

Temple, Palace, Scholar's House: Three Settings of Traditional Korean Culture



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ASIAN ART MUSEUM
CHONG-MOON LEE CENTER
FOR ASIAN ART AND CULTURE

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Acknowledgments

Packet written by Brian Hogarth
Director of Education, Asian Art Museum

Portions of the text are adapted from lectures and publications by Dr. Kumja Paik Kim, Curator of Korean Art, Asian Art Museum, Dr. Lewis Lancaster, Distinguished Professor of Buddhist Studies, University of California, Berkeley, and Dr. Mark Peterson, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. See resource list for complete listing of books.

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Note that McCune-Reischauer spellings have been followed for Korean terms in the text.

Introduction

Previous packets produced by the Asian Art Museum on Korea-related subjects have focused on art collections or art exhibitions. Recognizing, however, that many of the teachers and students visiting our galleries come from social studies classes, we have decided to take a broader cultural approach in this packet.

Our purpose here is to introduce teachers and other readers to several traditional settings of Korean culture: Buddhist temples, Palaces, and Scholar's Houses, as well as Confucian Academies where scholars were trained. These settings provide a framework or backdrop for many of the historical art objects on display at the museum.

The historical focus of this packet is from the Koryo dynasty (918–1392) through the Choson dynasty (1392–1910), almost a thousand year period leading up to the modern era.

By looking at broad historical and cultural trends during this time and students and teachers can discuss how:

- Korea has developed its own indigenous culture, adopted cultural influences from outside, and transmitted cultural beliefs elsewhere.
- Korea imported Buddhist and Confucian traditions from China, adapting them into their own beliefs and practices.
- Korean art and architectural forms are related to those of its neighbors, but with unique characteristics.
- Historical and cultural forces developed in the past continue to influence Korean culture and society today.

Background information contained in this packet is designed for the teacher to read or use as needed. Slides and slide descriptions, as well as handouts and suggested learning activities are designed for use in the classroom.

Comments, corrections and feedback on these materials are always welcome. Please contact the Asian Art Museum Education department at Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, CA 94118 415-379-8710.

Korea: The Geographical Context

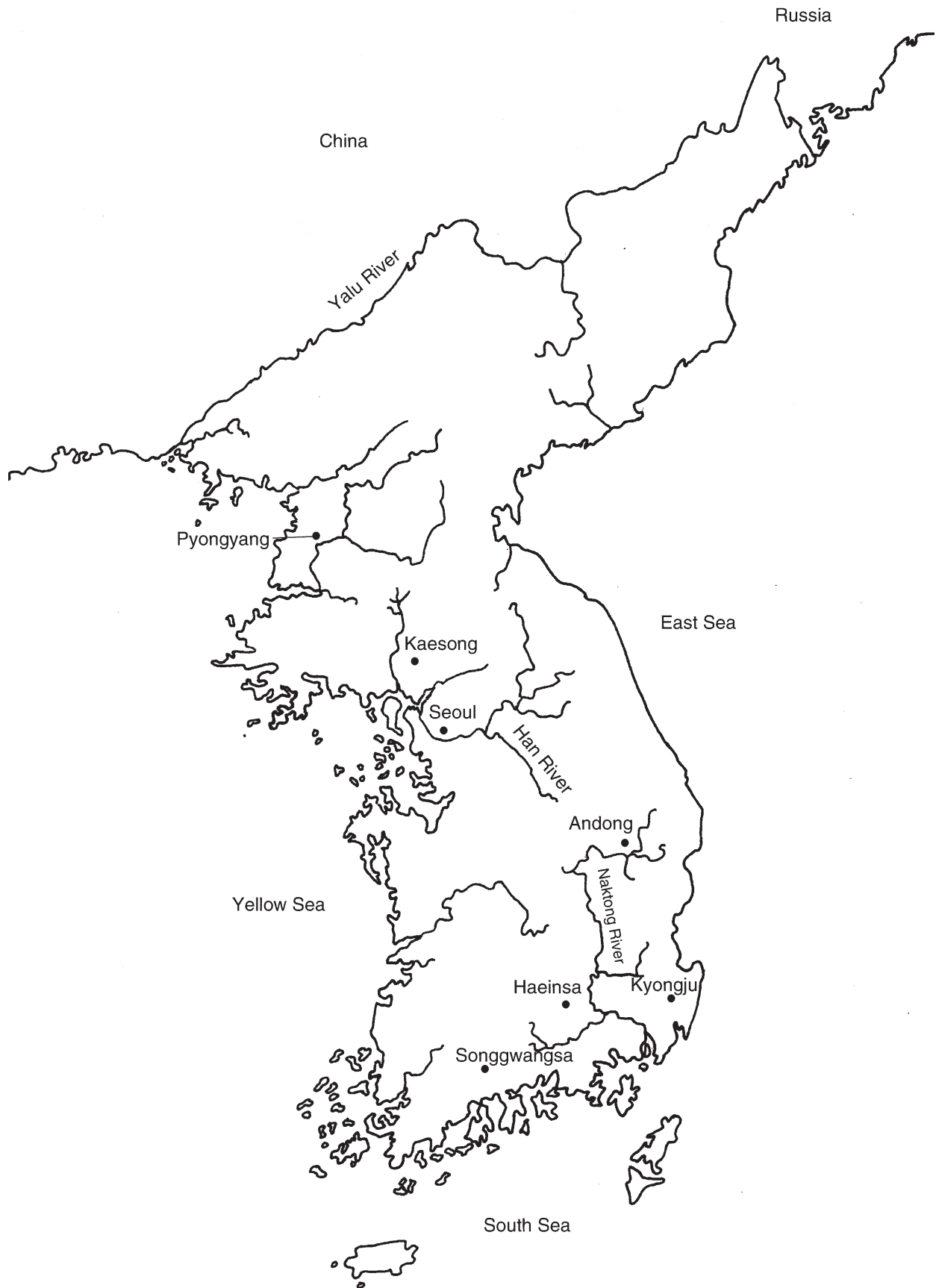
Korea is a peninsula on the eastern side of the Eurasian continent, jutting into the sea between China and Japan. It covers 85,000 square miles, about the size of Minnesota or Great Britain. Approximately 70 percent of the land mass is mountainous.

The Yalu river forms a natural border between North Korea and China and the southeastern tip of Russia near Vladivostok. Other major rivers are associated with major cities: the Taedong river passing through the North Korean capital of P'yongyang, the Han river through the South Korean capital of Seoul, and the Nakdong river, which flows south to the sea near the port city of Pusan.



Korea forms a natural link between the ecologies and human cultures of China, Russia, and Japan, and as such, has been both a peaceful conduit of culture and civilization, and a stage for conflict between competing powers. Despite Mongol and Japanese invasions, and the devastation of the Korean war (1950–1953) which divided Korea along the 38th parallel, there were sustained periods of development in Korean history, resulting in a largely homogenous culture.

Map of Korea



Ancient Korea

In this section, we briefly review the foundations of Korea in the Bronze Age, leading up to the formation of Three Kingdoms.

Neolithic and Bronze-Age Korea

Evidence of human habitation on the Korean peninsula begins with the Paleolithic period—from 400,000 to 10,000 years ago, but more extensive signs emerge during the Neolithic period, between roughly 10,000–1,000 BCE (before the common era, or AD 1 in the Western calendar). The material remains from this time are mostly pottery, hence the identification of cultures by pottery styles. For example, “Chulmun” style pottery is reddish brown earthenware decorated with parallel lines called a “comb pattern.” Some regions developed flat-bottomed pottery; others preferred round-based pottery. Settled communities grew as hunting and gathering began to be replaced or supplemented with agriculture. Houses were partly below ground, with thatched roofs supported by posts. From around 1500 BCE, large stones (dolmens) were placed over burials. About 20,000 of these can still be seen around Korea today.

By approximately 1,000 BCE, the Bronze Age in Korea had begun. Bronze was cast for weapons, as well as luxury items such as crowns and mirrors. The Bronze Age also saw the introduction of rice cultivation into Korea, either from mainland China or from Southeast Asia.

Koreans are believed to have descended in large part from the southern migrations of Tungusic people from the Siberian/Manchurian region. Linguistic analysis of Korean places it within the Ural-Altaic family of languages. This family includes the languages of the Mongols, Kazakhstans, Tungus, Manchus, and is even related to Hungarian, Turkish, and Finnish.

A fascination with metal relates to these nomadic roots of Korean culture. Nomadic cultures are horseback riding peoples, meaning a life attuned to the saddle and to seeking out pastures. This life lends itself to metal tools and cooking utensils. Even today, Koreans eat with metal chopsticks, and frequently use metal bowls for eating.

Between about 200 BCE to 1 CE, iron was introduced into Korea from the northeastern area of China. Initially, it was imported, but soon it began to be manufactured within the Korean peninsula. One of the later states to emerge in the south, Kaya, became a major supplier of iron and also began using the wheel to make pottery. Iron tools accelerated the development of agriculture, and the development of more stratified societies. This led to walled communities, in order to protect settled life and accumulated resources. The first that we know of was called “Old Choson.” *Choson* means “morning calm,” a term that was adopted by the later Choson dynasty (1392–1910). Wiman Choson, which followed Old Choson, was overrun by armies of the Chinese Han emperor Wudi in 108 BCE. This Chinese settlement became known as Nangnang (Lelang in Chinese; near present-day P’yongyang), one of four commandaries established in the northcentral region. It fell to the emerging state of Koguryo in 313 of the common era (CE).

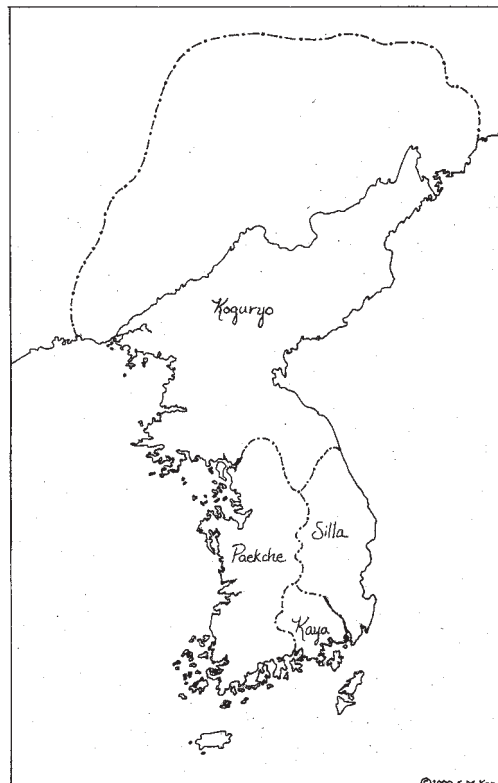
There are mythological references to these early kingdoms. The most famous legend speaks of the founding of the Korean race by Tan'gun, the offspring of Hwanung, the younger son of the Heavenly king, who coupled with a bear that the gods had changed into a woman. Each of the major states that evolved in the 3rd century CE adopted creation myths and specific dates were later assigned indicating when each kingdom began.

Three Kingdoms

During the late Iron Age and the time of the Chinese commandaries, three competing states arose in the north, southwest and southeast, eventually forming the Three Kingdoms Period (57 BCE–668 CE). All three kingdoms fell in and out of alliances with each other. All recognized the supremacy of China, and tried to influence China to their own advantage.

The largest of the three kingdoms was Koguryo, a warlike state based on a league of five peoples in the north. Although it repelled Chinese forces from Nangnang, Koguryo maintained close ties with China, adopting both Confucian and Buddhist practices, as well as the Chinese writing system. It maintained dominance over the northern half of the peninsula for several centuries, but was weakened by a series of prolonged attacks from the other two states in the mid-600s.

Paekche, located in the southwest, claimed descent from peoples who had migrated south to the area around modern-day Kwangju. Paekche took advantage of its proximity to China to develop an extensive trade network. It also had close ties to the island of Kyushu (part of present-day Japan). One of the kings of Paekche, Song Wang (reigned 523–554) introduced Buddhism to Japan.



Paekche battled Koguryo in the late 300s, when its capital was located at Hansong (present-day Seoul); it was pushed further south by Koguryo a century later. A long-held alliance with Silla ended in 553, and Paekche united with Koguryo to battle Silla. This confrontation resulted in both Koguryo and Paekche falling to Silla between 660–668 CE.

Between Paekche and Silla in the south lay a federation of states known as Kaya, located south of Mount Kaya, west of the Naktong river. Kaya made considerable contributions in the area of arts and technology. Excavations in the area of present-day Kimhae have established the development of high-fired ceramics (stoneware) and iron armor and weapons which were exported to the north and to Japan. Kaya ceramics are highly varied in form. Kaya was conquered by Silla in 562 CE. Silla (pronounced “shilla”) emerged in the vicinity of Saro, later called Kumsong (present-day Kyongju) in the southeast part of the peninsula. The kingdom was consolidated in the mid-300s, after which it undertook further expansion. Silla did not adopt Buddhism until the sixth century, much later than Koguryo and Paekche. Silla claimed two queens among its rulers just before unification. After absorbing Kaya in 562, Silla enlisted the aid of Tang Chinese forces to help defeat Paekche in 660 CE, and then Koguryo in 668 CE.



Pedestal
Stoneware, Kaya, late 5th century
Asian Art Museum, 1990.32

Shamanism and Priest Rulers

During ancient times, the people of Korea practiced various forms of shamanism. These practices continue to this day. Although the word *shaman* is used in a number of cultural contexts, it is closely connected with northeast Asian and sub-Arctic cultures. Rather than a religion organized around founders, texts, dogmas, or hierarchies of priests, shamanism revolves around individuals (usually female shamans, Korean *mudang*) who make contact with the spirit world by falling into a trance, by dancing or performing (*kut*). During the trance, the shaman is possessed by a spirit, or can converse with spirits for the purposes of soothsaying, exorcism, healing, including assisting souls of the deceased on their journey after life, or to address restless souls who might be causing trouble. Shamanism is recorded a number of times throughout

Korean history, and it seems to have mingled with elements of Buddhism and Daoism.

There is some suggestion that references to “heavenly priests” in ancient times indicate that early kings were also shamans. It is more likely that early kings took on a symbolic role as chief priest, since at the time, there was not the same division of secular and sacred authority that developed later as religious institutions became more formalized. Early kings were often clan heads or patriarchs of a particular descent line. The lineage referred back to a primogenitor, who in ancient times might have been linked to animal powers. The evocation of animal powers is a common feature of shamanistic societies. The presence of symbols such as the tree, antler, and claw on gold crowns found in Silla tombs are linked to the headdresses of Siberian shamans.

Crowns

Complete gold crowns have been discovered from Silla tombs. The first gold crown was uncovered in 1921. Other tombs were also found to contain gold crowns. The burial mounds consisted of a wooden chamber tomb covered by layers of stone and earth. In addition to gold crowns, the occupants were buried with gold necklaces, girdles, silver ornaments, as well as pottery and glass vessels.

The gold crowns are made of sheets of gold, formed into a head band. Rising from the band are uprights in the shape of stylized trees, antlers and/or wings. Embryonic, comma-shaped jades resembling bear or tiger claws are often attached with gold



Gold crown
Silla, 4th-6th century
National Museum of Korea

thread. Numerous bangles hang down like leaves from the “tree” uprights. The tree symbolizes a ladder, from which the gods descend to earth. The three-pronged shape also resembles the Chinese character for mountain. Trees connect earth to heaven since the roots reach down into the earth, and the branches ascend to heaven. Bird wings also symbolize the connection between earth and heaven, as birds fly freely through space. Deer antlers symbolize renewal, since deer shed their horns in autumn and sprout new ones in spring.

It is not known whether the gold crowns were worn in ceremonies, or made just for burial. In either case, they convey authority, as well as the rich cosmology associated with early shamanistic beliefs.

Unified Silla

In this section, we review the formation of a unified state under Silla, its support of Buddhism and attempted administrative reforms.

Unified Silla (668-935 CE)

Silla allied itself with Tang China in order to fight Paekche, and then Koguryo. China had been beaten back several times in past battles with Koguryo. Siding with Silla allowed China to break the stalemate in the north by attacking from the south. After the fall of Paekche and Koguryo, China began to set up administrative offices in the newly conquered districts, hoping to regain control over all of Korea. Silla took advantage of rebellions in the defeated states, turning them against the Chinese. In 676, after a further eight years of conflict, the Chinese were expelled from Korea. The area north of the Taedong river, however, was taken over by various Koguryo and Khitan peoples and became known as the state of Parhae. Silla controlled the rest of the peninsula, but it was not until 735 CE that China finally recognized Silla's new boundaries.



Vessel in form of mounted warrior
Silla, 5th-6th century
National Museum of Korea

One factor in Silla's success was its system of training young men. *Hwarang* ("flower boys" or "elite youth") were groups of young aristocratic men trained in ritual dances, songs, and mountain hikes. This recruitment and training indoctrinated young men and probably prepared them for the military. A number of the prominent men who were instrumental in Silla's victory over the neighboring states were *hwarang* in their youth.

Once Silla control was established, diplomatic ties resumed with China. Peaceful times brought renewed trade. One Korean merchant by the name of Chang Po-go amassed a fortune through trade with Shandong province in China, partly by polic-

ing the seas to get rid of pirates. Trade also allowed Buddhist monks to travel to the mainland in search of relics, texts, and images.

Unified Silla adopted Buddhism as the official state religion. The idea of all peoples and classes worshipping the Buddha and the various bodhisattvas appealed to the Silla kings as a way to bring all classes into one line of submission. The court supported the construction of Buddha images, pagodas and temples with the belief that their presence helped protect the nation. Many of these monuments still survive—for example, the temple of Pulguksa and the famous granite statue at Sokkuram, both located in the hills above Kyongju. Buddhist monks offered teaching and medicinal help, and promoted the use of Chinese writing. For the lower classes, Buddhism offered the promise of salvation and a release from hardship and oppression. (See the separate section on Korean Buddhism)



Buddha
Sokkuram Grotto
Unified Silla period, second half of 8th century
Vicinity of Kyongju

By the time of Unified Silla (668 CE), ancient Korea had progressed from a wide-ranging set of independent clans and communities to a more stratified society based on a central monarchy and court. Prior to unification, Silla power was based on a “bone-rank” system, with clear lines of descent. The king was *songgol* or “sacred bone,” descended from the Kim clan. Next in line was *chin’gol* or “true-bone” rank, followed by *tup’um* or “head rank.” Silla kings had always married members of the Pak clan. This changed in the mid-600s, when all royalty became *chin’gol*, the true-bone rank. The old methods of decision making by meetings with clan leaders (*hwabaek*) were dropped, and in its place various branches of government were added, along Chinese lines. Among these were an executive branch, a judicial branch, and a group of censors who monitored the other parts of government for corruption. Confucian training in the arts of government was instituted in 682 with the founding of the first National Academy (*Kukhak*). The military ranks, previously led by the aristocracy from the capital, were replaced by men from Koguryo and Paekche in six of the nine military units. The whole of society was categorized by various grades, with the vast majority of people falling into commoner (*chonmin*) or slave status. The increased size of the unified kingdom required an increased level of centralized

administration. The country was divided into provinces, and attempts were made to set up local administrators along Chinese lines and to reform the land-holding system, which allowed the government to grant land on a permanent and hereditary basis. The reforms ran into trouble, not only from the aristocratic power base, but also from a shrinking tax base as more land came into private hands. The peasantry felt the double burden from local administrators and hereditary lords. These became factors in Silla's eventual downfall, and would surface again as major issues in the Choson dynasty (see the section on land issues)

Silla's foundation began to erode in the century following the reign of King Kyongdok (mid-700s). There were frequent shifts in the monarchy, each unable to secure a strong power base. Regional "castle lords" grew more powerful, and when the peasants revolted in 889, several factions proclaimed a re-emergence of the old states Paekche and Koguryo. "Later Paekche" was led by Kyon Hwon, a peasant leader. "Later Koguryo" was led by a former Silla aristocrat from the north named Kungye. Both men proved to be tyrants. Kungye was killed by his own generals and was succeeded by Wang Kon in 918. Wang Kon defeated Kyon Hwon and accepted the surrender of the last Silla king in 935.

Koryo

In this section, we review the major political events of the Koryo dynasty, and the invasions that struck Korea in the latter half of the dynasty.

Koryo dynasty (918–1392)

The Koryo dynasty, from which the English and French words for Korea are derived, was marked by intellectual and cultural achievements as well as several periods of foreign invasion, instability, and shifting foreign relations.

The handover of power from the last Silla king to Wang Kon (posthumously known as King T'aejo) was relatively peaceful. T'aejo went out of his way to stabilize the various factions throughout the country in order to establish his position. The former Silla king was employed as governor of Kyongju. T'aejo took a Silla wife and also arranged marriage ties with some twenty gentry families. Farmers were relieved of taxation for a period of three years in order to recuperate. Even so, the new king remained concerned about the stability of the new state, which largely rested on the continuing question of aristocratic privilege versus social mobility. He issued a famous set of Ten Injunctions that he hoped would guide his descendants. In them, he professed his belief in Buddhism and in the powers of geomancy and shamanism to protect the state and the new capital at Kaesong. (See "Student Readings").

The numerous in-laws created by T'aejo's multiple marriages led to succession problems after his death. Only after ruthlessly eliminating his potential enemies did King Kwangjong restore stability to the throne in 949. Over the next few reigns, the government was reshaped by reducing the power of the provincial landlords and by establishing an examination system in 958 that broadened the potential for more people to enter the ranks of the official bureaucracy. There were three levels of examination, based on the knowledge of classical Chinese literature and scholarship. Government officials were distinguished by the style and color of their clothing.

Despite these changes, many aristocratic privileges remained. For example, the upper levels of the aristocracy were exempt from having to take any of the government examinations, and were guaranteed positions of importance. The military leaders, on the other hand, saw their positions decline in importance.

China: Serving the Great

Korean history cannot be recounted without reference to China. Korea's relationship to China was like that of a younger brother to an older brother. China was seen as the dominant culture, the source of civilizing rituals, the "Greece and Rome" of the East Asian world.

Underlying the relationship between China and its neighbors was the principal of *sadae* or "serving the great." This phrase was drawn from the ancient Chinese Confucian philosopher Mencius, who observed that the subservience of the ruler of a small kingdom to a larger neighboring state should be reciprocated by the benevolence of the larger state. In other words, like father to son, or elder brother to younger

brother, large and small states were obliged to honor their relationship in formal ways.

China interpreted its position as the “middle kingdom” (the center of all things) and expected neighbors to defer to that status by sending tribute and exchanging diplomatic missions as well as bestowing titles that reflected that relationship. The elder brother feeling was reinforced by the adoption of Chinese cultural values and practices such as Confucianism, Chinese writing, court rituals, Buddhist practices, and so on by neighboring states such as Korea and Japan.

Korean adoption of Chinese values and practices was not a one-way street. Korean scholars made significant contributions to Chinese scholarship. Korean ceramics during the Koryo dynasty were felt by the Chinese to be equal to or in some cases, better than Chinese ceramics from the same time period. Korean ink and paper products were highly sought after by Chinese scholars. Korean merchants and shipbuilders dominated the sea lanes between the two countries for centuries.

Tribute missions took place between China and Korea from the Three Kingdoms period through the Choson dynasty. For many of those years, we know the actual number of missions that took place. For example, 63 missions were sent during the eighth century CE during the Unified Silla period. During the 10th and 11th centuries (early Koryo period) there were thirteen missions from Korea and seventeen from China. Korea typically sent textiles, furs, gold, silver, weapons, ginseng, and paper. China typically sent silk, ritual objects, tea, medicine, jade, books, Buddhist objects, and musical instruments. Missions also took place around funerals, investitures and other significant dates concerning royalty. They also included the exchange of personnel, including slaves, musicians and dancers, and members of the court. During the Mongol period, hawks from Korea were in great demand as hunting birds.

Tribute missions contributed to the development of real commerce and trade. Officially, trade was restricted to diplomatic missions, but unofficially a great deal of trade and commerce between the upper classes was tagged on to the tribute missions. Luxury items such as jade and ceramics that turned up in Korean aristocratic households were most likely shipped this way--after all, the aristocracy and Confucian gentlemen would have publicly frowned upon commercial activity. This explains Korea's enthusiasm for supporting tribute missions, even at times when relations with China were uncertain or when military confrontations were taking place.

Diplomatic exchange for the purposes of bestowing titles and recognizing newly formed states became an increasing problem for the Korean court over time. Officially, China and Korea could not exchange missions without receiving approval in the form of a seal and proper title from the Emperor of China. The first king of Choson (T'aejo) wasn't recognized as king at first because of unresolved disputes over Chinese living in Korean territory. As powerful kingdoms besides China formed on Korea's borders, the Korean government had to weigh the pros and cons of who they would exchange diplomatic missions with. In addition, Korea's relations to China became even more complicated when China was overrun by so-called barbarians, for example when the Song dynasty was overrun by the Jin, or when the Manchus overran the Ming dynasty. Chaotic conditions in China sometimes led to the impression that Korea was the torch bearer of Chinese civilization.

Foreign Invasions and Military Dictatorship

Around the same time that the Koryo dynasty was taking shape, the Khitan peoples of southeastern Manchuria grew in strength and overthrew Parhae. They also conquered the Jurchen people living along the borders of the Yalu river, on Koryo's borders, proclaiming a new Liao dynasty in 946. By 989, these Liao armies were amassing along the banks of the Yalu river. Fearing an alliance between Koryo and Song China, Liao forces invaded in 993. They were repelled and withdrew temporarily, only to attack again in 1010. This time, Koryo forces were defeated, their commander was captured, and Liao forces advanced on the capital. Kaesong was sacked, but the Koryo army and court had withdrawn, and were able to launch a counterattack, inflicting heavy losses on the Khitan. A final campaign was launched in 1018. This time, Liao forces were soundly defeated.

A new threat arose from the Jurchen peoples, who overtook the Liao in 1115 by allying themselves with the Song Chinese. The victorious Jurchen then turned on the Chinese. In 1126, they captured the Chinese capital at Kaifeng, along with the Emperor Huizeng. This meant the whole of China was now under Jurchen control. Koryo was faced with the dilemma of whether to respect the Song court, now relocated south at Hangzhou, or to pay tribute to increasingly threatening Jurchen, now called the Jin dynasty.

Mass conscription of the populace began. Thirty years of war with the Liao dynasty and the new threat from the Jurchen, however, were creating instability at the Koryo court. Finally, a series of factional disputes ended in a military takeover of the Koryo court in 1170. Various generals fought for control for years until one, Ch'oe Ch'ung-hon, launched a military dictatorship that lasted from 1197 until 1258.

During the Ch'oe dictatorship, Koryo kings continued to rule, but real power passed to a military caucus with sweeping powers. Ch'oe's son, Ch'oe U, succeeded his father, thus establishing hereditary rule. He attempted to win support by returning confiscated land and slaves to their rightful owners, and by inviting scholars and civil officials to take part in government once again. But serious peasant revolts continued to plague the regime, and a new threat arose from the north—the Mongols.

Mongols were nomadic peoples who developed into a strong horseback warrior culture under the leadership of Chinggis (Genghis) Khan around the beginning of the 13th century. Positioned to the north of China, they moved with lightning speed across Asia, all the way to Europe. By 1215, Mongol forces had conquered much of the Jin (Jurchen) state, which included northern China and the city of Beijing. Jin refugees poured into Korea, burning and pillaging as they moved. Koryo joined forces with the Mongols to rid themselves of the Jin in 1219, but this was only the first step in what turned out to be a full-scale Mongol invasion in 1231. Koryo sued for peace. This stopped the invasion, but resulted in huge tribute demands by the Mongols. The list included thousands of otter skins, horses, pieces of clothing, as well as hundreds of aristocratic virgins. The Ch'oe government accepted, but quickly moved the entire government to Kanghwa Island, at the mouth of the Han and Imjin rivers. This position exploited the Mongol fear of the sea. From here, the exiled government carried on until 1270, supported by grain taxes delivered by sea.

With a government in exile, the rest of the populace was forced to withstand the full force of Mongol invasion. Food was in short supply and thousands were slaughtered defending various mountain strongholds and island bases. Even monks took up arms. Countless treasures, records, and monuments were destroyed. The nine storied pagoda at Hwangyongsa in Kyongju was destroyed, as were a complete set of Buddhist texts in the form of woodblocks. The level of hardship was intolerable. In 1258, the last Ch'oe dictator was assassinated, and by 1270, the court was reestablished at Kaesong. Resistance to Mongol rule continued in the south for several more years and was only put down by combined Mongol-Koryo forces in 1273.

By 1279, Mongol rule of China was complete, with Khubilai Khan as emperor. For most of the next century, Korea continued under Mongol rule. Koryo kings were subordinated in several ways. The suffix *jong* (“ancestor” or “progenitor”) was dropped from their titles and replaced by *wang*, (“loyal subject”). Crown princes were required to live in Beijing and marry Mongol princes, only being allowed to return to Kaesong on the death of the king. Korea was forced to comply with Mongol plans to invade the western Japanese island of Kyushu in 1274 and again in 1281. Both invasions involved some 900 ships, and thousands of combined Chinese, Mongol and Korean troops. Both were repelled by determined Japanese resistance, and strong storms at sea.

Koryo Celadons

During the Koryo dynasty, artisans created a range of luxury items for the use of the court, the aristocracy, and the Buddhist establishment. Among these, the most famous are the Koryo celadons. These celadons reached a peak of production in the 12th century, just before the Mongol invasions.

Celadon is a European term used to describe the bluish-green glazes on certain types of Chinese and Korean ceramics. The unique color was probably derived from the color of jade, a hard stone revered throughout Chinese and other Asian cultures. Greenish-gray ceramic wares were first produced in China during the Tang (618–907) and Song (960–1279) dynasties. Some of these Chinese wares made their way to Korea as part of diplomatic missions and on merchant ships trading between eastern Chinese ports and the southwest coast of Korea. It was in the southwestern corridor of the Korean peninsula that we find the remains of kilns dating from the Koryo dynasty that began to produce a uniquely Korean version of the bluish-green glazed ceramics. These items were used in a variety of ways—at home, as gifts, as items of trade, used in Buddhist ceremonies and sometimes buried with their owners.

Korean celadons are made of stoneware, a high-fired ceramic that has been dipped in an iron-rich glaze, and fired in a kiln that is deprived of oxygen and is known as a *reduction kiln*. The unique color comes from the exact combination of these elements during the firing process, something that required high technical skill and probably a lot of experimentation. It is believed that only 1 out of every 10 such pieces that came out of the kiln reached the proper standard—the rest would have been considered inferior and broken. Korean celadons are admired for the thinness of the glaze, the numerous yet subtle varieties of shades of greenish-blue (as many as 50 or 60), and the different shapes and forms. Some of these forms are based on natural shapes, such as vegetable gourds. Others were probably based on metal forms (see slide # 10).

Korean celadons can be distinguished from Chinese green-glazed wares not only by form and color, but also by a love of imperfection derived from a close observation of nature, as well as inlay decoration techniques that were unique to Korean ceramics.

Among the first to admire Korean celadons were in fact the Chinese. We have the written testimony of a Chinese envoy from the Song court of Emperor Huizong, who visited Kaesong, the Koryo capital. Another Chinese writer remarked that the celadons (*ch'ongja* in Korean), were to be included with the best of Chinese ceramics, as 'first under Heaven', a remarkable compliment for the time.
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The Downfall of Koryo

By the 1340s, Mongol rule was beginning to break down in China, complicated by a series of natural disasters. Rebellions broke out, including one led by the Red Turbans, that made its way into Korea and briefly occupied Kaesong. In 1368, a powerful rebellion under Zhu Yuanzhang (reign name: *Hongwu*) swept northern China and eventually formed the new Ming dynasty. As the Mongols withdrew, Koryo attempted to regain control. But years of hardships, the cost of fighting and continued problems with Japanese piracy along the southern coast was taking its toll on the regime.

A new, rising class of scholar-officials, trained in Confucian schools, saw corruption all around them—too much privately held land, too many top positions controlled by the military, and too much dependence on a religion (Buddhism) which seemed to run contrary to the principles of social responsibility that they believed were the duty of men in positions of authority and public office. These scholar-officials would play a major role in the coming dynasty.

King Kongmin (1351–1374) attempted to address these problems with further reforms, but he was assassinated. The court broke into factions, one group wishing to support the remnants of Mongol rule in the north, the other wishing to support the new Ming regime in China. Caught in between these extremes was General Yi Song-gye, who had made a name for himself fighting Red Turbans in the north and Japanese pirates in the south. When sent to fight off menacing forces of the Ming encroaching on Koryo territory in 1388, Yi made a momentous decision and turned his army back on the capital, deposing the king and taking over the government. In several years, all land was nationalized and redistributed (even to the point of burning all the old land registers), rivals were eliminated with the support of the army and in addition, new opportunities were given to the scholar-official classes. The stage was set for a new, reform-oriented government.

Choson

In this section, we mainly review the formation of the Choson dynasty, its re-shaping of government and society along Neo-Confucian lines and other issues such as land reform up until the middle of the dynasty.

Choson dynasty (1392–1910)

The Choson dynasty ruled Korea for more than 500 years. During the early part of the dynasty, key government and administrative positions were reorganized, and the principles of Neo-Confucianism formally adopted. Land reform continued to be an issue throughout the dynasty. In the middle of the dynasty, the country was devastated by two Japanese invasions, followed by Manchurian invasions. At the same time, factionalism became a major factor in government, crippling much-needed efforts at reform. In the latter half of the dynasty, agricultural techniques improved, and commercial activities increased. Some political stability was restored during the 1700s. During the later part of the dynasty, however, Korea faced numerous external challenges, Western ideas about social equality as well as new technology leading to the devastating international power struggles of the 20th century.

It took several years for Yi Song-gye (T'aejo) to establish the new dynasty. The choice of a new name for the dynasty was selected by the Chinese emperor. *Choson* means “morning freshness” or “morning calm.” It also makes reference to the ancient kingdom of Choson.

As a symbol of the new dynasty, the capital was moved to Hanyang (modern Seoul) from Kaesong. The site was chosen with the help of geomancy (*p'ungsu*) to ensure good fortune for the new state. New palaces were erected for the royal family and the restructured government administration (see separate section on Royal Palaces). T'aejo's succession became a power struggle among his sons, but his administrative reforms were continued by the major kings who followed him: T'aejong (1400–1418), Sejong (1418–1450) and Sejo (1455–1468).

T'aejong set about disbanding the old Koryo administration. He changed the Privy Council to a state council and gave it less authority. The six ministries (Taxation, Personnel, Punishment, Public Works, Rites, and War office) were given increased power with direct access to the king. Three censor offices (Advisors, Inspectors, and Censors) acted as a check on bad government. The overall direction was towards a more tightly controlled, centralized bureaucracy.

King Sejong (1418–1450) is regarded as one of Korea's great monarchs. He revived a department known as *Chiphyon-jon*, a scholarly research group (like a modern day think tank organization) whose stunning achievement was the invention of the Korean alphabet, known as *Han'gul*. This gave Koreans a means of phonetically writing their language. Although scholarly work continued to be based on Chinese, a great deal of literature could now be written in a way that more Koreans could understand. Even today, there is a national holiday in Korea celebrating the birth of the language.

Sejong was seen as embodying Confucian ideals of the virtuous monarch. Neo-Confucian practices, based on the writings of Chinese scholar Zhu Xi (see the section on Neo-Confucianism), spread to a larger percentage of the population, displacing many of the rituals that had been conducted by Buddhists. Buddhism was relegated to a lower status, its monks restricted to the countryside, its landholdings diminished, and its power base greatly eroded.

In his later years, Sejong was taken ill and had to step down. Bitter fighting broke out among his successors. King Sejo (1455–1468) had to quell rebellions and dispose of a number of his relatives before his position was secure. Under his rule, government administration became even more centralized and tightly controlled. A series of attempts to codify the law, dating back to Koryo times, were completed late in Sejo's reign. They were finally announced in 1470, the second year of the next king's (Songjong's) reign. Known as the *Kyongguk Taejon*, these formed the basis of Korean law for several hundred years.

The New Social Order

The new regime set in place by T'aejo and succeeding rulers made a lasting imprint on Korean society. Society was divided into strict classes with corresponding modes of behavior and conduct. Officials were now appointed on the basis of their performance in Confucian-based examinations. The intention was to replace the former aristocratic basis of government with a new meritocracy. Initially, this created clear social distinctions and moral codes of behavior. In the long run, however, it created rigid class structures and divisions that conflicted with the needs of the state to deal with change and reform.

At the top of the new hierarchy in Choson society were the yangban. *Yangban* meant the "two classes" of military and civil officials. Yangban was a more broadly based group than had ruled during the Koryo period, but it still comprised only about 10 percent of the population. Within this category were nine grades, with the upper three occupying the most important positions. There were actually more military positions than civil positions, but the civil positions were considered more prestigious.

There were three types of examinations--civil, military, and technical. Civil examinations were held every three years. There was an upper and a lower category. The first set of examinations took place in the provinces. The next set took place in Seoul. Only the top candidates made it to the final set of examinations, held in the presence of the king. A single set of military examinations took place along the same lines, however, they included the testing of military arts such as archery and horsemanship. A third set of examinations selected applicants for various technical bureaus of the government such as translation, astronomy and medicine. In theory, anyone of free-born status could sit for the examinations, but in practice it mainly suited those who were in a position to prepare for them--the yangban.

Yangban education began at the local level. Young boys entered a *sodang*, or community elementary school, studying language and Confucian literature. Only after graduating from the secondary schools were students permitted to sit for the first set of

examinations. Those entering the upper level of civil examinations usually entered the single university in Seoul, the *Songgyun'gwan*.

Below the yangban class was an emerging group known as *chungin* (middle people), mostly low-level officials or technical specialists operating at the local level. The bulk of the population fell into the class known as *sangmin* or *yangmin* (common people), who were mostly farmers, fishermen, craftsmen, and merchants. This group included large numbers of independent peasants. They bore the brunt of taxes, not only on harvests, but also on products indigenous to their region. Peasants had to wear a special identification tag at all times. They were also expected to perform military and public works duties-- a minimum of six days per year (usually more) for any male between the ages of sixteen and sixty. Merchants were frowned upon by the Confucian elite, yet some made significant gains with the growth of markets and commerce over the course of the Choson dynasty.

At the bottom of Choson society were the slaves or *chonmin*, as well as actors, *kisaengs* (female entertainers or prostitutes), *mudangs* (female shamans) and butchers. Lower positions such as these were hereditary. For example, the children of slave women continued to be slaves, no matter what the status of the father. Slaves represented about 30—40 percent of the population at various times during the Choson dynasty.

Women, especially at the upper levels, led segregated lives. They had to veil their faces in public, and could only be seen by men (outside their close relatives) during certain hours of the day. They lived in inner quarters within each residence. They were expected to act in a hospitable and dutiful way and were responsible for the well-being of the home. Marriages were arranged by parents at an early age. Women had to marry outside the blood clan, with someone of the same social standing. Once married, women lived with the man's family. Women had some protection against divorce, as well as property rites, but widows could not remarry. Men could marry more than one woman, but considerable problems arose for secondary wives, whose children did not enjoy the same status as those of the first wife.

Genealogies became very important in the Choson dynasty, and males had to present clear lines of descent in order to prove their social standing. The Confucian emphasis on ancestor worship was reinforced by a government law requiring every family, at whatever level, to have a household shrine. In yangban homes, this meant a separate building at the back of the compound, where the eldest male presided over ancestral rites. Other important rituals included coming-of-age ceremonies, marriages, and funerals. Especially important was the three-year mourning period for deceased relatives.

Land Issues

Land was the principal source of revenue for the Choson government. It was also a major source of conflict--between the government, the aristocracy, and the new yangban class. For the aristocracy, land was a form of entitlement, a source of power that was their hereditary right. Land was also given for political favors. During the Koryo, vast tracts of land had been given to Buddhist establishments. The Yangban class expected to receive land as part of their position in the new government. The Choson leadership had limited success in dealing with these land issues.

At the start of the new dynasty, all land was nationalized and redistributed. Korea was divided into the eight provinces. Each province had a supervisor, who oversaw a group of district magistrates. Local magistrates governed with the help of a council of local yangban. Supervisors and magistrates were moved about in the hopes of preventing too much loyalty to a particular region or locality. The new dynasty was concerned about separatism and wished to bring the regions under tighter control.

The prevailing “Rank Land” system provided former and current officials with land allocations in the capital region. Even though land grants were limited to the lifetime of the recipient, there were enough loop holes to allow the gradual accumulation of hereditary lands. In addition, there was “Merit Land” or land given in perpetuity to families who had supported a new king in his bid for the throne. Since there were a number of successions in the early Choson, there were plenty of new families and supporters to look after.

A new set of reforms was introduced by King Sejo in 1466. The “Office Land” law decreed that officials could only be granted land while they were in office. Merit Land, however, continued to be handed out. In many cases, the very same officials who were supposed to prevent the accumulation of private land were the ones given Merit Land in perpetuity. As private lands increased, government revenues fell. Loyalties to one’s family or clan generally took priority over the needs of the state. These conflicts were hard to resolve for many reasons.

In theory, all land belonged to the state. What this really meant was that the state designated certain lands as “public lands” from which it could collect rent in the form of tribute. This tribute was the tax on the land, usually a percentage of the harvest. Tribute tax was the principal form of revenue for the government. Private land was granted to officials and other individuals and they collected rent on it. At the start of the Choson, large estates had been confiscated by the state. Much of this was meant to be redistributed as “public land” to small owners, but in fact became a source of private land for much wealthier landowners.

Among these new landowners were the yangban, who moved to the country once they were out of office. These large agricultural estates were known as *nongjang*, and they continued to grow at the expense of available land. New land could be obtained by clearing waste land, but this was only possible for the rich, given the heavy investment required before the new land produced any crops. Since rent could only be collected during office tenure, Yangban made sure that at least one member of its family remained in a government position to maintain income from land holdings. Another problem for the yangban occurred in the later Choson with respect to available land, as scores of yangban were kept out of the government through factional disputes, or because there simply weren’t enough available positions to go around. These yangban retreated to the countryside, taking up residence in numerous *sowon*, or private Confucian academies.

If the increase in private estates was one issue, another issue was how to collect the taxes. In theory, local magistrates were responsible for tax collection. Landlords and other tribute collectors were, however, not averse to collecting in excess of the official

requirements. Yangban were generally exempt from the tax. Under King Songjong, it was decreed that local officials could not collect any income from the land. Tax was a portion of the harvest, 10 percent at first, then reduced during King Sejong's reign. Later it became possible to pay tribute in rice or cloth in order to standardize the system. The heaviest burdens fell on the farmers and peasants. To alleviate some of the burden, a system of surplus rice loans began with the intention of covering times of poor harvest. But this system failed in the event of several bad harvests, or during times of war. In addition to regular tax, peasants had to pay an army cloth tax of two rolls of cloth for every man in each household who was of military age. As the use of coinage spread in the 17th century, further abuses of the system arose, one of which was money lending. The combined burden of all these taxes on the peasantry went unresolved for centuries and became a major factor in the outbreak of several rebellions in the 19th century.

One positive development with respect to land was an increase in the food supply resulting from agricultural improvements. Beginning in the 14th century, productivity increased through the use of continuous cultivation on lower elevations. In addition, land was reclaimed from the sea. Better irrigation techniques and rain gauges were introduced in the 15th century. Rice seedlings began to be transported from germination beds to paddy fields, leading to more productive land use. Cotton was brought back from China, greatly improving the clothing of the common people, who had previously worn hemp. The population of Korea almost doubled between 1400 and 1511, to about 10 million.

Mid-Choson: Foreign invasions

Just as the later Koryo was beset by foreign invasions, the Choson suffered a set of foreign invasions during the late 16th to mid-17th centuries.

Ever since the late 13th century, southern Korea had been hassled by pirates, operating from bases in Japan, Taiwan, and elsewhere. King T'aejong led a successful attack on the base at Tsushima island in 1419, but problems continued. The Portuguese began to be active along the coastal regions, especially in Japan, where they brought Christian missionaries and muskets. Japan was in a state of civil war, which ended with the unification of the country under Toyotomi Hideyoshi in 1590.

Hideyoshi was upset with the trade limitations imposed on Japan by China and Korea and the Portuguese. He banned Catholicism, and sent envoys to Korea demanding that Korea allow his armies to pass through on the way to invade China. Korea did not take his intentions seriously, and it was unprepared for the first Japanese invasion that landed in Pusan in the spring of 1592. Armed with muskets, the Japanese had reached Seoul within three weeks, virtually overrunning the whole country. However, Korea was saved by a relief force of Ming Chinese, along with the combined resistance of peasantry, monks, and naval forces under Admiral Yi Sun-sin. Yi Sun-sin's "turtle ships," the world's first iron-protected ships, harassed the Japanese supply lanes. They were especially helpful in disrupting the second invasion in 1597. Both Admiral Yi and Hideyoshi died in 1598 and the invasion was broken off.

The effects of the two invasions were far-reaching. The rich farmlands of Kyongsang had been devastated. Many cultural treasures, as well as important records were lost.

The invaders had captured thousands of Koreans, whom they sold as slaves to Japanese and Portuguese merchants. They also took entire villages of potters back to Japan so that they would not have to pay for expensive imported ceramics.

Although peaceful relations were restored between Japan and Korea in 1606, Korea was barely able to recuperate before another threat arose in Manchuria. This was the home of the Jurchen people, who had formed the Jin dynasty before the Mongol period. Ming China had been weakened by their support of Korea during the Japanese invasion, and had to call on Korean help when the Manchus began to attack from the north in 1616. Manchuria recognized the traditional problem of facing allied Korean and Chinese forces on both sides of them, and decided to subdue Korea first. Korea's King Injo (1623–1649) held to a pro-Ming stance, but the country was overrun twice, and he had to concede defeat to the Manchus (now called Qing) in 1636. Injo's two sons were delivered as hostages, and the nation had to pay tribute to the Manchus, severing ties with Ming China. China was soon taken by the Manchus, who established the new Qing dynasty in 1644. During the half-century of wars and devastation, the country's population had decreased. Government was in disarray. Traditional allegiances to greater China were now broken.



Complete View of Mount Kumgang
Chong Son (1676-1759)
dated 1734
Hanging scroll
Ink and color on paper
Asian Art Museum

Factionalism

Another factor weakening the state of affairs in mid-Choson was the formation of factions within the Korean government. These factions stemmed from the Neo-Confucian belief in honoring ancestors. Ancestral ties were sacrosanct, not only within one's family but also in teachings and ideology. Ideological ties began with one's teachers at the academy schools or *sowon*. These *sowon* increased as more and more yangban retreated to the countryside. By the time young civil officials reached court, they were already lined up behind one doctrinal camp or another. Factions not only grew around ideology, but also around succession issues. As civil officials sided with various families jockeying for position at court, they invariably fell victim to political purges. Two sides originally grew around the opposing views of two scholars, Yi I and Yi Hwang, and these sides began to assume names according to the area of Seoul that they lived in. The various factions--western, eastern, northern, etc.--proliferated between 1574 and 1864, when finally a policy of political advancement regardless of factional allegiance was put into place.

Advances in Trade, Commerce and the Arts

As mentioned earlier, traditional Korean society frowned upon commercial activity, restricting it to tribute missions, and trading between the lower-class merchants and foreign markets. This situation began to change in the 17th century. Changes in tax laws allowed for the introduction of government sponsored merchants (like purchasing agents) in the urban areas of Seoul, Kaesong and P'yongyang. Licensed shops and markets spread, and coinage began to be used as a medium of payment. At first, these city merchants monopolized certain commodities such as silk, cotton, paper, but gradually wholesale markets developed in the provinces. Peddlers and local craftsmen now had the means to sell their products and various guilds were formed by different professions.

In the early Choson, high-quality goods were produced under state supervision in official workshops, ensuring a steady supply for the court and aristocracy. After the new uniform tax laws were introduced in the 17th century, however, artists and craftsmen were somewhat freed from having to turn over their products to local officials. They also benefited from the growth of local markets and merchants.

At the same time, political and intellectual developments favored a turning away from the influence of China towards a new interest in things Korean. Prior to the 18th century, for example, Korean scholarly artists based their techniques and themes on Chinese models. The artist Chong Son (1676–1759) traveled throughout Korea and painted a series of famous views of the Diamond Mountains (Mount Kumgang) encouraging the development of so-called true-view landscapes using Korean subject matter. Even court artists began to turn their attention from official subjects, to the daily lives of all classes of people. This was known as “genre” painting and its best known artists are Kim Hongdo (1745–1818?) and Sin Yun-bok (1758–?). Changes in the visual arts were also reflected in literature, as more novels were written in the native *han'gul*. The new paintings and novels celebrated the humanity of all classes, not just the yangban.

Developments in Late Choson

The reigns of King Yongjo (1724–1776) and King Chongjo (1777–1800) were reasonably successful at balancing political appointments among the various factions. It was Yongjo who introduced the uniform tax law, described above. Chongjo renewed some support of Buddhism, but came down hard on Catholicism. During their reigns, various movements arose known collectively as “self-strengthening” movements. Among these was the Sirhak movement that was partly designed to encourage practical scholarship, partly to support the development of things Korean, and in part a response to foreign ideologies such as Catholicism.

After Yongjo and Chonjo’s reigns, a period of in-law family successions began. The disorder caused by increasing bribes at court led to increased taxes. This created a burden for the peasantry that ran counter to new feelings of equality. Catholicism appealed to commoners, as well as city dwellers and some yangban. Slavery was gradually disbanded between 1801 and 1894. At the same time, a new religious movement called *Tonghak* grew among the people of farming villages resulting in widespread peasant rebellions in the late 19th century.

Against this background of broad social change, the mid to late 19th century court was dominated by the leader known as Taewon’gun. On the progressive side, he reformed taxation, revised the legal code, and suppressed a number of the sowon (schools). However, his costly rebuilding of the Kyongbok Palace, and his isolationist responses to Russian and American activities were less popular with the general populace. Korea became known outside as the Hermit Kingdom.

The late Choson was a period of competing interests between pro-Chinese, Russian, and Japanese forces. When Korea allied itself to Russian interests in Manchuria as a way to stem Japanese domination of Korea, the Japanese went to war and defeated Russia in 1905. This led to the annexation of Korea by Japan in 1910, bringing an end to the Choson dynasty.

Royal Palaces of Seoul

In this section, we examine Choson-dynasty palaces in Seoul. In particular, we look at the layout and construction history of two major compounds—Kyongbok and Changdok—that were the residences and administrative centers for most of the Choson-dynasty rulers.

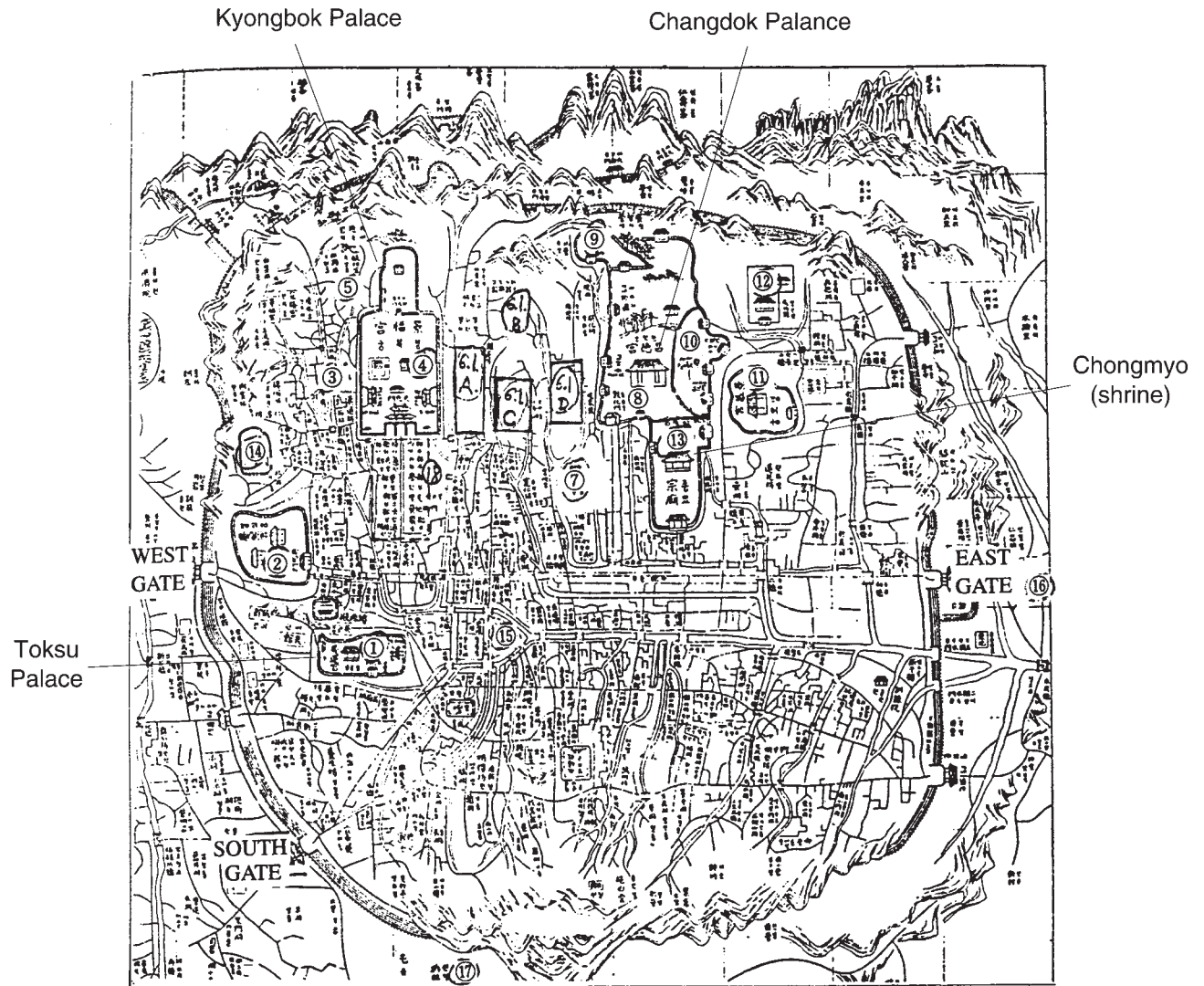
Building the New Capital

The history of the royal palaces of Seoul begins with the founding of the new capital. Seoul was named capital of the Choson dynasty in 1394. It has since become the capital of South Korea (Republic of Korea). During Choson times, it was known as Hansong (“fortress on the Han river”) or Hanyang (“north bank of Han”). A southern capital of the Koryo dynasty, its history stretches back to the Three Kingdoms period, when it was the first capital of the Paekche kingdom.

The choice of a new capital for the Choson was influenced by the principles of geomancy (*p’ungsu*—known in the West by the Chinese term, *feng shui*). Geomancy determined vital forces of nature in the landscape that were either positive or negative. By choosing an auspicious site, one could ensure good fortune. King T’aejo (first king of Choson) believed that part of the reason Koryo fell was that its capital (Kaesong) had run out of good fortune. Apparently there were disagreements over the effectiveness of geomancy. The king was advised by his officials to consult the heavens and the people’s will according to ancient tradition. Several sites were considered throughout the peninsula. Construction began at one location, but the king’s ministers dissuaded him for practical reasons. Seoul was ultimately chosen because it was well situated on a flat plateau between several mountains in the north, was centrally located, and offered river access in the south, an important consideration for the collection of taxes.

There were political considerations behind the move as well. King T’aejo needed to build a new power base for his rule. He needed to distance the new government from associations with its former site. Following T’aejo, there was a succession crisis, and for a brief time, the capital moved back to Kaesong. Finally, during Taejong’s reign (1400–1418) the court moved back to Seoul, where it remained until the end of the dynasty.

The central core of the city was laid out in grids running along the cardinal directions, between Mount Pugak and the Han river. There were living quarters, shopping areas, drainage canals and a number of palace compounds. The Royal Ancestral Shrine as well as the Altar to the State deities were built first, followed by the royal palace compound. Stores were built along the main roads and allotted to specialized merchants, since at this time commercial activity was carefully controlled. Drainage solved the problem of water collecting in the eastern part of the city. The city was protected by surrounding walls, and travelers entered through four gates, two of which still stand. The original walls, fifteen feet high, were built between 1396 and 1398 with mud and stone. In 1422, during King Sejong’s reign, they were reconstructed using only stone. By 1428, the city had a population of 100,000. The population doubled and tripled between the 17th and 19th centuries. The original core forms only one section of the modern city of Seoul, which has grown to accommodate well over 11 million people.



Old Seoul

(from Bartholomew, *Choson Dynasty Royal Compounds*)

All of the major Choson-dynasty palace compounds were severely damaged, first during the Japanese invasion of 1592, and later during the Japanese occupation from 1910–1945, when a large percentage of the buildings were demolished, destroyed or abandoned. A Japanese government building was erected directly in front of the main palace (Kyongbok) obscuring the view. It was demolished in 1997 and since then, an ambitious plan of restoration has been undertaken. With the exception of a few important buildings, much of what we see now is modern reconstruction.

Kyongbok and Changdok Palaces

For the first two years of his reign, King T'aejo ruled from a former Koryo country palace. The first buildings he ordered to be constructed were a new palace (Kyongbok), an ancestral shrine (Chongmyo) to the east of the palace, and an altar for spring and fall rites to the west of the palace.

The royal ancestral shrine was begun in 1394 for the purposes of housing the tablets of King Taejo's ancestors over the past four generations. This was in keeping with Confucian practices (see separate section) but also had the symbolic rule of legitimizing the dynasty. As the dynasty continued, the shrine was expanded. The current Main building has 19 rooms with 49 tablets honoring past kings and queens. Additional tablets of secondary kings, queens and loyal subjects are located within adjacent Halls. In keeping with the solemnity of their role, the shrines are austere in appearance. Every first Sunday of May, however, descendants of the last monarch return to conduct the ancestral rites, keeping alive a tradition that can be traced back thousands of years to ancient China.

The royal compounds of Seoul are called *Kung* (*Gung* when combined with a palace name) meaning *palace*. Five major palaces stretched across the northern part of the city. The two major palaces discussed here are Kyongbok (mentioned above) and Changdok. These large palaces (*taegung*) were royal residences combined with administrative offices and a throne hall. (Lesser palaces did not include the throne hall, and are properly called detached palaces—*pyolgung*). The design of the large palaces was based on classical Chinese concepts of city planning. Major buildings and roads were placed along various grid lines. The palace was meant to stand at the center of the city, at the northern end of the main avenue facing south. It was entered through three gates and contained three courtyards. The main gate was the most imposing. Between it and the throne hall was a bridge over a stream running east-west. Each courtyard stood at the heart of a different part of the compound. Individual buildings were connected with passageways, smaller gates and enclosed corridors. The royal residences were contained within tall walls and labyrinthine corridors at the back of the compound to ensure privacy and security. There was also a formal garden for the private use of the royal family. The most famous of these is the “Secret Garden” at Changdok palace.

The throne hall (Kunjongjun) was the most impressive building in the Kyongbok palace compound, where the king received visitors and held coronations and New Year's greetings (see slides # 10 and 11). The king met with his cabinet in the audience hall (Sajongjon) behind the throne hall area.



Kyongbok
Sajongjon (Hall)

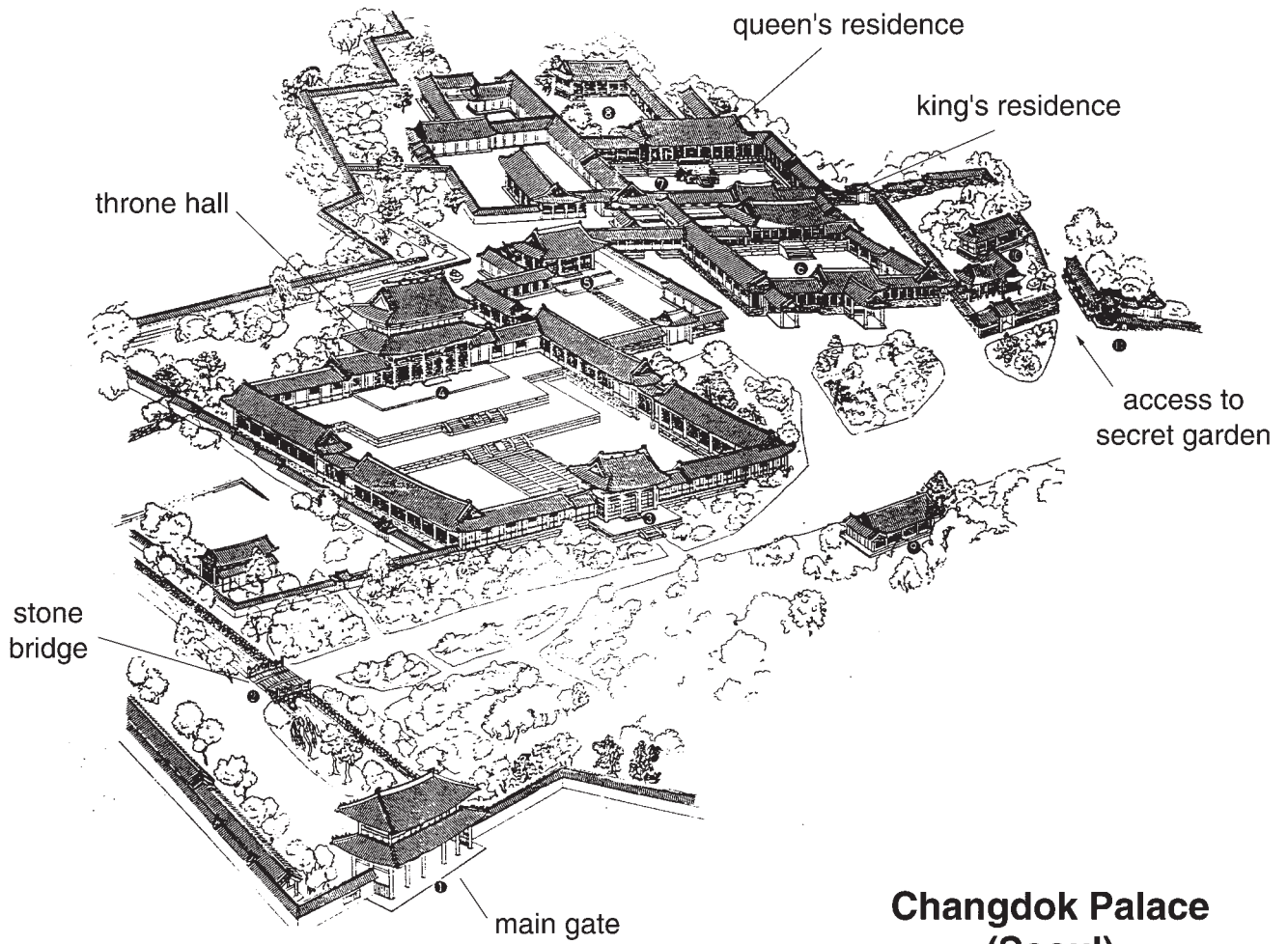
The major palaces were like cities within cities. Cooks, textile artists, medical staff, craftsmen specializing in the various trades (clay, leather, paper, metal, etc), musicians, calligraphers and painters, scholars, government officials and their support staffs were all housed within the various compounds. Palaces also contained libraries and official records. Final examinations at the highest level were conducted in the presence of the king in one area of the Secret Garden in Changdok Palace.

Layout and Construction

Korean royal palaces are a combination of Chinese-style symmetry and Korean asymmetry. Symmetry of layout can be seen at Kyongbok, in the area immediately surrounding the throne hall. At Changdok, the arrangement of buildings is more asymmetrical, beginning with the main gate, which is off to one side. Traditional Korean architecture tends to follow geomantic principles by complementing and accentuating the natural contours of the surrounding landscape. The residential sections of Changdok palace, for example, appear to blend in with the trees and gardens that form a graceful backdrop to them.

Major buildings such as palaces and temples were planned along Chinese lines, but executed with a strong sense of Korean aesthetics. These aesthetics emphasized an appreciation for natural materials, and a desire to show the interconnectedness of humans and nature. Rooflines curve gracefully upward at the eaves to reflect the contours of mountains and hills, while sheltering the buildings from rain and sun. While palace architecture is clearly related to Buddhist temple design, Choson-dynasty palaces were influenced by Confucian values and therefore are more restrained in their decoration. Compared to the huge complex of the Forbidden City (Palace Museum) in Beijing, the royal palaces of Seoul seem much more approachable and human-scale, less imposing and grandiose.

Choson kings were supposed to display austerity and frugality, not ostentation. Censors and advisors frequently had to try and curb the natural tendencies of kings to lavish their surroundings with the trappings of power. Neo-Confucianism also required strict separation of men's and women's quarters. The queen's residential area



**Changdok Palace
(Seoul)**

was the most secluded part of the large palace buildings. In one section of the “Secret Garden” at Changdok Palace, a yangban-style house was built, so that the royal family could experience the lifestyle of the aristocratic class.

Each building sat on a raised, stone platform. The basic shell of the building consisted of post-and-lintel construction, with a large roof and overhanging eaves. Weight is transferred from the roof timbers through a bracketing system to the columns below. A more complicated system of bracketing that allowed for support between the columns was introduced in the fourteenth century for larger buildings. The throne room at Changdok palace has a double storied roof, adding to the sense of scale inside and out. The walls of palace buildings, freed of the weight-bearing responsibilities of Western style walls, were lightly plastered or filled with a combination of shutters, sliding doors, and wooden latticework, which could be opened or closed according to the season.

History of the Palace Buildings

Visitors to Seoul are often confused about which palace is which, and when each was used. Kyongbok was the first major palace, but it was abandoned in favor of Changdok shortly after King T’aejong returned to Seoul. He had arranged the murder of his half-brother at Kyongbok. Not surprisingly, he wished to take up residence elsewhere.

Changdok was built between 1404 and 1405, even though it was a more modest palace. Changdok was destroyed during the first Japanese invasion in 1592, but was rebuilt in 1609 as the main royal residence. Thirteen Choson dynasty kings ruled from Changdok. It was the principal seat of government until 1867, when Kyongbok was rebuilt during the reign of King Kojong and the Regent, Taewon-gun. The original Kyongbok had been quite modest in scale—350 *kan* (*kan* was a measurement defining the space between columns) The reconstruction made it 18 times larger than the original. The new palace had 350 buildings and totaled 7,225 *kan*. Another palace—Toksu—twice served temporarily as the main palace, once following the Japanese invasions, and again between 1897 and 1919, during the final years of the Choson dynasty, after the murder of Queen Min by Japanese-hired assassins. After 1910, the Japanese occupation forces demolished about 85 percent of Kyongbok palace. From 1919 to 1945, remaining members of the royal family lived in a section of Changdok palace.

Korean Buddhism

This section outlines some of the features of Korean Buddhism, its historical development, and the main figures who appear in Korean Buddhist arts.

Buddhism is one of the world's major religions. It began approximately 2500 years ago in northeastern India, with the teachings of the historical Buddha. The historical Buddha was born into a princely caste, and later renounced his position in order to seek an answer to the problems of suffering that he saw around him. He reached enlightenment after an intense period of meditation beneath the bodhi tree. He then taught for the rest of his life to his disciples and members of the lay public. Monks and nuns formed the first Buddhist communities, renouncing worldly associations, and following the teachings of the Buddha.

Over the next millennium, Buddhism evolved into many different schools or sects, eventually spreading beyond India north through Central Asia, the Himalayas, and China, Korea, and Japan, as well as south to Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia.

Historical development of Korean Buddhism

Buddhism entered China in the late Han dynasty (approx. 1–200 CE) and was supported by various foreign dynasties that ruled parts of northern China after the Han. It was from one of these northern states that Buddhism first came to the Koguryo kingdom in the 4th century CE, during the Three Kingdoms Period. Buddhist ideas were transmitted through monks, texts, relics, and images, traveling by land and sea. The first mention of Buddhism indicates that a king of Qin in northeastern China sent a monk named Sundo with images and texts to Koguryo in 372. A few years later, another monk was sent. Then in 385, two monasteries were founded by these two monks. Another source indicates that an Indian monk named Malananda came from the Eastern Jin to Paekche in 384, and that in the next year, a monastery was built and ten monks were ordained. Malananda came from Serindia, a Chinese term for “western regions” including India. Whether or not the dates are accurate, we get the idea that Buddhism served many different interests. Subsequent texts refer to Buddhist monks curing illnesses. Buddhist images dazzled kings. Buddhist buildings were constructed to help win wars or avert a calamity. Buddhism promoted reading and writing, as a way to become familiar with Buddhist texts. The earliest Buddhist images to have survived are from about 150 years later.

By the time Buddhism entered Korea, it was already a fully formed religion, with established texts, practices, iconography, and the support of various rulers. At first, it appealed to Koreans on a practical level, by making a connection between cause and effect, for instance the relationship between one's deeds and the kind of karmic retribution that results from those actions. The image of a heavenly Buddha that all paid homage and obedience to appealed to Korean kings as model for earthly rule. Temples and pagodas provided a further stimulus to these new beliefs and practices. Buddhism had another factor in its favor—its ability to adapt to local beliefs. It incorporated many of the prevailing Shamanistic beliefs into its practices, its pantheon of Buddhist figures and into its temple imagery.

When Buddhism first appeared at the Silla court it was poorly received by the nobility, despite the king's interest. A year later, in 527 (or 528) the Grand Secretary Ich'adon plotted with the king to arrange his own martyrdom, by building a temple against the wishes of the court. After his execution, a set of miracles took place, and all were convinced of the value of Buddhism. Buddhism continued to work its way into the fabric of Silla society by siding with various myths and beliefs that were prevalent at the time. For example, the Silla king Munmu (who unified the Three Kingdoms) built a temple by the sea (Kamunsa) in the hopes of protecting the state against Japanese marauders. When he died he left instructions to cremate his body and scatter his ashes offshore, so that he could become a great dragon to protect the kingdom. This is important in several respects. Dragons were associated with the water and could move between the world of humans and the world of spirits. A narrow passage was cleared from the sea to the temple to allow the spirit of King Munmu to fulfill his vow. Cremation is also an important reference, since it was a Buddhist funerary practice that was new to Korea.

Further evidence for the adoption of Buddhism can be seen in the institutions of the *hwarang*, the training program for aristocratic youth in Silla. We find a strong association between the hwarang youth and the cult figure of Maitreya. Maitreya and Sakyamuni were both popular figures in the early stages of Korean Buddhism. Sakyamuni (the historical Buddha) was popular with kings, since he was linked to the concept of *Cakravartin*. Cakravartin was an Indian concept of the ideal king, or literally "wheel turner," one that all would follow since he sets the world in motion. The Buddha was an ideal figure, one that a king would want to fashion himself after. Therefore we find the names of kings who have adopted titles associated with Buddhism, perhaps as a way to strengthen their authority. Similarly, Maitreya was associated with the hwarang aristocrats. Maitreya is a bodhisattva that will become a Buddha in the future, a fitting image to identify with promising youth.



Standing Buddha
Unified Silla period, 8th century
Asian Art Museum, B65 B64

During the Unified Silla (668–935 CE), Buddhism flourished at all levels of society. The Silla capital, Kumsong (“Golden City,” present-day Kyongju) was laid out in the style of the Tang Chinese capital at Chang’an (X’ian) with a grid formation, and may have housed close to a million people. Large-scale Buddhist works continued to be built with the intent of protecting the nation (*hoguk pulgyo*). For example, the Temple of Four Guardians was built in response to threats from Tang China as a protective measure.

Buddhist works also included numerous wall sculptures carved into caves and mountain rock faces. The most famous of these stone images is the 17-foot-high granite statue of the Buddha at the Sokkuram grotto which was constructed in the hills facing the Eastern Sea near Kyongju. Commissioned by Chief Minister Kim Taesong around 750–800, it consists of a small anteroom and a domed hall, where the main statue sits, surrounded by various disciples and bodhisattva figures. The stunning location, and exquisite carvings attest to the artistry of Silla craftsmen and to Minister Kim’s dedication of the site to the memory of his ancestors. It is now a Unesco world heritage site. Fine stone masonry can also be seen in another work associated with Kim Taesong—the Pulguksa (Buddha-land temple) built in 751. Although mostly destroyed during the Japanese invasions of the late 1500s, the two stone pagodas survived (one simply designed, the other elaborate), along with the stone foundations and steps. The temple was reconstructed during the Choson dynasty.



Pulguksa Temple

Renewed relations with Tang China ushered in several centuries of contact, trade, and exchange that allowed monks to travel to China to obtain relics, texts, and images. At this time, there were many different schools of Buddhism in China. These schools were based on different teachings inspired by various *sutras* (texts) that had been translated into Chinese from various Indic languages. Out of each of these schools emerged different concepts of reality as well as different Buddhist figures that became a focus of worship. Two systems of thought —Madhyamika and Yogacara — dominated Chinese Buddhist practice and a Korean monk named Wonhyo (617–686) set himself the task of unifying the various schools. His works, including “Harmonizing the Debates Between the Ten Schools” and “The Awakening of Faith”

were transmitted to both China and Japan. Although he never traveled to China, he did spend a number of years traveling around Korea to inspire the masses, reputedly singing and dancing so that everyone would encounter the name *Buddha*. In doing so, he was instrumental in popularizing the notion of universal Buddhism, the idea that not everyone has to follow the monastic path to aspire to the condition of Nirvana, where the cycle of rebirth is extinguished. (See “Student Readings”).

The worship of Amitabha (“the Buddha of infinite light”) dwelling in the Pure Land and the bodhisattva of compassion Avalokiteshvara (“one who observes the sounds of the world”) became popular among the common people. Various stories describe how individuals were saved from peril by praying to these figures, or how they appeared in the guise of another figure. Kungye, who founded the Later Koguryo kingdom that rebelled against Silla and eventually helped bring about the Koryo dynasty, believed himself to be a reincarnation of Maitreya. In Chinese and Japanese Buddhism, belief in Amitabha’s Pure Land eventually superseded that of Maitreya’s Tusita heaven. In Korea, however, the two continued to be revered during the Unified Silla period. Pure Land Buddhism was especially popular with the common people because it was claimed that devotees merely had to evoke Amitabha’s name in order to be admitted to the Pure Land.

In the late Unified Silla period, another form of Buddhism began to appear in Korea known as *Son* (*Chan* in Chinese, *Zen* in Japan). It is believed to have been transmitted to Korea by Pomnang in the late 600s, during the reign of Queen Sondok (reigned 632–647). In China, it was founded by Bodhidharma (around 470–543), who traveled to China from South India. Son Buddhism rejected teachings based on knowledge of texts and instead relied on spontaneous personal insight into the nature of reality. Through meditation, each person recognized his or her own Buddha-nature. This became the foundation of the Meditation school in Korean Buddhism.

In the political realm, late Silla Buddhism became less concerned with propagating the faith and more concerned with gaining support for competing doctrines and monastic establishments. The dominant Kim family maintained close ties with the monastic establishments to honor their ancestors. Buddhist institutions became more focused on rituals and ceremonies as way to increase support from the aristocracy, a trend that continued in the Koryo dynasty (935–1392). During the Silla period, Buddhism had been used as a political force, overtaking tribal belief systems, and linking directly with the king as Buddhist leader of the new nation. By the Koryo, the Buddhist hierarchy had worked its way into the government administration as a distinct entity. The National Preceptor (*kuksa* or teacher) became the most important appointment, charged with ministering to the needs of the general populace.

Koryo Buddhism

The founder of the Koryo, Wang Kon (T’aejo, reigned 1392–1398), erected ten Buddhist temples in the new capital at Kaesong, and listed his support of Buddhism among his Ten Injunctions. Successive kings patronized Buddhism, and members of the royal family often became monks. Buddhism was closely linked with geomancy, the practice of carefully selecting sites based on the flow of energy in the natural landscape. Despite T’aejo’s injunction limiting temple sites to places already favored

as geomantically suitable, Buddhism continued to increase its land holdings, as stupas, monuments and temples were built whenever important monks died.

During the reign of King Songjong (reigned 981–987), Buddhism was briefly suppressed in favor of Confucianism. However, when the Khitan invasions began, popular sentiment was that Buddhism was essential for the welfare of the state. For this reason, in addition to the customary rites such as coronations and funerals, Buddhism now engaged in massive public ceremonies and state rituals upholding national security, health, and prosperity. These ceremonies reached new heights during the reigns of King Chongjong (reigned 1034–1046) and Munjong (reigned 1046–1083). One annual ritual called the Ceremony for the Chanting of Sutras, took place throughout the capital, and involved thousands of monks in prayers and processions. Later, assemblies for 10,000 monks were held where everyone was fed. These rituals and ceremonies placed a tremendous financial burden on the state.

During the Koryo, several important monks attempted to unify and further develop Buddhist doctrine. Buddhism in Korea had by now become centered on two schools—*Kyo*, which stressed the study of Buddhist doctrine, and *Son*, which stressed insight based on meditation. The first monk to attempt reform was Uich'on (1055–1101), the fourth son of King Munjong. He studied in China and brought back about 4,000 volumes of Buddhist texts. These formed the basis for the Korean Tripitaka (see section on temples and monastic life). Like Wonhyo, Uich'on promoted tolerant views encompassing both study and meditation, although he clearly favored the doctrinal approach. This became known as *Ch'ontae-jong*, (based on the Chinese *Tiantai* school) and was the more popular of the two forms of Buddhism during Koryo.

Another important figure was Chinul (1158–1210), who continued efforts to unite the two schools by advocating three sutras—the Platform Sutra, the Diamond Sutra, and the Flower Garland Sutra. He favored Son, but admitted the importance of Kyo, and accepted the mantra used in the worship of (Pure Land) Amitabha Buddha. Chinul was associated with the founding of Songgwangsa temple (see slide # 2). T'aego (1301–1382) continued the work of Chinul. He visited China, and in 1348, brought back the practice of using *kongan* (more often referred to in the west as koan). *Kongan* are perplexing questions posed by senior monks designed to overcome the reliance on rational thinking. These became part of Son Buddhist practice.

The most lasting achievement of the Koryo dynasty in terms of Buddhism was the printing of two sets of wooden blocks containing the complete Buddhist texts or *Tripitaka*. Both were undertaken as a matter of national security, as a means to protect the nation, just as earlier temples and pagodas had been built to protect Silla. The first set was burned during the Mongol invasions in 1231, but the second set (completed 1251) miraculously survived to the present-day and is stored at Haeinsa (see slide # 6 and section on monastic practice). Unfortunately, the printing of the texts did not have the desired effect of stemming the foreign invaders. They were seen by some as another expensive project and used to support arguments against the efficacy of Buddhism in the late Koryo and early Choson dynasty.

Buddhist establishments flourished during the Koryo dynasty by receiving gifts of land, individual endowments and through state appointments of abbots and other

senior positions. Monks assumed leadership positions as advisors at court. Although not much has survived, Buddhist arts were stimulated by the demand for statuary, temple bells, illuminated manuscripts on paper and paintings on silk as well as ritual implements such as water sprinklers (*kundika*), incense holders and other objects (see slides # 7-8).

Buddhism in the Choson dynasty

Buddhism came under heavy criticism from supporters of Neo-Confucianism late in the Koryo dynasty and in the early years of the Choson dynasty (1392–1910). It lost much of its political standing and its land holdings, but it gained popularity among the common people. The ranks of monks were reduced, and those that remained were restricted to the countryside, where Buddhism continued to thrive in the mountain monasteries. Eleven schools of Buddhism were reduced to seven, and then two. Buddhism attempted to reconcile itself to Confucianism on philosophical and moral grounds. While these efforts to stem the decline of Buddhism were not successful, they did help unify the remaining doctrines and schools if only for the sake of preservation. Buddhism received some support under Kings Sejong and Sejo, but in general was suppressed during the Choson.

The Japanese gave some renewed life to Korean Buddhism during their occupation of Korea in the first half of the 20th century, by encouraging monks to marry, as they did in Japan. (The celibacy of Buddhist monks had been a major issue for the Confucians who argued against Buddhism.) In 1962, however, Korean Buddhists were divided into celibate and marrying orders. The former took the name of *Chogye*, the latter the name of *T'aego*. This has led to recent tensions between the two groups. In general Buddhism continues to be a major force in the religious life of modern Koreans, even reviving somewhat in the last few years.

Contributions of Buddhism to Korean culture

Buddhism made innumerable contributions to Korean culture. One of the most important was the development of writing, of printing books and the dissemination of texts, leading to further literacy among the general population. Buddhist scholar Lewis Lancaster has likened this to the introduction of a whole new set of technologies. Buddhist monks acted as teachers. They were conversant in many texts and traditions. They brought with them artisans skilled in designing and constructing buildings, casting beautiful images and huge bells in bronze. Buddhist temples were made using the Chinese bracketing system that allowed the construction of large scale image halls and towering pagodas. These skills were transmitted to Japan by way of Paekche in the 500s, and helped develop Buddhist arts and the practice of writing there.

Buddhist monks also brought the tradition of tea drinking to Korea, beginning in the monasteries and spreading to the general population. Tea had become popular in Song dynasty China, and spawned a whole industry of tea related products. Tea drinking assisted the practice of meditation, by helping monks stay awake, but it also had many medicinal benefits and became popular among the upper classes during the Koryo dynasty. Some of the best green teas are still grown in the mountain monasteries, particularly in southwest Korea.

Buddhist figures

As we have seen, Buddhism brought with it an array of texts and images which helped to convert many people to the new religion. As Buddhism traveled from China and Central Asia to Korea, the most popular images were adapted by Koreans and given new Korean names. For the most part, the new Buddhist figures supplanted indigenous nature spirits. In some cases, the nature spirits were added to the Buddhist pantheon. One example of this was the mountain spirit (*sansin*) that was believed to reside in the mountain to the north of community settlements. He is usually depicted on paintings as an old man with a white beard and high forehead, accompanied by a tiger. He can be found in Buddhist temple complexes in a separate shrine, or off to the side of Buddhist figures in image halls of a temple, where he continues to be worshipped.

The form of Buddhism that arrived in Korea was principally *Mahayana* (“Greater Vehicle”) Buddhism, a form that featured an extensive pantheon of buddhas and bodhisattvas. Buddhas are enlightened ones who have reached nirvana. Sakyamuni Buddha is a historical figure, but others (Vairocana, Amitabha) are abstract or universal concepts of Buddha—Buddha being the reference to both a historical figure and a state of being. Bodhisattvas are enlightened beings who have postponed enlightenment to help others attain buddhahood and to alleviate suffering. Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are distinguished by their hand positions (mudras) and by their attributes—clothing, ornaments, physical features, etc.

Among the earliest Buddhist images to gain popularity in Korea was Maitreya (Korean-*Miruk*) who resides in the heavens, waiting to come as the Buddha of the future. Some of the best-known early Buddhist sculptures in Korea show Maitreya seated resting his right foot on his left knee with the right hand supporting the chin. This image was popular through the Unified Silla, and was associated with the youth organizations known as Hwarang. Korean figures of Maitreya were among the first Buddhist images brought to Japan.

Avalokiteshvara (Korean-*Kwanseum*) was the most popular bodhisattva. He is a compassionate figure, able to hear the pleas of suffering humanity. Sometimes he is depicted with many arms and heads. He typically holds a lotus in one hand, and has a Buddha painted or carved on his crown. In China and Japan, he was often depicted in a feminine form, but he retained male features within the Korean context.

Other popular forms of Buddha included Vairocana, the cosmic Buddha from whom all others emanate. He is often depicted in the center of Buddhist triads in the temple. On his right is Sakyamuni, the historical Buddha, and to his left, Locana, the blissful Buddha.

Vairocana has a distinctive mudra—the right hand encloses the erect forefinger of the left hand. Amitabha, another abstract Buddha, presides over the Western Paradise of the Pure Land, where he waits to welcome souls after death. Entry to the Pure Land, it is felt, can be obtained by sufficient and honest repetition of the popular mantra—“*Namu Amit’abul*” (Hail Amida Buddha). (See slide # 7)

Buddhist temples and monastic life

In this section, we examine two Buddhist monasteries in Korea and their architectural features. We also review some aspects of monastic life, and the preservation of Buddhist texts.

*Note: Robert Buswell, now teaching at UCLA, studied to become a Buddhist monk and resided at Songgwangsa for five years. This section draws from his book, *The Zen Monastic Experience* (Princeton, 1992).*

Through its history, many of Korea's Buddhist temples and artistic treasures have been destroyed. However, a significant number remain, and many have undergone extensive renovation. Today, religious and monastic practices are very much alive in these temples and monasteries.

Among the surviving temples and monasteries in Korea, we have already mentioned one—Pulguksa, which is considered the national temple of Korea, and is a popular tourist site. Three other large monasteries are considered to represent the three jewels of Buddhism. The three jewels are the three tenets of Buddhism—the Buddha, the teachings (*dharma*), and the community or brotherhood (*sangha*). Persons adopting Buddhism profess faith in the three jewels.

Buddha himself is represented by Tongdo-so near present-day Pusan, which holds relics of Sakyamuni in a stupa. Stupas originated in India as sacred mounds enclosing the relics of important persons. The Indian emperor Asoka is believed to have scattered the remains of the Buddha around many stupas in ancient times, hence the practice of stupa building became closely associated with Buddhist sites. Initially stupas were the focus of worship, but as Buddhist imagery developed across East Asia, the image hall became a separate building, and the stupa remained the monument that marked the site of a relic chamber. By the time Korea had adopted Buddhism as a state religion, Buddhist temples followed the pattern of Tang Chinese Buddhism. The stupa was now a pagoda shape, generally a square, two to ten stories tall. Relics (*sarira*) or scriptures were placed in metal or glass containers and stored in the pagoda. At Tongdo-sa, the main image hall has a hole in the back wall, from which one can view the platform containing the stupa holding the relics of the Buddha.

The importance given to each of the three monasteries is indicated by their layout, with the most important building located at the top and rear of the compound, and the main image hall in the middle. At Tongdo-sa, this top position is taken up by the stupa containing the relics. At Haeinsa, the top position is taken up by the two halls containing the Buddhist texts on wooden blocks. Songgwangsa represents the sangha, the brotherhood, and is regarded as one of the most important teaching monasteries for monks in Korea. Therefore the position at the back of the compound is taken up by the meditation halls. Meditation practice is one of the core activities of Korean Son Buddhism.

The layout of Songgwangsa is typical of many temple compounds. It is located on the slopes of a mountain. Geomantic principles place buildings with their backs to the mountain and facing a stream or river. The mountain also shelters the monastery from the cold winters. Its remote location derives not only from the fact that monas-

teries were kept to the countryside during the Choson. It is also pertains to the indigenous worship of mountains and mountain spirits, and to the fact that remote areas are beneficial for the practice of meditation. Monks use the local stream for washing and drinking water. They harvest plants for food in the surrounding fields.

Visitors to Songgwangsa monastery approach via a wooded path, past a grove of stone stelae, or memorials, until they reach the first of several gates. The first gate is called a single-pillar gate. Passing over a bridge which spans the local stream, visitors now pass through the second gate, devoted to the four guardian kings (*deva*). These kings may be depicted right on the doors of the gate, or in paintings, but most often they appear as two pairs of large statues on either side of the gate as one passes through. These guardians have a somewhat exaggerated or grotesque appearance. Each carries various weapons or objects that helps them defend the monastery and the Buddhist faith.



Drum and
Bell Tower

The next structure en route to the heart of the compound is the Drum and Bell tower. From here, four different instruments are used to sound the time of daily events. These instruments are the drum, the gong, the bronze bell and a suspended wooden fish. Each instrument represents a different dimension of the living world and is struck rather than rung.

Now one enters the main courtyard area, placed at a higher level than the entrance. At many monasteries there is one or more stupas or pagodas placed in the central courtyard area (see slide # 4). The main courtyard at Songgwangsa is rather large and vacant by comparison to most on account of its being destroyed during the Korean War. The most famous pagodas to survive are the two at Pulguksa outside Kyongju.

The main image hall is the principal building in terms of architecture and the ideological center of the practice, where worship takes place several times a day (see slide # 5). At these ceremonies, monks chant and prostrate themselves 108 times (there are believed to be 108 neurosis/diseases that plague humanity). The main hall contains a

central image of Sakyamuni Buddha or Vairocana (see Buddhist figures section earlier), often flanked by other Buddhas. Sakyamuni is the historical Buddha, usually shown with one hand touching the earth. Vairocana is the principal deity image for the Hwaom or doctrinal school of Buddhism. Behind the main image on the back wall are colorful scroll paintings (*t'aenghwa*) showing various Buddhist figures. Usually along one of the side walls of the main hall are images of various guardian generals, dressed in military garb.

In Korea, as in Japan, Buddhist buildings are periodically rebuilt, infusing the temple with new life and preventing wood decay. Buddhist buildings are constructed using huge posts and beams joined together without nails in a bracketing system. This also makes them easier to take apart for reconstruction. The main beams and supporting columns are brightly colored in what are called *tanch'ong* patterns (see slide #9)—predominantly red, green and blue, with yellow walls. The roofs are topped with dark gray tiles. The walls are covered with lattice-work doors that are opened and closed several times a day. The roof line dips slightly in the middle and curves upward at the corners, reflecting the sloping lines of the mountains and hills that surround the temples.



Haeinsa

On either side of the main image hall, facing on to the central courtyard, are subsidiary halls. One is called the Judgment Hall and contains statues of judges who determine one's fate upon death. They also contain records of the deceased. Another hall (see slide #3) contains portraits of the Son masters who have headed the monastery in the past. Living and dining quarters for the monks are off to the side near the entrance gates.

Monastic life at Songgwangsa

Monastic life consists primarily of a combination of chanting, study, and meditation. The community consists of postulants (aspiring novices) and novices (aspiring monks) regular monks, visiting monks, support staff, lay workers, and volunteers.

Persons wishing to be admitted as a monk at Songgwangsa begins the process with a six month period as a postulant or aspirant. Koreans sometimes refer to this as “entering the mountains.” Usually, one member of a family may choose to enter a monastery, although the first-born son would be discouraged from doing so because of concerns over preserving the lineage and maintaining filial duties. In Korea, as elsewhere in Asia, it is possible (though discouraged) to “disrobe” or go back to secular life (*hwansok*).

During the first six months, the postulants (*haengja*) become accustomed to the secluded life of a monk, and maintains a rigorous schedule of largely physical labor around the campus, usually much of it in the kitchen. While they labor, they learn the monastic rules, study the precepts, and memorize chants used in morning and evening prayer. The candidate’s hair is shaved as a symbol of cutting one’s ties to the world, reducing vanity and as a matter of cleanliness. Simple robes are worn. One’s choice of monastery is crucial at this stage, as it becomes the home monastery, where the experience of becoming a monk is formed.

Having successfully completed the first six months, postulants are now ordained as novices (*sami*) during a three-day spring ceremony. On the final morning, the novices prostrate themselves before the Son master three times. While bending forward, the master recites the ten precepts and asks the candidates if they can keep and not transgress them. They are: (1) not to kill; (2) not to take anything that is not given; (3) not to partake in sex; (4) not to lie; (5) not to take intoxicants; (6) not to sleep on high or wide beds; (7) not to adorn oneself with ornaments and perfumes; (8) not to sing and dance or intentionally attend such performances; (9) not to obtain gold or silver; and (10) not to raise domestic animals or eat in the afternoon. At the end of this, a waxed wick is placed on the novice’s forearm and burned to the skin, symbolizing nonattachment to the body. The ordination is concluded with a breakfast meal, at which the novices are formally introduced to the brotherhood. An identification card is issued, a new *kasa* (robe) can now be worn, and the novices can participate in the same functions as the other monks.

Each of the novices works with a master teacher (*unsa*) who, after about three to five years recommends the novice for ordination as a monk (*bhiksu*). *Bhiksu* means “a person who receives a share,” referring to the practice of monks supporting themselves through begging or receiving alms from the community in which they live. Becoming a monk also signals the acceptance of the novice into the brotherhood. The ordination of bhiksus takes place on a large platform raised off the ground. Three presiding monks and various witnesses conduct the ceremony, which takes place after the noon meal. A few new precepts are reviewed, and as the novices are questioned, they all answer in unison. They chant together and repeat some of the rules of the order. Official documents are issued. Although never written, it is assumed that from hereon in, the monk will remain as such, and not return to lay existence. It is also at this point that family ties diminish. Alternatively, the novice may feel that a monastic life is not suitable and decide to leave.

Ordained monks now decide if they wish to pursue administration, scholarship, or meditation. Usually, for the first few years, new monks are assigned to support services. These are the positions that take care of the monastic administration, agricul-

ture, and public matters, allowing monks whose focus is meditation or study to proceed with minimal distraction. At the head of the support positions is the abbot (*chujŏ*), who in most monasteries is both temporal and spiritual leader, although at Songgwangsa, there is a separate Son master for spiritual matters.

The abbot is usually middle aged, with at least ten years experience as a monk. His skills are administrative and managerial rather than with meditation. He calls a meeting every morning with his officers, which includes staff dealing with accounting, the administration of hired help, monastic rules and the kitchen. This group is the only part of the regular monastery that can be excused from morning and evening worship. It supervises lay workers who do construction, farming, logging, and contract jobs as needed. This contract work was traditionally done by the slave cast, but is now paid with low wages in return for meals and room and board.

Once monks have passed their first few years, they can request to leave their home monastery to pursue studies elsewhere. One option is to go to a seminary. Haeinsa, for example, offers systematic study of texts, in contrast to Songgwangsa, which is focused on Son meditation. Seminary curriculum is based on a program prescribed by a Son master from the Choson dynasty and involves years of study in various stages, each stage dwelling on various sutras. Typical days would combine silent reading, lectures and discussions, meditation and chanting. Haeinsa has the largest number of male students. Including novices and monks, nuns and residents of small retreats called hermitages, the Haeinsa community currently numbers about 500. (More on Haeinsa follows this section)

The heart of Songgwangsa is its meditation practice. This takes place during summer and winter meditation retreats each lasting three months. Meditation monks are treated as a special group and are distinguished from the rest of the monastic community while these retreats are in session. They follow their own rigorous schedule and are exempt from much of the daily routine that the rest of the monastery follows. Most aspects of a monk's life while meditating take place in the Meditation hall (*sonbang*), where strict rules are observed. Monks carry out most of their activities in silence. They sleep in the same spot where they meditate. They are served tea several times a day. There are two halls each serving 24 monks, each sitting facing away from



each other towards the wall. Meditations begin with the verger of each hall striking a wooden gourd-shaped instrument known as a *mokt'ak*. Meditation takes place in three or four hour blocks, usually 3:00—6:00 am, 8:00—11:00 am, 1:00—4:00 pm, and 6:00—10:00 pm. Sitting is relieved by brief meditating walks around the room. Monks are expected to attend all sessions unless they are ill. Monks are free to take toilet breaks. If a monk feels drowsy, he may request a slap on the back from the succentor in that hall by bowing and leaning over. This is seen as an aid to meditation, not a punishment. Monks receive very little sleep during these retreats. They are issued one cotton quilt, bedding and a wooden block on which they rest their head. Approximately every two weeks, monks have a full day devoted to bathing and cleaning, where conversation is allowed, and a more elaborate meal is served mid-day. The Son master also delivers a fortnightly lecture, which includes formal and informal sections. One unusual aspect of meditation retreats is the one-week “ferocious effort” meditation that takes place in the winter, during which time the monks do not sleep for seven straight days. This reenacts the intense period before the enlightenment of the Buddha.

What is the purpose of Son meditation practice? We have seen that Son Buddhism in Korea developed in such a way that it combined doctrinal study (texts) with the experience of meditation, aiming for progressive realizations on the part of the individual leading (potentially at least) to a state of enlightenment. Students are given *kongan*, perplexing questions with odd replies. Each student meditates on the crux of the *kongan*, called *hwadu*. The *hwadu* is the essential part of the question/answer exchange. By concentrating on it, the student places himself in the state of mind of the master who posed the question. Realization occurs when the student removes the barrier of his own logical mind, directly experiencing the oneness of his own mind with everything else in the universe. Instead of the individual self thinking these thoughts, everything is a “Great Self.” The *hwadu* creates a state of doubt and inquiry into the nature of reality in which the division between self and the rest of the world becomes transparent. Chinul (1158–1210) felt that students had to get to the point where they would experience the truth, and act enlightened, not simply be enlightened. Chinul called this “sudden awakening/gradual cultivation (*tono chomsu*)” approach to practice, in which the initial awakening engendered by Hwaom doctrinal understanding was bolstered through gradual cultivation of Son meditation and finally verified through direct realization.” (Buswell, *Zen Monastic Experience*, p. 59)

Meditation, in short, happens on a very individual basis, but the monastic experience as a whole provides a supervised and controlled environment where one’s vocation master, fellow monks and various Son masters can nurture the student/monk through many years of practice.

Son masters (*sonsa*), like the abbots, are appointed, usually for ten-year periods. They may have been chosen, formally or informally, by an older master. They have their own residence, and often spend time in a separate hermitage retreat within the general vicinity of the monastery. They are concerned with the spiritual training of the monastic community. They give talks, interview monks during the retreats and answer their questions. Assisting the master in these duties is the rector (*yuna*) and usually a personal assistant.

During the spring and autumn breaks (*haeje*), ordained monks are free to leave the monastery, to travel or return to their home monastery. Significant dates in the annual calendar at all monasteries include New Year's celebrations, Buddha's birthday (early May) and at Songgwangsa, the observance of the founder Chinul (1158–1210) in mid-April.

Monastic food is vegetarian, and includes many of the crops and “mountain vegetables” grown in the immediate area. Several times a year, the entire community is called to the fields for important planting and harvesting activities. The ever-popular *kimchi* (pickled cabbage) is prepared in late autumn. Each monk has his own bowl and garment. Monks take only what they expect to eat, and should finish all the food in their bowl.

Haeinsa and the Tripitaka Koreana

Like Songgwangsa, Haeinsa is also part of the Chogye Order of the Son school of Korean Buddhism. Its claim to fame is that it houses the famous set of Buddhist texts carved on wooden blocks known as the Tripitaka Koreana. This has made it a popular destination for tourists, but it also continues to be an important center for study, meditation and devotional worship.

Haeinsa is located beneath Mount Kaya near Taegu in North Kyongsang province, in the south-central part of Korea. Kaya may be a reference to the ancient states of Kaya, or it could be derived from Gaya in India, near the place where the Buddha achieved enlightenment. *Haein* means “ocean seal,” and the full name has come to mean “Temple of Reflections on a Calm Sea” because it appears to float like a ship in the park containing Mount Kaya. On a deeper level, the title refers to an enlightened state of mind, where desires and follies are overcome, and the true nature of Oneness is reflected, like a calm sea.

The founders of the temple were descendants of Master Uisang (625–702) who brought the Avatamsaka school of Buddhism, along with many texts, to Korea from China. This became the Hwaom school of Korean Buddhism. Avatamsaka is a specific sutra, which makes reference to the universal, harmonious mind underlying all things. This sutra was said to be first preached by Vairocana (see the section on Buddhist figures), hence the figure of Vairocana is the central image in the main shrine known as *Taejokkwangjon* or Hall of Great Silence and Light (see slide #5).

The history of the temple and its wooden blocks is fascinating. Legend has it that the two founding monks, Sunung and Ijong, were meditating in the forest in the year 802. The queen of the Silla king at that time took ill, and officials were dispatched to seek help from the monks. They refused to leave, but instead had the officials tie a thread to a pear tree and take it all the way to the queen. When she awoke the next morning, she was cured, and in gratitude the first temple building was erected.

The first major renovation of the site was financed by the first Koryo king T'aejo. The current set of wooden blocks arrived at the beginning of the Choson dynasty in 1392. The temple was again restored in the 1400s under the patronage of two queens. Haeinsa escaped destruction from the Japanese invasion, but seven fires ravaged the

temple between 1695 and 1871. Miraculously none affected the buildings housing the wooden blocks. During the Korean War, the buildings were almost destroyed. North Korean troops were believed to be hiding in the temple grounds, and planes were sent to bomb the site. But the pilot could not bring himself to carry out the mission.

The layout of Haeinsa is similar to that of Songgwangsa. One ascends along a wooded path, through several gates, rising upward towards the main courtyard facing the image hall. Surrounding the courtyard is the Main Hall straight ahead, a Teaching Hall on the right and the Bell pavilion containing the bell, drum, gong and wooden fish on the left. A single stone pagoda is placed slightly off center, to the east.

Two sets of wooden text blocks were carved during the Koryo dynasty. Both were created in order to stem foreign invasions and protect the nation. The first set was carved when the Khitan were a threat, and took about seventy years to complete. It was unfortunately destroyed by fire during the Mongol invasion in 1232. A second set was begun in 1236 on Kanghwa island, where the Koryo court under King Kojong (reigned 1213–1259) was taking refuge during the Mongol occupation. The set was completed sixteen years later in 1251, then shipped to Haeinsa in 1398 during the reign of the first Choson king T'aejo. Some say the blocks were carried up the mountains on the heads of nuns. Haeinsa was probably intended to be a safer, more remote location— away from pirates along coastal areas.

The blocks were created through a painstaking process. Logs of white birch trees were cut down from the islands off the south coast. To weatherproof the logs, they were submerged in seawater for three years, cut into planks, boiled, dried and then exposed to winds for several more years. Each plank was planed smooth, then each character was painted on with a brush. Some thirty carvers worked on the 52,382,960 characters, each one carved after bowing to the Buddha. The characters are Chinese, in the style of a Song Chinese master calligrapher. The texts are so uniform they appear to be the work of a single hand, nor is there a single mistake. There are 81,258 blocks. Each block is 70cm long, with 23 lines of text, each line having 14 characters. Each block has been coated with lacquer to prevent insect damage, and each corner



Haeinsa
Halls

reinforced with metal to prevent warping. The blocks are stacked in rows on wooden shelves inside two large halls and two smaller halls (see slide # 6).

The miraculous survival and condition of the blocks can also be attributed to the design of the buildings that house them. The two large halls (Changgyonggak) were positioned on the slopes of the mountains so that they did not receive too much cold wind from above and not too much damp wind from below. Temperature and humidity were controlled through a two rows of grill windows. The windows vary in size to allow for the proper flow of air from one side to the other. The blocks themselves are thinner in the middle where the carved characters are, to allow airflow as well. The floors of the halls were prepared with layers of salt, charcoal and lime underneath, which again regulate humidity during the different seasons. The building has been designed so that water runs off, and the clay tile roof prevents abrupt changes in temperature from the sunlight. In the 1970s, a new modern storage hall was constructed for the blocks, but even modern scientific methods could not improve the environment, and the old halls were found to be superior.

The Tripitaka Koreana is renowned all over the world among surviving East Asian versions of Buddhist texts on account of its comprehensiveness, style and accuracy. It was based on the most complete texts (mostly Northern Song Chinese) available at the time it was made. *Tripitaka* refers to the three “baskets” of Buddhist scriptures—one devoted to the teachings, one to the rules of the sangha, and the third to various treatises. Ironically, for many years, a Japanese version of the Koryo texts was considered a standard reference for scholars, and only more recently has it been apparent that the Haeinsa set was the original source. Luckily, the Tripitaka Koreana has been one of the first complete Buddhist texts to be produced in electronic form, thereby ensuring an even greater distribution for the future.



Traditional Scholar's House

In this section, we review the basic features of traditional scholar's class houses, many of which can still be seen today. We look at the separation of men's and women's areas and how this affected furniture and lifestyles.

Introduction

Traditional houses in Korea were influenced by a number of factors. Topography and local precipitation determined such things as layout and the types of materials used. Class distinctions were another important factor. During the Choson dynasty, society was divided into strict classes in accordance with Neo-Confucian ideology. The *yangban* class (military and civil official or scholar class) were governed by specific regulations concerning housing, clothing, and expected behavior. Men and women lived very different lives. These regulations and codes of behavior influenced the layout and design of traditional houses. These traditional scholar-class homes still exist in smaller towns and rural settings of Korea today. Most date from the latter half of the Choson dynasty (about 1700–1910).

Use of materials

The basic difference between upper-class homes in the Choson and those of the middle and lower classes is the materials used in their construction. Commoner dwellings used mud for walls and had thatched roofs. The layout followed simple L-shapes, parallel or square shapes, with most of the living, kitchen and work spaces in close proximity.

Upper-class homes used tiled roofs, and the living areas were subdivided into distinct sections for men and women. Some parts of the house were elevated above the others. The house stood on a foundation of granite and stone. The basic framework consisted of pillars and beams supporting the roof, with walls consisting of windows, sliding doors, and wooden frames covered by three layers of wallpaper. Windows were covered with rice paper to allow privacy but still admit light. Sliding doors ran along grooves into the wall, opening up or closing rooms as needed. Panels lifted up in summer to allow summer ventilation, and could be closed to keep out winter winds. Flooring consisted of internal sections of heated floors covered by oiled paper called *ondol*. Flooring in areas that were open to the outside were covered with wooden sections called *maru*. Ceilings were mainly of two kinds: open rafter ceilings for the main hall, and drop ceilings covered with layers of rice paper in enclosed rooms.

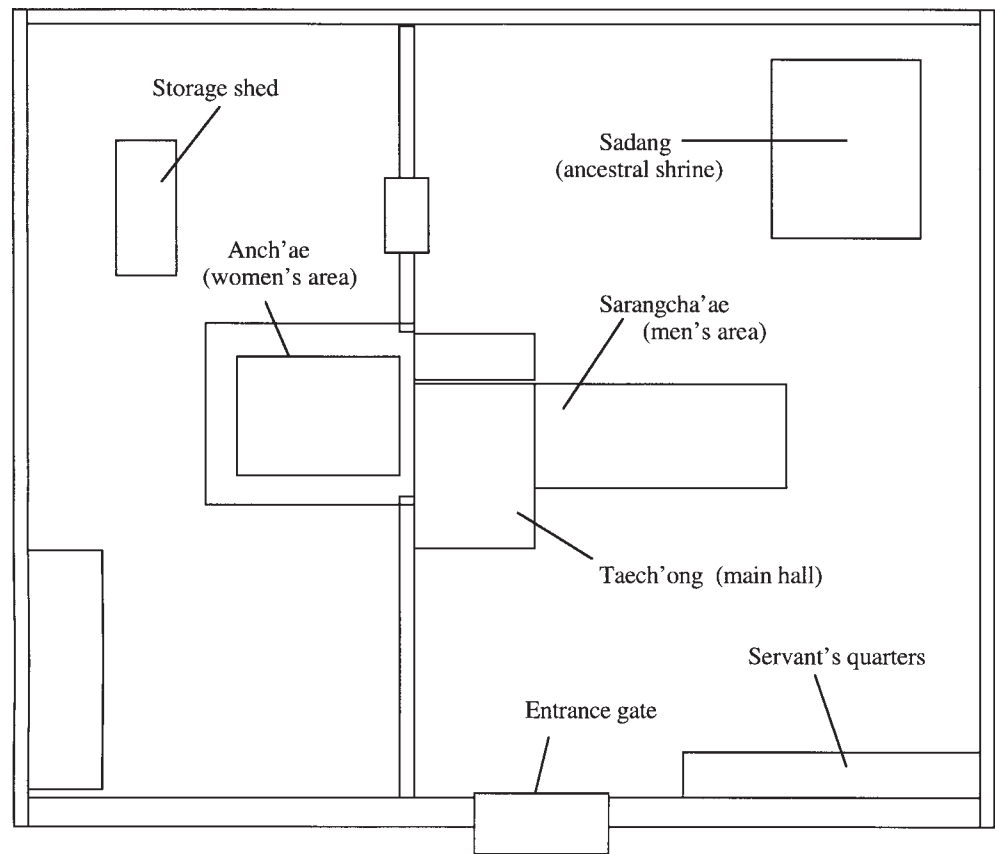
Basic design and layout of spaces

Traditional Korean homes are conceived differently from Western homes. A Western-style house is like a box. The house completely encloses the space that it inhabits. The grounds are outside the walls of the house, something that is seen as a landscape surrounding the house. One goes up and knocks on the front door to enter the house. Traditional Korean upper class homes, by contrast, are like a box that is open at the top. The outside of the box is the wall (*dam*) surrounding the home. This wall

is low, not imposing, but enough to define the space inside. Once inside the entrance gate of the wall, you are inside that home, and call to announce that you have arrived.

The visitor to the traditional Korean house entered a courtyard area, facing a section of the house that appears to be half-open to the outside (see slide # 17). In Western terms, we would call it a porch, but in traditional upper-class Korean homes, this was called the *taech'ong*. Whereas a Western-style porch is usually a private relaxation area at the back, the *taech'ong* is at the front, and was intended to be a public reception area for the male of the house to receive guests. The *taech'ong* featured a *maru* (wooden) floor and an exposed rafter ceiling. The *taech'ong* functioned as an intermediary area between the more secluded parts of the house and the outside. It was also a place from which the owner could survey the public part of the property. Only immediate members of the family would have entered the inner part of the house. This was the women's area, built around another courtyard, usually enclosed on all sides by various rooms, a kitchen area, and sometimes a storage shed. At the back of the house, usually on higher ground beyond the men's section, was the ancestor shrine (*sadang*). This had its own enclosure, and was for the private use of the family to attend to ancestral rites at designated times of the year.

The following simplified diagram illustrates the conceptual use of space in a traditional scholar-class home of the later Choson dynasty:



Visitors enter the house into the men's area—*sarang-ch'ae*. Within this area is the wooden-floored porch section—*taech'ong*. The women's area is secluded and accessible only to family members and female servants—*anch'ae*. In the back corner is located the family shrine—*sadang*.

Another important aspect of traditional Korean homes was living on the floor. Floor culture meant stepping up into the house (a practice still common today), taking shoes off on special stepping stones just outside the room, then sitting in crouched positions on floor cushions. Floor culture also meant that windows were positioned lower down, and furniture built for lower level activities. Ondol (heated floors) made living on the floor quite comfortable.

Yangban-class houses were restricted in size and decor during the Choson dynasty. Rules were set in place in 1430 during the reign of King Sejong in an attempt to limit the size of houses. These rules had to be amended, as houses expanded in areas that were not defined by the law, for example the size of servant's quarters or the kitchen area. The basic unit of measurement was the *kan*, the square formed by four support posts. Thus houses could number 30 kan, 40 kan and so on. The permitted number of kan depended on one's rank, but these rules were frequently broken, and the permissible number expanded later in the dynasty. The bright colors seen on the posts and beams known as *tanch'ong* (see slide # 9) were restricted to temples and palaces. Owners of private residences who disobeyed this rule could be flogged. Similarly, private residences could use square pillars, but not round ones. These rules were also broken as the dynasty continued.

As the Choson dynasty progressed, the functional layout of upper-class houses increasingly reflected Neo-Confucian principles and practices (see separate section on Neo-Confucianism). Respect for the ancestors and elders, the separation of men's and women's functions leading to the increased subservience of women to men, and the passing of inheritances to the eldest son or substitute—all had an impact on the layout of residences. Spaces were allocated to senior and junior men and women in a way that reinforced the hierarchical nature of family relationships. Family members moved about a house several times during their lives and occupied different rooms as their positions changed. These rules varied slightly depending on the system of inheritance adopted within each region of the country. The senior male and his wife occupied the main rooms within the men's and women's quarters respectively. Once this couple became older or passed away, the dominant position passed to the eldest son and his wife, the daughter-in-law. They had assumed secondary positions within the household up until that point. The eldest son, for example, would have lived in the same wing as his father, and possibly had a 'junior' study similar to the main study used by his father. Prior to the 1600s it was common for the male to live at his new wife's family home until their children had grown up. This practice changed in mid-Choson, and men now only stayed at their wife's home a matter of days.

Only the senior male, his eldest son, the senior male's wife and the eldest son's daughter in law had separate rooms. Everyone else shared a room, within the appropriate wing. As families expanded, new rooms could be added to the existing ones, connected by sliding doors. Rooms could also be accessed by a narrow maru connecting to rooms. This ledge allowed people to walk between rooms without having to put on their shoes again.

Kitchens were built at a lower level with a dirt floor, surrounded by fire-resistant walls. The heat from the kitchen fireplace was directed upward through flues under the floors of the house and out a chimney at the other end. The ondol floors were protected by stones covered with clay, and then finished with oiled paper on top, so that the stones were heated, which in turn heated the floor itself. The wooden maru sections of the house were not heated this way. Portable heaters could also be placed in individual rooms.

Men's area (*sarang-ch'ae*)

The main rooms contained within the men's quarters (*sarang-ch'ae*) were the open area called the *taech'ong* (mentioned earlier), and a master bedroom for the principle male as well as his study/drawing room known as a *sarang*. The bedroom, study, porch, and related rooms all formed one unit that typically sat on a higher foundation than the rest of the compound. Sometimes, a wealthy individual might have built a library in a detached building. This library might have been a reading room or simply a place where books were stored. Outhouses for the men's quarters were usually just outside the main gate or in one corner of the main courtyard. Servants used one portion, the master of the house another.

The *taech'ong* was sometimes connected to an enclosed verandah called a *numaru*. This area projected out from both the *taech'ong* and the *sarang*. The three exposed sides were decorated with latticework and railings called *rangan*, making an important decorative addition to the front of the house (see slide #17). The area was used for relaxation and enjoyment, and could be enclosed with windows and sliding panels for increased warmth during the winter.

While the various spaces within traditional Korean homes were defined by men's and women's quarters and by degrees of privacy and hierarchy, they could also be defined by the furniture that was used. Much of this furniture was meant to be portable and could be brought in or out as needed. This is an essential difference between rooms in floor cultures such as Korea and western style rooms. In western rooms, the furniture often defines the room. For example, a Western dining room contains a dining table and chairs and this furniture stays in the room. By contrast, traditional Korean rooms are adapted to different uses by readjusting the furniture. Cushions can be brought in to make a bed. Food can be brought to an individual part of the house on trays. Rooms can return to their sparse look at the end of the day. The only pieces of furniture that did not move very often were the large storage cabinets.

In the men's study—the *sarangbang*—we find a selection of furniture scattered around the walls and floor, most of which can be moved if necessary to suit the occasion. In keeping with Neo-Confucian values, the room had an uncluttered, modest appearance. Furniture was largely undecorated, the man preferring the natural tone of the wood. An open shelf (*t'akcha*) held a few objects, books and several drawers on the lower section. The man sat at the innermost side of the room, on a large cushion called a *poryo*, with his back against another cushion known as an *ansok*, and his arm resting on a square cushion known as a *sabangchim*. These cushions were for study and rest, not for sleeping. In front of the large cushion was a desk (*soan*) for reading and writing. Next to it was a lamp, usually a stand holding one or more lamp bowls (*tunggyong*). On the wall was a mail holder (*kabi*).



Sarang-man's study

Behind the large cushion was a folding screen (*byongp'ung*). Folding screens were placed in a number of rooms, and had practical as well as aesthetic functions. On a practical level, they could be moved to suit the room. They provided a focal point for the room, or a backdrop to the main person sitting in the room. They divided space, cut drafts, created a sense of privacy and enclosure. Aesthetically, the paintings mounted on the screen displayed the owner's taste. Men's rooms, for example, displayed traditional Chinese calligraphy or classical scenery in the Chinese style. Flowers and birds might have hung in the women's room. Symbols of longevity might have hung in the room used by elderly parents.

Women's area (*an-ch'ae*)

The women's area included the *anbang*, where the principle woman resided, a secondary room called *konnobang*, most often used by the daughter-in-law, a main hall, kitchen, and storage room. In some larger houses, the kitchen and storage room could be separate rooms, but usually they were part of the *anch'ae*. The women's area was generally to the north of the rest of the house.

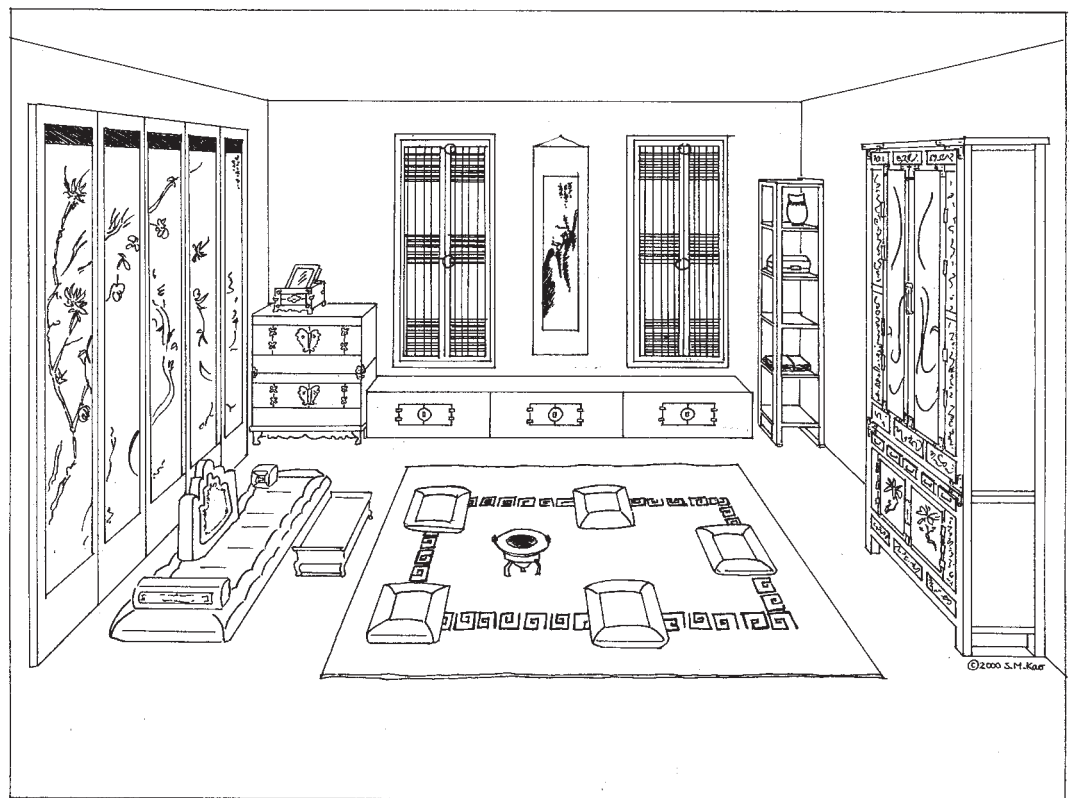
The rooms in the women's area usually all faced an inner courtyard (see slide #18) which was surrounded by a low, inner wall. Servants came and went through an inner gate. Upon entering the inner courtyard, one faced the main hall (*antaech'ong*) of the women's section, similar in style to the men's *taech'ong* with a wooden *maru* floor, and raised up off the ground. Next to this area was the *anbang* or main room for the senior woman of the house.

Facing east or southeast on a different side of the courtyard was the kitchen, and usually a subsidiary room called *ch'anggan* for food storage and preparation. This meant that the preparation of food took place with one's back to the outside world, facing

in towards the rest of the house, a meaningful gesture indicating a wish for good fortune. Women were entrusted with the preparation of food and therefore the well-being of the home. Most of a woman's life was spent in this area. Often, personal bathing took place in this room as well, using heated water from the hearth.

Close to the kitchen, but outside the courtyard area was a storage room and stone platform area known as *changdokdae* on which rested numerous large pots containing condiments (sauces) and other foods. These were the sauces and ingredients (soybean paste, kimch'i, red chili peppers, etc.) essential to the preparation of Korean food. Even today, these condiment jars can be seen in the yards or balconies of Korean homes.

Within the *anbang* could be found cushions, screens, desks, and lamps similar to the men's rooms. The principal furniture pieces were the storage chests. Wardrobe chests were called *chang*. Tall *chang* containing a coat rack might have been placed in an adjacent room. A *pandaji* chest contained bedding as well as clothing, to suit the four distinct seasons of the Korean peninsula. Since people sat on the floor, stackable chests known as *nong* became popular. These were often decorated with inlaid mother of pearl, bamboo or reed mat (see slide #19). Other notable objects in the woman's room were the sewing kit for handicrafts and a mirrored cosmetic or vanity box known as a *chwag-yong*. The cosmetic box was a container whose lid was a mirror that could be flipped up at an angle for viewing.



Anbang—woman's room

Aspects of Upper-Class Women's Lives

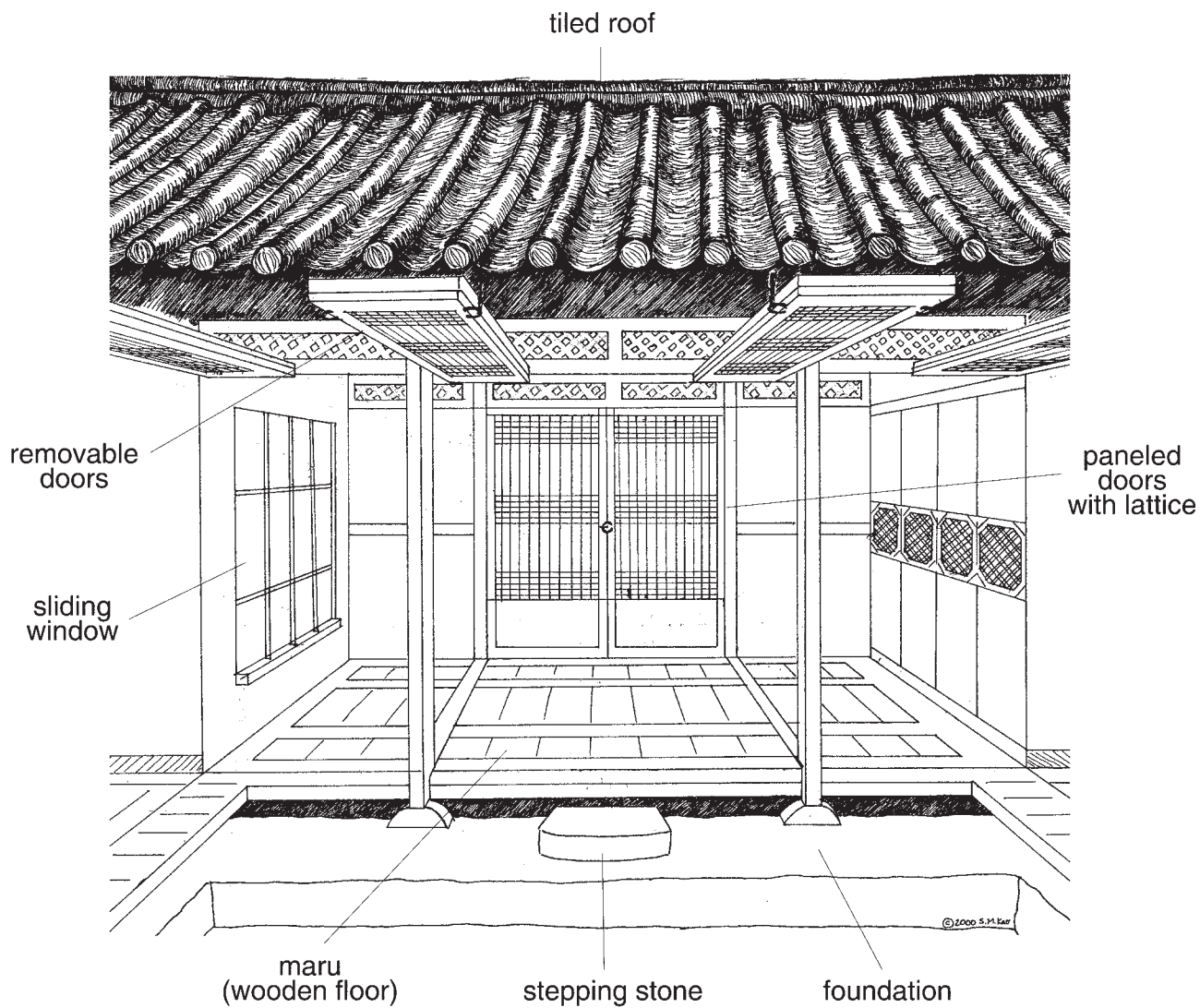
As has been noted before, members of the Choson-dynasty upper class conformed to the Neo-Confucian principle of separate functions for men and women. This meant separate quarters in the home for women, as well as strict rules regarding public appearance and access to women's quarters.

Upper-class women spent most of their lives in the *anch'ae*. They were generally separated from boys and men at age seven. They were not encouraged to learn the same skills as men, and any reading or writing abilities would have been picked up from their parents or by observing their brothers while they were practicing or being tutored. Some did manage to write poems and paint pictures, often giving us insights into the most intimate observations of their surroundings. Most women excelled at sewing and embroidery. Objects like needle, thread, scissors, sewing box and iron became treasured companions.

Women were only allowed to leave their house with permission of the husband. If they did, they rode in palanquins and were required to cover their faces. Lower-class women would have been seen more often, as they accompanied their husbands to the fields. Upper-class men and women ate and slept in separate parts of the house. Houses were designed to give the appearance that men and women did not even see each other, but often, there were inner passageways allowing access from the man's quarters to the woman's. Men and women tended to sleep together on days that were considered auspicious.

In general, women were expected to behave with modesty, while at the same time, taking charge of the house, the kitchen and the children. They were expected to "keep the peace" at home. Women occasionally took charge of a household when the husband died and the son-heir was under-age, or if there was no male heir. Arguments over the inheritance of property caused quarrels among women. Widows could not remarry. Secondary wives and their offspring did not enjoy the same rights as primary wives and their offspring. Perhaps the most difficult relationship to manage in the home was the one between the senior matron of the home and the daughter-in-law, particularly at the time when the eldest son assumed the senior position in the house, and the daughter-in-law thereby assumed possession of the primary room in the women's quarters.

Taech'ong (porch)



Slide no. 1



Identification

The slide shows mountains and harvested rice in the autumn near the village of Andong in South Korea. Andong has been preserved as a traditional village, and exhibits both upper- and lower-class houses from the Choson dynasty (1392–1910).

The Korean peninsula is filled with mountains. Mountains form natural barriers and also create distinctive regions within Korea. Rice is a staple crop in Korea. Land formed the basis of wealth for most of Korean history. Rice was harvested not only for food, but also to pay for taxes.

Discuss the importance of the land and mountains to Korean history and culture:

- indigenous spirits were believed to inhabit mountains; these mountain spirits or mountain gods were later incorporated into Buddhism
- Buddhist monasteries were often built in mountain locations; during the Choson dynasty, Buddhism was suppressed, but it continued to thrive in mountain and rural settings, where it gained support among common people
- villages and towns were positioned with their backs (north) to the mountains facing a river (south); Andong is located where the river forms an S-curve. Finding an ideal place for a building in the landscape is called *p'ungsu* (geomancy) Correct placement of buildings is believed to ensure good fortune for all who live there.
- Korea is a country of four seasons; traditional life was built around cycles of the moon and the changes in weather. The Korean fall harvest festival is called Ch'u-sok.
- Rice was introduced to Korea probably from China in ancient times; rice cultivation improved during the Choson dynasty ; rice is grown in terraces that make efficient use of mountainous terrain; rice forms a principal grain dish (*pap*) at meals.

Slide no. 2



Identification

This is a bird's-eye view of Songgwangsa—a Buddhist monastery in the mountains about 18 miles from the southern coast of Korea. Songgwangsa means “piney expanse monastery.” It is located on the slopes of Chogye mountain. Its history dates back to the 10th century, but the great monk Chinul (1158–1210) is credited with building it as a center for meditation practice. The monastery was partly destroyed by the Japanese invasions (1592, 1597) and there was a devastating fire in 1842. It was further damaged between 1948–1951 during the Korean war. The present monastery was largely rebuilt and expanded under the leadership of the master Kusan (1908–1983)

The layout of the monastery follows the gentle slope of the hill beginning in the lower part of the photograph and proceeding upward. The entrance to the monastery is through several gates under the trees at the lower left corner. The center of the monastery is the large central building facing an open courtyard. This is the main image hall where monks assemble for daily chanting. On either side of the courtyard are (to the left) a hall devoted to monastic treasures, and on the right, a hall devoted to another Buddhist figure named Ksitigarbha. Above the main image hall are two buildings devoted to meditation. To the right of that building is the Hall of National Preceptors, or national teachers. The dining hall and residence area for the monks is on the lower right-hand side.

Discuss the significance of Buddhist monasteries to Korean culture:

- Buddhism originated in India, and first came to Korea from China in the 4th century. Originally, Buddhism consisted of a community of monks and nuns who renounced their family ties and professed faith in the Buddha, the Buddha's doctrine and the community or sangha. Buddhist monasteries were often situated in remote areas and monks supported themselves by begging.
- monasteries were often founded by an important monk, or established by kings or nobility as a way of building merit or ensuring good fortune for themselves,

their families or the nation. Land was often donated to monasteries on a tax-free basis. Monasteries further supported themselves by overseeing important rituals.

- Buddhist monasteries became important repositories for texts, relics, and Buddhist images. They were centers of study and learning.
- lay public could assist the monks and take part in worship at the monastery; those who wished to devote themselves fully to a life of study, meditation, or service to Buddhism became monks and nuns
- Songgwangsa became known as a center for the study of Son meditation; this is a form of quiet contemplation, where the practitioner spends several months learning to dispense with the logical mind and realize a point of oneness with all life; the ultimate goal of meditating monks is to reach a point of enlightenment, leading to a state where the cycle of rebirth and suffering ceases, known as *nirvana*.

Slide no. 3



Identification

This is the portrait hall at Songgwangsa showing the various teachers and founding monks who are associated with the monastery and with Son Buddhist practice. Monastic practice consists of chanting, study, and meditation. Historically, there were two main schools of Buddhism in Korea, one focused on the study of texts, and another focused on meditation practice. The dominant form of Korean Buddhism, Son (Chinese: Chan, Japanese: Zen), represents a blending of these two schools. Different monasteries, however, specialize in different aspects of the practice. Songgwangsa specializes in meditation practice. This means there is a special group of monks within the monastery that practices meditation almost exclusively for several months, several times a year. Since texts are not held to be as important as the practice of meditation in these circumstances, learning from experienced masters becomes very important. These Son masters, as they are known, learned from past masters, and so on, back to the original founder. Halls containing pictures of past masters, therefore, represent foundation of experience and learning inherent in the monastery. It is from these individuals that the practice of meditation has been passed down through the generations.

The Asian Art Museum contains a monk's portrait on a hanging scroll similar to the ones seen in slide no. 3.



Portrait of Sosan Taesa, Hyujong (1520-1604)
Choson dynasty, late 16th-17th century
Asian Art Museum, 1992.345

This is a portrait of Sosan Taesa (Hyujong) a Son master of the mid-Choson dynasty (1500–1600). His importance is emphasized by his elevated position on a richly decorated chair (remember that most people sat on the floor at this time) and by his sumptuous robes. He holds a long whisk in one hand. His steadfast gaze attests to his reputation as a master teacher and also as a warrior monk who rallied fellow monks to fight the Japanese invaders in 1592.

Discuss the importance of master-teachers in Korean (Son) Buddhist practice:

- how does the presence of master teacher portraits assist monks in their meditation practice?
- what is Son Buddhism? What does meditation do? (see previous slide description and section in texts called “Buddhist temples and Monastic life”)
- compare the use of portraits in other educational settings

Slide no. 4



Identification

This picture shows the main courtyard area of Haeinsa—a Buddhist temple in South Korea. In the foreground is a single pagoda. In the background, on higher ground is the main image hall, where monks chant several times a day (see next slide). Around the courtyard lanterns in the form of lotus flowers have been strung in memory of the last Son master.

Pagodas are an essential feature of most Buddhist monasteries. They started out as *stupas* or reliquary mounds in India, containing relics of the Buddha or important Buddhist monks. By the time Buddhism reached Korea, stupas had become the Chinese pagoda form consisting of square platforms in many layers. This is a three-story pagoda on a base surrounded by a stone banister. It is in the style of Unified Silla (668–918) and was remodeled in 1926.

The main image hall is usually the largest building in a Buddhist monastery, although not necessarily the most important. This is where monks and lay public convene for worship and chanting several times a day. The tiled roof curves slightly upward. The roof is supported by an elaborate system of posts and beams, which are brightly painted in *tanch'ong* patterns (see slide #9)

Haeinsa is famous as a repository for a complete set of Buddhist texts on wooden blocks (see slide #6) and is also famous as a center for the study of Buddhist doctrine. The last master to teach at Haeinsa—Songch'ol—was highly regarded and thousands attended his funeral here in 1993. Songch'ol's approach to meditation was quite different from the methods favored by Chinul, the founder of Songgwangsa. Songch'ol believed in “sudden awakening” rather than the gradual experience of enlightenment used at Songgwangsa.

See the attached diagram of Haeinsa in this packet, and use this and the slides as a basis for the following questions:

- using Haeinsa as an example, discuss the layout of a Buddhist monastery. Is this a symmetrical layout? If not, why not? How do the buildings take advantage of the natural topography?
- where did pagodas come from and what is their meaning?
- what is the function of the main hall?

Slide # 5



Identification

This slide (taken by Belgian photographer Mark De Fraeye) shows monks in worship inside the main image hall (see external view in the previous slide).

The main hall is known as *Taejokkwang-jon*. The name is derived from the main statue inside. The name means “Hall of Great Calm and Brilliance” and here the main figure is Vairocana. “Vairocana” is a cosmic figure of the Buddha, literally “cosmic or universal law or energy.” Vairocana is not a depiction of the historical Buddha who lived and preached in India. He is a manifestation of a cosmic principle that is universal and timeless. His hands are held together in a distinctive *mudra* (mudras help to identify different Buddhist figures). He is flanked by two other large Buddhist figures, Majusri and Samantabhadra. Behind the main figures are paintings showing various saintly figures known as Bodhisattvas and defenders or guardian figures. A rich canopy hangs over the main figure and the ceiling is painted in bright colors (tanch’ong patterns, see slide # 9).

The monastery was founded in the 9th century, but like many monastic buildings, has undergone many restorations. This building dates from 1818.

The image is dark because most worship takes place early in the morning before sunrise and in the evening after sunset. Monks sit in hierarchical order, with the senior monks tending to sit in the back. Lay public can participate, but they are not allowed to enter through the main doors. Worship takes the form of chanting from various texts known as sutras. The text associated with Vairocana is the Flower Garland Sutra. One also prostrates oneself before the images of the Buddha many times.

Discussion:

- compare Buddhist worship with that of other religions; how does it differ? How is it similar?
- how do sculptures and paintings function in Buddhist worship?
- describe the qualities needed to practice as a Buddhist monk (see section of “monastic life” in the background texts)

Slide # 6



Identification

This slide shows the inside of one of two halls containing over 80,000 wooden text blocks. These blocks are famous around the world as one of the best surviving complete Buddhist texts known as Tripitaka. *Tripitaka* means “three baskets,” referring to the Buddhist teachings, rules of monastic life and commentaries, set down centuries earlier and transmitted to Korea via China. This was the second of two sets of blocks created during the Koryo dynasty (918–1392). They were created in the hopes of averting attacks by foreign invaders. The first set was destroyed by the Mongols, but a second set was completed in 1251 and survived here in the mountain monastery of Haeinsa.

The survival of the 2nd set of texts is largely attributable to the two halls that they are contained in. Through carefully designed windows, roofs and flooring, they allow perfect ventilation and humidity, thus preventing cracking or rotting of the wood.

The texts were carved in Chinese characters on individual blocks stacked horizontally on the shelves. Printed copies can be made from each block with ink and paper. As recently as the 1960s, thirteen sets were printed on paper and distributed around the world (one set was sent to the University of California at Berkeley) and currently, the set is being digitized for electronic access.

Discussion

- Discuss the importance of wooden text blocks to the history of printing and the dissemination of Buddhism
- discuss the techniques used to preserve the blocks (see section on Haeinsa in “Buddhist temples and Monastic Life”)
- compare the new technologies of the Internet with wooden texts--what are the advantages and disadvantages of both?

Slide # 7



Identification

This is a painting in the collection of the Asian Art Museum, “Buddha Amitabha with the Eight Great Bodhisattvas” (B72 D38) It dates from the 14th century, during the Koryo dynasty. It is a hanging scroll, made of ink, colors and gold on silk. Paintings from the Koryo dynasty are rare.

Buddhism was particularly favored as a royal religion during the Koryo dynasty (918–1392) when it received numerous commissions, land grants, and tax exemptions, and conducted rites for individuals and the state. Members of the aristocracy paid for Buddhist works of art for family altars and to be placed in local temples and monasteries. A painting such as this was probably commissioned in the hopes that it would bestow honor and blessings on the patron and his family.

The central figure in the painting, surrounded by a large halo, is Amitabha. Like Vairocana (discussed in slide #5) Amitabha is a cosmic figure, the Buddha of eternal life and boundless light. Amitabha presides over a heavenly realm known as the Pure Land of the Western Paradise. Pure Land Buddhism began in the Unified Silla period (668–918) and gained popularity among all classes, since, it was claimed, devotees with a pure heart only had to evoke Amitabha’s name to be admitted or reborn into the Pure Land.

In this painting, Amitabha is flanked by eight Bodhisattvas, saintly figures who assist worshippers in their efforts to seek enlightenment. On the left are (by their Sanskrit names) Avalokiteshvara (Korean: *Kwanum*), Manjushri (*Munsu*), Maitreya (*Miruk*). On the right are Mahasthamaprapta (*Taeseji*), Samanatabhadra (*Pohyon*), Ksitigarbha (*Chijang*) and Sarvanirvana Viskambin (*Chejang’ae*). Each bodhisattva is richly attired, with elaborate jewelry and distinctive headdresses, in contrast to Amitabha, who is more simply attired and bare chested.

The placement of halos and the different size of the figures reinforces the hierarchical arrangement. The individual halos also reinforce the circular composition. Faces and

figures are depicted simply, with static frontal poses, but the garments are rendered in bright reds, greens and blues.

Discussion

- discuss why an aristocratic patron would commission a Buddhist image like this; where might it have been placed?
- how has the artist shown hierarchy in the arrangement of the figures? How do we know these are not earthly, mortal figures?
- what elements of this painting might have been based on real life at the time?

Slide # 8



Identification

This slide shows one of the treasured objects in the Korean collections of the Asian Art Museum, Ewer with lid (B60 P 123+), from the Koryo dynasty, approx. 100–1150, made of stoneware with celadon glaze.

This pouring vessel, which would have sat inside a bowl, was probably used in Buddhist rituals, as it contains a cover in the form of a lotus, a Buddhist symbol of purity. Celadons reached a peak of production in the early 1100s, just before the Mongol invasions. They were greatly admired by the Koryo aristocracy and various accounts by contemporary Chinese visitors to Korea also mentioned them as equal to or better than similar wares produced in China. Koryo celadons continue to attract collectors today, and are among the most sought-after works of Korean art.

The particular attraction of Koryo celadons lies in its elegant forms and uniquely colored glazes, typically greenish-blue. This piece has been modeled on a metallic form, as we can see from the straight shoulder of the vessel and the flat handle. The greenish-blue color suggests the color of jade, a color that also inspired Chinese wares that were making their way into Korea. It seems likely that Korean potters working in the southwest area of Cholla province were influenced by these Chinese wares, and made efforts to surpass them. The unique color was obtained by experimenting with the right combination of iron in the glaze, high kiln temperatures and reducing the oxygen in the kiln during the firing process. The final result is a light, almost transparent glaze that pools in some places and allows the body of the vessel to show through in others.

Discussion:

- discuss the influence of Chinese ceramics and trade on Korean ceramics
- how did aristocratic patronage of Buddhism affect the arts?
- describe the form of this vessel; compare with the jar in slide # 4.

Slide no. 9



Identification

This slide shows the upper inside of a gateway at the entrance into one of the royal palaces in Seoul.

This particular gate leads into the Kyonghuigong, a minor palace compound that was moved during the Japanese colonial rule to make room for a Japanese school. The original gate dates from 1616. It is now being restored.

Kyonghuigong is one of several palaces in Seoul. The largest palace was Kyongbok, but the most lived-in palace by the Choson monarchs was Changdok (see next slide). These two palaces were meant to be both residences for the royal family and administrative centers for the court. They consisted of numerous buildings built around courtyards and connected by various passageways and corridors. The most public areas tended to be at the front of the building and the most residential and private buildings were located at the innermost parts of the compound. Generally, there were three parts—official buildings, residential buildings and gardens.

One entered the royal compounds through several gateways. These gateways were originally placed along protective walls in the four cardinal directions. In some cases, topographical features dictated slightly different layouts.

The gateway seen here is similar in construction to those found at Buddhist temples. It consists of posts and beams with rafters that descend from the top, supporting a roof that descends in two stories. Both were decorated in the bright green-blue-red patterns known as *tanch'ong*. In the slide, one can see the complicated structure of beams and rafters that are exposed as one walks between the two doorways of the gate. The doors of the gate and the cross beams are painted a reddish brown, in contrast to the bright colors of the rafters.

The gate symbolizes the transition from one world to the next. In a temple setting, it means leaving the mundane world, and entering the realm of the sacred. In a palace complex, it separates the realm of the everyday from the realm of secular and political power.

Discussion:

- discuss the function of royal palaces in the early Choson (see also section on “Royal Palaces of Seoul”)
- how did Buddhist temple architecture influence Palace architecture? how does the use of gateways differ?
- describe the use of color in this gateway

Slides # 10 and 11



(slide #11 by
photographer
Mark De Fraeye)

Identification

The slides show the outside of the throne hall at Changdok, and the inside of the throne hall at Kyongbok palace, both built during the Choson dynasty (1392–1910) in Seoul.

Changdok was originally designed as a secondary or detached palace, since Kyongbok had been designed as the main palace. After the Japanese invasion of 1592, however, Changdok was reconstructed first while Kyongbok lay in ruins. For almost the next 300 years, Changdok was the main royal residence and seat of government.

The main throne hall at Changdok was first constructed in 1405 and was rebuilt in 1609. It was further damaged in a 1623 coup d'état, and burned down in a fire in 1803. The present building was reconstructed in 1804. King Sunjong (reigned 1907–1910) modernized it with curtains and electric light fixtures. It has since been named National Treasure no. 225.

The proper name for the building (slide #10) is *Injongjon*, meaning “Hall of Benevolent Rule.” The hall stands at the center of the administrative part of the compound,

inside the second gate. From this hall, the king presided over state ceremonies, New Year's festivities, royal family celebrations, and the reception of foreign visitors.

Korean palace buildings were never grand in the manner of Chinese palaces, but instead are modest, yet stately and well proportioned. The building itself is slightly longer (81') than it is deep (61'). Choson dynasty buildings were measured in terms of *kan*, the space or bay between four pillars. Therefore, the throne hall measures 5 kan wide by 4 kan deep. The building has a double-storied roof and sits on a three-step stone terrace. The walls are covered with lattice windows. Corridors to the east and west flanking the building were intended for processions of civil and military officials. A separate lane was intended for the exclusive use of the king.

The inside of the building reveals only one story, providing a spacious atmosphere and lofty setting for the throne. There are balconies along the inside walls. The throne hall shown here (slide #11) is from Kyongbok, but is very similar in layout and design to the throne found at Changdok. The throne sits at the center of the hall under an elaborate canopy highlighted by woodwork and designs of phoenix, clouds, and flower scrolls. Behind the throne is an openwork wooden screen and above this stands a screen painting with stylized sun and moon shining over "five mountain peaks." The painting symbolized the king's sovereignty on a number of levels. It represents Korea, dominated by mountain peaks, but it also refers to the five elements and the balance of yin and yang represented by the sun and moon. Thus the king, sitting in the center of the painting, balances and unites the heavens and the earth. The Sun/Moon/Five Peaks painting traveled with the king on official business and was always placed behind him.

Discussion

- refer to the drawing of the layout of Changdok palace (see "Palaces" section); locate the position of the throne hall
- how does the design, construction, and decoration of the throne room support the public role of the king and his administration?

Slide # 12



Identification

This large white jar was made of porcelain in the 17th century during the Choson dynasty (1392–1910) It is in the collection of the Asian Art Museum (B60 P110+).

In contrast to the celadon stonewares of the Koryo dynasty (see slide #8), Choson dynasty ceramics were dominated by two types of ceramics: *punch'ong* wares and white porcelains. Punch'ong wares were stonewares covered with white slip and decorated with a variety of decorative techniques. These wares were in widespread use between 1400 and 1600, but never recuperated from the Japanese invasions of 1592 and 1597. Porcelains were produced throughout the Choson dynasty. White porcelains epitomized the new regime's emphasis on Neo-Confucian virtues of morality, purity and modesty, just as scholar officials wore white robes. Undecorated white porcelains were felt to be appropriate for use in Confucian rites, for scholar's objects and were popular for such uses as this large food jar.

Porcelains were made using kaolin clay in a high fired kiln. Undecorated white porcelain production was centered at official kilns in Kwangju, where it was closely watched by representatives of the office in charge of food for the king.

This jar is both refined in its color, with a hint of blue in the glaze, and robust in its shape. It tilts slightly to one side, reminiscent of more rustic pottery. This appeal to naturalism and simplicity combined with purity and refinement is distinctly Korean.

Discussion:

- compare the qualities of this jar to the ewer in slide # 8
- describe the qualities of porcelain that appealed to the Neo-Confucian elite

Slide #13



Identification

This slide shows the front entrance to the Oksan Confucian Academy near Yandong village not far from the present-day city of Kyongju.

Oksan Academy was a private school or *sowon* for advanced students. Sowon became fashionable during the Choson dynasty (1392–1910) (see section on Neo-Confucianism). Sowon were founded by scholars, or in memory of scholar officials. They included facilities for study as well as shrines where ancestral offerings were (and still are) carried out in memory of the founding scholars and other Confucian worthies. Sowon proliferated to such an extent that they were abolished towards the end of the Choson dynasty. Oksan Academy was one of 47 to survive.

The Academy was founded in 1574 in memory of the scholar Yi Onjok (1491–1553). After many years of government service, Yi Onjok fell from power and spent several years studying in the area of the school. Upon his return to office, he became involved in a famous debate over gifts from Japanese emissaries. He was later involved in a purge of scholars that resulted in his banishment. Members of the Yi family continue to inhabit Yandong village (see slide #17).

The slide shows the three-part gate at the entrance. Inside the main gate one enters a courtyard area facing the lecture hall. On either side is a dormitory. To the upper left is a stone memorial. Straight behind the lecture hall is the shrine, and nearby more than 1,000 books are stored. The area to the right of the main courtyard was used by the slaves and other support staff who serviced the needs of the academy.

The roundel emblem on the three front gates is called a *taeguk*, and usually symbolizes heaven, earth and man. A variation of it appears on the Korean flag. It is related to the familiar Chinese symbol of ying-yang, the opposing yet complementary forces of nature. The Korean symbol adds the third element, humans, who stand between heaven and earth, aware of the need to balance competing forces.

Discussion:

- discuss the importance of Neo-Confucianism to Choson society
- discuss how sowon (private academies) fulfilled Neo-Confucian ideals

Slide no. 14



Identification

This slide shows a modern-day class of students studying at Namwon Sodang. This school has kept alive the style of teaching from the Choson dynasty. The master (center) and students wear white *hanbok* (traditional Korean clothing) as befits the yangban (upper) class. Students grew their hair long until it was bound in a top-knot during the important capping ceremony. *Sodang* were local schoolhouses where the sons of aristocratic families studied until the age of fifteen, when they entered either one of four schools in Seoul or a country school in their vicinity. At these higher schools, they prepared to pass the first set of civil examinations that would admit them into the ranks of civil officials.

The boys in the slide study Chinese calligraphy. Calligraphy is painted with brush and ink and can be produced in five different scripts. It is both an art form and a language. It originated with the ancient seal script found in ancient China on ceremonial bronze vessels and on oracle bones. Chinese writing systems entered Korea during the Three Kingdoms period (57 BCE–668 CE) probably assisted by Buddhist monks, who were proficient in the reading and writing of texts. Even after the Korean (*hangul*) system of writing was developed in 1446, scholars continued to read and write using Chinese calligraphy.

In calligraphy, each character is composed of different brush strokes. By learning many different strokes that make up thousands of characters, students learned not only a written language but also the expression inherent in brush painting. Calligraphy was therefore a window into one's personality. Mastering many brush strokes and scripts demonstrated one's education. Strong, well-painted characters showed the strength of one's character.

Key Confucian phrases and ideas would be placed on walls and over doorways to instill certain values. These values included human-heartedness, modesty, reciprocity and the cultivation of virtue. By cultivating one's moral qualities, and by acting in a virtuous way, one could improve the lot of society in general. Since scholar-officials

were in positions of power, it was vital that they demonstrated these virtues through their behavior and through their actions.

Discussion:

- explain how calligraphy cultivated certain qualities in the student
- discuss the importance of examinations in Choson society and government (see section on Choson dynasty in Historical background materials)

Slide no. 15



Identification

This is a painting in the collections of the Asian Art Museum (1998.42). It portrays a gentleman of the scholar-official class (*yangban*). It was painted about 1930 by the artist Ch'oe Kwang'ik, who was born in 1891 and studied in Japan before earning his living as a portrait painter. He settled down in Kwangju, South Cholla province, where he died in 1970. The painting was given to the museum as a gift by the artist's son.

The scholar wears a top hat (made of horse hair) and informal robe associated with yangban of the late Choson dynasty. Confucian values had instilled a love of virtue and modesty in men of the upper class, hence the clothing styles were plain and simple.

This was a difficult time in Korea, as the country was being run as a colony of Japan. Koreans suffered many hardships and deprivations. The artist managed to make a living under the occupation, painting portraits out of his studio in Seoul. The scholar's expression is firm and resolved, perhaps an indication of his determination to persevere under the circumstances. The portrait also indicates the persistence of Choson-dynasty values even after the dynasty had come to an end.

The style of the painting is unique. It combines Western and Korean painting techniques. The garment, for example, is painted without any sense of depth or volume. The emphasis is on graceful, flowing lines. The patterns on the mat recede as if to suggest Western perspective or spatial depth. The scholar's face is also shaded in a way that suggests greater three-dimensionality. The artist probably wanted to show he could incorporate a variety of traditional as well as modern techniques.

Discussion

- discuss the style of this portrait; how does it compare with the portraits of the Son masters in slide #3?
- describe the lifestyles and values of the scholar-official class during the Choson dynasty

Slide no. 16



Identification

This is a detail of a screen painting in the collections of the Asian Art Museum (1998.111*) called *ch'aekkori*. This object is a recent acquisition to the AAM. It was purchased with funds from the Koret Foundation, the Connoisseur's Council, and the Korean Art and Culture Committee. Ch'aekkori were paintings of scholar's books and other accoutrements that became popular during the 18th century onward. The slide shows a detail of the 8-panel screen, painted with ink and color on paper. This painting is by Yi Ungok (1808–1874).

The fashion for these type of screens may have begun with King Chongjo's (reigned 1776–1800) stated preference for paintings showing scholar's books. Yi Ungok specialized in ch'aekkori, suggesting that there was a considerable demand for such pieces.

Scholar-officials (*yangban*) were in the top class of Choson society. As the educated elite, they would have surrounded themselves with the products of learning, although with moderation. Books included Confucian classics, commentaries, genealogies referring to one's own family history, as well as personal writings and letters.

The owners of these paintings were not necessarily scholars themselves. Possibly they were commissioned as a sign of respect for the literati. On the other hand, they may have been done as a way of emulating that lifestyle, much like today's consumer products convey notions of class distinction and prestige.

The shelves depict not only books, but also brushes, ink sticks, inkstones, rolled up scroll paintings, ancient bronzes, ceramics, and other treasured possessions. The artist has created a sense of depth in the painting by adding Western techniques of perspective—for example, in the way each shelf appears to recede into the background. Painted screens, in addition to being works of art, fulfilled many practical functions in the home such as dividing space and cutting drafts. Screens also provided a focus or a backdrop to the person sitting in front of them.

Discussion:

- describe as many different objects as you can on the shelves
- explain the purpose of screen paintings showing scholar's objects

Slide no. 17



Identification

This is a section of one of several residences (*Much'omdang*) belonging to the Yi family in Yandong village, near the present-day city of Kyongju. This is the outer wing that one encounters when entering the walled enclosure of the compound.

Yandong village, like many villages throughout Korea, is dominated by a few families and their offspring. Historically, Yandong was dominated by the Son and Yi families. The most famous person associated with the village was Yi On-jok, the scholar to whom Oksan Confucian Academy near the village was dedicated (slide # 13). Yi On-jok's mother was from the Son family, but in keeping with Confucian traditions, he inherited his father's name and property. Problems arose between the two families on account of Yi On-jok that continue to this day. Both families built important houses on ridges overlooking the town. Each house was surrounded by a wall, below which were clustered the thatched cottages of the servants. During the Choson dynasty, servants had to carry water up to these houses on a daily basis. Descendants of the families still live in these houses, although the town has been designated a historic site and is frequented by tourists looking to catch a glimpse of "traditional" Korea.

Confucian beliefs required the separation of men's and women's quarters in upper-class homes during the Choson dynasty. The L-shaped building in the slide sits detached from the building inhabited by the modern family. It is raised above the ground to reflect the social standing of the owner. The detached porch (referred to at this site as *pyoltang*) is the area where the male clan head would have received guests, read books on a warm summer's day, or met with village elders. The section jutting out is decorated with railings known as *keja* or chicken-shaped railings. The building is covered with a *maru* (wooden) floor, in contrast to inner rooms elsewhere, which would have been heated by special floors called *ondol*. The supporting posts are round, not square—this was a privilege reserved for higher-status *yangban* (civil and military officials).

Note the lines of the roof that curve upward from the point where the weight of the roof meets the vertical thrust of the pillars and walls. Korean builders delighted in the

natural properties of the wood. Porches like this were designed to show off the floor, the railing, posts, and the supporting beams.

Discussion:

- what was the function of this building? How did it serve the family in their position as clan head in the village?
- describe the use of wood in this building, both structurally and aesthetically

Slide no. 18



Identification

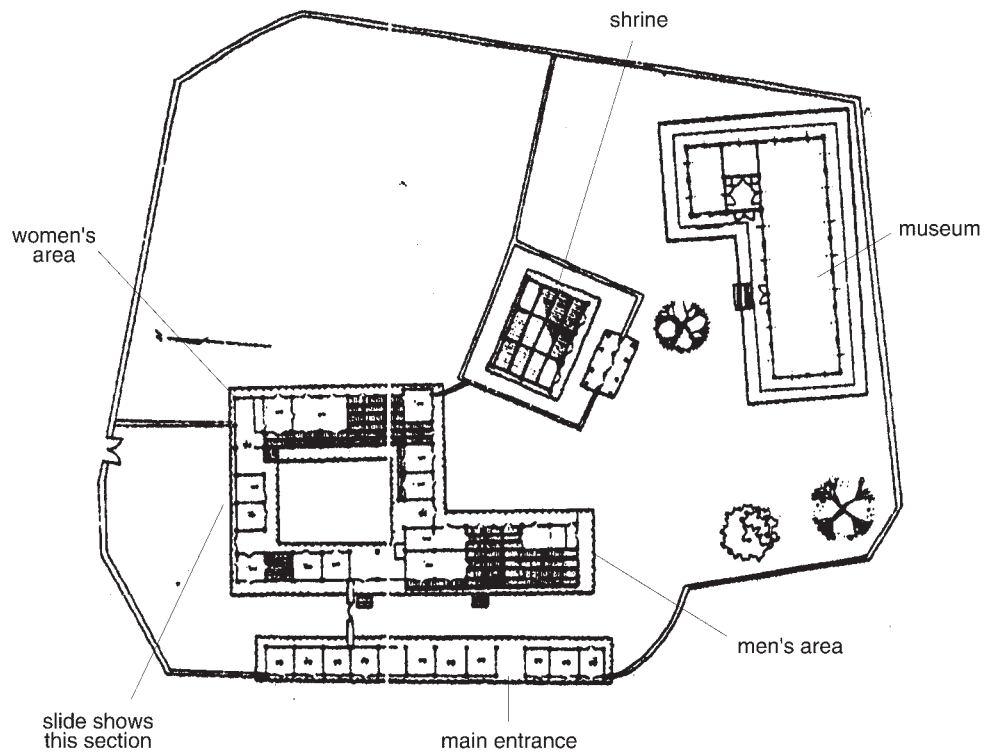
This slide shows one side of the inner courtyard of a clan family house in Hahoe village near present-day Andong, in Kyongsangbuk-do (province) in the central eastern part of South Korea. See also slide #1. This house was built by the grandson of Ryu Song-ryong (1542-1607), who was prime minister during the period of the Japanese invasions. It is therefore a middle-Choson period home. The present building has 32 rooms and an annex that has been turned into a museum.

The section of the house shown here is the kitchen area of the women's quarters or *anch'ae*. Harvested persimmons hang from the balcony of the second story, which can be accessed by stairs on the right. The kitchen would have been at the lower level. The upper room was used by the daughter-in-law, until such time as the senior male and his wife either relinquished their position to the daughter-in-law's husband (the eldest son) or died. To the right of the picture (at a higher level) is an open porch area similar to the man's porch (previous slide) but facing the inner courtyard. Connected to this porch was the main room—*anbang*—of the senior woman of the house. She was in charge of the activities of the entire *anch'ae* area.

The pots in the foreground are storage jars for sauces and condiments used in Korean cooking. They would be tended on a frequent basis. Around the courtyard were other small rooms. The women's area was accessed by a secondary, inner gate. (see diagram on next page)

Upper-class women were expected to tend to domestic matters almost exclusively. Some rarely left the inner quarters of their house. Women were expected to look after the welfare of the family, but at the same time, act in a modest and submissive way.

The senior lady of the Ryu clan who runs the present house recounts that the property was briefly abandoned during the Korean war, but has since recovered its pride of place in the middle of the village. It is now listed as an important cultural property. Queen Elizabeth II of England stopped here during a recent visit to Korea.



Discussion:

- discuss how the layout of traditional upper-class homes during the Choson reinforced Confucian ideas about men and women
- research the use of sauces and other ingredients used in Korean food; how are these dishes prepared and eaten?

Slide no. 19



Identification

This is a two-storied stackable chest called a nong from the collections of the Asian Art Museum (Donated by Mrs. Evelyn McCune, 1992.30.1-3). It is made of wood that has been lacquered and inlaid with mother of pearl.

Lacquer is a resin from a tree that is boiled and applied in layers to furniture and other household objects for both beauty and protection. It is difficult to work with and laborious to apply. As a further enhancement, Korean artisans inlaid the lacquered chest with mother of pearl, or the shell of a mollusk, to add a bright, shimmering quality to the finish. Inlay technique has a long history in Korea, most notably metal inlay and ceramic inlay techniques used in the Koryo celadons and punch'ong wares.

Women's rooms in traditional upper class homes of the Choson dynasty (1392–1910) were called *anbang* (meaning "inner room"). Because women were not expected to pursue the same activities as the men of the house, the furniture found in the anbang was different. Whereas the principal man's room would have contained objects related to study and scholarship- books, writing table, brushes, etc., -the woman's room contained furniture related to domestic activities such as the storage of clothing and bedding. This two-piece chest would have been found in a woman's room. It dates from the 19th century, and may have been made for court use

Since Koreans sat on the floor, furniture tended to be short, or else stacked to facilitate handling of the contents. Korean clothes are folded and placed flat within the sections of the chest. On multilevel chests, the different sections could be moved about when changing wardrobes to adjust to the four distinct seasons in Korea. The legs on the bottom protected the chest from the heated ondol floors, and could be detached when moving the sections.

Discussion:

- how does this furniture reflect the life of women during the Choson?
- compare the design and use of this chest to present-day methods of hanging and storing clothes

Slide no. 20



Identification

This is a textile known as *pojagi* or wrapping cloth. It is a 20th-century piece, made of silk and patchwork. It is in the collections of the Asian Art Museum (1993.5) and was donated by Forrest Mortimer.

Since women were discouraged from the literary or artistic pursuits of their husbands during the Choson dynasty, they excelled in domestic arts such as cooking, sewing, and embroidery. As if to counter the generally repressed and reserved nature of upper-class Choson life (for example, the black and white garb of the scholar in slide # 15) women expressed themselves with greater abandon in the design and execution of *pojagi* and other textile arts. *Pojagi* is a generic term for wrapping cloths that cover a range of uses, from wrapping a sacred text, to covering a table or altar, to wrapping the wooden duck that bridegrooms present to the bride's family as a symbol of fidelity. *Pojagi* are usually square, and were made by women anonymously.

This piece has a patchwork design in bright colors, as bright and cheerful as a Mondrian or Leger painting. It could be called a *chogak po*, a term referring to *pojagi* that has been decorated with bits of leftover cloth. It could also be called a *sang po*, a type of *pojagi* used to cover the food table. *Sang po* were frequently decorated with patchwork as well, with a small tab in the middle for lifting.

The careful making of *pojagi* was felt to confer blessings on the recipient. They were often given by grandmothers and mothers as gifts to their offspring. Most *pojagi* have never been used. As practical objects, *pojagi* covered or wrapped themselves around a variety of objects. As surfaces for design and applied materials, they brightened many ceremonies and occasions. As gifts, they became treasured mementos between loved ones.

Discussion:

- discuss the many uses of *pojagi*, and how they express the arts of women during the Choson dynasty

Student activities: Terms

Discuss the following terms in reference to Korean history and culture:

P'ungsu (geomancy)

Son (meditation) Buddhism

Buddhist figures: Sakyamuni (historical Buddha)
Maitreya (the future Buddha)
Amitabha (Buddha of the Pure Land/Western Paradise)
Vairocana (Cosmic, eternal Buddha)
Avalokiteshvara (bodhisattva of compassion)

Sutras (texts)/ Tripitaka Koreana (“three baskets” of Buddhist texts on wooden blocks)

Pagodas (derived from stupas—reliquary mounds)

Tanch'ong patterns

Celadon (bluish-green glazed stonewares during Koryo)

Confucius / Neo-Confucianism (social and political system adopted in Choson)

Yangban (scholar- official and military class)

Sowon (private Confucian academies)

Sarang-ch'ae and An-ch'ae (men's/women's area of traditional upper-class homes)

Maru/ Ondol (wooden floor/ heated floor)

Ch'aekkori (scholar's objects screen)

Pojagi (wrapping cloth)

Dynasties/periods:

Three Kingdoms (57 BCE–668 CE), Unified Silla (668–935 CE), Koryo (918–1392 CE), Choson (1392–1910 CE)

Other topics:

- Discuss impact of geography on Korean culture, history, architecture
- Discuss Korean relations with peoples of China, Japan, Mongolia, and Manchuria throughout the history covered by this packet
- Discuss impact on Korean culture of sitting/eating/living on the floor

Resource List

General Books on Korea

- DeFraeye, Mark, and Frits Vos. *Korea: Scenic Beauty and Religious Landmarks*. Antwerp: Pandora, 1996.
- Eckert C., Lee, Y. Lew, M. Robinson, and E. Wagner. *Korea Old and New: A History*. Cambridge: Korea Institute, Harvard University, 1990.
- Han, Woo-keun. *The History of Korea*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1974.
- Lee, O-Young. *Things Korean*. Rutland: Charles E. Tuttle, 1999.
- Lee, Peter H., and Theodore De Bary (ed.). *Sources of Korean Tradition*, vol. 1. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.
- Pratt, Keith, and Richard Rutt. *Korea: A Historical Cultural Dictionary*. Richmond: Surrey/Curzon, 1999.
- Wright, Chris. *Korea: Its History and Culture*. Seoul: Korean Overseas Information Service, 1996.

Books on Korean Arts, Buddhism, and Neo-Confucianism

- Bartholomew, Peter. "Choson Dynasty Royal Compounds: Windows to a Lost Culture." *Transactions*, vol. 68. Seoul: Royal Asiatic Society, 1993.
- Buswell Jr., Robert E. *The Zen Monastic Experience: Buddhist Practice in Contemporary Korea*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992.
- Chun, Jin-Hee, et al. *Hanoak: Traditional Korean Homes*. New Jersey: Hollym International Corp., 1999.
- Deuchler, Martina. *The Confucian Transformation of Korea: A Study of Society and Ideology*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992.
- Kendall, Laurel, and Mark A. Peterson. *Korean Adoption and Inheritance, Case Studies in the Creation of a Classic Confucian Society*. New York: Cornell, 1996.
- Kim, Hongnam, ed. *Korean Arts of the Eighteenth Century: Splendor and Simplicity*. New York: Asia Society, 1993.
- Kim, Kumja P. *Hopes and Aspirations: Decorative Painting of Korea*. San Francisco: Asian Art Museum, 1998.
- Kim, Kumja P., and Hah Dong-hwa. *Profusion in Color: Korean Costumes and Wrapping Cloths of the Choson Dynasty*. Seoul: Museum of Korean Embroidery and San Francisco: Asian Art Museum, 1995.

Koreana Korean Cultural Heritage Series: *Fine Arts*, vol. 1; *Thought and Religion*, vol. 2; *Traditional Lifestyles*, vol. 3. Seoul: Korea Foundation 1996–1998.

Lancaster, Lewis R., and Yu Chai-shin. *Studies in Korean Religious and Culture: Introduction of Buddhism to Korea: New Cultural Patterns*, vol. 3; *Assimilation of Buddhism in Korea. Religious Maturity and Innovation in the Silla Dynasty*, vol. 4; *Buddhism in Koryo. A Royal Religion*, vol. 5; *Buddhism in the Early Choson: Suppression and Transformation*, vol. 6. Berkeley: Insitute of East Asian Studies 1991, 1996.

Lee, Kyong-hee. *World Heritage in Korea*. Seoul: Hak Go Jae, 1998.

McKillop, Beth. *Korean Art and Design*. London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1992.

Smith, Judith G., ed. *Arts of Korea*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1998.

Yi, Kun Moo. *National Museum of Korea* (catalogue). Seoul: National Museum of Korea, 1998.

Yoon, Chang Sup. *Korean Architecture*. Seoul: Seoul National University, 1995.

Other Resources

Teacher Guide. *Korea: Lessons for High School Social Studies Courses*. New York: Korea Society, 1999.

Koreana Seoul: Korea Foundation (www.kofo.or.kr/kdata.htm).

Korea Overseas Culture and Information Service (www.kocis.go.kr).

Korea Insights (www.korea.insights.co.kr).

Ask Asia (www.askasia.org).

CD ROM: *Korea: A Cultural Bouquet* Samsung Foundation of Culture, 1999.

Video: *Nine Cloud Dream*. San Francisco: Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.

Museum Education Booklets:

Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

Seattle Art Museum, Seattle WA.

Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY.

The Korean Adoption of Neo-Confucianism

Whereas Buddhism was the prevailing belief system during the Unified Silla and Koryo Dynasties, Neo-Confucianism became the governing philosophy of the ruling classes during the Choson dynasty. In this section, we examine, What was Neo-Confucianism? How was it introduced to Korea in the early Choson dynasty? What was its effect on Choson society, particularly the scholar/literati class?

Neo-Confucianism (*Yukyo*)

Neo-Confucianism was a revision of Confucian philosophy that took place primarily during the Northern and Southern Song dynasties in China (960–1279 CE). It was transmitted to Korea principally through the writings of the Chinese philosopher Zhu Xi during the Koryo dynasty and then adopted during the Choson dynasty as a governing philosophy. This philosophy profoundly influenced the political, social, moral, and artistic life of the ruling classes and, by extension, the rest of society during the Choson dynasty.

Confucianism was a social and political philosophy based on the teachings of the ancient Chinese master, Confucius (Chinese *Kongzi*, Korean *Kongja*) who lived 550–479 BCE during the Spring and Autumn Period of the Eastern Zhou dynasty. Confucius's ideas were concerned mainly with politics and social relationships rather than spiritual matters. He believed that rulers had a moral obligation to govern in the interests of the people and that they should seek the advice of gentlemen educated in classic literature. Social cohesion was based on the respect of five relationships between father and son, ruler and minister, elder brother to younger brother, husband and wife and between friends. Confucian ideas were reinforced through the observation of rites, especially those concerning ancestors. These ideas were further developed by later philosophers, notably Mencius (372–289 BCE). An educational system that tested students on a set of classic books began in the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) and became the means by which men entered the governing bureaucracy.

Zhu Xi (1130–1200) was a government administrator during the Southern Song dynasty who studied the Confucian classics and their reinterpretation by a group of five teachers who had lived in the previous generation during the Northern Song. These authors looked for ways to add a cosmological dimension to the Confucian teachings. They took a particular interest in the *Yijing* (Book of Changes) and borrowed ideas concerning immortality from Daoism, another Chinese philosophy. Zhu Xi formed all these ideas into a coherent, rational system of thought. According to him, living things consist of *li* (Korean *i*)-- an organizing principle or force that is part of a greater whole and is eternal, and *qi* (Korean *ki*)-- physical matter, or the material by which things are produced. Zhu Xi felt that human nature is eternal, like *li*, but is tarnished by our physical self, and the passions of the earthly world. Education can help one investigate the physical realm, and realize the underlying principle *li*. Neo-Confucian ideas blended the old principles of social harmony with new cosmological underpinnings. Confucian morality, in effect, was linked to the cosmic order. Zhu Xi's ideas were not accepted during his own lifetime, but his commentaries on the Confucian classics were widely circulated and were a cornerstone of

political and social thought in the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties in China (1279–1911) These ideas, as we shall see, became orthodoxy in Choson-dynasty Korea.

The Confucian classics that Zhu Xi commented on were the so-called four books and three classics. These books formed the standard curriculum after Neo-Confucianism was adopted in Korea. The four books were the Analects of Confucius (*Lunyu*), the Great Learning (*Daxue*), the Doctrine of the Mean (*Zhong yong*), and the Book of Mencius (*Mengzi*). The three classics pre-dated Confucius and were the Book of Changes (*Yijing*), the Book of Odes (*Shijing*), and the Book of Documents (*Shujing*). More advanced students studied a further five books that included the Book of Rites (*Liji*) and a related essay called the Classic of Filial Piety (*Xiaojing*).

Zhu Xi emphasized the *Daxue*--the Great Learning. This book expanded on a section of the *Liji* dealing with the aims of “refining one’s character,” “loving the people” and “striving for the highest good.” By investigating things, having sincere purpose, being devoted to personal cultivation, the family would be in order and there would be peace under heaven.

The Beginnings of Neo-Confucianism in Korea

The ideas of Zhu Xi (*Chuja* in Korean) were transmitted to Korea several generations after his death and formed the basis of political and social thought for the Choson dynasty (1392–1910). How and why did this transmission happen?

Martina Deuchler has studied this question specifically in her *The Confucian Transformation of Korea* (Harvard, 1992). Confucianism appears in the Korean records as early as the Three Kingdoms period, but it was largely confined to the training of officials. Korean scholars studied Confucianism in China during the Unified Silla period, but their work was confined to the middle ranks of the government. During the Koryo dynasty, Buddhism was the official state religion, but Confucianism was well known, and acknowledged to be an important ideology for statecraft. A Confucian-style examination system was begun in 958 CE along with government sponsored schools. At this time, there was little antagonism between Buddhism and Confucianism.

Korea was initially cut off from Neo-Confucian ideas when the Jin dynasty overran northern Song China in 1127. It wasn’t until the Mongol period of the Yuan dynasty (1279–1368) that Koreans traveling between China and Korea for courtly and diplomatic reasons encountered these ideas. It was the scholar An Hyang (1243–1306) who is credited with introducing Neo-Confucianism to Korea. While accompanying an official mission to Beijing in 1289, he encountered the books of Zhu Xi, personally copied them by hand, and returned to Korea to propagate these ideas. Yi Saek (1328–1396) revised the education system along Neo-Confucian lines and became an inspiring teacher, along with Chong Mongju (1328–1396), who was praised by Yi as the founder of Korean Neo-Confucianism.

As outlined in other sections of this packet, political and social conditions in the late Koryo paved the way for the adoption of Neo-Confucianism. The country had been weakened by various military dictatorships and Mongol rule. There was a recurring struggle between kings and the aristocracy. Land was increasingly falling into private

hands, reducing government tax revenues. Succession problems abounded because the offspring from multiple wives and extended families contested each other's positions. Buddhism enjoyed political favors through family connections and land grants.

Confucian scholars argued that placement in government positions should be based on merit, not family position. King Kongmin (1351–1374) attempted reforms, but when he placed an obscure Buddhist monk, Sin Ton, in charge of government affairs, his regime broke down. In 1371, Sin Ton fell from monk and three years later, the king was assassinated. Confucian scholars began to question the value of Buddhism. It seemed impractical to concentrate on spiritual matters when urgent political and social reform was needed. When Yi Song-gye staged a coup in 1388 and formed the new Choson dynasty in 1392, he was attracted to the new social and political ideology of Neo-Confucianism as a way to reform Korean government and society.

The scholars who sided with the new Choson dynasty were not so much a new class of people as they were inspired by the need for reform. Neo-Confucianism, in their minds offered a system of thought, beliefs and practices that addressed all the problems of the day. Buddhism was felt to be at fault because it placed too much emphasis on matters of the afterlife, and it pulled its followers away from family and social obligations. Succession problems were caused by the lack of clear relationships between members of the family and related kin.

Neo-Confucianism advocated a return to the ways of the ancients, who, it was believed, fashioned government to fit the needs of the people. The king needed to be an example of virtue and to choose advisors who would maintain these high moral standards. At the heart of these new standards were the “three bonds and five relationships” (*samgang* and *oryun*) which reiterated Confucian filial obligations of junior to senior family members and of subjects to the state. Relationships were maintained through the observation of four rites: (*sarye*) capping, wedding, mourning, and ancestor worship. These rites assisted people in developing the moral order and therefore maintained the state and social harmony.

Neo-Confucianism in Practice

The adoption of Neo-Confucianism in Korea did not simply exist at the level of ideas. It was put into practice in the form of laws, both at the government level, at the community level, and in the home. Under King T'aejong, for example, the building of ancestral shrines (*sadang*) was required by law and began in the early 1400s. Lineage and kinship became patrilineal, in contrast to Koryo society, which had been more loosely defined around either matrilineal or patrilineal lines of descent. Descent was now rooted in a common great-great grandfather (usually either three or four generations). The most senior male in the line of descent officiated at ancestral rites several times a year. The line of descent was perpetuated through the first male offspring of the primary wife. If there was no male heir, a substitute could be adopted. Women were married in their own home, but went to spend the rest of their adult lives in their husband's home. In order to legitimize these descent patterns, written genealogies (*chokpo*) were produced in great number. These genealogies became essential in proving one's status in order to obtain a government position.

Neo-Confucianism began on a moral high note, but the adoption of new practices began to pose problems as the dynasty entered its second century. Professor Mark Peterson has studied these problems in terms of inheritance patterns and women's lives during the Choson. Originally, inheritances were divided equally between both male and female offspring, but by the seventeenth century, the eldest son had begun to assume more exclusive rights as heir. Land issues were mainly to blame. In the early Choson, land was more plentiful. Property was based on agricultural land, worked by slaves. As agriculture improved and land decreased, the possession of inherited land became even more crucial as a way of maintaining status. Property assigned to primary wives was somewhat protected, but the preference given to eldest sons created difficulties for secondary wives and their offspring. Daughters also began to be excluded from inheritance because, it was claimed, they did not observe the mourning period for as long as their brothers. Neo-Confucian laws intended to instill a new moral order were detrimental to secondary offspring as well as to women in general.

The rise in position of Neo-Confucian scholars had not come easily. A series of purges took place early in the dynasty that resulted from fighting between *sarim* or "country scholars" and men appointed by the king for their loyalty. Typically it was the *sarim* who were persecuted. Fundamental disputes arose among Neo-Confucian literati several times during the Choson. Neo-Confucianism promoted unswerving obedience to certain principles, with the result that problems were often interpreted as questions of moral and intellectual standing, rather than opportunities for compromise or reform. One famous debate (the Four-Seven debate) arose over the relationship between the Neo-Confucian concept of "four beginnings" versus the concept of "seven emotions." Various factions formed, some around the scholar Yi Hwang (1501–1570), others around the scholar Yi I (1536–1584). A later debate centered on the extent to which human nature differs from that of other creatures.

Neo-Confucianism as a political system declined in the 19th and 20th century as new ideas of social equality conflicted with traditional values. Nevertheless, the social imprint of Neo-Confucianism on Korean culture is still prevalent in many areas including family relationships, honoring one's parents, respect for strong central government, as well as the emphasis on education.

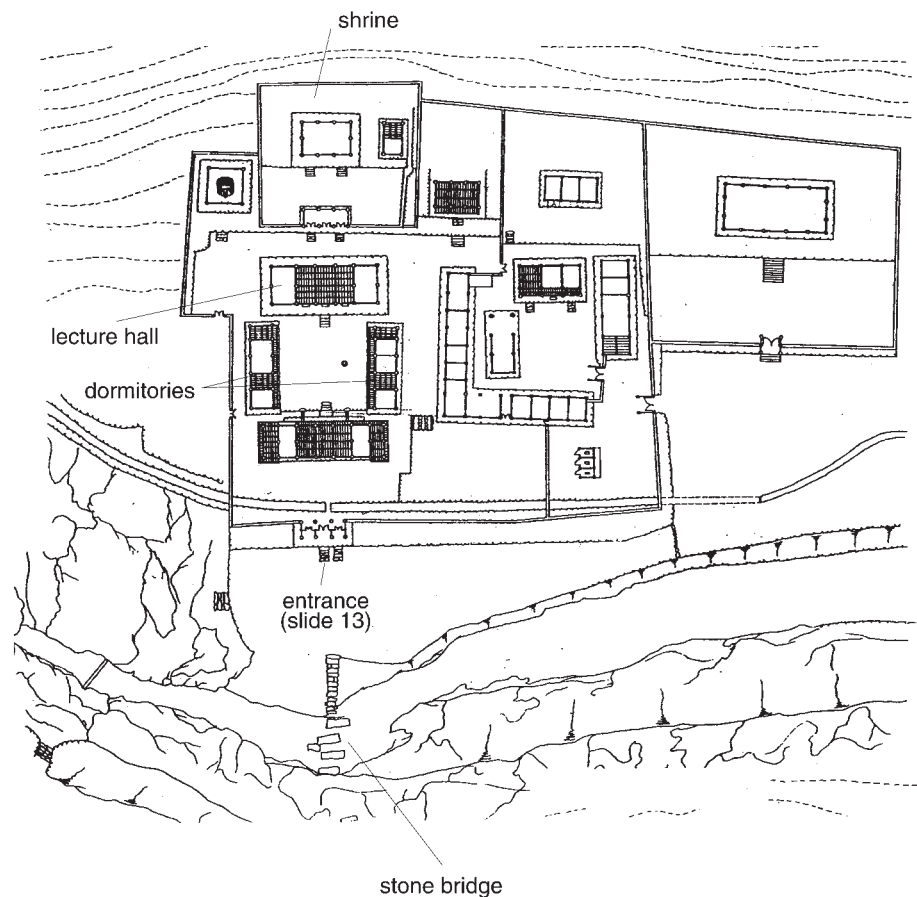
The Growth of *Sowon*

Educational institutions grew during the Choson, since education was fundamental to Neo-Confucianism. Chief among these institutions was the Royal Confucian Academy, and various county schools maintained by state and local governments. A significant development, however, was the growth of private academies known as *sowon*. The first appeared in 1543, with another founded shortly after by Yi Hwang (mentioned above), near present-day Andong. Yi's academy became the first to win royal charter status, written in characters by the king himself and still exhibited at the site. The new schools cropped up everywhere. Within a century, *sowon* were in a similar position to that Buddhist temples during the Koryo. They were exempt from taxes and were given grants of books, land and slaves. *Sowon* were usually founded in memory of famous scholars. They were also begun by scholars who either could not find, or wished to escape from the pressures of government positions. Some schools became involved in the political disputes of the 17th and 18th centuries, by indoctrin-

nating students and rallying them behind certain factions. Around 1600, there were more than one hundred sowon. This number had grown to over 300 by the early 18th century. Land shortages were, in part, attributable to the growth of sowon in the latter half of the Choson. They were suppressed in the latter half of the 19th century, and their numbers declined significantly.

In their prime, sowon fulfilled two main functions. They trained scholars at an advanced level and they served as ancestral shrines to Confucius and the founding scholar associated with each site. The layout of sowon consisted of a front gate (see below and slide # 13), and a square compound that consisted of dormitories on the side, with a main lecture hall essentially in the same place occupied by the main image hall at a Buddhist monastery. At the back of the main lecture hall was the shrine. Servants quarters were located off to the side of the main courtyard, and there was an area devoted to the preparation of feasts used during the ancestral rites. At the Tosan sowon near Andong, commemoration rites for scholar Yi Hwang (also known as T'oegye) are still held twice a year. The dormitories hold collections of books and calligraphic works. Yi Hwang's portrait and the academy can also be seen on the 1,000 won (currency) Korean note.

Oksan Sowon (Private School)



Artistic Pursuits of the Scholar Class

Like their counterparts in China, the scholar-official class (*yangban*) engaged in literary and artistic pursuits as a way to understand the past and cultivate their character. Studies in the Confucian classics would have already prepared the scholar for the more leisurely pursuits of reading, writing poetry, and painting.

Poetry and painting converged in the practice of calligraphy and brush painting. These were not technical arts but rather a means of expressing one's inner being through the careful manipulation of brush and ink on paper or silk. The "four treasures" used in brushwork and found on the scholar's writing table were paper, brushes, ink, and the inkstone. Often there was a beautifully made water-dropper and paperweight as well. Inksticks (generally from pine soot) were ground with water to make the ink while the scholar mentally prepared himself for painting. Weasel hair was especially prized for brush hairs. Brushes came in many thicknesses, and ink could be applied using many different strokes, either with a dry brush or wet brush.

Traditional painting usually took the form of landscapes or else pictures of plum-blossom, orchid, bamboo, or chrysanthemum known collectively as "the four gentlemen," as each symbolized a virtue held in high esteem by the scholar class. Paintings often depicted Chinese subjects drawn from the imagination, the surrounding landscape or from works of literature. The point was not so much to paint the physical likeness of the scene, as much as follow in the path of a past master, or to paint the essence of a scene that fitted one's state of mind. The painting of specifically Korean subjects began in the 18th century (see the historical overview section).

The printing of books from moveable metal type was developed was invented during the Koryo dynasty. During the Choson, it helped disseminate works in the new Korean language *hangul*. However, scholar officials continued to study and write in Chinese for many years in Chinese using brushwork. Calligraphy could take many forms. There were five major scripts in Chinese to choose from, each with distinctive strokes. Each character is made up of a sequence of strokes within an imaginary square. These strokes could be carefully controlled or very expressive depending on the desired effect. As with landscape painting, it was quite common to copy the style of master calligraphers from the past. Brushwork and calligraphy are still greatly admired and practiced to this day.

Student Readings:

“Wonhyo’s Arouse Your Mind and Practice” (late 7th century CE)

Wonhyo was the first great Korean advocate of Buddhism. He read widely and attempted to synthesize the thoughts of competing schools of Buddhism. He also spent much of his time roaming the countryside teaching and inspiring people with the ways of Buddhism.

The following are extracts from his treatise “Arouse Your Mind and Practice!” These are often read by persons entering a monastery hoping to become monks.

“Who among human beings would not wish to enter the mountains and cultivate the path? But fettered by lust and desires, no one proceeds. But even though people do not return to mountain fastnesses to cultivate the mind, as far as they are able they should not abandon wholesome practices. Those who can abandon their own sensual pleasures will be venerated like saints. Those who practice what is difficult to practice will be revered like buddhas.

High peaks and lofty crags are where the wise dwell. Green pines and deep valleys are where practitioners sojourn. When hungry, they eat tree fruits to satisfy their famished belly. When thirsty, they drink the flowing streams to quench their feeling of thirst. Though one feeds it with sweets and tenderly cares for it, this body is certain to decay. Though one softly clothes it and carefully protects it, this life force must come to an end. Thus the wise regard the grottoes and caves where echoes resound as a hall for recollecting the Buddha’s name. They take the wild geese, plaintively calling, as their closest friends. Though their knees bent in prostration are frozen like ice, they have no longing for warmth. Though their starving bellies feel as if cut by knives, they have no thoughts to search for food.

Suddenly a hundred years will be past; how then can we not practice? How much longer will this life last? Yet still we do not practice, but remain heedless.

Though talented and learned, if a person does not observe the precepts, it is like being directed to a treasure trove but not even starting out. Though practicing diligently, if a person has no wisdom, it is like one who wishes to go east but instead turns toward the west. The way of the wise is to prepare rice by steaming rice grains; the way of the ignorant is to prepare rice by steaming sand.

Everyone knows that eating food soothes the pangs of hunger, but no one knows that studying the dharma corrects the delusions of the mind. Practice and understanding that are both complete are like the two wheels of a cart. Benefiting oneself and benefiting others are like the two wings of a bird.

There is no benefit in nourishing a useless body that does not practice. Despite clinging to this impermanent, evanescent life, it cannot be preserved. The four great elements will suddenly disperse; they cannot be kept together for long. Today, alas, it is already dusk and we should have been practicing since dawn. The pleasures of the world will only bring suffering later, so how can we crave them? Years after years continue to pass; unexpectedly we have arrived at the portal of death.

A broken cart cannot move; an old person cannot cultivate. Yet still we humans lie, lazy and indolent; still we humans sit, with minds distracted. How many lives have we spent in our useless bodies? This life must come to an end; but what of the next? Is this not urgent? Is this not urgent? “

Questions:

1. *Wonyo advises that we urgently address fundamental concerns about human existence. What are these concerns?*
2. *What comparisons and analogies does Wonyo make in describing the human condition?*
3. *What solutions does Buddhism offer, according to Wonyo?*

Extracts quoted from *Sources of Korean Tradition*, Volume 1 (Lee, et al. editors, New York: Columbia University Press, 1997)

Student Readings: Wang Kon's Ten Injunctions (943 CE)

Wang Kon was the first king of the Koryo dynasty. His reign lasted from 918-943 CE. He wrote a set of "Ten Injunctions hoping that his followers would use them as guidelines and directions for the future, or as he put it, "as a mirror for reflection". His Ten Injunctions were:

1. The success of every great undertaking of our state depends upon the favor and protection of Buddha. Therefore, the temples of both the Meditation and Doctrinal schools should be built and monks should be sent out to those temples to minister to Buddha. Later on, if villainous courtiers attain power and come to be influenced by the entreaties of bonzes, the temples of various schools will quarrel and struggle among themselves for gain. This ought to be prevented.
2. Temples and monasteries were newly opened and built upon the sites chosen by the monk Toson according to the principles of geomancy. Her said: "If temples and monasteries are indiscriminately built at location not chosen by me, the terrestrial force and energy will be sapped and damaged, hastening the decline of the dynasty." I am greatly concerned that the royal family ,the aristocrat and the courtiers all may build many temples and monasteries in the future in order to seek Buddha's blessings. In the last days of Silla many temples were capriciously built. As a result, the terrestrial force and energy were wasted and diminished, causing its demise. Vigilantly guard against this.
3. In matters of royal succession, succession by the eldest legitimate royal issue should be the rule. But Yao of ancient China let Shun succeed him because his son was unworthy. That was indeed putting the interest of the state ahead of one's personal feelings. Therefore, if the eldest son is not worthy of the crown, let the second eldest succeed to the throne. If the second eldest, too, is unworthy, choose the brother the people consider the best qualified for the throne.
4. In the past we have always had a deep attachment for the ways of China and all of our institutions have been modeled upon those of T'ang. But our country occupies a different geographical location and our people's character is different from that of the Chinese. Hence, there is no reason to strain ourselves unreasonably to copy the Chinese way. Khitan is a nation of savage beasts, and its language and customs are also different. Its dress and institutions should never be copied.
5. I achieved the great task of founding the dynasty with the help of the elements of mountain and river of our country. The Western Capital, P'yongyang, has the elements of water in its favor and is the source of the terrestrial force of our country. It is thus the veritable center of dynastic enterprises for ten thousand generations. Therefore, make a royal visit to the Western Capital four times a year-in the second, fifth, eighth, and eleventh months-and reside there a total of more than one hundred days. By this mean secure peace and prosperity.

6. I deem the two festivals of Yondung and P'alghan of great spiritual value and importance. The first is to worship Buddha. The second is to worship the spirit of Heaven, the spirits of the five sacred and other major mountains and rivers, and the dragon god. At some future time, villainous courtiers may propose the abandonment or modification of these festivals. No change should be allowed.
7. It is very difficult for the king to win over the people. For this reason, give heed to sincere criticism and banish those with slanderous tongues. If sincere criticism are accepted, there will be virtuous and sagacious kings. Though sweet as honey, slanderous words should not be believed; then they will cease of their own accord. Make use of the people's labor with their convenience in mind; lighten the burden of corvee and taxation; learn the difficulties of agricultural production. Then it will be possible to win the hearts of the people and to bring peace and prosperity to the land. Men of yore said that under a tempting bait a fish hangs; under a generous reward an able general wins victory; under a drawn bow a bird dare not fly; and under a virtuous and benevolent rule a loyal people serves faithfully. If you administer awards and punishments moderately, the interplay of yin and yang will be harmonious.
8. The topographic features of the territory south of Kongju and beyond the Kongju River are all treacherous and disharmonious; its inhabitants are treacherous and disharmonious as well. For that reason, if they are allowed to participate in the affairs of the state, to intermarry with the royal family, aristocracy, and royal relatives, and to take the power of the state, they might imperil the state or injure the royal safety-grudging the loss of their own state (which used to be the kingdom of Paekche) and being resentful of the unification.

Those who have been slaves or engaged in dishonorable trades will surrender to the powerful in order to evade prescribed services. And some of them will surely seek to offer their services to the noble families, to the palaces, or to the temples. They then will cause confusion and disorder in government and engage in treason through crafty words and treacherous machinations. They should never be allowed into government service, though they may no longer be slaves or outcasts.

9. The salaries and allowances for the aristocracy and the bureaucracy have been set according to the needs of the state. They should not be increased or diminished. The classics say that the salaries and allowances should be determined by the merits of those who receive them and should not be wasted for private gain. If the public treasury is wasted upon those without merit or upon one's relatives or friends, not only will the people come to resent and criticize such abuses, but those who enjoy salaries undeservedly will also not be able to enjoy them for long. Since our country shares borders with savage nations, always be aware of the danger of their invasions. Treat the soldiers kindly and take good care of them; lighten their burden of forced labor; inspect them every autumn; give honors and promotions to the brave.
10. In preserving a household or state, one should always be on guard to avert mistakes. Read widely in the classics and in history; take the past as a warning for the present. The Duke of Chou was a great sage, yet he sought to admonish his

nephew, King Ch'eng, with *Against Luxurious Ease (Wu-i)*. Post the contents of *Against Luxurious Ease* on the wall and reflect upon them when entering and leaving a room.

Questions

1. *What ideas or beliefs does Wang Kon uphold?*
2. *What problems does he think will continue in the future?*
3. *What sort of man do you think Wang Kon was (based on these statements)?*
4. *Would today's presidents or leaders face similar issues? If so-which ones?*

Extracts quoted from *Sources of Korean Tradition*, Volume 1 (Lee, et al. editors, New York: Columbia University Press 1997)

Student Readings: Royal Prayer on the Occasion of the Production of the Tripitaka

The second set of wooden blocks containing the Buddhist texts were produced in the middle of the 13th century in the hopes of saving the nation and offering divine protection during the Mongol invasion.

This passage was written by Yi Kyu-bo, a scholar-official under King Kojong (1213-1259)

“We together with the dukes, counts, ministers and all the officials in the civil and military service, pray to the Buddha, Indra and all the gods and spirits of the thirty-three heavens who reside in the endless void of the ten directions. The distress inflicted by the Tartars is severe. Their merciless and brutal nature aside, they are more stupid and savage even than beasts. So how can they ever know that there is the Buddha’s law which is the most precious under heaven? Therefore, they have burned up all the Buddha images and scriptures on the path trodden by their filthy footsteps. The printing blocks of the Tripitaka housed at Puinsa were at last burnt down. The product of tremendous endeavor over decades was turned to ashes overnight and a great treasure of the nation has vanished. How could all the Buddhas, bodhisattvas and the heavenly kings, despite their merciful, magnanimous hearts, withstand this disaster? We hope that all the Buddhas, saints and the gods of the thirty-three heavens look upon our wish and grant us miraculous power to make those ruthless barbarians turn course and run away, never to infringe upon the border of our nation again. When the war has ended and peace brought to the country so the queen dowager and the prince may live long and the nation prosper through ten thousand generations, we will all devote ourselves to protecting the Buddha’s law and repay His grace. Please heed our earnest wish.”

Questions

- 1. To what does the writer attribute the destruction of the first set of blocks?*
- 2. What benefits to the nation are ascribed to Buddhism?*

Excerpt quoted in: Lee, Kyong-hee, *World Heritage in Korea*, Seoul: Kak Go Jae Publishing Co., 1998

Student Readings: Neo-Confucian critiques of Buddhism

1. *Chong Tojon's Rebuttal of Buddhism (late 14th century CE).*
Chong Tojon (d 1398) was instrumental in the political change from Koryo to Choson around 1392. He defended the new philosophy of Neo-Confucianism by exposing what he felt was the falseness of Buddhism and other beliefs.

“Mencius (a Confucian philosopher from China) said, ‘Now when people see a young child about to fall in a well, they all have feelings of fear and pity.’ He continued to say: ‘The feeling of commiseration is the beginning of humaneness.’ This means that the feeling of compassion is inherent in our minds and reveals the error of the Buddhist elimination of thought and forgetting of emotion. As for humans being born with the life-creating mind of heaven and earth, this is what is called humaneness. This principle is truly embodied in our minds. Therefore, that feeling of pity when we see a young child crawling into a well arises of itself and cannot be blocked. If one pursues this mind and expands it, his humaneness will be inexhaustible, and he will be able to join and succor the whole world. Thus the Confucianist does not fear the rise of concern but only follows the natural manifestation of the principle of Heaven. How could he be like the Buddhist, who fears the rise of feeling and concern and strives forcibly to eliminate them in order to return to annihilation?”

The Buddhists do not know that principle is embodied in the mind, and they use mind as their religion... If one concentrates his rightness while nourishing and expanding his material force, it will become the greatest and stoutest power, strong and moving, and coming into being by itself, filling up all between heaven and earth... This is why the learning of the Confucians is correct and is not like the biased learning of the Buddhists...”

2. *Confucian scholar Sin Ch'ojung presented the following memorial to the King in 1424:*

Those Buddhists, what kind of people are they? As eldest sons they turn against their fathers; as husbands they oppose the Son of Heaven. They break off the relationship between father and son and destroy the obligation between ruler and subject. They regard the living together of man and woman as immoral and a man's plowing and woman's weaving as useless.

If those monks were forced to return to their home villages; if they were treated as men fit to join the military; if they were made to settle down in order to increase the households; if we burnt their books in order to destroy their roots and branches; if their fields were requisitioned in order to supply military rations; if their slaves were given to the government in order to distribute them among the offices; if their bronze statues and bells were entrusted to the Offices of Supply in order to prepare them for official use; if within the capital the temples of each sect were divided up among the offices without buildings; if the temples outside the capital were all torn down in order to build postal stations and school buildings; if for funerals the Family Rites of Zhu Xi were exclusively relied upon-

-then, in a few years, the human mind would be corrected and the heavenly principles clear, the households would increase, and the number of soldiers would be complete.”

Questions:

1. *Explain the differences between the above two criticisms of Buddhism?*
2. *What principles of Neo-Confucianism would they replace Buddhist practices with?*

Extracts quoted from *Sources of Korean Tradition*, Volume 1 (Lee, et al. editors, New York: Columbia University Press, 1997)

Student Readings: Neo-Confucianism

From Sin Sukchu: House Rules (1468):

Rule One: Make the Mind Discerning

Man's mind does not have constancy. If it is trained, it exists; if it is neglected, it vanishes... The mind is the prime minister of the body. In the eye's relationship to color, it is the mind that sees. In the ear's relationship to sound, it is the mind that hears. All the members of the body depend on the mind for functioning. Therefore, if one wishes to straighten out the members of the body, one should straighten out the mind first.

Rule Two: Be Circumspect in Behavior

If in serving my father I do not exert myself to be filial, my son will do to me as I have done to my father. If in serving my elder brother I am not respectful, my younger brother will do to me as I have done to my elder brother. Therefore, only if I make myself stand on faultless ground will everyone among father and son, elder brother and younger brother, husband and wife, be equally correct. This can be extended to the relationship between ruler and subject and between friends.

Rule Three: Be Studious

One who has narrow ears and eyes can never have a wide mind. For widening eyes and ears nothing is better than reading books. The ways of the sages and worthies are laid out in books. If... one progresses step by step and with great care, in the course of time one naturally gets results. The essence of learning lies in gathering up the dissipated mind. If the mind is concentrated, it is naturally brilliant and circumspect, and its understanding is more than sufficient... For a human being, not to study is exactly like facing a wall... When reading the books of sages and worthies, one should search for their minds and incorporate them one by one in oneself.

Rule Four: On Managing a Household

Under present customs father and son and brothers rarely live under one roof. As they establish their own households, each keeps his own slaves, and gradually they become estranged from each other and are no longer on friendly terms. As father and elder brother, one should be patient and forbearing, generous and humane, and not petty and small...

The harm of extravagance is greater than a natural disaster. If a house declines, it is usually because of overspending. Therefore frugality is the first principle in managing a household... We and our relatives derive from the same source and split into branches. Seen by our ancestors, we are all alike.

Rule Five: On Holding Office

As a high official, one cannot rule independently; one must rely on one's subordinates. The way to treat a subordinate is to extend sincerity in order to employ him... If a man knows that he is doubted, he certainly does not dare to do his best.

Rule Six: On Instructing Women

The wife is the mate of the master of the house and has the domestic management in her hands. The rise and fall of a house depends on her... A wife is loyal and pure, self-

controlled, flexible and obedient, and serving others. She minds the domestic realm exclusively and does not concern herself with public affairs.

Questions

1. *Discuss the virtues upheld by these house rules. What would today's 'house rules' look like? What might be the same, and what would be different?*

Extracts quoted from *Sources of Korean Tradition*, Volume 1 (Lee, et al. editors, New York: Columbia University Press, 1997)

Student Readings: Community Compacts (Late 16th century CE)

The following is excerpted from the community compact written by the scholar-official Yi I (1536-1584). Community or village contracts were widely implemented after 1520, in the hopes of improved administration and public morality.

Mutual Encouragement of Virtue and Virtuous Acts

“Virtue” means to be filial to one’s parents, to be loyal to the state, to be harmonious with brothers, to be obedient to elders, to govern oneself according to the Way, to maintain family rectitude with propriety, to speak always with integrity and trust, to behave always with reverence, to control one’s anger and lust, to refrain from loud talk and women, to be impelled to act upon seeing good, to be impelled to amend upon hearing of mistakes, to offer rites with utmost sincerity, to mourn with all one’s heart at funerals, to be friendly with clan members and neighbors, to choose friends carefully and to fraternize with them in a humane manner, to teach children correctly, to treat subordinates according to proper rules, to maintain integrity in poverty, and to be willing to yield to other when rich.

“Virtuous acts” means to investigate principle through reading, learning proper decorum, and learning how to calculate clearly so as to be able to manage one’s household and be able to undertake assigned tasks sincerely, to be able to manage one’s family with diligence and help all creatures in a humane manner, to be able to carry out what is promised and comply with others’ requests, to be able to help those who are ill or in distress and bestow beneficent works widely, to be able to lead others to do good and correct misconduct in others, to be able to plan on behalf of others and accomplish things for others, to be able mediate conflicts and resolve disputes, to be able to promote what is beneficial and eliminate what is harmful, to serve honorably in office and respect the law, and to be able to be scrupulous with regards to taxes.

Every member of the compact shall strive to practice virtue and virtuous acts as listed above and shall encourage other to do the same. When there is a meeting of the compact members, those who have done good deeds are to be commended, and those who have not are to be warned.

Mutual Corrections of Wrongful Conduct

Wrongful Conduct refers to six violations of right conduct, as follows:

First is to indulge oneself in pleasure-seeking, such as getting drunk, engaging in quarrels, associating with prostitutes, and indulging in games of chess or checkers.

Second is to engage in angry disputes and litigations, such as holding a grudge over a trivial point, becoming angry impulsively, using abusive language, beating others, and initiating lawsuits.

Third is to transgress against proper decorum, by such things as acting indiscreetly, slighting etiquette, insulting seniors, showing bias in the treatment of others, humili-

ating other by relying on the influence of a powerful individual, elevating oneself by degrading others, governing one's family without proper rules, being overly intimate with or estranged from a spouse, not acknowledging and amending mistakes, and acting against advice.

Fourth is to utter words that are not trustworthy, such as speaking untruthfully, deceiving others, hiding shortcomings and mistakes, resenting people who advise correction, trying to influence the officer of the month not to record one's misconduct, humiliating others with insulting words, associating with evil men and supporting them with flattering words, spreading falsehood to mislead people, slandering people by means of falsifications and exaggerations, agreeing with someone to his face but denying it behind his back, writing to ridicule other and to expose their private concerns, and taking pleasure in talking about the past mistakes of others.

Fifth is to act excessively in one's private interest, such as seeking one's own interest at the expense of other in dealing with people, seeking only selfish gains without assisting others seeking things that belong to others, transgressing against and harassing village people and monks, being dishonest in dealing with what others have entrusted to one, receiving bribes from those who wish to win favor with the government, and failing to maintain integrity while in office.

Sixth is not rejecting evil practices, such as failing to prohibit family members from worshipping with licentious suits, moving an ancestor's grave without good reason after being misled by the geomantic claims of a trickster, failing to conduct funerals within the appropriate time periods, and failing to hold rites because of boils and measles.

There are four violations of the compact rules. First is failure to encourage each other to practice virtue and perform virtuous acts. Second is failure to correct each other's faults. Third is failure to mutually observe rites and customs. Fourth is failure to help each other at times of illness or disaster.

There are five kinds of conduct that are unbecoming in a cultivated man.

First is associating with men who are inappropriate companions for a cultivated man.

Second is rambling about, loafing around, and neglecting one's work.

Third is behaving without decorum, such as entering or leaving a room without scruple or respect, walking without composure swinging one's hands and arms without restraint, wearing excessive ornamentation or inadequate cap and gown, speaking carelessly, making noise and unrestrained laughter.

Fourth is doing one's work without sincerity, such as abandoning work one has accepted responsibility for, being late for meetings, failing to attend meetings by making excuses, and trying to evade taxes.

Fifth is unscrupulous consumption, such as spending excessively without considering one's resources, hosting needless drinking and feasting, failing to live a frugal life, and seeking wealth by improper means.

All the members of the compact should each reflect and admonish one another not to commit the faults listed above.

When a member commits a fault, he should be admonished immediately, and his case should be reported to the director and the officer of the month without concealing it or shielding it.

Questions

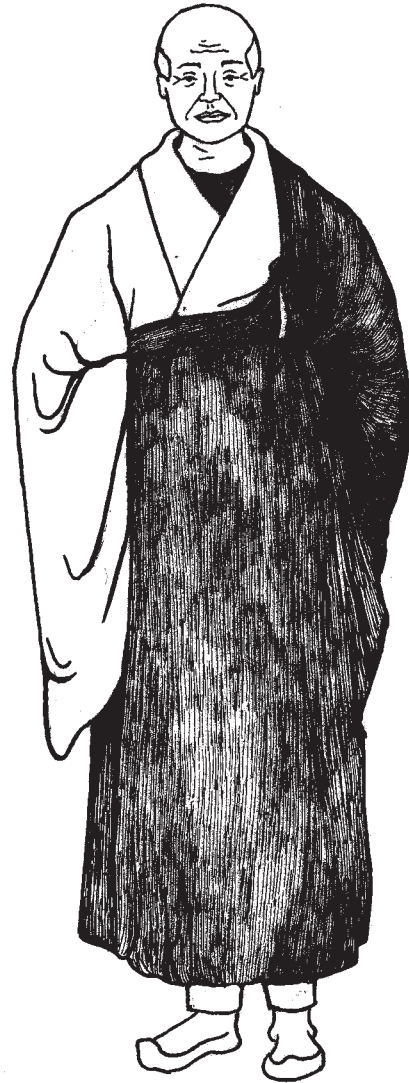
1. *Of all the rules of conduct listed here, which do you feel are the most important?*
2. *How do these rules reinforce Confucian principles?*
3. *How might these rules have increased the power of literati-scholar class individuals and decreased the power of others?*

Extracts quoted from *Sources of Korean Tradition*, Volume 2 (Lee, et al. editors, New York: Columbia University Press 1996)

Student Activity

Buddhist Monk

Describe the life of a Buddhist monk at Songgwangsa or Haeinsa in Korea



Refer to sections in background materials “Temples of Monastic Life” and the handout diagram of Haeinsa temple.

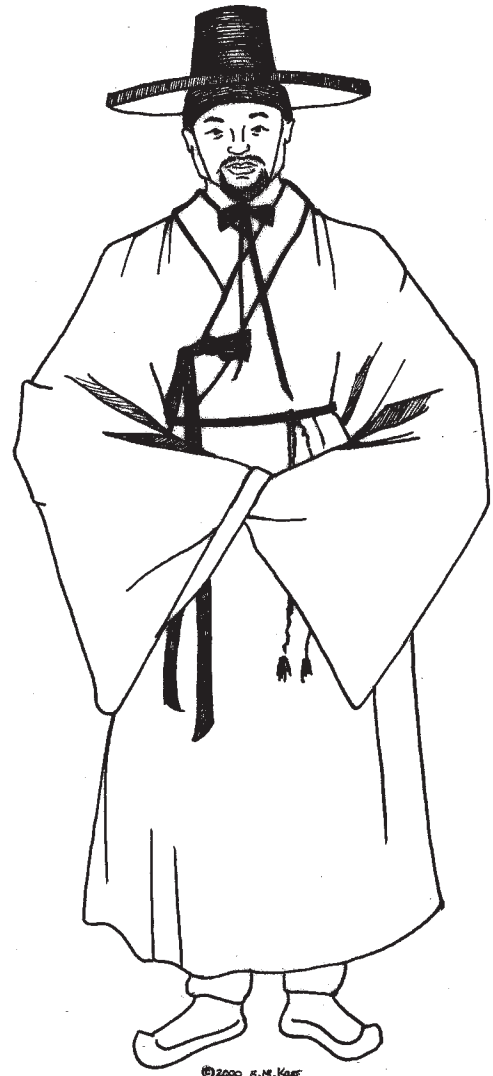
Student Activity

Choson dynasty man and woman

Describe the daily life of a man and woman from the upper classes (yangban) during the Choson dynasty (1392–1910).



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Refer to sections in background materials:
“The new social order” (Choson section)
“Traditional Scholar-class Home” and the
Student Readings.