

national museum of korea

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白磁

Beauty of Joseon White Porcelain and the Aesthetics

The Great Myth and Mystery of Peruvian Civilization: Inca

Development Strategy of the Museums in the 21st Century and Beyond

Exhibitions of Treasures Abroad at the NMK

A New Year has just begun. 2010 is the “Year of the Tiger” and the year to mark the fifth anniversary of the NMK’s relocation to Yongsan. For the past five years, the NMK has been able to make substantial progress. Particularly in 2009, we played a seminal role in heightening the domestic and international status of the NMK as well as all of Korea’s other museums and galleries by carrying out a wide range of celebratory events for the 100th anniversary of the Korean museums. In 2010, the NMK will take another leap forward by taking advantage of the many positive outcomes from these centennial celebrations and the ensuing public interest in museums.

This winter issue deals with Joseon white porcelain. Boasting the pure white coloring that the Joseon people loved and the beauty of curved forms, this pottery has long been regarded as one of the most representative artworks of Joseon, reflecting the Neo-Confucian tenet of frugality. However, there were so many types of white porcelain in Joseon that it cannot be adequately defined within the single term, “white porcelain.” In this issue, we have tried to impress our readers with the sophisticated aesthetic sensibilities of the Joseon era, by examining both the history of white porcelain in line with overall history of the dynasty and the masterpieces.

White porcelain was not only precious works of art made by skilled artisans but also utilitarian vessels that were used by common people for various purposes in everyday life. In other words, it came into being, developed, and even sometimes went out of favor according to the the social changes of the time. Although it took over 400 years for the splendid Goryeo celadon to transform into the pure white porcelain of Joseon, we cannot help but say that the changes are dramatic. The process of making Joseon vessels – ranging from *buncheong* ware which based on inlay technique of Goryeo period to blue-and-white porcelain, white porcelain painted in underglaze iron-brown, white porcelain painted in copper oxide, and pure white porcelain – enables us to understand how much the Joseon people appreciated and realized the natural beauty of purity.

I hope this issue will help you to grasp the value and the significance of Joseon white porcelain, once buried in Korea’s tumultuous history but recently rediscovered.

Choe Kwang-shik
Director, National Museum of Korea
January 2010

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Notes for Readers

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

White Porcelain Jar with Plum and Bamboo

Written by Chin Hwa-Soo
Director of Jinju National Museum, Korea

I first saw this porcelain jar more than 30 years ago when I was still in college. I was bewitched by the masterpiece and the impression has remained unchanged ever since. I vividly remember how much I admired the solid curve and, most amazingly, the masterful brush strokes in ink on the round surface of the jar. It was a true *sagunja* 四君子 (paintings of four gracious plants) perfectly executed with vigorous brushworks of light and shade and of natural brilliance. Time has not at all discolored the enchantment that I had from the bamboo leaves. They still unfold like sprinkled gold dust and stimulate my aesthetic sensibility.



White porcelain jar with
plum and bamboo designs in underglaze iron-brown
H. 41.3 cm
National Treasure No. 166

White porcelain jar with plum and bamboo designs in underglaze iron-brown is an exemplar of the 16th century *cheolhwa baekja* 繪畫白磁 (white porcelain painted in underglaze iron-brown). Its solid form, painting style of plum blossoms and a bamboo tree, and glazed state are evident telltales. In shape, this jar is similar to the *buncheong* ware (ceramic ware made of a gray or grayish black clay body covered with finely grained white clay) of the early Joseon period, but it is more neatly molded, bestowing it an added degree of magnificence. Although its original shape cannot be confirmed (because the mouth area has been repaired), this white jar could not be entirely different from the current shape considering the shapes of the *buncheong* jars of the time. Its short neck widens out towards the shoulder that flows to the body, which widely extends to make a voluminous curve and then gradually narrows down to the bottom. The contour of the mass is simply neat as well as firm, running from top to bottom in a perfect smoothness.

In terms of pattern, the white porcelain bears a variation of typical arabesque design on the neck and, on the shoulder, a row of lotus petal pattern that is closely assimilated with the one seen on the *buncheong* ware of the period. The bottom area is surrounded by wave patterns 波濤文 (*padomun*), while the whole body is covered with bamboo and plum trees.

Most notably, the bamboo trees are expressed in a single stroke using the *gureuk* technique 鈎勒法 (outlined first and then filled in with color), and the twigs of trifoliate or quatrefoil leaves drooping low are sprouting from the diagonally-stretching-out tree trunks. The *gureuk* technique is also used for the old plum tree. The trunk is dramatically bent to form a strong s-shaped arch from which equally powerful side branches stretch out with the buds just about to burst out.

This white porcelain is made of light-gray clay kneaded well to make a smooth surface. The tint of the glaze is almost milky-white without crackles, being evenly coated with high-density, stable glaze. The color of the underglaze iron-brown is umber expressed as brushworks of various shades on the just right spot with precision that can be rarely rivaled. This true and marvelous work of art harmoniously features three distinct patterns and bamboo and plum trees in a 40 cm tall three-dimensional object without losing balance, vigor, and tension between the elements to make it look natural and even superb. Given the mastery, it must have been painted by the court painters of Dohwaseo 都護署 (Royal Bureau of Painting) who were versed with the painting technique of the *sagunja* in fashion at that time, and most likely produced at the official kiln in Gwangju, Gyeonggi-do, considering the structural fineness. Simply put, this white porcelain is the supreme amalgamate that a gray-white clay jar painted with underglaze iron-brown could produce. ≡

History of Joseon White Porcelain, the Vessel of Joseon Spirit

Written by Kang Kyung-nam
Curator of the Fine Arts Department

Pottery is a period product created by a trinity of elements: fire, earth, and man. As the criteria of what is considered beautiful differ by period, so do the characteristics of pottery. Pottery is most accurate in representing the period and its unique beauty since it is characteristically produced for practical purpose according to the aesthetic standards of the users of the time.

White porcelain 白磁 (*baekja*), indicates white clay pottery coated with pure lime glaze and baked at a temperature of over 1,350° C. White porcelain of Korea started to be produced in the Goryeo Dynasty (918-1392), but it was produced in earnest during the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1897). The Joseon porcelain is the major influence on the birth of the dignified “Beauty of Joseon” candidly embodying the aesthetic sense of the Joseon people living on the tenets of Confucianism, the dominant belief system at the time.

Joseon’s white porcelain transformed along with the dynasty’s 500-year-long history and the transformations are evidently imprinted in it. Noticeable changes in terms of ceramic history can be largely summarized as follows: establishment of official kiln 官窯 (*gwanyo*, circa 1467-1468), Japanese invasion of Korea (1592-1598), adjustment of official kiln to be non-migratory (1752), and privatization of official kiln (1884).

White porcelain of Joseon was produced in line with the Goryeo tradition and under the influence of Chinese manufacturing techniques. However, the proactive intention of the Joseon Dynasty to use white porcelain products should not be overlooked in its proliferation. To the Joseon people, clean and flawless white porcelain was considered most suitable for everyday ware since it reflected the Confucian tenet to value temperate living and frugality, and the taste in

turn made the ceramic industry during the Joseon era focus on the manufacture of white porcelain. Moreover, the love of the royals for white porcelain further contributed to an increase of white porcelain production. For example, King Sejong the Great 世宗 (r. 1418-1450), one of the greatest monarchs of Joseon, was such a lover of white porcelain that he used it exclusively at the court.

White porcelain seemed to be made during the early Joseon period at some of the prestigious ceramic factories along with *buncheon* ware 粉青沙器 (ceramic ware made of a gray or grayish black clay body covered with finely grained white clay). However, it seems that the volume of its manufacture could barely satisfy the needs of the royal family considering the fact that official kiln was established to manufacture high quality utensils for official use around this time.

Official kiln called Bunwon 分院 was operated branched out from Saongwon 司饔院 (the government office to manage the royal kitchens). It was situated in Gwangju, Gyeonggi-do because the area was rich in firewood, good soil, and clean and clear water, and the transportation to the country’s capital, Hanyang (present Seoul) was easy from there. Established around 1467-1468, at the end of King Sejo’s reign and the beginning of King Yejong’s, the official kiln enabled the high-volume production of superior-quality white porcelain. Until its privatization in 1884, it profusely produced various types of white porcelain including pure-white porcelain 純白磁 (*sunbaekja*), inlaid white porcelain 象嵌白磁 (*sanggam baekja*), blue-and-white porcelain 靑畫白磁 (*cheonghwa baekja*), white porcelain painted in underglaze iron-brown 鐵畫白磁 (*cheolhwa baekja*), and white porcelain painted in underglaze copper oxide 銅畫白磁 (*donghwa baekja*).

Most notable in terms of the decorative patterns during the early period of the Joseon white porcelain is inlaid white porcelain. For example, White porcelain bowl inlaid with lotus and arabesque designs 白磁象嵌蓮唐草文大鉢¹ is a soft pottery in line with Goryeo pottery tradition. It is the finest example of the Joseon era inlaid white porcelain with its shape similar to those of the early period of Ming China (14th century) and its inlay technique and coloring reflecting the aesthetic tastes of Goryeo. Its sharp yet gentle lines of patterns demonstrate that it was made in a kiln in Gyeongsang-do.

Pure-white porcelain without any decoration was the most-produced pottery throughout the Joseon period. Made even before the establishment of the official kiln, it is no exaggeration to say that it best manifests the aesthetic sensibilities of the Joseon era. It is baked after covered with transparent glazes, and those made in the early period best convey the Confucian ideals that the Joseon people espoused featuring strictly-shaped outline in harmony with the clean white body.



¹
White porcelain bowl inlaid with lotus and arabesque designs
Joseon, 15th century
H. 7.6 cm; Diam. 17.5 cm (mouth), 6.2 cm (bottom)
National Treasure No. 175

Pure-white porcelain jar [白磁壺](#)² in the collection of the NMK is a typical example of white porcelain produced during the early Joseon period. The coloration of white porcelain will differ by period, and those made during the 15th to 16th centuries generally featured a tinge of ivory white. This particular jar has an air of gracefulness and elegance to it, featuring a subdued gloss and a shape that radiates a sense of stability and volume. One of the finest examples of its type extant, free of any surface impurities, it is presumed to have been produced at the official kiln.

Another beautiful type of Joseon-era white porcelain is blue-and-white porcelain painted in cobalt-blue pigment. Its production presumably began around the mid-15th century based on a record saying that Joseon pottery industry was trying to produce domestically-made blue pigment (*cheonghwa*) during the reign of King Sejo (1454-1468). The pigment was very expensive imported from China and, according to other various Joseon-era documents and records (such as *the Annals of the Joseon Dynasty*), the manufacture and use of blue-and-white porcelain were strictly controlled by the government. Only professional *hwawon* [畫員](#) (royal court painters) could draw with the pigment due to its high price, and the restriction in turn resulted in high-quality painthings on blue-and-white porcelain.



2
Pure-white porcelain jar
Joseon, 15th-16th century
H. 36.8 cm

Blue-and-white porcelain jar with plum, bird and bamboo designs [白磁靑畫梅鳥竹文壺](#)³ is an excellent example, containing many important characteristics of the early Joseon jars. Using the boneless technique [沒骨法](#) the picture applies light and shade in an enchanting manner on the whole surface of the porcelain body. It is also an important source for the study of 15th-century Korean painting.

Blue-and-white porcelain dish with poetry [白磁靑畫詩文碟](#)⁴ is most notable for the poetry written in cobalt-blue on its interior. This type of wide-brimmed dish is called *jeonjeopsi* and it is possible that it was meant to be used as a saucer. It also bears a seven-letter poem about liquor which is written in blue and in a flowing and elegant semi-cursive style.

The order and stability that had marked and defined Joseon society were destroyed by the Japanese invasions of Korea from 1592-1598. The war devastated the entire country, with consequences so grave that it even brought the dynasty's existence into doubt. It accordingly affected the ceramic industry as well. A document records that imitations were used for royal ceremonies because there was no blue-and-white porcelain available. The quality of pottery also fell during this period. Not only was the clay not purified, but the patterns and basic forms lost their inherent dignity. The pottery during this time brought out instead the Joseon people's sense of irony and dry, bitter humor, both better reflecting the unsettled atmosphere of the time.

3
Blue-and-white porcelain jar with
plum, bird and bamboo designs
Joseon, 15th-16th century
H. 16.5 cm
National Treasure No. 170



White porcelain jar with cloud and dragon designs in underglaze iron-brown [白磁鐵畫雲龍文壺](#)⁵ is a typical example of the mid-17th century. A dragon has been painted in iron-brown utilizing lively brush strokes and bold omissions and deformations. Since the pigment is easily absorbed into clay, such designs can only be properly made on them with quick and skillful brush strokes. The jar looks tense and powerful, due to the harmony between the color of iron-brown and the coarse, dark-gray body of clay.



5
White porcelain jar with
cloud and dragon designs in
underglaze iron-brown
Joseon, 17th century
H. 36.1 cm; Diam. 17.6 cm (mouth)



4
Blue-and-white porcelain dish
with poetry
Joseon, 15th-16th century
H. 1.8 cm; Diam 21.2 cm (mouth)

7

White porcelain jar with grape design in underglaze iron-brown
Joseon, 18th century
H. 38.0 cm; Diam. 15.0 cm (mouth)
National Treasure No. 93



During the reigns of King Yeongjo (1724-1776) and King Jeongjo (1776-1800), a period of post-war stability arose, enabling the Joseon ceramics industry to enjoy a remarkable renaissance. In 1752, during King Yeongjo's reign, the official kiln that had to move every 10 years in search of firewood became permanently situated in Bunwon-ri at the confluence of the South and the North of Hangang (river).

This period was characterized by the appearance of new basic forms and the prevalence of white porcelain painted in underglaze iron-brown and simpler underglaze decorations of blue-and-white porcelain. The coloring of the white porcelain, which had been tinged with light gray in the 17th century, gradually changed to snow-white toward the 18th century, with production centering on the Geumsa-ri area.

Large white porcelain jar [白磁大甕](#)⁶ represents the essence of Joseon aesthetic in regard to white porcelain. This type of uniquely shaped jar was produced from the late 17th century until the mid-18th century. It is also called a moon jar (*dalhangari*), as it reminds people of the rounded full moon. With its height of over 40 cm, voluminous form, and soft, milk-white coloration, it exudes warmth and friendliness.

During this time, white porcelain painted in underglaze iron-brown came into fashion in place of the costlier blue-and-white porcelain. White porcelain jar with grape design in underglaze iron-brown [白瓷鐵畫葡萄文甕](#)⁷ is a masterpiece produced by the official kiln. Its upright brim is one of the prominent features of the jars made between the late 17th century and the early 18th century. Due to too much underglaze iron-brown coloring, the grapes and leaves are not expressed clearly but entangled. Despite the shortcoming, however, we can easily appreciate the artist's skillfulness in using brush strokes and composition, considering the monkey jumping over the ripened grapes. Grapes often symbolize fertility, while monkey signifies "rising in the world and becoming famous" as the Chinese character to mean monkey is pronounced the same as the letter to mean lords, which is "hu". [侯](#)

6

Large white porcelain jar (*dalhangari*)
Joseon, early 18th century
H. 41.0 cm; Diam 20.0 cm (mouth), 16.0 cm (bottom)
Treasure No. 1437



White porcelain polygon bottle with chrysanthemum and bamboo designs [白磁青畫菊竹文角瓶⁸](#) is an elegantly shaped bottle with a long neck. Simple cobalt-blue underglaze pattern in harmony with bluish white body as seen in this bottle appeared around the 18th century and brilliantly illustrates the beauty of Joseon ceramics of the time.

Blue-and-white porcelain jar with cloud and dragon designs [白磁青畫雲龍文壺⁹](#) features a dragon—the symbol of the king. This type of jar was also called *yongjun* [龍樽](#) and used to hold liquor or flowers at royal ceremonies. Although the dragon, seen here toying with a cintamani (or wish-fulfilling jewel) in the clouds, looks slightly stiff, the jar is definitely the product of official kiln considering the quality of clay and glaze. White porcelains painted with copper oxide were also produced during this period such as White porcelain jar decorated with lotus flower design in underglaze copper oxide. [白磁銅畫蓮花文壺¹⁰](#)



9
Blue-and-white porcelain jar with cloud and dragon designs
Joseon, late 18th century
H. 53.9 cm; Diam 21.2 cm (mouth)



10
White porcelain jar decorated with lotus flower design in underglaze copper oxide
Joseon, 18th century
H. 29.7 cm; Diam 13.3 cm (mouth)



8
White porcelain polygon bottle with chrysanthemum and bamboo designs
Joseon, 18th century
H. 27.5 cm

Joseon in the beginning of the 19th century witnessed that the class of aristocracy expanded as the royal authority weakened and the old social order collapsed. The official kiln, which had been operating as a form of government-run handicraft manufacturing, was also threatened, and in 1884, it was turned over to the private sector. This period featured a wide variety of pottery including the one painted with mixed colorings and increasingly produced stationery items.^{11,12} During this period, auspicious patterns [吉祥文](#) (*gilsangmun*) was the most popular reflecting the widespread belief in praying for good fortune. A prime example is Blue-and-white porcelain jar with symbols of longevity in copper oxide. [白磁青畫長生文銅彩壺¹³](#) The jar is decorated with *sipjangsaeng* [十長生](#) patterns painted with both cobalt-blue and copper oxide. *Sipjangsaeng* indicates ten traditional symbols of longevity and were also frequently used in paintings. The high upright mouth is one of the typical features of the time.



11
White porcelain water dropper with bamboo design and poetry
Joseon, 18th century
H. 8.5 cm



12
White porcelain five-peak-shaped brush stand
Joseon, 19th century
H. 4.8 cm

As discussed above, ceramic artisans of the Joseon era were able to create a well-received world of pottery thanks to both the royals and ordinary people under the influence of neo-Confucianism. The sophisticated aesthetic sensibility expressed in deft brush strokes of cobalt-blue and copper oxide applied on the snow-white body of white porcelain epitomizes the Joseon’s unique “aesthetics of dignified grace.” ≡



13
Blue-and-white porcelain jar with symbols of longevity in copper oxide
Joseon, 19th century
H. 37.3 cm

Written by Bang Byungsun
Professor of Archaeology and Art History,
Korea University

Beauty of Joseon White Porcelain and the Aesthetics



1
White porcelain bowl inlaid with lotus and arabesque designs
Joseon, 15th century
H. 7.6 cm; Diam. 17.5 cm (mouth), 6.2 cm (bottom)
National Treasure No. 175

Birth of Joseon White Porcelain

Joseon pottery is distinctive from that of Goryeo as much as its political agenda and ideology system differ from those of Goryeo. In the early Joseon period, *buncheong* ware (ceramic ware made of a gray or grayish black clay body covered with finely grained white clay), a derivative form in line with the Goryeo celadon making tradition, began to be widely produced and established as a unique Joseon pottery. Boasting distinguished decorative techniques and patterns that were both humorous and individualistic, *buncheong* ware reflected the tastes of a new social order, favored by both the royal household and the literati-officials. In contrast to the large-scale sites for celadon production during the Goryeo period, *buncheong* ware was produced in small- and medium-sized kilns spread around the country. Serving as the major centers for Korean pottery-making during the first 150 years of the Joseon period, these kilns produced pottery with regional touch in the provinces of Chungcheong-do, Jeolla-do, and Gyeongsang-do.

In the stream of ceramic history, the 15th century was when China had set a global trend in pottery-making, away from celadon in favor of white porcelain. Envoys of the Ming Dynasty to Joseon carried the white porcelain of Jingdezhen and of Longquan, blue-and-white porcelain

(*cheonghwa baekja*), or celadon as gifts for the Joseon kings and ministers. Particularly, blue-and-white porcelain seemed to appeal fresh to the aficionado of celadon for its firm shape and the beauty that blue patterns on a white background made.

King Sejong, one of the greatest rulers of Joseon, played a seminal role in making white porcelain the official pottery of the royal family. Taking advantage of the powerful royal authority in place by his father, King Taejong, he dedicated himself to seeking a distinctive quality that echoed the natural characteristics of the Joseon people outside from the influence of the systems and civilizations of the Ming Dynasty even in the field of pottery production. Although a large number of white porcelain pieces, including blue-and-white porcelain, were already brought in from the Ming of China at the beginning of the dynasty, producing vessels that could qualify as royal ones required additional data resources on the pottery available throughout Joseon. Building a nation-wide, pottery-related information database was necessary, and *Sejong Sillok Jiriji* (*Annals of King Sejong*, “Geography” section) was published to provide it. After conducting a country-wide research on the ceramic and porcelain production conditions, the king chose white porcelain to be used for royal vessels and enforced the production of high-quality white porcelain to match the royal dignity.

Establishment of Bunwon

Management of kilns to manufacture vessels for the royal household of Joseon was assumed by the official kiln named Bunwon, a branch of Saongwon (a government office to manage the royal kitchens). Built in Gwangju, Gyeonggi-do, the Bunwon began to make a wide variety of white porcelain with artisans recruited from all around the country.

The date of its establishment is conjecturable if noting an article that states, Saongbang was renamed Saongwon and a government official called *nokgwan* was newly appointed in the 13th year (1467) of King Sejo’s reign for the newly-named office. These changes indicate that Joseon needed a new position to operate Saongwon and the position’s responsibilities were closely related with the functions of the official kiln. To corroborate, a record found in *Yongjae chonghwa* by Seong Hyeon (1439-1504) states that the Saongwon officials were divided in two and oversaw and managed the manufacture of white porcelain with *seori* (administrative assistants) in assistance. Furthermore, “Local Products of Gwangju” section of *Sinjeung Dongguk yeoji seungnam* (*Revised and Augmented Gazette of Korea*), which describes the circumstances of Korea in the 1480s, notes that the Saongwon officials were supervising government artists engaged in the manufacture of royal pottery. It means that the Bunwon was already established before the late 15th century. Finally, “Gongjeon (Production Laws)” section of *Gyeonggukdaejeon* (*Complete Code of Laws*), written in the 16th year of King Seongjong’s reign, records that 380 artisans, working on a rotating basis, had been brought in from all parts of the country.

Although base research to determine site for the pottery production revealed that Gwangju in Gyeonggi-do and Sangju and Goryeong in Gyeongsang-do were the three best locations for producing the highest-quality white porcelain, Gwangju was decided for a state-run porcelain factory for three reasons: the region’s ability to meet the need for fuel and other raw materials, level of manufacturing technologies, and convenience of locating near Hanyang, the nation’s capital.

The Bunwon in Gwangju had to move every ten years for fuel supply within the boundary of Saongwon, and the restriction brought up two negative results: not only were there large moving expenses but also production suffered because the artisans were forced to undertake the hard work of moving instead of making pottery.

Types of White Porcelain and the Productions

Besides white porcelain, blue-and-white porcelain using cobalt blue pigment (cheonghwa baekja) and white porcelain painted in underglaze iron-brown (cheolhwa baekja) using iron oxide were produced in the early Joseon period. Introduced later were white porcelain painted with copper oxide (donghwa baekja) and black glazed ware colored in rich iron oxide (heugyuja). Inlaid white porcelain (sanggam baekja) was also manufactured in the 15th century. Although it shared similar production techniques with inlaid celadon (sanggam cheongja), it differed in handling some fine details and ceased from being produced. The manufacture of white clay celadon with blue glaze (baektae cheongja) that began to be produced exclusively for the crown prince also ended in the mid-17th century.

Producing white porcelain first requires high-quality white clay that can endure extremely high temperatures. According to the decree written during the late Joseon period, the soil found at Gwangju in Gyeonggi-do, Gonyang and Jinju in Gyeongsang-do, and Yanggu in Gangwon-do was considered the best for making white porcelain. After the soil had been selected and transported to the Bunwon by ship, the impurities of the soil were filtered out. Next process was a thorough kneading followed by molding usually by a spinning wheel but frames were also used for the vessels to be molded in an image or an angled one. Joining separate molds or scraping out a whole lump out from inside was also used in molding as a way to shape.

After shaping process, additional sculpting was sometimes added or bisque firing was done at about 900° C. After the bisque firing, followed were drawing on the surface using a variety of pigments and applying glaze on the surface.

• Yongjae chonghwa (慵齋叢話, Assorted Writings of Yongjae) by Seong Hyeon, Volume 10
•• Goryeosa jeoryo (A Condensed History of Goryeo), Vol. 34, December, 1st Year of King Gongyang’s Reign
••• Sejo sillok (世宗實錄, Annals of King Sejo), Vol. 42, April, 13th Year of King Sejo’s Reign

Glazes were usually made by mixing feldspar and white clay with wood ashes. Glazed pottery was then baked again in *gapbal* 匣鉢 (boxlike containers made of fire-resistant clay or specialized fireclay) or in layers, according to need. Often a large quantity of firewood was required as reducing flames were needed at temperatures of more than 1250° C. The back of a kiln afar from the fire source was often used for bisque firing because the extreme heat could not reach up there. Upon finishing firing, vessels were taken out and sorted after sitting for cooling in the kiln for two days. Many were rejected before reaching the Saongwon, and even well made pieces were determined as not proper at the office. Most kilns of Joseon were basically *deungyo*, 登窯 uphill kilns installed on the slopes of mountain ridges to contain up to ten compartments. The color of white porcelain was determined by the amount of iron oxide and the purification level of the raw material and Joseon white porcelain was produced in pure white, milk white, or bluish white according to the circumstances of the time.

During the Joseon period, a large amount of vessels was reserved for ritual utensils as Confucian ceremonies were rigorously observed. Various types of bowls, dishes, jars and bottles, and stationery were also produced. While the ceramic consumers of Goryeo were attracted to the sublime color of celadon blue and the perfection and decorativeness of patterns of inlaid celadon, Joseon people considered the pottery as the symbol of Neo-Confucian standard of frugality and purity. Perfection was second to the symbolic nature to the Joseon people; they rarely insisted on pure white or refined decoration but natural state to reflect the characteristics of raw material which was white clay. Finished products did not have to be rigidly symmetrical, and any iron or other foreign substance that remained on the surface was not considered to be a flaw even for the royal vessels. Most likely the white porcelain vessels for general consumers were also produced by the same standard.

White Porcelain of the Early Joseon Period

Various types of pottery were manufactured in the early Joseon period including celadon. Most notable one was blue-and-white porcelain. The pigment of cobalt, 回回靑 which was very rare, was imported from China. Therefore, strict regulations were provided for its management and manufacture. It was purchased and managed by the high-ranking royal court painters of Dohwaseo 圖畫署 (Royal Bureau of Painting) only. The painters were entrusted with drawing the patterns on the pottery surface such as plum, bamboo, and pine trees, which were highly painterly being applied with simple yet elegant brush strokes to symbolize the integrity and dignity of the literati-official.

Blue-and-white porcelain jar with pine and bamboo designs with inscription of ‘Hongzhi ernian’ 白磁青畫弘治二年銘松竹文壺² is a good example. Manufactured in the second year (1489) of Hongzhi period (used to have the inscription of ‘Hongzhi ernian’ on its brim, but only ‘Hongzhi’ after repair), this jar is a typical s-shaped porcelain with a wide mouth. The bamboo trees are applied all over the body in a vertical composition without much blank space reflecting the court’s glamorous decorative tastes rather than the connotation associated with bamboo trees. On the other hand, the powerfully stretching pine trees with sharply angled boughs demonstrate the typical features of the late 15th century to the 16th century pine tree paintings. They plainly show a characteristic of *mukjukhwa*, 墨竹畫 (ink paintings of bamboo) with the sporadically hanging pine needles spreading out in a radiating pattern and with the lively bamboo sprigs and joints diagonally climbing.

Blue-and-white porcelain jar with plum, bird and bamboo designs 白磁青畫梅鳥竹文壺^{see page 6} is a prime example of the bird and flower motifs used for the blue-and-white porcelain that frequently appeared in the early Joseon period. The body holds two birds sitting on a widely stretching plum branches and chrysanthemum on the lower part, and the lid is decorated with the bamboo painted in boneless technique. 沒骨法 This vessel would have pleased the literati-officials of the early Joseon period judging from its lively expressions and the way to utilize margins.

White Porcelain of the Late Joseon Period

Joseon Dynasty of the 17th century experienced a host of socio-economic difficulties resulting from the Japanese invasion of Korea in 1592 and the Manchu invasion of 1636. The period witnessed the widespread use of white porcelain painted in underglaze iron-brown instead of the costlier blue-and-white porcelain of the previous period. White porcelain painted with copper oxide also appeared at this time. Not only the official klin but also regional kilns participated in pottery production, presumably due to changes in the status system and the ongoing development of commerce.

White porcelain jar with plum and bamboo designs in underglaze iron-brown 鐵畫白磁梅竹文壺^{see page 2} is a typical *cheolhwa baekja* of the early 17th century. A true masterpiece, it features bamboo and plum trees of the literati spirit drawn with spacious margins. Each bamboo sprig holds three to four leaves, each of which are finished off in a delicately controlled brushstroke of shade and light with the tip accentuated to look like a dot. The lush leaves spread right across to symbolize the integrity and upright behavior associated with bamboo tree. These types of composition and brush strokes can easily be compared to those of *Mukjukdo* 墨竹圖 (bamboo painting in ink) drawn by Yi Jeong (1554-1626), a great master of bamboo painting in ink. Meanwhile, the plum leaves are felt gentle depicted in small and round forms to match the vessel’s soft curve. It reminds of *Mungmaedo* 墨梅圖 (plum painting in ink) by Eo Mongryong (1564-?).

White porcelain jar with dragon and cloud designs painted in underglaze iron-brown 鐵畫白磁雲龍文壺³ uses the conventional aspects of dragon in the 17th century. The beast’s bulging mouth, heavily exaggerated teeth, overly oiled and brushed-back hair, contours of body, and the clouds expressed in rapid brushstrokes appear consistently throughout the entire Joseon period. Such jars with dragon and cloud designs were mainly used for royal ceremonies as dragons symbolized royalty. These depictions were also popular with the public, with many simpler models being manufactured at the regional kilns.

White porcelain jar with grape design in underglaze iron-brown 鐵畫白磁葡萄文壺⁴ from the collection of the Ewha Womans University Museum is presumed to have been made in the early 18th century. Because of its large scale, the jar was made by combining two separately molded bodies, and the joint is visible reflecting the Joseon era’s preference for naturalness. The grape vines and leaves occupy the upper part and their darkly colored thick twigs are diagonally extending downward. A light coloring is applied to the five-lobed leaves with the veins in detail. They look like a hand with five fingers widely spread. The shading of the grapes of various sizes is well expressed in the style of *mukpododo* 墨葡萄圖 (grape paintings) in fashion at the time.

In the beginning of the 18th century, the reorganization of the official kiln system, which had been weakened since the two wars, was completed. Good-quality raw material production centers were determined after testing white clay-producing areas across the country and a more convenient supply and transportation system was established. In the 23rd year of King Sukjong’s reign (1697), artisans were allowed to sell some of the wares to ordinary people to enhance and to smooth the operation of the Bunwon.



2
Blue-and-white porcelain jar with pine and bamboo designs with inscription of “Hongzhi ernian”
Joseon, 1489
H. 48.7 cm
Dongguk University Museum
National Treasure No. 176

In addition, the practice of moving the Bunwon frequently to alleviate fuel shortages was suspended; it was permanently settled in Bunwon-ri, Gwangju, Gyeonggi-do in the 28th year (1752) of King Yeongjo’s reign. With the economic recovery, imports of cobalt from China were resumed and blue-and-white porcelain reappeared featuring a brand-new style that illustrates the aesthetic tastes of Joseon’s ruling class to the fullest. Landscape designs [山水文 \(sansumun\)](#), never seen before, newly appeared, and painterly designs copied from sample books on art were applied on smooth ivory surfaces. A wide variety of dinner sets began to be produced in answer to a more diversified food culture in addition to stationery items increasingly produced following a rise of the aristocracy in number. Distribution industry of the white porcelain also expanded, due to the introduction of china shops [沙器店](#) and ceramics merchants.

Blue-and-white porcelain bottle with chrysanthemum and insect designs in underglaze iron-brown and copper oxide [靑華白磁鐵彩銅彩菊草蟲文瓶](#)⁵ from the collection of the Kansong Art Museum is remarkable for the harmony that its

body, its milk-white glazing, and its imposing, upright neck is making. The patterns are suggestive of *Chochungdo* [草蟲圖](#) (grass and insect paintings) by Jeong Seon, the country’s leading artist at the time. The gently spread, v-shaped twigs and drooping leaves along with the red, white, and brown chrysanthemums in full bloom were all made separately and then pasted onto the vessel body before being additionally colored on. A rare yet masterful example of Joseon white porcelain, using cobalt, iron, and copper oxide for coloration, this pottery piece expresses both the exuberance and the elegance of the time.

Sosang palgyeongmun [瀟湘八景文](#) (designs of eight famous scenic spots between rivers of *Xiaoshui* and *Xiangjiang*) were frequently used as the subject matter for landscape designs on *cheonghwa baekja* in the 18th century. *Autumn Moon over Lake Dongting* [洞庭秋月](#) and *Mountain Market in Clearing Mist*, [山市晴嵐](#) which appear on opposite sides of the Blue-and-white porcelain with water and mountain, plum, and bamboo designs [靑華白磁山水梅竹文壺](#)⁶ in the collection of the NMK, were done in the southern-school painting style. If we examine

Autumn Moon over Lake Dongting closely, the landscape contains, in a lozenge-shaped pattern with dual border lines, the Yueyang Tower [岳陽樓](#) that is drawn with skilled brush strokes at the bottom right and the mountain peaks and the moon with such precision as to make the region instantly recognizable.

Unfortunately, the sophistication and elegance shown in these works disappeared after the 19th century, due to a movement against excessive decorativeness. Instead, simpler compositions and more abstract depictions were used to decorate white porcelain, including auspicious patterns or *gilsangmun*. This resulted in another, radically different kind of beauty, akin to that of the folk paintings then in vogue. In addition, a trend towards imitating Chinese styles and decorative paintings grew in intensity. Still, a wider variety of living utensils were then being manufactured as the numbers of consumers wanting to buy them continued to grow.

Blue-and-white porcelain jar with symbols of longevity in copper oxide, [靑華白磁 銅彩十長生文瓶](#) [see page 11](#) illustrates both the bold omissions and the exaggerations of the 19th century blue-and-white porcelain. In it, some of the *sipjangsaeng* [十長生](#)

(the ten traditional symbols of longevity) are depicted without size or perspective differentiation, but they look very alive and animate. The paintings depicted in the porcelain—deer flying in the clouds, a turtle turning its head away, and a soaring red pine tree—shows the style and grace of Joseon white porcelain, regardless of crudeness and verisimilitude.

Decline of Joseon White Porcelain

Toward the end of the 19th century, the Joseon Bunwon could not sustain its production system mainly due to the poor management and fraud widespread in the society where pottery was recognized as merchandize. The difficulty led to the royal bankrupt and finally privatization of the official kiln in 1884. Joseon white porcelain barely maintained its status as high-quality pottery in the flux of imported Chinese and Japanese porcelain in the midst of the nation’s decreasing political power. ≡

3
White porcelain jar with dragon and cloud designs painted in underglaze iron-brown
Joseon, 17th century
H. 28.2 cm
Gwangju National Museum



4
White porcelain jar with grape design in underglaze iron-brown
Joseon, early 18th century
H. 53.3 cm
Ewha Womans University Museum
National Treasure No. 107



5
Blue-and-white porcelain bottle with chrysanthemum and insect designs in underglaze iron-brown and copper oxide
Joseon, 18th century
H. 42.3 cm
Kansong Art Museum



6
Blue-and-white porcelain with water and mountain, plum, and bamboo designs
Joseon, 18th century
H. 38.1 cm



Written by National Museum of Korea Editorial Team
Reviewed by Choi Heungseon, Curator of the Exhibition Team

The Great Myth and Mystery of Peruvian Civilization: Inca

The Great Myth and Mystery of Peruvian Civilization: Inca
December 11, 2009–March 28, 2010
Special Exhibition Gallery

The NMK introduced a special exhibition entitled *The Great Myth and Mystery of Peruvian Civilization: Inca* on December 11, 2009. Following *The Glory of Persia* in April 2008 and *Egypt, the Great Civilization: Pharaohs and Mummies* in April 2009, the exhibition is the third of the museum’s “World Civilization Series” and has been attracting great public interest due to its unprecedented scale. Featuring relics from the ancient Andean civilization until the fall of the Inca Empire in 1532 after the invasion of Spain, the exhibition consists of 351 artifacts from the collections of nine Peruvian museums, including the Museo Nacional De Arqueología, Antropología e Historia de Perú and the Museo Rafael Larco Herrera.

Notable attractions include golden relics from the pyramids of the Lord of Sipán and artifacts excavated from Machu Picchu, the greatest archeological accomplishment of Peru —all of them available for viewing by the Korean public for the first time. Visitors will also marvel at mummies and ancient fabrics, many of which have never been displayed even in their home country.

The special exhibition is organized in three sections, each of which traces some aspect of the history of ancient Peru. The first section, designed to serve as a guide to the entire exhibits, deals with the myth and the legend of the ancient Andean civilization around 3000 BC. It consists of relics from the Chavín culture, the precursor to succeeding Peruvian civilizations. The second section demonstrates how the ancient Andean civilization developed. It includes golden relics of the Lord of Sipán, the mystery of Nazca, Andean mummies, and artifacts from the Chimú Empire, which contended for power with the Incas. The last section deals with the Golden Inca Empire. Introducing the social structure, religion and governmental system of the Incas, who welded a number of regional states into one large administrative unit, it also features pictures of Machu Picchu, often called “the castle in the air” and Cusco, the capital city, once called “the navel of the universe.”





Mantle depicting deities
Paracas, 1000 BC-AD 200
L. 254.0 cm, W. 141.0 cm
Museo Nacional De Arqueología,
Antropología e Historia de Perú

Myth of the Ancient Andean Civilization

Beginning as an agrarian society, the ancient Andean civilization developed into an urban structure around 1800 BC. The change resulted in increased crop yields, development of earthenware and textiles, and growing urban population, which led to dramatic changes to the social order. More refined political and religious systems were also developed and resulted in power concentrated in the hands of a few people with specialized knowledge. At about the same time, a number of structures, including the Cerro Sechin temple, were built on the central and northern coasts. Relics from the Cerro Sechin area include fences on which warriors and various parts of the human body were drawn.

The Chavín culture (1000-400 BC), which appeared around 1000 BC, was the first link in the chain of ancient Andean civilizations. Arising in an area called Chavín De Huántar, located at an altitude of 3,185 meters in the northern Peruvian highlands, it covered two-thirds of the entire country and played a pivotal role in the development of religious services and trade exchanges with other regions. For example, the Pacopampa society, whose gigantic temples are located in the same area, was strongly influenced by the Chavín culture. Although formerly considered to be a colony of Chavín De Huántar, later research has revealed that it is unique with its own distinctive features.

The Cupisnique culture (1200-200 BC) developed along Peru’s northern coastal area. It begun before the Chavín culture but was influenced by it later on. Featuring totems representing feline, condors and serpents, it is famed for its sculptures and architecture. Cupisnique craftsmen engraved religious patterns on tools used for religious rituals with felines having pride of place.

The Paracas culture (1000 BC-AD 200), which arose in the dry, infertile, southern part of Peru, including Chíncha and Pisco, is renowned for thousands of mummy capes embroidered in magnificent patterns. The bodies of the dead, always put into a sitting position, were dressed in layers of cloth and preserved in huge jars or snow-covered caves.

The weaving and dyeing techniques of the Paracas people rank among the most excellent in the world. They used a wide variety of shades and colors, beginning from seven basic colors but extending the number to about 190. In addition, they manufactured lace made with a three-dimensional needlework technique.



Pectoral with feline design
Cupisnique, 1200-200 BC
L. 34.8 cm
Museo Rafael Larco Herrera



Necklace with feline pendant
Pacopampa, 1250 BC-AD 1
L. 42.2 cm, Diam. 4.7 cm
Museo Rafael Larco Herrera



Owl-shaped vessel
Cupisnique, 1200-200 BC
H. 21.8 cm, W. 16.5 cm
Museo Rafael Larco Herrera

Establishment of the Andean Kingdom

The ancient Andean civilization, originally established under the influence of the Chavín culture, developed into a separate entity around 100 BC. A wide variety of cultural centers also appeared then, including Moche in the north, Lima in the central part, Nasca in the south, and Tiahuanaco in the highlands of Lake Titicaca.

These strong regional characteristics differentiated each area in terms of both arts and styles. At the end of this period, the Tiahuanaco-Wari culture came into being in the south and then spread throughout Peru, establishing a new political, cultural and religious order that in turn became the basis for the Inca Empire.

The Moche culture (100-700) with its strong political structure, ruled the northern coast of Peru for 1,000 years until the Inca Empire was formed. Although its dominant gods were drawn in the shape of human, they combined the characteristics of feline (the cat family), serpents, and birds. Ai-Apace, the most powerful deity and the god of decapitation, abundance and creation, was worshiped in the pyramids of the Lord of the Sipán and the temples of the Sun God and the Moon God.

The Moche civilization made thousands of hectares of wasteland arable by digging irrigation canals or diverting river courses for growing crops such as corn, potatoes, pumpkins, and peanuts. Its most outstanding cultural heritage consists of earthenware depicting a wide variety of scenes.

Meanwhile, the Wari Empire (600-900) was absorbing surrounding regions through alliances, negotiations, and sheer brute force. Influenced by the expansion of Tiahuanaco in the fields of religion and the arts, it developed important economic relations with the Nasca society around 700, becoming the first empire to unify the entire area, except for the central coast. However, its power began to erode in about 800 and collapsed after 100 years with its northern mountains conquered by the Chimú culture and the capital captured by Chancay.

Afterwards, cities that had previously been governed by the Wari Empire, including Lambayeque, Chimú, Chiribaya, Chanca, and Cusco, developed through a system of regional alliances. Bronzeware became an important article of trade at this time, and various other metalware technologies were developed as well.

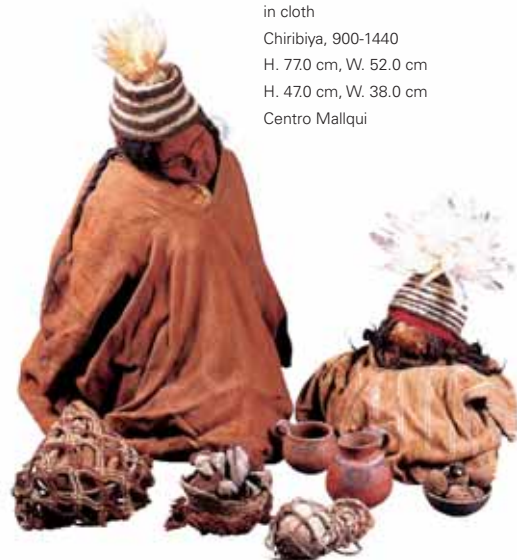
Feline figure of worship
Moche, 100-700
L. 57.0 cm, W. 43.0 cm
Museo Tumbas Reales de Sipán



Earthenware vessel in shape of a human head
Moche, 100-700
H. 23.2 cm, W. 24.6 cm
Museo Rafael Larco Herrera



Mummies of an adult and an infant in cloth
Chiribiya, 900-1440
H. 77.0 cm, W. 52.0 cm
H. 47.0 cm, W. 38.0 cm
Centro Mallqui



Ear ornament decorated with the Lord of Sipán
Moche, 100-700
Diam. 9.2 cm, Wt. 66.8 g
Museo Tumbas Reales de Sipán





Quipu
Inca, 1430-1532
L. 53.0 cm, W. 48.0 cm
Museo Nacional De Arqueología,
Antropología e Historia de Perú

Statuettes of women
Inca, 1430-1532
Museo Nacional De Arqueología, Antropología e Historia de Perú
Museo Inca de la Universidad Nacional San Antonio Abad

Statuettes of men
Inca, 1430-1532
Fundación Miguel Mujica Gallo
Museo Inca de la Universidad Nacional San Antonio Abad



The Golden Empire of the Incas

The Incan Civilization, arising in the vicinity of Lake Titicaca around 1400, brought about an era of political, economic, cultural, linguistic, and religious unification by conquering the Chavín, Moche, Nasca, and Tiahuanaco civilizations.

The word Inca originally referred to the king, and his subjects called the Inca Empire Tahuantinsuyu, meaning an empire divided into four areas. It was divided into four administrative districts (called *suyu*) centering on the capital, Cusco; they included Antisuyu in the east, Kuntisuyu in the west, Qullasuyu in the south, and Chinchaysuyu in the north. Each *suyu* was ruled by an “Apu” selected from brothers of the king. The king of the Incas, who functioned as the supreme ruler in military, religious, and political terms, enjoyed all the royal powers held sacred by other ancient civilizations.

In order to govern and maintain such a vast territory, the ruler of the Incas decreed that all the areas under his sway must adopt Incan ways: for example, the Sun God of Inca was to be worshiped as the supreme deity, and Quechua, the Incan language, was to be used universally. In order to control his realm more efficiently, he built a gigantic road system, the Cápac Ñan (Road of the King). Beginning at Cusco, the capital, it sprawled throughout the entire territory like a giant cobweb, smoothing the delivery of information and the transportation of goods.

Although the Cápac Ñan was 38,600 kilometers long, the use of *chasqui* (express messengers) and *quipu* (a preliterate system of notation using rope knots) enabled information to be collected rapidly, even in faraway areas. The road also helped to spread the Incan language among other tribes and played a pivotal role in dispatching armies during periods of war.

Like the preceding ancient Andean culture, the Incans mummified and worshiped their ancestors. After being wrapped in magnificent cloths tied in many folds, the royal mummies were placed in buildings designed for their exclusive use and displayed in plazas and temples at the time of important ceremonies. Messages from deceased rulers, interpreted through the medium of shamans, exerted a great influence in the fields of religion and politics.

The highest Inca god was Inti, the Sun God. The Incans built a golden temple for him, and held a gigantic celebratory festival, called Inti Raymi, every June. According to a legend about the origins of the Incas, Inca was considered as son of the sun and gold was thought to be beads of sweat from the sun. Silver, called “the tears of the moon,” was used to symbolize a younger sister or a wife of Inca. From this, we can see how the ancient Andean civilization developed a unique dualism of the universe—including the sun and the moon, gold and silver, and *yin* and *yang*. ☰

Fruit-shaped vessel decorated with monkeys
Inca, 1430-1532
H. 17.3 cm, W. 12.1 cm
Museo Nacional De Arqueología, Antropología e
Historia de Perú



Banquets Permeated with the Magnificence and Grandeur of Joseon

Scenes of Banquets and Ceremonies of the Joseon Period

October 10–December 6, 2009

Special Exhibition Gallery

Written by National Museum of Korea Editorial Team
Reviewed by Hwang Ji-Hyeon, Curator of the Fine Arts Department

At all times and in all places, whenever there are happy occasions, people gather with friends and acquaintances to celebrate. Korea is no exception; banquets have been held to mark happy and celebratory occasions from ancient times.

There are many terms for these events, including feasts, receptions, and ritual ceremonies, and their procedures may vary according to the occasion. However, the feelings in the hearts of the hosts and hostesses and the heartfelt congratulations of their guests remain unchanged. This Korean tradition of giving banquets still continues today and, to feature it, the NMK hosted an exhibition entitled *Scenes of Banquets and Ceremonies of the Joseon Period* as part of the 100th anniversary celebrations of the Korean museums.

The exhibition features paintings of feasts and banquets held during the Joseon period, *uigwe* (royal protocols), and utensils and artifacts used in the celebrations. In addition, it provides for the visitors multimedia equipment to learn more about the characteristics and sounds of musical instruments played at these events and to better understand the true nature of Joseon-era banquets, primarily through reproductions of dinner tables of the period.

Celebratory Rites of the Joseon Royal Court

Since Joseon followed the tenets of Confucianism, everything had to be based on good manners and proper behavior. As a result, both official and private events followed procedures grounded in a strict knowledge of etiquette. Whenever there was a memorial or happy event within the royal family, the crown prince and court officials carried out a ceremony called *jinharye*, which consisted of presenting eulogy to the king and congratulations on his achievement. This was always followed by a banquet.

The *jinharye* was divided into *joui* and *haui*. The former was held on designated days every year, such as Lunar New Year's Day, the winter solstice, and the onset of spring, while the latter was held on special occasions, such as the birthdays of the king and the crown prince, the birth of prince, formal beginning of the crown prince's studies, investitures of the crown prince or the queen, and royal wedding.

Royal banquets were solemn and magnificent. When they were over, a series of documents including *uigwe* was made to record each part of the event, and major scenes at the banquets were depicted in paintings. These materials are now used as basic research sources, through which we can better understand the royal family and the larger society and culture of the Joseon period.

Congratulatory Ceremony of the Crown Prince's Birth
Joseon, 1874

Ten-fold screen, color on silk, 131.5 × 39.4 cm (each)
Contains a scene of *harye* (celebratory greetings) held on February 14, the 7th day after the birth of Emperor Sunjong (1874-1926), the second son of Emperor Gojong and Empress Myeongseong in 1874.



Queen's highest ritual vestment (replica)
Late Joseon
Silk, L. 148.2 cm
Sejong Museum



Banquets of the Joseon Royal Court

Banquets held at the court were called by various names including *jinch*an, *進饌 jinyeon*, *進宴 jinjak*, *進膳* and *pungjeong*, *餽饗* according to the occasions that varied in size and purpose. The banquets were not just one-day celebration but usually lasted for two to four days according to the invited and intentions that could be categorized as *naeyeon*, *內宴* *oeyeon*, *外宴* *yayeon*, *夜宴* *igilhoejak* *翌日會酌* or *igirayeon*, *翌日夜宴* for example.

Strict regulations were applied in holding these banquets with the procedures, utensils, and decorations for each banquet set forth differently. Music and dances accompanied to enhance enjoyment but not without strict formalities to be abided by. Music *樂* in particular was an indispensable part of the Joseon court banquets since they were meant to bring the upper and lower classes closer together and make them feel a sense of kinship in contrast to the ritual etiquette *禮* that was supposed to outline their differences. Dances always performed as a form of prayer in the Joseon banquets for continued prosperity, stability of the royal family, and a peaceful reign.

Illustration of Ritual Equipment from the Royal Procession to the Royal Tomb at Hwaseong
Late Joseon
Ink and color on paper, 62.2 × 47.3 cm
In 1795, King Jeongjo visited Hwaseong, where the tomb of Sado Seja, his father, was located in commemoration of the 60th birthday of Lady Hyegyeong, his mother.
This book illustrates in extended detail the procedures of the royal procession.



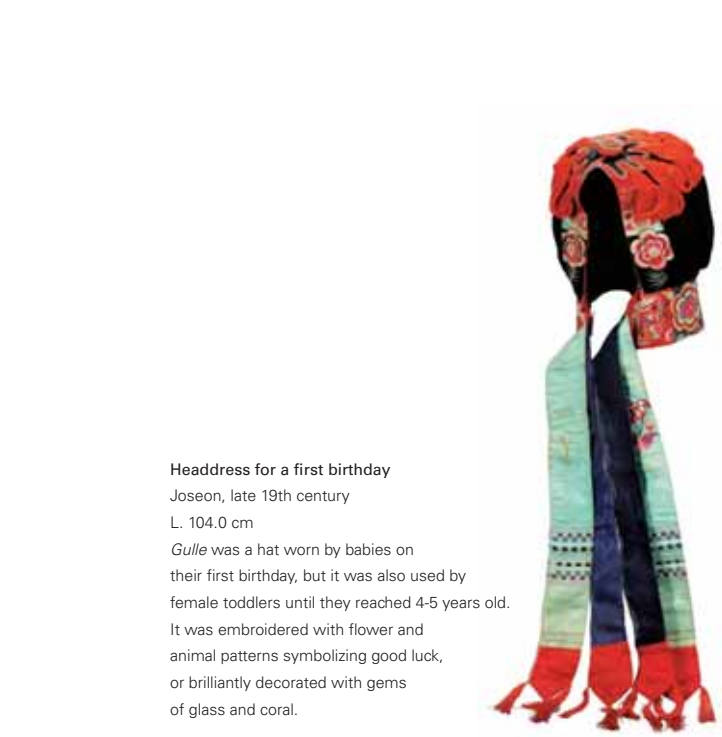
Celebratory Customs of Commoners

Celebrations held by ordinary people during the Joseon period can be examined through *Pyeongsaengdo*, *平生圖* pictorial biographies containing paintings of such happy events as a person’s first birthday party, wedding, 60th wedding anniversary, and birthday feasts for old people.

A banquet was held on a baby’s first birthday to wish for its healthy growth. The purpose of a table full of food was not just for serving food but also for offering of prayers and wishes for the baby’s health, longevity, wealth, and success in life.

When babies grow and become adults, they start a family. Because of this, *Pyeongsaengdo* also features scenes of marriage ceremonies —including processions with people holding *cheongsachorong* (a Korean traditional lantern with a red-and-blue silk shade), followed by *gireogabi* (the groomsman, holding a wooden wild goose) and the groom riding a horse and wearing *samogwandae* (a black gauze hat and leather belt). Joseon-era weddings were so important that even commoners were allowed to dress in imitations of royal dresses, ornaments, and official uniforms.

The term *hoehollye*, *回婚禮* meaning an event held to mark a couple’s 60th wedding anniversary, was an important ceremony that celebrated the spouses’ blessed and glorious lives. The couple was congratulated by their children and relatives, and the event included reproducing scenes of their wedding and a banquet.



Headdress for a first birthday
Joseon, late 19th century
L. 104.0 cm
Gulle was a hat worn by babies on their first birthday, but it was also used by female toddlers until they reached 4-5 years old. It was embroidered with flower and animal patterns symbolizing good luck, or brilliantly decorated with gems of glass and coral.

Celebratory Customs among Government Officials

Scholars of the Joseon period cherished entering into the government service by passing the state examination and then retiring honorably as their lifetime wishes. Various ceremonies and banquets were held to celebrate these occasions, as well as other important events during their careers.

The first celebratory ceremony, held to celebrate a person’s entry into government service, was called *samil yuga* *三日遊街* (3-day yuga). At this time, the successful candidates, preceded by musicians and performers, marched along the street for three days, placing a paper flower given to them by the king in their official hats. Afterward, they informed their ancestors that they had passed the examination by placing the crimson certificate (*hongpae*) on their shrines.

Crimson Certificate
Joseon, 1814
Ink on paper, 90.5 × 62.7 cm
Hongpae was a certificate given to candidates who had successfully passed *jeonsi* (palace examination), the final leg of *gwageo*, entry exam into the civil service or the military. Written in Chinese ink on this crimson paper are the results to inform the rank and name of the successful examinee. This one was bestowed on Jo Giyeong (1781-1857), who won the first place in the *gwageo* for the civil service on March 16, 1814, in the 14th year of King Sunjo’s reign.



A variety of feasts were held to commemorate a person’s accession to government office. The accession to office of governors with great power in the local administration was a particularly important event for local residents. Grand parties were thrown for these favored administrators, with people from the private, government, and military sectors participating. Scenes of celebrations were also produced at *gyehoe* *筵會* (social gatherings of scholars) organized to further the arts and promote friendship. A *Gyehoedo* *筵會圖* (documentary painting recording a social gathering of scholars) was made to commemorate and record details of these events, including important moments and the titles, names, and official positions of the participants. These documents were handed down from generation to generation, enabling details of the clothing, ornaments, utensils, music, and dances that were popular then to be examined even today. ≡

Welcoming Ceremonies for the Governor of Pyeongyang (attributed to Kim Hongdo)
Joseon, 18th century
Part of three-painting set, light color on silk, 71.2 × 196.6 cm
Depicts scenes from a feast held to welcome the accession to office of the *gamsa* of Pyeongan-do. *Gamsa* was the highest position in a provincial government during the Joseon period and welcoming the appointed official was regarded as a very important event by the local residents.



Development Strategy of the Museums in the 21st Century and Beyond

An international forum was held in the Main Auditorium of the NMK on November 3, 2009 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Korean museums and discuss what roles museums should play in the future. Organized by the Steering Committee of the 100th Anniversary of Korean Museums and the NMK, the forum introduced directors of leading overseas museums and representatives of international museums and organizations, such as the State Hermitage Museum (Gosudarstvennyi Muzei Ermitazh) of St. Petersburg, the Tokyo National Museum, the National Museum of China, and the International Council of Museums (ICOM). All were invited there to present their visions for museums in the 21st century, under the theme of “Development Strategies for Museums in the 21st Century and Beyond.”

The major discussion topic was the many changes taking place in museum communities around the world. Agreeing that museums should not just concentrate on academic and artistic values, but must instead change and develop to meet the needs and demands of the times, the participants went on to suggest various approaches

to the changed functions and roles of museums.

Every attendee agreed that museums of the future must strive to improve the quality of life of all people, and expressed the hope that the forum would begin a process of enhancing mutual cooperation and increasing professional exchanges among museums throughout the world. In the following stories, the NMK will outline some major details of these discussions.



The Role and Future of International Organizations of Museums with a Special Reference to ICOM

– Alissandra Cummins, President, International Council of Museums (ICOM)

The key role of ICOM has been to define, develop and disseminate knowledge about the role and functions of museums themselves primarily through the Code of Ethics

and their rationale and responsibilities. According to the Code of Ethics that ICOM has developed for them, museums are responsible for guarding natural and cultural heritages, collecting and preserving their collections, and developing academic and educational programming.

The theme for this international forum recalls the perspective of our organization – that of the ICOM- in that it recognizes as a point of departure that: “The museum is an institution in the service of society and its development.” This statement remains at the heart of all ICOM’s thinking and action.

ICOM has to date nearly 30,000 members from 155 countries. Today, more than 80% of ICOM members are from Europe, thanks to the enthusiasm of our members in Europe to ICOM. But this could also be an alarming message and make us wonder why such a gap exists between the reality of the society and what is facing us among the international museum community, including Asia, the Arabian countries, Africa, and Latin America. In addition, we are committed to carrying out organizational reforms to modernize ICOM and strengthen its influence. By developing a Web site and

building a database for our members, for example, we will enable our network to be fully utilized when major events in museum circles are occurring.



The Role and Future of International Organizations of Museums with a Special Reference to ASEMUS

– Stéphane Martin, Chairperson, ASEMUS

The Asia-Europe Museum Network (ASEMUS) is a relatively new organization. The network has been set up as a result of the Asia-Europe Conference on “Reforming Museums for the 21st Century” that was held in Stockholm in September 2000. The initiative came from major museums in Asia and Europe. Today, 68 museums are members of the network and seven institutions are its affiliated partners.

In the museum field, an imbalance exists between museums in Europe and Asia in terms of the importance of their collections of art from the other region. The balance is obviously in favor of the European institutions, as many European collections benefited from a colonial past. As a result, Asian works of art in European museums hold heritages that are not available in Asia itself.

There is a lack of contacts between the civil societies of the two sides of the continent and therefore a strong need to foster increased partnership, understanding and mutual learning in order to meet the challenges resulting from the different parts of the continent growing together. ASEMUS was developed to bridge this gap and

correct that imbalance by promoting the exchange of collections and expertise, developing collaborative projects, and encouraging greater cooperation between Asian and European museums. If we take full advantage of today’s networked world, all of us can benefit from sharing our experience and knowledge, reducing expenses through jointly produced exhibitions and promoting mutual understanding and intercultural connections by holding traveling exhibits. By deploying the expertise it has gained over the past ten years, ASEMUS can help stimulate the network and lay further foundations and projects we would carry out in common.



Cultural Diversity and the Role of Museums in a Multicultural Society

– Julian Raby, Director, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, USA

Immigration radically changed the face of many countries over the last century. Over the last thirty years in particular there has been increasing demand from ethnic minorities, immigrants, or indigenous, for greater representation. And, museums often regard as catering to privileged sectors of society have strived to mirror these social changes. Regarding audiences, there has been a conscious effort to incorporate a wider spectrum of the population in the museum-going public, and many museums that expressly focus on local communities and on national minorities have opened. In the

US and the UK, the solution adopted has been “positive discrimination.” Museums are giving way to greater inclusion, increased representation and participation. The question here is not how museums will attract more diverse audiences, but what are the consequences of incorporating diverse voices? In other words, for we are not talking here about having multi-lingual labels all saying the same thing, but about labels expressing the voices of different interest groups.

Museum employees have adopted a convention of anonymity in the way that they address the public. They rarely say who chose the artworks, who composed the narratives, who created the mise-en-scene, so on and so forth. In movies and plays, on the other hand, ready information on directors, designers, and editors is a given, enabling a variety of interpretations of their viewpoints. Museums should not be places that convey intangible, but for constantly-changing interpretations. In the same vein, museum collections are selective components, and their exhibitions are artificial products, to which the tastes and biases of a host of experts have been added. If museums can acknowledge this very basic fact, they will be less hesitant about introducing differing voices with different interpretations from those of the curators, giving precise information about the time periods of relics and where they were found but also talking about the “auteurs” of their exhibitions.

Museums should become free spaces—ones in which discussions can occur in a multitude of voices. They can allow for a wider range of opinions if their curators and directors break away from the current emphasis on “tacit objectivity.”



Future of Museum Management in the Era of Changes

– Mikhail Borisovich Piotrovsky, Director, The State Hermitage Museum, Russia

In 2014, the State Hermitage Museum will be celebrating its 250th anniversary. Preparing for this significant date, the museum, in cooperation with the Rotterdam AMO studio of architect Rem Koolhaas, is performing the research project “Hermitage 2014.” This is a kind of philosophical master plan of how and where the museum will be developing in the 21st century. How to meet new challenges, how to not lose the existing merits and advantages, and how to form the needs and tastes of the generations to come.

Mirroring the 19th century’s mania for establishing monumental collections, the State Hermitage Museum has been an encyclopedic museum from the very beginning of its existence. Although its inherent conservatism will dictate that this characteristic continues to be maintained, it will be a conservatism that is tinged with a transforming mobility. The Imperial collections were mobile enough, uniting everything that was kept in many palaces. After the revolution of 1917, the museum collections of the Hermitage become broader and more varied. Here enter the collections of artworks from Central Asia and Far East Asia and the Caucasus. In addition, the museum’s horizon on world cultures was greatly expanded when a variety of collections from the residence of a billionaire named Stroganov and other private museums were added to its holdings.

The history of the Hermitage is also a history of European architecture in Russia. Each building is a high spot in the history of Russian architecture. The same can be said about the interiors, in many cases reconstructed in different times and distinct in style from the exteriors of the buildings. The key task of the development of the museum is to preserve its merits and advantages, enriching them with new meanings and new powers. Through the “Hermitage 2014” project, the State Hermitage Museum will strengthen its characteristics and merits and continue keeping its historical influences.



Management State of the National Museums in Japan as an Independent Administrative Institution

– Administrative Institutions Zeniya Masami, Director, Tokyo National Museum, Japan

There are four national museums in Japan: the Tokyo National Museum, the Kyoto National Museum, the Nara National Museum, and the Kyushu National Museum. In 2001, an independent administrative body was established to implement a range of administrative services provided by the central government in a more flexible manner, and to offer higher-quality administrative services as part of the reforms instituted by it. One result of this was that the Tokyo, Kyoto, and Nara National Museums were merged into the Independent Administrative Institution of National Museums, while the Kyusu National Museum became a facility of

the larger institution after becoming an independent administrative body.

Japan’s museums are committed to improving visitor satisfaction levels by boosting the value and substance of their services, reinforcing their service capabilities, and promoting international cooperation and the spread of education.



Friends and Volunteers: Social Contributions and Financial Support for Museums

– Daniel Ben-natan, President, World Federation of Friends of Museums (WFFM)

Established in Belgium in 1975, the WFFM is a global organization that consists of national museum federations in 18 countries. It serves to promote international cooperation among them, with a view to developing functions to benefit museums and the general public and sharing their various areas of expertise.

Visitors, museum associations, and volunteers form the nucleus of support for today’s museums, and local communities and the public contribute to their welfare and upkeep in both a social and a financial sense. While this means that museums’ development strategies should include supports for social contributions from the public and the private sector, it leads to a second problem: not compromising on their academic and artistic legitimacy in their relationships with contributors, sponsors, and members of museum associations. Finding the proper “balancing point” will be the key to their success.



Diverse Cultural Heritage and Environments

– Laurence Foana’ota, Founding Member & Honorary Executive Board Member, Pacific Islands Museums Association (PIMA)

The indigenous of the South Pacific who are known as Melanesians enjoy a more diverse and richer cultural heritage and environment than other Pacific islanders. Although rapid changes are happening under the influence of globalization, the residents of these mountainous areas are determined to holding fast to their traditional beliefs and lifestyles. Solomon Islands Government like those in other Pacific Island States and Territories to put school programs in place aimed at encouraging and strengthening their maintenance, preservation, protection and promotion as well as development for the purpose of educating the young people and those in the future.



The Present and the Future of Chinese Museums

– Huang Zhenchun, Secretary of CPC Committee, National Museum of China
Chinese museums, in modern sense, were first established in 1905, and they have experienced a series of ups and downs over the past century. There are now more than 2,400 museums in China,

with their numbers continuously rising for the past 30 years.

One major challenge that these institutions face is to determine how to develop according to the recommendations of international museum circles while remaining suitable for domestic conditions. Some proposed solutions include the increased systematization of exhibition mechanisms, the enhanced integration of exhibition systems, improved service techniques, and an augmented level of external cultural exchanges.



Interaction between Innovative Technology and Museums

– Steven Engelsman, Director, National Museum of Ethnology

Technology has changed the whole world. The innovative technology has also impacted on museums. Technological innovations related to museum development are especially important in such areas as mobility, communications, and information.

These technologies can help museums fulfill their two key missions: to safeguard cultural heritage and to present it to the people. The State Hermitage Museum is a fine case in point: IBM partnering with the Hermitage over the last years is making a fantastic database of the Heritages collections available through internet with very strong and innovative search engines. In the same vein, the development of multimedia technologies enables museums to provide visitors with

interactive devices that can convey the specialized knowledge of their curators in an extremely easy, efficient, and effective manner.

Another project, called the Virtual Collection of Masterpieces (VCM), launched by ASEMUS and joined by the NMK, has been designed to act as a bridge between museums throughout the world.



Significance of 100 Years of Korean Museums and the Future

– Choe Kwang-shik, Director, National Museum of Korea

2009 marked the 100th year of the opening of the Imperial Household Museum, Korea’s first modern museum. The development of Korean museums has included many hardships along the road of the nation’s history, such as the Japanese colonial period and the liberation that followed the country’s imperial era. This is just one of the reasons why the 100th anniversary of Korean museums is so significant, and why we should think about the history of our museums over the past century and prepare for their efficient development in the future. Korean museums are symbolic spaces for the nation’s legitimacy, as well as repositories of national cultural content. In this context, I hope that the creation of the Yongsan Museum Complex will serve as a new development model for Korean museums in the future. (See National Museum of Korea Vol. 09 for full text) ≡

“ I Want the Hidden Charms of Korea to Be Known to the World. ”

Lee Charm
Member of the Steering Committee of the
100th Anniversary of Korean Museums /
President of the Korea Tourism Organization

Many people in Korea will find it unusual that you, a naturalized Korean with no previous government experience, should occupy the president position of the Korea Tourism Organization. Please tell us about your vision for the organization and what its major activities in the future will be.

The Korea Tourism Organization is getting ready to take a new leap forward under the “Visit Korea Year” slogan. This will happen for three years, starting from 2010. Our mission is to act as a sort of “control tower” for the nation’s tourism industry. We will do this by strengthening the nation’s tourism network by which not only Koreans can enjoy their country’s highlights more conveniently but also more foreign tourists will want to come here. In addition, we will try to make Korea a “must-visit country” for overseas visitors by mobilizing all the strengths of the country’s tourism resources. We will also augment our tour guide services and make our facilities more comfortable and convenient, so that Foreign Independent Tour (FIT) visitors can travel in Korea without any difficulty. Finally, we plan to increase the availability of low- and mid-priced accommodations, through programs such as Good Stay and Best Night in Korea (BENIKEA).

If you look at Korea’s history and culture as tourism resources, which one or ones do you think foreign tourists will find most attractive?

Korea has many charms, but I think its greatest strength lies in the dynamism that flows from the harmonious mingling of many cultures. A good example is found in the religious sector in Korea. Although a wide variety of religions have developed in Korea, including Buddhism, Confucianism, Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, and folk beliefs, they have all taken root without resorting to disruptive struggles or unseemly disputes with one another. I believe that this ability to accept and value differences, which is probably unique in the world, leads to the formation of unique Korean energies such as *gi* (subtle spirit of nature), *heung* (stimulated excitement), and *jeong* (compassionate heart). In my opinion, *gi* has been the key to Korea’s creation of world-class art and culture, *heung* has been the core stimulant to intense feelings of joy and excitement that cannot be found anywhere else in the world as demonstrated in the collective cheering during the FIFA World Cup in 2002, and *jeong* has been experienced as the Korean people’s legendary graciousness by foreigners. I understand things like these are the essence of the charm of Korea and I want to introduce all of them to the world.

In Europe and the USA, museums have always been prime tourist attractions. What do you think should be done to turn Korean museums into more popular tourist attractions?

The NMK is already a major venue for Korean cultural tourism, with over three million visitors per annum. However, I think that Korean museums are seen as being overly serious and stodgy, and not as places in which people can relax and enjoy themselves. We need to turn museums into a venue that can attract people to Korea’s unique culture and more specialized themes, so that people will visit them more easily and comfortably. When we have done that, we can turn to marketing that is aimed at foreign visitors. In addition, the names of many museum artifacts need to be reworked so that ordinary people can understand their characteristics with ease, instead of using Chinese characters that are too hard to understand. It would be much easier to stimulate the interest and curiosity of your visitors by telling the stories behind the relics. I am happy to see that Korean museums are unfolding a variety of cultural events aimed at making them into “open spaces.” If these efforts succeed, Korean museums can better play their rightful role as the nation’s representative cultural brands.

Please tell us which holding or holdings in Korea’s many museums you consider to be the “most Korean,” and why.

For me, it is *Hunminjeongeum*, Korea’s unique written script. I understand that the Kansong Art Museum has *Hunminjeongeum Haeryebon* (Proclamation of the Creation and Use of *Hunminjeongeum*) in its collection, while the NMK has a copy. *Hunminjeongeum* was invented by King Sejong and scholars at the Jiphyeonjeon (Hall of Worthies, a royal research institute of Joseon) in the mid-15th century, because ordinary people found it so hard to read and write using Chinese characters. Each letter of *Hangeul* (the Korean alphabet) was originally conceived by combining the shapes of the vocal organs of the human body. Even today, more than 500 years later, its invention is thought of as an amazing feat. What makes *Hunminjeongeum* the most representative of Korea’s cultural artifact is that it consists of the five basic consonants ㄱ, ㅋ, ㆁ, ㆁ, ㆁ combined with the cardinal vowels symbolizing heaven, the earth, and humankind ㅏ, ㅓ, ㅗ and that it even reflects the principle of *yin* and *yang* considering the balance between inhalation and exhalation in their pronunciation. It is truly a world-class historic and cultural property. ≡

Exhibitions of Treasures Abroad at the NMK

A way to boost international cultural exchange

Written by Shin Soyeon
Curator of the Exhibition Team

2009 marks the 100th anniversary of Korean museums. The NMK has been introducing a series of extremely popular special exhibitions and events to celebrate the occasion. Noticeable are *Egypt, the Great Civilization: Pharaohs and Mummies* (April 28-August 30, 2009) and *A Great Myth and Mystery of Peruvian Civilization: Inca* (December 11, 2009-March 28, 2010). Both exhibitions were prepared in line with “World Civilization Series,” the NMK’s exhibition initiative to feature diverse cultures of the world to the Korean soil.

History of exhibitions of collections from overseas museums

The NMK began to show collections from overseas museums about 30 years ago. It hosted *The Golden Culture of the Incas: National Treasures of Peru* in 1982, and *Engravings of the Roman Landscape: Italian Copperplate Engravings from 17th to the 19th Centuries* in 1983. These exhibitions were held at a time when Korea was entering into a renewed phase of international relations based on its rapid economic growth. They were enthusiastically received by many visitors of Korea, exposed to famed international showings for the first time. Unfortunately, the opportunity for hosting such exhibitions decreased toward the 1990s, due to increased efforts to discover more about Korea’s own history and culture and expanded research into Korean cultural properties. As a result, the lion’s share of Korean museum exhibitions at the time was given over to Korean art and findings from archaeological excavations, led by the NMK.

During this period, the NMK sporadically hosted *Scythian Gold from the Collection of the State Hermitage Museum in Russia* (1991), *Masterpieces of the Luoyang Culture in China* (1998), *Masterpieces of French Pottery* (2000), and *Masterpieces of Japanese Fine Art* (2002), despite the increased opportunities to hold international exhibitions toward the 2000s. The NMK could not take full advantage of the situation due to a lack of space until its relocation to Yongsan in 2005.

Strengthening of international exhibitions and the NMK’s “World Civilization Series”

After hosting a number of special exhibitions featuring Korean cultural properties, the NMK decided to add to its range of exhibition themes following its relocation to the Yongsan site in 2005. Space was found for large-scale special exhibitions, and the NMK began to carry out international exhibitions using its own resources and expertise to plan and operate them. *Louvre* to show masterpiece paintings of the museum, which ran from October 24, 2006 to March 18, 2007, began the new era. Visitors were able to learn about trends in Western painting from the 15th to the 18th century, spanning the time between the Renaissance and Impressionism. They could also appreciate masterpieces by Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, Jacques David, and lesser-known artists, all gathered together in a single venue.

This showing was especially targeted at students and office workers in their 20s and 30s with a relatively low level of interest in traditional Korean cultural properties and / or the NMK, by encouraging them to continue on to see the NMK’s permanent exhibit galleries after viewing the special exhibition. The number of visitors to our permanent exhibit galleries increased sharply during the time of this special showing.

Emboldened by the singular success of this exhibition, the NMK went on to initiate the “World Civilization Series,” with *The Glory of Persia* (April 21 to August 31, 2008) acting as its first feature. This series purports to introduce major ancient civilizations and other significant civilizations in the world’s cultural history and the exhibit-related relics. *Egypt, the Great Civilization: Pharaohs and Mummies* was held in the summer of 2009, and *A Great Myth and Mystery of Peruvian Civilization: Inca* is currently underway. The NMK plans to continue this very popular exhibition program series into the foreseeable future.

Posters for exhibitions of collections from overseas museums at the NMK



The primary goals of the museum’s international exhibitions are to help Koreans learn more about other important civilizations around the world and to encourage further cultural exchanges between and Korea other countries. Their numbers began to increase around the time of the museum’s relocation to Yongsan and were also tied to an increase in the number and range of overseas exhibitions of Korean cultural properties, resulting in greater opportunities for exchange exhibitions. The NMK is currently preparing two exhibitions tentatively entitled *The Greek Civilization* and *The Great Culture through The Silk Road*, both to be presented in 2010. In addition, it plans to continue hosting the world civilization series and theme exhibitions to introduce the cultures of other countries.

Preparing for international exhibitions

International exhibitions require a long and well-organized preparation period, both because they are carried out on a relatively large scale and they usually involve acquiring national treasure-level relics from overseas institutions.

The NMK’s special exhibitions over the past five years have come about through its own detailed planning processes or by receiving proposals from agencies or overseas museums. When an exhibition is being planned or has been proposed, many factors must be taken into account

—including the themes, period, anticipated effect on the society, economy, and culture, conditional factors, and cost. After decision on these factors, curators at the NMK conduct an in-depth study of the relics, discuss other “nuts and bolts” of the project, and obtain advice from outside experts regarding the ultimate value of the showing.

Next to follow are discussions about the actual relics to be borrowed. The first thing to do is to send a facility report to the relevant organization or organizations. The Committee for Exhibition Selection is then set to conduct an overall review of the project. Committee meetings are usually held on a quarterly basis and it is at this committee meeting that the practicability of a proposed special showing is determined.

When an exhibition theme has been decided on by the committee, museums in both countries designate curators to discuss further details of the exhibition including lists of the objects to be loaned and exhibition schedules. Proposals regarding the makeup of the exhibition are then confirmed, and the design of the exhibition room and the production of descriptive materials begin. The transportation schedule for the properties must also be ascertained to ensure that they arrive in time for the exhibition. Relics that have been brought into Korea are put into the museum’s exhibition rooms after they have been unpacked and their condition checked with their couriers. All duties relating to special exhibitions are the responsibility of the NMK’s Exhibition Team.

Significance of international cultural exchanges

When the NMK is planning an international exhibition, it must take into account such factors as theme (or themes), composition, range and scale, drawing power, and anticipated profitability. The most important consideration, however, is the probable level of public interest. Although the roles of museums are becoming increasingly diversified, the sponsoring of exhibitions still remains their core function. The NMK believes that an important reason for introducing overseas cultural properties to Koreans is to help them understand other cultures and better appreciate Korea’s role as an important member of the global community.

It signifies that the NMK, given its very public function and role, does not see profitability as being the most important component of special showings. It also means that the themes of such exhibitions must be chosen from a balanced viewpoint and as the result of correct and careful deliberation. The NMK is committed to promoting exchange exhibitions with overseas museums in consideration of such public goals.

Apart from short-term special exhibitions, the NMK also hosts long-term showings that it promotes and plans for on its own. These usually last from one to two years, with priority being given to their educational value. They have included showings on Indonesian and Japanese art (2005), Vietnamese art (2008), and Uzbekistani art (2009). All of them

were held at the Asian Arts Gallery. We are also planning a variety of exchange exhibitions with all the other countries in Asia. These are organized by the Asian Arts Department of the Curatorial Affairs Office.

The museum also helps visitors better understand the content of its exhibitions through the lecture format and a wide range of educational programs that allow viewers to experience the history and culture of other countries at a personal level.

We also host exhibition-related concerts and performances, as well as programs at which visitors can sample the foods of other countries and learn about their clothing and fashion accessories.

The NMK is constantly adding to its network of connections with leading museums around the world to continuously carry forward its “World Civilization Series” and to ensure that its showings are interesting and informative. It also obtains information on exhibitions by overseas museums through the exchange of materials published by the NMK and other institutions, while encouraging interaction with their administrators and other key personnel. Korean people are eager to understand the rest of the world through their museums, and the NMK tries to meet this need by planning a wide variety of exhibitions and inviting exhibition proposals based on its networking activities. ≡

Entrance (left) of the exhibition, *Louvre* and the masterpiece paintings on view (right) (2006)



List of exhibitions held (& to be held) at the NMK in cooperation with museums abroad (2006-2010)

Year	Title	Exhibits	Number of Visitors	Period
2006	<i>Louvre</i>	70 works of arts including the Portrait of Napoleon from the Louvre collection.	523,482	October 24, 2006-March 18, 2007
2008	<i>The Glory of Persia</i>	204 Iranian treasures from the beginning of civilization including the Sasan Dynasty period.	274,728	April 21-August 31, 2008
2009	<i>Egypt, The Great Civilization: Pharaohs and Mummies</i>	231 objects from the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna.	448,208	April 27-August 30, 2009
	<i>The Great Myth and Mystery of Peruvian Civilization: Inca</i>	348 objects from nine institutions including the Museo Nacional De Arqueologia, Antropologia e Hiatoria de Perú.		December 10, 2009-March 28, 2010
2010	<i>Greek Civilization</i> (tentative title)	130 objects from the British Museum collection.		April 30-August 29, 2010
	<i>The Great Culture through The Silk Road</i> (tentative title)	200-250 objects from the Xinjiang Autonomous Region Museum in China.		December, 2010-March, 2011

Cheongjaeong is an Excellent Symbol of Korean Achievements

Interview with Carla Stansifer

Research intern at the NMK on Fullbright Scholarship

Can you elaborate on what made you interested in Asian art and culture, especially Korea's?

When I was younger, I was very interested in German culture because my father's family came from Germany to the U.S. several generations ago. I began to realize that, as much as I enjoyed German language and foods, I am not German. I am American. In America, we have traditions that are thousands of years old, but they belong to Native American culture. Since I'm no more Native American than I am German, I decided I should choose the ancient culture that I found most interesting for my studies, since I would be an outsider to any culture.

I love Asian cultures for many reasons, but especially for the art. I find the asymmetry and the importance of negative space (what you don't see) to be extremely beautiful. I began my interest in Asian cultures by studying Japanese, when I was working at the Denver Art Museum in Colorado. I met two people who introduced me to all things Korean. (They were Park Min-gwon and Son Ki-in, special interns in our department who each stayed for about one year.) I began to understand that Korean art is often overshadowed by China and Japan. I developed a strong desire to learn more about the unique qualities of Korean art and share them with others.

What makes you decide to study Korean lacquer among the other types of Korean art? Could you explain how your study has been progressing at the NMK?

Lacquer is my favorite artistic medium: it is only found in Asia, yet each country has developed its own unique styles and techniques; it is extremely durable, so we have a wide range of examples spanning thousands of years to compare and study; it's an incredibly complex material to use, so I especially admire the artists who must become

part painter and part chemist to be successful; and, of course, it is quite beautiful. The fact that Korean *najeon chilgi* (shell inlay lacquer wares), in particular, has been admired by others for centuries should make it easier to see why I would want to study it. I'm currently producing a documentary, "Lacquer: Korea's Brilliant Art," on contemporary lacquer artists to share with an American audience.

Being at the NMK over the past six months has allowed me to do some in-depth research on the origins and development of *najeon chilgi*. Although there is only one object intact from the Goryeo period (when *najeon chilgi* first appeared) it is housed at the NMK. By meeting with conservators at the museum and having ready access to the library I have been able to further my knowledge about these rare objects.

Tell us about your general impression on the NMK as a foreign visitor and an working intern?

On my first visit to the museum, I was very impressed with the facilities. The collection is vast and well displayed. I think the education and curatorial departments do an especially good job deciding how a piece can best be displayed and shared with the public. In the past, I was never fond of having replicas in museums, but I think they are used wisely and for the best reasons at NMK. I'm glad to see that the museum also supports performing arts and other events to enhance the value of its collection.

I have to say my favorite object is the Silla gold crown. The display is stunning. The craftsmanship is telling of the detail favored by later Korean artist. The symbols and materials speak of the values of the people who made it, and seeing it makes me imagine what life was like in those days.



*I believe you are also familiar with the history and culture of Goryeo as you study the Goryeo lacquer. It will be meaningful if we can hear from you about your impression on the Cheongjaeong that was recently established based on *Goryeosa, History of Goryeo*.*

Even though the *Goryeosa* was compiled in the Joseon period, the scholars were thorough and it is a reliable source for learning about things of Goryeo. The pavilion is an excellent symbol of Korean achievements because it unites some of the best elements of Goryeo culture: it is a garden feature, so it invokes harmony with nature; the architectural methods remind us that craftsmanship and natural materials are to be valued; the dancheong represents the uniqueness of Korean painting; even the calligraphy on the signboard tells us that literature should be considered a fine art; and the celadon roof tiles on the top are the crowning achievement of all the Korean arts. I was glad I could be here during its construction and the momentous 100th anniversary of such a fine institution. ≡

Learning through Talks with the NMK Curators

A popular and long-running program to deepen people's understandings of the museum's showings and the exhibits

To fully appreciate the contents of a museum exhibition, you must be fully versed in their characteristics, historical background, and the people who made them. Although some basic information is given on the exhibition's panels or by the museum's guides, it is often not enough to satisfy visitors seeking detailed data and information. The NMK's program of "Talks with the Curators" was developed to meet this need. An integral part of the museum's educational programming, they take place in the evening, allowing visitors who come to the NMK after work to appreciate its exhibits more easily.

Since its introduction in March 2006, this learning program has been running 171 times over the past four years or so, always enjoying a high level of visitor participation. Given twice every Wednesday evening, at 6:30 PM and 7:00 PM, each session runs for half an hour.

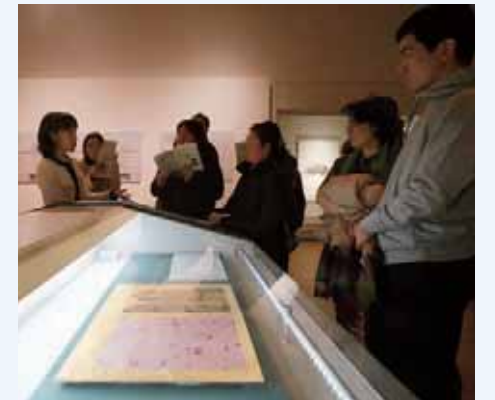
Each event includes talks on the exhibitions and the relics displayed in them, all given by curators in charge of exhibition planning or who have special expertise in the topic or topics under consideration. Time is also given for questions and answers afterwards. Some of our visitor responses have included, "Now I can understand our culture better," and "I was interested in the relics on display, but didn't know how to approach them or what to focus on. Now my curiosity has been satisfied."

The program, which features professional-level discussions on such diverse themes as archeology, art history, Korean history, and overseas civilizations, is participated in by all the curators and researchers at the NMK, including its Curatorial Affairs Office and Exhibition Team.

New events are added to the program whenever there are special exhibitions in addition to the permanent ones. Open to the first 50 people who want to join it, it can be accessed easily, without the bother of complex registration procedures. Visitors learn a lot at these sessions, because they

can hear explanations by specialists while actually viewing the exhibits. The resulting atmosphere differs appreciably (and positively) from educational programming given in the confines of a classroom. The program's many merits have attracted a host of visitors to it, with a large number of them returning to the museum again and again to learn from and participate in it.

To increase accessibility even more, the NMK operates a free shuttle bus every Wednesday that departs from the National Folk Museum of Korea at 6:20 PM and arrives at the museum at 7:00 PM. In addition, the "Talks with the Curators" are continually revised and strengthened to meet the changing needs of the museum's visitors and develop exciting and stimulating new themes. ≡



Signed MOU with the Freer Gallery of Art

The reorganization of the Korean Gallery at the Freer Gallery of Art is an integral part of the NMK's comprehensive support program for Korean galleries at overseas museums. Entitled "Support Programs for Korean Galleries Overseas," the program began in 2009 and will continue through 2011. As the first step, the NMK signed in last November an MOU with the Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, two galleries of Asian art at the Smithsonian Institution. The Galleries will carry out the reorganization of its Korean Room from 2009 to 2011 by relocating it to a better site and revamping its exhibits. The changes were based on an analysis of all the museum's Korean art collections.

The Smithsonian Institution, situated in Washington DC, is the world's largest museum complex, comprising 19 museums and 9 research centers. About 136 million exhibits in a wide range of fields are on display, ranging from works of art from around the world to biological specimens and scientific materials. Its workforce includes 6,300 employees and about 6,000 volunteers.

The Freer Gallery of Art attracts 898,000 visitors annually. The Korean Room, which opened in 1993 on a site of about 264 square meters, has approximately 500 Korean relics in its collection, with a focus on ceramics and archaeological remains. Unfortunately, however, only 30 or so are actually on view. The restructuring project will include the creation of a new exhibition space for 50 or so relics and improvement to its showcases and lighting.

The NMK's Support Programs for Korean Galleries Overseas chooses partner institutions according to the principle of "selection and concentration," and supports the operation of their Korean facilities in a number of ways. These include special exhibitions of Korean fine art, leasing relics for permanent showings, issuing Korean art-related publications, academic consultations, improvements to exhibition halls, and educational programs related to Korean culture.

Although Korean galleries overseas are designed to inform the world about Korea's culture and history, they have required a great deal of supplementary support due to a lack of exhibition space and an insufficient number of relics. The MNK's partnership with the Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery is expected to provide the momentum needed for Korean galleries around the globe to be reinvigorated. ≡

Signing the MOU at the NMK



New Gojoseon Room

The NMK established a new Gojoseon Room in its Archeological Gallery on November 3, 2009. A wide range of viewpoints on Gojoseon (the first true "nation" in Korean history) has been suggested, from such varying fields as mythology, literature, and archaeology. The Gojoseon Room has been organized by compiling such research achievements.

Korea has its own chronological era, called "*dan-gi*," which is not used anywhere else in the world. Referred to as the Dangun Era, [檀君紀年](#) it sets 2333 BC (when Gojoseon was established by Dangun) as its starting point. Even though this foundation myth of Gojoseon as the basis of the Korean people's history has only a symbolic meaning and has not considered as a true historical event, the story still reflects the actual realities of the era. The records had placed the date of Gojoseon's founding at 2333 BC, and actual proofs of this were later found in remains and relics of the Bronze Age. This means that Gojoseon was actually established on the basis of this bronze ware culture. The Bronze Age Room deals with the development of occupations and tools at that time, helping us to better understand the bronze culture of Korea which led Gojoseon's foundation.

The Gojoseon Room, which deals with the growth of political groups in Gojoseon and surrounding areas, is divided into four sections: "The Formation of Gojoseon," "Changes in Gojoseon around the 5th Century BC," "The Development of Gojoseon after the 4th Century BC," and "The Fall of Gojoseon and the Influence of Its Culture."

Most of the Gojoseon-related relics on display were found in North Korea, including Liaoning-type bronze daggers reportedly found under the Japanese Rule from Sincheon, Hwanghaenam-do and Seongcheon, Pyeonganam-do and relics of Iron Age excavated from Yongyeon-dong, Wiwon, Pyeonganbuk-do. The discoveries are arranged in a way that visitors can easily compare them with South Korean counterparts and that boosts a clearer understanding of the Korean ancient past.

The establishment of the Gojoseon Room enables us to understand the ebb and flow of Korean history, with small groups formed both inside and outside of the peninsula gradually constituting themselves into nations. ≡

Earthenware
Excavated from Misong-ri, Uiju,
Pyeonganbuk-do
H. 24.0 cm



Newly established Gojoseon Room in the Archeological Gallery



Taein Gohyeon-dong Hyangyak: The 500-Year-Old Village Code

The NMK opened a theme exhibition called *Taein Gohyeon-dong Hyangyak: The 500-Year-Old Village Code* on October 27, 2009. A major goal of the showing is to introduce a wider audience the achievements and results of the NMK's research on historical and cultural heritage of Taein undertaken by the History Department. On display are 84 pieces of 47 objects, reflecting the lives and culture of the Taein-hyeon (prefecture) of Jeolla-do during the Joseon period and showing details of and changes to *hyangyak* (village codes) in the area.

The centerpiece is *Taein Gohyeon-dong Hyangyak* [泰仁古縣洞鄉約](#) (also called *Gohyeon-dong Hyangyak*), Treasure No. 1181. The term *hyangyak* refers to community charters that villages created to stabilize their systems of governance and help their citizens become familiar with Confucian customs and rules of etiquette.

The *Gohyeon-dong Hyangyak* was used for about 500 years after its first enforcement by Jeong Geuk-in (1401-1481) in 1475, the 6th year of King Sejong's reign. Although no *hyangyak* materials from the 15th and 16th centuries are now extant, those dating from 1602 (the 35th year of King Seonjo's reign) to 1977 are still preserved.

In addition to this, the *Imgye Gisa* [王矣記事](#) (a record about Taein scholars who protected the *Annals of the Joseon Dynasty* by moving them from Jeonju Sago to a safer place during the Japanese invasion of Korea in 1592) made available to the public for the first time ever. Also on display are various relics from Taein-hyeon that were excavated during the historic and cultural heritage inspection and are being spotlighted again. These include Seonghwangsa Sinsang, [城聖祥神像](#) deity sculptures enshrined at Seonghwangsa (shrine) in Taein-hyeon, which is actually a statue of Shin Jam [申潛](#) (1491-1554, a leading Confucian magistrate of Taein who was an exemplary administrator), and a rubbed copy of a testimonial made in commemoration of his achievements.

Other exhibits include narrative poems by scholars from Taein, such as a rubbed copy of Myogalmyeong [楊國銘](#) (prose inscribed on a tombstone) for Yi Hang [李恒](#) (1499-1576), a representative Confucian of the mid-Joseon period, Irobi [移路碑](#) (a memorial stone) with a record saying that a main road passing through Taein-hyeon was relocated according to the topography-based theory of divination, and a *Sangchungok* [養春曲](#) by Jeong Geuk-in, the first narrative *gasa* [歌辭](#) (lyrics) written in *Hangeul*. ≡

Portrait of Choe Chiwon, Chae Yongsin
Early 20th century
Color on silk, 110 x 73.0 cm
Taeansa at Museong Seowon



Ten Sages in Debate near Pine Tree
Pavilion, attributed to Chae Yongsin
1910
Color on silk, 119 x 83.4 cm
Songsansa, Jeongeup



Taein Gohyeon-dong Hyangyak (part)
Treasure No. 1181



Exhibitions

Special Exhibitions

The Great Myth and Mystery of Peruvian Civilization: Inca

Date December 11, 2009–March 28, 2010

Venue Special Exhibition Gallery

Features about 351 objects loaned from 11 national and private museums and research institutions of Peru to shed light on the 5,000 years of the region's cultural history of more than 20 countries. Co-organized by the NMK and Hankook Ilbo in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of Korean museums and sponsored by SBS, the exhibition is expected to facilitate the international cultural exchange between Korea and Peru (see page 18 for details).



Special Showing of 2009 Donated Collection

Date December 22, 2009–March 28, 2010

Venue Donation Gallery

Introduces 60 pieces newly donated by 12 persons including Mr. Suh Sangho, the awardee of the Medal of Cultural Merit. This exhibition is prepared in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of Korean museums to nurture donation culture in Korea as a sequel to the exhibition entitled “Notable Selections from the Donated Collections” previously held in March 2009 for the same purpose. Exhibits include pottery, Buddhist works and various crafts, old books to enable us to glance upon the art world of Kim Jeonghui, and various ancestral portraits.



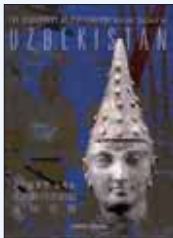
Theme Exhibitions

The Crossroads of Civilization: Ancient Culture of Uzbekistan

Date November 17, 2009–September 26, 2010

Venue Central Asia Room, Asian Art Gallery

Prepared in multi-level governmental cooperations of Korea and Uzbekistan, this exhibition features more than 100 objects loaned from various cultural institutions of Uzbekistan including The State Museum of History of Uzbekistan and Samarkand Archaeological Institute. It is arranged in four sections to cover from the pre-historic culture of Uzbekistan to its traditional handicraft today to boost multi-direction cultural exchanges between the two countries and beyond.



Taein Gohyeon-dong Hyangyak

Date October 27, 2009–January 31, 2010

Venue Foreign Relations Room, Historical Gallery

This exhibition is based on a series of researches on the historical and cultural heritage of Taein (now Taein-myeon and Chilbo-myeon), Jeolla-do. It showcases 29 volumes of *Gohyeon-dong Hyangyak* (Treasure No. 1181), a village code that has lasted in effect until recently since the 15th century of Joseon. Related artifacts including offering vessels, paintings such as *Portrait of Choe Chiwon* (857-?), and various manuscripts to explain etiquettes of the everyday life activities practiced in the region are also on view (see page 43 for details).



Japanese Modern Art

Date November 18, 2008–March 21, 2010

Venue Japanese Art Room, Asian Art Gallery

Displays about 40 Japanese Western paintings collected by King Yeongchin (1897-1970) of Joseon. This collection of paintings, engravings and drawings are mainly created by painters who studied in France after graduating from the Tokyo School of Art.

A Vessel for the Soul: Sinan Incense Burner

Date October 28, 2008–March 28, 2010

Shows incense tools and equipments discovered in 1976 from a wrecked trade ship that was heading for Kyoto, Japan from Ningbo, China in the early 14th century. About 80 splendid incense burners and boxes are on display to portray the “craze for fragrance” that arose in the East Asia and to explain how incense were used and who used them at the time.

Publications

The Great Myth and Mystery of Peruvian Civilization: Inca

Features the Peruvian civilization encompassing about 20 cultures and empires during the 5,000 years of history. This exhibition catalog of more than 300 pages introduces 351 artifacts loaned from nine national and private museums and research institutes of Peru in three chapters with a brief explanation on each country and the culture. ISBN: 978-89-92237-08-6

People Living with the Korean Museums

A collection of interviews to feature ten most celebrated museum workers in Korea and their achievements in developing the Korean museums throughout their 100-year history. The interviewee includes Dr. Kim Chewon, the first director of the NMK, Lee Nan-young, Korea's first female museum professional of this stature, and Choe Kwang-shik, the present NMK director. ISBN: 978-89-7090-752-9

The Crossroads of Civilizations: Ancient Culture of Uzbekistan

Introduces the Uzbekistan culture from the prehistoric period to the 8th century that encompasses the bronze and iron cultures, Buddhist culture, and Sogdian culture of the region west of Pamir Mountains. ISBN: 978-89-9609575-3 03600

The Letters of King Jeongjo of Joseon

Introduces 66 letters of King Jeongjo of Joseon in the collection of the National Museum of Korea. The king's letters are featured as photo images along with translated texts in Korean supplemented with meticulously explained notes and summaries for an easier and faster understanding. ISBN: 978-89-92788-29-8 94900

The 100-Year History of Korean Museums

Published in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Korean museums, this set of two books describes the history and achievements of the Korean museums during the past 100 years from 1909 to 2009 in Volume 01 and provides in Volume 02 supporting study materials and information on the regional museums of Korea including private ones. ISBN: 978-89-6435-052-2, 978-89-6435-051-5

White Paper on the Celebratory Programs for the 100th Anniversary of Korean Museums

Reports on the programs to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of Korean museums. This publication consists of a book to introduce this year's various celebratory programs and two supplements to feature related photos, press releases and broadcasting materials.



Miscellaneous

November 2, 2009

Cheongjaeong Unveiled with Fanfare

Cheongjaeong, Pavilion with Celadon Roof Tiles, built beside Reflecting Pond to perpetuate the 100th anniversary of the Korean museums was unveiled with great fanfare. It was built based on a historic record about a pavilion roofed with celadon roof tiles called Yangijeong.

November 3, 2009

Celebration of the 100th Anniversary of Korean Museums

Held with about 400 guests in attendance including Kim Yunok, First Lady; Yu Incheon, Minister of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism; Kathleen Stephens, Honorary Ambassador of the NMK; and the directors of public, municipal, private, and university museums.

December 4, 2009

The 11th Dongwon Nationwide Convention for Research Excellence

The Research Institute of Korean Archaeology in support of the NMK hosted the 11th Dongwon Nationwide Convention for Research Excellence at the museum's Second Auditorium. This convention has been possible by the endowment fund by Dongwon Lee Hong-kun (1900-1980) and his family, one of the major contributors to the NMK.

December 10, 2009

The 2nd Meeting for the NMK Management Council

Held to brief the museum's achievements in 2009 and the future plans for 2010, most notably on the building project of a museum complex at Yongsan that will be encompassing a natural history museum and a children's museum, for example.

December 21, 2009

2009 National Conference of Museum Directors

Held at the Second Auditorium with more than 200 museum directors and regional committee members in attendance. In it, museum professionals of meritorious contribution were awarded along with the winners of “100 Museum Visits,” one of the NMK's campaign to boost museum visit, by various high-ranking officials of Korea.

January 11–24, 2010

Photo Show: The 100th Anniversary of Korean Museums

Planned to recollect the significance of the 100th anniversary of the Korean museums, this photo exhibition features scenes of various events and programs for the 100th anniversary of Korean Museums.

January–August 2010

Revision of English Signboards and Exhibition Panels

Dedicated to grow into an internationally-recognized cultural institution, the NMK initiated a project to revise all its panels and signboards in English, many parts of which have been criticized for inaccuracy and awkwardness in expression.

Permanent Exhibits of South and Southeast Asian Art

Special Showing

Date **March 30, 2010**
Venue **Asian Art Gallery**
 National Museum of Korea

The National Museum of Korea opens a long-awaited exhibition of its own collection of South and Southeast Asian Art at the Asian Art Gallery in March 30, 2010. Since the reopening in 2005, the Indian and Southeast Asian Art Room has been used for the special exhibitions of Indonesian and Vietnamese arts with loan objects from the respective countries but not of its own collection.

Most of the high-quality exhibits that will be put on view in the new exhibition have been collected during the last decade. The Friends of National Museum of Korea has been particularly instrumental in the process through generous gift and donation. The exhibition will provide an excellent chance to meet an extensive collection of Indian art, which includes Gandharan art, Hindu and Jain sculptures and wall hangings, and miniature paintings. In addition, Khmer sculptures from Cambodia, Buddhist objects from Indonesia, Myanmar, Thailand, and ethnic materials from various parts of Southeast Asia will be shown.