

The **University of Cambridge Department of East Asian Studies** is pleased to announce the following lecture in its series of East Asian seminars.

This seminar starts at **5:00PM** and will take place in **Rooms 8 & 9** in the Faculty of Asian & Middle Eastern Studies (formerly Oriental Studies), Sidgwick Avenue, Cambridge CB3 9DA, unless otherwise indicated.

ALL ARE WELCOME



**Transcending the Boundaries, Embracing the Others: International
Contexts of Korea's Modern and Contemporary Nationalisms**
Professor Vladimir Tikhonov, University of Oslo
Friday, 28th October 2011, Umney Theatre, Robinson College

Nationalism, often understood to be the paradigmatic modern ideology in Korea, always tended to develop in an international context, in close connection with the ever-changing imagery of the outside world. Inasmuch as some Others – Chinese, Japanese or Americans, depending on which version of the Korean nationalist ideology we are to focus on – were ascribed the roles of nations' enemies, yet another set of the Others was viewed either as fellow victims to sympathise with, or as potential allies. For Korea's modernist nationalists on the eve of the country's full colonisation in 1910, for example, the enslavement of Vietnam by the French as described in Phan Bội Châu's (1867-1940) *Việt Nam Vong Quốc Sử* (History of the Loss of Vietnam, hugely popular in its several Korean translations), was the closest allegory of Korea's own impending plight. In the 1920s and early 1930s, Mahatma Gandhi's (1869-1948) anti-British movement was a cause célèbre of the Korean nationalist publications; Communists, who had little sympathy for INC's perceived "bourgeois opportunism", responded by linking Korea's national liberation to the defence of Russian and Chinese revolutions. After 1945 too, the official nationalisms of both North and South Korea were closely intertwined with the specific ways of perceiving the international context for the nation state-building processes on the Korean Peninsula: the former viewed the "liberation" of South Vietnam as a blueprint for Korea's own unification, while the latter perceived the dispatch of troops to "defend" South Vietnam as a decisive point on the way towards national regeneration. To summarise, the present lecture will deal with the internationalism as an inherent part of modern and contemporary Korea's many nationalisms, showing once again that there is hardly an ideology with stronger international awareness than that of nation and nation state.

Vladimir Tikhonov was born in Leningrad (St-Petersburg) in the former USSR (1973) and educated at St-Petersburg State University (MA:1994) and Moscow State University (Ph.D. in ancient Korean history, 1996). He has worked for the Russian State University of Humanities (1996), KyungHee University (1997-2000) and for Oslo University as an associate professor and full professor (from 2006). His main field is the history of ideas in early modern Korea, particularly Social Darwinist influences in the formative period of Korean nationalism in the 1880s-1910s. Another major area of Tikhonov's research is the history of Korean Buddhism in modern times, particularly in connection with nationalism and militarist violence. His book, *Usŭng yŏlp'ae ūi sinhwa* (The Myth of the Survival of the Fittest, 2005) is one of the first monographic studies of Social Darwinism in modern Korea and its relations to Korean nationalism. The same topic has been dealt with in English in his *Social Darwinism and Nationalism in Korea: The Beginnings (1880s-1910s)* (Brill, 2010). He also regularly contributes to South Korea's liberal and progressive media, including daily Hangyoreh and the weekly Hangyoreh21

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Please note that this talk falls on a Friday and takes place in The Umney Theatre, Robinson College.