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Announcing a Chinese Studies public talk
co-sponsored by the **Center for Korean Studies**

“The China-North Korea Intrigue under Xi Jinping and Kim Jong-un: A Marriage of Convenience or a New Strategic Partnership?”

by

LEE Seong-hyon, Ph.D.

Director, Center for Chinese Studies, The Sejong Institute, Seoul

Friday, March 8, 2019, 12:00 pm

Moore Hall 109, 1890 East-West Rd, University of Hawaii at Manoa

As all eyes are on the second Trump-Kim summit in Vietnam, we should remember that it was Kim's meeting with Xi Jinping earlier this year that revealed how Kim would prepare for the summit. Kim said he would approach the denuclearization negotiation through “joint research and fine-tuning” with “China.” Surprisingly, the wording's significance was not duly appreciated by Western observers at that time. It would mean that even if Xi were not present at the Trump–Kim summit, Kim's demands at the negotiation table with Trump would reflect Xi's will as well. In Kim's New Year address, he made a veiled warning to the U.S.: “If the U.S. doesn't keep the promise it made in front of the world and misjudges the North Korean people's patience, imposes unilateral concessions and continues with sanctions and pressure, we also don't have any other choice but to explore a new path.” Many experts at that time interpreted Kim's “new path” as North Korea returning to missile launches and nuclear tests. But Dr. Lee argues that the “new path” Kim meant was to align North Korea closer to China. Given that this is the 70th anniversary of the establishing diplomatic ties between Beijing and Pyongyang, there will be a raft of high-level exchanges between the two, unprecedented in recent decades. The talk will end with policy implications for the United States.

Dr. Lee is a graduate from Grinnell College, Harvard University, and Tsinghua University (Ph.D. in political communication). He was the 2013-14 Pantech Fellow of Stanford University. Currently he is also Senior Fellow (nonresident) at the Center for Korean Peninsula Studies at Peking University. He has written extensively on the relations between the U.S., China and Korea. His comments and columns appeared at CNN, BBC, New York Times, Washington Post, Al Jazeera, Foreign Policy, China's CCTV, Hong Kong's Phoenix TV, among others. He writes bi-weekly columns at The Korea Times. He lived in Beijing for 11 years. His research interests include: China–U.S.–North Korea Relations, U.S.–China Relations, Sino–North Korea Relations, and Chinese Press and Foreign Policy.

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