On March 18, 1871, Taewongun (Grand Prince) who held real power when King Kojong (r. 1863-1907) assumed power at the age of 12, issued a historical order that was enforced nationwide: All Confucian private academies ever built, except for the forty-seven royal-chartered ones, were to be destroyed. During the period from 1865 to 1871, over 800 academies were abolished and these intermediate organizations largely disappeared from the central scene of the Korean history and politics. From the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, Choson monarchs enthusiastically encouraged and sponsored the establishment of the academies on the ground that the academy growth would contribute to country’s moral reform and state-building. Why did the dramatic change of governmental policy on the academies occur? How can we resolve this historical enigma? To answer these questions, Koo situates this historical drama in a broader sociological context involving political competition between the state and nascent civil society, in association with his aim of overcoming the current historical explanations emphasizing more imminent causes of the abolition, such as military and fiscal abuses of the academies.

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Friday, October 5, 2007, 12:00pm–1:15pm
Philippines Conference Room, Encina Hall, third floor
616 Serra Street, Stanford University Campus

This program is free and open to the public. Reservations are required via http://ksp.stanford.edu/events by Tuesday, October 2, 2007. For more information, contact Heather Ahn at hjahn@stanford.edu.