

IAED USA: The General Sherman Incident - Beginnings of Korean-American relations

Roger Wetherall
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Webinar

The International Association for Peace and Economic Development



The General Sherman Incident of 1866

How an obscure pirate ship became the beginning of Korean-American relations, modern Korean history, and the rise of the clan of Kim Il Sung.

Tuesday, February 21, 2 – 3 PM EST (New York Time)

Dear,

History is both “what happened” and what people remember, think, or believe happened. The [General Sherman incident](#) of 1866 provides a revealing illustration of this two-fold understanding of history. The foreign ship, owned by an American but chartered by British merchants and largely staffed by Asian sailors, illegally sailed up the Taedong River to the outskirts of P’yŏngyang in the summer of 1866. Clashes with local Koreans led to the fiery demise of the *General Sherman* and the death of all of its crew.

Largely forgotten in the United States, this incident has been remembered and re-imagined in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea) as not only the beginning of “150 years of

enmity” between Koreans and Americans but also the beginning of modern Korean history. Moreover, as the story was told and retold in North Korea, it became a lynchpin in the unfolding narrative of the Kim clan’s bold and innovative resistance to American imperialism both economic and military.

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Dr. Kirk W. Larsen

Associate Professor of History, Brigham Young University.

His research interests include foreign relations in East Asia, imperialism, and U.S.-East Asian Relations. He is the recipient of the BYU History Department’s Outstanding Teacher of the Year Award in 2010 and the Bender Teaching Award from George Washington University in 2006.

Dr. Larsen’s publications include [Tradition, Treaties, and Trade: Qing Imperialism and Chosŏn Korea, 1850–1910](#) and [Peace in the East: An Chunggŭn’s Vision for Asia in the Age of Japanese Imperialism](#) (co-editor with Yi T’ae-jin and Eugene Y. Park).

He has published, presented, and commented on a variety of contemporary issues including East Asian foreign relations, North Korea, nationalism and elections in South Korea, and Sino-Korean relations. He has appeared on ABC, MSNBC, VOA, the Canadian Broadcast System, and Al Jazeera.



Dr. Thomas Selover

Dr. Selover is international co-coordinator for the International Association of Academicians for Peace (IAAP), and international President of Professors World Peace Academy (PWPA). He previously served as President of SunHak UP Graduate University outside of Seoul, Korea. He holds a doctorate in comparative religion and East Asian philosophy from Harvard University. Dr. Selover has taught at universities and colleges in Canada and the US, as well as in China and Korea. His current research focus is on the values of human-relatedness in promoting a society of interdependence and mutual prosperity.



Mr. Roger Wetherall

Moderator

US Coordinator,

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We look forward to your participation and engagement in this event.

Thank you,

Roger Wetherall

IAED-USA Coordinator

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