

The Master's Duty:

Tourism qua Critique of Asymmetrical Japanese Colonial Policies
in Yi Sang's "Miscellaneous Writings by Autumn Lamplight"

Tuesday, November 19, 2024 | 5–6:30 p.m.

Davidson Math and Science Center (DMSC), Room 104 • University of Nevada, Reno
FREE and open to everyone



John M. Frankl

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Professor Frankl completed his undergraduate education at UC Berkeley where he majored in East Asian languages, studying both Korean and Mongolian. He went on to complete a master's degree in modern Korean literature at Yonsei, where he focused on short fiction from colonial Korea. He then completed a second master's degree in Regional Studies East Asia and a Ph.D. in East Asian Languages and Civilizations, both at Harvard.

South Korea is experiencing an unprecedented surge in tourism, fueled largely by growing global interest in Korean music, cinema, television, food, and culture. As the once outwardly flowing Korean wave breaks on domestic shores, conflicting visions of how to channel this force coexist. These concerns, however, are not new. In the mid-1930s, in Korea under Japanese occupation, modernist Yi Sang (1910–1937) grappled with the challenge of presenting Korea to the world. Yi rather seamlessly straddled his multiple identities as a Japanese government architect and idiosyncratic Korean artist, colonial subaltern, and loyal subject. Examining certain of his representative essays reveals a situational identity based upon and changing according to geographical and emotional locations, as well as real and imagined interlocutors. In the final installment ("Mistake") of his 1936 five-part essay "Miscellaneous Writings by Autumn Lamplight," Yi explicitly and audaciously critiques Japan's colonial policies, exposing the hypocrisy in how Western tourists were treated in Japan and colonial Korea as ostensible equals.

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For any questions, please contact Professor Gene Park (genep@unr.edu) in the History Department.