilingualism as a Tool of Resistance Against Homogenising National Narratives in Pak Sunnyö's *Ai röbü yu* (*I Love You*, 1962)

#### **Abstract:**

With Japan's defeat in 1945, both the Koreas and Japan had to reinvent themselves as distinct nation states. In this process, the Korean language, ridded from all remainders of Japanese linguistic influence, came to signify the unity of the South Korean nation state. However, this new doctrine of Korean monolingualism proved difficult to adapt to, especially for the so-called "post-[Korean] war generation" (*chönhu sedae*), who were raised bilingually during the colonial period and ascended the literary stage after the Korean War (1950-53). Following the liberation, they had to adjust to the newly prescribed monolingualism and a narrative that negated parts of their childhood memory. An ambivalence towards the memory of Japanese imperialism and a discomfort with the homogenising postcolonial national narrative thus often feature in their work.

Case in point is Pak Sunnyö's 1962-short story *Ai röbü yu* (*I Love You*). In this talk, I will show how *I Love You* makes skilled use of Korean, Japanese, and English multilingualism to develop a female subjectivity that challenges both Japanese colonial discourse and chauvinistic postcolonial South Korean narratives. Ultimately, the text's profoundly transnational nature becomes apparent when, through use of the English language, *I Love You* carves out a hybrid space for Japanese-Korean reconciliation beyond the strict lines of ethno-national unity.

#### **Jun.-Prof. Nadescha Bachem**

Nadeschda Bachem is a Junior-Professor in Korean Studies at the University of Bonn. Her research focuses on postcolonial South Korean and Japanese literature. She received her PhD from SOAS, University of London, in 2018, with a thesis entitled 'Remnants of Empire: Colonial Memory in Japanese and South Korean Short Fiction, 1953-1972'.