

Einladung zum Gastvortrag

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## Sweating Statues and Miraculous Images in Chosŏn Korea

Dienstag, 11. Juli. 2023, 16–18 Uhr ct.

Hörsaal B, Kunsthistorisches Institut, Koserstr. 20, 14195 Berlin

This lecture examines why the sweating miracles were regarded particularly important at the Chosŏn court. At the Confucian court of Chosŏn, only one type of miracle was continuously reported to the king: the perspiration of Buddhist statues. Throughout the Chosŏn era, perspiration miracles of Buddhist images were reported to the court even when the court persecuted Buddhism. Particularly informative for this research is a series of debates at the court surrounding the frequent perspiration of Buddhist statues reported in 1662 during the reign of Hyŏnjong (r.1659-74). During the debates, some court officials appealed to the king



to destroy the statues that showed the miracles, while some objected to such iconoclastic action. Based on analyses of the court debates, this lecture suggests that the statues' perspiration was generally regarded as an ominous sign and that the Chosŏn court had to encourage local officials to report such miracles so as to collect the data to predict the calamities and wars. The lecture further shows that monastery bronze bells, the *tripitaka* woodblocks, and stone stele also performed sweating miracles in Chosŏn, which were all unanimously thought of as inauspicious signs. The Chosŏn court's nervous attitude towards sweating statues left such a deep imprint in the psyche of Korean people that similar beliefs continued to contemporary times. Even after the Korean War (1950-53), some famous Buddhist statues, such as the giant stone statue of Maitreya at Kwanch'oksa and the iron Buddha at Changgoksa, have been believed to perspire as a prophecy of national disasters.

**Youn-mi Kim** is Associate Professor of Asian Art History at Ewha Womans University. Prior to joining the Ewha faculty, she worked as Assistant Professor at Yale University (2012-16) and Assistant Professor at the Ohio State University (2011-12). She earned her Ph.D. from Harvard University in 2010. She is the editor of *New Perspectives on Early Korean Art: From Silla to Koryo* (Korea Institute, Harvard University Press, 2013); and a co-editor of *Pokchang*, the special issue of *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 28 (2019) and the *Dhāraṇī and Mantra in Ritual, Art, and Text*, a special issue of the *International Journal of Buddhist Thought and Culture* 30, no. 2 (2020). A grantee of The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Research Fellowships in Buddhist Studies 2018, she is currently completing her book manuscripts, entitled *Architecture of Virtuality: Pagodas of the Liao Empire (907-1125)*.