

Research Centre for East Asian Cultures

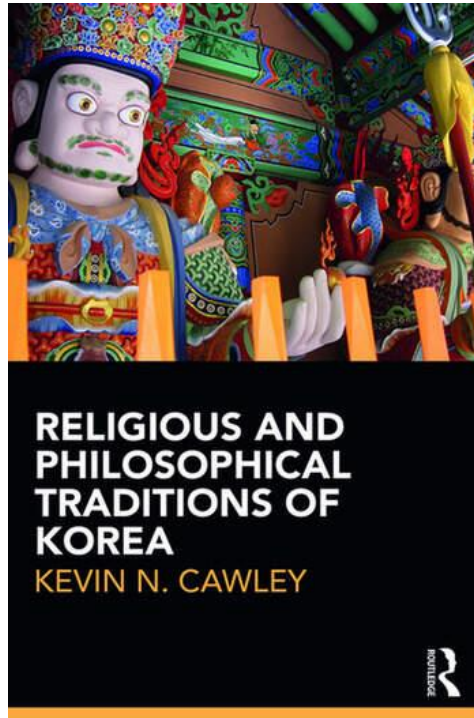
St Anne's College, Oxford OX2 6HS



Research Centre for East Asian Cultures  
Distinguished Scholar Lecture Series

–Supported by the Alpina Foundation–

## Yulgok 栗谷 (1536-1584) and T'oegye 退溪 (1501-1570): On Practicing Sagehood



**Kevin Cawley, University College Cork (UCC)**

**Saturday 14 October 2023, 11:00–12:30 BST**

**China Centre, Lucina Ho Room (first floor)**

**Hybrid event: Those wishing to attend online please contact Robert Chard for a Zoom link ([robert.chard@ames.ox.ac.uk](mailto:robert.chard@ames.ox.ac.uk))**

(Registration not necessary if attending in person)

By the late fifteenth century, Neo-Confucianism had been adopted as the philosophy of the Chosŏn dynasty (朝鮮, 1392-1910), supplanting Buddhism's former status. This study compares two Neo-Confucian colossi from the first part of the Chosŏn dynasty, concentrating on their theories on 'Sage Learning' (聖學, K. *Sŏnghak*). T'oegye 退溪 Yi Hwang 李滉 (1501-1570) and Yulgok 栗谷 Yi I 李珥 (1536-1584), both wrote very specific texts on sagehood: i) *Sŏnghak sipto* 聖學十圖 (The Ten Diagrams on Sage Learning) by T'oegye dating from 1568, and ii) *Sŏnghak chibyŏ* (聖學輯要) [Essentials of the Learning of the Sages], written by Yulgok in 1575, though the latter wrote an important shorter text *Self-Admonition* (自警文, K. *Chagyŏnmun*) that already highlighted his own resolve to become a sage. T'oegye and Yulgok identified our place in a morally directed universe in which one is expected to act responsibly toward other members of one's family and the larger society, or rather apply a social vision of morality, interconnected through a series of relationships, which also requires us to put sage-learning into actual practice in our daily lives.

**Dr Kevin Cawley** is a Senior Lecturer in Korean Studies and Director of the Irish Institute of Korean Studies at University College Cork, Ireland. He has published extensively on various aspects of Korea's intellectual history. His books include *Religious and Philosophical Traditions of Korea* (Routledge: 2019) and *Transnational East Asian Studies* (Liverpool University Press: 2023).