The Ashikaga shoguns, avid patrons of the arts, were especially known for their collections of Chinese paintings, ceramics, and bronzes which they displayed both for their own enjoyment and during visits of eminent guests to their palaces. They also commissioned detailed illustrated manuscripts that inventoried and gave instructions for the proper display of their collections. This talk will examine various meanings of elaborate formal display during the Muromachi period by focusing on the performative aspects of the formal displays of the Ashikaga collections. In particular, I will discuss the socio-political meaning of formal display for the Ashikaga by focusing on the special significance they held for the sixth Ashikaga shogun, Yoshinori (1394-1441; r. 1429-1441) during the visit of Emperor Go-Hanazono (1419-1471; r. 1428-1464). Through a close reading of contemporary visual and written sources, this talk will also try to reconstruct the interior displays during the imperial visits.

Jungeun Lee is an art historian who specializes in medieval and early modern Japanese and Korean art and architecture. With her broad curatorial and research experience in the states and Korea, her primary research interests include formal interior display, visual and material ornamentation in architectural setting, court and shogunal patronage on arts and their collections, and the inter-cultural relationship among the arts of Japan, Korea and China.