Korean History Upside-Down: Why The Traditional Story Has It Wrong

a lecture by

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IKS Lecture Series
Wednesday, March 7

Korea's history of the 20th Century has been a narrative of victimization -- taken over by the Japanese, divided by the Americans and Russians, plunged into a war not of their choosing. This talk, however, argues that by examining Korean history from a long-term perspective, a completely different narrative emerges. Based on research on changing society after the fall of the Ming dynasty, we will look at radical changes in Korea after the seventeenth century. If there were dynamic changes in society, does this explain why Korean dynasties last so long and does that paint a picture of a stable and peaceful society -- quite the opposite of the common narrative in the 20th century? Historians in both Korea and the United States are now endorsing a more positive view of Korea's history, one that reflects the active role played by the nation itself and that helped bring Korea to the important position it now holds in world affairs.

Dr. Peterson is the author of Korean Adoption and Inheritance (1996); A Brief History of Korea (2009); and co-editor of Korean Women (1983). He is the former chair of the Korean Studies Committee of AAS and book review editor for the Journal of Asian Studies for Korean Studies books. He is also a member of the Royal Asiatic Society, the International Association for Korean Language Education, the International Korean Literature Association, and the American Association of Korean Teachers.

Scott Lab 0054
201 West 19th Ave.
3:30 - 4:30 p.m.

Co-sponsored by:
East Asian Studies Center
Department of History

This event is sponsored in part by a U.S. Department of Education Title VI Grant.

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