

Fall 2024 Arts of Asia Lecture Series
Sponsored by the *Society for Asian Art*

**Sixteenth-Century Painting of Officials' Gathering in Yeongbyeon:
A Virtual Tour of the City in Today's North Korea**

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This presentation offers an in-depth examination of *A Gathering of Military Officials* (object number: 2005.74), the earliest dated Korean painting in the collection of the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco. The painting vividly captures the moment and scenery of late 16th-century Korea. Classified under the genre of Gyehoedo (paintings of gatherings) within the broader category of documentary paintings, this hanging scroll depicts a specific event—the gathering of retired royal guards—at a distinct location, Mount Yaksan in Yeongbyeon (a city in present-day North Korea).

Through comparisons with ancient maps and photographs, we will virtually travel back to late 16th-century Mount Yaksan in Yeongbyeon. This painting is highly significant in Korean art history, as it is the only surviving artwork illustrating the city of Yeongbyeon. Moreover, its style and approach toward representing the actual scenery are considered a precursor to the true-view landscape paintings of the 18th century, which depicted notable and scenic sites across Korea.

Important Terms and Names

CHO Yeongseok 조영석趙榮祐(1686 - 1761); a poet, calligrapher, and painter

Dokseodang 독서당 Hall of Worthies; located in Seoul

Five representative scripts in East Asian calligraphy; seal, clerical, regular/standard, semi-cursive, and cursive scripts

Gyehoedo 계획도 契會圖; a painting depicting a gathering of literati

Mount Inwang 인왕산 仁王山; a mountain in central Seoul

JEONG Seon 정선 鄭歡 (1676-1759; pen name: Gyeomjae 겸재 謙齋); an eminent painter during the Joseon dynasty

JEONG Yugil 정유길 鄭惟吉(1515 -1588, pen name: Imdang 임당 林塘); a scholar officer, who wrote the colophon on the painting, “A Gathering of Military Officials” (object number: 2005.74)

Jingyeong sansu 진경산수 眞景山水; true-view landscape or true-scenery landscape;
alternative word of Silgyeong sansu

Joseon dynasty 조선시대 朝鮮時代 (1392-1897)

KANG Hui'eon 강희언 姜熙彦 (1738 – 1784?); painter

KANG Sehwang 강세황 姜世晃(1713 – 1791); painter, collector, scholar-official

King Seonjeo 선조 宣祖 (1552 -1608; reigned 1567-1608); the 14th king of the Joseon
dynasty

KIM Sowol 김소월 (1902-1934); a poet

Nong'eun-dang 농은당 濃隱堂; Neong'eun Villa, whose owner is not identified; in Seoul,
but the exact location is not known either.

Pyeongyang or Pyongyang 평양 平壤; the capital of today's North Korea

Seonjeongwan 선전관 宣傳官; a royal guard and King's messenger during the Joseon
dynasty

Seonjeon-ryowu-jaehoe-gwanseo-do 선전료우재회관서도 宣傳僚友再會關西圖;
“Painting of the Reunion of Seonjeon Colleagues in Gwanseo”; title of AAM's painting,
“A Gathering of Military Officials” (object number: 2005.74)

Silgyeong sansu 실경산수 實景山水; real-view landscape, alternative word of Jingyeong
sansu

Yaksan 약산 藥山; a mountain in Yeongbyeon city

Yeongbyeon or Yongbyon (or Nyongbyon in North Korean pronunciation) 영변 寧邊;
a city in present-day North Korea

YI Heunghyo 이흥효 李興孝 (1537-1593)

Yujogondon 유조곤돈 柔兆困敦; an ancient cyclical term for the year of Byeongja 병자년
丙子年

Yukgang-hyun 육강현 六岡峴; Yukgang Hill in Seoul; alternative name of Yukgak Hill

Suggested Readings in English

Ahn, Hwi-joon, “Contributions of Court Painters in the Development of Korean Painting from Early to Mid Joseon Dynasty (1392-ca. 1700)” in Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, *The Court Painters of Joseon Dynasty* (Seoul: Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, 2011), 258-260.

“Cat 59: A Gathering of Scholar-Officials” and Cat 60: Landscape with Figures” in Kumja Paik Kim, *The Art of Korea: Highlights from the Collection of San Francisco’s Asian Art Museum*, (San Francisco: The Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, 2006), 182-185.

Jungmann, Burglind, “The Question of ‘True Scenery’: Jeong Seon” in Burglind Jungmann, *Pathways to Korean Culture: Paintings of the Joseon Dynasty, 1392-1910* (London: Reaktion Books, 2014), 135-154.

Park, Eunsun, “A Painting of a Joseon Officials’ Gathering Returns Home” in *Korean Heritage Autumn* (Cultural Heritage Administration, 2022, Vol 58), 12-17.

Yi, Song-mi, “Korean Inspiration: True-View Landscape Painting of the Late Joseon Period” in Song-mi Yi, *Korean Landscape Painting: Continuity and Innovation Through the Ages*, (Seoul: Hollym, 2006), 93-129.

Yoo, Hannah, “View of Nong’eun Villa From Yukgang Hill” in the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, *Asian Art Museum of San Francisco: Collection Highlights*, (San Francisco: Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, 2018), 225.

Korean art exhibitions in the United States in Fall 2024 – Summer 2025

Lineages: Korean Art at The Met

November 6, 2023 – October 20, 2024; Metropolitan Museum of Art
<https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/lineages-korean-art>

Perfectly Imperfect: Korean Buncheong Ceramics

December 3, 2023 – December 6, 2024; Denver Art Museum
<https://www.denverartmuseum.org/en/exhibitions/perfectly-imperfect>
Digital catalog: <https://buncheong.denartmus.org/>

Korean Couture: Generations of Revolution

April 28 - October 13, 2024; Cleveland Museum of Art
<https://www.clevelandart.org/exhibitions/korean-couture-generations-revolution>

Meot: Korean Art from the Frank Bayley Collection
August 28, 2024 - March 2, 2025; Seattle Asian Art Museum
<https://www.seattleartmuseum.org/whats-on/exhibitions/meot>

Hallyu! The Korean Wave
Sep 27, 2024 – Jan 6, 2025; Asian Art Museum of San Francisco

Suki Seokyeong Kang solo exhibition (title to be determined)
February- May 2025; Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver

Lunar Phases: Korean Moon Jars
March 2 – June 8, 2025; Denver Art Museum