

Rutt Gallery of Korea at Durham University

Large Print Guide



Introduction to Korea



Located between China, Russia, and Japan, the Korean peninsula has been the home of many vibrant and pioneering cultures throughout the past 4000 years.

A defining feature of the Korean people has been the ability to absorb influences from their neighbouring countries and adapt these to suit their own style and tastes. These outside influences often combine with traditional Korean art forms, resulting in a unique style which is seen in the ceramic art, calligraphy, architecture, and music of the peninsula.

Since 1948 CE, the Korean peninsula has been split along the '38th parallel' into the Republic of Korea (often called 'South Korea') and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (often called 'North Korea'). These two countries share the same rich history, but are now very culturally and politically different. This gallery focuses mainly on the art and culture of the historic Korean dynasties, but also includes material from the two contemporary cultures that currently co-exist on the peninsula.

Though they say "The hills are high,"
all hills are still below heaven.
By climbing, climbing, climbing more,
there is no peak that cannot be scaled.
But the man who never tried to climb,
he says indeed: "The hills are high."

Yang Saeon (1517 – 1584 CE)

A Lifetime of Books

In the Joseon Dynasty (1392 – 1910 CE), scholars were extremely influential people who worked in government, education, and the arts. The majority followed the Neo-Confucian beliefs of respect for elders, hard work, and thoughtfulness to others, and believed that these principles were key to creating a more peaceful and prosperous society.

Scholars could be members of the upper class, the *yangban*, or the middle class, the *chungin*. The upper class worked in the Royal Court along with military officials to help the King rule the country. They had to either be born to *yangban* parents, or pass the notoriously difficult state examinations to become members of the aristocracy. These exams required many years of study in subjects as diverse as calligraphy, history, and politics, with a particular focus on Confucian classic texts. The exams were open to all in Korean society, but the price of education meant that entry was effectively restricted to the upper classes.

The middle class was made up of skilled professionals and had a thriving scholar population. Although of a lower social status and with less free time than the *yangban*; *chungin* still undertook scholarly pursuits such as performing music and writing poetry. Most lived in the capital city, but many others were based in their home towns. Here they would help their families, and their in-depth knowledge placed them as highly regarded members of local society.

A strong scholarly tradition was also present in Buddhism: many religious texts were printed and monks read widely to improve their knowledge.

Much of a scholar's life was spent in his study, and so this had to be a calm retreat. One source of inspiration was found in the harmony and beauty of nature, and many scholars hung paintings or calligraphy depicting mountains, rivers, and forests to help their work. The study was also home to all the scholar's tools.

Back at the High Cloud Terrace
my study is cool and quiet.
A lifetime of books
has meant delights without end.
What words can I find to describe
these pleasures ever fresh?

The Twelve songs of Tosan



Water Droppers 연적 (硯滴)

Porcelain 자기

Joseon Dynasty 조선시대

1800 - 1910 CE 1800 - 1910 년

Gift of Bishop Richard Rutt

DUROM.1991.109-110



These water droppers are shaped as a peach, a symbol of long life, and as a mythical lion dog. The dark blue glaze of the dog was popular in both Korea and China.



Inkstone 벼루(硯)

Slate 점판암

1880 - 1974 CE 1880 - 1974 년

Gift of Bishop Richard Rutt

DUROM.1991.86

Inkstones are used like a paint palette to mix ground ink sticks with water to make ink for writing. The treasured inkstones were meticulously hand-carved by one person.



Inkstone 벼루(硯)

Slate 점판암

Republic of Korea 대한민국

1950 - 1991 CE 1950 - 1991 년

Gift of Bishop Richard Rutt

DUROM.1991.135.a-b

This inkstone is carved in the shape of a turtle. Turtles live longer than other animals and they became a symbol of longevity. By having a turtle-shaped object, the owner would also hope to have a long life.



Inksticks and Paintbrushes 먹과 붓

Ink, Bamboo, Animal Hair 먹, 대나무, 동물의 털

Republic of Korea 대한민국

1954 - 1974 CE 1954 - 1974 년



Gift of Bishop Richard Rutt

DUROM.1991.89, 91, 95, 98

Ink sticks are solid blocks of dried ink. They are decorative pieces in themselves and often have inscriptions and designs showing natural scenes or intricate, geometric patterns. The evergreen pine trees on one of these ink sticks symbolises a long life. Paintbrushes were used for writing with as well as painting and were made in different sizes to reflect these varied uses.



Folding Fan (합죽시온)

Bamboo, Paper, Ink

Republic of Korea, 1954 - 1974 CE

Gift of Bishop Richard Rutt

DUROM.1991.40

This fan by contemporary fan maker Kim Bo Kyung features watercolour paintings on the paper and pyrography (burnt) designs on the bamboo spokes. The 'time' in the title refers both to the changing seasons and also to changing times in life.



Test stick 낙죽(烙竹) 기법

Bamboo 대나무

20th Century 20세기

Gift of Bishop Richard Rutt, DUROM.1991.97

In Korea, many bamboo and wooden items are decorated with burnt designs of animals or plants. The technique, called pyrography, takes years to master. This stick is thought to be a practice piece.



Scholar's Sign 현판

Wood, Paint 나무, 먹

Joseon Dynasty 조선시대

1800 - 1910 CE 1800 - 1910 년

Gift of Bishop Richard Rutt, DUROM.1991.167

This sign would hang in a scholar's study. Scholars were strongly influenced by the beauty of nature, and often included natural imagery in their work. This sign is no exception, and it translates as: 'The Green Waterside Study'.



Writing Desk 경상 (經床)

Wood 나무

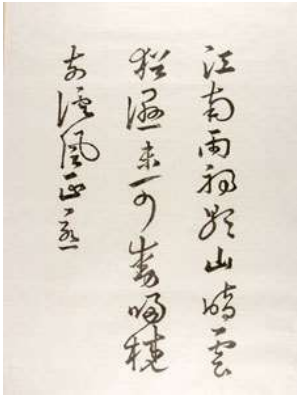
Northern Korea, Joseon Dynasty

조선시대 북쪽 지방

1800 - 1910 CE 1800 - 1910 년

Gift of Bishop Richard Rutt, DUROM.1991.85

This writing desk is designed to hold everything a scholar would need. The top compartments are used to store seals, ink sticks, ink stones, and seal paste. The drawer is used for storing paintbrushes, and the base for paper and scrolls. The paper seen on the top here has both the native Korean script *Hangeul* and the Chinese character script *Hanja* printed on it.



**Print of calligraphy in the style of
Shin Saimdang 서예**

Paper, Ink 한지, 먹물

Republic of Korea 대한민국

1954-1974 CE 1954-1974 년

DUROM.1991.30

Gift from Bishop Richard Rutt

Shin Saimdang (申師任堂) was a Korean artist, writer and calligrapher who lived from 1501-1551 CE. Very little of her calligraphy survives but her style has been praised for its 'elegance, serenity and purity, filled with the lady's virtue'. This print reproduces a piece written in *hanja* - Korean language written using Chinese script.



+, -

By Lee Min Soo 이민수

Porcelain 자기

Republic of Korea 대한민국

2013 CE 2013 년

Art Fund_

Art Fund COLLECT prize 2013

DUROM.2013.125

The blue and white stripes are not painted on the surface, but are in fact very thin, separate layers of porcelain which have been added one at a time. This precise technique was developed by Lee himself, and it took him three years to perfect. The cut-out areas mirror the angular shapes of the Korean script, Hangeul.

The Sage King



His greatest achievement was the creation of the Korean script, Hangeul, in 1444 CE

King Sejong is one of the most celebrated rulers in all Korean history. His reign (1418 – 1450 CE) saw major developments in many areas of Korean society. He revolutionised agriculture, designed musical instruments, built an astronomical observatory, published books on medicine and morals, mapped Korea, and even set the guidelines for the documentation and preservation of history.

Before this, the Korean people used Chinese characters (known as Hanja) to write with. This was a problem as Korean and Chinese are very different structurally and use different sounds to pronounce their words and, as a result, only members of an elite class who had an extensive knowledge of the Chinese language could learn to read and write. This inequality distressed King Sejong, and he and a team of scholars developed a new, easy to understand, Korean alphabet so that information could be freely accessible to all of his people, and everyone could express their own thoughts in writing.

It took Sejong many years to complete the alphabet. Although Hangeul faced initial opposition from the ruling scholarly elite and underwent later revision, it was finally accepted. Today it consists of 24 consonants and vowels – these are grouped into syllable (beat) blocks to form words and can create every sound in the Korean language. It is still the official script of both North and South Korea.

All the major alphabets currently in use around the world are adaptations of pre-existing scripts, but Hangeul was created from scratch. This makes the script truly unique and a remarkable achievement. To acknowledge Hangeul's place in world history, the book in which the language was first published and explained, the *Hunminjeongum* ('Correct Sounds for Teaching People', 1446 CE), was added to the UNESCO Memory of the World register in 1997 CE.



Wooden Chest 장

Wood, Brass 나무, 황동

Josen Dynasty 조선시대

1850 – 1910 CE 1850 – 1910 년

Gift of Mr and Mrs Macdonald

DUROM.2014.361

A distinctive feature of Korean furniture is ornate brass fittings. Brass has a functional use but is also used to emphasise the proportions of the furniture. The striking central round brass plate on this chest acts as a lock plate but is also intricately engraved with a floral motif.

The hinges at the side of these double doors are also decorative and are made in the shape of hopae - identification tags. Korean men ever the age of 16 had to wear hopae during the Joseon Dynasty and these would differ in material based on your social status – ranging from ivory for the aristocracy to dark wood for people of the lowest classes.

Korean language is extremely reliant on a strict etiquette code and so being able to identify what social class a person is from before speaking to them would prevent a person from making any embarrassing mistakes by talking to them as if they were from a lower social rank.



Gayageum (가야금)

Wood, Silk

Republic of Korea, 1990 - 1999 CE

Gift from the Ministry of Culture & Tourism of Korea and Korean Embassy in London

DUROM.1999.125

Invented around 500 CE by King Gasil of the southern Kingdom of Gaya, the gayageum has become one of the most iconic Korean instruments. The instrument is used in chamber and orchestral music as well as for solo pieces. The strings are plucked to the left of the bridges while the right hand is used to distort the note.



Screen
Wood, Paper, Ink
Joseon Dynasty,
1850 - 1910 CE

This screen is a beautifully hand-painted example from the late Joseon Dynasty in Korea. Each screen shows a different countryside scene. It is likely that these images show actual places in Korea as the Korean style of painting was to depict real-life scenes, this is unlike the Chinese style of painting imagined, perfect landscapes. From right to left, these scenes show:

Rocks and a lakeside

Fishermen on their boats in a wooded landscape

A flock of birds flying over mountains and the sea

View of a misty hillside with trees

A traditional 'hanok' house on a mountain

A traditional 'hanok' house on a lakeside

A Buddhist monastery on top of a mountain with a sail boat in the foreground

A Buddhist stone pagoda at sunset

In Korea, like China and Japan, screens were not only stunning decorative items but were used to tell visitors information about the owner's beliefs. All of these scenes emphasise the values of simplicity and purity of nature that were held in high esteem in the Neo-Confucian society at the time, and the owner's visitors would have been aware of the meaning and symbolism in the screen's paintings.



Model of a Turtle Ship 거북선 모형

Brass, wood, textile 황동, 나무, 천

Republic of Korea 대한민국

1969 CE 1969 년

Gift of Bishop Richard Rutt, DUROM.1991.155.a-b

This model of a Korean Turtle Ship was presented to Bishop Richard Rutt, an Anglican Priest who spent much of his life in Korea. The turtle ship is a uniquely Korean vessel and this model would have been displayed in Rutt's home. The turtle ship was in use in the 1500s CE at the time of Japanese naval attacks and ultimate invasion of Korea in 1592 - 1598 CE. The ship was an intimidating sight and in addition to cannons and heavy armour, there are reports of fire and noxious smoke pouring out of the dragon's mouth in battle.



Moon Jar 달항아리

By Mun Pyung 문 평

Ceramic 세라믹

Republic of Korea 대한민국

2013 CE 2013 년

Given by the Friends of the Oriental Museum, 2013.124

The Moon Jar is a ceramic form unique to Korea. These jars were first made in the Joseon Dynasty where their primary purpose was for storage of oils. Their use as everyday items has resulted

in very few of the original Joseon Moon Jars surviving to the present day. However, the striking form of the jar, which resembles a full moon, has inspired many contemporary Korean artists as well as ceramicists worldwide. The shape of the moon is especially important to Koreans as historically, Koreans followed a lunar calendar, and the moon remains a prominent feature in many annual festivals and celebrations today.



Wooden Chest 장

Wood, Brass 나무, 황동

20th Century 20 세기

Bequest of Bishop Richard Rutt
DUROM.2013.35

Korean furniture is built low to the ground to fit inside Korean homes which typically have low ceilings and heated flooring called ondol. The wood has been cut to emphasise the grain as this reveals the natural beauty of the wood. A distinctive feature of Korean furniture is the brass fittings, these are used to emphasise the proportions of the furniture as well as acting as a join as no nails are used. The centre metal fastening is in the shape of a bat, this is a symbol of good luck in Korea.



Korean Glass 24
by **Choi Keeryong**
Glass, porcelain
Scotland, 2016 CE

Purchased from the artist
DUROM.2017.175

Korean artist Choi Keeryong, lives and works in Scotland. Working in glass, he deliberately creates artworks that do not readily fit either Korean or British culture but can be seen as a blending of both. This reflects his own feelings of being 'in-between'.

The form and materials are designed to reflect British tastes. Glass is not traditionally used to make decorative art in Korea. The lettering used for the decoration might appear Korean to a British viewer but it will also appear odd to most Koreans. These words are known as 'alien words'. They were invented by young people in South Korea using the Internet and are widely used by them on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter.



Decorative teapot

Ceramic with celadon glaze

Republic of Korea, 1955 - 1999

CE

Gift of Mrs Sylvia Park MBE

DUROM.2017.202

The reinterpretation of classical ceramics has become a key theme for contemporary Korean potters. This large, decorative teapot is a wonderful example of a traditional shape and decorative style forming the starting point for a modern work of art.

The Goryeo dynasty (918-1392 CE) in Korea is particularly closely associated with the emergence of ceramics decorated in the grey-green hue known as 'celadon' in the West. Its rise represented both a technological and conceptual change in ceramic production in Korea from the grey stoneware ceramics that had dominated before this time. Colour and decoration came to form important elements in Korean ceramic style.

During the Korean War (1950-1953 CE) ceramic production in Korea virtually ceased. In the late 1950s research institutes were set up to encourage research into Korean culture and tradition. The revival of celadon-glazed ceramics was one of the areas that received considerable attention, as Korean potters sought to recreate the famous celadons of the past and then reinterpret them for the modern day.

The Korean Wave 한류

In the past few decades, technology and creativity have flourished in the Republic of Korea. This 'Korean Wave' has witnessed the development of new electronic technologies, the production of internationally acclaimed films and drama series, and the emergence of Korean artists. Perhaps the most prominent product of this fusion of art and technology is the recent success of *K-pop* – Korean Pop Music. This innovative and energetic genre has been many people's introduction to Korean culture, and artists like *PSY* have acted as a gateway to learning about other aspects of contemporary Korean culture such as Korean food or art.

At the same time, Western and other Asian cultures are becoming increasingly influential upon Korean cultural and artistic tastes. This melting pot of ideas could not have developed were it not for the opening up of Korea, once dubbed 'The Hermit Kingdom', over the last 150 years. The array of external influences and ideas entering Korea has inspired Koreans and enabled the country to establish itself on the world stage as an economic, technological, and creative power.

Contemporary Korean culture remains closely aligned with traditional concepts of Korean identity and draws upon historical culture, as well as the Confucian and Buddhist ethics prominent in Korean society.



PSY, Sixth Album, Part 1

싸이 6집 파트 1,

CD, plastic, 시디, 플라스틱

Republic of Korea 대한민국

2012-2013 CE 2012 년, 2013 년

DUROM.2013.63

Park Jae-sang, known as Psy, is Korean's most famous international superstar. His video for the hit song Gangnam Style was the first to exceed one billion views of YouTube. As of April 2017 it is still the most viewed video on YouTube, now exceeding more than 2.84 billion views. He has been hailed as the first musician to rise from local to global fame via the internet, securing his place in pop-culture history



Psy Postage Stamps in Frame 싸이

기념우표

Paper, glass 종이, 유리

Republic of Korea, 대한민국

2012 CE 2012 년

DUROM.2013.91

K-pop star Psy has had a huge impact in raising the profile of Korean culture worldwide. These stamps were produced by the Korean government as a recognition of his achievement.



Sewol Ferry disaster sticker and key chain

Rubber, metal, plastic

Republic of Korea, 2015 CE

Gift of Lauren Barnes and David Ellwood

DUROM.2017.174

Almost three hundred people died in this disaster and nine remaining missing. A western-style yellow ribbon has been adopted as the symbol of remembrance for those who lost their lives. The yellow ribbon may have its roots as far back as the English Civil War but it has become strongly associated with remembrance following war and disaster worldwide. The text of the sticker translates as: 'We want to know the whole truth about Sewol.'



Molang 몰랑

Polyester 폴리에스터

Republic of Korea 대한민국

2013 CE 2013 년

DUROM.2013.109

Molang is a character created for a mobile phone instant messaging system. The fat white rabbit, who takes pleasure in eating and sleeping, has since become very popular.



Zodiac Espresso Cup

Porcelain

Republic of Korea, 2013 CE

The mix of cultural influences in Korea is exemplified in this espresso cup. The Korean designs are based on traditional zodiac animals and are printed on an Italian-style cup.



Chopsticks 젓가락

Plastic 플라스틱

Republic of Korea 대한민국

2013 CE 2013 년

DUROM.2017.172

Food is traditionally eaten with chopsticks in Korea. These learner chopsticks are decorated with the animated character 'Petty the Penguin' to encourage children to use them.



Ghosts of Korea by Yoon Sung Moon

Paper (facsimiles of originals)

Republic of Korea, 2015 CE

DUROM.2017.174



This set of postcards depicts characters from a mix of traditional and modern Korean ghost stories. The story of the Toilet Helper begins when you run out of paper—will you choose red or blue paper from the ghost attendant? Regardless of your choice, you may die. A top student is killed by a jealous friend who pushes her from the roof. Her ghost bounces along as she died, still seeking revenge. An old lady traveling with her cat is killed in an accident. Her half-cat, half-human ghost still chases children at dusk.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)

In 1910, Korea was annexed by the Empire of Japan. Following the Japanese surrender at the end of World War II in 1945, Korea was divided in two along the 38th Parallel by the USA and Soviet Union. Negotiations regarding reunification failed and in 1948 separate governments were formed with both claiming the right to rule the whole peninsula. Border skirmishes led to the Korean War (1950-1953). An armistice agreement led to a ceasefire, but no peace treaty has ever been signed.

The DPRK, more commonly referred to as **North Korea**, describes itself on its official website in these terms, *'The DPRK is the Juche-orientated socialist state which embodies the idea and leadership of Comrade Kim Il Sung, the founder of the Republic and the father of socialist Korea'*.

Juche is the ideology of national self-reliance introduced by the leader Kim Il Sung. Principles of independence, national economy and self-defence aim to create a self-reliant and strong socialist nation. The Kim family are promoted as the saviours of the people, leading the Workers' Party of Korea.

Critics view Juche as a vehicle for promoting the personality cult of Kim Il Sung and his family, providing a mechanism for sustaining dictatorial rule, justifying the country's isolationism and the oppression of the human rights of the Korean people



Silla Dynasty Dolls 신라시대 인형

Marble Resin 수지

Korean Peninsula 한반도

2013 CE 2013 년

DUROM.2013.79

Despite their deep divisions, there are now several joint manufacturing projects between North and South Korea. Designed in the south and made in the north, these dolls offers a glimpse of the possibility of a future based on shared history and culture. These miniature Silla Dynasty dolls are shown in traditional court clothes. The King wears a purple traditional coat called a *durumagi*. The Queen wears a yellow *durumagi* and her crown.



Set of cups with stands
Silver
Early to mid 20th century

Collection of Erna Hähnel
DUROM.L.2017.2

This set of silver cups for drinking rice wine is still being researched. It was given to a Erna Hähnel, a member of a delegation from the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) which visited North Korea in 1957. The cups are Japanese in style and may have been made in Korea during the period of Japanese colonial rule (1910-1945 CE). This was a difficult period for all Koreans and so why they were deemed a suitable gift for an official visitor from an important ally is still unclear.



This photograph depicts members of the delegation from the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) visiting the DPRK (North Korea) in 1957. Erna Hähnel, whose collection is now on loan to the museum, is the lady standing third from the left.

Awaiting image

**North Korean propaganda poster
Paper
DPRK, 2013-2017 CE**

Gift of Tom Fowdy
DUROM.2017.666

It has been said that most, if not all, contemporary North Korean art is produced as propaganda to support the ideology and aims of the ruling Kim family. Most work is made in the socialist realist style in state-run art studios. Three key themes dominate: glorification of the leader, celebration of present day life; and celebration of the glories of the revolutionary past and fallen martyrs.

Best Under Heaven

Admired for centuries, Korean ceramics not only represent the very best in Korean artistic and technical skill, but also reflect the major changes in this society over the last 2000 years.

Grey-coloured ceramic pieces were made in Korea in the 5th century CE, but improvements in technology saw ceramic art flourish during the Unified Silla Dynasty (668 – 935 CE). During this time, Korean ceramics diversified into many types including white porcelains, brown onggi jars, and grey-brown pieces with white decoration called bunch'eong. These were all used for a variety of purposes, from decoration, to storing vegetables.

Perhaps the most iconic type of all Korean ceramics is the calm, mysterious, and beguiling blue-green celadon. This glaze came to Korea from China, and first became popular during the Goryeo Dynasty (918 – 1392 CE). Although Korean potters originally started producing celadon to emulate the Chinese tastes of the time, they soon mastered crackled-glaze techniques and went on to develop their own unique forms.

This era marked the emergence of Korea as a centre for ceramic excellence in Asia, and Korean ceramics gained many admirers in both China and Japan. Chinese Song dynasty writer “Taepyeong Noin” even went so far as to describe Korean celadon to be some of the ‘best under heaven’. Korean ceramics have continued to influence potters globally, with many indigenous Korean forms inspiring the western Studio Pottery movement.

While blue-green celadon reached its pinnacle in the Buddhist Goryeo Dynasty, the succeeding Joseon Dynasty made iconic white porcelains. These reflect the ideals of purity and modesty prominent in Neo-Confucian thought.

Ceramic production declined and some skills were almost lost during the Japanese occupation (1910 – 1945 CE) and the Korean War (1950 – 1953 CE). However, a resurgence of interest in traditional ceramics in the latter half of the 20th century has led to many old techniques being rediscovered, developed, and adapted – with new emerging artists continuing the great Korean traditions.



Ewer 청자 표주박모양 주전자

Ceramic, celadon glaze 세라믹, 청유

Goryeo Dynasty 고려시대

1100—1200 CE 1100 – 1200 년

Gift from Mrs Juliane von Hessert from
the De Laszlo Collection

DUROM.1992.156

This gourd-shaped ewer has a debated purpose. The lotus flower has a special significance in Buddhism and so the lotus designs incised into the sides of the vessel imply that the piece could have been used to pour water in Buddhist rituals.

However, during the early Goryeo Dynasty, lotus flowers were a common motif. This along with the vine-shaped handle suggest that the jug was more likely used to pour wine at social gatherings.



**North Korean '*sanggam*' ware
Ceramic
DPRK, 2016-2017 CE**

Gift of Tom Fowdy
DUROM.2017.292 and 293

The celadon pottery with *sanggam* inlay dating to the Goryeo dynasty (918-1392 CE) is regarded as one of the most iconic of Korean art forms. Modern day Korean potters in both the North and the South still try to emulate this work. These two vessels purchases in North Korea in 2017 have been made to look like *sanggam*-ware but the decoration is painted under the glaze rather than using the traditional technique of inlays.



**North Korean '*sanggam*' ewer
Ceramic
DPRK, 1953-1957 CE**

Collection of Erna Hähnel
DUROM.L.2017.1

This small ewer was presented as a gift to a lady called Erna Hähnel, who was part of a delegation from the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) which visited North Korea in 1957. The shape and design clearly reflects Goryeo Dynasty pieces like the larger ewer displayed here. It is clear that from its infancy the DPRK has valued Goryeo celadon ceramics as an art form that is distinctively Korean and therefore worthy of celebration.



Celadon Bowl 청자 대접

Ceramic 세라믹

Goryeo Dynasty 고려시대

1100—1300 CE 1100 – 1300 년

Gift from the Artfund from the bequest of F.W. Pierce
DUROM.1978.93

The bowl's uneven shape is probably a result of firing.
Temperatures exceeding 1200°C were required to fire ceramics,
but this made results difficult to control.



Mallet Shaped Vase 청자 상감 병

Ceramic 세라믹

Republic of Korea 대한민국

1945 - 1992 CE 1945-1992 년

Gift from Mrs Juliane von Hessert from
the De Laszlo Collection

DUROM.1992.157

During the early 20th century, Japan illegally annexed Korea.
During this period, traditional Korean culture was suppressed and
the technique of celadon making almost lost. This vase is an
example of the mid-20th century celadon revival where the
techniques of old were rediscovered. The celadon has the
desired blue-green colour, and the *sanggam* inlay is
well-executed but the crackled glaze is yet to be refined.



Bowls with Sanggam Inlay

청자 상감 대접

Ceramic 세라믹

Goryeo Dynasty 고려시대

1150—1392 CE 1150 – 1392 년



Gift of Rt Hon Malcolm MacDonald,
DUROM.1969.236.a&c

The black and white details on these bowls is called sanggam inlay. This technique was developed in Korea during the mid-Goryeo Dynasty. The designs were first cut out from the clay before firing and small inserts of white, and red clay (which turns black during firing) were put in its place. The designs of lotus flowers, clouds, bamboo, and peonies show Koreans' love of nature.



Shadowed White

By Lee In Hwa 이인화

Porcelain, Opaque Clay

자기, 불투명 점토

Republic of Korea 대한민국

2013 CE 2013 년

Given by the Friends of the
Oriental Museum

DUROM.2013.126

Lee's ethereal Shadowed series is characterised by thinness. Here, she has carefully shaved parts of the porcelain to create a cloud-like appearance. If you look closely, there is a small dot cut into the sides, this marks the thinnest point of each bowl.



Bunch'eong Vase 분청사기 병

Ceramic 세라믹

Republic of Korea 대한민국

1950 - 1960 CE 1950 - 1960 년

Gift from Mrs. Jae Mee Jeon, Mayor of Kwangmyong, Kyonggi Province
DUROM.1997.173

Bunch'eong is a grey ceramic with a white slip design. It first became popular during the late Unified Silla Dynasty but is still admired and made today.



Oil Bottle 청자 상감 유병

Ceramic, Gold 세라믹, 금

Goryeo Dynasty 고려시대

1100 - 1300 CE 1100- 1300 년

Gift from Mrs Juliane von Hessert from the De Laszlo Collection, DUROM.1992.155

Small vessels such as this were used to store hair oil. The rim of the bottle has been repaired with gold lacquer. Only the most prized pieces were repaired in this way.



Porcelain Perfume Bottle 백자 향유병

Ceramic 세라믹

Joseon Dynasty 조선시대

1800 - 1910 CE 1800 – 1910 년

DUROM.1971.2

This small perfume bottle with a cloud design would have been used as part of a daily routine. White porcelain overtook celadon in popularity during the Joseon Dynasty. The non-colour, white, mirrored the Confucian ideals of modesty and purity prominent at the time. Blue decoration was introduced around the same time Chinese 'blue and white' porcelain became popular. It was not uncommon for Korean artistic taste to mirror that of the Chinese court.



Onggi Jars 용기

Ceramic 세라믹

Republic of Korea 대한민국

1954 - 1991 CE 1954 – 1991 년



Gift of Rev Richard Rutt

DUROM.1991.107,108, 118, 121

Onggi jars are used everyday in Korea, principally to store vegetables, most notably, *kimchi* which is a Korean delicacy of fermented vegetables in chilli and other spices.

These jars come in a variety of sizes, and onggi can be metres high. This is achieved by creating the pots in sections and joining them layer by layer rather than shaping the bowl from one piece of clay.



Celadon Stem Cup 청자 상감 컵

Ceramic 세라믹

Late Goryeo Dynasty 고려시대 말기

1300 - 1400 CE 1300 – 1400 년

Gift of the Rt Hon Malcolm MacDonald, DUROM.1969.236.b

The Mongol invasions of East Asia in the late 13th Century influenced ceramic design for centuries afterwards. This cup has a typical Mongol raised base but has been decorated in a Korean celadon glaze with an inlaid design. This piece shows how Koreans adopted and absorbed outside cultural influences and adapted these to suit their own artistic tastes.



Incense Stick Holder 향 보관함

Ceramic, quingbai glaze 세라믹, 청바이
글레이즈

Joseon Dynasty 조선시대

1700 - 1850 CE 1700 – 1850 년

DUROM.1969.372

China has always been an influential neighbour of Korea and artistic trends often cross the border. This Korean incense stick holder is decorated with a light blue Chinese glaze called 'qingbai'. On each side of the piece is an image depicting the 'Four Gentlemen' - these are flowers representing each of the seasons.



Miniature Moon Jar 작은 달항아리

By Adam Buick 아담 뷰익

Ceramic: Llondi clay 세라믹: 론디
클레이

Wales 웨일스

2013 CE 2013 년

DUROM.2013.67

Many western artists are inspired by Korean ceramic forms. Welsh potter Adam Buick, like many Korean artists, is particularly interested in the impact of nature, and has included his natural environment in his interpretation of the Korean Moon Jars by used locally-sourced Welsh clay and glaze.



Coral Eye, Golden Tears

By Myung Nam An

Porcelain

London, UK

2016 CE

DUROM.2017.302

The artist Myung Nam An was born in Gyeonggi, South Korea, an area famed for its ceramic production, but now lives and works in London.

Her work is inspired by nature, in particular sea creatures, insects and flowers. In her 'Golden Eye' series she has drawn inspiration from sea urchins and corals, while the central 'eye' is used to reflect the image of the viewer back at themselves.

To create these organic forms Myung Nam An uses a traditional Korean ceramic technique called Cheomjang. This involves building up tiny drops of slip and coloured pigment to create tall, hair-like spikes. The painstaking and random nature of this technique ensures that no two pieces are the same.

Spirituality and Beliefs

Buddhism, Confucianism, shamanism, and Christianity are the four main belief systems in Korea. These have co-existed on the peninsula for centuries and have frequently exchanged ideas and practices. Indeed, many festivals, ceremonies, and important events have roots in at least two of the four main beliefs of Korea. Shamanism is an ancient religion that teaches that both good and bad spirits can affect your life. Shaman ceremonies are now viewed as cultural treasures and performed solely at folk events; however, many thousands of people still pay for the services of shamans, and even more seek advice from those specialising in fortune telling.

To gain support in Korea, Buddhism incorporated elements of shamanism into its ceremonies. In 552 CE Korean monks introduced Buddhism to Japan.

Confucianism meanwhile, with its focus on the values of respect for others and working hard for the benefit of society, developed as an ideal moral code for Koreans to follow. These values became popular with the ruling elites of the Joseon Dynasty (1392 – 1910 CE), who prized the structure and emphasis on loyalty to superiors promoted by Neo-Confucianism more highly than individual success promised by Buddhism.

Unusually, Korea is one of the few countries outside Europe where Catholicism was not introduced by foreign missionaries, but in fact developed after Koreans met with Jesuit missionaries in Beijing. Christianity offered the Korean people equality regardless of age or status, and so despite initial persecution

and martyrdom, interest in Christianity grew in the late 1800s. Protestantism was introduced by missionaries in the 1880s and gained wide support.

These focus on an afterlife or salvation, and traditional religions such as Buddhism have once again flourished. Islam was known to Koreans in the Goryeo dynasty (918 – 1392 CE) but later disappeared and was re-introduced by Turkish UN soldiers during the Korean War of 1950–1953 CE. There are now over 40,000 Korean Muslims.



Fish Bell 목탁

Wood 나무

20th Century 20 세기

Gift of Bishop Richard Rutt

DUROM.1984.a-b

This bell is one of many instruments used in Buddhist ritual and is native to Korea. The round holes on either side of the bell are the fishes' eyes and the slit represents its mouth. This bell was purposefully shaped like a fish as it is believed that a fish once made a Korean Buddhist missionary lose his scriptures in a river whilst returning from India. By hitting the head of the fish bell, a word of the lost text is thought to reappear from the bell's mouth.



Incense Spoon 동제수저

Bronze 청동

Goryeo Dynasty 고려시대

1100 - 1392 CE 1100 - 1392 년



Gift from Mrs Juliane von Hessert from the De Laszlo Collection
DUROM.1992.158.a-b

Incense spoons were used in Buddhist rituals. One spoon is double ended. The second spoon has a 'Magpie tail' handle. Magpies were said to be the bearers of good news.



Funerary Urn 사리 항아리

Pottery 도자기

Unified Silla Dynasty 통일 신라

600 - 800 CE 600 년 - 800 년

Gift from Mrs Juliane von Hessert
from the De Laszlo Collection

DUROM.1992.154

This decorated urn was used to hold the cremated remains of a Buddhist believer. The domed lid highlights the skill of the early Korean potters, and the grey colour is typical of this time.



Bronze Mirror 청동 거울

Bronze 청동

Goryeo Dynasty 고려시대

918 - 1392 CE 918 - 1392 년

Gift of Wellcome Historical Medical Museum, DUROM.W265

Creating mirrors from polished bronze was a significant technical and artistic achievement. Because of their status, they were often placed in tombs with other prized items to be used in the afterlife. This mirror's decoration of a large engraved Buddha sitting on a lotus flower indicates that the original owner was Buddhist and its religious design indicates that it was probably designed specifically for ritual or burial use.



Bronze Mirror 청동 거울

Bronze 청동

Goryeo Dynasty 고려시대

900-1000 CE 900 – 1000 년

Gift of Sir Charles Hardinge
DUROM.1960.4164

Mirrors became increasingly popular in the late Goryeo Dynasty and were made for a variety of purposes. This mirror's simple decoration of petal shaped edges implies that it was used in the home.



Bronze Mirror 청동거울

Bronze 청동

Joseon Dynasty 조선시대

1600 - 1900 CE 1600 – 1900 년

Gift of Sir Charles Hardinge
DUROM.1960.1176

The design of mirrors echoed the changes in religion and belief. This mirror has a strong Confucian design, and shows a scholar sitting amongst pine trees. These trees are a symbol of longevity and resilience.



Talismans

Paper, Ink

Republic of Korea,
1954 - 1974 CE

Gift from Prof KL Pratt
DUROM.1975.8

Talismans are traditionally printed by Buddhist monks or fortune-tellers. These pieces of paper could be carried, or pasted onto the walls inside the home. Talismans stem from the shamanic belief that these drawings can bring good luck, protection, or help avert disaster.



Dancheong Cross 단청 십자가

By Kim Myoung Won 김명원

Wood, Paint 나무, 페인트

Republic of Korea 대한민국

2013 CE 2013 년

Gift of Ms Kim Hyunjoo, DUROM.2014.343

This cross is an example of Christianity's adaptation to suit Korean life and traditions. The wood of the cross is made from a beam 100 years old and painted in Dancheong; a brightly coloured painting style. Dancheong is typically Korean and was used to decorate both Buddhist temples and homes alike. By including this historic piece of painting in the cross, the cross links Korea's past with Christianity today.



Crucifixes and bell 십자가와 종

Brass 황동

Republic of Korea 대한민국

1954 - 1974 CE 1954- 1974 년



Gift of Bishop Richard Rutt

DUROM.1991.162-164

These items are from the Seoul Anglican Cathedral. Christianity was introduced to Korea in the late 1800s, and 25% of Koreans are now Protestants or Catholics.



Rice cake stamp (*tteoksal*)

Wood

Republic of Korea, 1900-1999 CE

Gift of Lauren Barnes and David Ellwood

DUROM.2017.171

Rice cakes filled with bean paste and decorated with a stamped design are eaten at many celebrations and festivals in Korea. This seven-petal design is associated with Harvest Festival (*Chuseok*) and other important celebrations such as weddings and a baby's first 100 days. Many other designs symbolising good fortune, long life, good health and protection from evil spirits are also used.



Marriage 결혼

Marriages were once arranged between families, but in the past few decades, 'love marriages' have become more commonplace. This, along with the growth of Christianity, has led to more 'western' marriage ceremonies. However, many couples still have an additional traditional ceremony in the bride's house where gifts are exchanged between families and respect shown to elders, in line with Confucian practices.

Wedding ducks (pictured above) are a traditional gift, and are given by the groom to the brides' family as a promise of fidelity, as ducks were believed to mate for life. After the wedding, the ducks became a symbol of the marriage and are placed in the couple's home. If the couple is happy, the ducks were placed beak-to-beak. But if the couple has an argument, they are positioned tail-to-tail. These ducks are painted with the auspicious colours, which bring good luck.

DUROM.2013.111 and 112



Children's Day 어린이날

Children's day is celebrated in the Republic of Korea every year on May 5th. This day is to show that children are important members of society. To celebrate, many games, like the tujeon cards pictured above, are played and children are treated to visits to museums or zoos. Children's day is celebrated in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea too, but this is on June 1st - International Children's day. The celebrations here have a more nationalistic feel, with children sometimes taking part in mock military parades alongside traditional games and dances.

Gift of Bishop Richard Rutt
DUROM.1991.103

The Oriental Museum would like to thank the following people and organisations for their contributions to the Korea gallery:

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The Rutt Family

This gallery is named after the pioneering Korean studies scholar, Bishop Richard Rutt CBE (1925 – 2011 CE). Rutt spent twenty years as an Anglican missionary in the Republic of Korea, holding many positions in the Church, eventually rising to become the Bishop of Daejeon in 1968. During his time in Korea, Rutt developed an intimate knowledge of the Korean people, their history, language, and culture; and wrote several books and articles about life in the country. On returning to the United Kingdom in 1974, he served as the Bishop of St Germans in Cornwall, before being named Bishop of Leicester in 1979. In 1994, Rutt converted to Roman Catholicism. Throughout his life Rutt collected traditional and contemporary Korean objects. His gift to the Oriental Museum forms the core of our Korean collections, and many pieces donated by Rutt are on display in this gallery.