

November 6, 2017

## [SEMU-YÉOL LECTURE] 2017 November

### Until You Can Bite: Yun Chi Ho, Life Writing, and Bourgeois Ethics in Colonial Korea

**Lecturer: Henry Em**

Associate Professor, Yonsei University Underwood International College

Record keeping was a vital part of Joseon (1392-1910) culture. Literati kept diaries (*ilgi*) while on official or personal travels, and recorded household events like a historian would keep daily records at the royal court, chronicling everything from the weather to meals, relatives visiting to financial transactions. But in Yun Chi Ho's *Diary*, begun in 1883 and ending in 1943, we see a distinctly modern and bourgeois sensibility take shape, in the form of the diary itself as it becomes private by adopting the enunciation system of the letter (letter to self). Along with this modern mode of reflexivity, we see in Yun's diary a longing for love and validation from his wife, something that his male ancestors (and his wife) need not have demanded from marriage. We see a bourgeois ethic emerging in the way Yun could be moved to help the destitute, and yet be angry at the Japanese colonial state for pressuring landlords to reduce rents on their tenants. This examination of Yun Chi Ho's *Diary* will offer a glimpse of how market logic and competition in a colonial setting impacted social relations as well as emotional life.



**Henry Em** is associate professor of Korean history at Yonsei University Underwood International College. He received his B.A. and PhD (History, 1995) from the University of Chicago. From 1995 through 2012, he taught at UCLA, University of Michigan, and NYU. He was Fulbright Senior Scholar to Korea (1998-1999) and Visiting Professor at Centre de Recherches sur la Corée, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris (2000). His recent publications include “Historians and History Writing in Modern Korea,” *Oxford History of Historical Writing: Volume 5*, edited by Axel Schneider and Daniel Woolf (Oxford University Press, 2011), *The Great Enterprise: Sovereignty and Historiography in Modern Korea* (Duke University Press, 2013), *The Unending Korean War*, a special issue of *positions: asia critique* co-edited with Christine Hong, 23:4 (Winter, 2015), and “War Politics, Visuality and Governmentality in South Korea,” *North Korean Review*, 12:1 (Spring, 2016).

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**Directions**

**Venue**

Education room (1st floor), Seoul Museum of History  
55 Saemunan-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul

**Date and Time**

November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017 (Mon)  
11:30 A.M. to 13:00 P.M

**Fee**

No Admission Fee.

**Contact (Registration required)**

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