

THE CENTRE FOR KOREAN RESEARCH PROUDLY PRESENTS

"RECLAIMING THE TRAUMATIC PAST IN PUBLIC MEMORY: CONTENTED SITES OF ETHICAL WITNESS AND SOUTH KOREA'S JEJU 4.3 MASSACRES BY STATE VIOLENCE"

By Dr. Nan Kim
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3:30PM-5:00PM

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Abstract: Marking seven decades since the 1948 Jeju Uprising, the past year has seen an extraordinary degree of commemorative activity in Korea surrounding the remembrance of those events and the subsequent Jeju 4.3 civilian massacres by state violence. This presentation considers on going historical debates and developments in memory politics highlighted by the 70-year milestone, while also tracing past efforts that brought suppressed Jeju 4.3 historical memory into greater public awareness during recent decades. Recognizing how greater visibility of traumatic historical events can also bring about new kinds of risks, this paper challenges an uncritical embrace of "dark tourism" with respect to massacre-related memorial sites on Jeju Island and elsewhere in the world. Framing Jeju's history of state-led touristic development by South Korea's past military-authoritarian regimes as integral to the censoring and historical erasure of Jeju 4.3 that had prevailed during much of the late 20th century, this paper argues that the island is uniquely positioned to draw into question the larger discourse that regards as a form of tourism the visitation of sites associated with intense historical trauma.

Bio: Nan Kim is Associate Professor in the Department of History at UW-Milwaukee, where she is the Director of Public History and the Co-Coordinator of Asian Studies. She is the author of *Memory, Reconciliation, and Reunions in South Korea: Crossing the Divide*, and her work has appeared in *The Journal of Asian Studies*, *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*, and *The Routledge Handbook on Memory and Reconciliation in East Asia*. She serves on the editorial boards of the *National Museum of Korean Contemporary History* and *The Seoul Journal of Korean Studies*. A native of New York City, she received her PhD in Cultural Anthropology from the University of California, Berkeley, and her bachelor's degree in English Literature from Princeton University.



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