Imagining Collective Selves in the Margin- On Centennial Trajectory of the Modern Korean Historiography

Programme Event

International Committee of Historical Sciences | 26–30 August 2026 | Leipzig, Germany

DATE	LOCATION
27 Aug 2026, 08:30 - 10:30	House 3 SR226
THEME	CONFERENCE
D - (Overcoming) Marginalization, Bias and Inequality in Historiography	International Committee of Historical Sciences

Overview

This panel traces the trajectories of modern Korean historiography over the last one hundred years, full of the multiple interactions between East and West, Center and Periphery, Eurocentrism and Sino-centrism. Universalism and Particularism, Modernism and Nativism, etc. Like most historiographies of the ‘Rest’, the modern Korean historiography has not broken free from the Eurocentric discourse of historicism to project the ‘West’ as ‘History.’ Sharing the value code of the self-Orientalism, anti-Western national historiographies often fell into a trap of Eurocentrism. More often than not, the Occidentalist slogan of ‘overcoming the West’ beyond the developmentalist narrative of ‘follow and catch-up’ shared the code of Eurocentrism, which epistemologically implied ‘overcome by modernity/the West’ more than ‘overcoming modernity/the West’. However, the fast rise of Korea to the level of the developed ‘West’ in the 21st century brought a seismic change to the historical imagination, signaling the departure from the Eurocentric historicism of unilinear development of world history and the emergence of post-Eurocentric global history. Viewed from ‘history of experience,’ the abysmal difference of lived realities between senior teachers, born in South Korea, poorer than most African countries in 1950~60s, and students, born in Korea as one of the OECD countries in the 2000s, makes the history classes at Korean universities a highly interesting social science lab to experiment competing historical imaginations for the alternative past open to the future.

Participants

Convenor

- Jie-Hyun Lim (Sogang University)

Chair

- Jin-A Kang (Hanyang University)

Commentator

- Jin-A Kang (Hanyang University)

Panelists

- Tae-Ho Kim (Jeonbuk National University)
- Kyunghwan Oh (Sungshin Women’s University)
- Jae-hoon Shim (Dankook University)
- Daham Chong (Sangmyung University)

Papers

Beyond Narratives of Catch-up, towards Catch-up of Narratives: Current Historiography of Korean Science, Technology, and Medicine

Tae-Ho Kim (Jeonbuk National University)

Overcome by the 'West': Writing the history of the 'West' in Korea

Kyunghwan Oh (Sungshin Women’s University)

From a Faithful Periphery to Standing Alone: The Evolution of Korean Historiography on Chinese History

Jae-hoon Shim (Dankook University)

South Korean Historiography on Civil Service Examination, Max Weber, and the Cold War Transpacific Invention of Confucian Modernity

Daham Chong (Sangmyung University)

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