

Shadow Capital Cities in the Korean World

The Center for Korean Studies at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) is currently considering the possibility of forming a panel at the upcoming Association for Asian Studies (AAS) and/or the Association of American Geographers (AAG) annual meeting that would expand upon ongoing research pertaining to Korean capital cities (<http://lodel.ehess.fr/crc/document.php?id=609>).

Our previous research activities (the 2011 AKSE panel “Phantom Limbs, Multiple Heads: Korean Capital Cities in the Divided Nation”; the 2013 Paris workshop “Villes capitales dans le monde coréen”) have explored the capitals at the center of the State or national territory: hyper-capital cities like Seoul and Pyongyang that cumulate core functions in the nation (historical, political, economical) and that may be part of a larger international order; or former capital cities that now legitimate the present States’ meta-narratives such as Kyōngju and Kaesōng. Main themes covered in the course of that research have also included: the relationship between political power and capital cities as center of the State (or lack of such connection), major planning and building projects involving capital cities, hyper-capital cities and social elites, and heritage and conservation in historical capital cities.

The envisioned panel, however, seeks to go beyond previously studied capital cities such as Seoul, Kaesōng and Kyōngju, and will consider capital cities located on the margin or in the shadow: historically marginal capital cities (Kongju or Puyō), once forgotten capital cities (such as Suwōn), fantasized capital cities (of the future reunified Korea, for example), near-capital cities in the making (Sejong-si), appendix-capital cities (Songdo), diasporic capital cities (LA, Almaty), and others.

We welcome scholars of all disciplines and appreciate transdisciplinary and comparative approaches. If you are interested in collaborating on an AAS/AAG panel, please write to gelezeau@ehess.fr with a topic proposal and abstract until July 15, 2013.