

# BRIDGING KOREA OLD AND NEW

## Re-Periodizing the History of Korea for a Global Age

**January 29, 2016 (Friday) 9:00-18:30**  
**CRT-4.36, Run Run Shaw Tower,**  
**Centennial Campus, HKU**

This international conference puts forward a new frame reference for examining the history of the Korean peninsula from the time of early state formation to liberation from Japanese colonial rule in 1945. In Korean history, the modernization paradigm conceived in the 1960s is long overdue for a replacement. The proposed trans-national and cross-temporal approach provides a way of framing Korean history outside the bounds of nationalism, economic development, and democratic transition.

Building on a rich and diverse body of recent research, the new framework draws connections among case studies that have analyzed a range of topics in isolation, resulting in four definable eras: (1) from one marked by regional disparity until 900 CE; (2) to a time of building a centralizing and activist regime between 900 and 1550; (3) a turn toward brokered administration from around 1550; and (4) a period dominated by the attempts of three successive governments to re-establish stronger central control, between 1800 and 1945. This synthesis, if successful and persuasive, will provide a viable successor to the teleological narratives reflective of South Korea's nation-building and Cold War politics in East Asia. It hopes to generate new questions for the field of Korean history and facilitate engagement with historians of other parts of the world, particularly China, Japan, United States, Europe, and Southeast Asia.

09:00-09:30: Opening Ceremony

09:30-10:45: Development of Social Complexity and First Generation States in the Korea-Manchuria Region  
Mark Byington (Harvard University)

10:45-12:00: To Build a Centralizing Regime: Yangban Aristocracy and Medieval Patrimonialism, 900-1550  
Javier Cha (University of Hong Kong)

12:00-13:00: Lunch Break

13:00-14:15: The Rise of the Brokered State: The High Chosŏn Era, 1550-1800  
John S. Lee (Harvard University)

14:15-15:30: Reassessing Three Reformist Regimes, 1800-1945: Taxation and the Transformation of the Korean Fiscal State  
Holly Stephens (University of Pennsylvania)

15:30-16:00: Coffee Break

16:00-17:15: The Origins of South Korean Historiography: Evidential Learning, Historism, Modernization Theory, and Critical Turn  
Yun Sang Hyun (Seoul National University)

17:15-18:00: Comments and Criticism  
Remco Breuker (Leiden University)

18:00-18:30: General Discussion

Each session will consist of 45 minutes of paper presentation and 30 minutes of discussion. Audience members are welcome to ask questions and contribute to the discussion.

All are welcome. No registration is required.  
For enquiries, please contact Dr. Javier Cha at [javierc@hku.hk](mailto:javierc@hku.hk).

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