

# NATIONAL MUSEUM OF KOREA

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE VOL.65 AUTUMN 2023



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Baekje  
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Buyeo National Museum  
National Treasure

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# NATIONAL MUSEUM OF KOREA

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE VOL.65 AUTUMN 2023

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#### Note to Readers

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#### National Museum of Korea

**Quarterly Magazine** is also available on the website (webzine.museum.go.kr/eng) and smart devices. You can also download its PDF version and subscribe to our newsletter to receive our latest news on the website.

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# WHAT DOES THE GILT-BRONZE INCENSE BURNER OF BAEKJE REVEAL TO US



The Gilt-bronze Incense Burner of Baekje was excavated from an ancient temple site in Neungsan-ri, Buyeo, which once served as the Baekje capital. This is the finest artifact among all the extant metalcrafts of Baekje origin. It displays the characteristic composition (a mountain-shaped lid and bowl shaped body on a single stem) of the early Baksan (Ch. Baoshan) incense burners of Han China (206 BCE-220 CE), yet simultaneously with form and elements that are uniquely its own. Importantly, the motifs of numerous imaginary creatures and winged animals as well as figures of hermits cultivating the Daoist Way are exceptional to the Baekje piece; they do not appear on known earlier Baksan incense burners from China.

The 39 different animal figures and 17 persons that appear on the incense burner lid are depicted as denizens of the sacred mountain. **Fig.1** Birds constitute one-third of the animals on the lid, suggesting the influence of the sacred bird totems that originated in foundational beliefs from ancient times in Korea.

The Gilt-bronze Incense Burner of Baekje is clearly different from other Baksan mountain-shaped incense burners that had been discovered until now from China, in that the fearful and wild mountainous world has witnessed a transformation into a mythical and Daoist mountain of immortals. The motifs of Daoist deities and practices of Daoist hermits to become immortals originates from the mythical world of the Dong-i (Ch. Dongyi) people. Such motifs are not part of the earlier Baksan incense burner landscapes but rather appeared as the paradise of the afterlife in murals inside ancient tombs located in parts of present day China as well as on the Korean Peninsula from the Three Kingdoms period of Korea.

**Fig. 1**  
**Bird and Human Figures**  
Depicted on the Lid of the Gilt-bronze Incense Burner of Baekje

The Baksan incense burners in China steadily lost their symbolism and formativeness after China's Northern and Southern Dynasties period (420-589), while the Baekje people applied their sophisticated metalcraft techniques to visually create the world of mythological and Daoist immortals. A mysterious paradise world unfolds with the various decorative figures on the incense burner. Take, for example, the divine hybrids of different animal species as seen in the *Guideways through Mountains and Seas (Shanhai jing)* and the creatures Cheonchu (Ch. Qianqiu) and Manse (Ch. Wansui) with a human face and a bird's body **Fig.2** mentioned in the *Master Who Embraces Simplicity (Baopuzi)* by Ge Hong (283-344), which are purported to live for thousands or even tens of thousands of years. There is Oesu (Ch. Weishou), the frightful beast **Fig.6**, a divine being that was believed to expel demons and lead the way to transcendent paradise. The masters of the sacred mountain are the Daoist hermits, who abstain from eating grain in favor of herb roots, tree bark, and medicinal herbs **Fig.8**; extract minerals from stones to concoct and consume elixirs of immortality; and engage in controlled breathing exercises.



**Fig. 2**  
**Creature with Human Face and Bird's Body**  
Depicted on the Lid of the Gilt-bronze Incense Burner of Baekje

These human figures reveal the training practices for becoming an immortal in accordance with the Daoist religion of the time: enter celebrated mountains full of frightful beasts and spirits, perform their ablutions and exercise self-discipline provided in the “Climbing Mountains and Crossing Rivers” chapter of Ge Hong's book. Thus, the Baekje incense burner represents a comingling of the ancient mythological space of the Dong-i people handed down through the Three Kingdoms period of Korea as well as the Daoist space from the *Master Who Embraces Simplicity* for nourishing life and concocting pills of immortality.

According to the primogenitor myth, Baekje's people originated from the ancient kingdom of Buyeo (in present-day Manchuria), as did the people of Goguryeo. Religious ceremonies as well as everyday manners and customs were fundamentally the same in both societies. The Daoist realm presented by the Gilt-bronze Incense Burner of Baekje resonates with the world found on the ceiling mural inside a Goguryeo tomb. The abovementioned divine animals like Cheonchu and Manse; flying fish, and winged beasts; as well as Daoist hermits

concocting elixirs of immortality are also seen in ancient Goguryeo tomb murals. As such, this is the mythical world shared by Baekje and Goguryeo alike. **Figs. 2 and 3, Figs. 4 and 5, Figs. 6 and 7**

This is the tradition of the Dong-i people's mythical world which has come down from the *Guideways through Mountains and Seas*, illustrating the appearance of a Daoist paradise that changed and developed over the ages. The legends and idea of Daoist immortal seen in Goguryeo and Baekje culture did not come about under Chinese mythological influence but rather can be seen as an indigenous mythology and way of thinking shared among the Dong-i people in East Asia. Therefore, the Gilt-bronze Incense Burner of Baekje should not be construed as being a cultural influence from China but rather must be interpreted from the perspective of a mythological tradition of the Korean Dong-i people.



**Fig. 3**  
**Creature with Human Face and Bird's Body**  
Depicted on the North Wall of the Front Chamber inside the Deokheung-ri Tomb  
Goguryeo  
408 CE





**Fig. 4**  
**Creature with Human Face and Animal Body**  
Depicted on the Great Gilt-bronze Incense Burner of Baekje



**Fig. 5**  
**Creature with Human Face and Animal Body with the inscription of "Seong-seong" (Ch.Xing-xing)**  
Depicted on the South Section of the Front Chamber Ceiling inside the Deokheung-ri Tomb Goguryeo 408 CE



**Fig. 6**  
**Oesu, Frightful Beast**  
Depicted on the Great Gilt-bronze Incense Burner of Baekje



**Fig. 7**  
**Oesu, Frightful Beast**  
Depicted in the Northwestern Corner of the Coffin Chamber inside Ohoebun Tomb No. 4

The lotus shaped body of the Gilt-bronze Incense Burner of Baekje signifies regeneration for being reborn as an immortal. The lotus form that encompasses the sacred mountain realm embodied by the incense burner establishes an allegory for rebirth as a paradise with overlapping meanings from the creation myth of ancient civilizations and Buddhist culture.

The incense burner's lotus bud stands for the life force, which causes a separate organism to be germinated inside each petal as it unfolds. A powerful Buddhist cultural influence has perpetuated the universal spread of the lotus motif throughout East Asia as a symbol for rebirth and nobility. In the Buddhist culture, the lotus has become a figure for "rebirth in paradise" by combining the "paradise" image with the symbol of rebirth in ancient myths.

The Baekje incense burner craftsmen were influenced in part by Buddhist culture for them to employ a lotus bud to depict rebirth in paradise. However, the presence of sacred animals such as flying fish and winged beasts upon the lotus indicate that this symbolized a Daoist paradise. Through records, it can be

understood that the people of Baekje possessed a deep understanding of herbal medicine and Daoist medical practice and sorcery with advanced techniques. In Baekje, Daoism had not developed in an independent, full-fledged manner around particular Daoist orders or temples. Rather, it is presumed to have been spread through Buddhist monks who had acquired Daoist teachings and practices in Buddhist temples.

Moreover, all the human and animal figures that appear on the incense burner are shown circling in a clockwise direction, the path of the sun. Such a completely symbolic world connotes the principles of the creation and operation of the myriad things, as understood by people in ancient times.

In this connection, the Gilt-bronze Incense Burner of Baekje reveals the principles ordering the natural world, to include the regeneration of all things. It also shows the view of paradise within the archetype of the ancient Korean spiritual culture that was passed down from the *Guideways through Mountains and Seas* through the *Master Who Embraces Simplicity*. What is

more, the piece offers a concrete example of religious beliefs, thought systems, and ritual practices in the Three Kingdoms period of Korea, for which related materials are rare. As such, the Gilt-bronze Incense Burner of Baekje is a very valuable source for studying ancient history and religious culture of Korea.

The Baekje king moved the capital to Sabi in 538 and requested Liang to dispatch a group of specialists to help set up the state institutions and capital city. Liang delegation consisting of a master in the Mao version of the *Book of Songs*, along with various craftsmen, painters, and a collection of Buddhist sutras crossed the sea to go to Baekje. The exchange culturally stimulated the Baekje people, who built the brick chamber tomb for King Muryeong (r.501-23) and created an elegant clay bodhisattva statue that adorned the temple at Jeongnimsa. Baekje craftsmen are believed to have completed the Gilt-bronze Incense Burner of Baekje in the sixth century. It is presumed that this piece was created with the purpose of fostering national healing and recovery. It may have served as a religious means to overcome the political crisis and personal

agony that King Wideok of Baekje experienced following the death of his father, King Seong (r.523-554), in the Battle of Gwansanseong Fortress in 554. The incense burner may have been commissioned by King Wideok in honor of his father, as a symbol of the recovery of national pride and the re-establishment of the absolute power of the Baekje royal court. It is the essence of the Baekje culture, one of the most exquisite creations of East Asia at the time, produced with the most advanced techniques and state power of the kingdom as a means to reassert the royal authority and its capability of communicating with the heavens.

The Gilt-bronze Incense Burner of Baekje can be described as an assembly of religious thought of the Baekje people in combination with Baekje's spiritual culture, which had been condensed from a mythological world. Elements from the myths, mountain worship, and sacred bird beliefs held by the Baekje people from ancient times became fused with the beliefs in the Five Agents, Daoism and Buddhist world that were adopted later to realize the Gilt-bronze Incense Burner of Baekje, a cast object that fully embodies a single

idealized view of paradise.

This incense burner demonstrates the technical prowess and cultural potential of the Baekje people, exhibiting some of the most advanced methods on the Korean Peninsula combined with Baekje's advanced culture and the mythological world. This piece is truly at the very pinnacle of East Asian craftsmanship, testifying to the outstanding artisanship and superiority of Baekje fine arts, which even surpassed the level of Chinese craftwork at the time.



**Fig. 8**  
**Human Figure Gathering Medicinal Herbs**  
Depicted on the Gilt-bronze Incense Burner of Baekje

*This article is a summary excerpt from Park Kyungeun's doctoral thesis, "A Study of the Iconography and Symbolism of the Gilt-bronze Incense Burner of Baekje," (2018, Seoul Hongik University Graduate School)*



# AN INTERCONNECTED STORY OF THE GILT-BRONZE INCENSE BURNER OF BAEKJE

The Gilt-bronze Incense Burner of Baekje 3.0: Burning the Incense  
Special Exhibition Celebrates 30th Anniversary of the Excavation  
September 23, 2023 – February 12, 2024



## The Gilt-bronze Incense Burner of Baekje 3.0 Update

The Buyeo National Museum has organized a special exhibition simply called *Gilt-bronze Incense Burner of Baekje* to celebrate the 10th anniversary (2003) of its discovery, followed a decade later by *Wishes Rising to Heaven: Gilt-bronze Incense Burner of Baekje*. This year marks the 30th anniversary of the excavation of the famous relic. Over that time, a series of academic symposia has also been conducted on the subject, while research has continued on the iconography, philosophical basis, origin, and usage of the incense burner. The present special exhibition, the third in this series, runs from September 23, 2023 through February 12, 2024. The event updates the research results on the Gilt-bronze Incense Burner of Baekje, with special attention being placed on the “incense” aspect.

The Buyeo National Museum carried out an academic survey called “Incense Burners and Incense Culture” to delve into how Baekje incense-related practices looked and how Korean incense usage advanced generally. In the process of the study, the Museum brought together creative and beautiful examples of Korean censers from Baekje and other regions, and this collection is on display at this year’s special exhibition. In addition, incense makers



**Earthenware Incense Burner**  
Baekje  
H: 16.9 cm, RD: 9.0 cm, BD: 12.0 cm  
Buyeo National Museum

were brought in to help reconstruct the fragrance originally used in the Baekje gilt-bronze vessel, and this material is burned in the exhibition hall to create the scentior.\*

The exhibition’s introductory section features a video presentation that begins from the smoke holes that penetrate the top of the incense burner lid. The short film was produced to emphasize “incense,” the main theme of the exhibit this time around. The camerawork shows the Gilt-bronze Incense Burner of Baekje and smoke swirling about it in 3D to maximize the aesthetic effect.

Passing through the introductory section, the visitors get to see the Gilt-bronze Incense Burner of Baekje up close. The description panel posted on the display case exterior shows twelve hashtags. They are arranged in a logically connected order that addresses the typical questions that visitors have when they see this particular relic.



**Incense Burner with Handle**  
Baekje  
H: 7.8 cm  
Buyeo National Museum

\* Scentior, a portmanteau crafted from the words “scent” + “interior” to refer to a room’s interior fragrance design.



The Incense Burner’s Landscape Explained with 12 Hashtags

#Dec. 12, 1993: a clear day on which the incense burner was excavated.

The Gilt-bronze Incense Burner of Baekje, one of the best-known pieces from Korea’s cultural heritage, was recovered from a former temple site in Neungsan-ri, Buyeo on December 12, 1993. The hashtag presents images of the Buyeo National Museum survey team that excavated the censer as well as the extensive press coverage following the discovery. The excitement felt at the time of the discovery is conveyed by showing the incense burner in its original enclosure, encased in a double layer of glass.

#86 faces: iconography of the 61.8cm incense burner

The Gilt-bronze Incense Burner of Baekje composition presents a great story. The figures that adorn this large piece are laid out in a well-balanced manner to deliver exquisite sculptural beauty: a dragon thrusts itself out of the waves and surges powerfully aloft, while an elaborate

and beautiful landscape unfolds inside the lotus that blossoms from the dragon’s mouth. A phoenix alights gently on the uppermost peak of multiple mountains. Like a movie scene, a cast of 86 characters appear vividly on the individual lotus petals and mountain peaks that are arranged one after another. A 3D digital magnifier kiosk is provided to allow visitors to view these 86 faces in close detail. Wild pigs appear to be in great haste as they burst from their hiding places in the brush. Dogs look animated as they follow people who are depicted plodding along. Musicians wear ecstatic expressions as they hear beautiful melodies. A close-up view of these various figures reveals the peaceful and vibrant world in the imaginations of the Baekje people.

#12 perforations: traces of the incense burner’s production process

More traces of the artisans’ work are found on the Gilt-bronze Incense Burner of Baekje than one may expect. The handiwork of ancient craftsmen can be detected through cut marks on the dragon’s horns, casting mold remnants between

the waves on the pedestal, and plating residue around an expanded smoke hole. Moreover, a video is now available on a new understanding of the Gilt-bronze Incense Burner of Baekje production process, based on the results of the latest computed tomography (CT) scans and incense-burning tests.



Celadon Incense Burner with Fish-dragon Decoration  
Goryeo dynasty  
H: 20.1 cm  
National Museum of Korea

#King Mu’s 35th reign year, ritual incense burned. Other censer types from Baekje. Ancient incense

New incense-related practices were adopted through the Unified Silla, Goryeo and Joseon periods amidst influences from neighboring states or religious traditions. The venues where incense was used advanced beyond state rituals or Buddha halls to include the realm of people’s everyday lives. The exhibition introduces visitors to various types of Baekje incense and others of Korean origin, and a special area inside the hall allows visitors to learn about the incense varieties mentioned in ancient records and shown in archaeological and art-related sources. Visitors may enjoy the fragrances of aloeswood, frankincense, and white sandalwood for themselves, and experience the feelings of ancient people as they soothed their bodies and minds with incense while conveying their heartfelt desires to Heaven.

PR Activity for the Special Exhibition

Visitors are invited to post their impressions of the special exhibition via the SNS App, and when they leave they receive a complementary bookmark infused with the fragrance (The Gilt-bronze Incense Burner of Baekje Incense 287) that is released inside the exhibition hall. Thus, a visit to the exhibition promises to be a special experience that lets visitors take home their feelings when seeing the Gilt-bronze Incense Burner of Baekje. The fragrance blotter bookmarks made specially for this event are an 18cm relief image of the incense burner. Keeping the bookmark inside a book will allow the fragrance to last longer, and it can be used as a fragrance diffuser as well.



Juniper Wood  
1. Silla, L: 12.4 cm  
Gyeongju National Museum  
2. Silla, L: 3.2 cm  
Gyeongju National Museum  
3. Unified Silla, L: 4.5 cm  
National Museum of Korea



Exhibition Hall



#King Mu’s 35th reign year, ritual incense burned



## INCENSE SMOKE WAFING ANEW FROM THE GILT-BRONZE INCENSE BURNER OF BAEKJE WITH THE LATEST DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

In May 2021 the Buyeo National Museum unveiled a new set of immersive contents (“contents fused with new technology”) after more than a year of hard work. The program was produced by applying cutting-edge technologies to project the image of the Gilt-bronze Incense Burner of Baekje, which is a major piece in the Buyeo National Museum collection and referred to as the quintessence of Sabi Baekje period (538-

660) culture. This project is part of a concerted effort to transform the ambience inside national museums from somber academic settings to comfortable rest areas and multipurpose cultural spaces. The marriage of the latest digital technologies with Korea’s cultural heritage has been an opportunity to put cultural heritages hidden away inside display cases in a new light and tell visitors the stories behind these pieces.

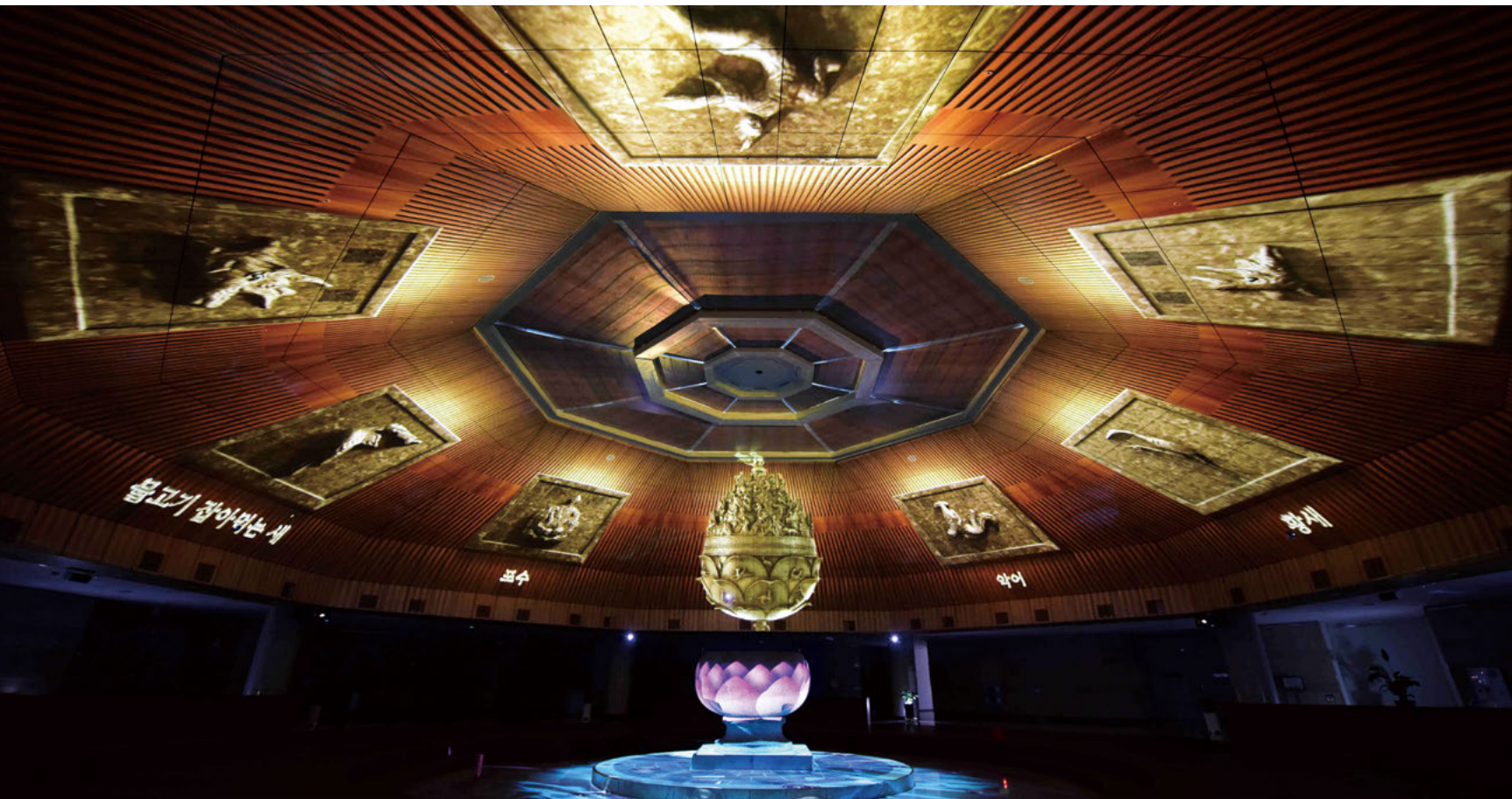
Projection mapping technology has been applied to create a program that reveals the true character of the Gilt-bronze Incense Burner of Baekje. The images are cast onto the ceiling of the central lobby in the Permanent Exhibition Gallery. The screen closes and the light is shut off in the hall as the contents video begins at the ceiling apex. A breathtaking multimedia show commences through twelve 4K beam projectors, supported by a digital surround sound system. When the video starts, the censer’s “winged beast” appears to guide the audience through the landscape presented on the Gilt-bronze Incense Burner of Baekje.

In the video sequence, the incense burner assumes its shape as a dragon emerges from the ocean depths and a mountaintop realm is formed above. Five musicians perform beautiful melodies that resound about the magnificent top of the incense burner, prompting the icon figures

engraved in the censer surface to come alive. The video ends with new incense being burned inside the censer that has been dormant for more than 1,400 years. While the video plays, a device releases lotus blossom fragrance, providing the audience with olfactory enjoyment to accompany the dazzling visual effects. The contents fused with new technology lets the viewers travel back to the time when Sabi was the Baekje capital.

“Baekje in Virtual Reality,” the third in a series of programs that fuse contents with new technology, was unveiled to the public this past February. These contents represent a type of digital retreat from one’s busy schedule. The allure and beauty of four different kinds of Baekje cultural heritage were shown on a massive LED screen, measuring 2.4 meters by 12 meters. Importantly the second sequence of the Gilt-bronze Incense Burner of Baekje gives the audience members the sensation of performing

music themselves, as one of the five musicians. The censer, which in the past could only viewed inside a display case in the museum exhibition hall, has been brought a step closer to visitors through the latest digital technologies. Going forward, the Buyeo National Museum will devote more effort to researching and disseminating knowledge about Baekje’s superb history and cultural heritage, starting with the Gilt-bronze Incense Burner of Baekje.





# A MODERN LITERARY MAN: OH SECHANG (SOBRIQUET WICHANG)

Oh Sechang: A Modern Calligrapher and Connoisseur at NMK’s Permanent Exhibition Hall  
September 7, 2023 - December 25, 2023

Oh Sechang (1864-1953, sobriquet Wichang) was both a patriot who participated in the March First Movement of 1919 and a prominent Korean calligrapher<sup>Fig. 1</sup>. To mark the 70th anniversary of his death, the National Museum of Korea is putting this man’s work in the spotlight with a special exhibition in the Calligraphy and Painting Section (No. 202-4 & 5) of the Permanent Exhibition Hall through December 25. The items on display are mainly from the NMK collection and are part of the periodic rotation in the Calligraphy and Painting Section exhibit. Visitors can view Oh Sechang’s life during turbulent times as well as his artistic activities, research on Korean calligraphy, and discriminating eye toward artworks.



Fig. 1  
Oh Sechang  
©The Independence Hall of Korea

## Moving from Son of an Interpreter to Respected Elder Among the People

Oh Sechang was born in 1864 as the eldest son of Oh Gyeongseok (1831-1879) from the Haeju Oh clan, which boasts a long line of translation-interpretation officers. He passed the interpreter examination in 1879 and worked for the government as an interpreter of the Chinese language. He helped to publish the weekly gazette *Hanseong jubo* as a secretary in the Office of Culture and Information in 1886, and in 1894 he was appointed to the position of staff officer in the Deliberative Council for Military and State Administration, where he worked on the government’s sweeping reforms program (the Gabo Reforms). After resigning from government service, Oh Sechang became

a reporter and found himself at the forefront of the Patriotic Enlightenment Movement. He served as the president of the *Mansebo*, a newspaper launched by Cheondogyo (Religion of the Heavenly Way), in 1906 and the following year he supported the National Debt Redemption Movement, an effort to restore Korean sovereignty by repaying government bonds owed to Japan.

Korea lost her sovereignty and was colonized by Japan in 1910, and Oh Sechang could neither receive a noble title nor gifts of money from the Japanese imperial government. On March 1, 1919, he was among the thirty-three representatives who affixed their names to the March First Declaration of Korean Independence on behalf of the Korean people<sup>Fig. 2</sup>. The police arrested him for this, and he was

sent to prison for two years and eight months. He also refused to go along with the Japanese government’s program forcing Koreans to give up their native names and adopt Japanese-style names in the 1930s and early 1940s. After Korea was liberated in 1945, Oh was shown special respect by the public for embodying the March First Independence Movement. He was posthumously awarded the Order of Merit for National Foundation, Second Class, by the government in 1962.



View of the Exhibition Hall

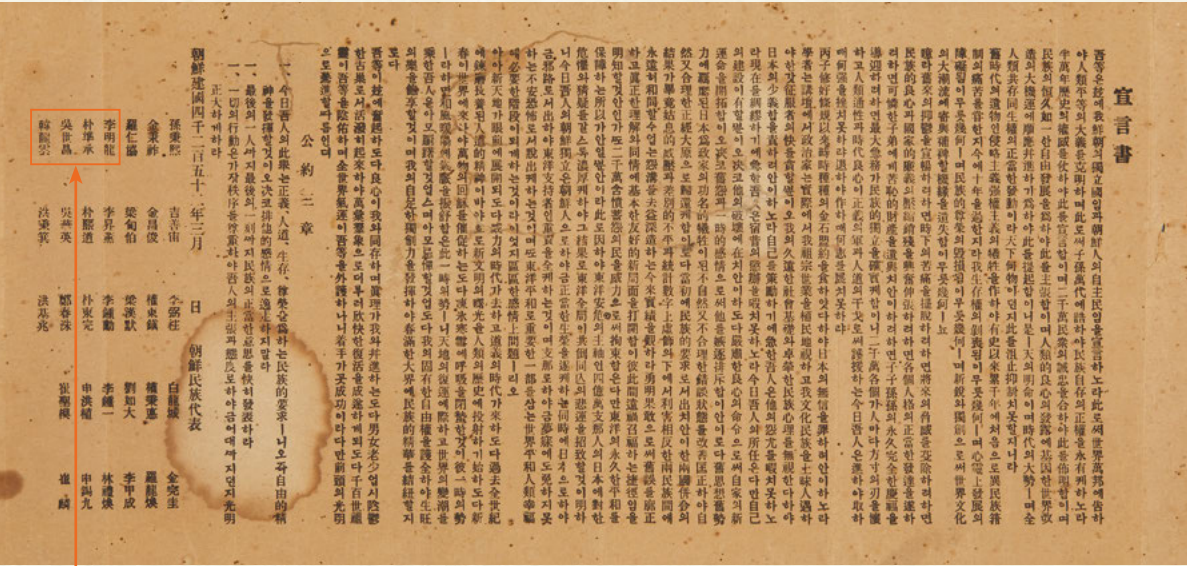
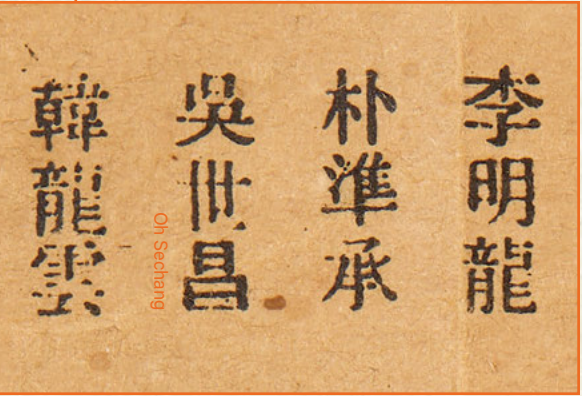


Fig. 2  
March First Declaration of Independence  
Bearing the Names of 33 National Independence Leaders Including that of Oh Sechang  
1919  
Type Printing on paper, 24.2 x 47.8 cm



Magnified Image: Oh Sechang's Name





**Fig. 3**  
**Copies of Engravings on Ancient Objects**  
 Oh Sechang  
 1940  
 Ink on paper, 60.2 x 143.3 cm



**Fig. 4**  
**Characters for "Fish," "Cart," and "Boat" in Ancient Pictographic Script**  
 Oh Sechang  
 1929  
 Ink on paper, 149.6 x 61.9 cm  
 Bequest of Friends of National Museum of Korea, 2005



Magnified Image:  
 Oh Sechang's Sobriquet  
 Recluse  
 Watching the Undulating Waves in the Far East



**Fig. 5**  
**Poems by Korean Literati, Written in Seal Script**  
 Oh Sechang  
 20th century  
 Ink on paper, 149.6 x 61.9 cm  
 (each)

## Creating a Unique Calligraphic System Based on Ancient Writing

Oh Gyeongseok, Oh Sechang's father, traveled to China multiple times as an interpreter-translator and collected various source materials, including rubbings of epigraphs engraved in metal or stone. Oh Sechang used such references, which were either handed down from his father or collected directly, to hone his calligraphic skills. In the process, he introduced creative brushwork styles, particularly in the "clerical" and "seal" script genres.

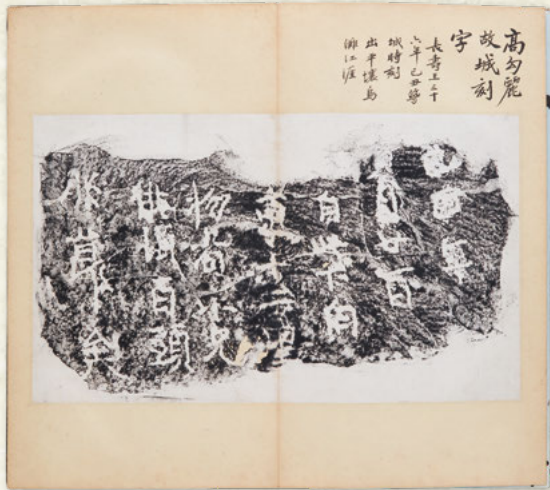
Oh Sechang reproduced patterns or written text engraved on old ceramic rooftiles or bronzeware, and added the explanation "copies of engravings from bells, cauldrons, tiles and bricks" **Fig. 3**.

He also introduced creative calligraphic works inspired by specific pictograms found in ancient Chinese writing. His 1929 pictographic renditions of the characters for "fish," "cart," and "boat" **Fig. 4** is reminiscent of immediate drawings made when looking at characters. He does not abandon the literary quality of the ancient writing yet also brings out the graphical features of the characters very well.

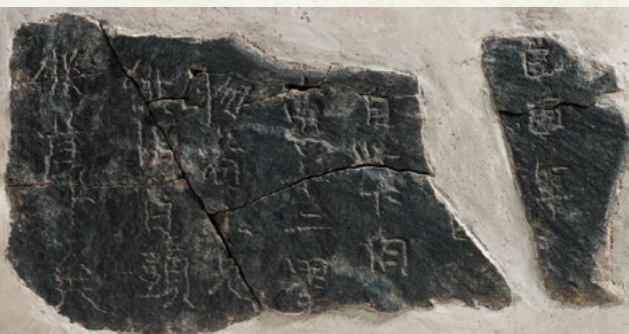
The present exhibition also introduces works that are believed to have been produced by Oh Sechang between 1902 and 1906, when he was had become caught up in political intrigues and sought asylum in Japan. *Poems by Korean Literati, Written in Seal Script* **Fig. 5** is a pair of verses originally written by Yu Huigyeong (1545-1636) and Baek Daebung (?-1592). At the end, Oh Sechang has included his sobriquet, "Recluse Watching the Undulating Waves in the Far East." This particular monicker is not seen on any of his other works and suggests he was outside Korea at the time.

## Collecting and Organizing Old Korean Writings

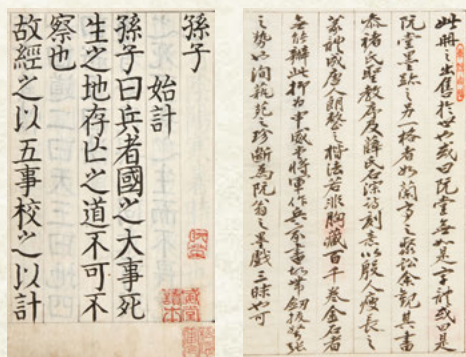
Oh Sechang devoted himself to collecting and organizing documentary materials on calligraphy, painting, and engravings on metal or stone. He then compiled three major books on these subjects, namely *Calligraphy Collection from the Rose of Sharon Region*, *Stone Inks from the Rose of Sharon Region*, and *Examination of Writers and Painters from the Rose of Sharon Region*, with "the Rose of Sharon Region" being a reference to Korea. His research on calligraphy and painting is particularly meaningful as an opportunity to get people to recognize that extant calligraphic works and paintings from earlier periods belong to the Korean people's heritage and must be preserved and passed down to future generations.



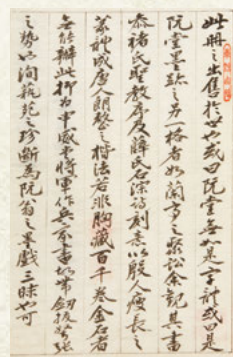
**Fig. 6**  
**Rubbing of the Stone Fragment of the Pyeongyang City Wall in Goguryeo**  
 pages 3-4 of *Stone Inks from the Rose of Sharon Region*  
 compiled by Oh Sechang  
 20th century  
 Ink on paper, 35.0 x 19.0 cm



**Fig. 7**  
**Stone Fragment of the Pyeongyang City Wall in Goguryeo (Original Surface from which the Rubbing was taken)**  
 Engraved in 469  
 Ewha Womans University Museum Collection  
 ©Cultural Heritage Administration



**Fig. 8**  
**Grandson, Calligraphy by Kim Jeonghui**  
 Kim Jeonghui  
 19th century  
 Ink on paper, 25.0 x 16.0 cm  
 Bequest of Lee Honggeun, 1981



**Fig. 8-1**  
**Note written by Oh Sechang on Grandson Calligraphy by Kim Jeonghui**  
 1933



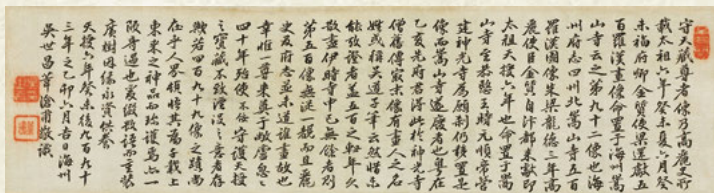
**Fig. 9**  
**Honored One Sudae Jang**  
 Painter Unknown  
 1235  
 Light color on silk, 135.0 x 54.2 cm  
 Treasure

This exhibition sheds special light on *Stone Inks from the Rose of Sharon Region*, which contains 78 rubbings of engravings on metal or stone objects that were produced from the Three Kingdoms through Joseon Periods. The album includes a rubbing from a Stone Fragment of the Pyeongyang City Wall in Goguryeo (part of the Ewha Womans University Museum collection), which was engraved in the year 469 while Goguryeo was building the wall around its new capital. The Stone Fragment was acquired by Oh Gyeongseok in 1855, and passed down to Oh Sechang. Part of the Fragment was subsequently broken off and lost, but the rubbing contained in *Stone Inks from the Rose of Sharon Region* was made while the original piece was intact, elevating its value **Figs. 6 and 7**.

## Cultivating a Discerning Eye by Researching Ancient Objects

As Oh Sechang researched ancient objects, he developed a keen eye for evaluating calligraphy and art. His own calligraphic style was quite original and he left an opinion on *Grandson*, a calligraphic piece purportedly brushed by Kim Jeonghui (1786-1856), but the authenticity was under dispute. Oh Sechang pointed out that the seal affixed on the work was that of Shin Heon (1810-1884), a student of Kim Jeonghui's. Oh added that Kim Jeonghui brushed his calligraphy on the basis of works by several Tang period masters in China, and concluded that *Grandson* had indeed been produced by him **Fig. 8**. Oh also offered his view on the *Honored One Sudae Jang* figure in the *Buddhist Paintings of the Five Hundred Arhats* series produced in the 13th century. He explained that his father, Oh Gyeongseok, had obtained the work in 1875 and had passed it down to him, and he researched documentary sources such as the *History of Goryeo* (*Goryeosa*) and *Haeju Magistracy Gazette* (*Haejubu-ji*) to ascertain the type of work it was **Fig. 9**.

Oh Sechang was a writer, calligrapher and painter who lived to the ripe old age 90, personally witnessing a tumultuous time in Korean history that spanned from the end of Joseon through the establishment of the Republic of Korea. He devoted himself to the enlightenment and independence of the Korean people, researched Korean calligraphy and painting, and labored to ensure that these works were recognized as Korean heritage, preserved, and handed down to posterity. This exhibition provides visitors with an opportunity to appreciate the works that Oh Sechang produced himself and feel his effort to use what is ancient as a model for creating what is new.



**Fig. 9-1**  
**Note written by Oh Sechang on Honored One Sudae Jang**  
 1915



# WATER DROPPERS: BEAUTIFUL DESKTOP ART OBJECTS

The water dropper is one of the necessary implements for brushing calligraphy, for it is used to hold the water that the calligrapher needs when grinding the ink stick on the inkstone. These pieces are exquisitely crafted into various theme shapes, including fruit, humans or animals, and they are produced in pottery types ranging from celadon and white porcelain to *buncheong* ware. They are loved by many viewers for their excellent shapes and designs.

The items shown on this page are from the late Lee Kun-Hee's collection, which was donated to the nation by his surviving family members.



**Celadon Water Dropper in the Shape of a Young Maiden**  
Goryeo dynasty  
Ceramic Ware: Celadon  
H: 9.5 cm, W: 6.5 cm  
National Museum of Korea



**Celadon Water Dropper in the Shape of a Frog**  
Goryeo dynasty  
Ceramic Ware: Celadon  
H: 7.3 cm, BD: 9.5 cm  
National Museum of Korea



**White Porcelain Water Dropper in the Shape of a Peach with Underglaze Iron-painted Decoration**  
Joseon dynasty  
Ceramic Ware: White Porcelain  
H: 11.9 cm, BD: 7.3 cm  
National Museum of Korea



**Round Blue & White Porcelain Water Dropper with Openwork Grass Pattern**  
Joseon dynasty  
Ceramic Ware: White Porcelain  
H: 7.8 cm, BC: 15.4 cm  
National Museum of Korea



**Blue & White Porcelain Water Dropper in the Shape of Geumgangsan (Diamond Mts.) with Underglaze Copper-red Decoration**  
Joseon dynasty  
Ceramic Ware: White Porcelain  
H: 17.0 cm, BD: 14.8 cm  
National Museum of Korea



**Blue & White Porcelain Water Dropper in the Shape of a Carp**  
Joseon dynasty  
Ceramic Ware: White Porcelain  
H: 13.0 cm, MC: 1.3 cm  
National Museum of Korea



**Celadon Water Dropper in the Shape of a Duck**  
Goryeo dynasty  
Ceramic Ware: Celadon  
H: 8.0 cm, L: 16.0 cm  
National Museum of Korea



**Black-glazed Water Dropper in the Shape of a Peach**  
Joseon dynasty  
Ceramic Ware: Black Glaze  
H: 4.7 cm, W: 3.8 cm  
National Museum of Korea



**White Porcelain Water Droppers in the Shape of a House**  
Joseon dynasty  
Ceramic Ware: White Porcelain  
H: 8.7 cm, W: 9.4 cm  
National Museum of Korea



**Buncheong Ware Water Dropper with Stamped Floral Design**  
Joseon dynasty  
Ceramic Ware: Buncheong Ware  
H: 8.0 cm, D: 0.5 cm  
National Museum of Korea



# CAPTURING TREASURED MOMENTS IN PAINTINGS

Special Exhibition at the Jeonju National Museum  
August 1, 2023 – October 29, 2023

People everywhere have special moments they want to preserve forever. We encounter countless special days in our lives such as when we view a beautiful landscape at a travel destination we happen to visit, when we are about to part from an enjoyable get-together with good friends, or when something we have wanted for a long time finally comes to pass.

The 25th World Scout Jamboree was held at Saemangeum, in Jeollabuk-do Province from August 1 through 12, 2023. The World Jamboree is a celebration for young people takes place once every four years, and 32 years have passed since the last Jamboree was held in Korea. To commemorate this occasion, the Jeonju National

Museum is displaying paintings that depict special gatherings, nature scenes, or special events from the Joseon period (1392-1910).  
An occasion where we can spend such meaningful moments together constitutes a very special day indeed. In the days without cameras, brilliant moments and beautiful scenes people wanted to remember were re-created through a painter’s brush. Gatherings of the literati to share food on hot summer days were also preserved in paintings. Meanwhile, events of great importance to the Joseon royal family were recorded in both texts and paintings. These examples reveal that people in traditional times, like those today, wished to keep forever moments especially significant to them.

Take, for example, Chae Yongsin (1850-1941), an artist from Jeonju who was unexpectedly summoned to Seoul and paint the portrait of King Taejo, the Joseon founder. He also painted a series of ten important events from his professional carrier, a genre known as *pyeongsaengdo*, or “lifetime scenes.”  
The exhibition at the Jeonju National Museum is divided into three different themes. Section 1 introduces paintings of “refined gatherings” (*ajip* or *ahoe*), leisurely, private affairs where scholarly friends compose poetry or prose.

## Invitational Meetings and Their Backstories

Paintings of gatherings depict fleeting warm and happy feelings of the moment, freezing them forever in time.  
The cultural tradition of recording precious meetings in both writing and pictures in Joseon, backed by a history of more than half a millennium, reveals the great value that Koreans have long placed on meetings and interpersonal relationships.

This fact is borne out by numerous late Joseon paintings and written accounts on the poet society (*sisa*) meetings of *jung-in* class (hereditary status group between commoner and yangban) members or the literati social gatherings (*gyehoe*), both of which convened in the ravines at the foot of Mt. Inwangsan In *Ten Friends*Fig. 2, Seo Jiksu (1735-1811) reproduces an imaginary moment in which he meets with beloved lifelong companions, which includes his ink brushes and books. Court painter Yi Inmun (1745-ca. 1824) painted *Refined Gathering at the Pavilion*Fig. 3, a work accompanied by a list of the participants and a description of their activities. The special exhibition also features the *Painting Scroll of the Purification Ritual*, a scene of *jung-in* who gathered in 1853 to commemorate the 1,500th anniversary of the *Orchid Pavilion Gathering*.



Fig. 2  
*Ten Friends*  
Yi Inmun (1745-ca. 1824)  
Joseon dynasty, 1783  
Light colors on paper, 126.8 x 56 cm  
National Museum of Korea



Fig. 3  
*Refined Gathering at the Pavilion*  
Yi Inmun (1745-ca. 1824)  
Joseon dynasty, 1820  
Light colors on paper, 86.7 x 57.7 cm  
National Museum of Korea



Fig. 1  
*Lifetime Scenes*  
Attribute to Chae Yongsin (1850-1941)  
Early 20th century  
Ten panels, Colors on silk  
Panel Dimensions: 83.0 x 31.9 cm  
National Museum of Korea  
Bequest of Lee Kun-Hee, 2021





**Fig. 4**  
***Idle Talk Beneath the Trees***  
Yi Insang (1710-1760)  
Joseon dynasty, 18th century  
Ink on paper, 34.0 x 59.8 cm  
National Museum of Korea  
Bequest of Lee Kun-Hee, 2021

Social gatherings of all sorts provide leisurely moments free from everyday concerns. This is true whether the participants are persons who amassed great learning and virtue, leaving their names in the historical record; individuals who dropped out of society yet led unfettered lives as recluses; or officials who were fully involved in the social mainstream. Paintings allow us to become acquainted with the likes of Su Shi (1037-1101, style name Dongpo), who has been revered for more than a thousand years as one of China’s most fascinating personalities. We also get a glimpse of gatherings to celebrate the *Preface to the Orchard Pavilion Poems*, a masterpiece of everlasting merit by the famed Chinese calligrapher Wang Xizhi (303-361). The original text was buried with Tang Emperor Taizong in his mausoleum.

Yi Insang (1710-1760) painted *Idle Talk Beneath the Trees*<sup>Fig. 4</sup> and gave it to his close friend, Im Mae (1711-1779). Im liked the work but was not adamant about possessing it. Yi responded: “I write this note to prevent some other person from putting this up for sale.” Members of the Joseon literati displayed a culture of appreciating the arts—meeting to

write poetry, paint pictures, and then enjoy them together while cracking jokes.

### Recording Scenery as a Way to Remember People

“Rather than venturing to tramp all around there physically, it’s like viewing it to your heart’s content from the comfort of your bedroom.” This remark is written on *General View of Mt. Geumgangsan* by Jeong Seon (1676-1759). Jeong Seon’s work exudes the emotional response the actual mountains evoke, and it allows the viewers to enjoy the scenes whenever they want. As such the visual experience has been imparted with a special meaning of “owning the scene.” Realistic reproductions of actual sights may contain multiple layers of significance as places the artist would like to visit but are too far away, places the artist is determined to see sometime without fail, places the artist wants to remember forever, or places painted to preserve fond memories.

Section 2 introduces paintings of places that are remembered as nature scenes with special significance for the artist. The settings are exceptional in themselves, but many of these works include certain personal interactions.



**Fig. 5**  
***Pavilion for Loosening the Collar (Pigeumjeong Pavilion)***  
Kang Sehwang (1713-1791)  
Joseon dynasty, 1789  
Light colors on Silk  
127.0 x 69.4 cm  
National Museum of Korea

Kang Sehwang (1713-1791) accompanied his son to Mt. Geumgangsan after his appointment as magistrate of Hoeyang. The artist stopped by Pigeumjeong (Loosen-the-Collar Pavilion), which stood at a crossroads along the way, and painted the scene for posterity<sup>Fig. 5</sup>. On another occasion, he painted Ugeumam Rock while on his way to Buam, where his son was to serve as magistrate. Hence the story of a happy father-and-son reunion is woven within these beautiful scenes. Yi Insang painted from memory the scene of Guryongpo (Nine-dragon Falls)<sup>Fig. 6</sup>, which is in the Mt. Geumgangsan, fifteen years after he had visited there with friends. Recording a landscape in paint was a way for the artist to remember people to whom he was close.

### Recording Happy Occasions Deemed Treasures

Section 3 displays paintings that record special events at royal palaces and portraits that were painted on commission in the modern period. Even today the commemorative photograph is an important part of the proceedings at 1st year birthday celebrations, weddings, award presentations, and retirement ceremonies in

Korea. In the times before the advent of the camera, paintings were the way to hand down to subsequent generations the scenes of events at the state level and important anniversaries inside families.

Paintings are extant from the Joseon period that chronicle the development of the Crown Prince within the royal family, from his birth to his formal meeting with teachers at Seonggyungwan (Royal Confucian Academy), and the commencement of his studies there. The birth of a crown prince was a joyous occasion for all the king’s subjects, and the administration of all punishments was suspended kingdom-wide from the time the queen entered the ad hoc Delivery Office, which manages various tasks related to a royal birth, until the baby is born.

The expression “If someone doesn’t want to become the Pyeongan-do governor, he or she cannot be persuaded to do anything” indicates how widely coveted the governorship of that province (in present-day North Korea) was in traditional times. The *Pyeongang Governor’s Banquet* vividly captures the spectacle of more than 2,500 people who floated up the Daedonggang (river) in boats to attend a great feast to welcome the incoming provincial chief. The festivities took place around the Bubyonguu (Tower Drifting on the Blue Water) and Yeonggwangjeong (Pavilion in the White Silky

Light), both in present-day Pyeongyang. In 1743, King Yeongjo hosted an archery contest with his civil officials to extend military arts to Confucian regimen and maintain the tradition of King Taejo, the Joseon founder and a skilled bowman. *Formal Archery Ceremony*<sup>Fig. 7</sup> was painted to praise and preserve the significance of this event.

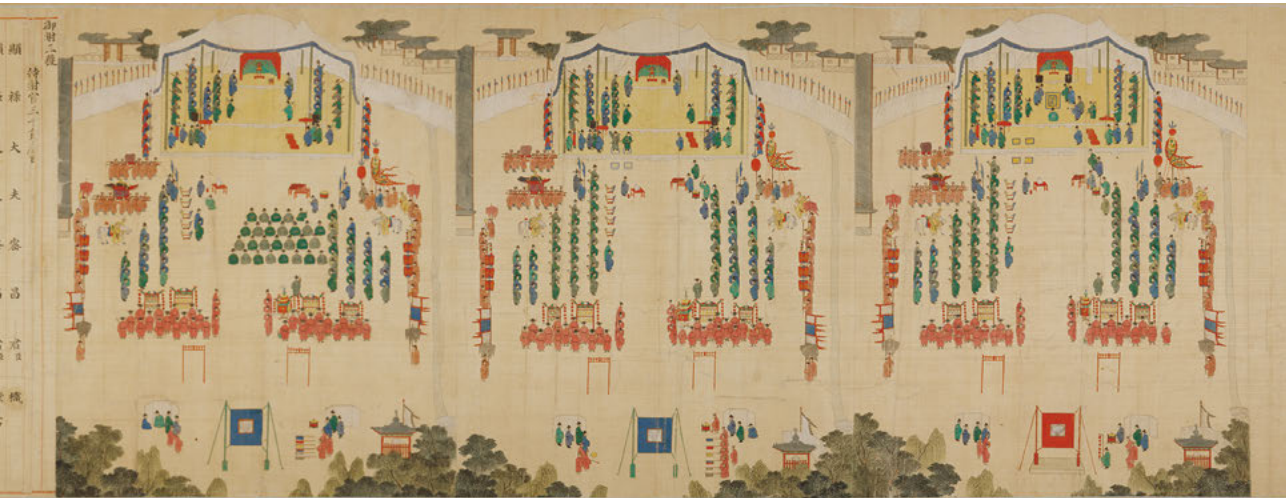
### Ten Special Moments in My Career that Shine Brightly

As we have seen, significant moments in time were preserved through paintings. Such artworks were made possible because people invariably consider their own lives to be important. Early on, Chae Yongsin understood this demand, and he commercialized portraiture. Anyone could, by paying a sum of money, obtain the portrait of a venerable teacher or a grandfather who had already passed away. Chae also received a special summons to travel from Jeonju to the capital, Hanyang, where he was commissioned to reproduce the portrait of King Taejo. Then he additionally reproduced the portraits of the seven ancestors of the Joseon royal family. After returning to Jeonju, he painted the portraits of officials such as the magistrate of Jilgok and the magistrate of Jeongsan. His reputation as the “artist who painted royal portraits” was well established in his native region of Jeollabuk-do,

and he ran a studio with his son and grandson in Jeongeup. He lived out his years producing paintings on commission. His works were not confined to portraits but also included landscapes and flower & bird paintings.

One day in his seventies, Chae Yongsin witnessed a panorama of brilliant flashes of his life’s proudest moments. He could not forget his experience of being called to the capital to participate in the King Taejo royal portrait reproduction, the apex of his career. Thus, Chae proceeded to produce a ten-panel silk screen portraying the most important events in which he participated, preserving them as a record for future generations.

Today seems like just another day, the same as yesterday. Some days I’m happy, while others are not so much. However, if I consider the present to be the first day of the rest of my life, then every day is always special. Following the lead of the artist who takes up the brush at special moments, try coming to the special time travel experience arranged at the Jeonju National Museum to recall the feelings of people in the Joseon period who wished to record what is happening right now, right here, today for future generations to see. You are cordially invited to a special exhibition that makes today all the more special.



**Fig. 7**  
***Formal Archery Ceremony***  
Joseon dynasty, 1743  
Colors on silk  
59.7 x 259.8 cm  
National Museum of Korea



# PAINTINGS LOVED AND CHERISHED

Special Exhibition for Paintings Donated in the Name of Huh Minsoo  
September 15, 2023 – December 10, 2023

On September 15 Gwangju National Museum opened *Paintings Loved and Cherished*, a special exhibition of works previously owned by the late Huh Minsoo (1897-1972). Twelve individual pieces of important late Joseon calligraphic works and paintings in four sets were delivered to the Museum from the United States this past March. They were in the private collection of Gail Ellis Huh (aged 85) and had never been shown publicly before. Huh Minsoo had gifted these artworks to his son and to her, his daughter-in-law.

Huh Minsoo was a banker born on the island of Jindo, part of Jeollanam-do, and a descendant of Heo Ryeon (1808-1893), a master painter among the artists in the Honam region (Southwestern Korea). His daughter-in-law, Gail Ellis Huh, wished to donate the works, in the name of her respected father-in-law, to a museum near his native Jindo island. This special exhibition was organized to openly praise the deeply significant donation of Madame Huh. On display are a total of 83 pieces from 46 sets, including the pieces from Huh Minsoo as well as related paintings and calligraphic works.

## First Public Viewing of Works Documented in *Seongnong's Garden of Paintings*

The work that has garnered the greatest interest within the recent donation is *Plum Blossoms in Ink* by Kim Jingyu (1658-1716), a literati calligrapher-painter from the 17th century. This work follows the style of ink-wash flower-and-bird compositions in vogue during mid-Joseon. In the donation item identification process, it

was found to have been included in *Seongnong's Garden of Paintings*, a multi-volume album of original artworks accumulated and complied by Kim Gwangguk (1727-1797, whose sobriquet was Seongnong), one of the foremost calligraphy and painting collectors of late Joseon. The original *Plum Blossoms in Ink*, which had only appeared in records pertaining to *Seongnong's Garden of Paintings Volume 1*, had been newly discovered.

The Kim Jingyu *Plum Blossoms in Ink* donation has made this special exhibition a venue for confirming the true nature of *Seongnong's Garden of Paintings*, which has been handed down to the present in fragments. A hand-copied version of *Seongnong's Garden of Paintings* came to light and garnered extraordinary attention from academia in 2013. That album is seen by the public for the first time at this exhibition, along with fifteen of the fifty-plus calligraphy pieces and paintings introduced in it. Of special interest are four works that belong in private collections and have never before been on public display, including a version of *Plum Blossoms in Ink* by Jo Sok (1595-1668), a calligrapher-painter from the mid-Joseon period.

## The Story Behind the Donation and Donated Articles by Gail Huh, the Daughter-in-law

The exhibition tells of Gail Huh, daughter-in-law of Huh Minsoo, in relation to three different topics.

The first topic is the introduction of the important artworks in the donation and the donor Huh Minsoo, along with fellow clan members Heo Ryeon and Heo Baekryeon (1891-



Exhibition Hall

1977). The donation includes two works by Heo Ryeon. They are accompanied by the memories from a family photo of the donor and reveal the close ties that Huh Minsoo shared with Heo Baekryeon, a relative and long-time friend who grew up with him on the Jindo island.



Hand-copied Version of *Seongnong's Garden of Paintings*  
Kim Gwangguk (1727-1797)  
Joseon dynasty, 19th century  
Ink on paper, 27.5 x 18.2 cm  
Private collection





**Pine Trees**  
Heo Ryeon  
Joseon dynasty, 19th century  
Colors on paper, Each 93.2 x 27.0 cm  
Gwangju National Museum  
Bequest of Huh Minsoo



Exhibition Hall 1

Second is the story of how the donated work *Master Dongpo in Bamboo Rainhat and Wooden Clogs* by Shin Myeongyeon (1808-1886) has put *Bamboo Rainhat and Wooden Clogs* into the spotlight. It was produced by the 19th century Korean literatus Pak Bongbin (1838-1904) to offer a memorial sacrifice to Su Shi (1037-1101), whose sobriquet was Dongpo, and the painting depicts the famous Song dynasty literatus when in exile. The recent appearance of *Master Dongpo in Bamboo Rainhat and Wooden Clogs* is significant because it clearly indicates a Korean fondness towards Su Shi in the 19th century.

The third story line is how the donation resulted in the first public display of Kim Jingyu's *Plum Blossoms in Ink* along with fifteen of the other original works featured in *Seongnong's Garden of Paintings*, a testimony to Kim Gwangguk's superb eye for fine art.

Visitors have an opportunity to appreciate the superb artistic judgment and sense of Kim Gwangguk, one of the most important art collectors in late Joseon.

As an epilogue, special exhibition visitors view a video presentation called *The 11,500km Journey*, which details the process for getting the donated items from Virginia in the US to the Gwangju National Museum between 2022 and March 2023.

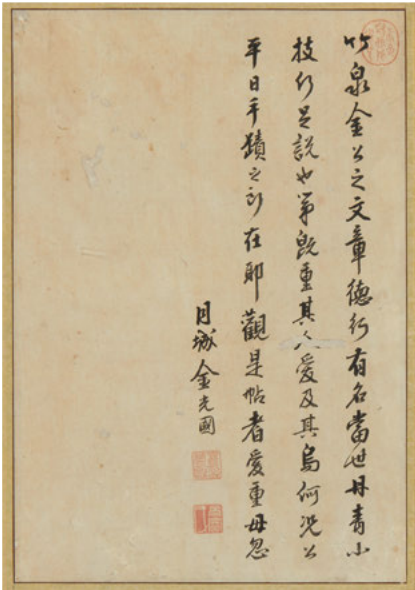
## Old Paintings for All to Enjoy Both Visually and Tactilely

Exiting the exhibition gallery, visitors are invited to look at and touch replicas of the *Plum Blossoms in Ink* and *Songdo* paintings that are on display. The Museum has teamed up with the Gwangju Art Association to create a tactile experience space that lets disabled and nondisabled persons alike feel the texture of actual pine trees, pine needles, apricot trees, and birds, thereby gaining a deeper apricot trees of old paintings.

Additionally, this exhibition offers access to digital contents, which convey the stories about

the artworks and donations most effectively. An animated work with heartwarming illustrations and a documentary film are shown inside the exhibition gallery. They were produced based on video recordings of art collector Gail Huh's private home as well as on data gleaned from there, helping to enhance visitors' understanding and feelings of familiarity for the subject matter.

A phrase by Kim Gwangguk in his *Seongnong's Garden of Paintings* about Kim Jingyu's *Plum Blossoms in Ink* reads: "Love and cherish [it]; do not disdain [it]", and that sentiment inspired the title for this exhibition, *Paintings Loved and Cherished*. In keeping with Kim Gwangguk's request, the work was long preserved and loved by the family of Huh Minsoo, and now its long journey home has been completed. May this exhibition provide an opportunity for visitors to feel the love and caring that has gone into such an old painting filled with countless memories.



**Plum Blossoms in Ink**  
Kim Jingyu (1658-1716)  
Joseon dynasty, 18th century  
Ink on paper, Each 31.0 x 21.5 cm  
Gwangju National Museum  
Bequest of Huh Minsoo

Exhibition Hall 2





# EXPERT EXCHANGE, BEYOND NMK AND CULTURAL BOUNDARIES

The Museum Network Fellowship, which has been held annually since 2012, convened from September 6 to 16 at the National Museum of Korea. It was the first Fellowship Program conducted in the in-person format in four years.

This year, five experts in charge of Korean galleries and related projects were invited from Denmark, the United States, and Canada. The program was structured to provide practical help to participants in running the projects at their organizations, and customized programs were arranged by reflecting the participants' requests and suggestions in advance. We interviewed the participants to hear their thoughts about the Fellowship program.



Curators in charge of Korean galleries from North America and Europe who participated in the Museum Network Fellowship



Viewing the Permanent Exhibition at the National Museum of Korea

| Please introduce yourself.

**Martin** I work in the National Museum of Denmark as a senior researcher. My main research area is East Asian popular culture from the transnational perspective. My background is in Korean Studies, so Korea is my primary field. As curator, I cover the East Asian collections in our museum.

**Nicole** Nicole Dowd, Head of Public Programs, Smithsonian National Museum of Asian Art

**Tongyun YIN** I am the Cofrin Curator of Asian Art at the Harn Museum of Art at the University of Florida in the USA. My primary role involves supervising the preservation, interpretation, presentation, and research of the Harn’s Asian art collection, including over 250 Korean artworks, dating from the 5th century to the present time.

**Kwon** I am Kwon Sungyeon, Associate Curator of Korean Art and Culture Royal Ontario Museum (hereinafter ROM). As a Korean-Canadian immigrant, I have been working in the art field for many years, shuttling between Korea and Canada. Currently, I also teach Korean art history as a (status-only) Assistant Professor in the Department of Art History at the University of Toronto, which is a partner institution of ROM.

**Kim** I am Jiyeon Kim from Peabody Essex Museum, Salem. I am currently working on the museum’s new Korean gallery, set to open in 2025.

| What was your first impression of the NMK?

**Martin** I have visited the NMK several times since 1993. My first impression this time was how creatively the exhibition team has employed digital and other interactive media inside the exhibitions; and in a way that heightened my attention to the displayed objects and their stories.

**Nicole** Upon first visiting the NMK, I was overwhelmed by its scale and the amount of objects, galleries, and stories being told through the museum. My two favorite experiences in the museum:

- when we spent time during the evening open hours when there were fewer people in the museum and I could sit in the galleries and quietly view and contemplate the incredible objects and exhibition design;
- when we toured the special exhibition “*Companions on the Eternal Journey*” and learned so much about the mysterious and often poignant pottery figures from ancient Korean tombs. The use of technology in the storytelling was so unique and helped all visitors understand the context and ritual surrounding these historical objects.





2023 Museum Network Fellowship 2nd Round Table



Visit to the Excavation Site of Jjoksaem

**Tongyun YIN** My initial impression of the NMK was formed long before my visit in September. The Harn Museum has benefited tremendously from a long collaborative partnership with the NMK, involving research, collection conservation, exhibition, and collection digitization projects. The NMK’s consistent dedication and unwavering support for these projects to enhance the understanding and appreciation of Korean history, art, and culture left a profound and inspiring impression on me. During my visit to the NMK, I was further captivated by the NMK’s encyclopaedic collection and the diverse range of exhibitions and educational outreach programs it offered to both domestic and international audiences. Particularly noteworthy was the incorporation of digital technologies to enhance the interpretation for and accessibility of the displayed works in the museum galleries, which I found to be highly enlightening.

**Kim** It’s been several years since my last visit to the NMK, and I was struck by its evolution into an even more welcoming and engaging space.

**We are curious about the discussions you had with experts at the NMK during your consultation sessions. In your opinion, what kind of opportunities would the Fellowship bring in the future?**

**Martin** As for me, I got excellent specialist advice from the NMK regarding a wooden Buddha figure which has been believed to be Korean. As it turns out, it is more likely from the Chinese Qing dynasty.

**Nicole** I had truly interesting and fruitful conversations with the Education Division at the NMK, not only about public programs and education events, but also accessibility and reaching new audiences through technology and the media most comfortable to them. I also had the opportunity to meet with the National Folk Museum specifically about Chuseok celebrations at the National Museum of Asian Art and I believe that we will find ways to work together on future Chuseok festivals in the US to bring Korean culture and traditions to American audiences.

Overall the Fellowship facilitates a deeper connection for museum professionals who work on Korean exhibitions and cultural programs at Korean-based institutions and also other international colleagues who can support and advise one another. It builds a unique network that can strengthen how Korean art and culture is supported globally.

**Tongyun YIN** I think each institution has its distinctive needs and faces different challenges when it comes to delivering engaging and sustainable exhibitions and programs for their communities. At the Harn Museum, our primary challenge is how to use our limited collection to effectively introduce the rich and multifaceted art and culture of Korea throughout its extensive history. During my discussion with the Overseas Korean Galleries Support Program, we explored the opportunities for borrowing digital content for the Harn’s Korean art gallery. That will enrich the narratives that we would be able to present to our visitors. The Fellowship provided a distinctive opportunity to foster this in-depth discussion that addressed our unique challenges.

**Kwon** I discussed mostly about Korean special

exhibitions I propose to curate at ROM. We discussed possibilities of loaning collections and procedures. Throughout the Fellowship, I’ve got ideas to put up Korean exhibitions at ROM and met the people who I could collaborate with.

**Kim** I feel the future collaboration with the NMK is very promising. Everyone was supportive and open-minded. Regardless of the opportunities ahead—be it a loan exhibition, exchange program, or some other initiative—I am confident that PEM and the NMK will build a robust partnership forged in trust and mutual understanding.

**What did you expect to learn from this Fellowship? Please share what was impressive about the Fellowship and whether the experience was helpful.**

**Martin** The experience was super helpful! It was like being served 5 years of vitamins within 10 days. I have now seen museums, cultural heritage institutions and met people which I believe will be helpful in my work on the Korean collection in Denmark for the next many years to come. And I

have been generally inspired with many ideas on how to display and narrate our objects and create new collections.

**Nicole** Through the Fellowship experience, I expected to learn more about how Korean museums present Korean art, history and culture to broad audiences through exhibitions, education, digital initiatives and public programs. I was so impressed at the diversity of museums and spaces we visited during the Fellowship Program and how open staff were to sharing their work and initiatives with our group. I was especially impressed by the incorporation of technology and prioritization of accessibility across museums, especially through the OGAM Sensory Learning Space, not only the design and presentation of the gallery, but also the audience data collection and outcomes that make the experience so meaningful. While I have been home for almost one month now, the experiences and meetings we had during the Fellowship will stay with me throughout my professional career. While our schedule was very busy, it allowed us to have as many experiences as possible in both Seoul and Gyeongju and I’m so appreciative of all of the time, effort and planning it must have taken to put this together.

**Kim** I was very impressed by the cutting-edge exhibitions, interactive media, and state-of-the-art facilities of Korean museums. But most of all, I truly appreciated how all the technologies and innovations were aimed at involving a wider variety of audience and engaging more intimately with visitors. I noticed that all exhibits and interpretative materials were thoughtfully designed, considering the visitors’ viewpoints, flows, and reactions. Of course, networking with Korean colleagues and other fellows was invaluable. All the inspirational conversations, opinions, suggestions will be of great help to my future projects.

**Tongyun YIN** The Fellowship provided such an invaluable opportunity to facilitate connections

among specialists and curators from abroad and Korean professionals in different institutions.

I deeply appreciated the diverse channels through which we were exposed not only to curatorial practices but also to conservation of objects of different mediums, collection preservation, educational programming, and research projects. Furthermore, the Fellowship offered a comprehensive learning experience encompassing both historical and modern and contemporary art and history of Korea, which aligns with my goal of showcasing to American audiences the continuity of Korean art and culture as a vibrant living tradition. The hospitality and meticulous planning throughout the entire itinerary were truly remarkable. I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who dedicated their hard work to ensure the success of this Fellowship Program! Thank you very much!

**Kwon** It was a valuable opportunity for me to meet curators and professionals from museums and art galleries in South Korea. In the past, I was well connected with curators and artists in the field of Korean contemporary art. It was immensely beneficial for me to meet the experts in Korean archaeology and premodern art. Visiting the Silla Kingdom’s tomb excavation site, exploring the ancient tomb storage of the Yeongnam region, and listening to the explanations from curators in archaeology and classical art were fascinating and educational. I was inspired for new special exhibitions. Moreover, having worked in the Canadian art scene for a long time, I believe I can play a role in facilitating collaboration between South Korean museums/art galleries and institutions in Canada.



# A COLLECTOR’S INVITATION COMES TO CHEONGJU

A Collector’s Invitation: Special Exhibition at the Cheongju National Museum at the Bequest of the Late Chairman Lee Kun-Hee  
July 25, 2023 – October 29, 2023

\*The items on display are part of the cultural heritage that surviving family members of the late Chairman Lee Kun-Hee donated to the nation.

The surviving family members of the late Samsung Group Chairman Lee Kun-Hee (1942-2020) donated 21,693 pieces from his massive private collection to the nation on April 28, 2021. The National Museum of Korea and National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art cohosted a special exhibition entitled *A Collector’s Invitation* in April 2022, marking the first anniversary of the donation. This was followed by local special exhibitions at the Gwangju National Museum from October 2022 and at the Daegu National Museum from April 2023.

The third in this series of local exhibits was organized at the Cheongju National Museum, which sought to satisfy enthusiastic local interest in Lee Kun-Hee’s donation by displaying such major artworks from the collection as

Jeong Seon’s famous *Clearing after Rain in Mt. Inwangsan*. Also being introduced are a landscape called *Gudambong Peaks*, which features a scenic spot in Chungcheongbuk-do; a portrait of Gwon Sangha (1641-1721), a disciple of the great Confucian scholar Song Siyeol (1607-1689), who represented the North Chungcheong region; and traditional Chungju tables, small dining tables crafted in Chungcheong-do with signature “frog legs,” or legs indented toward the bottom. Overall, the exhibition spans calligraphic works, paintings, wooden furniture, ceramics, and metal crafts, with 399 separate pieces in 201 sets on display, including 18 items named as a National Treasure, a Treasure, or some other cultural heritage designation.

The late Lee Kun-Hee once said that his nation’s cultural competitiveness is created

when Korean-style identity permeates affairs in everyday life. Hopefully this special exhibition will prove to be an opportunity for visitors to feel the discerning eye and taste of a collector who was deeply committed to Korea’s important cultural heritage.

## Stone Cultural Artifacts in the Outdoor Garden at Cheongju

The stone cultural artifacts donated by the Lee Kun-Hee estate serve as the highlight of Cheongju National Museum exhibitions. Some stone statues greet visitors at the exhibition gallery entrance and in the lobby, while others [Fig. 1](#) are waiting outside to send them off. A photo area has been arranged in the lobby for visitors to carry the fun and memories away with them.

Over 210 of the 836 stone cultural artifacts donated by the surviving family members of the late Lee Kun-Hee were selected for arrangement in the Cheongju National Museum outdoor garden. Stone cultural artifacts have recently been placed between the trees and flowers that have long graced the Museum grounds, providing a relaxing experience felt nowhere else in the city. Moreover, a truly enjoyable experience awaits you when you stroll in the outdoor garden, gaze at the face of a statue standing there heedlessly, and try to identify what each figure is grasping in its hands.



**Fig. 1**  
**Stone Statues (At the Exhibition Venue)**  
Joseon dynasty  
Granite, H: 130 cm, W: 35.0 x 38.0 cm  
National Museum of Korea  
Bequest of Lee Kun-Hee, 2021



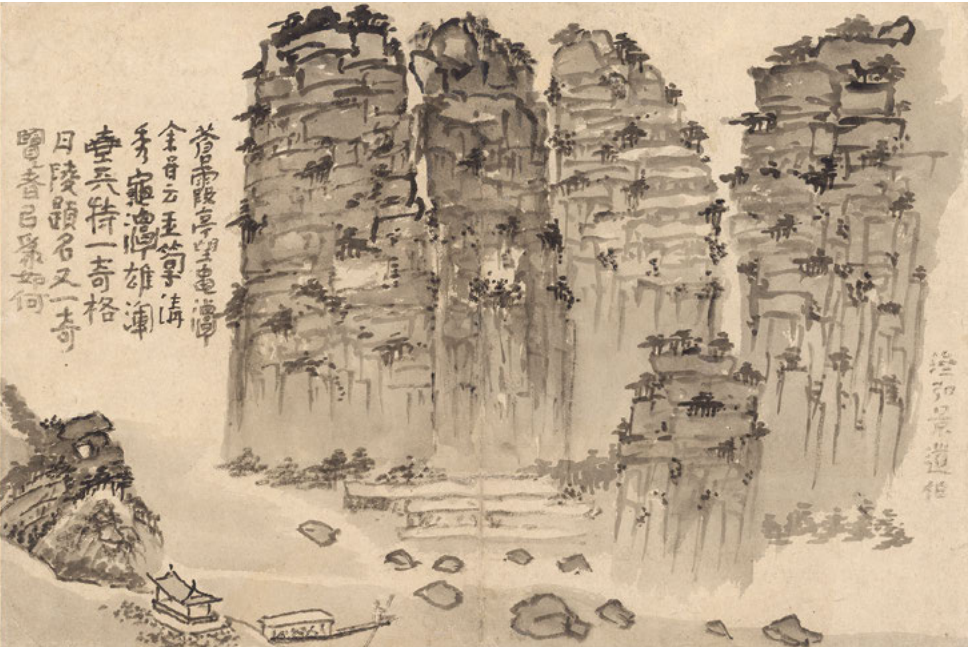
### A Collector’s Invitation: “Welcome, Visitors, to Cheonju.”

The special exhibition is organized into the Reception Area; Section 1, “The Collector’s Diverse Interests”; Section 2, “The Collector’s Treasures”; Section 3, “The Collector’s Day”; and Sendoff Area. The Reception Area is a space dedicated to welcoming the visitors. Here they encounter the landscape painting *Gudambong Peaks*[Fig. 2](#), depicting a beautiful scene in Chungchongbuk-do, along with a portrait of Gwon Sangha, who was a disciple of Confucian scholar Song Siyeol. They are also offered cups of tea, served on traditional Chungju tables, while they hear stories about the collection pieces.

Section 1 introduces the broad range of high-quality cultural artifacts amassed by the collector, Chairman Lee, irrespective of any given time period or social trend. Diverse items are on display, including the typical calligraphic works, paintings, celadon porcelains, and white porcelains that collectors mainly favor, as well as books, *buncheon* ware, Buddhist artworks, and metalcrafts. Lee Kun-Hee, whose precious cultural heritage pieces were donated to the nation in his name, repeatedly discussed the excellence of traditional culture in everyday affairs, and he felt this surely was what established Korea’s cultural identity.

Moreover, the late Samsung Chairman said that cultural competitiveness is generated when ordinary people can feel genuine “Koreanness” in the lives they lead every day. In Section 1 visitors are introduced to beautifully inlaid celadon pieces; white porcelains[Fig. 3](#) that demonstrate the beauty of pure whiteness; *buncheon* ware pieces that well represent the regional characteristics of Chungcheong-do; and refined metalcrafts, including Buddhist craftworks. Of special interest are ornaments[Fig. 4](#) decorated with various patterns, the hidden beauty of which was recovered through preservation treatment processes in Cheongju.

Section 2 gives visitors a chance to appreciate the treasures, calligraphic works, and paintings the collection assembled through Lee Kun-Hee’s exceptionally discerning eye. His ability to judge arts and crafts did not happen overnight. He inherited an in-depth knowledge about cultural artifacts from his father, and he collected high quality treasures with a keen appreciation for exceptionality. A considerable number of the items he acquired in this way were subsequently recognized for their value and excellence and designated as National Treasures or Treasure by the Korean government.



**Fig. 2**  
***Gudambong Peaks***  
Yun Jehong (1764-ca. 1845)  
Joseon dynasty, Early 19th century  
Ink on paper, 28.2 x 42.1 cm  
National Museum of Korea  
Bequest of Lee Kun-Hee, 2021



**Fig. 3**  
***Faceted Bottle with Bamboo***  
Joseon, 18th century  
H: 41.0 cm  
National Museum of Korea  
National Treasure



**Fig. 4**  
***Ornaments in various patterns***  
Goryeo dynasty  
Gilt-bronze, L: 6.7 cm W: 3.0 cm  
National Museum of Korea  
Bequest of Lee Kun-Hee, 2021



**Fig. 5**  
***Clearing after Rain on Mt. Inwangsan***  
Jeong Seon (1676-1759)  
Joseon dynasty, 1751  
Ink on paper, 79.2 x 138.0 cm  
National Museum of Korea  
Bequest of Lee Kun-Hee, 2021  
National Treasure

Section 2 features paintings by Jeong Seon, *Clearing after Rain on Mt. Inwangsan*[Fig. 5](#) (National Treasure, on display Jul. 25- Aug. 20), and Kim Hongdo, *The Sound of Autumn*[Fig. 6](#) (Treasure, on display Oct. 11-29), as well as writings by Jeong Yakyong (1762-1836), *Story of the Jeong Family's Filial son* (on display Jul 24-Aug. 15) and *Story of the Jeong Family's Filial wife* (on display Aug. 17-Sept. 6).

In Section 3 the collector’s daily life is presented in a showcase out of a *Scholar's Accoutrements* painting, which began as a way for him to view his cherished art objects while carrying out his daily routines. Koreans in late Joseon took pleasure in collecting important

art objects and they tended to arrange them in cabinets for viewing. Collectors like Lee Kun-Hee, who have donated their valuable cultural artifacts, surely made their everyday lives more meaningful by looking at such diverse and beautiful art objects.

Once the visitors emerge from the exhibition gallery, they can encounter various tactile experience items that get them a step closer to the “Museum for All” ideal. Also available are QR codes that provide explanations of individual items on display, Braille explanations for the blind, and books written in large typeface for those with severe visual impairments. The invitation to the Museum has been extended

to all, and it is hoped that everyone finds the experience both fun and easy.

Through this special exhibition, the Cheongju National Museum wishes to present a businessman who cared deeply about and amassed pieces of Korea’s traditional culture. These objects were accumulated over a long period under the discerning eye and tastes of a single collector. Now perhaps this exhibition will enable those who visit the Museum to better appreciate famous articles that tell the story of Korean history. This is the third local exhibition of donated items from the Lee Kun-Hee estate, and we hope that it brightens your day.



**Fig. 6**  
***The Sound of Autumn***  
Kim Hongdo (1745-ca. 1806)  
Joseon dynasty, 1805  
Light colors on paper, 55.8 x 214.7 cm  
National Museum of Korea  
Bequest of Lee Kun-Hee, 2021  
Treasure



# GALLERY FOR ALL: THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF KOREA AND THE NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON

The National Museum of Korea has opened *Masterpieces from the National Gallery, London* inside the Special Exhibition Gallery. This is the first time that the Korean public has seen important pieces from this prestigious institution, which will celebrate its 200th anniversary in 2004. “People” is the overarching theme of the exhibit, and the presentation of works from such Western masters as Raphael, Caravaggio, Rembrandt, Constable, Van Gogh, and Monet demonstrates how the interest in people gradually grew during the five centuries after Europe’s Middle Ages.

This exhibition was planned to convey, along with the “People” theme, the message that the nature of art evolved from an exclusive privilege

for the powerful to something that everyday people could enjoy. In the process of organizing this event, moreover, I was particularly moved by the story of the single “Picture of the Month” exhibition at the National Gallery during World War II.



Fig. 1  
Damiano Mazza, *The Rape of Ganymede*  
about 1575  
Oil on canvas, 177.2 x 188.7 cm  
The National Gallery, London. Bought, 1824



Fig. 2  
Claude (Claude Gellée)(1604/5?-1682)  
*Seaport with the Embarkation of Saint Ursula*  
1641  
Oil on canvas, 112.9 x 149 cm  
The National Gallery, London. Bought, 1824

The co-organizers of this special exhibition are national institutions that represent their respective countries, and as such they both aspire to be “galleries for all.” The statement that both museums are headed in the same direction means they are similar, among other things.

In 18th century England, grand tours were popular; the Royal Academy of Arts was established in 1768, and Continental European artworks were being collected with a fervor. English collectors at the time were most avidly focused on pieces by European masters from the Renaissance and Baroque periods. The European Continent was plunged into chaos from the French Revolution followed by Napoléon Bonaparte’s (1769-1821) rise, causing the best artworks to flood the market at low prices. Meanwhile, England enjoyed political, economic, and military stability at the end of the 18th century and beginning of the 19th century. This combination of factors resulted in a golden age for English collectors of fine art. Moreover, the Enlightenment had spread throughout Europe, prompting increased calls for public art

exhibitions as a means of public education, and public art museums were established in each European country.

The opening of the Louvre Museum in Paris in 1793, when the French Revolution was at its peak, accelerated the establishment of public art museums in England. The National Gallery opened its doors in 1824 under the banner of a “Gallery for All” British subjects, not just for the nobility. Indeed, the National Gallery purchased the 38 artworks in the collection of the recently deceased John Julius Angerstein (1735-1823), a Russian-born émigré banker and fine art collector, while his former townhouse at No. 100 Pall Mall was used temporarily to display the paintings. Thus the Gallery’s beginning was somewhat later and more modest than the national art museums in other European nations. As for the reason, the major public art museums in Europe were mostly formed through either nationalized or donated royal art collections, and the artworks were exhibited in royal palaces. In England, on the other hand, the king and nobility maintained their power, so

their art collections could not forcibly be made public property. Two of the original 38 paintings in the Gallery collection are being shown at the present special exhibition: Damiano Mazza’s *The Rape of Ganymede* and Claude’s *Seaport with the Embarkation of Saint Ursula* Figs. 1 and 2

From the time of its opening, the National Gallery has been run as a “Gallery for All,” as its name implies. The Gallery was moved to its present building in London’s Trafalgar Square in 1838. At the time, Trafalgar Square was easily accessible for all social classes, as the rich rode in their horse-drawn carriages on the west side, while the poor were able to walk along the east side. People of all ages, including children, were allowed into the building, and admission was free of charge. Thus, the art museum became a space for all people, not just the privileged upper class. Moreover, the art museum was recognized for its educational function, and students were allowed to come in and sketch the works on display.





**Fig. 3 Artworks being moved to the Countryside Quarry**  
©BRB(Residuary) Ltd.



**Fig. 4 Bomb-damaged National Gallery Exhibition Hall**

Importantly, the public nature of this art museum is well demonstrated by the program that displayed just a single painting at any given time. As the German Nazi invasion of the British Isles loomed, all the paintings inside the National Gallery were moved to a slate quarry in the Welsh countryside for storage<sup>Fig. 3</sup>. Daily music recitals were given in the empty building to help raise public morale, but visitors were left with an empty feeling by an art museum that had no artworks to see. People began to ask for just a few paintings to look at during the course of the war. In response, the National Gallery adopted a program in which a single painting was taken from collection's hiding place in the slate quarry for a month-long display at the Trafalgar Square location, although the art museum was under constant danger of being bombed<sup>Figs. 4 and 5</sup>.

“Art serves to comfort people who are hurting in difficult times.” As we got this special exhibition ready, this statement impressed us deeply. We wanted to convey how national art museums are meant to serve the public at large and show visitors how art provides solace and enjoyment. To this end, we produced a video on the establishment of Britain's National Museum and the exhibition of a single artwork during the war, and it is being shown in the exhibition hall. The presentation has continued to be well received by exhibition visitors.



**Fig. 5 Scene of the “Picture of the Month” Exhibition at the National Gallery**



**Fig. 6**  
**Piero del Pollaiuolo (about 1441-before 1496)**  
***Apollo and Daphne***  
Probably 1470-80  
Oil on wood, 29.5 x 20 cm  
The National Gallery, London. Wynn Ellis Bequest, 1876

Three of the artworks that were put on sole monthly display inside the museum during the war are also here in Seoul at the present special exhibition: Claude Lorrain's *Seaport with the Embarkation of Saint Ursula*, Piero del Pollaiuolo's *Apollo and Daphne*, and Rembrandt's *Self-Portrait at the Age of 63*<sup>Figs. 2, 6, and 7</sup>.

The “Picture of the Month” exhibition at the National Gallery during World War II is reminiscent of the situation that the NMK faced during the Korean War. The National Museum of Korea opened in December 1945 after taking over the Joseon Governor-General Museum that had been established during Japanese colonial rule, and subsequently displayed items and ran public educational programs even during difficult times. In 1946, the Museum held a special exhibition of important cultural artifacts that had been discovered by Koreans since Liberation in the previous year, while lectures were given



**Fig. 7**  
**Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669), *Self-Portrait at the Age of 63***  
1669  
Oil on canvas, 86 x 70.5 cm  
The National Gallery, London. Bought, 1851

to schoolteachers and members of the general public starting from 1949. The NMK's actions were particularly impressive during the period immediately after the Korean War broke out on June 25, 1950. The North Korean army began to face serious military setbacks in the South that September, and the North Korean officials wanted to take precious Korean cultural assets northward. Orders were given to pack them up, but the NMK staff deliberately procrastinated and eventually prevented the items from being removed from the Museum in Seoul. These cultural heritage artifacts were thus preserved, and the Museum staff soon moved them in secret southward to Busan to prevent their being destroyed. The project was carried out in four shipments between December 1950 and May 1951. The National Museum of Korea ran two special exhibitions there prior to returning to Seoul after

the Armistice was signed in July 1945. Part of the warehouse in Busan's Gwangbok-dong district was renovated to hold the *First Invitational Exhibition of Contemporary Artists* (May 16-25, 1953), while the warehouse at the Busan Office of Property Custody was the venue for the *Yi Dynasty Paintings Exhibition* (June 15-24, 1953). The slogan “Space for All” at the National Museum of Korea and National Gallery, London makes us think about the role of a national museum and national art gallery as well as the true meaning of art, namely to console people during difficult times. The museum exhibitions are for the benefit of all visitors, and the museum space is for anyone to enter freely and enjoy. These are values shared by the two institutions that organize the present special exhibition and represent Korea and the United Kingdom, respectively.



# A MIRACULOUS ENCOUNTER THAT STARTS FROM THE FINGERTIPS

NMK Relic Restoration Volunteers

“Gosh, it’s really odd. Even in pieces, if I can find a perfect match to the broken part, I get to work right away.”

There is a job that suits each person, no matter who they are. In this way, coming across a broken earthenware pot makes me long for my work and draws me in like a magnet. And there are people who consider themselves to be likeminded companions who can take on the task of completing such encounters successfully. These people are precisely the Relic Restoration Volunteers from the Archaeology and History Division at the National Museum of Korea.

More than a few of the relics shown in the special exhibition *Companions on the Eternal Journey—Earthenware Figurines and Vessels from Ancient Korea* passed through their hands. I met with some of them and heard about some of their restoration stories.



| What opportunities have you had for relic restoration work?

**Na Yeosaeng** Originally, I was greatly interested in fine art and handcrafts, so I traveled around to museums a lot. I continued to look at the items on display, and at some point felt the urge to touch them. I attended a special lecture hosted by the National Museum of Korea in 1992, and I began to work in this field in 1999.

**Song Seonyoung** I also attended special lectures at the NMK. I looked at the relics, listened to the explanations, and visited archeological excavation sites. The thought struck me that it would be nice to actually touch them directly. Therefore, I attended lectures continuously, and I had the good fortune to start doing this work in 1999. As a young person, I found it was an enjoyable place to be, and now 24 years have passed in a flash.

**Kim Wonja** I started my museum career as a docent, who explains the exhibits to visitors. Then, in 2018, I joined the group. Many earthenware vessels are on display in the exhibition galleries that I served as a guide at that time. One day while I was leading a group, the realization hit me: ‘How am I qualified to explain museum exhibits when I don’t even know the thickness, weight or texture of the earthenware vessels on display?’ That’s why I did not hesitate to apply for this group. Looking back, I know I made the right decision.

**Han Yeongmin** A long time ago, I visited the US as a member of a nongovernment diplomatic delegation. Experiencing the culture of a different country sparked my interest in my own country to grow. I collected Korean earthenware vessels as a hobby. At that time, I happened to see a want ad for special lecturers at the museum. That’s where it all started for me.

| In the process of earthenware vessel restoration, what was the must difficult relic and most memorable relic that you have ever come across?

**Song Seonyoung** I clearly remember the time we restored the long-necked jar that had been discovered in Daho-ri, Changwon, Gyeongsangnam-do Province. The restoration work itself was taxing, but I had many problems with the coloring. The piece was very old, so the application of modern coloring wouldn’t do. But my efforts in this regard didn’t turn out well. Also, even after the restoration was close to completion, I could not locate one piece that went onto the mouth. I thought everything possible had been done when the missing piece showed up. I intended to wrap up this project with

this piece missing. But in the end, I had to take the whole thing apart and reassemble it.

**Na Yeosaeng** My most memorable project was a large jar from Seobongchong Tomb in Gyeongju. During the restoration, the piece was so heavy and large, my wrists and fingers were under great stress. That was because I had to grasp the large relic with all my strength to set it firmly inside the frame. My fellow team members helped me out a lot at that time.

**Han Yeongmin** There is one relic that elicits the most dissatisfaction. It was a vessel lid decorated with clay figurines. The photo shoot for this special exhibition catalog was finished before I found a piece that had been missing from my piece. I felt terrible. Fortunately I completed the lid by adding two more birds to the one that had been there before, but I was unable to get my baby (i.e., my work) photographed. At any rate, it is on display at this exhibition.







Na Yeosaeng

Performing such an arduous task must take a toll on your bodies. So what is the reason that you are willing to perform volunteer service?

**Na Yeosaeng** Restoration work is the only thing that thrills and pleases me. So the restoration lab is like a playground for me. The work is demanding, but I feel excited whenever I'm on my way to work.

**Song Seonyoung** My neck, lower back, wrists, shoulders, and fingers ache all over. It's the same for the other team members as well. My entire body is under stress and strain while I focus on examining the earthenware painstakingly during the restoration work. Regardless, when I locate the right place for the earthenware piece and it fits perfectly, the tips of my fingers tremble with excitement. I guess I am still doing this work because of that feeling.

**Kim Wonja** The feeling I get from restoring and coloring a piece that makes it into an exhibition is indescribably moving. That's why I love this work.



Han Yeongmin

Just like the name *Companions on the Eternal Journey* says, much hard work in places unseen is done to bring museum visitors and earthenware vessel together in a special exhibition. Please give the visitors some points to remember while viewing the relics.

**Han Yeongmin** It's interesting to see the funerary practices and ways of life of the time period. I recommend that you look carefully at the expressions on each of the human and animal figures. The expressions are really diverse. The patterns incised on the earthenware vessels are also highly detailed. Because I have examined them so closely, I am amazed at how they could be made like that.

**Kim Wonja** The exhibition presentation was good, for it allows people to understand the coarse earthenware they are seeing even without any particular explanation. Transparent OLED displays serve to sequentially illuminate and then hide the animal figures in the incised line drawings. It's truly marvelous and fun to watch. I think children will really love it.



Kim Wonja

**Na Yeosaeng** In the exhibition, I'd like to recommend a scene on the Lid Engraved with the Image of a Procession. No matter how hard I looked, I could not find any more parts of the linear incised drawings. I was about to give up, but then tried matching it with the earthenware brought up from the Gyeongju National Museum. And what do you know! It fit perfectly! I suggest you see for yourselves.

What do the relics mean to each of you?

**Song Seonyoung** They are like old friends. Each time I visit the museum, I'm eager to discover "which friends I will meet this time."

**Han Yeongmin** Their existence is important. Aren't they part of the heritage left behind by our ancestors?

**Kim Wonja** It's humbling for me to handle the relics that were made by our ancient ancestors. My heart pounds every time I am looking at them and am tasked with restoring them.

Is there anything you'd like to add in closing?

**Song Seonyoung** We all used to say we wanted to do this job until it became too hard for us. We have spent the prime of our lives performing this restoration work for more than two decades. Despite this, we have no regrets. This work remains enjoyable. However, we worry about who can carry on this task when we become too old to continue. So we hope that many young volunteers will join us and keep our endeavors alive.

We know that many relics remain hidden in the ground and await our discovery. Excavation projects continue throughout the country as before. I believe we need more volunteers like us who can let the world know about the relics yet to be unearthed and shed new light on our history. This is highly significant work and something that must continue without fail. I hope that many who love their history and historical relics will take part in this noble mission.



Song Seonyoung



# THE KOREAN CULTURE BRAND PROMOTED AT INCHEON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

The world is being reconnected. The number of tourists coming to Korea is increasing as the aftereffects of the COVID-19 pandemic subside. The National Museum of Korea operates a “Korean Culture Brand Hall” at Incheon International Airport, a major gateway into the country, to introduce and promote traditional culture to the world at large. Let’s have a look at Korea’s cultural legacy proudly on display at various locations inside the Airport.



## Learn about the Korean Culture Brand at the Incheon Airport Museum

In 2021, the National Museum of Korea concluded a business agreement with Incheon International Airport Corporation (IIAC) to spread the word about the excellence and beauty of Korea’s cultural heritage. This agreement allows the NMK and the regional national museums to display pieces in their collections inside the Incheon Airport Museum, which is on the concourse for departing passengers, inside Terminal 1.

The Incheon Airport Museum consists of the Exhibition Hall, where the items from the national museums are displayed, and the Exhibition Lounge, where modern works of art are shown. This layout allows visitors to view Korean cultural objects both old and new at the same location. The NMK is responsible for managing the Exhibition Hall, while the IIAC is in charge of the Exhibition Lounge. The Exhibition Hall outer walls are covered with brass plate, meant to reinterpret the texture of traditional forged high tin bronze. The appearance is reminiscent of the inner box used to protect the royal seal in Joseon, projecting the sense that “precious items are stored within” and making the structure a masterwork in its own right.

In 2021 a special exhibition entitled *Containing Beauty: Deep Enjoyment, Brilliant Light* was held to celebrate the Incheon Airport Museum’s fresh start. Among the highlights of the exhibit were golden earrings from Silla, testimony to the kingdom’s superb goldsmithing skills. Also on display were celadons from Goryeo and white porcelain from Joseon, which are examples of Korean craftsmanship and formative aesthetics at their finest. The *HANBOK (Korean Traditional Dress)* exhibition was organized in 2022 in cooperation with the Daegu National Museum to introduce Korea’s traditional clothing and accessories, a topic

garnering increased interest around the world in recent years. This year’s exhibit is *Masterpieces of the Baekje Kingdom, Tiles with Patterned Designs*, displaying important pieces from the Buyeo National Museum collection. The exhibition has been well received by travelers, who learn how the Baekje patterned tiles were unearthed and the stories behind the patterns on the tiles.

In addition, hands-on learning programs are run in conjunction with the theme of each exhibition at the Incheon Airport Museum, helping to further visitors’ understanding of the topic at hand and promoting the exhibition with the public. This time around, visitors are invited to complete the images on the Baekje patterned tiles by stamping a series of imprints on a piece of paper. The high quality of the exhibits organized by the National Museum of Korea and its affiliated museums are meant to instill the image of Korea’s cultural prowess in the minds of domestic and foreign travelers alike.

## Super-large Media Tower Displays Digital Contents on the Korean Culture Brand

A 27m tall media tower awaits visitors inside the Millennium Hall in Incheon International Airport Terminal 1. The 8,000 high-resolution LED panels that cover the massive structure project realistic digital images that promote the Korean culture brand. The Pensive Bodhisattva is the first brand-related digital contents displayed on the colossal tower. The image was taken from the NMK’s Immersive Digital Gallery, transcending the limitations of the video medium to visually achieve the adjustments in the angle, environment and materials that let onlookers vividly sense the Pensive Bodhisattva’s famously enigmatic smile. This visual image, under the title “Greet with Korea’s Best Smile,” won Germany’s 2023 IF Design Award in the Public Branding category.

The image of the Ten-story Stone Pagoda of Gyeongcheonsa Temple, a National Treasure, is

being prepared to follow the Pensive Bodhisattva onto the media tower. This pagoda is on display along the Path to History section on the first floor of the National Museum of Korea’s Permanent Exhibition Hall. It is made of marble, a rarity in Korea, and exquisitely carved to reproduce the decorative features of wooden pagodas. The source material for this digital image also comes from the Immersive Digital Gallery.

Starting in 2024, the NMK plans to take advantage of its newly secured budget to go all out in creating “Korean culture brand digital contents,” selecting from the best of the nation’s cultural heritage. Korea’s cultural heritage is being reinterpreted newly in a digital format, and travelers both domestic and foreign who pass through Incheon International Airport will also be offered a special artistic experience.

## K-Culture Products Also Available at IIA

Popular items in the MU:DS lineup from the National Museum Cultural Foundation (NMCF) are also available at Incheon International Airport. This has been made possible through close collaboration between the NMCF and the Korea Cultural Heritage Foundation to aggressively promote K-Culture products. Travelers can find some of the best-selling MU:DS products such as miniature Pensive Bodhisattva statues and *Uigwe* mug & coaster sets at the Korean Traditional Culture Center, which is located in the Duty Free Zone of the Departure Area on the 3rd floor of Terminal 1. These products were selected for sale at this location for their suitability as souvenirs or travel gifts. Those who want to introduce overseas friends and acquaintances to fine examples of Korea’s cultural heritage are encouraged to stop by the Korean Traditional Culture Center at IIA, instead of having to look around many stores before leaving the country.



Scout Jamboree Participants Visit Various National Museums, Experience Korea’s Cultural Allure

More than one thousand participants in the 25th World Scout Jamboree in Saemangeum, Korea visited the National Museum of Korea during their stay in the country. They were introduced to major items on display that provide a look at Korean history and culture.

Members of the British scout troop expressed their surprise at the scale of the museum exhibition space after visiting the Calligraphy & Painting and Wood & Lacquer Crafts Galleries. They said they would like to visit the Museum again if given the chance and get a closer look at the beautiful items on display. Scouts from Norway and Denmark also took part in the docent tour and experiential program at the NMK in Seoul. Meanwhile, more than 150 members of the Korean scout contingent visited the Gongju National Museum to look at exhibits and the open collection. At the same time, Indonesian scouts toured the Iksan National Museum and said that they enjoyed learning more about the Iksan area through this experience.

Jamboree participants who dropped by the Cheongju National Museum remarked how they liked the refined exhibits and the great spots for picture taking. The museums present cultural experiences and memorable scenes in various ways such as on-the-spot live streaming, a fitting program for young people who are familiar with digital media. Do-it-yourself programs have also been arranged to inform visitors about Korean history and culture. For example, they can create a stamp with their name in *hangeul*, to learn more about the excellence of the Korean alphabet; make a piece of blue-and-white porcelain; or craft a “griptok” (smartphone grip) with mother-of-pearl. National museums offered participatory programs that are sure to deliver lasting memories of the fun these young folks had in Korea.

Special Exhibition of Masterpieces from the National Gallery, London Attracts 300,000

The number of visitors to *The Masters’ Attention Directed at People: Masterpieces from the National Gallery, London* broke the 300,000-mark on September 20, the 111th day since the special exhibition opened at the National Museum of Korea. The daily average of visitors remained above 2,700 persons and was projected to draw the highest number of visitors for any NMK special exhibition since the *Egyptian Treasures from the Brooklyn Museum* Event that opened in 2016. This performance is particularly noteworthy, given the restrictions on the number of people who could visit the NMK since the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. The main reasons for the popularity of the special exhibition, which ran through October 9, was its textbook-like presentation of Western fine art, allowing visitors to examine at a single venue the flow of European painting from the 15th through 20th centuries, starting from the Renaissance and extending to the Impressionist Period.

Patriot Yun Bonggil’s Will is Shown Publicly to Mark 78th Anniversary of Korean Liberation

During August, the National Museum of Korea held a special showing of articles left behind by independence activists Lee Bongchang and Yun Bonggil to mark the 78th anniversary of Korea’s liberation from Japanese colonial rule. Among the articles on display are items designated Treasure by the Korean government such as a sworn oath by patriot Lee Bongchang and a personal history and last will & testament written in the hand of patriot Yun Bonggil.

Lee Bongchang wrote his sworn oath immediately before departing for Japan on a mission to assassinate the Japanese emperor. The document was signed when he joined Korean Patriotic Corps (KPC) Chapter No. 1, and it includes an oath to struggle for the independence of the motherland. Yun Bonggil jotted down his personal history and will in his notebook prior to his orchestrating the bombing incident in Shanghai’s Hongkou Park in 1932. The notebook contains one poem he wrote after he cased Hongkou Park on the night before the bombing attack and another poem he left for Kim Gu, who organized the KPC. His will, which was found wrapped up in a baby’s bedding, reveals how fervently the 24-year-old Lee longed for his homeland’s independence that he was willing to die for the cause. In it, he called on his two sons to “be brave warriors for Joseon without fail.”












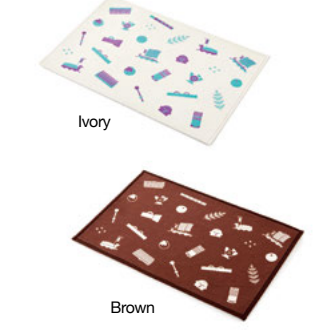

Meanwhile, the Denny Taegeukgi (designated Treasure), the oldest version of the Korean flag that presently exists in Korea, was also put on display in cooperation with the national Museum of Korean Contemporary History. Owen Nickerson Denny (1838-1900) was an American who served as an adviser for King Gojong from 1886 to 1890, and his descendants donated this flag to the Republic of Korea in 1981.

The Great Legacy Meets Today 2023, UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity Performances

The National Museum of Korea, National Museum Cultural Foundation, and Korean Traditional Performing Arts Foundation cohosted *The Great Legacy Meets Today 2023*, a series of UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity Performances. Now in its sixth year, this annual event has served as an excellent opportunity for the public to see Korean cultural heritage in both its intangible and tangible forms. The lineup this year featured thirteen acts, including the Namsadang Nori repertoire. The various Namsadang Nori folk performances (acrobatics, singing, dancing and circus acts), the Silla court dance Cheoyongmu (Dance of the Dragon of the Eastern Sea), and masked dance dramas were among the categories of intangible cultural heritage staged on the NMK grounds. The show began with the Handure Madang Performing Arts Group’s exciting Namsadang Nori, followed by *pansori* (dramatic oral narrative sung by a professional singer and accompanied by a single drummer), Ganggang sullae (a particular folk song accompanied by group dance), farmers’ percussion music, a modern rendition of Cheoyongmu, and the Gangneung shamanistic ritual, which customarily was held on the 5th day of the 5th lunar month.

HERE ARE SOME MUSEUM GOODS TO WARM YOUR HEART AMIDST THE CHILLY WINDS OF AUTUMN

You may find these items offline at the National Museum Shop and online at [www.muds.or.kr](http://www.muds.or.kr).

<p><b>Tranquil Conversation in Scented Candlelight</b></p>  <p><b>Shaped Scented Candles Modeled after Celadons with Inlaid Crane Patterns (2 types)</b></p> <p><b>Size</b> 60 x 100 mm <b>Material</b> Soy wax <b>Price</b> KRW 35,000</p> <p>Scented candles shaped like a Goryeo prunus vase/ wine bottle with inlaid crane pattern. Fills the air with the delicate fragrance of pear and freesia.</p>	<p><b>Incense Holders to Calm the Mind</b></p>  <p><b>“Pensive Bodhisattva” Incense Holder</b></p> <p><b>Size</b> (Miniature) 20 x 20 x 40 mm <b>Materials</b> Cast brass and aluminum pressed together, anodized, and plated <b>Price</b> KRW 80,000</p> <p>The incense holder consists of a flower-shaped base and a Pensive Bodhisattva character. Available in two colors—gold or rose gold.</p>	<p><b>Mood Lamp, for Introspective Moments</b></p>  <p><b>Lamp Made from Hanji, Featuring Sun, Moon and Five Sacred Peaks</b></p> <p><b>Size</b> 220 x 250 x 40 mm <b>Materials</b> Made with traditional mulberry paper (<i>hanji</i>), hardwood, acrylic and natural oil <b>Price</b> KRW 110,000</p> <p>This mood lamp employs the <i>Sun, Moon and Five Sacred Peaks</i> scene. The <i>hanji</i> material in the lamp was produced in the traditional way by certified artisans. Illuminate your space with the positive energy from the <i>sun, moon, and five sacred peaks</i>.</p>	<p><b>Made with Soft, Spongy Material</b></p>  <p><b>Jinju National Museum Foot Mat</b></p> <p><b>Size</b> 600 x 400 mm <b>Material</b> 100% polyester <b>Price</b> KRW 18,000</p> <p>The foot mat features cute illustrations of famous relics at the Jinju National Museum. Warm up your place a bit more with soft microfiber material.</p>
   <p><b>Artistic Moon Jar-shaped Candles (4 types)</b></p> <p><b>Size:</b> 90 x 90 x 93 mm <b>Materials</b> Soy wax blend (with paraffin) <b>Price</b> KRW 46,000</p> <p>Candles modeled after the round and ample appearance of the moon jar. Available in four colors, each with a distinctive fragrance—wood, forest, straw and so on.</p>	  <p><b>Sanye Lion Figure Incense Holder</b></p> <p><b>Size:</b> 180 x 55 x 41 mm <b>Materials</b> brass, wood <b>Price</b> KRW 120,000</p> <p>This brass incense holder is modeled after the lid of a Goryeo celadon incense burner in the shape of a lion. The <i>sanye</i> is a fantastic beast said to resemble a lion and to like fire by nature. As such the figure has traditionally been engraved on incense burners.</p>	  <p><b>Mood Lamp with Pensive Bodhisattva Character</b></p> <p><b>Size</b> 70 x 80 x 110 mm <b>Materials</b> LED lamp, ABS/silicone <b>Price</b> KRW 35,000</p> <p>By touching the Bodhisattva, the brightness and color can be adjusted in 5 levels, and it is safe for children to use with its soft silicone material.</p>	 <p>Ivory</p> <p>Brown</p>
 <p><b>“Dugi-ugi” Cushion &amp; Blanket</b></p> <p><b>Size</b> (Cushion) 350 x 300 mm (Blanket) 900 x 650 mm <b>Material</b> 100% polyester <b>Price</b> KRW 40,000</p> <p>The Jinju National Museum, inspired by earthenware that resembles the human head, designed this cushion blanket. Utility is excellent, as the soft blanked is inserted inside the cushion.</p>			





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