

National Museum of Korea

Quarterly Magazine published by
National Museum of Korea
Vol.12 Summer 2010



As seen in the modern English name “Korea,” an exonym derived from the ancient kingdom of Goryeo, the Goryeo period marks a turning point in the Korean history and culture. In this issue, the *National Museum of Korea* explores the Goryeo culture further through various exhibits from the Goryeo Room. In particular, articles on Goryeo’s marvelous printing technology, Buddhist scripture, and bronze mirrors will help your curiosity about the day-to-day life of people who lived the period be better satisfied.

Another new room devoted to Joseon period properties in diverse genre is scheduled to open in August 2010. In celebration of the Joseon Room which will contribute to the NMK’s endeavor to present a more eye-catching and streamlined navigation to visitors, the *National Museum of Korea* plans to feature in-depth introduction to the Joseon Room exhibitions from the next issue.

In last April, meanwhile, the NMK was ranked first in Asia and 10th in the world in terms of the number of visitor by *The Art Newspaper*, a London-based monthly newspaper about the visual arts. The achievement is a result of the NMK’s efforts to improve customer services including the offering of diverse cultural programs, the extension of museum hours, and the online provision of collection photos. The NMK will stay committed to enriching the experience of the NMK visitors with pleasant museum environments as well as innovative programs and services.

Thank you.

Choe Kwang-shik
 Director-General,
 National Museum of Korea
 Summer 2010

NMK Exhibitions Abroad

02 nmk today

Wind in the Pines: 5000 Years of Korean Art, Exhibition on tour to Russia

06 international tour 1

Sutra Painting: Drawings in handwritten Buddhist scripture

20 curator’s choice

NMK’s new Honorary Spokespersons

34 people

“Today’s full of amazing moments.”

39 nmk education

News & Miscellaneous

04

Palaces of Korea, Photography exhibition invited to Mongolia

10 international tour 2

The Flourishing of Buddhism and the Development of Goryeo Buddhist Scripture

22 theme essay

Conservation Treatment Process of Wood Statue of Seated Amitabha

36 in focus

Exhibitions & Publications

40 nmk news



White Porcelain Jars: Embracing Joseon Ideals and Rituals

14 nmk exhibition

Goryeo Bronze Mirrors: Reflecting the Life and Society of the Goryeo People

28 theme collection

“We’re too intent on finding the clues in the Museum.”

38 nmk visitors



Publisher National Museum of Korea
 135 Seobinggo-ro, Yongsan-gu, Seoul, 140-026, Korea
 Tel: (82 2) 2077-9253 / Fax: (82 2) 2077-9258 / E-mail: innie2005@korea.kr
Editorial Direction National Museum of Korea Publishing Team
Design and Production Ahn Graphics Inc., Editorial Team
Translation / Revision Timothy V. Atkinson & Christin Jung / Lee Mi-jin

National Museum of Korea, a quarterly magazine, abides by the principles set forth by the Korean Committee for Ethics in Book and Magazine Publication. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any other information storage and retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publisher.
 Printed in Korea Copyright © 2010 National Museum of Korea. All rights reserved. ISSN: 2005-1123

NMK Exhibitions Abroad

The NMK achieved three overseas exhibitions in June alone. On June 1, the opening ceremony of the *Wind in the Pines: 5000 Years of Korean Art* exhibition took place at the State Hermitage Museum in Russia. On June 9, a photography exhibition titled *Palaces of Korea* was held at the National Museum of Mongolia. On June 25, 27 pieces of Korean relics including a duck-shaped earthen vessel greeted visitors at *A Passage to Asia* invited by BOZAR, the Center for Fine Arts in Brussels. In particular, the BOZAR exhibition planned to celebrate Belgium's hosting of the 8th ASEM Summit is of greater significance, in that 15 Asian countries put their cultural properties on display under the same roof.

As such, the NMK has successfully organized 120 or so overseas events at different scales over the past 60 years. The first ever exhibition of Korean cultural properties dates back to the late 19th century when the introduction of the Korean culture to the world was mostly driven by diplomatic missions and foreign scholars stationing in Korea. In the aftermath of the two World Wars involving Europe and Japan, the international tour of the Korean arts considerably dwindled. With the establishment of the Korea Republic in the 1950s, however, the NMK reorganized its system and resumed overseas exhibitions on the back of continued international interest in Korea's cultural property.

The *Korean Ancient Culture* is an exhibition that toured eight major cities in the US from 1957 and 1959 with the aim to reform the international image of Korea from a war-ravaged country unsustainable without international assistance into a land of time-honored history and splendid culture. The exhibition featuring a total of 197 pieces representative of various periods and genres was so successful that an additional tour, this time to European countries including the UK, France, the Netherlands, Austria, and Germany, was initiated in 1961 with a two-year duration.

The biggest overseas exhibition planned so far is *5000 Years of Korean Art* that toured Japan, the US and Europe in the 1970s and 1980s and captivated art aficionados in those regions. The list of 348 items featured includes relics newly found in the course of territorial development that was active at that time in Korea as well as metal arts, ceramics, and paintings which were most representative of diverse periods spanning from the prehistoric times to the Joseon Dynasty.

A merit of a masterpiece exhibition such as *Korean Ancient Culture* and *5000 Years of Korean Art* is that the guests visiting the exhibition can understand the Korean history and culture at a glance through relics and cultural properties that have the characteristics of different periods and genres. That is why a panoramic display of masterpieces is the most preferred format for an overseas exhibition hosted by a country, like Russia, to which the Korean culture is still foreign. Exhibition catalogs published in the language of the hosting country often serve the role of an introductory book to the Korean art history.

In the 1970s, the NMK's exchange with Japan began to be active with the restoration of the diplomatic relationship between Korea and Japan. The *Ancient Korean Arts: Quintessence of 1000 Years of Silla* in 1983 and the *Envoys from Korea: Japan-Korea Culture Exchange for 200 Years in Pre-Modern Period* in 1985 are the events that the NMK jointly organized with the Tokyo National Museum.

The hosting of the 1988 Summer Olympics in Seoul was a catalyst that boosted the international awareness of Korea significantly. Subsequently, overseas exhibitions of the Korean cultural properties gained further momentum. In the 1990s, the interchange with international museums became diversified to include exchanges of exhibition, professionals and expertise as well as participation in international conferences and seminars. Korea and the Korean culture began to attract greater attention from the world in the 1990s than ever before. While the previous exhibitions abroad were planned as large-scale events aimed to provide an overview of the entire Korean culture, the focus shifted to medium-size exhibitions devoted to a specific theme. Examples include the *Gaya Civilization* (Tokyo National Museum, Kyoto National Museum, and Fukuoka Prefectural Museum of Art; 1992), *The Beauty of Goryeo Ceramics* (Museum of Oriental Ceramics, Osaka; 1992), *Korean Arts of the 18th Century* (Asia Society New York Center, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution, and Los Angeles County Museum of Art; 1993-1994), all of which were held in link with the NMK's special exhibitions at home.

At the same time, domestic scholars' contribution to the creation of catalogs for the NMK's overseas exhibition has increased as witnessed in the cases of *Korea, The Ancient Kingdoms* that toured three museums in Germany and the Switzerland from 1999 to 2000 and the *Earth, Spirit, Fire: Korean Masterpieces of the Joseon Dynasty* that took place at the Queensland Museum and the Powerhouse Museum in Australia in 2000. The NMK is playing a greater role in the all aspects of exhibitions on overseas tour in the 2000s including the selection of items featured and the write-up of related documents and publications. In the case of *The Smile of Buddha, 1600 Years of Buddhist Art in Korea* exhibition that was held in Brussels in 2008, the NMK's opinions were actively reflected in the selection of the theme, items to be showcased numbering some 204, and display methods. For the *Wind in the Pines: 5000 Years of Korean Art* in Russia, the NMK provided the entire contents of the exhibition catalog.

Equipped with the accumulated experience and diverse exhibition items in stock, the NMK is always committed to proposing exhibitions featuring a new theme to the international museum community. A special exhibition of metal arts that introduces the splendid gold culture of Silla is scheduled to take place at the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney in 2011, while another event titled *Expedition for Apricot Blossoms* is planned to be held at the Victoria and Albert Museum in the UK in 2014. These and other endeavors by the NMK will continue to contribute to bringing the Korean culture closer to the world. ≡



Scenes from *Wind in the Pines: 5000 Years of Korean Art* held in Nicolas Hall at the Hermitage, Russia

The list of NMK Exhibitions held abroad in large scales

Exhibition	Museum	Country	Relic
Ancient Relics Exchange between Korea and Japan	Osaka Municipal Museum of Art, two more museums	Japan	700
Gaya Civilization	Tokyo National Museum and, two more museums	Japan	437
5000 Years of Korean Art	Tokyo National Museum, 13 more museums	Japan, USA, EU	348
Ancient Korean Arts: Quintessence of 1000 years of Silla	Tokyo National Museum, two more museums	Japan	323
Korea, the Ancient Kingdoms	Zürich, Rietberg Museum, two more museums	EU	321
Korean Treasures	Osaka Museum of History, one more museums	Japan	269
The Smile of Buddha, 1600 Years of Buddhist Art in Korea	BOZAR, the Centre for Fine Arts in Brussels	Belgium	204
Korean Ancient Culture	Washington, National Gallery of Art, 14 more museums	USA, EU	197

News

NMK signs MOU with NHN on Cultural Property Database

The NMK signs a memorandum of understanding on the online service of cultural property database with NHN Corporation, a Korean Internet content service operator. Under the MOU, an outcome of the two entities' like-mindedness, the NMK and NHN will lead Korea's endeavor to share its cultural properties with the general public on a broader basis.

The plan is to service the diverse contents on Korea's cultural properties developed by the NMK via NHN's Naver portal, the most popular Internet portal and search engine in Korea, to some 1.7 million netizens a day. The NMK and NHN will also expand the service to overseas through NHN's subsidies in Japan, China, and the US so that Korean expats and people in the international community can appreciate cultural properties of Korea more easily. Part of the NMK's "Popularization, Informatization, and Internationalization" initiative, the partnership is anticipated to serve as an opportunity through which the NMK can transform itself to become not just a treasury of cultural properties but also a birthplace of new cultural contents.



NMK excavates Xiongnu tombs of Duurlignars

The NMK starts the 2010 schedule of the Korea-Mongolia joint research dubbed the

Mon-Sol Project on June 8 until August 16 together with the Institute of Archaeology under the Mongolian Academy of Sciences and the National Museum of Mongolia.

The study site is a cluster of some 200 Xiongnu tombs located in Duurlingnars, about 500 km to the northeast from Ulaanbaatar. Various relics that belong not only to the confederation of nomadic tribes from Central Asia but also to China have been discovered so far from the Xiongnu tombs of Duurlingnars. From 2006 to 2009, the joint research team finished the excavation of Tomb No.2-5 and four subordinate tombs of Tomb No.1. This year, the team plans to research Tomb No.1 and its three other subordinate tombs. Tomb No.1 is a large-scale tomb with a 30-meter entrance passage and a 21x24 meter square-shape main burial chamber. The total length is over 50 meters and the depth is estimated to be about 20 meters.



NMK becomes an open forum for the public activities

On June 12, the NMK Plaza was covered with avid soccer fans cheering for the Korean players in the 2010 FIFA World Cup match with Greece. The event planned in link with the *Gods, Heroes, Mortals: art and life in ancient Greece* (May 1-August 29) of the "Great Civilization of the World" series is part of the NMK's initiative to return the outdoor space to the public as a forum for diverse public activities. People visiting the Museum on June 12 enjoyed a special discount on

the ticket for Greek masterpieces and the live broadcasting of the match. The outdoor cheering event was very well organized and passed without mishap thanks to the 3,000 citizens participated.



East gate of the Exhibition Hall opens

The east gate of the museum building has opened on June 15 following the completion of the vestibule. With the gate opening, access from Yongsan Family Park is improved and visits to the eastern part of the Museum, where the Bell Pavilion, the Pagoda Garden, and the Dragon Fall are located, are expected to increase.

Prior to the opening, the movement of visitors was disproportionately concentrated on the routes from the west and main gates to the Great Hall, leaving the east side of the Museum premise underused. The NMK has consistently been committed to offering the outdoor space to the general public for refreshment as such getting rid of the fences between the Museum and Yongsan Family Park, and opening landscaped trails around the park and the west gate.

The outdoor space is a gallery as well that features the Celadon Pavilion, the Bosin-gak bell, and diverse stone sculptures. With the forest inhabited by a variety of trees and wild flowers, the Reflecting Pond, the Dragon Fall, and streams full of diverse flora and fauna, the NMK is transforming into a "museum park" where healthy

ecosystem embracing tradition and history.



Guy Sorman visited the NMK

Guy Sorman, the world-renowned French philosopher, visited the NMK on July 6, 2010. Guy Sorman has written twenty books on contemporary affairs and columns for *Le Figaro*, *the Wall Street Journal*, *Dong A Il-bo*, and other publications around the world. As a western intellectual having an extensive knowledge on Asian cultural heritage, he once had suggested *Bangasayusang* (Golden Seated Buddha) to be the emblem of Korea. Director-General welcomed Mr. Sorman and accompanied him viewing the permanent collection of NMK followed after lunch at the museum. A set of framed photos of *Bangasayusang* was delivered as a special souvenir.



Miscellaneous

April 19, 2010

Museum's Nickname

Museum Park got chosen as the nickname of the NMK, from a total of 2,875 entries. Other prizewinning names are; *M-Park*, *Naum*, *Koreum*, *Onnurium*, and *Koseum*.

May 4, 2010

Automated Teller System

The automated teller system replaces the museum box office. The NMK has implemented free entrance for the past two years yet ticketing was required in order to maintain public circulation. For convenience, the visitors are no more in need of tickets to the collections except children's museum and special exhibition.

May 17, 2010

Young Curators of the Year

Two awardees for the "Young Curators of the Year" were announced; Hong Kyung-a (Sookmyung Women's University Museum) and Byun Gil-hyun (Gwangju Museum of Art). As a part of the *Museum Week* program, the NMK selects promising curators aged under 45 who have shown remarkable performances in their curatorial work.

May 25, 2010

Director-General welcomed Morgan Tsvangirai, the Prime Minister of Zimbabwe and accompanied them viewing the NMK masterpieces.

May 27, 2010

The president of UNESCO General Conference, Davidson L. Hepburn, visited the NMK and toured the permanent exhibition.

June 22, 2010

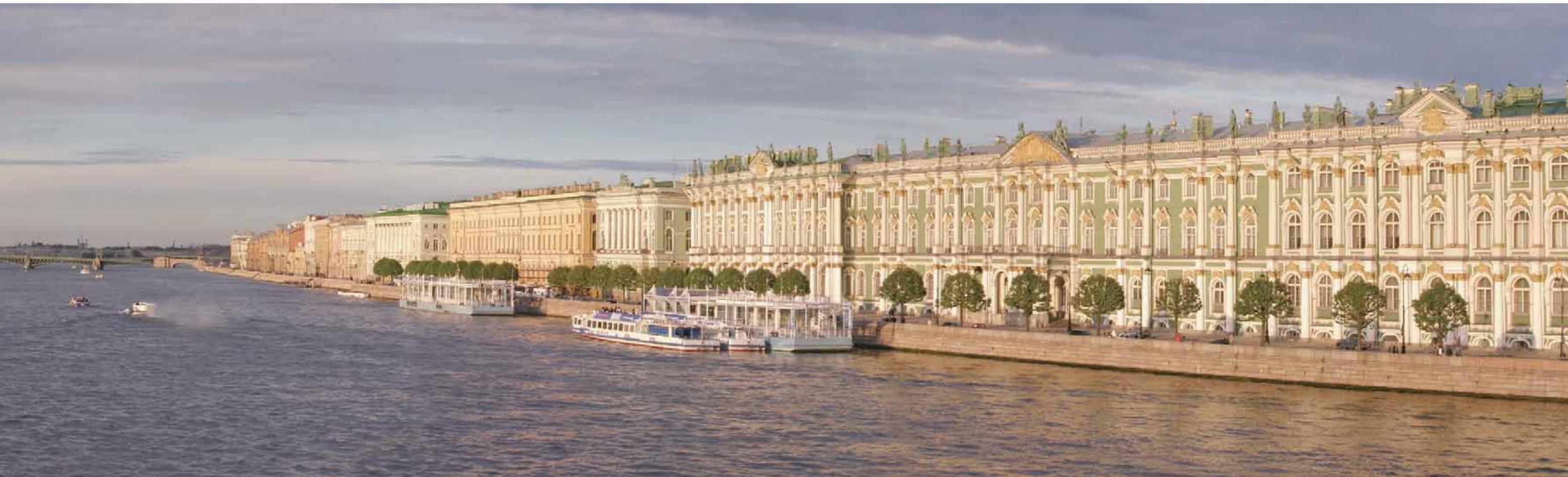
Free image of the museum collection available on-line

The NMK removed internet security and firewall from the website (<http://www.museum.go.kr>), which allows viewers to download or print out any image freely from 2,780 collections. The service applies non-commercial use only.

June 27, 2010

National Veteran Honorees invited to the museum

41 national veteran honorees were invited to the tour around the NMK's permanent collections as well as the special exhibition.



Wind in the Pines: 5000 Years of Korean Art Exhibition on tour to Russia

The State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, Russia
June 1-September 5, 2010

Written by Yang Heejung,
Associate curator of the Exhibition Team

Wind in the Pines: 5000 Years of Korean Art, a touring exhibition of the NMK to Russia, takes place in the State Hermitage Museum (the “Hermitage”) in St. Petersburg from June 1 to September 5. The exhibition is realized in 19 years since the NMK and the Hermitage signed an agreement on the exchange of exhibitions in mid 1991. Under the agreement, the exhibition *Scythian Gold* by the Hermitage was hosted by the NMK in 1991 and the NMK’s reciprocal exhibition of about 290 pieces in the Hermitage was scheduled in 1993. Tentatively titled *Korean Treasures*, the introduction of Korean arts to Russia by the NMK, however, wasn’t realized due to a series of events including the meltdown of the Soviet Union in late 1991, the appointment of a new Hermitage director in 1992, and the NMK’s decision to relocate to Yongsan in 1995.

In 2008, the two museums finally agreed to hold an exhibition of Korean arts in Russia in 2010 celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Korea-Russia diplomatic relations. *Wind in the Pines: 5000 Years of Korean Art* is planned as a panoramic display of the 354 pieces, most of which were originally selected in the early 1990s for the *Korean Treasures*, so that Russian visitors new to Korean arts can see the history and development of Korean arts from the prehistoric times to the Joseon Dynasty at a glance.

The venue is the Nicolas Hall in the Winter Palace which is a former residence of Russian emperors and one of the five main buildings constituting the Hermitage complex. Currently, most of the temporary exhibitions at the Hermitage take place in this magnificent 1,103-square-meter gallery decorated with slender Corinthian orders and elaborately decorated entablatures. The Nicolas Hall was named such because a large portrait of Nicolas I had been mounted on one of the walls. As the biggest room in

the Winter Palace originally used as Russian emperors’ banquet room, the Nicolas Hall has a very high ceiling. For the NMK exhibition, temporary walls are established along the walls and columns, and stand-alone showcases and special lightings are installed as is the case with typical palace-turned-museums in Europe.



A sketch of the Nicolas Hall (1866)



Jordan Staircase



Preparation of the exhibition venue (left above).
Exhibition ready to greet visitors (left below).



The famous Jordan Staircase leads visitors to the vestibule of the Nicolas Hall on the 2nd floor. Greeting visitors at the entrance are two works of Bae Bien-U, a Korean photographer well known for his black-and-white pine tree photos that remind the viewers of traditional ink paintings of Korea.

The first section features relics from the prehistoric age to the Three Kingdoms period^{57BC-668AD} including the gold crown and belt ornament excavated from Seobong Tomb^{瑞鳳塚} of Silla. The representative pieces of Silla's unique gold metalwork will be intriguing to Russians who are familiar with the gold culture of Scythia or the Greek colonies on the coast of the Black Sea. Also attracting eyes are ornamented sheath which was recovered in 1973 from Gyerim-ro Tomb No. 14 located in Hwangnam-dong, Gyeongju. One of the burial goods for the dead, the sheath was an import and

almost same in shape and decoration as the ornamented sheath which was found in Borovoe, Kazakhstan and dated back to the late 5th or early 6th century. In the exhibition, the two ornamented sheaths are displayed side by side as the evidence of the cultural exchange between Korea and the Eurasian Continent in the 5th and 6th centuries. Also showcased in the first half of the display route are gilt bronze statues of Buddha, *wadang*^{瓦當} (roof-end tiles), and *pungtak*^{風鐸} (wind chimes attached to the end of roof eaves), which show the prevalence of Buddhism in the Three Kingdoms and the Unified Silla period⁶⁶⁸⁻⁹³⁵, as well as earthenware decorated with stamped patterns characteristic to the Unified Silla earthen pottery.

The stand-alone showcases established in the central space of the Hall present Goryeo period⁹¹⁸⁻¹³⁹² artworks by genre. The gold accessories, Buddhist incense burner,

Buddhist ritual ewer, and gilt bronze statues of Bodhisattva^{菩薩} on display are masterpieces that show the delicate beauty of the traditional Korean metal art. The following three sections feature a carefully selected collection of Goryeo celadon^{高麗青瓷}. Also a pair of stone statue of civil official and a 1.3 ton stone lantern, both of which were established to guard a tomb, are placed at the heart of the Hall, escalating the feel of Korea to the space. The subsequent section catches eyes with seven pieces of wood furniture seldom displayed to the public outside of Korea and chests decorated by the mother-of-pearl inlay or ox horn layer inlay techniques – items that enable the visitors to see an aspect of Koreans' everyday life in the past, along with the Goryeo period ornaments.

The vast collection of Joseon period¹³⁹²⁻¹⁹¹⁰ *buncheongsagi*^{粉青沙器} (ceramic ware made of grayish black clay body covered with finely grained white clay), and white porcelain^{白磁} exude an another kind of fascinating allure of Korea's sophisticated ceramic art. The Hermitage allotted over half of the wall space in the Nicolas Hall to accommodate thirty-some pieces of Joseon period paintings including the *Portrait of Yi Ha-eung*^{李瑄應}, the father and regent of Joseon King Gojong designated as Treasure No. 1499; *Wunnangjasang*^{雲娘子像} by Chae Yongshin^{蔡龍臣}, one of the rare existing female portraits depicting a young woman holding a baby; genre paintings of Kim Hongdo^{金弘道} and Shin Yunbok^{申潤福}, two famous Joseon period painters better known by their pen names Danwon^{檀園} and Hyewon^{蕙園}, respectively; *Jeongyangsado*^{正陽寺圖} by Jeong Seon^{鄭敎} depicting a view of the temple called Jeongyangsa^{正陽寺} in Mt.



Portrait of Yi Ha-eung
Joseon
132.6 × 67.8 cm
National Museum of Korea
Treasure No.1449



Wardrobe Case
Joseon
Decorated by the ox horn layer inlay technique
24.5 × 34.5 × 21.5 cm
National Museum of Korea

Geumgang; *Paegyosimmaedo*^{鰲橋尋梅圖} by Sim Sajeong^{沈師正} describing a poet in journey for early-spring apricot blossoms in a romantic landscape; and the Buddhist painting of Daeheungsa (Temple)^{大興寺} with a height of over 3.5 meters.

On the sidelines of the exhibition, the NMK holds three educational "Master Class" sessions on June 5, July 3, and August 7, where NMK curators invite children from Russian orphanages to provide guided tours to the exhibition and opportunities to make the model kits of the gold crown and Seokgatap^{釋迦塔} (Sakyamuni Pagoda) of Silla enabling the kids to learn the structures and usages of the Korean treasures. At the same time, the Korean Consulate-General in St. Petersburg and the Hermitage will jointly invite people interested in Korea from diverse Russian communities to the exhibition and hold an event experiencing the Korean cuisine. ≡

Palaces of Korea

Photography exhibition invited to Mongolia

National Museum of Mongolia
June 9-July 5, 2010

Written by Chang Eunjeong
Associate Curator of the Archaeology Department



The *Palaces of Korea* photography exhibition took place in the National Museum of Mongolia from June 9 to July 5. The event, the NMK's second overseas exhibition this year, is all the more significant in that it was held in the "2010 Year of Korea in Mongolia" designated by the Korean and Mongolian governments in celebration of the 20th anniversary of the bilateral diplomatic ties. The two nations have since maintained a close cooperative relationship in the political, economic, and social areas, and been committed to active cultural exchange based upon mutual trust and understanding. For instance, the Mon-Sol project, a joint research initiative started in 1997 by the NMK, the National Museum of Mongolia, and the Institute of Archaeology under the Mongolian Academy of Sciences, has played a significant role in the cultural interchange between the two countries. *Palaces of Korea* is organized as a venue through which to deepen the mutual understanding of the two nations' history and culture, thereby contributing to the Korea-Mongolia friendship.



Geunjeongjeon 勤政殿 Hall and Vicinity, Gyeongbokgung



Eosumun 魚水門 Gate, Changdeokgung



Mythical Unicorn-Lion, Gwanghwamun 光化門 Gate



Heunghwamun 興化門, Gyeonghuigung

The palaces are one of the most precious cultural properties of Korea that retain the innate value and dignity even after having gone through many ups and downs over their long history. In the era of a dynastic state, the palaces are not only the residence of the king and royal family but also symbols of majesty for the nation. Although traces of palace sites – some of which date far back to the Three Kingdoms period of Korea^{57BC-668AD} – have been discovered in the capital area, only those built in the Joseon period¹³⁹²⁻¹⁸⁹⁷ are in their original shapes and structures. *Palaces of Korea* aroused a special attention from the Mongolian public by introducing rare photographs of the Joseon palaces that were taken a century ago capturing the time-honored history, ideology, and meaning behind the unique architectural style of the edifices.

After deciding Hanyang 漢陽 (an old name of Seoul) as its capital, the Joseon Dynasty began to build royal palaces. The master plan for the capital and the locations, directions, structures, and names of royal palaces were decided in conformity with the ruling ideology, Neo-Confucianism^{性理學}. Gyeongbokgung 景福宮 was originally constructed in 1395 as the primary palace for the Joseon Dynasty. Believing that frugality is one of the virtues a ruler has to have, King Taejo 太祖, r.1392-1398 instructed only necessary buildings be constructed. With Jongmyo 宗廟 (a Confucian shrine dedicated to the memorial services for the deceased kings and queens) in the east of Gyeongbokgung and Sajikdan 社稷壇 (a Confucian altar used to perform the national soil and grain ceremonies praying for a good harvest) in the west of Gyeongbokgung, the founding king meant to show an example to his subjects of being grateful of the ancestors, respectful of the heaven, and cherishing the land.

Established in 1494, Changdeokgung 昌德宮 is a secondary palace or *igung* 行宮 located in the east of Gyeongbokgung and often called *donggwol* 東闕 (the East Palace) along with Changgyeonggung 昌慶宮. Originally intended to be used as the residence of *seja* 世子, the Crown Prince or the main palace in contingency, Changdeokgung was favoured by many Joseon kings as the main palace. Changgyeonggung, situated in the east of Changdeokgung, is the third Joseon palace to be built. When constructed in 1418 by King Sejong the Great 世宗大王, r.1418-1450 as the residence of his father King Taejong 太宗, r.1400-1418, the palace was originally named Suganggung 壽康宮 and renamed to Changgyeonggung in 1484 when a number of new buildings were added by King Seongjong 成宗, r.1469-1494 to accommodate three *daebi* 大妃 (the Dowager Queens).

In addition, there are royal retreats called *haenggung* 行宮. An important example is Gyeonghuigung 慶熙宮 which is also called *seogwol* 西闕 (the West Palace) due to its location in the west of Gyeongbokgung. Gyeonghuigung was the most representative *haenggung* but turned to *igung* when Changdeokgung replaced Gyeongbokgung as the main palace in the late Joseon period. Gyeongungung 慶運宮 is another *haenggung* located in Jeongneung-dong which served as a primary royal palace in late Joseon. The name changed to Deoksugung 德壽宮 as the palace began used as the residence of King Gojong, the Gwangmu Emperor 高宗光武帝, r.1863-1907 of the Korean Empire 大韓帝國 following the accession of King Sunjong, the Yunghui Emperor 純宗隆熙帝, r.1907-1910 to the throne.

The photography exhibition also offered a summarized history of the Korean royal palaces as well as three-dimensional models of Joseon-period palace layouts and structures for a better understanding of the exhibits by Mongolian visitors. It

is also noteworthy that the exhibition presented the space concepts such as *donggwol*, *seogwol*, and *bukgwol* 北闕, the North Palace in a systematic manner and enabled Mongolian visitors to appreciate Joseon palaces as the complex of halls and pavilions in palaces with diverse different functions that convey the beauty and spirit of the Korean palace architecture together with *woejeon* 外殿, outer court (a space for official events of the state), *naejeon* 內殿, inner court (a residential area for the king and the queen), and *huweon* 後苑, rear garden (a resting space for the royal family). In addition to the photo exhibition, an animation reproducing the scenes depicted in *jinchando* 進膳圖 (paintings of court banquets and rituals) was also presented to demonstrate that Joseon palaces are spaces for diverse cultural and living activities. ≡

White Porcelain Jars: Embracing Joseon Ideals and Rituals

Standing Exhibit, 3rd Floor White Porcelain Hall
June 15-November 14, 2010

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



The National Museum of Korea is now holding a theme exhibition under the title *White Porcelain Jars: Embracing the Joseon Ideals and Rituals*. White porcelain 白磁 *baekja* represents the final chapter in the history of traditional Korean ceramics. The exhibition was designed to remind visitors of the historical meaning and value of Joseon's ceramic works.

More than mere vessels, Joseon white porcelain jars reflect how people lived in a Neo-Confucian society. For example, every ceremony conducted by the royal family was in accordance with Confucian rules and procedures, and all the vessels in the ceremonies were used strictly according to prescribed rules. Noteworthy among these are *taeho* 胎罩 (urns for storing afterbirth), *myeonggi* 明器 (vessels buried with the dead for use in the afterlife), and *yongjun* 龍樽 (large wine jars adorned with a dragon motif). These demonstrate the unique tradition of Joseon ceramics as well as the aesthetic sense of the royal family.

The exhibition is divided into three sections, each based on a different theme. Section 1 covers the distinctive features of white porcelain jars and their development, providing visitors with an overview of how white porcelain ware evolved over the Joseon period. Section 2 focuses on the white porcelains of the royal family, demonstrating how ceramics reflected the culture and way of thinking at the pinnacle of the Joseon state, which adopted Neo-Confucianism as its guiding philosophy. Finally, Section 3 unveils white porcelain jars that have been newly acquired by the National Museum of Korea. They were recently discovered in numerous excavation projects being conducted around downtown Seoul.



Developments of White Porcelain Jars and their Characteristics

Joseon white porcelain jars were produced as vessels for storing water, pickled seafood, grains, sauces and other food items. These vessels served other functions as well such as keeping the afterbirth of children from the royal family, being buried with the dead or being used in various ceremonies. The shapes, decorative patterns (or lack thereof) and other distinguishing characteristics of the Joseon white porcelain pieces vary according to the period of production and intended purpose.

The vessels can be generally divided into two major categories: “vertical jars 立罍” and “round jars 圓罍”. The former type has a long body with the center of gravity in the shoulders. The latter type, on the other hand, is round, so the gravity center is in the middle of the mass. The large porcelain jars of the “round” classification produced

during the late 17th century and throughout the 18th century were also known as “moon jars.”

Pure white porcelain 純白磁, namely the pieces without any decoration whatsoever, were produced throughout the Joseon period. Inlaid white porcelain 象嵌白磁 was in vogue during the 15th century, while blue-and-white porcelain 青磁白磁 elegantly adorned with blue images from oxidized cobalt came on the scene during the 15th and 16th centuries. The pieces from this period are often characterized by a mouth that either stands up straight with a slight inward slant or curls outward.

Joseon suffered through a war with Japan at the end of the 16th followed by two invasions by the Manchus in the first half of the 17th century, and obtaining a sufficient supply of cobalt pigment from overseas became very difficult. Therefore, Joseon potters began producing white porcelain in underglaze iron-brown 鐵畫白磁

instead. Joseon society stabilized in the 18th century, and the blue-and-white porcelains regained popularity. Elegant porcelains were produced that reflected the aesthetic sensibilities of the upper class. The decorative trends were strongly influenced by contemporary trends in Qing China, and this outside influence continued through the 19th century. The class of people demanding porcelains also expanded, and various “auspicious patterns 吉祥文”, motifs that symbolize long life and other forms of happiness, were used. As for the jar shape, the neck was made to stand up straight starting in the 18th century, and it became steadily longer in the 19th century. Pieces with squared corners also appeared, in addition to the vertical and round types.



White porcelain jar with plum, bamboo and bird designs in underglaze cobalt-blue
Joseon, 15-16th century
H. 16.5 cm
National Treasure No. 170



Blue and white porcelain jar with plum, bamboo, bird designs
Joseon, 15-16th century
H. 25.0 cm



White porcelain jar with cloud and dragon designs in underglaze iron-brown
Joseon, 17th century
H. 36.1 cm



White porcelain jar with symbols of longevity in underglaze copper oxide and iron-brown
Joseon, 19th century
H. 37.3 cm



White Porcelain “Moon Jar”
Joseon, Early 18th century
H. 41.0 cm
Treasure No. 1437

White Porcelain Jars of the Joseon Royal Household

Neo-Confucianism was the state ideology in Joseon, and rituals that systematically expressed these values were considered very important. The *Manual of the Five Rites of State* 國朝五禮儀 was completed in 1474 to prescribe how major state ceremonies were to be conducted, and the government became directly involved in the production of hand-crafted items needed for these ceremonies. Moreover, the production of high-quality ceramic ware was a matter of state concern. Saongwon 司饗院 (the government office to manage the royal kitchens) needed reliable suppliers of dishes and cookware that could meet the high standard required for serving royal family members. The first state-run kilns were established in 1467 or 1468 to produce ceramics for the royal family. From that time on, these “official kilns 官窯” played a central role in the development of Joseon ceramics.

The Joseon royal family required special types of jars and urns for ceremonial purposes. These included the urns for storing royal afterbirth, funerary vessels for burial with a deceased royal family member, and large wine jars with a dragon motif. Joseon people believed that the placenta and umbilical cord determined the growth and the fate of a child after it has been born. Therefore, these organs were ritually interred in a stone chamber on a celebrated mountain. This extensive ceremonial activity was performed as a prayer for the child’s good health and long life as well as for the flourishing of the royal family. Meanwhile, the large wine jar decorated with a dragon image is another ritual vessel, which was to flaunt the majesty of the royal family.

This theme exhibit offers visitors with a unique opportunity to view many funerary vessels as well. On display are vessels that were buried in the tombs of Crown Prince Euiso 懿昭世孫, the half brother of King

Jeongjo 正祖, r.1776-1800; Crown Prince Munhyo 文孝世子, 1782-1786, son of King Jeongjo; Royal Noble Consort Wonbin of the Pyeongsan Hong clan 元嬪洪氏, 1766-1779, King Jeongjo’s first consort; and Princess Cheongyeon 淸衍郡主, 1754-1821, King Jeongjo’s younger sister.

This collection provides a clear picture of the royal family’s funerary vessels (*myeonggi*) in late Joseon. Some of these were containers for use by the departed in the next life, revealing the belief in an afterlife. For example, a funerary jar filled with eggs was unearthed in Eunpyeong New Town (northern Seoul). Presumably, the food was either meant to be eaten by the deceased in the next world or was a symbol of rebirth. Thus, the white porcelain jars of Joseon not only served a functional purpose (storing things) but also played an important role in supporting the contemporary value system.

White Porcelain Jars Unearthed from Hanyang, the Capital of Joseon

Redevelopment and restoration projects in downtown Seoul continue at a rapid pace today, prompting various historical excavations prior to the commencement of construction work. These archeological digs have shed greater light on what life was like in the Joseon capital, then called “Hanyang 漢陽”. Excavations have been carried out at Gyeongbokgung (the Main Palace); in Cheongjin-dong (a district in Jongno) and Pimat-gol (alleyway running parallel to Jongno); at the East Gate History & Culture Park; at the Seoul City Hall reconstruction site; and during the restoration of Cheonggye Stream. The white porcelains unearthed at these various sites provide important clues to the pottery used by Hanyang residents and the standard of living that they enjoyed. For example, three white porcelain jars produced at

government-run kilns in early Joseon were recently found in excellent condition in Cheongjin-dong.

The National Museum of Korea collection includes white porcelain jars unearthed in the Jongno and Namdaemun-ro districts; most were produced in official kilns and are of very high quality. An elegant white porcelain piece from an excavation site in Namdaemun-ro features a white glaze with a hint of blue. A lidded jar with a dragon motif discovered in Junghak-dong appears to be a *yongjun* piece from the 17th century. The “white porcelain jar with plum and bamboo,” found in an excavation in Gwancheol-dong (Jongno-gu) was broken but has the same shape and decoration as National Treasure No. 219, housed at the LEEUM Samsung Museum of Art. As such it reveals the early Joseon trend in the production of white porcelain in underglaze iron-brown.

The white porcelains from Joseon are indeed alluring. The pleasant white coloring and rather unsophisticated yet attractive contours fascinate with their aesthetic depth. Porcelains, amiable and pure, have also emerged on the modern art scene. Kim Whan-ki 1913-1974 and Do Sang-bong 1902-1977, who pioneered western-style painting in Korea, introduced several works that reinterpret Joseon white porcelains. Their images have become symbolic motifs that reflect a uniquely Korean lyricism.

Modern Korean ceramic artists are still working on white porcelains. Their works reflect pride in tradition and an artistic spirit that are writing a new page in Korean art history. As such, Joseon white ceramics are not a dead tradition; they have taken new forms and are still with us today. ■



Burial wares (*Myeonggi*) of Crown Prince Moonhyo’s Tomb Joseon. 18th century



A set of placenta jars and tablet Joseon Height of Outer Jar. 42.5 cm



White porcelain jar with cloud and dragon designs H. 53.9 cm



White Porcelain Jar Joseon. 15-16th century H. 36.8 cm Unearthed in Namdaemun-ro 2-Ga, Jongno-gu



Plum Blossoms and Jars by Kim Whan-ki. 1957 Oil Painting on Canvas 53.0 x 37.0 cm Whanki Museum

Sutra Painting: Drawings in handwritten Buddhist scripture

Written by Bae Young-il,
Associate Curator of the Fine Arts Department

Sagyeong 寫經 (transcribed sutra) is Buddhist scripture that has been reproduced by hand. After Shakyamuni entered nirvana, his pupils documented his words, which had been orally transmitted, by writing them down. Once the *sutras* (the written records of Buddha's discourses) were completed, they became master texts that were repeatedly hand-copied by succeeding generations. The original reason for hand-copying the scripture was to teach Shakyamuni's words to new adherents and propagate the Buddhist faith. However, once printing techniques were developed, the act of reproducing the scriptures by hand began to take more of a religious significance. The practice of *sagyeong* became ritualized and was seen as a way to accumulate merit rather than an act of simply reproducing text.

In addition, the sutras, or teachings of the Buddha, had significance as the "the Words of Buddha 法寶", one of the Three Treasures 三寶, namely the Buddha, the Law (or Dharma) and a Buddhist monk (or Sangha). As such, they were often reproduced as offerings that were placed inside pagodas or Buddha statues. Some *sagyeong*, especially those copied as an act for accumulating merit, were hand-written in gold or silver ink, showing the transcriber's great reverence for Buddha's teachings.

In the Goryeo period 高麗 918-1392, Buddhism was the state religion, playing a major role throughout society, from the royal family and aristocracy to the common people. Amid this backdrop, the royal family and powerful personages sponsored an increasing number of *sagyeong*. These projects were conducted as prayers to ask for blessings or to repel malevolent forces on behalf of the state or a particular individual. Indeed, the Goryeo government established an office dedicated solely to managing sutra reproduction, raising the quality of these handwritten and hand-drawn texts. The high quality of Goryeo *sagyeong* was recognized throughout Northeast Asia at that time, as even members of the Chinese imperial family wished to own them.

The *Sutra Painting* 寫經變相圖 is a drawing placed at the head of the text to summarize the instructive and narrative contents of the *sutra*. The images were drawn with lines according to a prescribed style. More than 150 of the *sagyeong* produced on the Korean Peninsula still exist inside and outside the country. They date from the Unified Silla 統一新羅 668-935 through Joseon 朝鮮 1392-1910, but most were made in Goryeo period, especially during the 13th and 14th centuries.

The *sagyeong* genre represents some of the best artwork from the Goryeo period. The Maharatnakuta Sutra 大寶積經 (*Sutra of Great Collection of Treasures*), produced in 1006, is considered to be artistically and esthetically outstanding. This is the earliest known *sagyeong* from Goryeo. The 120-volume work is a collection of 49 Mahayana sutras about the Dharma of bodhisattva cultivation and the Buddha's predictions of those who will attain Buddhahood. The image below is from Volume 32, illustrating the "Radiant Assembly 出現光明會" (The assembly where Buddha manifests with radiance). Queen Mother Cheonchu 千秋太后 964-1029, the mother of King Mokjong 穆宗 r. 997-1009, and her favorite retainer, Kim Chi-yang 金致陽, co-sponsored this project. The text is hand-written in gold ink on dark blue paper, while the illustration was drawn in silver ink. This is the only extant work from the *Tripitaka in Gold Lettering* from the Goryeo period.

The elegantly-drawn illustration at the beginning of the text features three bodhisattvas inside an embossed frame, standing on lotus pedestals and holding offerings in their hands. Their appearance is orderly and imposing, suggesting the confidence of the Goryeo people.

A rain of flowers fills the background, which is divided into three sections from top to bottom. The flowers are piled up like snow on the ground, while clouds appear in the air. The area outside the frame is also decorated; flying musical instruments (including a drum and a lute) are in the space at the top of the picture, while flowers and grass are shown sprouting at the bottom. However, this embossed frame in the early Goryeo *sagyeong* is replaced by a series of diamond scepter images in later works, and nothing is drawn outside the border.

This work, representative of transcribed *sutras* from early Goryeo, still maintains the traditions of the Unified Silla, such as the composition covering the entire page and elegantly-drawn thin lines in a consistent thickness with unbroken continuity. ≡



Maharatnakuta Sutra
Volume 32
Goryeo, 1006
29.1 x 45.2 cm
Hoshakuji (Temple), Japan



Tripitaka Koreana
Goryeo, 13th century
24.0 x 70.0 cm (approx.)
Haehinsa (Temple), Korea
National Treasure No. 32

The Flourishing of Buddhism and the Development of Goryeo Buddhist Scripture

Written by Oh Youngsun
Associate Curator of the Exhibition Team

The advancement of human civilization has been driven by the cultural transmission and interaction, and the creation of writing systems marked a great turning point in promoting such exchanges. The advent of writing is also what separates prehistoric times with historic times. The subsequent invention of printing methods enabled the mass production of documents and accelerated the process of cultural sharing still further.

Korean developed the paper and ink necessary for printing very early. The world's oldest known woodblock-printed text is a copy of the *Mugu jeonggwang dae daranigyeong* 無垢淨光大陀羅尼經, "Great Dharani Sutra on Immaculate and Pure Light", produced in the Unified Silla 統一新羅 no

later than 751. In the succeeding kingdom of Goryeo, woodblocks were carved for printing the entire Buddhist canon, and the massive project was carried out not once but twice. The Goryeo people were also the world's first to use movable metalloid type for printing, perhaps as early as the 13th century.

The printing methods of Goryeo are exemplified by the *Palman daejanggyeong* 八萬大藏經, "Tripitaka Koreana", produced from woodblocks, and the *Jikji: Essentials on Direct Pointing at the Mind and Body* 直指心體要節, produced from movable type. These two works can be aptly described as the apex of Korean printing and important world heritage.

Woodblock Printing

The world’s first printed texts were produced using woodblocks with text carved as mirror images. Ink is rubbed onto the characters in relief, which are then pressed firmly onto paper or cloth. Woodblock printing was first practiced in Korea during the Unified Silla and continued to be used throughout Goryeo and into Joseon. As such, woodblocks played the greatest role in early printing. Importantly, Buddhism was the main social influence in Silla and Goryeo, and demand for printed Buddhist scripture remained constant. Thus, once the woodblocks were carved, they could be used repeatedly, making them more efficient.

Korea’s oldest extant copy of text printed from woodblocks is the *Great Dharani Sutra on Immaculate and Pure Light* 無垢淨光大陀羅尼經,

believed to have been produced in the mid-8th century. The Goryeo people inherited Silla’s Woodblock printing tradition and developed it further. For example, copies of the *Dharani on the Seal of the Precious Chest* 寶鏡印陀羅尼經 were printed from woodblocks at Chongjisa 總持寺 in 1007, during the reign of King Mokjong 穆宗, r. 997-1009.

The scroll measures 240cm long by 7.8cm wide and features an exceptionally well drawn *Sutra Painting* 變相圖 at the front to summarize the instructive and narrative contents of the sutra text that follows. This is the oldest extant Sutra Painting produced in Korea. The woodblock-printed text is also far more refined than the lettering for the *Great Dharani on Immaculate and Pure Light*, which was produced with very early movable type.

The *Tripitaka Koreana* is at the absolute pinnacle of woodblock printing in Korea.

“*Tripitaka* 三藏”, three baskets refers to a complete collection of the Buddhist canon, which includes the Buddha’s teachings (*Sutra Pitaka*), the rules of discipline (*Vinaya Pitaka*), and the treatises (*Abhidharma Pitaka*). Two sets of woodblocks for printing the Buddhist canon were produced during Goryeo. *The first carving* 初彫大藏經 was conducted in the 11th century to ask the Buddha to help to expel the invading Khitan forces. Those woodblocks were destroyed by the invading Mongols in 1232, *prompting a second carving project* 再彫大藏經 in the 13th century. More than 2,600 fascicles printed from the first-carved set are believed to be extant, but most are in Japan. The largest collection of these texts, more than 1,800 fascicles, is housed at Nanzenji 南禪寺, in the Tokyo area. Over 600 more are estimated to have been taken to the island of Tsushima.

The National Museum of Korea has Fascicle 59 of the *Sutra of the Great Collection of Treasures* 大寶積經 (National Treasure No. 246), Fascicle 15 of the *Treatise on the Stages of Yoga Practice* 瑜伽師地論 (National Treasure No. 273), Fascicle 32 of the *Treatise on the Stages of Yoga Practice* (National Treasure No. 272), Fascicle 12 of the *Treatise of Acclamation of the Sagely Teaching* 闡揚聖教論 (National Treasure No. 271), Fascicle 13 of the *Index of Tripitaka Volume 20* 新撰一切經源品次錄 (National Treasure No. 245) and Fascicle 13 of the *Flower Adornment Sutra* 大方廣佛華嚴經.

Goryeo monks carved a second set of more than 81,000 woodblocks 八萬大藏經版, literally the “80,000 Tripitaka woodblocks” as a prayer for Buddha’s help in expelling the Mongols. This collection is preserved at Haeinsa 海印寺 today.

The state-sponsored project was managed by a temporary government

commission, the *Tripitaka Directorate* 大藏都監, on Ganghwa Island. The actual carving work was supervised by a branch office of the Directorate in Namhae, Gyeongsang-do.

The monks were laboring to secure divine assistance in protecting the kingdom. Thus, they performed their work with great devotion, and the resulting accuracy of the text and quality of the carved Chinese characters are unsurpassed anywhere. The collection was designated a World Heritage by UNESCO in 1996. The National Museum of Korea has copies of Fascicle 55 (Treasure No. 972) and Fascicle 64 (Treasure No. 969) of the *Treatise on the Stages of Yoga Practice* which are printed by the second set of Tripitaka Koreana.

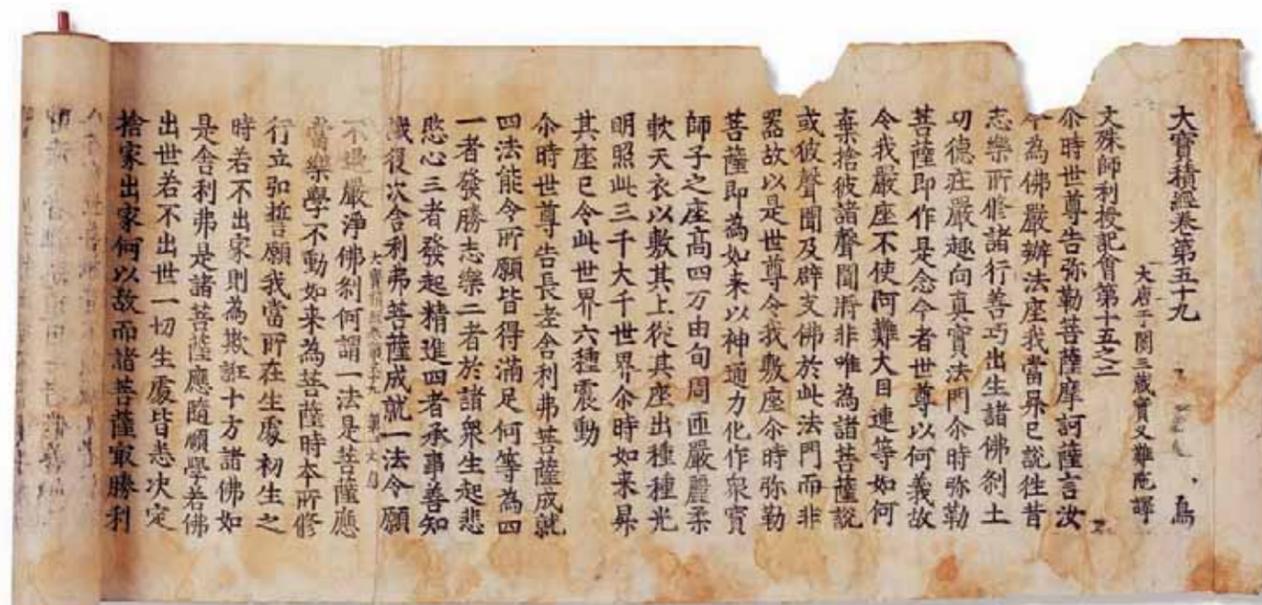
The tremendous woodblock carving effort in Goryeo suggests that multiple copies of the Buddhist canon were produced at that time. Moreover, individual temples

also served as centers for printing scripture, the poetry of eminent monks and other literary works. As such, Goryeo represented a golden age for Woodblock printing. Of course, great pains were made to advance woodblock printing techniques, and Confucian classics, individual writings and histories were all published in Goryeo as well. However, the majority of the output was Buddhist literature.

Great Dharani Sutra on Immaculate and Pure Light
Unified Silla, 8th century
648.0 x 6.7 cm
Bulguksa (Temple), Korea
National Treasure No. 126



The Sutra of the Great Collection of Treasures
Fascicle 59
Goryeo, 11th century
30.0 x 1,081.0 cm (approx.)
National Treasure No.246



Movable Metal Type

Movable metal type in Goryeo is a great Korean cultural legacy that shines in the history of world printing. Woodblock printing was an efficient method for printing Buddhist canonical literature, for which demand was widespread and constant. However, when a wide variety of texts must be published, carving woodblocks for each one would not so economically feasible. Movable type is a better option in this case because the font, once cast, can be reused to print diverse texts instead of only one. Such economic necessity drove the development of movable type. The typeset pieces, which could be made from various materials, were arranged on a printing plate. Ink was then applied to the typeface, which was pressed firmly against paper.

Printing with movable type began in China in the 11th century. People normally associate metallic fonts with movable

type printing, but *Bi Sheng* 畢昇, the Chinese artisan who invented the first known movable type system, used ceramics. The ceramic pieces were impractical because they were easily damaged or broken.

Wood was the next material tried for crafting movable type. However, the wood grain created inconsistencies in character size, and the wood absorbed much water, making the printed text uneven. Goryeo was the first to improve the technology by casting the movable type from metal, namely copper.

Records state that Goryeo published numerous copies of the *Texts on Prescribed Rituals of the Past and Present* 詳定古今禮文 with movable metal type between 1234 and 1241, the world's first known instance of this printing method being employed. According to the records, *Nam Myeong-cheon Hwasang's Song of Enlightenment* 南明宗和尚證道歌 was also published with woodblocks in 1239 after previous editions had been produced using movable metal type.

The Goryeo central government led the drive to develop movable metal type, which then spread throughout the kingdom. *The Monk Baegun's Anthology of the Great Priests' Teachings on Identification of the Buddha's Spirit by the Practice of Seon* 白雲和尚抄錄佛祖直指心體要節, also known as *Jikji* was published in two fascicles at Heungseoksa 興德寺, in Cheongju, in 1377. Today the single remaining copy of Fascicle 2 is held in reserve by the French National Museum and recognized as the world's oldest extant book printed from movable metal type. In 2001, UNESCO inducted the text into the Memory of the World program.

Only two pieces of metal type cast in Goryeo are extant. The National Museum of Korea has one, which was used to print the character bok 佛. The second piece is known to be in North Korea. Their value is great, for they are definitive proof that metal moving type was indeed employed during the Goryeo period.



Metal typeset character bok^佛
Goryeo, 12th century
1.0 x 1.0 cm

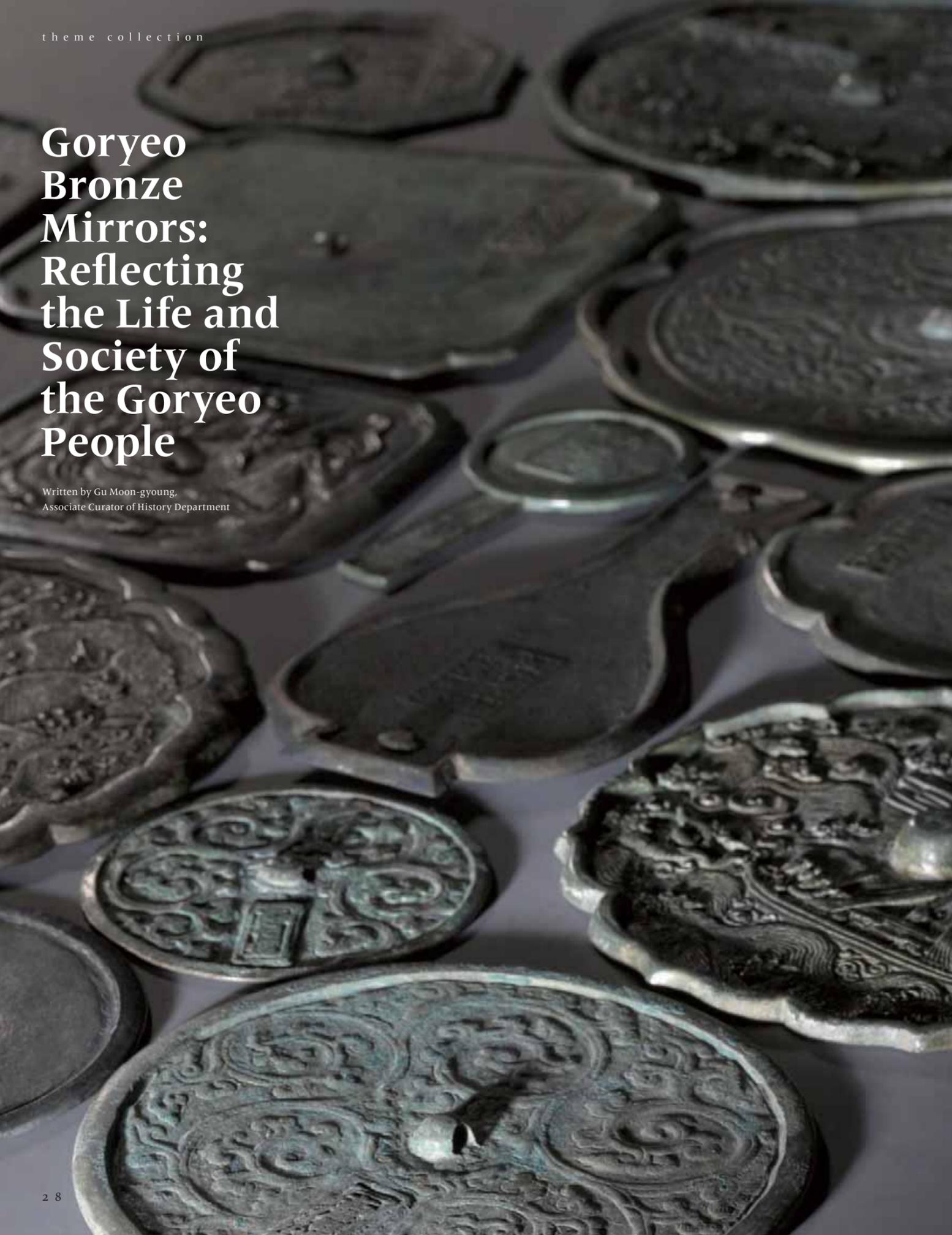
Goryeo printing techniques with movable metal type were passed down to the following kingdom of Joseon, where substantial advancements were made rapidly. The Joseon state replaced Buddhism with Neo-Confucianism as the political ideology and needed to mass-produce many books to support this effort from early on. Joseon's first movable type pieces were cast in 1403, the *gyemi* 癸未 year by the traditional sexagenary cycle. Therefore the font was collectively called *gyemi* characters 癸未字. This was followed by new font castings in 1420, *gyeongja* characters 庚子字, 1434 *gapin* characters 甲寅字, 1436 *byeongjin* characters 丙辰字 and 1450 *gyeongo* characters 庚午字. Such extensive work in metal type casting preceded Johannes Gutenberg, who completed his famous 42-line Bible. ■

The Treatise on the Stage of Yoga Practice
Fascicle 32
Goryeo, 11th century
28.8 x 1,290.0 cm (approx.)
National Treasure No.272



Goryeo Bronze Mirrors: Reflecting the Life and Society of the Goryeo People

Written by Gu Moon-gyoung,
Associate Curator of History Department



Advent & Symbolic Significance of Bronze Mirrors

Bronze mirrors 銅鏡 were widely used before the advent of glass mirrors. The back side of the bronze mirror was often decorated with patterns or writing to enhance its artistic value.

The earliest bronze mirrors to be found on Korea date back to the Late Bronze Age (more than 2400 years ago). They are classified as the “mirror with coarse pattern 粗文鏡,” which means the back side has two or more circles etched in it and usually some simple geometric pattern such as the shape of a lightning bolt. Over time, “mirror with fine patterns 精文鏡” emerged as the triangular or circular patterns become finer and more complex.

Bronze Age mirrors were believed to have supernatural power and were possessed by shamans or other officiators of sacrificial ceremonies for the dead. Therefore, the mirrors were used as funerary objects and buried in the tombs of the tribal leaders. They were also valued in their own right as keepsakes, art pieces or ritual implements. For example, a stone mirror, which of course does not reflect light, was unearthed at the ruins of an old ceremonial altar site in Jungmak-dong, Buan. Buddhism became widespread in Korea during the Unified Silla, and bronze mirrors, because of their symbolic importance, were often part of reliquaries inside pagodas or used as ritual objects used in consecration of a building site.



Mirror with fine patterns
The Early Iron Age

Use of Bronze Mirrors in Goryeo

A far greater number of bronze mirrors have been found dated from the Goryeo Dynasty than from earlier periods, as Goryeo artisans developed methods for mass producing them from high-quality copper, the principle component in bronze. Popular demand for bronze mirrors increased, and many were buried, along with other objects owned by the deceased in life, as part of the contemporary funereal custom. At the same time, the mirrors were widely used in Goryeo for their basic function, namely as an accessory for grooming.

Combs and hairpins have been found together with bronze mirrors in Goryeo tombs, indicating that the mirrors a utilitarian purpose. However, mirrors and makeup were not exclusively for women; their use was widespread among male aristocrats and government officials.

When in use, the bronze mirror could be held in the hand or hung on clothes by a cord that was threaded through a ring (or rings) on the back. Special racks were also made to stand the mirror up.

A section of the silk hand-scroll painting entitled *Admonitions of the Instructress to the Palace Ladies* 女史箴圖 from China's Eastern Jin Dynasty 東晉, 317-420 details palace ladies dressing up front of a bronze mirror on a stand. An iron mirror stand from Goryeo, decorated elegantly with silver and gold inlay, has also been found. A "lacquer ware vanity case 漆鏡奩" excavated from Seokam-ri Tomb 王軒墓 No. 205, near Pyeongyang, provides a glimpse into how bronze mirrors were stored in ancient times. Along with the mirror, the box would contain combs and other grooming and makeup accessories. When it was found, the "Celadon Vanity Case with Turtle-shell Pattern" from the Goryeo period contained small, lidded boxes for cosmetics. The case also had spaces inside for a mirror, ornamental hairpins, chignon ornaments, and rings.



Silver-gilt mirror stand
Goryeo

Bronze Mirrors Trade with Neighboring States

Goryeo Founder Wang Geon 王建, named King Taejo, used maritime trade as an important foundation for power. The port of Byeongnando 碧淵潭, at the mouth of the Yeseong River 禮成江 in present-day North Korea, was the international center trading with merchants from lands as distant as Southwest Asia. Of course, most of the commerce was with the Chinese.

Copper in China, was relatively easier to work with than other metals were. Casting was easy, and the appearance was beautiful. For these reasons, copper was used initially for making ritual implements or weaponry, and with the passage of time, applications for copper expanded to include Buddhist objects such as statuary and bells as well as coinage, containers and other everyday implements.

The growing demand for copper caused supply shortages, and it became strictly controlled by Chinese authorities since Tang Dynasty 唐朝, 618-907. The heavy regulation sparked the private casting of copperware, but the product quality also declined.

Bronze mirror production in the Song Dynasty 宋朝, 960-1279 was centered in Huzhou 湖州, Zhejiang Province 浙江省, with large quantities also coming from Yangzhou 揚州 and Hangzhou 杭州. These mirrors were produced under official authorization, and had the words "government inspected & registered 官府驗記" inscribed on them as proof. However, despite repeated government prohibitions, private trade in bronze belts and mirrors continued to flourish. This means that the demand for bronze mirrors was too strong for the government prohibitions to be effective.



Mirror inscribed with the characters for "Huzhou"

Most of the bronze mirrors said to have been discovered in the Gaesong area as well as those known to have been excavated from Goryeo period tombs were actually produced in China. Many mirrors bearing the inscription "Huzhou" have turned up in Korea as well as in Japan. Others are identified as being from Yangzhou or Hangzhou. Sometimes the name of the manufacturing house (Such and such 家 family) is inscribed instead. Thus, most of the writing on bronze mirrors imported into Goryeo from China states the place of origin, the maker or the official mark of approval. Interestingly, the extant inscriptions on these mirrors differ considerably in terms of legibility. Sometimes the script is faint or completely illegible, suggesting that the mirror is actually a reproduction instead of a Chinese-made original.



Mirror inscribed with the characters for "Huzhou" (detail)

Social Climate and Technical Progress in Goryeo

Song Envoy *Xu Jing* 徐兢 wrote *Illustrated Account of Goryeo* 高麗圖經, early 12th C., which covers customs and folkways. His work verifies that copper was abundant in Goryeo: “The land produces little gold or silver but much copper. Almost all the containers in commoners’ homes are made of copper.”

The History of Goryeo 高麗史, official history of the Goryeo kingdom, compiled in 1454 states that Goryeo sent brass to the short-lived Chinese dynasty Later Zhou 後周, 951-960 on two occasions during 957. The amount shipped in the 11th moon alone was around 50,000 catties geun 斤. The quality of Goryeo copper was particularly high and praised by the Chinese. This record illustrates that large volumes of high-quality copper were sent to China from Goryeo. Jin Dynasty 金朝, 1115-1234 envoys who visited Goryeo from northern China in the 12th century returned home heavily laden with

copperware. Records also show that Chinese envoys and members of their entourages would request locally-made bronze mirrors in early Joseon 朝鮮, 1392-1910.

Goryeo bronze mirrors were produced by hand in shops run either by the government or by a private family. The Board of Works 工曹 was chiefly responsible for the official shops in Goryeo, and controlled their artisans. The artisans who performed the work were controlled by the Board of Works. We know the types of work that was performed in these government-run shops by the products they made and types of artisans deployed in the shops. The “Food and Goods Annals” volume of the History of Goryeo states that 13 government offices controlled a total of 63 handicraft shops, which performed 62 different kinds of work.

In Goryeo, bronze mirror production was performed by the “mirror craftsmen 鏡匠”, who were attached to the Office for the Management of Smelting 掌冶署. *The Illustrated*

Account of Goryeo reports: “The skills of the Goryeo craftsmen are exquisite in the extreme. The very best of these artisans belong to the government offices.”

The situation changed by late Goryeo, however, when bronze mirror production was mainly in private hands. This can be surmised by records stating King U 禔王, r.1365-1389 invited private “mirror craftsmen” to the palace to teach their mirror-casting techniques.

Meanwhile, the active exchanges with China enabled Goryeo to obtain diverse shapes and patterns for bronze mirrors. Comparisons of the bronze mirrors from the two regions reveal that most have similar shapes, inscriptions and patterns, and classifying the mirrors into specific regions of origin is a difficult task. Virtually none of them indicate the place of origin or the reign date when production occurred. Moreover, many were reproductions of extant bronze mirrors.

Conceptualizing and Categorizing Goryeo Bronze Mirrors

How is one to define a “Goryeo bronze mirror” precisely? This depends on how one conceptualizes it. The narrowest definition would be identifying only those bronze mirrors with indigenous designs, production techniques and materials as being “Goryeo.” However, one must also include those bronze mirrors that were copied in Goryeo from Chinese originals. In other words, in the broadest sense, bronze mirrors that were produced in Goryeo copying the imported ones or with only partial modification of patterns can still be considered as being “Goryeo Bronze Mirror.” Such practices make difficult to determine the production date on the basis of the patterns found on bronze mirrors from the Goryeo period.

Therefore, scientific comparisons of the composition of bronze mirrors and further research will be needed in order to determine which ones were produced indigenously in Goryeo, which were imported and which were copied from imports.

A prime example of the “Goryeo bronze mirror” in the narrowest sense is one with the phrase “Made in Goryeo 高麗國造” embossed on it. The “pattern-less bronze mirrors 素文鏡”, ones lacking a pattern or inscription of any kind, that were discovered in Goryeo period tombs or pagodas are also likely to have been locally produced. That is because bronze mirrors from China that belong to this category have their place of origin embossed on them.

Two other types of bronze mirrors, both of which have been found in rather large numbers in Korea, were probably produced in Goryeo as well. They are the ones that bear the inscription “Luminous and Grand, Sunlit Heaven 煥丕為天” and those featuring the “Dragons with Laurel Tree and Pavilion” motif 銅龍樹閣文鏡. Both types have rarely been unearthed in China and distinguishing features are found on each. However, studies are ongoing to ascertain where exactly they were first produced and when. ≡



Mirror inscribed with the characters for “Made in Goryeo” (detail)



Fish-pattern Bronze Mirror



Mirror inscribed with the characters for “Luminous and Grand, Sunlit Heaven”



Mirror featuring the “Dragons with Laurel Tree and Pavilion”



Mirror inscribed with the characters for “Made in Goryeo”



NMK's new Honorary Spokespersons

Interview with Sohn pum soo & Chin yang hye
Broadcaster Couple

How do you feel about serving as the honorary spokesperson of NMK?

(Chin) It's a great pleasure. As I have had keen interest in NMK, I'm thrilled and ready to take an active part to make a contribution.

(Sohn) Ironically, people don't pay a visit that often to places close to their home, thinking there's no rush and saying "maybe tomorrow". Now we are appointed as the spokespersons to be obliged to visit the museum from time to time, and I'm quite excited. I remember the first time I visited NMK when I was a kid. The famous relics from school books appeared in front of my eyes. I was truly impressed and still reminisce about the excitement of the day. It is not the first priority how well kids know about the stories or histories of the relics. Rather, their experience being exposed to the relics itself matters. I was told there are less family outings at the NMK compared to the large number of group visitors. We will try to make the museum more attractive to family groups while we are serving as the spokespersons.

Do you have a particular relic you like among those displayed in the NMK?

(Chin) Yes, the white porcelain bottle with a string pattern! I found it on a book and instantly fell in love with it. I even pictured the photo with my mobile phone to let my friends know about its modern beauty. I was also happy to find the replica of the bottle at the museum shop.

We try to visit a museum wherever we travel the world, even though the kids don't find it very appealing. The visiting experience gets more exciting when we find a nice souvenir from the museum shop. NKM has quite an extensive collection of souvenir and hopefully, I can see more.

As a long-time resident of Ichon-dong where the museum is located, you might have observed the development process of the NMK after its relocation years ago. How well do you think the museum has played a role to be a cultural complex widely open to public?

(Sohn) We moved here 12 years ago, and indeed, we have seen the changes occurred in the neighborhood. It was a dramatic change to reach the relaxed and amiable state as of now, particularly considering the ambience less ordered back then. The museum performed a great role to make such a change in the community.

(Chin) Rome wasn't built in a day. But I agree there has been a huge change around here. It was rather quiet when we first moved here but now we have traffic jams during the weekends, which proves the popularity of the neighborhood. While I walk through the museum area, I see various people enjoying their time; family on a picnic, young people reading books under a tree, and couple on a date. Once I envied the people relaxed in *Jardin des Tuileries*, the garden next to the *Louvre*. Now I don't need to. My kids sometimes ask me if they could bring a baseball set when we go to the museum. They feel pretty comfortable about visiting the museum, like a visit to their friends. I can assure you that the museum and the park have taken a huge part to the daily life of the inhabitants, and I'm very proud of it.

We'd like to hear about any suggestion or ideas to make the NMK as one of the most beloved world-class museums.

(Chin) I wish the public know better of the various cultural & educational programs at the museum. NMK has already enough cultural contents and infra-structure, and moreover, the audience has showed great enthusiasm and highly advanced manners as far as I've known. Active promotion and publicity will enable more people benefit the varied programs and top quality facilities.

(Sohn) It's only about one tenth of Koreans who actively participate in cultural activities. I believe more people should get involved with cultural programs rather than indulged to media such as TV, internet or video game. And I'm telling this even though Chin and I are media professionals. The cultural activities should be shared by all the citizens, not only by some privileged. Hopefully, NMK makes a strong effort to expand the base of people who appreciate the valuable heritage, by planning diverse programs particularly for low-income or neglected groups. ≡

Conservation Treatment Process of Wood Statue of Seated Amitabha

Written by Kim Kyoungsu
Associate Conservator of the Conservation Science Team



Man-made objects created from organic materials are subject to decay, a natural process that forces the materials to go back to its origin, namely the Mother Nature. Exhibitions in a museum are not exceptions. Only difference is how long it takes for the process to take place depending on the material properties.

While made of diverse materials including soil, stone, metals, and wood, relics are often made of fragile organic materials. Wood is particularly sensitive to the environmental conditions. Wood repeats expansion and contraction according to with the surrounding moisture and temperature conditions, which could lead to cracks. It is also susceptible to bugs and germs. The primary duty of a conservation scientist is to prevent such damages from happening or progressing further. The conservation of *Wood Statue of Seated Amitabha* 阿彌陀如來, Buddha of infinite light is a case that went through six stages of conservation work.

Step 1. Decision to Treat the Statue for Conservation

The statue whose original gilding is still intact is estimated to have been made in the 15th century as the evidence of the Goryeo influence is found in its style. With a slender face, the seated Amitabha has a unique beauty rarely found among Joseon period Buddhist statues.

However, a closer look could find that most of the *nabal* 螺髮 (the hair of Buddha curled into clockwise spirals) and half of *yukgye* 肉髻 (cranial protuberance of Buddha, one of the auspicious marks of the body of Buddha symbolizing the wisdom of the Buddha) were missing. The right-hand fingers were barely there and the entire left hand was fallen off. The body was covered with a thick layer of dirt. A more serious problem, however, was the porous wood surface damaged by bugs. The statue couldn't be displayed in its previous state due to the fragile material base.

Wood Statue of Seated Amitabha (completion)

Step 2. Selection of Pre-Treatment State Examination Method

In order to investigate the structure and material state of the statue, the conservation team took X-ray photos. At the same time, ordinary photos were also taken and the dimensions were measured to document the pre-treatment state. A detailed recording of the bare-eye inspection and other examination results is a must.

Based upon the inspection results, the treatment method and procedures were decided. First and foremost, the seated Amitabha required the reinforcement of the wood. In addition, the thick layer of dirt on the surface needed to be removed and the missing *nabal*, *yukgye*, and fingers had to be restored.

Step 3. Conservation Material Selection

A careful selection of conservation material is very important. They need to be easily removable for future conservation works. As a material for the wood reinforcement, an acrylic resin was chosen. To fill the void, the conservation team selected HPC (hydroxypropyl cellulose in water) that melts in water. For the restoration of the missing parts, soil, wood powder, plaster and an epoxy resin were used together with water-soluble hide glue.

Before being applied, all materials as well as methods went through thorough testing to screen out materials that are hard to remove or don't fit well with the original material.



Wood Statue of Seated Amitabha (before the treatment)

Step 4. Implementation of Conservation Treatment

The first procedure was to strengthen the fragile wood with reinforcing material that penetrates deep into the wood. An acrylic resin melt in water was either applied on the surface or injected by syringe into parts which were hard to reach. Secondly, the pores and small missing parts were filled back with the mixture of wood powder and HPC.

Next was the restoration of the *nabal*, *yukgye* and missing fingers. As the size and shape of *nabal* is so diverse, a number of currently available cases were studied in an effort to determine the size and shape of *nabal* that best fit the seated Amitabha. About 40 pieces of plaster *nabal* were produced out of a silicon mold. To ensure that the plaster pieces can be easily separated later, the conservation team applied several layers of *hanji* 韓紙, Korean mulberry paper to the statue head before attaching the *nabal* pieces one by one with the mixture of soil powder and hide glue. *Yukgye* was restored with the composition of wood powder and hide glue.

Mudra 手印, Buddhist hand gesture is an important symbol that distinguishes the statue from other types of Buddha. In order to decide the *mudra* for the seated Amitabha, the conservation team had to review various records and documents. The material used for the fingers was an epoxy resin. An epoxy resin is hard to remove if it is applied directly to wood. Therefore, the conservation team first



X-ray photo to investigate the structure

carved the fingers out of epoxy resin blocks and then joined them to the statue using hide glue.

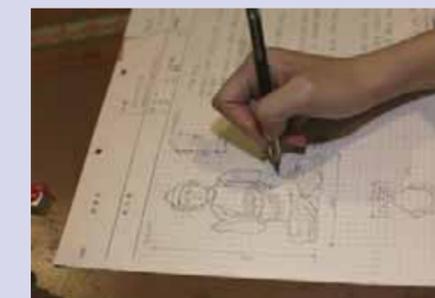
Lastly, the dirt on the surface was first brushed off and the stubborn remainder was carefully wiped out by cotton swabs wet in the 1:1 mix of water and alcohol. The treatment was finished with the process to color the restored parts.

Step 5. Documentation of Post-Treatment State

The materials and methods used in conservation and the post-treatment state were thoroughly recorded in photos and documents which will be useful when additional treatment is required in the future.

Step 6. Completion

After the conservation treatment, the wood statue of seated Amitabha is now strong in its base material and has the *nabal*, *yukgye*, and fingers all in place. The gilt surface that was covered with a thick layer of dirt has regained the original shine. The wood statue of seated Amitabha is now ready to greet visitors in the museum gallery with extended longevity.☺



Recording for the details

“We’re too intent on finding the clues in the Museum.”

CSI Squad: Find the Truth

Interview with Hong Seonghye, Shin Dasom, and Yun Ji-eun, Park Jee-in
History Exploration Club, Yangjung Girls’ High School



CSI (Chosun Special Investigation) Squad is one of educational programs, the NMK. Students participating in the program are assigned to solve fictitious crime cases in the late-Joseon period case in a four-member group based on leads hidden in the relics and properties displayed in the permanent galleries of the NMK. The four cases given to the groups are the murder of a lady in her 50s, a missing *nobi* 奴婢 (slave or servant), the grave robbery of a *taehang-ari* 胎盤 (placenta jar), and a stolen *hopae* 號牌, Joseon period identification tag case. After collecting leads individually, the students come back to the investigation headquarters and put their leads together to infer the causes and the suspects in group.

By enabling the students to learn about Joseon period properties in the course of seeking for leads as well as develop historical imagination while trying to solve the mysteries, CSI Squad offers a good opportunity to experience the museum in a more exciting way.

On the final day of the first-semester program, the NMK met with the first-year students of the Yangjung Girls’ High School who turned into CSI agents.

**Did you know the CSI Squad when you joined?
How did you participate in the program?**

(Hong) We are members of the Yangjung Girls’ High History Exploration Club and love to go on field trip to get hands-on experience of history more, than

just listen to history classes. We’ve always been interested in history but didn’t know about CSI Squad at all. The Club supervisor who is a history teacher recommended the program to us, and the program was way more exciting than we expected.

The program is comprised of an individual investigation and a team investigation. How did you like each?

(Park) It was such an extraordinary experience. When I first heard the program title, “Chosun Special Investigation,” it sounded so strange to me. But I enjoyed the relics and properties in the Museum more than any time before thanks to the program. The relics I investigated today looked differently. The properties that show the people’s daily life in the Joseon period are just a fraction of the entire exhibition and they have never looked so special to me.

I could feel a great sense of achievement when I managed to identify the location of the property in the Exhibition Hall and find the first lead from the property for my individual investigation. When my team put together the leads we found for the team investigation, new leads emerged from them. The team discussion and analysis of the stories behind the properties and the crime cases were other sources of fun.

You’ve probably developed a view of relics through the program. How did you feel about being part of the CSI Squad?

(Shin) I hope to be able to participate in the program again. The properties to investigate, I mean, the goal to achieve was so clear that I enjoyed the investigation a lot. I didn’t even realize the time flying. At first, I felt awkward because I met my team members today for the first time. While working together to solve the crime cases, we could developed a shared affinity. We also had a chance to listen to the conclusions of the other groups. Just like my team, they did create intriguing stories full of imagination. It is amazing to realize so many different stories can be thought of about a same case.

When the second semester begins after the summer vacation, students at other schools will participate in the program. Why don’t you tell us how we can improve the program?

(Yun) I am definitely going to recommend CSI Squad to my friends. The program will dispel their perception of National History as a boring subject. One thing I hope to be changed is the allocation of cases. We worked in eight groups and all the groups were assigned with the same cases. I think the participants may be able to learn more about our cultural properties and periodic histories if different cases are given to different groups. And the time was not enough. After searching for leads only for an hour and discussions followed, we didn’t have enough time to appreciate relics belonging to the other periods. It must be great if we had more time after the program to tour around the Museum. ≡

“Today’s full of amazing moments.”

Music Experience in Relics



The NMK offers diverse programs designed to provide equal opportunities of culture and art education to the public. There are ten programs tailored to the four types of impairment: visual, hearing, intellectual, and physical. In the Lecture Room 3 at the Education Center where the classes are held, the replicas of representative properties conserved at the NMK are on display so that all participants can touch and feel them.

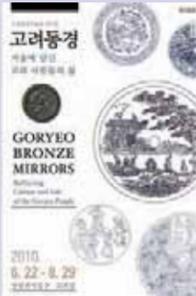
The “Music Experience in Relics” is a program for the people with hearing impairment. In the well-received program, participants learn the characteristics of wind, string, and percussion instruments and “feel” the different sound by watching and touching musical instruments of the Three-Kingdom period ^{57BC-668AD}. The “water vibration speaker” enables the participants to “see” the rhythm while the “paper vibration speaker” allows them to touch and feel the vibrating sound. The vibration tools developed by experts for the program also help participants tell the difference in the sounds of wind, string and percussion instruments. In addition, the instructor guides the participants to match a musical sound with a painting featured at the NMK that have the closest feels, so that the participants can develop their senses and emotions through the artworks.

In the two-hour session from 10:00 am on June 3, about 20 students of the Seoul National School for the Deaf took part in and explored a new world of music through the wavelengths delivered by the special vibration equipment. The most popular was the experiential activities. While making a speaker in the shape of *wanham* 阮咸 (a round-bodied lute of the Three-Kingdom period), the participants couldn’t hide their excitement. The activity of reproducing the wanham speaker helps them understand the particular shape and characteristic of the musical instruments. As the wanham vibration speaker allows a user to “feel” sounds in any places with a computer when oscillators and USB cable are attached, the participants were greatly satisfied with the easy-to-carry speaker. The program is open to schools or facilities for people with hearing impairment and reservation can be made by telephone in advance. ≡

Theme Exhibtions

Goryeo Bronze Mirrors: Reflecting Culture and Life of the Goryeo People

Date June 22-August 29, 2010
 Venue Goryeo Room, Medieval & Early Modern History Gallery



The NMK puts its collection of Goryeo period bronze mirrors, including the latest discoveries, on exhibition. Under the five categories, the exhibition is designed to introduce the genesis of Goryeo bronze mirrors as well as the life and culture of the Goryeo period reflected in them. A notable characteristic of the exhibition is featuring some epoch-making recent findings that could require the chronicle of bronze mirrors to be revisited. In particular, the fish-pattern bronze mirror excavated in Chudong-ri, Seocheon was wrapped in one of the five bundles of paper, *mukseojipyeon* 墨書紙片. The papers that wrapped the mirror are estimated to be a kind of document on account of some legible letters written on it such as *gihae* 己亥 (a name of time frame), *joyeon* 趙延, and *gyeong* 興. Other relics found along with the fish-pattern bronze mirror include ancient Chinese coins called *Chongningzhongbao* 崇寧重寶.1102-1106 and celadon ware that was used until the 11th or 12th century. Thus *gihae* 己亥 is presumed to be a time period either in 1119 or in 1179. The Chudong-ri bronze mirror is a valuable source of information for future studies as it is the only case where the production year can be estimated.

White Porcelain Jars: Embracing the Joseon Ideals and Rituals

Date June 15-November 14, 2010
 Venue White Porcelain Room, Sculpture and Crafts Gallery



White Porcelain Jars: Embracing the Joseon Ideals and Rituals throws fresh light on the features and characteristics of the Joseon period ceramic art. In the exhibition themed upon white porcelain jars features not only jars used by the commons but also those with a specific purpose for the Joseon royal family such as *taehang-ari* 胎盤 (placenta jar), *myeonggi* 明器 (burial ware), *yonqjun* 龍樽 (jar with dragon motif). The exhibition consists of three themes: The first part titled “Characteristics and Evolution of White Porcelain Jars” provides an overview of the history of Joseon period jars. The second theme, “White Porcelain Jars of the Joseon Royal Family” introduces how the jars reflect the royal family’s culture and ideology of the Joseon Dynasty which was founded upon Neo-Confucianism. The last part “White Porcelain Jars Unearthed from Hanyang, the Capital of Joseon” showcases white porcelain jars which have been discovered in Seoul, as the results of the recently robust excavation activities in the capital area.

The Rediscovery of Sinan Shipwreck Ceramics

Date From May 4, 2010
 Venue Sinan Seabed Room, Asia Gallery

A new section themed upon the *Rediscovery of Sinan Shipwreck Ceramics* has been opened within the Sinan Seabed Room at Asian Art Gallery. The ceramic ware, which were salvaged from the ancient ship wrecked on the way from Ningbo City, China to Kyoto, Japan, are representative of the 14th century Chinese ceramics for export. The over 20,000 pieces of ceramics present a wide variety of ancient Chinese ceramic ware burned in various different kilns in China. Previously five ancient kilns in China were identified as the origins of the *Sinan Shipwreck Ceramics*. In the course of preparing for the new exhibition section, additional seven kilns are found as the birthplaces of the ceramics. The content of the exhibition which is meant to be a journey back to the origin of the *Sinan Shipwreck Ceramics* will walk visitors through the various stages of distribution that the ancient ceramics burned in the ancient Chinese kilns went through to reach overseas customers. The section also enables visitors to understand the Chinese ceramics culture comprehensively and incorporates diverse social, economic, and cultural perspectives including the usages and distribution channels of the ceramic ware.



The New Joseon Room

Date From August 5, 2010
 Venue Medieval & Early Modern History Gallery

Located on the first floor of National Museum of Korea, the Medieval & Early Modern History Gallery will newly open the Joseon Room on Aug 5, 2010. The new Joseon room includes collections from “King and Nation,” “Socio-Economic Life,” “Print & Map,” and “Foreign Relations,” and reforms into five sections by chronological order to provide better understanding of the collection, under the following titles; Joseon 1: Foundation & Organization of the State, Joseon 2: Confucian Development and Foreign Relations, Joseon 3: Reorganization of New Order, Joseon 4: Tangpyeong Policy and Cultural Enhancement, and Joseon 5: Emergence of Modern Society. The new room exhibits approximately 1,100 relics featuring *Portrait of King Taejo* and *Astrolabe Clock (Honcheonsigye)*.



Publications

God, Heroes and Mortals: art and life in ancient Greece

The catalog is comprised of four parts: Part I “Gods, Heroes and Outsiders,” Part II “Human Figures,” Part III “Olympia and Sports,” and Part IV “The Greek Life,” each highlights the Greek mythology, the Greek’s ideals of human bodies, their spirit and life, respectively. Featured essays contributed by art professionals will further enrich the exhibition experience of the readers visiting *God, Heroes and Mortals: art and life in ancient Greece*.
 ISBN: 978-89-94207-01-8



Buddhist Hanging Scroll of Geumdangsa, Treasure No.1266

The NMK has published the *Buddhist Hanging Scroll of Geumdangsa, Treasure No.1266* as the catalogue for the significant exhibition. The publication provides a comprehensive introduction of Geumdangsa’s history and the cultural properties in possession of the Buddhist temple. The book is constituted with five chapters including “Geumdangsa’s History and Cultural Properties,” “Buddhist Rituals and Hanging Scrolls,” “Hanging Scroll of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva,” “Hanging Scroll of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva,” explores the cherished Buddhist treasure in a multidimensional perspective.
 ISBN: 978-89-93719-06-2



Scenes of a Bronze-Age Village

Recent discoveries of archeological materials from the Bronze Age have largely increased in number. The *Scenes of a Bronze-Age Village* describes a typical Bronze Age village and its characteristics based upon various relics. The content composed of “Development of Agriculture,” “Evolution of Tools,” “Emergence of Village,” “Rituals and Ceremonies,” and “Conflict and Consolidation” illustrates how the progress in agriculture and tools gave rise to large villages which, in turn, led to the appearance of rulers with strong power who led the tribe and maintained order. The *Scenes of a Bronze-Age Village* offers an interesting insight into the dynamics of Bronze Age society.
 ISBN: 978-89-92788-33-5



White Porcelain Jars: Embracing the Joseon Ideals and Rituals

Following the flow of the exhibition, the catalog is comprise of three themes. The first part reviews the changing features and characteristics of white porcelain jars of 15th-19th centuries and the second part examines the diverse implications of the Joseon period royal culture contained in white porcelain jars. The last chapter appreciates jars as containers for day-to-day use, through the relics that have been excavated in Hanyang, currently Seoul, and the capital of Joseon.
 ISBN: 978-89-93719-07-9



The International Journal of Korean Art and Archaeology Issue No.3

The third issue of the *International Journal of Korean Art and Archaeology*, an international academic journal published by the NMK, has been released. The latest issue features five academic papers carefully selected by an international group of 17 experts. The *International Journal of Korean Art and Archaeology* were created in 2007 with the aim to contribute to the development of Korean Studies by disseminate outstanding achievements of academic researches on the Korean tradition and culture to the world. The international journal is distributed to some 800 institutions including universities, museums, libraries, and Korean culture centers at home and abroad.
 ISSN: 2005-1115



Goryeo Bronze Mirrors: Reflecting Culture and Life of the Goryeo People

Introducing current theme exhibition *Goryeo Bronze Mirrors: Reflecting Culture and Life of the Goryeo People*, the catalog features pictures and detailed description of the relics displayed. The book also introduces components of the bronze mirrors, which is analyzed by the conservation team of the NMK with the help of laboratory microscope. Reporting varied cases of excavation in which Goryeo bronze mirrors were found since 1990s, the catalog is expected to be a primary reference for related studies in the future.
 ISBN: 978-89-93719-08-6



Painting of Four Deities drawn

on the *Gangseojungmyo*

Date August 17-November 28, 2010
Venue Prehistory and Ancient History Gallery
National Museum of Korea

Gangseojungmyo^{江西中墓} (*Gangseo* mid-sized tomb), one of the most representative tombs of late Goguryeo period, has been noted for its murals drawn on the stone walls. The four deities^{四神} (Blue Dragon, White Tiger, Red Phoenix, and Black Tortoise) covering the wall with no backdrops indicate individual guardians of the tomb. Through the four deities, it is possible to read the Goguryeo society in which Taoism and *Yin-Yang and the Five Elements*^{阴阳五行} were prevailed, as well as then how people perceived the afterlife. The well-executed painting of Four Deities has such significance in that its sophisticated technique shows the highly advanced quality of ancient painting and aesthetics of Goguryeo people.