

national museum of korea

Quarterly Magazine

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The Heart of Joseon, Plum Blossom

Meeting the People of Goguryeo from 1,500 Years Ago through Murals

Incense Culture of Asia: Linking People to the Divine

Korean Relics in Foreign Countries

The year of 2009 is a truly eventful year to all the museums of Korea as we celebrate the centennial of the Korea's first museum, the Imperial Household Museum. Looking back on the past one hundred years, we can see how much our Museum has changed amid the turbulent history of Korea. Our Museum's value has extended far beyond that of a mere cultural institution, having also served as a traditional symbol of the Republic of Korea.

In the 21st century, the National Museum of Korea will be a representative of the national brand and must evolve into a treasury of Korean cultural contents. As Emperor Sunjong opened the Imperial Household Museum in 1909 to share the national treasures together with the general people, the National Museum of Korea will organize a wider range of exhibitions and events to celebrate Korean achievements and culture not only for the Korean people but also for the rest of the world.

As part of our new vision, we have revised our English quarterly, *National Museum of Korea*. The bright and colorful page design provides a more dynamic feel, and a style has been adopted that appeals to a wide range of readers. This publication will introduce you not only to the Museum's outstanding collection and diverse events but also to new issues pertaining to the NMK. Our intention is to bring you, the readers, closer to the vigorous and ever-evolving Korean culture.

The theme for the spring issue is the plum blossom, ever so enduring yet delicate, defying the wintry cold to bloom ahead and intoxicating people with a sweet, subtle fragrance of spring. The image of the bunches of red and white plum blossoms vibrantly outstretched along an old gnarled branch is the exact symbol for the future of the National Museum of Korea, ready to surge with unprecedented power and splendor.

In spring, everything is fresh and vivid. I hope you enjoy the English edition of our publication, which coincides with our fresh start in celebration of the centennial of the Korea's first museum.

Thank you.

Choe Kwang-shik

Director, National Museum of Korea

Spring 2009

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Notes for Readers

- Romanization of East Asian terms and names follows the Revised Romanization System (2000) for Korean.
- East Asian names are listed, throughout the magazine, in the order of family name followed by the first name.
- With the exception of the administrative district names and geographical designations, hyphens are used to separate syllables when there might be ambiguity in phonetic transcription according to the New Romanization System, Article III: Special Provisions for Romanization, Clause 2.
- For compound terms, spaces are used to separate words when there might be difficulty in interpretation and transcription.

A House Surrounded by the Plum Blossoms Like Snowflakes



Plum Blossom Studio, Jeon Gi (1825-1854)
Joseon, mid-19th century
Ink and light colors on paper, 32.4x36.1cm

Prunus mume 梅 *mae* in Korean - commonly known in English as Chinese plum - blooms in late January or early February. Because they flower during the coldest time of the year, the plum blossoms 梅花 *maehwa* are valued as the “Three Friends of the Winter.” 歲寒三友¹ Because there were few that blooms before *Prunus mume* in Korean soil, the plum blossom was regarded as a harbinger of early spring and a favorite subject for many Korean painters during the Joseon period.¹³⁹²⁻¹⁹¹⁰

This painting entitled *Plum Blossom Studio*, 梅花畫室圖 was created by Jeon Gi, 田琦 1825-1854 an ill-fated artistic genius who died before reaching the age of thirty. As the artist's inscription in the lower right corner demonstrates: “While my dear friend Yeongmae plays the flute in the thatched house,” 亦梅仁兄草屋笛中 the painting was created for Oh Gyeong-seok, 吳慶錫 1831-1879 a station-house official who was six years younger than Jeon Gi. The painting features Oh, playing the flute in the house with a large rectangular window, and another person, who seems to be the artist himself, clad in red and crossing the bridge that leads to the house.

When I first saw the white dots in this painting, I thought they were big snowflakes. The mistake was done before I saw in person hundreds of *Prunus mume* trees in bloom at Jeommal, west of Chuncheon, Gangwon-do Province. It was only after the experience of plum blossoms in real life that I could understand the true value of this painting and get a better grasp of the artist's sensitivity when depicting the plum blossoms.

I could also better understand the famous poem entitled *Plum Blossom* by Wang Anshi, 王安石 1021-1086 a scholar official of the Song China. In this poem, he versed about the beauty of the plum blossoms in full bloom in the middle of the cold winter as, “They are unmistakably snow even from far away, for the subtle fragrance comes from them.” 遙知不是雪，為有暗香來 I find the first phrase most intriguing because it evidences that the poet also felt the flowering *maehwa* snowy as I did with the Jeon Gi's painting.

Jeon Gi was known as a close friend of Jo Huiryong, 趙熙龍 1789-1866, a Joseon literati painter who was exceptionally fond of plum blossoms and who praised Jeon's eight-fold screen painting, *Plum Blossom* 梅花圖八幅屏風 as follows: “Amid a pristine mountain valley were ten thousand plum trees luxuriantly intertwined and superbly reflected, alluring to feel as if dipped into the sea of fragrant snow.”

The reason for that the *maehwa* in the *Plum Blossom Studio* particularly looks like snows is primarily the white dots, but there are other reasons too. The snow-covered mountains are there to signify it is winter, and the sky is colored in light gray not to indicate it is a night but to emphasize the white, snowy mountains. Although plum blooms in the spring, Joseon painters depicted them in a snowy background of late winter or early spring to stress the symbolic quality of the winter-defying *Prunus mume* as one of the Three Friends of the Winter. ≡

Written by Min Kil-hong
Curator of the Fine Arts Department

¹

歲寒三友
“Three Friends of the Winter” refers to *Prunus mume*, pine tree, and bamboo. The plants are so named because the latter two (pine tree and bamboo) refuse to wither despite the bitter cold of winter and the former (the plum) blooms while the weather is still bitterly cold before any plant. The trio symbolized a noble, unyielding spirit, and was a popular theme for traditional East Asian poetry as well as painting.

Written in English by Kho Youen-hee
Former Researcher at the Oriental Institute of
the University of Chicago

Images and Beyond, Plum Blossom Paintings in the Joseon Period

Relationship between Image and Beyond

Plum blossoms are tiny and pretty, and yet strong enough to flower during the cold winter and act as the first harbinger of spring. The characteristics of this flower have long been loved by scholars in East Asia, and plum blossom has been a popular subject in works of art. This flower marked as the most frequently painted among the floral paintings of the Joseon period.¹³⁹²⁻¹⁹¹⁰

The plum blossom was indeed depicted in numerous creative ways during the Joseon period.¹ The followings are the three most prominent styles: the vertical branch style during the mid-Joseon, the plum blossom studio popular during the late Joseon, and plum blossom in red and white from the late Joseon. The visual expression and the change in the plum blossom image, one by one along with times, reflect the transformation in social mood and philosophical orientation during the time.

A painting exists as an image. Image is the premier and basic means to become a painting. But image is not only the image but also a connotation of something beyond the image. In East Asian classical painting theory, there was a concept about the interior connotation called *huayi*, 畫意 Meaning of the painting or *huawaizhhiyi*, 畫外之意 Meaning beyond the painting which was considered to be even superior to the visible image itself. This paper, however, does not limit itself to this theory but attempts to use the visual material as a means to understand the historical changes in aesthetical and sociopolitical thoughts during the Joseon period.

Elongated Vertical Plum Blossom Branch and Neo-Confucian Thought

The image of a plum tree with a vertically elongated branch has been long accepted as the representative image of plum blossom painting in the mid-Joseon period.² The most well-known painting in this style is *Moon and Plum Blossoms* 月梅 by Eo Mongnyong. 魚夢隱 1566-? In this ink painting, an elongated branch stretches high in the air, forming a vertical ordinate. This branch virtually divides the painting into two almost equal parts, bestowing on the painting an audacious feel.

In this style, the branch itself is conspicuous in its shape but the flowers on the branch are small and faint. No one would agree that the essence of this painting is simply the appreciation of beautiful flowers. The vertical line of the branch towering into the air, undoubtedly the main subject of this painting, looks spiritual and even obstinate. The line, thin but strong enough to stand firmly, seems to imply an indomitable spirit.

¹ Yi Seonok, "The Feature and Influence of Plum Blossom Painting in the mid-Joseon," *Misulshakyongu*, Seoul: Misulshakhoi, 2006.
² Hong Sunpyo, "The History of the Painting of Four Gracious Plants," *Four Gracious Flowers of Korea 四君子*, Seoul: Art Palace, 1992; Kim Hongnam, "Research for Plum Blossom, Tammae" 探梅, *In search of Plum Blossom*, Seoul: Ewha Woman's University Museum, 1997.



Plum Blossoms, Hong Suju (1642-1704)
Joseon, late 17th century
Ink on silk, 123.9x57.0cm

Moon and Plum Blossoms, Eo Mongnyong (1566-1617?)
Joseon, late 16th-early 17th century
Ink and light colors on silk, 119x53.6cm

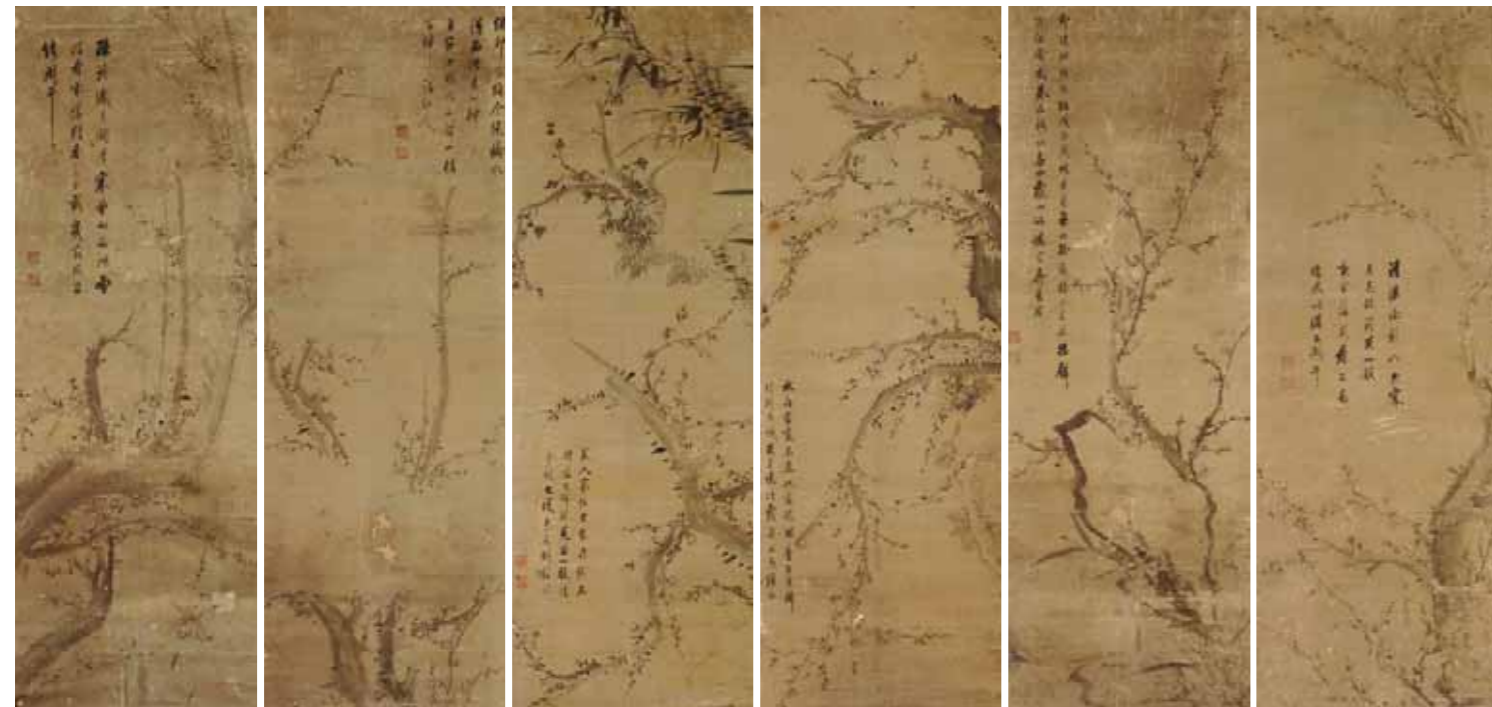
In fact, a plum branch growing too high is unusual. *Record about the Plum Tree* 梅譜 written by a Chinese scholar notes that this kind of branch stretched unusually high and elongated is called “eccentric branch” 奇條 in the southern region in China. The record further observes on the biological characteristics as that this eccentric branch is a new shoot sprouted in the first year just after the tree was planted, and that it is productive because many plums are clustered on the branch. The author of the record clearly points out that the eccentricity is only related to this productivity, not specifically related with the elegance or the dignity of the branch.³ Few plum blossom of this type were depicted in Chinese paintings.

It seems that Joseon scholars were also not so deeply concerned with the plum blossom as described in this record. They had been forging their own attitude toward this flower. Joseon literati’s poems on plum blossoms and the paintings emphasize the virtue of the morally strong spirit of the flower, which can survive the freezing winter. One of the most distinguished praises for the plum blossom since the late Goryeo period has been “the iron bowel and the stone heart” 鐵腸石心. Although the term was originally to indicate a Chinese poet, Song Jing, 宋景 who is famous for his song of plum blossom, and was hardly associated with the plum blossom in China, it became one of the most favorite remarks on plum blossoms in the Joseon period when a strict Neo-Confucianism dominated.⁴

One reason for that the vertical branch of the plum blossom was so popular to Joseon painters was that the branch bearing the tiny, feeble plum blossoms signified an image of the strong, indomitable spirit of the flower.⁵ A Joseon scholar of the sixteenth century, Gim An-guk, 金安國 1478-1543 facing the vertical branch in the plum blossom painting, and praised the image’s spiritual strength as:

“Being upright above all the worldly dust, It stands high, aloft.” from *Plum Blossom in Ink* 墨梅
亭亭出塵標，絕代而獨立⁵

Plum Blossoms, Yi Gong-u (1805-1877)
Joseon, 19th century
Ink and light colors on paper, 124.2 x 45.0cm (each panel)



- 3
Fan Cheng-da, “Epilogue”; *Record of Plum Tree* 梅譜.
- 4
Kim Jaeryong, “Tradition of Korean Poem on Plum Blossoms and Song Jing”; *Urimunhakyongu*, vol. 22.
- 5
Kho Youen-hee, “Making of the Vertical Composition in the Plum Blossom Painting through the Poems about the Paintings”; *Dongbanghak* 東方學, vol. 6, Seoul: Dongbang gochon yeonguso, 2000.
- 6
Gim An-guk 金安國, “Mukmae” 墨梅, *Mojaejip* 暮齋集, vol. 2.

Brilliant Flowering & Zen Aesthetics

The austere mood in ink painting of plum blossoms was a dominant motif well into the seventeenth century. Yet, the depicting style of the plum blossom began to change in the late Joseon, being associated with other motifs or its brilliant flowering in vibrant colors.

One of the new images is “plum blossom studio” 梅花書屋 that suddenly became popular in the nineteenth century. This painting impresses the viewers with the plum blossoms in full bloom so much as to fill much of the picture plane. A tiny building and a scholar reading within it, are the only means that the viewer can match the painting with the title by. Nonetheless, the building is too small for an adult to stand up and is unrealistically placed on the hill. The window is too small to show anything but a reading scholar, whereas the white flowers in full bloom dominate the composition, suggesting a steady but intensifying buoyancy and breathless visual beauty of spring. Though a scholar in the studio was the standard for representing the ideal life of a recluse, this kind of flowery brilliancy represents a stark contrast to the strict mood of the mid-Joseon period.

Plum Blossoms, Sin Myeong-yeon (1809-1892)
Joseon, 19th century
Ink and light colors on paper
32.1 x 23.9cm



Plum Blossom Studio, An Jungsik (1861-1919)
Joseon, late 19th-early 20th century
Ink and light colors on paper
83.5 x 83.1cm





Plum Blossoms, Jo Huiryong (1789-1866)
Joseon, 19th century
Ink and light colors on paper, 124.8x371.2cm

The renowned scholars in the late Joseon, Gim Jeonghi ^{金正喜 1786-1856} and Jo Huiryong ^{趙熙慶 1789-1866} call this scene of plum blossoms “the sea of fragrant snow.” This metaphor stemmed from a Chinese legend about Mt. Nafu ^{南浮山} in which ten thousands of plum trees are fragrantly flowering. The sea of snow image was accepted as a symbolic, imaginative, and visual media for unworldliness with an intriguing twist. The high spirit of Zen ^禪 Buddhism was matched to this image in the artistic taste of Joseon scholars at that time. Zen of Joseon scholars suggested an alternative aesthetic from the mainstream Zen and Neo-Confucianism. The pursuit of Zen at that time in Joseon was associated with an obsession with extremely elegant and exotic works and objects. ⁷

Because Confucianism was the dominant philosophy throughout the entire Joseon period, the Zen scholars also practiced Neo-Confucianism. Thus, the combination of extravagantly flowering plum blossoms and a reading recluse can be doubly read as a reflection of Zen aesthetics, as well as of Neo-Confucian thought. For this reason, many Joseon scholars were often reminded of a Chinese Confucian scholar recluse, Im Pu, ^{林逋 967-1028} who was famous for his expression of referring to the plum blossom as his wife.

Another important image of the flowering plum blossom is the red and white plum blossom tree. ^{紅白梅} Numerous painters produced this colorful image in the late Joseon. The most famous painter of this image at the beginning stage is Jo Huiryong. It was his dream to paint the most wonderful plum tree in Mt. Nafu. ⁸ On another painting of his red and white plum blossom

⁷ Kho Youen-hee, “Floral Painting and Poems in the 19th Century”, *Hanguksigamunhak*, vol. 11, Seoul: Hanguksigahakhoi, 2002.

⁸ Jo Huiryong, “Seogu mangnyeonnok,” *石友忘年錄* ch. 92, *Jeonjip* vol. 1: 133.

tree, he wrote the following poem. According to Jo, beautiful colors are the same in essence as the thought of Zen Buddhism: everything is void.

“In white as snow and red as orangutan, everything is void.
Thousand beads of bright jewels are amazingly all alike.” ^{from Six Songs on Plum Blossoms}
雪白猩紅色即空，明珠天顆訝勻同 ^{梅花六首⁹}

The multiple images of the plum blossom are significant visual media that suggest the thought, mood, and aesthetics of Joseon scholars; the elongated branches of the plum blossom trees emphasize the virtue of an austere life and self-restraint of the Neo-Confucian scholars in the mid-Joseon. The intriguing combination of extravagantly flowering plum blossoms in vibrant colors with a reading recluse suggest the change in aesthetic of Joseon scholars interested in an alternative Zen practice as well as in artistic taste different from those of the mid-Joseon. ⁹

⁹ Jo Huiryong, “Seogu mangnyeonnok,” *石友忘年錄* ch. 92, *Jeonjip* vol. 1: 133.

Plum Blossom: a Beautiful Flower

Written by Yoon Jong-gyoon
Senior Curator, Gwangju National Museum

that Reflects the Joseon Mindset

Nature of the Plum Blossom

The plum tree *Prunus mume* endures the winter cold and blooms first to announce that spring is imminent. Such tenacity inspired the literati of Joseon with a deep affection for the plum blossom. *梅花 maehwa* The beautiful, pure white blossoms have traditionally been compared to “a soul of ice” and “bones of jade,” and have symbolized the virtue and fortitude of the “Confucian gentleman,” *君子* the realization of the Confucian ideal.

The Joseon poet Seo Geojeong *徐居正 1420-1488* described the *maehwa* as the “sage of flowers,” *花中聖* because of its elegance and purity. The image of the bright and clean petals has been fondly embraced by East Asians, who are intent on capturing the inner beauty. This passion for the flower has generated many tales and created unique art genres based on the plum blossom motif.

The Chinese poet of Song dynasty Lin Bu *林逋 967-1028* built a thatched hut on Gaoshan *孤山 Lonely Mountain* in Zhejiang Province, planted flowering plum trees and lived there as a recluse for twenty years, writing poems. It was said that when he wanted a drink, he had a deer fetch for him tying the flask on its neck, and, when visitors came, he had a crane fly to greet them. These tales were illustrated in the theme paintings *Releasing Cranes* *放鶴圖* and *Plum Blossom Studio* *梅花喜神圖* that depicts a scholar studying plum blossoms in full bloom from his writing studio on a snowy day. Such motif as *Plum Blossom Studio* was particularly popular during the nineteenth century, and the person portrayed in the painting was usually the artist himself.

Another painting scenario based on the plum flower is *In Search of Plum Blossoms*, *探梅* and it portrays a scholar in search of a flowering plum, anxiously anticipating the spring on a snowy winter day. The theme was inspired by the life of the Chinese poet of Tang dynasty, Meng Haoran, *孟浩然 689 or 691-740* who was known for his love of alcohol and the lute and his nature-inspired poems. *In Search of Plum Blossoms* paintings depict a figure riding a donkey along a snowy mountain trail in early spring, around the time that the plum blossoms bloom.

One fine example from Joseon is *In Search of Plum Blossoms at Pa Bridge* *探梅尋梅圖* by Sim Sajeong, *沈師正 1707-1769*. This work features a scholar on a donkey crossing a bridge with snow-covered hills in the background. He is followed by a servant carrying a bundle that contains the utensils for writing poems, food, and drinks to enjoy while gazing at the early bloomers. ^{1, 2}



In Search of Plum Blossoms at Pa Bridge, Sim Sajeong (1707-1769)
Joseon, 18th century
Ink and light colors on silk, 115.0x50.5cm

1



In Search of Plum Blossoms, Kim Myeongguk (1600-1662?)
Joseon, 17th century
Ink and light colors on paper, 54.8x37.0cm

2

³
Album of Poems on Plum Blossoms, Yi Toegyae (1501-1570)
Joseon, 16th century
Calligraphy, 34.5x25.0cm
Image © Gim Minyoung Estate



Plum Blossom Lovers in Joseon

Many Joseon literati were fond of the plum blossom, and the famous Neo-Confucian scholar Yi Toegyŏ (李退溪 1501-1570) was the most prominent one among them. He described himself as a person who truly understood the plum blossom, and planted one hundred or so plum trees at his home. Yi Toegyŏ wrote *Album of Poems on Plum Blossoms*, (梅花詩帖) an anthology containing more than ninety pieces devoted to the flower.³ In his verses, Yi humanized the plum blossom, treating them with the dignity one would afford a person. He referred to plum blossoms as the “immortal of jade” (玉仙) or “immortal clad in a white silk.” (縞衣仙) Even facing his death, Yi Toegyŏ reminded his servants to “water the potted plum.” Such was his affection for this singular tree.

When discussing plum blossoms aficionados, literati painter Jo Huiyong (趙熙龍 1789-1866) of late Joseon must be included. His love for the flower is endless. He referred to himself as an “old plum gentleman,” (梅叟) painted and kept a screen painting of plum blossoms on silk at home, used ink stones inscribed with poems of the blossom, wrote a collection of one hundred verses on plum blossom, hung up framed calligraphy that reads “Pavilion of Hundred Songs of Plum Blossom,” (梅花百詠樓) and drank plum blossom petal tea. One of his elegant artistic signatures was the use of red and white dots to portray the plum in splendid full bloom. Jo’s rendering of the bough tips suggest a coiled dragon, and he led the popularization of the Lin Bu-inspired *Plum Blossom Studio* paintings in late Joseon.

⁴
Plum Blossoms, Gang Sehwang (1712-1791)
Joseon, 18th century
Ink and light colors on paper, 27.6x26.0cm
Image © Jo Gyeong-ok Estate



⁵
Old Plum Blossoms with Birds
Gim Hongdo (1745-1806?)
Joseon, late 18th-early 19th century
Light colors on silk, 99.0x43.3cm



Joseon Style Plum Blossom Painting

The Chinese generally liked their plum trees to be svelte and full of blossoms, while people in Joseon were moved by the old and broken trees with sparse blossoms. These differences in preference were reflected in their artworks.

Works by Eo Mongnyong (魚夢龍 1566-1617) are the exemplars of the unique brushwork achieved in Joseon ink plum blossom painting. With a simple composition, Eo shows young branches sprouting from ancient trunks, effectively conveying the long-lived and dignified quality of the flowering plum. Gang Sehwang (姜世晃 1712-1791) applies diagonal lines to elicit the noble spirit of plum blossom.⁴ Sim Sajeong’s *Scenes of birds and plum blossoms* present an emotionally-charged elegance. As a royal court painter, Gim Hongdo (金弘道 1745-ca. 1806) was the most prolific plum blossom artist.⁵ Works by these three artists (Gang, Sim, and Gim) are noteworthy because they all chose to paint red plum blossoms, instead of the more common white.

The mid-Joseon artists employed powerful and coarse brushstrokes to paint ancient-looking trees that symbolize the lofty spirit, while paintings from the late Joseon feature soft brushwork that evokes a poetic sentiment. In representing the flowers, the mid-Joseon technique includes abbreviated stamens and clearly outlined petals. By late Joseon, however, the stamens are luxuriously painted, while the stems and flowers are detailed with a balanced application of light ink and thin coloring. The range of variety and novelty in plum blossom painting was unprecedented at the end of Joseon.

Flowering Plum as Part of Life

New Year’s cards in Joseon often showed magpies sitting on a plum branch announcing the joyous advent of spring (The lunar New Year usually starts in late January or early February, so the New Year and the early spring coincide). Pictures of plum blossoms along with a variety of birds such as magpies, woodpeckers, sparrows, and pheasants became popular in the mid-Joseon, and the popular tradition remains so today.

Joseon people’s love for the plum blossom was not confined to painting. The motif was also applied to ceramics, woodcrafts, and various other everyday implements. The blue and white porcelain of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries featured images of plum trees and birds, a theme borrowed from Ming dynasty’s blue and white porcelains. Over time, however, a uniquely Joseon style emerged. A pattern depicting a single branch laden with plum blossoms was commonly used for small porcelain boxes or water droppers. Embossing techniques began to be applied on white porcelains from the late eighteenth century to bring out the plum flower image and to accent the decorative effect.

The flowering plum tree has been loved by Koreans from Joseon to the present day. For more than 500 years, the blossoms have conveyed a message of perseverance and hope, defying the cold and announcing to the world that spring is near. ≡



Blue and white porcelain jar with birds and plum tree design Joseon; H. 16.5cm, National Treasure No. 170



Square bottle with plum design Joseon; H. 8.7cm, National Treasure No. 166



Ink water container with plum design Joseon; H. 7.3cm



White porcelain with iron bamboo and plum tree design, Joseon; H. 41.3cm

Meeting the People of Goguryeo

from 1,500 Years Ago through Murals

Written by National Museum of Korea Editorial Team
Reviewed by Chang Eun-jeong, Curator of the Archaeology Department



Goguryeo Figures from Murals
February 24 - September 27, 2009
Goguryeo Room, Archaeological Gallery

Goguryeo was an ancient kingdom in Korea that lasted for about 700 years from 37 BC on, and its tomb murals offer an extremely appropriate way of showing what its people looked like and how they lived. The Archaeological Gallery of the National Museum of Korea has been showing a themed exhibition entitled *Goguryeo Figures in Murals* since February. Its aim is to shed a new light on various figures who led the culture of Goguryeo.

Goguryeo tomb murals were primarily painted in Jian 集安 and Pyeongyang, 平壤 the second and third capitals of the kingdom from the middle of the fourth century until the middle of the seventh, respectively. Tomb murals from other contemporaneous kingdoms, such as Baekje, Silla, and Gaya hardly match those from Goguryeo both in quality and quantity. They show vivid images of Goguryeo people on a grandeur scale with unmatched details.

But why did they paint on walls in the first place? It flows from their concept of afterlife. They believed the soul could keep living to the next world beyond the body, and that the afterlife would be no different from that of this world. This meant that a tomb was not merely a site where the dead were buried, but the place where the souls of the dead would live to the Goguryeo people. They depicted memorable artifacts from their lives, in hope that they could enjoy equal wealth and prosperity of this life in the next life. At first, these murals featured various events from daily life, but their content and pictorial styles evolved with the spreading Buddhism and *Eum-yang-o-haeng* 陰陽五行 Yin and Yang theory. They also display slightly different characteristics by region. For example, the morals and customs of Goguryeo are featured in murals found in Jian, ¹ while those in Pyeongyang ² show the cultural influence of the Han dynasty 202 BC-AD 220 in China, which governed the region for about four hundred years. This explains why we can see figures in Chinese-style dress in the latter.

The National Museum of Korea has about 120 replicas of Goguryeo tomb murals in its collection. They include *Goguryeo Figures on Murals* from Gamsinchong 高神塚 Tomb with the Scene of Deity in Niche and Ssangyeongchong 雙鏡塚 Tomb with Two Pillars that were produced from 1912 to 1914. These two murals, discovered near Pyeongyang, allow visitors to appreciate the culture and customs of that time. Because the Goguryeo tomb murals have suffered serious discoloration and various other damages over the past one hundred years since they were first uncovered, these replicas are significant resources for understanding the artistic accomplishments of the Goguryeo people.



1 Murals of Jian Region



Owner and his wife of Gakjeochong (Tomb with Wrestling Scene)



Feast scene of Muyongchong (Tomb with Dancing Scene)

2 Murals of Pyeongyang Region



Female owner of Anak Tomb No. 3



Thirteen governors-general and owners of Deokheungri Tomb

Figures of Gamsinchong

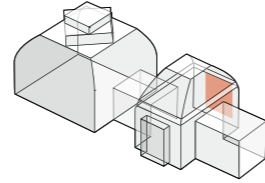
Gamsinchong ^{early 5th century} is a tomb with two burial chambers and two alcoves on the left and right wall. Its mural was outlined and colored in red and black, but dominated by the browns. Pillars and crossbeams were drawn in the corners and upper edges of the walls respectively, making the interior of the tomb look like a wooden building. The mural is characterized by the admixture of elements from before and after the fifth century, while the wide-sleeved costume and Buddhist-like sitting figure reflect the characteristics of tomb murals found near Pyeongyang.



Tomb Owner

This figure is sitting on a flat bench under a red curtain, in a purple *durumagi* (a traditional Korean men's overcoat) with both hands held inside the wide sleeves on his chest. He wears a dark silk hat that shows his high societal position.

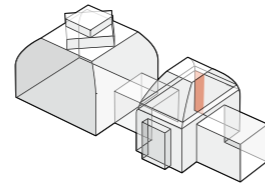
- 1 People with higher statuses and positions were painted larger than others in Goguryeo murals as seen in this mural. The two chamberlains behind the master are depicted smaller than their master.
- 2 An s-shaped cloud fills the upper background and a red lotus flower is drawn beneath the bench, making the tomb owner look even more elevated and noble.



Maids

Two maids are drawn on the upper sides of the right and left walls behind the tomb owner. The maid on the left holds her both hands together, as if paying homage to her master.

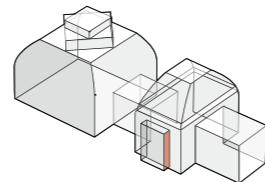
- 3 They both have their hair turned up and wear long skirts with a u-shaped apron and a long cloth band attached to their backs. This style of costume for maids is different from the clothes of maids found in tomb murals in the Jian area, but is similar to dress suits in the periods of the North and South dynasties (317-589), Tang dynasty (618-907), and Sui dynasty (581-618).



Warriors

Warriors, drawn on both walls of a niche opposite the tomb owner, stand with their swords held upright. The sword have round loops and long strings on their handles.

- 4 The warrior on the left looks different from the others, as he is dressed in high-necked armor and red pants, and wears a tall helmet with a feather.



Attendants

- 5 The attendants are placed below the maids and warriors. All three of them wear baggy trousers, and face the master with both hands inside their wide sleeves.



Figures of Ssangyeongchong

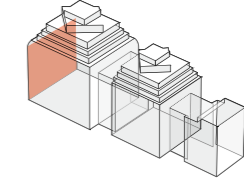
Presumably erected late in the fifth century, the Ssangyeongchong is noteworthy for its twin octagonal stone pillars and the sophisticated expressions of its figures. Two guards are on both walls of the entrance to the antechamber, while a noble couple sits side by side on the inner wall. On the eastern wall is a parade of people bringing food to the couple. Some of them wear polka-dot costumes, like those worn by figures in the Jian tomb murals. ≡



Owner of the tomb and his wife

The tomb owner and his wife sit in a luxurious room, facing the front. Their postures and facial expressions are similar to those of Gamsinchong, but red stripes have been added to their costumes. The size of the main figures in relation to the whole painting shows a decrease when compared to earlier works.

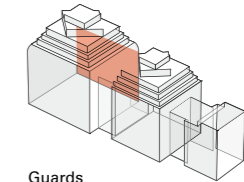
- 1 A pair of black ankle-boots has been placed between the stairs to the chamber and before the couple. It is interesting to note that their toecaps face each other.
- 2 Stand on both sides of the couple are attendants. The one to the right wears a pleated skirt, while the one on the left wears wide pants and a cloth hat. Both are much smaller than their masters to reflect the differences in their respective social standings.



A parade with offerings

The size of the figures is also important in this mural. A monk on the second row, wearing a robe and carrying a stick, is smaller than the noblewoman, indicating that Buddhism was not in yet in full flower.

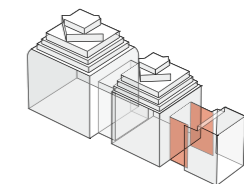
- 3 Drawn on the eastern wall of the burial chamber, the parade faces the northern wall, where the master couple is located. A page at the front is carrying an incense burner on his head. It has been used in ceremonies and rituals from ancient times.
- 4 In the fourth row is a noblewoman with her maids before and after her. She has her hair turned up and wears a pleated skirt and a black coat with red cloth attached to its collars and the edge of its sleeves.



Guards

- 5 Two guards are painted on both walls of the entrance way leading to the antechamber. The one on the west wall has a long lance slung over his shoulder, while the other on the east wall holds a long sword with an oval-shaped cord and a decorative string.

- 6 Their features, complete with big eyes and high noses, are definitely exotic and quite different from the other figures. They are believed to be western, who had entered Korea through the Silk Road.



Written by National Museum of Korea Editorial Team
Reviewed by Kim Young-mi, Curator of the Asian Arts Department

Incense Culture of Asia:

Linking People to the Divine

A Vessel for the Soul: Sinan Incense Burners
October 28, 2008–September 27, 2009
Relics from Seabed Room, Asian Arts Gallery



East Asian peoples consider self-discipline to be an essential aspect of their lives and they have always tried to communicate with their gods to reach the spiritual world. The exhibition, entitled *A Vessel for the Soul: Sinan Incense Burner* introduces this Asian culture of incense – a means for people both to reach deeper into themselves and to go beyond the everyday world. On display are about 80 pieces discovered in 1976 off the coast of Sinan, ^{新羅} Korea from a trade ship that sank about 700 years ago in its way to Kyoto, ^{京都} Japan from Ningbo, ^{寧波} China. The exhibits include the tools and equipment for incense burning as well as the incense materials such as fragrant herbs to tell how incense has been used in Asia and who used them.



Tripod incense burner with two handles
H. 6.3 cm; Diam. 10.8cm (mouth)

A Brief History of Asian Incense Culture

The incense culture of Asia has profound and complex meanings. It was originated from the Bongseon 拈香 ritual that was to be held during the Jecheon 祭天 ceremony, a ritual of Thanksgiving and offering prayers for fertility. The Bongseon ritual of burning firewood was primarily to inform the heavens that the gifts of the earth had been being used well. It is much later that the ritual developed into a spiritual, refined luxury for the aristocracy.

It is likely that Chinese were already burning incense at home during the age of civil wars.^{475-221 BC} In the early days, fragrant herbs were dried and directly burned to produce a fragrant smell and, around 206 BC-AD 8, bowls were used for incense burning and buried as death gifts for the dead in the tombs. The incense burners that were recovered from the seabed off Sinan are presumed to have been from the early fourteenth century. Most of them were made of metal or porcelain and shaped to resemble the bronze wares of the Song and Yuan dynasties.

Ding-Style Incense Burner

The Ding-style incense burners, modeled in the ding 鼎 an ancient Chinese vessel with legs and a lid form, are similar to ceremonial instruments in use during the Jinhua Confederacy period in the fourth century. They were used to boil and hold foods, and can be largely divided into three-legged round ding, and four-legged square ding.

Ding-style porcelain incense burners were either made without patterns or decorated with extremely simple ones, as it was not possible to copy the delicate patterns seen on the bronze ding of the time.¹ Particular burner is notable for its simple yet beautiful form.

Li-Style Incense Burner

Li 鬲 refers to ancient Chinese cooking utensils used to boil or heat foods. They are characterized by a wide mouth and hollow legs, which were made separately and then attached to the body. The legs of the Li-style incense burners are usually shorter than those of the Ding-style incense burners.^{2, 3}

Lian-Style Incense Burner

Lian 甗 means a vessel used for women's toilet articles during the Early Zhou period^{770-256 BC} in China. The Lian-style incense burners are deep, with shorter legs than those of Li-style incense burners, and their upper and lower diameters are the same. The legs served as mere decorations, with the actual support for the body being located in the center below. Lian-style Incense Burners were manufactured in a variety of sizes, but they all had similar patterns.

The incense burner with lateral lines⁴ is presumed to be from the latter part of the Southern Song dynasty,¹¹²⁷⁻¹²⁷⁹ while the one with trigram design⁵ is from the Yuan dynasty.¹²⁷¹⁻¹³⁶⁸ Incense burners from the former period usually have no patterns, while those from the latter were molded or decorated with patterns using various techniques.

Gui-Style Incense Burner

Gui 鬲 vessels were used to hold grain, and became important ceremonial utensils over time. Both the gui and ding vessels were used for ceremonies, but the former is placed in an even number while the latter in an odd number. The numbers of each vessel type are determined according to the social standing of the users. Some of the Gui-style incense burners discovered on the Sinan seabed have large feet instead of legs.

This hexagonal incense burner with patina⁶ is valued for its unique patterns. It has a dim fret in the shape of square scrolls on the foot at the bottom and thinly expressed cloud patterns in the middle, and the handle is molded in the shape of a fish.

Many celadon incense burners, shaped like those of the Gui-style incense burners, were discovered in the Sinan seabed. They were produced at the Longquan kiln 龍泉窯: molded in round, oval, and octagonal shapes, having animal-shaped handles, and decorated with various patterns.

¹
Long-legged incense burner
H. 15.9cm; Diam. 12.1cm



²
Tripod incense burner
H. 6.5cm; Diam. 11.6cm (mouth)



³
Tripod incense burner
H. 12.4cm; Diam. 16.4cm (mouth)



⁴
Incense burner with lateral lines
H. 9.3cm; Diam. 13.8cm (mouth)



⁵
Incense burner with eight carved trigram design
H. 14.0cm; Diam. 21.0cm (mouth)



⁶
Hexagonal incense burner with stamped cloud design
H. 9.9cm; Diam. 10.5cm (mouth)



Development of the Incense Culture in East Asia: Incense and Life in Korea, China, and Japan

The incense culture of Korea dates to the Three Kingdoms period.^{57 BC-AD 668} The Ssangyeongchong 雙楹塚 Tomb of the Twin Pillars mural is depicting a parade with a monk accompanying a noblewoman and a page carrying an incense burner.^{see page17} Incense burners from the Silla and Baekje Kingdom periods have also been found but most of them in the temple sites. It seems that the incense culture has been evolving into a temple ceremony in the late fourth century when the Buddhism was introduced to the kingdoms. Likewise, the incense burning culture also started as a ritual for the national or religious ceremonies in both China and Japan.

Boshan 博山 indicates a legendary mountain in the sea where wizards are believed to live. The Boshan-shaped incense burners are reflecting the traditional Chinese Taoist utopia and the Buddhist concept of the universe, as much as the ancient Chinese used incense as a medium between the earthly and heavenly worlds.^{see page18}⁷ It must have been heavenly seeing the smoke of incense coming out of the mountain-shaped covers.

By the tenth century, enjoyment of incense played an integral role in the lives of Chinese scholars. Illustrious officials and the literati enjoyed an elegant lifestyle, falling into meditation while burning incense or writing poetry. In this painting,⁸ an incense burner has been placed next to a man of substance, sitting on a valley riverside filled with bamboo.

Various tools and equipment are needed for incense burning. They include cases to store incense, burners, chopsticks to stir fire, spoons to scoop out the ashes, and vases to keep the chopsticks and spoons. In particular, a set of case, burner, and incense vase^{at times flower vase} are called the "Three Buddhist Offerings." The gentry of the Yuan period in China decorated their studies with beautiful and elegant Three Buddhist Offerings.⁹

The incense culture of Japan began to assume an aesthetic as well as a religious meaning after the Heian period.⁷⁹⁴⁻¹¹⁹² Noblemen held feasts to make and burn incense and vie for superiority. The participants burned different kinds of incense depending on wind velocity and strength and the season and place, with literary elements being added by the writing and singing of songs and poems.

In the Kamakura period,¹¹⁸⁰⁻¹³³³ collecting Chinese artifacts became fashionable and incense-related Chinese products were imported in mass with the Three Buddhist Offerings among them. The Sinan seabed relics also contain various sets of incense kits supporting the speculation that a decoration culture of Three Buddhist Offerings had been extremely popular at the time. The incense culture of Japan evolved into gatherings to enjoy the fragrance of incense, flowers, and tea during the Muromachi period¹³³⁶⁻¹⁵⁷³ in the fifteenth century.

Korea has not yet revealed any evidence of its incense culture and related relics, and Chinese incense culture almost disappeared by the Ming dynasty¹³⁶⁸⁻¹⁶⁴⁴ except the incense burners that are valued for their rarity and decorative quality up to today. ≡

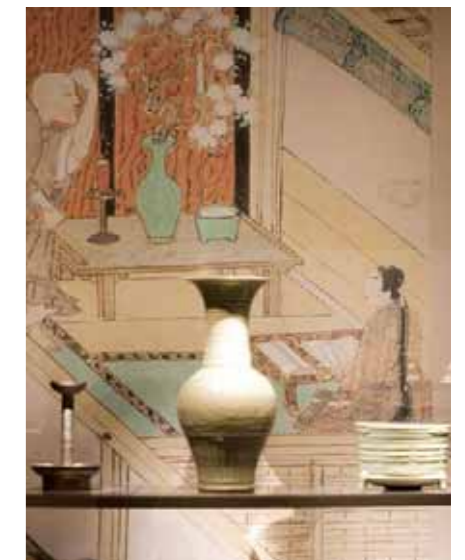
⁷
Boshan-shaped incense burner
H. 18.4cm; Diam. 8.3cm (mouth)



⁸
Incense Burning with Bamboo and Water 竹澗焚香圖
Southern Song; color on silk, 26.0x20.0cm
Image © National Palace Museum, Taipei 故宮博物院



⁹
Three Buddhist Offerings:
A set of candle stand, vase, and incense burner



Korean Museums, Growing with the Times

The National Museum of Korea has grown into the world's sixth-largest institution in scale, despite many national crises including Japanese colonial rule, the ensuing liberation, and the Korean War after. To celebrate the centennial of Korean museum, we will introduce a brief history of the museum's past, present, and future in three parts.

Imperial Household Museum
Yi Royal Household Museum
Yi Royal Household General Art Museum

1909



When the Empire of Korea was formed in 1897, opening a Western-style museum was considered a true measure of a civilized nation. The empire opened a museum in Changgyeonggung, one of the imperial palaces, in November 1909. The museum, called Imperial Household Museum, 帝室博物館 was the first "modern" museum in Korea in that it displayed relics for the general public.

Unfortunately, it was renamed "Yi Royal Household Museum" 李王家博物館 in 1910 under the Japanese rule to connote that the Korean Empire of the Yi Royal Family was not equal to The Empire of Japan. Yi Royal Household Museum was moved to Deoksugung Palace and its name was changed to "Yi Royal Household General Art Museum" 李王家美術館 in 1938.

Joseon Government-General Museum

1915



Following the enforced unification, Japan began to call the Korean Empire "Joseon," and established the Joseon Government-General to rule under the direct control of its emperor. In order to rule more effectively, Japan fabricated and distorted our history, trying to dampen and even extinguish our national spirit. History books published by the Government-General included false allegations that Korea had been ruled and influenced by China and Japan from ancient times, while the Joseon Government-General Museum 朝鮮總督府博物館 provided a venue for teaching and publicizing such untruths.

National Museum
Gyeongbokgung: the First Period

1945



Upon liberation, Korea took over the Joseon Government-General Museum and renamed it "National Museum" 國立博物館 in December 1945. Its organization and exhibitions were insignificant compared to those we see today. Nevertheless, the importance of the museum lies in that it tried to restore the damaged nation's cultural pride and to correct the false historical images of Korea.

National Museum
Namsan Period

1954



National Museum of Anthropology 國立民族博物館 was built on Mt. Namsan immediately after the liberation. After the Korean War broke out in 1950, the museum was incorporated into the National Museum as part of the government's policy of simplifying administration.

As for the National Museum, it was moved to Busan, the nation's temporary capital, for a short time during the Korean War, and returned to Seoul in 1953. Deoksugung site was then taken over by the Management Bureau of the Imperial Household Property 皇室財產事務總局 and the museum jointly occupied the Namsan Branch building incorporated with the National Museum of Anthropology.

National Museum
Deoksugung Period

1955



Having failed to free itself from the after-effects of the Korean war, the National Museum suffered a significant weakening in its position. In order to remedy this situation, Kim Jaewon, the director of the museum, asked then-president Rhee Syng-man to provide an appropriate space for it to preserve and exhibit its collections. As a consequence, the National Museum was allowed to repair and use part of the Deoksugung, which had been destroyed during the war. It was reopened to the public in June 1955.

National Museum of Korea
Gyeongbokgung: the Second Period

1972



The National Museum took possession of its own building in 1972, twenty-seven years after its inauguration. Designed and completed by the Cultural Heritage Administration, the building was located inside Gyeongbokgung on a site of about 14,000 square meters. It was designed as a replica of a national treasure-level wooden building. It was renamed "The National Museum of Korea" 國立中央博物館 at the same time. ≡



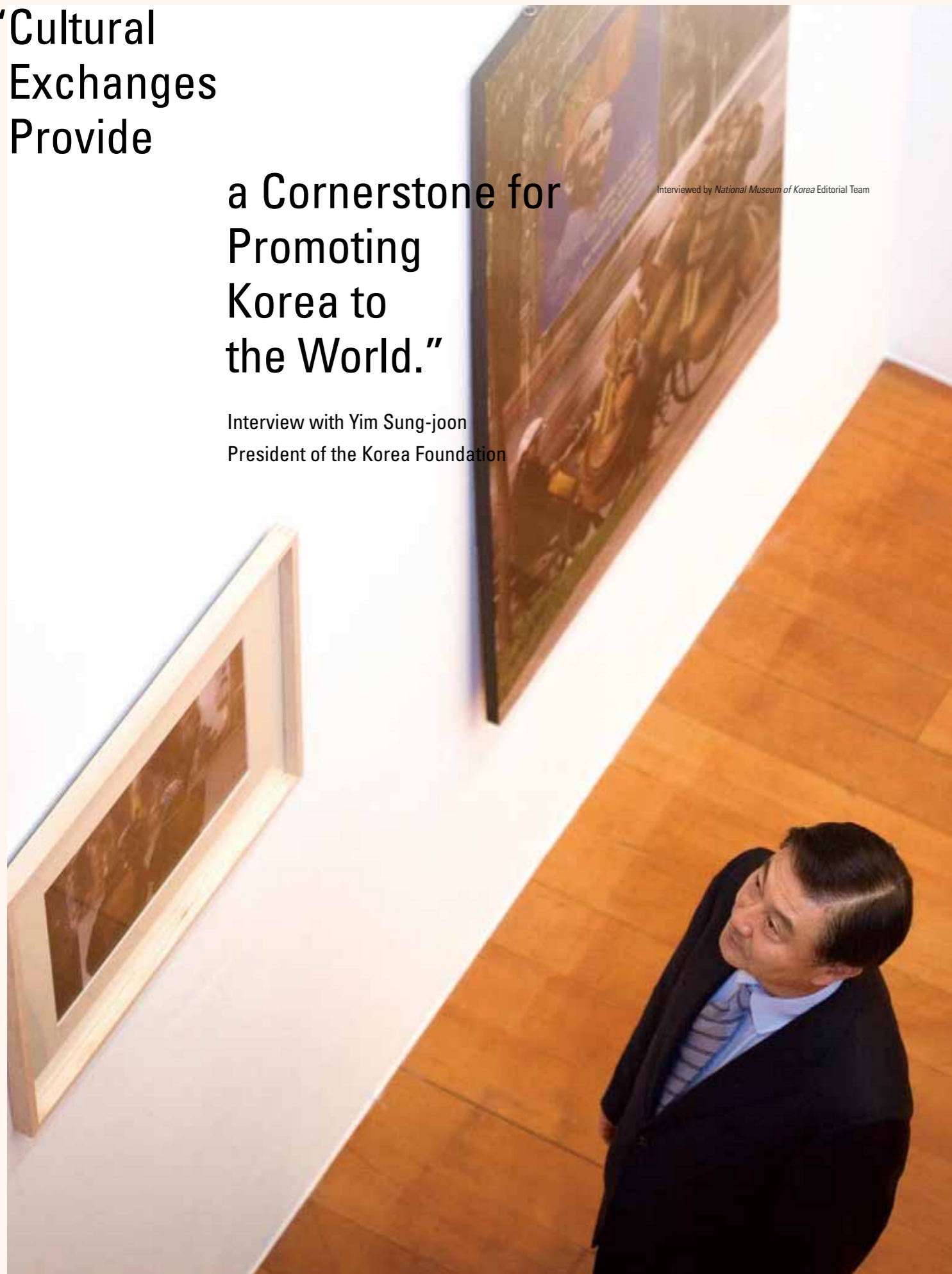
National Museum of Korea (No. 8) will feature "History of Korean Museums Part 2: the Present," focusing on the duration stretching from the period of Joseon Government-General building to the time of its relocation to the newly established Yongsan property in 2005.

“Cultural Exchanges Provide

a Cornerstone for Promoting Korea to the World.”

Interview with Yim Sung-joon
President of the Korea Foundation

Interviewed by National Museum of Korea Editorial Team



— Please tell us about your career before you were appointed president of the Korea Foundation.

After joining the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade in 1974, I held numerous positions at Korean embassies throughout the world, and also served as a senior researcher at the Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security. During my career of thirty-four years for Korean government, I came to the conclusion that cultural diplomacy is the best means of promoting our nation's identity abroad. In a sense, the Korea Foundation is an ideal organization for me as it is devoted to fostering cultural diplomacy between Korea and other countries. When I was appointed its president in early 2007, while working at our embassy in Canada, I made a vow that I'd commit myself totally to the job.

— What made you realize the importance of cultural diplomacy?

I was working at the Korean embassy in Egypt before moving on to the one in Canada. Although Egypt is not a large country in economic terms, it is well-known to most foreigners for its cultural richness. We are continually reminded of such things as the Pharaohs, the pyramids, and the unique cultural identity that all Egyptians share. This has made Egypt a global cultural country. It was then that I came to realize the power of culture and cultural diplomacy and saw how important it was to promote our own history and cultural identity abroad.

— Your ties with the National Museum of Korea should be also special, given that you are the president of the Korea Foundation. Please share any personal memories that you have related to the NMK and any projects of the foundation in collaboration with the museum.

I used to visit the NMK in the 1950s, when it was located in Deoksugung Palace. When it relocated



to Yongsan, I visited it soon after I returned to Korea after completing my service overseas. I was very delighted to see its impressive exterior and well-organized displays. It is like a Korean cultural venue has come into being, where not only Koreans but also foreigners can enjoy together.

In fact, the NMK has an enormous amount of content and information concerning Korean history, art, and culture. And, the Korea Foundation as a PR ambassador has resources to promote Korea and its cultural contents to the world. It means we can work together seamlessly on projects such as supporting the Korean galleries around the world through cooperative exhibition making.

— Creating galleries to stage Korean exhibitions in overseas museums would seem to be a very effective means of cultural diplomacy.

Yes, it is very significant. Korean galleries supported by the foundation are growingly increasing in numbers but the growth is meaningless that if there is not much to adorn the galleries. I think we could work together to reinforce both the quality and the quantity of the Korean exhibits in those galleries. That is why we need to foster cooperation and collaboration with the NMK and other museums of our home country. If we can borrow and show national treasure-level artifacts and works of art in special exhibition to the world through such cooperation, the cultural resonance will be beyond calculation.

— What kind of response are you receiving from the Korean exhibitions abroad and these special exhibitions?

We, in collaboration with the NMK and Leeum (Samsung Museum of Art), jointly staged a special exhibition entitled *Art of the Korean Renaissance, 1400-1600*, at the Korean Gallery at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. It was reported by the major local media including *The New York Times*, and garnered a very favorable response. Last October, we held a very successful exhibition, *The Smile of Buddha*, at the Center for Fine Arts (BOZAR) in Brussels, Belgium. It was not possible to mark such a big attendance record without the NMK's contribution to loan us the Pensive Bodhisattva (National Treasure No. 83) for the exhibition.

In addition, with our support, the University of Michigan Museum of Art recently re-opened after



an expansion and showed an exhibition of Korean art beautifully arranged there. In coming May, the Korean gallery at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art will re-open, again after some expansion with our support. We expect that this exhibition will fill the minds of many Koreans living there with pride and affection toward their mother country.

Moreover, we invited Peter Marzio, the president of The Museum of Fine Arts in Houston, to Korea and let him meet Suh Se-ok, the leading Artist of Korea. Their meeting eventually led to a Korean exhibition at the MFA, Houston and the former US president George Bush and his wife attended the opening ceremony. I cannot think of any better cultural diplomacy than this.

— Lastly, please tell us about projects that are underway or being planned by the Korea Foundation.

The Korea Foundation has been contributing to set up Korean exhibitions at more than twenty museums in seven countries since its founding in 1992. We plan to make a survey on the demand for our services and, in the same context, continue promoting cultural exchanges through various programs such as Curator's Workshops as we have done for the past ten years. So far, the workshop program invited more than one hundred curators from twenty-two countries, whose expertise lies in Korea. And we will continue our efforts to build intellectual networks for a greater appreciation of Korean art in connection with diverse organizations both at home and abroad. ■

— Further information on the Korea Foundation is available in six languages (Korean, English, French, Spanish, Chinese, and Japanese) at its website, <http://www.kf.or.kr>.

Korean Museums, Evolving with Digital Magic

Written by National Museum of Korea Editorial Team

Digital archives, ubiquitous networking, cultural technology - these words represent cultural phenomena of the twenty-first century. New digital technologies have become essential part of our lives, but what is it to the museums?

Museums are changing

Wayne Clough, the secretary of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC, announced in 2008 that the world's largest museum complex and research organization plan to digitalize its collections with the help of video game and web specialists and museum curators. The goal is to increase the level of interest of young students and the schools by enabling them to access the science, history, and culture-related collections of its museums online.

The European Union launched a digital archive called "Europeana" www.europeana.eu in November 2008, enabling digitalized books, publications, maps, and photographs to be accessed on the Internet. Europeana now offers 3 million items online from the collections of more than 1,000 cultural organizations throughout Europe, including the Louvre and the Rijks Museum Amsterdam. The Tokyo National Museum is also curating its collection into digital data, dispensing with text-oriented explanations while adding visual expressions to describe different feelings instead. The museum is also carrying on a license business using this data system.

What are digital museums?

More and more museums around the world are interested in their digital aspects in line with advanced digital technologies, and Korean museums are no exception. A digital Hangeul [Korean alphabet](http://www.hangeulmuseum.org) museum opened in 2005, followed by the Traditional Cultural Contents Museum at Andong in 2007 with 2,014 digital relics and seventeen virtual reality decks. Although a little different, the National Museum of Korea released a CD-ROM, *Digital Museum 2.0* in 2008, enabling photos of its relics and other information. In this April, the National Library



National Museum of Korea *Digital Museum 2.0*
This virtual museum in CD-ROM is for people to appreciate the NMK collection in a more personally entertaining way. Unlike traditional interface of viewing and reading in a traditional exhibition space, it offers 3D exhibition halls reinforced by convenient interfaces and virtual curators guiding through the collection. It is released in both Korean and English.



E-museum • www.emuseum.go.kr
This government site was built to introduce Korean museums and their collections online and is currently updating its interfaces and functions. You can view major artifacts from seventy-two national, university, public, and private museums across the country through the Internet after downloading a program from the site.



Digital Hangeul Museum • hangeulmuseum.org
This site is designed to provide everything on Korean alphabet Hangeul. Divided into five halls, you can learn about the history and the making of Hangeul from its initial stage, and access to a variety of related documents worth being regarded as national treasure.

of Korea opened the National Digital Library and, the "e-museum", a digital network of Korean museums, will soon let you find information on and view images of about 140,000 relics from 104 Korean museums as the result of collaboration between the National Museum of Korea and the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism.

This marriage between time-honored museum relics and state-of-the-art digital technologies seem very unusual at first glance. Looked at more closely, however, we can see the synergy between the Yin and the Yang combined together generating a perfect balance as illustrated by the philosophers of the East.

Well, what are digital museums exactly? There are two types of digital museums. One is online digital archives to hold information on museum relics and to be accessed through the Internet using a personal computer. The other is digital system within museums and galleries to enable exhibits to be more effectively appreciated through the use of ubiquitous systems. To simply put, the former could be called online digital museums, while the latter, offline.

What are the merits?

The biggest obstacles to museum visits are time, money, and physical distance, but digital museums are not affected by any of these constraints. There are no limits to their amount of space either. This means that each and every relic can be exhibited on digital museums and viewed 24/7. These advantages attract young people, who are not familiar with museums but are well acquainted with such features of the ubiquitous culture as 360-degree viewing, virtual experiences, and searching by surfing. Furthermore, databases of information on relics can be built into digital archives, allowing valuable national treasures to be managed. Just as importantly, information on traditional cultures, including traditional languages, royal court life, and songs, can be also stored.

How do digital museums communicate with their visitors?

The Andong Traditional Cultural Contents Museum, Korea's first museum without any "hands-on" relics, enables visitors to see, feel, and experience the lifestyles, principles, and values of traditional cultures by means of interactive storytelling. An animation on the battle in Gochang during the Goryeo in HD-level 4D images and the *Jangwon Geupje Nori* [a game simulating the civil service examination in Goryeo and Joseon](http://www.tcc-museum.go.kr) convincingly illustrates the "edutainment" functions of digital museums.

For these functions of digital museums, however, scholars are concerned about the possibility that they lead to less visits to actual museums and result in few aesthetic experience. Believing that an aesthetic experience can occur only from direct viewing of the objects in person, they suspect the effectiveness of digital museums in comparison with



Bank of Korea Museum • museum.bok.or.kr
This museum is located in the current Bank of Korea building, which was first built in 1912 under Japanese rule for then Joseon Bank. The museum holds Korean currency-related artifacts displayed in its three-story building and its site offers an interactive tour of the museum. By clicking "Glance at Museum," you can learn almost everything about Korean currency without tiring your legs.



Gyeongju National Museum • gyeongju.museum.go.kr
By installing a program, you can replay images that replicate the museum in 3D computer graphics. You can also enjoy narrations, choose diverse points of view, and even control the motions of avatars on display. It's like playing an RPG game on a computer. Most of the permanent exhibits of the Gyeongju National Museum can be accessed.



Andong Traditional Cultural Contents Museum • www.tcc-museum.go.kr
This museum, located in Andong, has over 4,000 relics on display in seventeen categories. It provides customized services to visitors using a Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) card that contains their gender, name, email address, and nationality. It enables visitors to experience traditional culture, including games and virtual reality programs related to the relics.

traditional ones. Nonetheless, the Tokyo National Museum's digital archive is recorded as a successful case: Digital exposure to its collection actually made the museum's on-site visitors increase.

Besides, the archive earned 50 million yen in a single year from licensing its collection data to be used in broadcasting, advertisements, and books and publications. In conclusion, the powerful Internet is continuously changing today's museum scene and the museums should evolve to become a cyber space that is open to all if they want to proactively communicate with people all over the world. ☰

Korean Relics in Foreign Countries

Dream Journey to the Peach Blossom Land, An Gyeon (active ca. 1440-1470), copied Joseon, mid-15th century
Ink and light colors on silk, 38.7x106.5cm
National Museum of Korea



One of the Finest Joseon Painting in Japan

In 1447, Prince Anpyeong, [安平大君, 1418-1453](#) the third son of Sejong the Great, [世宗大王, r. 1418-1450](#) had a dream one day. In the dream, the Prince and three companions were in a peach orchard. They glimpsed a utopia from a distance together, but, when they were approaching to it, the dreamy world disappeared as the Prince woke up from his sleep. The vision lingered the Prince's his head all day, and he felt everything around him surreal as if he were still in that paradise. The Prince recalled his dream sequence to An Gyeon, [安堅, active ca. 1440-1470](#) then the most gifted court painter in Joseon. An then began to reconstruct the scene as the Prince described without any interruption for three days and nights, and created the painting, *Dream Journey to the Peach Blossom Land*, [夢遊桃源圖 Mongyu dowondo](#) His work has been described as the “a tour-de-force illustration of a dream fantasy” and the “pinnacle of Korean art.”

Written by Kim Hyungchul
Chief Editor of the People Team, Hankook Daily News

Korean National Treasures Kept in Distant Lands

The Cultural Heritage Administration of Korea has identified more than 76,000 valuable Korean cultural properties that reside outside the country as of 2009. These treasures have left their land of origin via diverse routes under multiple circumstances. Of the total, about 34,000 are in Japan, over 18,000 in the US, more than 6,600 in the UK, and at least 5,200 in Germany. Other destinations include Russia, France, and China. Here we introduce some of the most important treasures that are kept mainly in Japan, the US, the UK, and France.

The lower left and the upper right corners of the painting offer an exquisite contrast between the real and dream worlds. It holds the Prince's writings on both sides to summarize his close-to-real dream and other details such as the date and the circumstances behind the production of the work. The Prince also wrote a verse on it, and more than twenty members of the Joseon elite of the time left their own handwritten commentaries, making this painting immensely significant not only for its pictorial fantasy but also for its literary as well as calligraphic contents. Unfortunately, the original *Dream Journey to the Peach Blossom Land* is no longer in Korea; it is hung in the Tenri Central Library at Tenri University in Nara, Japan.

Japan

The Kobe Municipal Museum houses a fourteenth-century Goryeo Buddhist painting of *Vairocana Buddha*. The painting has been called by various names over the centuries, including *Ten-thousand Buddha Painting*, [萬佛圖 Vairocana and the Three-thousand Buddhas](#), [兜率道那三千佛圖](#) and *Vairocana Narrative*. [兜率道那佛變相圖](#) The work measures 133.0cm wide and 196.0cm long, and features a central rectangle of 41 by 38cm with Vairocana in the center attended by Manjusri, [Bodhisattva of Wisdom](#) Samantabhadra, [Celestial Bodhisattva](#) the Six Bodhisattvas, the Ten Disciples, the Four Heavenly Guardian Kings, and the Eight Dieties. Surrounding this rectangle are about 8,000 thumbnail-sized Buddha images. Interestingly, the facial features of these tiny Buddhas are distinct from one another. There are laughing ones, dozing ones, doubting ones, to list a few, but all the Buddhas are vividly portrayed with a hint of playfulness. Research Professor Kang Soyon analyzes this quality of wit and humor uniquely Korean, not found in the Buddhist paintings of China or Japan.

Another important example of Korean Buddhist art that has been relocated to Japan is the *Water-moon Avalokitesvara* [Bodhisattva of Compassion and Mercy](#) painting now at Kagami Shrine. [鏡神社](#) The massive Goryeo Buddhist painting is 250cm wide and more than 400cm long. Although produced in 1310, the painting preserves the color intensity intact, and the fine detail, elegant coloration, and exquisite blend of gold and silver leaf still emits the ultimate splendor.

The Ogura Collection at the Tokyo National Museum includes more than 1,100 archeological materials and artifacts accumulated by Takenosuke Ogura, a Japanese businessman residing in Korea during the Japanese rule. Eight of these pieces have been designated as Important Cultural Properties of Japan, and thirty-one more are categorized as Important Works of Art. Some of his best pieces include the Headgear with openwork design that was unearthed in Changnyeong, Gyeongsangnam-do; a Unified Silla Vairocana statue; and the Hexagonal silver box with cover. [銀平脫六角盒](#) He also picked up several gold earrings of Silla, and the Gold crown that stands 13.2cm high. The Vairocana statue is a particularly striking piece, symbolizing the confident pride of Unified Silla as a unified state.



Gold Crown
Three Kingdoms Period, 6th Century
H. 13.2cm; Diam. 17.1cm
Tokyo National Museum, Ogura Collection
Image Source: National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage, *Korean Cultural Properties in the Ogura Collection of Tokyo National Museum, Japan*
Seoul: National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage, 2005

United States

One of the most famous collectors of Korean works in the USA is Gregory Henderson, who served as a Foreign Service Officer in Korea between 1958 and 1963. The officer collected an incredible amount of Korean cultural artifacts during six years of his tenure at the US Embassy in Korea. His extensive collection of 150 pieces spans from the first century through the nineteenth century and is famous for the exceptional quality. Many of the pieces are close to National Treasure category and the list of standouts will be too long to name in its entirety. The Plum vase of blue and white porcelain and the Horn-shaped pottery truly stand out. He also managed to collect some exquisite Buddhist pieces such as the *Pensive Bodhisattva* 半跏思惟像 and the Lotus Sutra copied in gold leaf by An Gyeon. The Henderson Collection is currently on display in the Arthur M. Sackler Museum at Harvard University. It was featured in the special exhibition entitled *First under Heaven: the Henderson Collection of Korean Ceramics* between December 1992 and March 1993. It has been reported as one of the largest and the most impressive private collections of Korean art outside Korea.

Melon-shaped wine ewer
Goryeo, 12th century
Stoneware with bamboo under celadon glaze, H. 21.6cm
Gift of Mrs. Roger G. Gerry, 1996
Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art



The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York is home for two items tantamount to be called Korean National Treasure: the Seated Maitreya and the Standing Buddha of Medicine. The Met also features an illuminated manuscript of the Lotus Sutra with gold and silver leaf on indigo-dyed mulberry paper. Other historically and artistically important pieces include the Duck-shaped vessels from the Gaya kingdom, the Melon-shaped wine ewer from Goryeo, and the *Maebyeong* plum vase with inlaid design of clouds and cranes from Joseon.

The Museum of Fine Arts in Boston also has some pieces of National Treasure status, including a standing Buddha of Medicine *Yaksa Yeorae* from the Unified Silla that is in excellent condition and displays the extraordinary sculpting techniques of the kingdom. Especially impressive are the *Maebyeong*, a tall baluster-shaped celadon plum vase from the Goryeo period featuring an inlaid decoration of a bird nestled amid three bamboo trees and the Lobed bottle with round body and long slender neck, and the *Landscape* by the famous early Joseon painter An Gyeon, is true joy to all the visitors.

United Kingdom

The British Museum boasts the finest collection of Korean artifacts. The four-hundred-square-meter Korea Foundation Gallery features such works as a white porcelain called “Moon jar”, 17-18th century a melon-shaped celadon vase from Goryeo, a porcelain storage jar decorated with dragon from Joseon, and a long-necked stoneware jar from Silla. 5-6th century In particular, the Moon jar, with its magnificently voluminous shape and gentle curves has been the major attraction. The piece is plain white with no decoration, representing the epitome of Joseon Neo-Confucian austerity. The late, Art History Professor Choi Sunu, 1916-1994 who once served as director of the National Museum of Korea, described it as: “Its great purity is like the essence of the unadorned human mind.” The Moon jar was bought in an antique shop in Seoul by a renowned British potter Bernard Leach 1887-1979 in 1935, and the British Museum subsequently acquired it in an auction.

Other notable works at the Korea Foundation Gallery in London include a portrait of the late Joseon Confucian scholar Yi Chegwang; the *Dhratarashtra*, a painting on hemp cloth of the Buddhist Guardian King of the East; the Table screen, *Chaekgeori*; and a genre painting by the famous Joseon painter, Gim Hongdo.

Moon jar (Dal-hang-a-ri)
Joseon, 17th-19th century
Glazed white porcelain, H. 47cm, Diam. 44.5cm
Image © Trustees of the British Museum, United Kingdom



France

The Guimet Museum in Paris is the largest museum in Europe specializing in East Asian artifacts. Its Arts de Corée Gallery boasts a Korean collection of more than 1,000 items. Noteworthy among these are a standing Pensive Bodhisattva presumed to be from Baekje, a seated teaching Buddha from Goryeo, a thousand-armed Avalokitesvara from Goryeo, a crown with trident-shaped branches from Silla, and a celadon plum vase from Goryeo. The *Water-moon Avalokitesvara* of Goryeo and the eight-panel folding screen painting by Gim Hongdo are “must-see” items for any visitor. The facial expression of the Seated teaching Buddha has been widely praised for its beauty. This is deemed to be the epitome of the aesthetic approach, was popular during the early Goryeo. The rigid and somber feel prevalent in the Unified Silla has been replaced by something much more gentle and mild.

The National Library of France in Paris maintains more than 360 important Korean cultural properties, including a collection of 297 *Oegyujanggak Uigwe*, 外臺章閣 儀軌 protocols of royal ceremonies and rites, looted by French troops from the Joseon Royal Archive on Ganghwa-do in 1886. The Library also holds *Jikjisimcheyojeol*, 直指心體要節 the world’s oldest extant book printed by movable metal type. The book was supposedly printed in Goryeo in 1377, seventy-eight years before the first Gutenberg Bible was produced. UNESCO has formally added the book to its “Memory of the World” list. Another Korean artifact of note at the Library is the *Wang-o cheonchuk gukjeon*, 往五天竺國傳 memoir of the pilgrimage to the five Kingdoms of India, written by Silla monk Hyecho. 慧超, 704-787

Returning Cultural Relics to their Rightful Place

A very important part of Korea’s cultural legacy has been relocated abroad. Some pieces were legitimately sold, given to collectors, or loaned out, while many others were either plundered or taken under suspicious circumstances. During the Japanese invasions of 1592-1598 the destruction and theft of historical records and art works was widespread. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Korean government authority was debilitated after Korean ports were first opened under Japanese colonial rule and again around the time of the Korean War. Foreigners, including diplomats and military personnel, roamed about the country unchecked, and many were art collectors who either purchased or simply took an untold number of invaluable Korean works of art out of the country.

Fortunately, some pieces that were stolen or illegitimately taken or purchased have been returned. The Ten-story Stone Pagoda of Gyeongcheonsa Temple, National Treasure No. 86 first erected in 1348 at Mt. Buso in Gyeonggi-do, was taken secretly to Japan by the court official Tanaka Mitsuaki. 1843-1938 However, Ernest Thomas Bethel, 1872-1908 an English journalist who was at the time publishing two Korean and English dailies, disclosed the theft to the world. Homer Hulbert, 1863-1949 an American missionary to Korea and also an editor of *Korea Review*, joined in the efforts. Hulbert made the facts known in the *Japan Chronicle, English daily* in Kobe, Japan, and then in the *New York Post*. This pressured the Japanese government to investigate and the pagoda was returned to Korea. Today it stands proudly at the center of the main hall of the National Museum of Korea.

Two masterpieces of Goryeo collected by the British lawyer John Gatsby, a celadon kundika with birds and tree design, National Treasure No. 66 and a white porcelain Boshan incense burner, are now on display at the Gansong Art Museum. Jeon Hyeongpil, 全馨弼 1906-1967 a wealthy Korean, founded Korea’s first modern private museum in 1938 to collect Korean cultural properties during the Colonial Period and to prevent their removal to Japan.

Koreans have still been unable to retrieve many invaluable cultural assets overseas. The National Museum of Korea is dedicated to tracking down items that were either stolen or obtained in some other illegitimate way. The government is also engaged in a program to ascertain precisely how many Korean cultural assets reside outside the country. The significance of these pieces, which help to define who the Korean people are, becomes all the greater when they reside in their place of origin. ≡

Jikjisimcheyojeol published by monk Baegun
Goryeo, 14th century
21.4x15.8cm
National Library of France (BNF: Bibliotheque Nationale de France)
Image source: Cheongju Early Printing Museum, Korea



Members of the Korean-American Association Learning about the 5,000 Years of Korean History

On April 6, members of the Korean-American Association visited the Theater Yong of the National Museum of Korea to attend a "Beautiful Friendship Concert" aimed at advancing the relationship between Korea and the USA. Before the concert, about 300 participants, including US Embassy employees, American military personnel stationed in Korea, and other members of the association toured the permanent exhibits of the museum to gain a deeper understanding the arts, culture, and history of Korea. The museum provided them with English-speaking guides.

The tour lasted for an hour—definitely not enough time to view all the relics in the museum, even though the visitors were organized into special groups to facilitate their viewing experience by the museum. They showed a lot of interest in the Gold crown from Silla, taking lots of photographs and asking many questions.

Responses of the visitors

"It's been three years and six months since I came to Korea, but this was the first time for me to visit the museum. I was most impressed by the ornaments and the jewelry section in the Silla room."
- Ambea Johnson, 8th grade student

"I came here as the volunteer group's leader. I was allowed to tour the museum before the people from the Korean-American Association arrived, and the huge Buddhist paintings in the Buddhist painting room will always remain in my memory. I love to travel, so I have been to several countries, including China, Japan, and Mongolia. It is interesting to see how Buddhist works of art in each country have

slightly different characteristics." - Cho Sung sik, MA candidate in International Politics, Graduate Institute of Peace Studies Kyunghee University

"I was impressed by the Comb pattern pottery in the Neolithic Period room. Unlike later vessels, they are pointed at the bottom, and I was curious to know why." "Looking around the museum, I learned that Korea is a country with a very long history and tradition." "I thought the Gyeongcheonsa Temple Ten-story Stone Pagoda at the rotunda was extremely beautiful." - Jeff Buczkowski, Public Affairs Officer, 8th United States Army and his family

"This is the first time I visited the National Museum of Korea since it was relocated to Yongsan. Preparations were already underway for the relocation about fifteen years ago. I participated in them as a Senior Secretary for Foreign Affairs and National Security at the Presidential Secretariat, so I was with great emotion that I came here.

The museum is brilliant! It is easily the equal of any other one anywhere in the world. An iron helmet in the Gaya room really caught my eyes. If the helmets the soldiers put on their horses on the battlefield had been too heavy, they would have fallen off, which shows that the Gaya people had excellent technologies for dealing with ironware."

- Jung Jongwook, member of the Korean-American Association, former visiting professor at the Seoul National University Graduate School of International Studies



Hands-on Experience of Korean Culture and History for the Korean Military Personnel

All young men of Korea in their late teens and early twenties are subject to roughly two years of military service with few exception, and they acquire a strong sense of loyalty and affection toward their country during the service. All national museums of Korea including eleven regional ones are newly servicing a variety of educational programs for military personnel to help them establish healthy historical viewpoints on their country, Korea. Each museum provides independent educational programs designed to utilize its own collections and to maximize their educational values. What we are introducing here is the National Museum of Korea's that gives the young men a viewing experience of artifacts on display and a hands-on art class of seal making.

The participants were the members of the Air Forces Operations Command and Support Wings. About forty air force personnel in their indigo-blue uniforms looked a little bit stiff at first, but they were no different from any students when they actually saw the relics. Woo Souyeon, a managing educator of the museum's various educational programs, says, "Museum education is naturally linked with various artifacts on display. The programs we offer at the NMK including this one are no different in essence. I think a learning experience becomes much more vivid if combined with a personal viewing experience and creating session after."

Upon hearing a brief lecture on the history and the use of seals in Korea and the world, the airmen began to make their own. Although this training program was highly difficult to follow through, their earnestness in learning combined with various helps by the experienced teachers made the complicated process rather easier.

What they created were seals that bear their names or favorite words and calligraphic writings on postcards. The lesson ended after they gave their

calligraphic works a final touch by stamping them with the seals that they had previously made. It was just a two-hour class but the time seemed pleasant to the airmen looking very satisfied taking the seals with them.

Interview with participant

Lieutenant Kim Ki Hyun, Air Force Operations Command and Support Wings

How did you come to participate in this program?

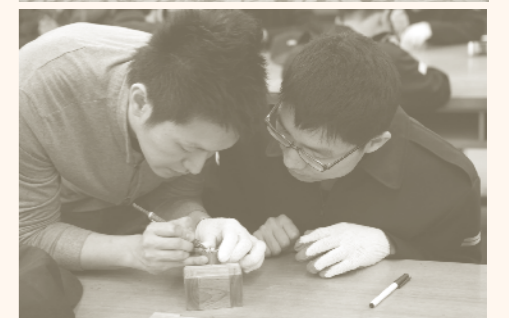
The Air Force operates a camp for personnel who will be promoted to the rank of corporal. Part of this program is to help them learn about the history of the country and its people.

Please share your impressions of the seal-making experience with us.

It felt very unfamiliar and difficult at first, because it was probably the first time any of us had actually made a seal. But it was fun. Although we only had a short time, we were able to raise our understanding of our cultural heritage. But the greatest pleasure is that we now have our own seals!

Were you interested in Korean history and relics before? Please tell us if there has been any changes in your viewpoint.

Although I liked Korean history during my school days, my interest in history and artifacts decreased as I grew older. However, by participating in this program and coming into direct contact with historical relics and data, I began to regain my interest. It was a great way for us to learn about an important part of Korean history.



Providing a Turning Point for Development of the Korean Museums

Conference of Korean Museum Directors held in celebration of the 100th anniversary of Korean museum



On February 23, the National Museum Directors' Conference was held in the Main Auditorium of the National Museum of Korea to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Korean museums. The conference, which was attended by museum and gallery directors from across the country, focused on the ongoing development of museums.

Kim Jong-kyu, co-vice chair of the organizing committee and honorary president of the Korean Museum Association, emphasized in his greetings that the museums, art galleries, and libraries are all national educational institutions. "On this 100th anniversary of Korean museum," he said, "let's help Korea to compete in the cultural arena of the 21st century by advocating for an increase in the diversity of museums." Choe Kwang-shik, director of the National Museum of Korea, and Bae Ki-dong, president of the Korean Museum Association, mentioned that museums of the future should become treasure houses of national brands, cultural contents, and the places where people can spend time most pleasantly and comfortably.

Choi Seon-Ju, the leader of the Project Team for the 100th Anniversary of Korean Museum at the National Museum of Korea, then briefed the meeting on commemorative projects. This was followed by presentations under the theme of The Future of Korean Museums. Choe Chong-pil, chair of the Korean National Committee sector of the International Council of Museums,¹ maintained that museums should have a sense of mission so that museum communities can help to solve economic difficulties. This is especially important in the 21st century when the importance of culture will be increasing. As Mr. Choe noted, "Where culture is flourished, business is nourished."²

Rhi Chong-Sun, president of the Korean Society of Museum Studies, then gave a talk on

future directions of the Korean museums, stating that it is now necessary for museums to expand qualitatively rather than quantitatively, while Choi Man-lin, former director of the National Museum of Contemporary Art, discussed developments of Korean art museums, providing momentum for thinking about the directions that museums and galleries must take in the future.

Afterward, four regional associations of museums³ from Seoul, Jeollanam-do, Gangwon-do, and Jeju-do led a discussion on cooperative projects. In addition, Lee Kang-won, director of the World Jewelry Museum and chairman of the Seoul Metropolitan Association of Museums, stressed that museums in Seoul must serve as the central axis and nexus for museums throughout the country, while Yoo Su-taek, chairman of the Jeonnam Association of Museums, emphasized the necessity of state subsidies. Kim Jae-hwan, director of the Mureung Museum, emphasized that museums should be places where moral and educational values can be created, and Han Jong Hoon, director of the Museum of African Art, gave a lecture on cooperative projects at museums in Jeju-do.

Given the great variety of voices from various museum communities, it was no surprise that the conference offered participants a wonderful opportunity to publicize the meaning of Korean museums. The passion shown by all those in attendance promises a bright future for all Korean museums.

¹ Choe Kwang-shik, director of the National Museum of Korea and co-vice chair of the Commemoration Project Committee.

² Kim Jong-kyu, honorary president of the Korean Museum Association and co-vice chair of the Commemoration Project Committee.

Generous Donations of Cultural Properties Continue...

A night for donors and a special show of the donated collections



On March 30, the National Museum of Korea, in collaboration with the Friends of the National Museum of Korea, held an event to honor its donors. Entitled "A Night with Our Donors," it was held in the Donation Gallery. The goal of this event was to express the museum's gratitude to its donors and remind everyone of the significance of such donations and the need to support museums. It included an unveiling ceremony, the opening of a themed exhibitions in the Donation Gallery, and the signing of support agreements.

Since 1946, the museum has received more than 28,000 cultural properties from 242 persons. During the event, the NMK director, Choe Kwang-shik, expressed his gratitude for such generosity, praising that donated cultural properties are among the museum's most precious cultural holdings.

"Donated cultural properties are especially meaningful due to the generous hearts of each donor, they were donated for a wish to share them with others. You are indeed our strongest supporters," he stressed.

All the NMK donors were invited to the event, including Yoo Chang-jong, chairman of the Friends of the National Museum of Korea, Yun Jang Sub, chairman of the Horim Museum, and Yu Sang-ok, chairman of Coreana Cosmetics. A Hall of Fame was also established, completed with name plaques for contributors and donors.

The guests also had an opportunity to see at first hand the cultural properties that they and others had donated. Chang Jina, curator of the museum's History Department, helped increase the visitors' understanding of these artifacts, underlining the preciousness of donated cultural properties. "These properties are especially meaningful, since they all carry special stories about their donors. Their value cannot be compared to that of other collections,

considering to the donors' efforts and love."

The chair of Coreana Cosmetics, Yu Sang-ok, has donated two hundred cultural assets, despite the fact that his company has its own museum of cosmetics. He explained why he did this. "I felt sorry that so many people don't visit museums, even when they are nearby," he said. "In the hope that our cultural heritage would be enjoyed by more people, I suggested that the NMK mount a campaign to visit museums 100 times. I decided to donate some of my own cultural assets, hoping that this program would result in more visits to museums and increased donations, in line with the donation and contribution campaigns already set up to commemorate their 100th anniversary."

Some of the participants have donated cultural properties on several occasions, or have collected them intending to donate them to the museum. Their generosity, which is greatly appreciated, will play an important role in spreading a donation and contribution culture throughout Korea.

This special exhibition will continue through July 12. The museum plans to publicize its donated artworks by holding similar exhibitions.

¹ Bronze brazier with beast decoration, Goryeo, H. 12.9cm, National Treasure No. 145, donated by Namkoong Ryon.

² The chair of Coreana Cosmetics, Yu Sang-ok, donated two hundred artifacts including cosmetic containers from the Goryeo dynasty.

³ Score of Korean National Hymn handwritten by Ahn Eak Tai donated by the Ahn Eak Tai Foundation.

⁴ Hagiyaki tea bowl with writing in Hangeul, 17th-18th century, H. 11cm, donated by Hujii Yae and her son, Hujii Gei in 2008.

Special Exhibition Egypt, the Great Civilization: Pharaohs and Mummies

a special exhibition in commemoration of
the 100th anniversary of
Korean museums

The National Museum of Korea regularly holds exhibitions to introduce the cultures of other countries around the world. *The Glory of Persia*, was held in April 2008 and the special exhibition featured more than 200 items from the collections of five leading Iraqi museums, along with HD special images reproducing noteworthy features of Persepolis. Held in Seoul and Daegu, the exhibition attracted an amazing 310,000 visitors.

Another special exhibition entitled *Egypt, the Great Civilization: Pharaohs and Mummies* will be held at the Special Exhibition Gallery of the National Museum of Korea from April 28 through August 30. This “blockbuster” exhibition, was jointly organized by the National Museum of Korea, KBS, and the Kunsthistorisches Museum, and sponsored by the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, the Embassy of the Arabian Republic of Egypt, and the Austrian Embassy.

The first part, “Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt,” introduces Egyptian religious beliefs through images of deities, including Horus, while the second part, “Son of God, Pharaoh” presents diverse tributes offered to the kings, who ruled with absolute power. The third part, “The Life in Ancient Egypt”, consists of murals and records on papyrus, enabling viewers to learn about the Egyptians’ diet, technologies, and art. The last part, “The Way to Eternity,” displays mummies and burial goods that reflect the ancient Egyptians’ view of the afterlife—including the Mummy of Neschonsu, the False Door of Init, and the Mummy Mask of Aset-em-ach-bit. The ancient Egyptians believed in physical resurrection and eternal life and thought that life on earth was a preparation for immortality in the next one. This explains why they looked forward to the future with such optimism.

Called “the mother of human civilization,” ancient Egypt occupies a prominent place in



archaeology. Although many Koreans also know about it through the movies or other media, Egypt-related learning and studies have not made much progress in Korea. The museum hopes that this exhibition will foster a broader understanding of ancient Egypt by showing some of its major relics and outlining the ideas and cultural backgrounds that helped form them. Monthly lectures by such Egyptologists as Dr. Wilfried Seipel, the former director of the Kunsthistorisches Museum, and Sakuji Yoshimura, a Japanese specialist on Egypt and former professor at Waseda University, will accompany this show for the purpose.

1
Statuette of god Thot depicted as Ibis
Late period, 6th century BC
Wood, silver, stucco, glass; H. 32.2cm
Image © Kunsthistorisches Museum, Austria

2
Giant head of a king
Ptolemaic period I - III, 305 BC-222 BC
Limestone; H. 58cm
Image © Kunsthistorisches Museum, Austria

3
Sculptor's model with relief of a falcon
Late period, 4th century BC-2th century BC
Limestone; H. 10.5cm
Image © Kunsthistorisches Museum, Austria

4
Falsedoor of Init
Old Kingdom, ca. 2374 BC-2191 BC
Limestone, H. 81.5cm
Image © Kunsthistorisches Museum, Austria

Exhibition of Korean Arts at the MET

the first American exhibition
showing works of art from the early Joseon

The Last March 17, a special exhibition of Korean art, entitled *Art of the Korean Renaissance, 1400-1600*, opened at the Korean gallery of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. It is the first American exhibition showing works of art from the first two hundred years of the Joseon exhibition. The exhibition, which will be held until July 21, was made possible by the Korea Foundation and the Kun-Hee Lee Fund for Korean Art. Comprising six parts, it will enable visitors to appreciate about forty-five outstanding Korean art works, including paintings, pottery, metal craft, and lacquer ware, through which the viewers can better appreciate the cultural renaissance that flourished during the first two centuries after the founding of Joseon.

The first part, “Setting the Stage,” shows the social and cultural backgrounds of the works, when Neo-Confucianism—the dominant political ideology of early Joseon society—dictated most aspects of life. The second part, “Romancing the Past,” shows how the theme of *Eight Views of the Xiao and Xiang Rivers* reached a renewed height of popularity in Joseon during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The third part, “Literati Essentials,” offers pictorial records of literary gatherings through early Joseon paintings, along with ceramics and lacquer ware that show the elevated tastes of the literati. The fourth part, “Royal Pedigree” provides white porcelains that reflects royal taste, and paintings of Yi Am and Yi Jeong who were royal descendants. The fifth part, “Vessels of Distinction,” features white porcelain and buncheong ware used for Confucian ceremonies and funerals, while the sixth part, “Worship and Paradise,” presents the essence of Buddhist works of art and high-standard Buddhist paintings commissioned by the royal households.

This exhibition has a great significance as it presents works of art from the early Joseon. Before



this show, Korean cultural properties introduced to the USA were mainly from the late Joseon. It consists of the Korean collection from Japan, the USA, and Germany including sixteen pieces from Korea. The participating museums are the Kyushu National Museum of Japan, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, the Museum of East Asian Art, Cologne, the National Museum of Korea, and the Leeum (Samsung Museum of Art).

Most importantly, the National Museum of Korea lent White porcelain bowl with inlaid lotus-arabesque design (National Treasure No. 175) and *Mother Dog and Puppies* by Yi Am. Choe Kwang-shik, director of the National Museum of Korea, who attended the opening, has stated that “In the future, we plan to actively publicize Korean works of art overseas, and not merely meet the requests of other museums for loans.” He also said that this is the first international exhibition utilizing loans since the opening of the Korean gallery at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1998.

1
Eight Views of the Xiao and Xiang Rivers, Anonymous
Joseon, 16th century
Eight hanging scrolls, ink on paper, 91x47.7cm (each panel)
Jinju National Museum of Korea

2
Bowl with inlaid lotus and arabesque design
Joseon, 15th century
Inlaid white porcelain; H. 7.6cm, Diam. 17.5cm (mouth)
National Museum of Korea, National Treasure No. 175

3
Mother Dog and Puppies, Yi Am (1507-1566)
Joseon, early 16th century
Hanging scroll, ink and colors on silk, 73x42.2cm
National Museum of Korea

Exhibitions

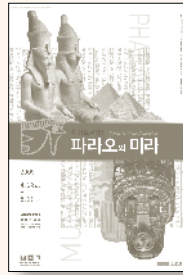
Special Exhibitions

Egypt, the Great Civilization: Pharaohs and Mummies

Date April 28–August 30, 2009

Venue Goguryeo Room, Archaeological Gallery

Called the matrix of human civilization, ancient Egypt occupies an extremely prominent place in archaeological terms. The exhibition, which consists of the Egyptian collection of The Kunsthistorisches Museum in Austria, will enable visitors to have a better understanding of ancient Egypt (See page 38 for a preview).



Themed Exhibitions at the Archaeological Gallery

Goguryeo Figures from Murals

Date February 24–September 27, 2009

Venue Goguryeo Room, Archaeological Gallery

This exhibition presents drawings of figures from Gamsinchong and Ssangyeongchong from 1912-1914 found in replicas of Goguryeo tomb murals at The National Museum of Korea. It enables visitors to learn about leading figures of the Goguryeo culture at the time (See page 14 for details).

Tombs of the Xiongnu in the Duurlig Nars

Date May 19–July 19, 2009

Venue Lounge, Archaeological Gallery

The Mongolian Plateau has been called a “quiet battlefield” in the world of archeology because of its unique relics. In 2007, The National Museum of Korea discovered a large group of tombs from the the Xiongnu period at a site about four hundred kilometers to the northeast of Ulan Bator, after more than ten years of work with its Mongolian counterpart. This exhibition promises to shed new light on the Xiongnu empire.

Themed Exhibitions at Fine Arts Gallery I and II

Buddhist Hanging Scrolls at Cheoneunsa Temple, Treasure No. 1340

Date April 28–August 2, 2009

Venue Buddhist Painting Room, Fine Arts Gallery I

The term “Buddhist hanging scrolls” refers to large Buddhist paintings used in a Buddhist mass or ritual as objects of worship. These rituals were held to overcome hardships in our daily lives, such as disease, hunger, war, and natural disasters, by invoking the power of the Buddha. *The Buddhist Hanging Scroll at Cheoneunsa Temple, Treasure No. 1340*, which stands over eight meters high, is considered to reflect the essence of Buddhist hanging scrolls, as well as demonstrating the major characteristics of Buddhist paintings of the Joseon period in the seventeenth century.

Royal Ceramics of the Goryeo Dynasty

Date December 2, 2008–May 10, 2009

Venue Celadon Porcelain Room, Fine Arts Gallery II

This exhibition is the first to present all of the cultural properties excavated from the tomb of Injong, the seventeenth king of the Goryeo dynasty (918-1392). Ceramics found at royal tombs were only made by the most talented artisans, allowing viewers to appreciate

the high standards of royal culture during the Goryeo period. Also on display are restored ceramics pieces found at kiln sites in Buan and Gangjin, where ceramics for the royal households were manufactured

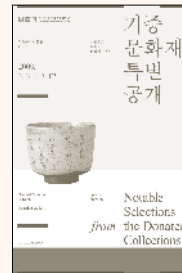
Themed exhibitions at the Donation Gallery

Notable Selections from the Donated Collections

Date March 31–July 12, 2009

Venue Donated Cultural Properties Room, Donation Gallery

Two hundred-odd pieces of donated cultural properties have been selected for display here. The exhibition includes a variety of cultural assets reflecting Korean culture and history, including ceramics, ancient documents, musical scores by Ahn Eak-Tai, and the oldest known Korean dictionary (See page 37 for details).



Special Exhibitions at the Asian Arts Gallery

The Life and Art of Chamagodo (The Tea and Horse Road), tentative title

Date May 19–July 19, 2009

Venue Theme Exhibition Room, Historical Gallery

Standing over 4,000 meters above sea level and extending from southern China to Nepal and India via Tibet, Chamagodo is the world's oldest cultural and economic road, formed two hundred years before the Silk Road. The exhibition is presenting artifacts that show the living conditions of the time, such as assault jackets, square boxes made from yak skin, and woolen blankets.

Themed Exhibitions at the Asian Arts Gallery

Japanese Modern Art

Date November 18, 2008–October 11, 2009

Venue Japanese Art Room, Asian Arts Gallery

This exhibition includes about 40 Japanese Western paintings, collected by King Yeongchin (1987-1970) of the Joseon. These paintings, engravings, and drawings are mainly by painters who studied in France after graduating from the Tokyo School of Art.



Gods, Mortals, and Stories in Indian Art

Date June 21, 2008–June 21, 2009

Venue Middle Asia Room, Asian Arts Gallery

This exhibition introduces forty three pieces of Indian works of art purchased by the museum or donated to it. They include Buddhist architecture from Gandhara, Buddhist and Hindu images of deities from each region of the country, and paintings from the 17th-19th centuries.

A Vessel for the Soul: Sinan Incense Burners

Date October 28, 2008–July 19, 2009

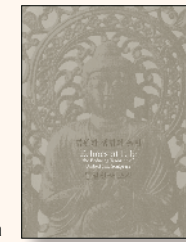
Venue Sinan Undersea Relics Room, Asian Arts Gallery

The exhibition shows incense kits carried on a trading ship that was wrecked while heading for Kyoto, Japan from Ningbo, China, in the early fourteenth century. By viewing these splendid incense burners and boxes, we can better appreciate the “craze for fragrance” that arose in the East Asia at the time (See page 18 for details).

Publication

Echoes of Life: the Enduring Tradition of Unified Silla Sculpture

This book discusses the special exhibition, *Echoes of Life: the Enduring Tradition of Unified Silla Sculpture*, which was held until March 1, 2009. Silla is widely regarded as the kingdom epitomizing the essence of Korea's ancient heritage. The exhibition contained about 200 works of art, including ten national treasures, such as a standing gilt-bronze Bhaisajyaguru Buddha statue from Baengnyulsa Temple.



Dahori, a Land in a Field of Reeds

The Dahori remains, which were examined from 1988 until 1990, enables a better understanding of memorial services held before graves during the Proto-Three Kingdom period. This leaflet contains information about the Dahori remains, which opened a new horizon on the formation of Korea's ancient kingdoms.

Joseon Portraits II

This book is volume sixteen of the series entitled *Korean Paintings and Calligraphy at the National Museum of Korea*. It includes forty-four full-length, full-color illustrations of official uniforms of the Joseon period, along with explanations and scientific analyses of Joseon portraits.

Tou, Clay Figurines of Silla

Tou are mainly modeled after people, animals, and daily necessities. This book shows a variety of clay dolls from the Silla Kingdom period and illustrates the lives of ordinary people of the time.

Royal Ceramics of the Goryeo Dynasty

This book, which accompanies the themed exhibition *The Royal Ceramics of the Goryeo Dynasty*, was also published in a Japanese version. It introduces the history of Goryeo royal ceramics, ceramics from royal tombs and other remains, kilns, and other royal ceramics.

Egypt, the Great Civilization: Pharaohs and Mummies

A brochure accompanying *Egypt, the Great Civilization: Pharaohs and Mummies*, the museum's special exhibition about ancient Egypt and its history and culture, will be published as a pictorial record of the event. It will include photographs of more than 230 relics, as well as papers on such topics as An Overview of Egypt's Ancient History.



Miscellaneous

May 5, Tuesday: Cultural Events on Children's Day

On Children's Day, a variety of events will be held for the children visiting the museum. These will include performances by clowns and the Alps Yodel Singing Group.

April 30, Thursday–May 2, Saturday: Concert for the Young at the Great Hall–Seoul Spring Festival of Chamber Music Fringe

Jointly promoted by the National Museum of Korea's project planning team and the Seoul Spring Festival, this concert is presented by young classical musicians.

May 2, Saturday–August 29, Saturday: Family Movie Screenings–See Egypt

Egypt-related movies, such as *The Mummy*, *Caesar and Cleopatra*, and *The Prince of Egypt* will be shown free of charge during the special exhibition, *Egypt, the Great Civilization: Pharaohs and Mummies*.

April 25, Saturday–May 23, Saturday: Saturday Family Concerts

A number of concerts that whole family can enjoy will be held including a “Cleopatra Gala Concert” in connection with the special exhibition on Egypt.

April 30, Thursday–May 28, Thursday: Art and Culture Education for Housewives–a Story of Ballet Narrated by Kim Juwon

Accompanied by explanations by Kim Juwon, senior dancer at the Korean National Ballet, Korean National Ballet members will perform popular ballet repertoire including *Swan Lake*, Act 1, Scene 2 adagio and *Giselle*, Act 2, pas de deux.

Lecture Series for Special Exhibition, Egypt, the Great Civilization: Pharaohs and Mummies

Monthly lectures will be given during the special exhibition on Egyptian culture, under such themes as “the ancient Egyptians” and “the birth of Egyptian civilization.” The lecturers will include Dr. Wilfried Seipel, the former director of the Kunsthistorisches Museum and Sakuji Yosimura, a Japanese Egyptologist and former professor at Waseda University.

General Assembly of the Korean Museum Association, 2009

Centennial of
Korean Museums:

Retrospectives
and New Visions

Date **May 22–25, 2009**
Venue **Main Auditorium**
 National Museum of Korea



The National Museum of Korea will host the General Assembly of the Korean Museum Association, in commemoration of the centennial of Korean museums. The presenters include Mr. David Flemming, chair of the International Committee on Management of the International Council of Museums and director of the National Museums Liverpool. The symposium will discuss a variety of topics on the future of the Korean museums as well as the management policies and educational programs. The National Museum of Korea will be discussing its future as a museum complex.

Organized by the Korean Museum Association in cooperation with seventeen cultural institutions and organizations including the National Museum of Korea.
Sponsored by Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism; Ministry of Education, Science and Technology; National Museum of Korea; ICOM Korea; Korea Foundation; Samsung Foundation of Culture; Hanmi Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd.; Seyun Cultural Foundation; and SigongTech Co., Ltd.