EDITORIAL NOTE

• The publication of this third volume of the International Journal of Korean Art and Archaeology comes after a considerable delay, which readers will understand when they read the account of the activities of Korean museums in a year that marked the centenary of the first opening of the Imperial collections to the public in 1909. Director-General Choe Kwang-shik has summed up the complex history of Korean museums from that year to the present when over 600 museums and galleries collectively undertake the task of presenting Korean culture to the nation and to the world. It is clear that the present flourishing and state-of-the-art displays, conservation and research of the collections has not been achieved without a struggle and the diligent efforts and dedication of a great number of individuals over the past one hundred years.

• The story of the various stages by which Korean museums were established, and the collections grew, is a fascinating one, and it is to be hoped that Director-General Choe's account may come to serve as a blueprint for the eventual publication of a complete history, with illustrations of the various buildings that have housed the collections, and of the manner in which they were displayed and interpreted for visitors. The author has rightly emphasized the vital role of museums as the repositories of the symbols of nationhood, while also documenting the roles of the branch museums established in various cities, both in the South and in the North, and the important contributions of private museums which have not only built up fine collections, but which, it might be added, have been able for example to recover elements of Korean culture, such as Goryeo Buddhist paintings, that were previously, despite their enormous importance, quite unrepresented in the national collections.

• Two other articles in this issue survey a wide range of subject-matter that might equally invite treatment as monographs. One concerns the fascinating question of Korea's historical relations with other countries across Asia as far as the Mediterranean; the other surveys the whole history of genre painting, a category that Korean artists took particularly to heart in the later Joseon period.

• Kwon Young-pil, who himself undertook his graduate studies in the West, in Germany, was particularly inspired by his own recent visit to some of the most notable archaeological sites and monuments of West Asia, to speculate on the amazing trajectories of certain artefacts and cultural norms that brought them right across Asia to Korea: objects blown from glass, or beaten in silver, and architectural features such as the cornice or balcony motif encountered in the Buddhist caves at Kizil, and transmitted thence to Dunhuang in far north-western China. Here the span of time as well as of distance is immense, with the further complication of the choice of land or maritime trade along the trade routes generally entitled the Silk Road. The stages by which objects travelled are often numerous and complex, a stimulus to the imagination and necessitating the documentation of many more details before a complete picture can emerge.

• In the case of Ahn Hwi-Joon's survey, on the other hand, the general outlines of the rise of genre painting in Korea in the 18th century are already well-known, and what the author is able to do for us is to fill in the details of many artists who are less well-known, and explore their relationships with their famous predecessors, the pioneers of Korean genre painting, in order to discover their own distinctive contributions. The article takes the story back to the earliest times, through the Three Kingdoms period, and Goryeo, for signs of the emerging interest of Korean artists and craftsmen in depicting scenes from daily life, as well as the impact of Chinese documentary paintings such as those illustrating the stages in the cultivation of rice and the manufacture of silk.

• Cho Hyunjong's paper examines the archaeological evidence for ancient musical instruments of the prehistoric and Bronze age, including wind instruments, stringed instruments, friction instruments, and bells and rattles. Some

of the latter, such as the double-headed, staff-end and eight-branched *ryeong* bells, are extremely distinctive and characteristic of Korea alone in East Asia. The author examines these instruments both for themselves and in their all-important social contexts, such as ancestral and shaman rituals, for which they constitute important evidence, and also in connexion with Chinese textual records.

From appearance and decoration alone, as well as patination, it is tempting to associate those musical instruments cast in bronze, namely *tak* and *ryeong* bells, with the type of mirror with finely cast linear decoration of concentric circles, triangles and hatching that is the subject of Park Haksoo's article on National Treasure 141. This fine object, although much damaged in the course of its long history, is totally different from the bronze mirrors of ancient China. The author's investigation of the casting method employed to shape the mirror and complete the intricate decoration of the back challenges the conventional view that such mirrors, in common with certain other bronze artefacts from the Korean peninsula, were cast from moulds made of talc or similar stone. Further research on other examples will be needed to confirm his conclusion that the mould was made of hardened moulding sand, as well as to explain the significance of the geometric designs and their relation to other contemporary ritual artefacts.

Lee Tae-ho's article also addresses an aspect of Korean visual culture from a modern scientific viewpoint. In this case the subject is that of the so-called 'true-view' painting, of which Jeong Seon (Chong Sŏn) was the foremost exponent. The National Museum has some outstanding examples of paintings by this artist, while others are in many other public and private collections in Korea including the Kansong Museum, whose chief curator Choe Wan-su has devoted much of his professional life to investigating the many places depicted by Jeong Seon, both as to topography and through literary references. Lee takes a different approach, discovering through photography (or what William Lindesay in his research on the Great Wall of China has called re-photography), just how Jeong Seon and and his followers composed and re-composed their 'true-view' depictions of famous places and scenic views of Korea, in order to achieve effects that occasionally coincide with the modern field of view but more often than not are only possible with painting, at the expense of true likeness. His research provides a fascinating insight into the magic of this particular genre and the way in which landscape is perceived by the human eye.

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