



International Hierarchy, Legitimacy, and the Founding of Joseon Korea

Monday 12 November 2018, 3pm-4.30pm

Speaker

**Assistant Professor
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School of International Service,
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Chair

Professor Evelyn Goh

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Location

SDSC Reading Room

Room 3.27, Hedley Bull Building (130),
ANU

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Image: Ewha Womans University

How is hierarchy created and maintained in international politics? This seminar examines the role of legitimacy in the formation of hierarchical order in international relations, drawing on historical insights from Joseon Korea's relations with Ming China – widely considered to have been the “model tributary relationship.” Specifically, Lee explores a series of decisions made by Joseon's founding fathers vis-à-vis the Ming in the late 14th and 15th centuries, in the two-level dual authority situation that existed between Joseon kings and Ming emperors. She argues that the Ming tended to enjoy a higher level of hierarchical authority when Joseon kings faced the need for greater legitimacy vis-à-vis political opponents in the realm of domestic politics. Three episodes demonstrate that the Ming's international authority was not only enduring but fluctuated at different times, because Joseon kings used the Ming emperors' symbolic recognition in ways that enhanced the former's kingship vis-à-vis domestic rivals in the process of domestic order-building, especially at times of regime vulnerability. The paper shows empirically how hierarchy is a social process, rather than a relationship based on top-down domination.

Ji-Young Lee is a political scientist who teaches at American University's School of International Service. She is the author of *China's Hegemony: Four Hundred Years of East Asian Domination* (Columbia University Press, 2016). Her current work concerns historical Korea-China relations with a focus on military interventions, and the impact of China's contemporary rise on the American-led international order. She has published articles in *Security Studies*, *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, and *Journal of East Asian Studies*. Previously, she was a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in Politics and East Asian Studies at Oberlin College, a POSCO Visiting Fellow at the East-West Center, a non-resident James Kelly Korean Studies Fellow with the Pacific Forum CSIS, an East Asia Institute Fellow, and a Korea Foundation-Mansfield Foundation scholar of the U.S.-Korea Scholar-Policymaker Nexus program. She received her Ph.D. and M.A. from Georgetown University, an M.A. from Seoul National University, and a B.A. from Ewha Womans University in South Korea.

Presented by:

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This research seminar is the fourth of the 'Women in International Security: Theory and Practice' Seminar Series 2018-19, jointly sponsored by the ANU Gender Institute and the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre. Consisting of research, career development, and policy dialogue seminars, this series showcases the work of prominent women in the fields of international security. For more information, contact the Series Convenor, Professor Evelyn Goh evelyn.goh@anu.edu.au, or visit the WIIS website <https://anuwiis.wixsite.com/anuwiis>.