

Scottish Centre for Korean Studies

Distinguished Lecture Series

Urban Renewal in Pyongyang: Making Fieldwork in a Closed Context

Tuesday 5th March 17:00-19:00
Lecture Theatre B, 40 George Square

View on Ryomyong Street in Pyongyang ,
Manon Prud'homme, August 2019



Manon Prud'homme will discuss the consequences of the "Arduous March" and the reconfigurations afterwards that affected the structure of Pyongyang itself by analyzing new urban projects, especially those constructed after Kim Jong Un's rise to power in 2011. After North Korea went through its biggest economic crisis since the Korean War in the 1990s, referred to by its government as the "Arduous March", the public distribution system collapsed and North Koreans were forced to adopt alternate strategies to survive. Black markets appeared and multiplied nationwide. In this context, marketization and monetization began in North Korea. Pyongyang had no choice but to adapt its political strategy in order to respond to its population's changed conceptions and demands of living standards. As a result, since the mid-2010s, Pyongyang's cityscape has been completely

reconfigured, similar to other post-socialist cities, with the construction of a series of residential districts in the historical downtown areas. Manon Prud'homme will rely on an analysis of recent urban development in Pyongyang since the 2010s in order to understand the economic and social changes in North Korean society. Based on both her research conducted in Pyongyang in 2016 and 2019, and on a variety of methodological tools, the lecture will also review the research methods in a "closed context".

Manon Prud'homme is a PhD candidate at the School of Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences (EHESS) in Paris under the supervision of Valérie Gelézeau. She obtained her Master's Degree in Asian Studies in 2020 and her research focused on the development of leisure parks and the evolution of leisure practices in Pyongyang. Her PhD research focuses on urban renewal and the construction of new residential districts and social change in Pyongyang since the "Arduous March" in the 1990s. Manon Prud'homme stayed twice for a month in Pyongyang, in 2016 and 2019, as a coordinator of a group of French students and as a student at the Kim Il Sung University.



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