



PHILADELPHIA
MUSEUM OF ART

Treasures from Korea •

Arts and Culture of
the Joseon Dynasty

1392–1910



A RESOURCE FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

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INTRODUCTION

Treasures from Korea: Arts and Culture of the Joseon Dynasty, 1392–1910, on view at the Philadelphia Museum of Art from March 2 to May 26, 2014, and this accompanying educational resource celebrate the art and culture of Joseon Korea. This resource was developed for K–12 classroom teachers to use with their students before, after, or instead of a visit to the exhibition. Works included are intended to appeal to a diverse student body and to offer rich connections with the art, language arts, and social studies curricula.

We hope that you enjoy exploring these works of art with your students, looking closely together, and talking about your responses to what you see. We also hope that learning about these objects inspires you to learn more about Korean art and culture.

THIS RESOURCE FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS INCLUDES:

- Connections to educational standards
- Curriculum connections with suggested classroom activities
- Glossary (glossary terms are boldface in the text)
- Resource list
- Teaching poster

THE CD INCLUDES:

- A PDF of this printed resource
- A PowerPoint presentation with digital images of all artworks and related looking questions to initiate discussions

This material is also available online at www.philamuseum.org/education.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Treasures from Korea: Arts and Culture of the Joseon Dynasty, 1392–1910 is the first full-scale survey in the United States to be devoted to the art of the celebrated Joseon dynasty (1392–1910), a period that spanned half a millennium and profoundly shaped the culture and identity of Korea today. With more than 150 works drawn from the National Museum of Korea’s collection and from public and private collections in Korea and the United States, this exhibition offers a rare opportunity for visitors to see some of Korea’s artistic masterpieces, including a number of national treasures. Five themes—kingship and courtly life, Joseon society, ancestral rites, the place of Confucianism and Buddhism, and Joseon in modern times—reflect the philosophy of the dynasty and the historical and cultural dynamics that shaped Korean life.

Treasures from Korea is one of two international exhibitions that are part of a multi-institutional collaborative exchange between the Philadelphia Museum of Art; the National Museum of Korea (NMK); the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA); the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH); and the Terra Foundation for American Art in 2013–14. In early 2013, *Art Across America*, featuring some of the finest works of American art from the colonial era to the present day from the collections of the four US museums, traveled to the NMK in Seoul, and the Daejeon Museum of Art. In 2014, *Treasures from Korea* will be on view at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, LACMA, and MFAH.



*The E. Rhodes and Leona B.
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KOREAN AIR

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The exhibition is organized by the National Museum of Korea, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

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CONNECTIONS TO EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS

Both national and Pennsylvania educational standards served as guidelines throughout the development of this teaching resource and helped determine the suggested classroom activities. In particular, the activities align with the following Common Core State Standards (see www.corestandards.org):

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standard for Reading

Standard 7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing

Standard 1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

Standard 2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Standard 3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective techniques, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

Standard 10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening

Standard 1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Standard 2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

Standard 4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

National Standards for Arts Education

The activities also align with the following National Standards for Arts Education (see www.arteducators.org):

Standard 2: Using knowledge of structures and functions. (Students know the differences among visual characteristics and purposes of art in order to convey ideas, and describe how different expressive features and organizational principles cause different responses.)

Standard 3: Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas.

Standard 4: Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures.

Standard 6: Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines.

JOSEON EVENTS

WORLD EVENTS

The Joseon dynasty begins in Korea, bringing with it the rise of Confucianism. **1392**

1400

King Sejong invents the Hangeul written language to promote literacy among all of his subjects. **1443**

1500

Japan invades Korea. **1593**

1600

The First Manchu Invasion results in a peace treaty between Korea and the Manchu people. **1627**

The Second Manchu Invasion begins. **1636**

King Hyojong writes letters in Hangeul while being held hostage during the Second Manchu Invasion. **1638**

1700

The wedding of King Yeongjo and Queen Jeongsun is documented in a royal protocol. **1759**

1800

Korean Catholics and French priests are persecuted by the Joseon government. In a counterattack by France, many royal protocols are destroyed. **1866**

Korea enacts a trade treaty with the United States. **1882**

Emperor Gojong declares the founding of the Korean Empire. **1897**

1900

Korea is occupied by Imperial Japan, marking the end of the Joseon dynasty. **1910**

The Korean War begins. **1950**

1347 The Black Death is brought to Italy by ships fleeing the Ukrainian city of Kaffa.

1492 Christopher Columbus arrives in North America.

1500 Explorer Pedro Alvarez Cabral lands in Brazil and claims it for Portugal.

1501 Michelangelo begins work on his legendary sculpture, *David*.

1519 Ferdinand Magellan begins his voyage around the world.

1520 Emperor Montezuma II dies, shortly before the fall of the Aztec Empire.

1603 The rule of the Tokugawa Shoguns begins in Japan.

1607 English settlers establish the colony of Jamestown in Virginia.

1773 American colonists protest British tax policies by dumping East India Company tea into Boston Harbor.

1776 The second Continental Congress ratifies the United States' Declaration of Independence.

1789 The storming of the Bastille marks the beginning of the French Revolution.

1865 An amendment abolishing slavery passes narrowly in the US House of Representatives.

1868 The Meiji Restoration leads to the end of feudalism in Japan.

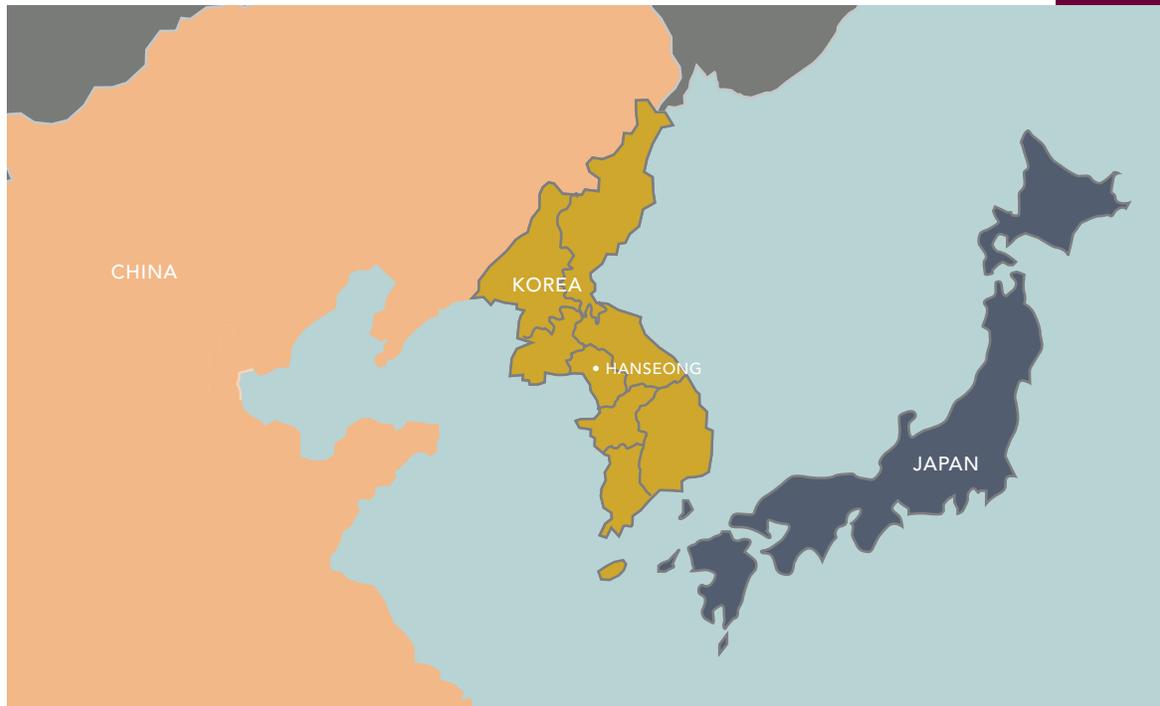
1874 The first exhibition of Impressionist art is organized in Paris.

1921 Harlem Renaissance poet Langston Hughes publishes his first poem.

1939 Germany invades Poland, beginning World War II.



KOREA • JOSEON DYNASTY



KOREA • TODAY



WHAT WAS THE JOSEON DYNASTY?

The Joseon (CHO-sun) dynasty was Korea's longest-ruling Confucian dynasty, spanning over five hundred years, from 1392 to 1910. Art and culture of the Joseon dynasty flourished mainly due to royal patronage and religious practices. The extensive scholarship, culture, and scientific inventions that originated during the dynasty profoundly shaped the culture and identity of Korea today.

JOSEON FAITHS AND BELIEFS

Several religions and philosophies influenced Korean society and artistic development. During the Joseon dynasty, Confucianism became dominant. However, Buddhist and Daoist ideals intermingled, creating a unique blend of thought and religion that guided all aspects of society.

CONFUCIANISM

Confucianism is a system of ethical rules designed to inspire and preserve the good management of family and society. It developed from ancient Chinese traditions and was codified by Confucius (551–479 BCE), a Chinese philosopher. Confucianism later spread to Korea, Vietnam, and Japan. Even today, Confucianism is integrated into every aspect of Korean culture.

Confucianism recognizes

Five Basic Human Relationships:

- Ruler and subject
- Parent and child
- Older sibling and younger sibling
- Husband and wife
- Friend and friend

Confucianism emphasizes Eight Important Virtues:

- Filial piety (respect for one's parents and ancestors)
- Propriety
- Benevolence
- Righteousness
- Loyalty
- Integrity
- Trust
- Humility

BUDDHISM

Buddhism is the Western name for a system of beliefs developed around the teachings of Buddha (c. 563–c. 483 BCE). About one-eighth of the world's people are Buddhists.

Buddha summarized life as Four Noble Truths:

- There is no escape from suffering in this world.
- Suffering is caused by desires.
- One must seek an end of suffering.
- To end one's suffering, one must follow the Noble Eight-Fold Path: right views, right intentions, right speech, right actions, right livelihood, right efforts, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

DAOISM

Daoism is an ancient Chinese belief system founded during the sixth century BCE by the philosopher Laozi (604–531 BCE) and introduced to Korea during the Three Kingdoms period (57–668 CE). Daoism emphasizes harmony between people and nature, focusing on the cyclical rhythms of time and the worship of ancestors.



THE KING AND HIS COURT

The highest artistic achievements of the Joseon dynasty can be found in objects produced for the king and the royal court. Often grand in scale and made with such luxurious materials as gold, silk, and imported minerals, the objects made for the court influenced the art and culture of all levels of Joseon society.



TEN LONGEVITY SYMBOLS

18th century

Ten-fold screen; colors on paper
98 3/4 × 232 13/16 inches (250.8 × 591.3 cm)

Private Collection

The rocky mountains, flowing waterfalls, and lush forest on this screen create a safe, cozy habitat for many animals. A flock of cranes stand in the treetops and fly high among the white clouds, enjoying a view of the bright red sun and the landscape below. Under the tall pine trees in the foreground, young bamboo plants and mushrooms grow within easy reach of a herd of hungry deer. Turtles surf the waves in the lower left. On the far right and far left, peach trees with branches full of ripe fruit lean into the scene.

LET'S LOOK

Share your observations about this painting. What catches your eye?

What kinds of animals and plants do you see?

Where did the artist use straight lines? Curvy lines? How do they help you look at all parts of the picture?

What colors did the artist use? Where are the colors repeated?

What mood or feeling do you sense in the picture? Why?

Featured in the screen are ten longevity symbols that express the universal wish for a long, healthy life. These symbols appear in many kinds of Korean art, including ceramics, furniture, embroidery, and metalworks. According to historical documents, Korean kings and their courtiers exchanged pictures of these **auspicious** symbols at the beginning of each new year. Such folding screens were placed behind the seat of the royal family during important ceremonies and banquets, serving as both an emblem of good luck and a lavish decoration. This particular screen was most likely produced for ceremonial use at court.

TEN LONGEVITY SYMBOLS

PINE TREE The pine tree is one of the most common symbols of longevity in East Asia. Because it remains green even in the harshest winters, it stands for resilience, endurance, and strength against adversity. The tree's gnarled bark was thought to resemble an old man's skin. A fourth-century Daoist text suggests that drinking the resin of a thousand-year-old pine will enable one to "live as long as the sun and the moon." The pine tree, bamboo, and plum tree are known as the Three Friends of Winter because they are evergreens.

SUN The sun is identified with longevity because it rises in the sky each day, without fail. The sun and moon represent the complementary yet opposing forces of yang and yin, which animate the cosmos in East Asian philosophy. The sun is pure yang, the male principle of the universe that is light and active and generates life.

CRANE Cranes live long lives, some species as long as eighty years. In some Asian folktales they are said to live as long as five hundred years. Cranes mate for life, and therefore symbolize harmony, a wish for a long marriage, and respect for one's parents and ancestors. Cranes also signify promotion at court, as they appear in the rank badge of Joseon civil officials. In Daoism the crane symbolizes transcendence and serves as a means of transport to heaven.

WATER An almost universal symbol of life, fruitfulness, and abundance, water is linked to longevity across time. In Daoist philosophy, water is one of the five eternal elements—together with earth, fire, metal, and wood—that make up the cosmos. A section of the important Daoist text *Dao De Jing* reads, "Nothing under heaven is softer or more yielding than water; but when it attacks things hard and resistant there is not one of them that can prevail."

MOUNTAIN Mountains and rocks keep their shape forever. The breathing of mountains is believed to activate the universe. They are the abode of Eight Daoist Immortals and on them are said to grow the mushrooms of immortality. In Korea and China, important state rituals were conducted in the mountains, and the dominant mountain peak became the emblem of the emperor.

CLOUDS As producers of rain, clouds sustain long life. In their swirling forms they contain the Daoist qi (chee), or breath of life. When their vapors gather around the mountaintops, they represent the uniting of yin and yang, soft and hard, changeability and permanence. The shape of clouds in some Joseon dynasty paintings, like this screen, resembles the form of the mushroom of immortality, reinforcing their connection to longevity.

DEER Nibbling as they do on forest vegetation, deer are believed to have a special talent for sniffing out the elusive mushroom of immortality that grows high in the mountains. They are frequently shown as the companion of Shou Lao, the Daoist god of longevity. Ground horn of deer has long been used for medicinal purposes in East Asia and is believed to promote health and long life. White Deer Lake on JeJu Island in Korea was said to be the place where immortals came "to bathe and drink in the milk of the white deer."

TURTLE Turtles are noted for their long life span. In addition, with their dome-shaped upper shell, flat lower shell, and legs in the four corners of their bodies, they were early emblems of the universe and the cardinal directions. In Korean mythology, the turtle is a messenger of good news in water, its counterpart being the tiger, the messenger in the mountains. In this screen, streams of breath emanate from the turtles' mouths, perhaps delivering their sacred messages.

MUSHROOMS The sacred, cloud-shaped lingzhi mushroom grants immortality to those who eat it. This mushroom springs from the roots of trees that grow high in the mountains where the Daoist immortals live. According to legend, it can be found only by a deer, crane, or phoenix.

BAMBOO Bamboo is one of the most versatile and abundant materials in East Asia, eaten by both humans and animals and used to make everything from houses to paper. It remains green throughout the four seasons and therefore symbolizes long life. Because it bends rather than breaks, bamboo represents resilience, and its simple shape, humility. According to Confucian ideology, bamboo possesses the qualities of a great scholar: humility, uprightness, flexibility of mind, and grace.

ROYAL PROTOCOL FOR THE ROYAL WEDDING OF KING YEONGJO AND QUEEN JEONGSUN

1759

Book; ink and colors on paper

18 9/16 x 13 5/16 inches
(47.1 x 33.8 cm)

National Museum of Korea, Seoul

LET'S LOOK

What is going on in this picture?

How are the people dressed?
What do they carry?

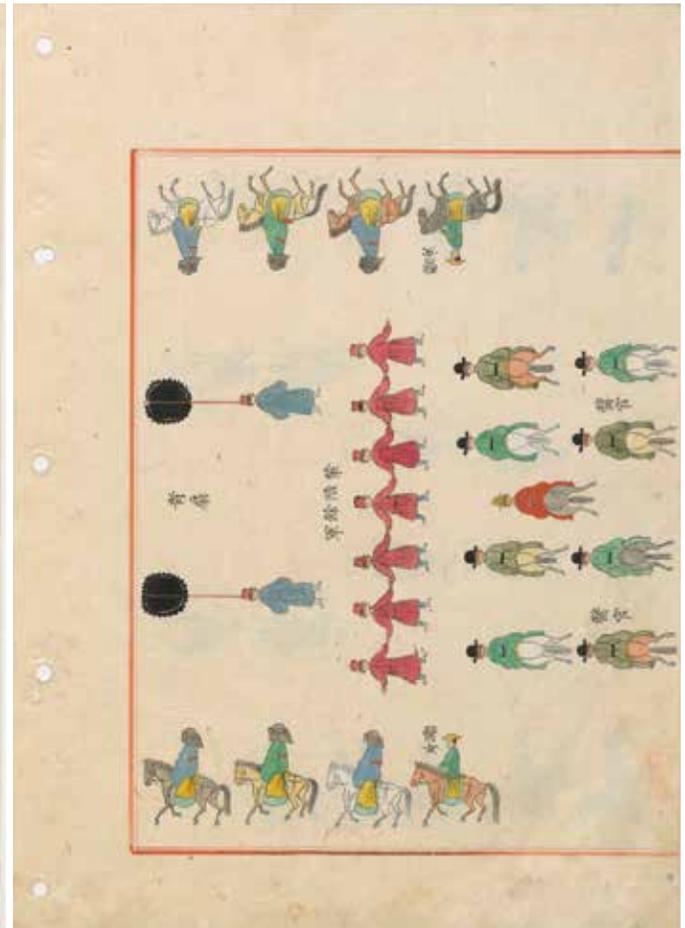
Who is walking? Who is riding?
Who is being carried? What might that say about them?

How are the people organized?

What do you think it would feel like to be a part of this procession?

These two pages are part of a much larger book, called a royal protocol, that was created for the wedding of King Yeongjo and Queen Jeongsun in 1759. This particular book was made for the king. Additional copies were given to other important members of the ceremony to serve as a guide. The book, which describes only the wedding procession, is 291 pages long, with illustrations of nearly 1,300 figures and more than 370 horses.

Here we see an orderly procession of court attendants on foot and on horseback wearing colorful clothing and headdresses. At the center of the left page, a group of men carry the queen's palanquin (enclosed carrier). Its elaborate roof is decorated with phoenixes at the corners. Look closely to see the silhouette of the queen through the lattice window. On each side of the palanquin, escorting the queen to the royal palace, are women wearing veils and riding horses. These women serve as the queen's attendants. Their veils



indicate their high status. The procession continues on the right page, where more men and women ride on horseback and two men carrying large black fans follow just behind the palanquin. The words on the pages identify the key people in the event.

JAR WITH DRAGON DESIGN

18th to 19th century
Porcelain with underglaze blue decoration
Height 21 1/4 (53.9 cm)
National Museum of Korea, Seoul



LET'S LOOK

Describe the colors and the decoration on this jar.

What do you notice about the dragon's pose and expression?

What patterns and designs do you see on the top and bottom of the jar?

Compare this jar's shape and decoration to those of the water dropper (page 26). What is the same and different? Why might that be?

This jar is decorated with a joyfully parading dragon, whose five claws are said to be a symbol of the royal family and, specifically, the king. In Korean mythology dragons are known as brave, confident, and wise, with the power to control the rain and clouds. Surrounding the dragon are small, simplified clouds and lotus flowers with long, curving petals. More floral and geometrical patterns decorate the top (neck) and bottom (foot) of the jar, framing the fierce creature. The potter formed this large jar on a rotating wheel in two parts and attached them at the shoulder, the widest part of the jar.

Dragon jars were very popular among the ruling class during the Joseon dynasty. This one is painted with cobalt, a luxury pigment imported from China that creates a beautiful, rich blue. The use of cobalt for decorating porcelain was restricted to items produced for members of the ruling class or the royal household. The fine materials and skillful technique indicate that this vessel was a product of the official kilns, reserved for the use of the royal family. It would have been used as an ornamental flower vase or to hold wine during royal ceremonies.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL/ART

Ten Longevity Symbols

Decorate the folding screen template on page 44 of this book or the companion CD with your own good luck symbols.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL/SOCIAL STUDIES

Create an Event Protocol

The royal protocol documents an important wedding in pictures and words. Is there a special family gathering or school event that you enjoy? What does everyone wear? Where do they stand? How do they move? Explain in writing or drawing how the event should be planned and carried out. As a class, try using each other's protocols to act out a scene.

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL/LANGUAGE ARTS

Be a Reporter for the Royal Event

View the animated scene from the royal protocol on the companion CD. Write about what you would hear, see, and smell. How would you feel? What would you be thinking?

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL/LANGUAGE ARTS

Write a Quest Story

Write a quest story about one of the objects in this book. Imagine that it was a part of the royal court and that it's gone missing. Who owned it? Who took it? How was it lost? How was it found? Can you also incorporate characters from the portraits?

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL/SOCIAL STUDIES, LANGUAGE ARTS, ART

Dragons Are Powerful!

Dragons are powerful creatures that are associated with kings and are believed to be made up of a combination of many great animals. Make a list of your favorite animals. Combine aspects of some or all of them to create a drawing of a powerful creature. Write a story about your creature's power.



JOSEON SOCIETY

The paintings, sculptures, and decorative arts produced during the Joseon dynasty exemplify the complicated social system and segregation of social classes, official ranks, and genders. Joseon society was strictly ruled by Confucianism, the official state ideology. Under Confucianism, modesty, filial piety (respect for one's parents and ancestors), frugality, pursuit of knowledge, and proper etiquette were highly valued. In addition, men and women were required to occupy different roles and spaces, even in their own households. Men's living quarters, called the *sarang-chae* (sah rang che), consisted of several rooms, including a place to study, a bedroom, and a living room. Women and children resided in the *an-chae* (ahn che). Their rooms were sheltered in the innermost section of the household.



WOMAN'S UPPER GARMENT (DANGUI)

Early 20th century

Silk with gold-leaf decoration

Length (front and back) 31 1/2 inches (80 cm)

Dankook University Seok Juseon Memorial
Museum, Yongin, Korea

LET'S LOOK

Describe the colors and patterns you see on this piece of clothing.

What do the designs remind you of?

How would you put this on?

Imagine you could wear this garment. How would you feel in it?

Dangui (dahng ui) were outer jackets worn by women as part of traditional Korean dress, called *hanbok* (hahn boak). Not all Joseon women were entitled to wear *dangui*. Such garments were typically worn only by royalty, high-ranking nobility, and ladies of the court. The higher the wearer's rank, the more expensive and elaborate the materials and decorations would be. This particular *dangui* was worn in the early twentieth century by a high-ranking noblewoman on visits to court. The garment is made of thin, slightly translucent green silk gauze over an inner layer of scarlet silk. It was fastened in front by tying the scarlet silk ribbons together. Strips of white cloth were separately sewn onto the collar and cuffs for easy removal and cleaning.

This *dangui* is embellished with symbols of good luck, such as the gold bats on the collar. The Chinese word for bat is pronounced the same as the word for good fortune. This led to bat images being used in Korean and other Asian cultures' art as symbols of luck. As bats were thought to live for a thousand years, they also became symbols of longevity. The Chinese word 壽福 (first character: life, second character: luck) is stamped on the garment in gold leaf, meaning both luck and longevity.



COMB BOX

19th century

Lacquered wood with mother-of-pearl inlay

11 5/8 × 10 11/16 × 10 1/16 inches
(29.5 × 27.2 × 25.5 cm)

National Museum of Korea, Seoul

In the *an-bang*, the main room of the women's quarters, or *an-chaе*, one would expect to see distinctly feminine objects, such as this comb box. This box is made of lacquered wood and ornamented with mother-of-pearl inlay and metal handles. The drawers were used to store accessories like combs, hair ornaments, mirrors, and waxed paper to hold the strands of hair that fell out during combing. Burning of collected hair outside the doorway of the house at twilight on New Year's Day was believed to ward off bad luck and illnesses.

The images on the front of the box symbolize fertility, luck, wealth, honor, and happy marriage. Mandarin ducks, like the pair on the right side of the bottom drawer, were believed to mate for life, representing harmonious marriage. On the left side of the bottom drawer, a pair of tortoises surfs on waves, symbolizing long life. On the left side of the top drawer, a pair of mythical phoenixes, also symbols of a harmonious marriage, eat bamboo fruit. The other three drawers of the box are decorated with pairs of peacocks whose elegant movements are admired and often associated with peace and prosperity.

LET'S LOOK

Look closely at each drawer on this box. What plants and animals do you see?

What patterns do you find?

How would each drawer open?

What would you store inside?

HANGEUL LETTER BY KING HYOJONG

1638

Ink on paper

15 3/16 × 19 7/8 inches (38.5 × 50.5 cm)

National Museum of Korea, Seoul

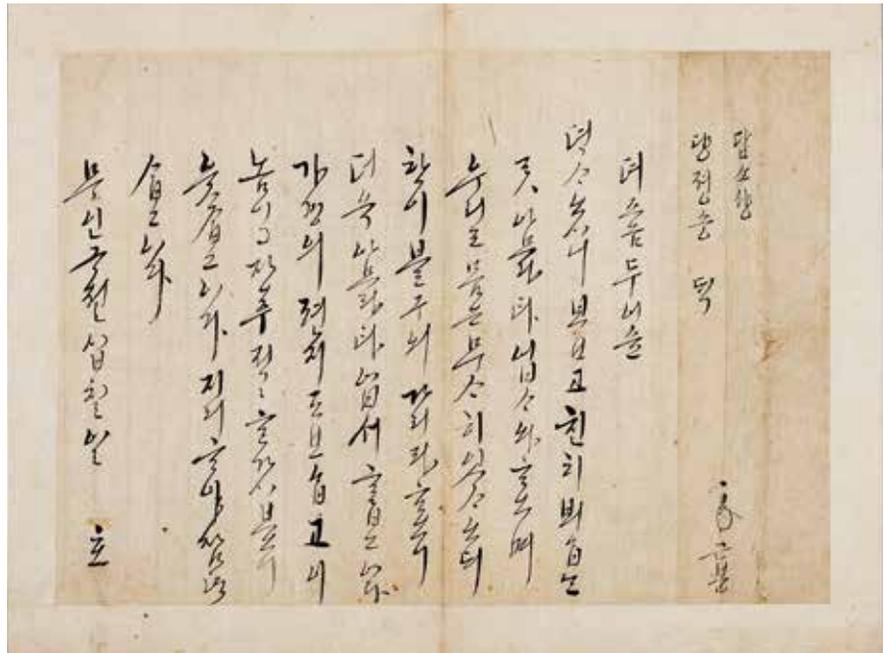
LET'S LOOK

This writing is read from right to left, top to bottom.

What do you notice when you look at it?

What does the writing remind you of?

Try to copy some of the writing. What do you enjoy? What is challenging?



The division between men and women was also evident in language and education. Joseon women could not hold official government positions, and were not expected to be educated at the same level as men. For instance, women were not taught to read and write in Chinese, which was used for official court documents as well as poetry and literature. This letter is written in Hangeul, the written language of Korea invented in 1443 by King Sejong the Great with a group of scholars. The king created a new alphabet that was easy to learn, so that all his people, including women and commoners, could read and write. Both simple and beautiful, Hangeul is celebrated by Koreans in a national holiday each year.

Grand Prince Bong-rim (1619–1659), who was later named King Hyojong, wrote this letter to his mother-in-law in 1638, informing her of his and his wife’s well-being, after they had been sent to the Chinese Qing court as hostages following the Second Manchu Invasion of Korea. The identities of Han and Ga Gyung, who are mentioned in the letter, are unknown. They are most likely relatives of the prince.

LETTER

답소상

(수결) 근봉

저즈음 두어 손

덕오시니 보고 친히 뵈

아므라타 업와 오며

우리도 몸은 무히 잇오

한이 불구의 가리라 오니

더욱 아므라타 업서 노이다

가경의 편지도 보고 이

놈이 장 주적가 시브오니

웃노이다 지리야 잠 덕

노이다

무인 구월 십칠일 호

TRANSLATION

We are immensely grateful for the recent letters you kindly sent us. We are healthy and well, and Han will go there soon. I also received a letter from Ga Gyung and his confidence makes me smile. Writing you briefly on a slow day. On September 17, 1638

PORTRAIT OF YI JAE

Late 18th century

Hanging scroll; ink and
colors on silk

38 1/2 x 22 3/16 inches
(97.8 x 56.3 cm)

National Museum of Korea, Seoul

Photograph by Jung-youp Han, Han Studio

LET'S LOOK

Describe this man's
pose and expression.

What do you notice
about his clothing?

What might these
observations tell us
about him?

Compare this portrait
with that of Yi Gyu-sang.
What are the similarities
and differences?
Why might that be?



The man in this portrait is Yi Jae, a high-ranking eighteenth-century government official and a Confucian scholar who wrote a celebrated text on Joseon Confucian rites. Here he wears a *sim-ui* (shim ui), a white robe with black trim that was the standard garment of Joseon scholars after retiring from public office. A colorful, decorative woven cord hangs from his sash. His simple clothing shows that he adheres to the Confucian value of modesty. Scholars were also expected to embrace studiousness, frugality, and integrity.



INKSTONE TABLE

19th century

Wood

8 11/16 × 12 1/16 × 7 1/2 inches
(22.1 × 30.6 × 19.1 cm)

National Museum of Korea, Seoul

LET'S LOOK

Describe the color and design of this table.

How is it similar to and different from tables in your classroom and in your home?

This table is about 2 ½ feet tall. How would you sit if you were writing on it?

What would you store inside this table?

Scholars such as Yi Jae, whose portrait appears on the facing page, studied in special rooms called *sarang-bang* (sah rang bahng). This table is an example of the furniture used in such a room. A scholar would sit on the floor while working at this table. Unlike the comb box for the women's quarters, this table is simple and unadorned; its natural wood grain serves as the only decoration. It would have been used to store paper, brushes, inkstones, and ink sticks, known collectively as the Four Friends of the Study, a name that tells how important these objects were to scholars. The top half of the table was used to store the inkstone, a flat slab usually made of stone but occasionally of jade, wood, or porcelain, on which a scholar would grind a dampened ink stick to produce ink. The top panel is actually a detachable lid that could be lifted to access the box-like space beneath. Paper was stored in the open space between the table legs.

WATER DROPPER WITH BAMBOO DESIGN AND POEM

18th century

Porcelain with underglaze
blue decoration

Height 3 3/8 inches (8.5 cm)

National Museum of Korea, Seoul



LET'S LOOK

What do you notice about the shape
and decoration of this object?

Where do you see bamboo? Where do
you see writing?

How do you think this
object was used?

Read the translation of the poem
that is written on this water dropper.

How do you think the poem
relates to the object?

Joseon scholars used water droppers like this one in their study rooms (*sarang-bang*) to drip water to dilute ink or to moisten ink sticks before grinding them. This example is decorated with images of bamboo, one of a group of plants known as the Four Gentlemen (*sa-gun-ja*). These plants—bamboo, plum blossom, orchid, and chrysanthemum—were so named because each was thought to display the ideal characteristics of a scholarly gentleman, such as fidelity and integrity. The plum blossom represents winter; the orchid represents spring; the bamboo represents summer; and the chrysanthemum represents autumn. Each plant demonstrates its own character to flourish in each season's challenges.

All four plants were widely used to decorate *sarang-bang* furniture and objects, and they often appear in paintings and on porcelain wares. Written in Chinese characters on the sides of the dropper is a humorous poem about how the dropper was used.

茲水之用	A container used for holding water
虛中受	Empty but also gains
而時出	Yet sometimes loses
於無有	Becomes present from nothing
道其在	Here is the way

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL/LANGUAGE ARTS

Symbolism

Discuss the characteristics associated with the symbols on the objects, such as bamboo, animals, pine trees, and so on. What characteristics are important to you? What plant or animal would symbolize it? Draw your symbol. Write a poem to go along with it, like the artist did on the water dropper on the facing page.

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL/SOCIAL STUDIES

Joseon Korea and Renaissance Italy

King Sejong the Great, who invented Hangeul in 1443, ruled at the same time Renaissance flourished in Italy. Make a comparative timeline of events in Korea and Italy from the fifteenth to the sixteenth century. Include scientific inventions, historical events, and works of art.

ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE, AND HIGH SCHOOL/ART

Create Your Own Portrait

What would you include to tell about yourself? How would you pose? What would you wear? What else would you put in your picture?

ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE, AND HIGH SCHOOL/ART

Jar

Korean pottery is known for its intricate design. Use the vase template on page 45 or the companion CD and decorate it with symbols and patterns.



ANCESTRAL RITES

Koreans have a rich tradition of rites (traditional ceremonies) that honor the spirits of ancestors and connect the living and the deceased. Filial piety (devotion to one's parents and ancestors) is considered one of the most important ideas of Confucianism. Honoring both living and deceased elders is expected and is a central part of family duties. Special works of art and crafts were created for ancestral ceremonies.

PAINTED SPIRIT HOUSE

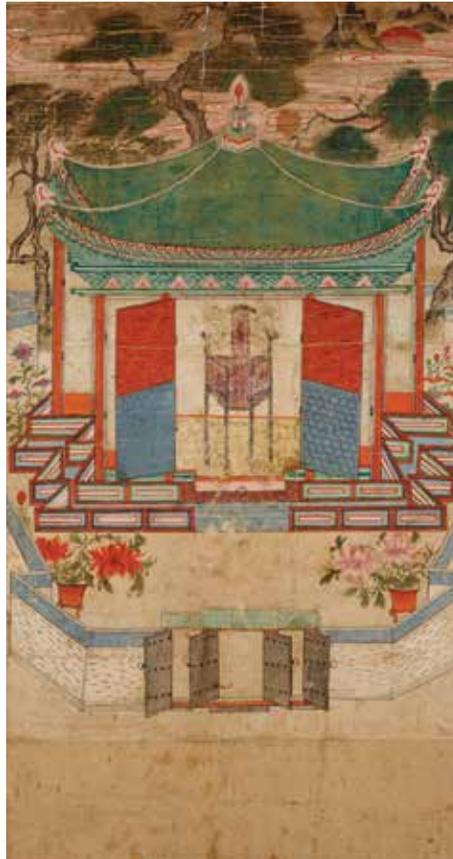
19th century

Hanging scroll; colors on paper

46 7/16 × 26 3/16 inches (118 × 66.5 cm)

National Museum of Korea, Seoul

Photograph by Jung-youp Han, Han Studio



LET'S LOOK

Share your observations about the place depicted here.

What do you notice about the house? The tree?

What is inside the house?

How might it feel to walk inside?

In this painting, a mature but flourishing pine tree (a symbol of longevity) towers over a spirit house (a shrine where ancestors are worshipped). Designed in the style of an aristocratic home, with beautifully curved, ceramic tiled roofs, the entire structure sits on a stone platform guarded by several fence walls edged in red and a final high white and blue wall. Potted peonies decorate the small courtyard. The wide open doors welcome viewers inside the house. A tall chair functions as a placeholder for deceased spirits. The fine detail in this work suggests that it was made by a skilled painter and highly valued by its owner.

Those who could afford to would honor their ancestors with extravagant ceremonies at an actual shrine, with a banquet and a visit to ancestors' tombs. Spirit house paintings were created for individuals who could not afford to build a lavish shrine. Such paintings were used during ancestral rites and have the same importance as a ritual being held at an actual shrine.



HUIJUN AND SANGJUN RITUAL VESSELS

17th century

Porcelain with underglaze
iron design

Huijun: 7 3/8 x 11 5/16 (18.8 x 28.7 cm);

Sangjun: 9 5/16 x 14 inches (23.7 x 35.6 cm)

National Museum of Korea, Seoul

Photograph by Jung-youp Han, Han Studio

Ritual vessels like these were used during ancestral rites at Jongmyo, a Confucian shrine in Seoul where kings and other members of the royal family held ceremonies to honor the deceased kings and queens of the Joseon dynasty. One such ritual was Jerye (jeh reh), during which attendees paid respect and devotion to their ancestors by offering food and drink for the deceased spirits.

These two vessels are made in the shape of an ox (*huijun*) and an elephant (*sangjun*), beloved animals that symbolize strength and long life. Decorated with lines to imply details of eyes and saddles, they would have adorned a table full of about eighty meticulously prepared foods and beverages, like fruit, meat, rice, rice cake, soup, and wine. These two vessels specifically held two different types of fermented rice wine.

LET'S LOOK

What do you notice
about these creatures?

Which is the elephant and which
is the ox? How do you know?

These were used for pouring
liquid. Can you see where it was
poured in, and where it came out?

How do you think it would feel to
hold these in your hand?

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL/SOCIAL STUDIES

Ancestor Worship

The spirit house painting was used during ancestor worship ceremonies in the Joseon dynasty. Research other cultural traditions of honoring ancestors, such as the Day of the Dead (Mexico), Qingming (China), the Obon Festival (Japan), and Pitru Paksha (India). Compare and contrast works of art and objects created for use during these events.



FAITHS AND BELIEFS

Even though Confucianism was the official ideology of Joseon society, the religions of Buddhism, Daoism, and Shamanism coexisted and were very influential on the production of art.

KARMA MIRROR AND STAND

19th century

Wood with painted decoration

Height 38 11/16 inches (98.2 cm)

National Museum of Korea, Seoul



LET'S LOOK

How would you describe this creature?

Is it friendly or fierce?
Why do you think so?

A person's past good and bad deeds were thought to be reflected in the mirror. How does the object's design relate to its purpose?

In Buddhism, people's souls are believed to descend after death to the underworld, where they progress through ten stages of judgment. At each stage, the souls are judged by one of the Ten Kings of Hell, and sentenced to a variety of punishments, according to their sins. At the end of each stage, the souls are assigned to a form of reincarnation.

The Fifth Court of Hell is ruled by King Yeomla, who is often associated with karma mirrors like this one. The soul being questioned stands in front of the mirror, which reflects all of the soul's past deeds, both good and evil. The king records the sins on a scroll, which is reviewed at the end of the soul's testimony. Depending on the number of sins, the king sentences the soul to an appropriate punishment.



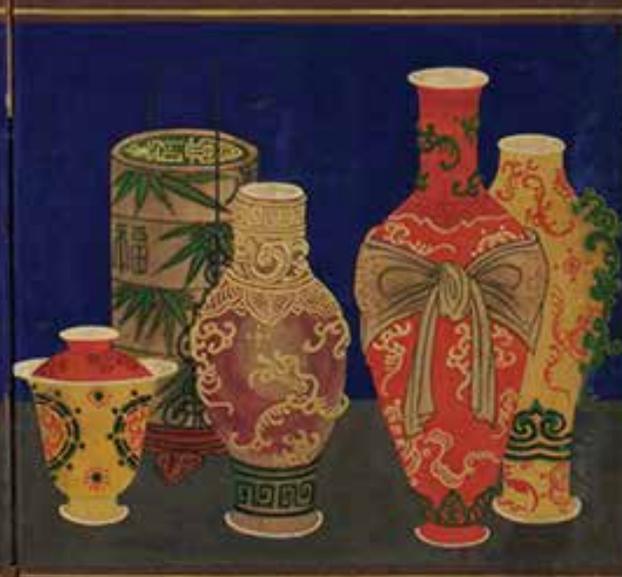
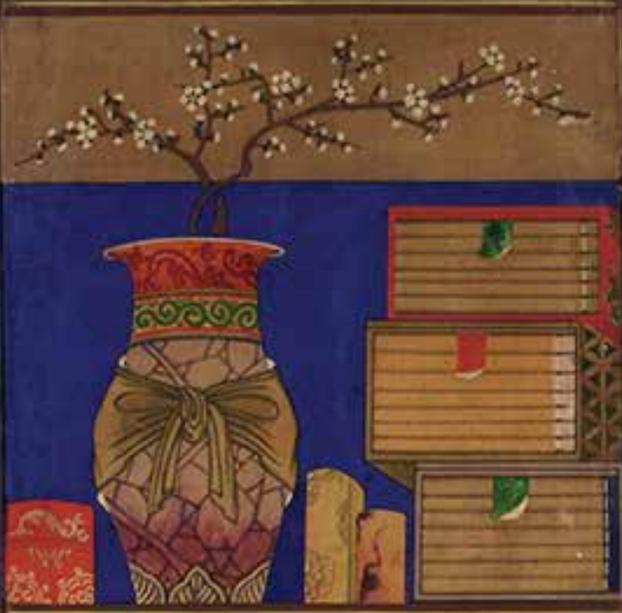
This mirror reminds Buddhist worshippers of the unforgiving afterlife. The flames around it represent the horrors of hell. The creature supporting the mirror is a lion, considered in Buddhist mythology to be the guard of the Laws of the Universe. On the back of the mirror is the ancient **Sanskrit** character ॐ, a holy syllable that is part of some Buddhist ritual chants. In Korean Buddhist temples, karma mirrors are often enshrined in halls where visitors pray for the deceased, as well as halls dedicated to worshipping the Ten Kings of Hell.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL/SOCIAL STUDIES

Karma Mirror

Karma mirrors remind people to reflect on their past deeds and their fate in the afterlife. Research beliefs about the afterlife in different ancient and modern cultures, such as Anubis (ancient Egypt), Hades/River Styx (ancient Greece), Yama (Hinduism), and the Last Judgment (Christianity). Do people make special art for use in their rituals? What are the beliefs about the judgment of souls in the afterlife?



JOSEON IN MODERN TIMES

Toward the end of the Joseon dynasty, Western culture came to the peninsula, transforming it politically, religiously, and culturally. Artists began to adopt Western painting styles, ideas, and techniques, producing unique works of art that reflected both Korean and Western societies.

PORTRAIT OF YI GYU-SANG

Early 20th century

Hanging scroll; colors on silk
57 × 27 11/16 inches (144.8 × 70.3 cm)

Attributed to Kim Eun-ho

Korean, 1892–1979

National Museum of Korea, Seoul



LET'S LOOK

Compare this portrait with that of Yi Jae. What are the similarities and differences? Why might that be?

What do you notice about this man's clothing and his chair?

What are some clues that tell you about his position in society?

What do his pose and facial expression tell you about him?

Read about Yi Gyu-sang's life. How does the portrait relate to what you learned?

This portrait depicts Yi Gyu-sang (1837–1917), a military officer, wearing the traditional military uniform and headdress of the Joseon dynasty. The pair of white tigers in the embroidered square badge on his chest symbolize his military status. He also wears two Western-style medals. The one on the left commemorates the fifty-first birthday of Emperor Gojong (1852–1919) and the fortieth anniversary of his ascension to the throne. The other medal commemorates the royal wedding of the crown prince, who would go on to become Emperor Sunjong.

The portrait was made in the first decade of the twentieth century, after Korea opened its doors to trade with the West, and the influence of Western art is apparent. For example, the realistic shading and different levels of brightness in Yi's face in this work resemble a photograph. The pattern on the floor mat recedes into the background, reflecting the use of Western-style perspective, a change from traditional Korean portraiture.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE, AND HIGH SCHOOL (ADAPTABLE)/ ART, SOCIAL STUDIES

Compare and Contrast Two Portraits

Yi Jae (portrait on page 24) and Yi Gyu-sang had different roles in Joseon society, but both worked as government officials. Compare the men's clothes, headdress, facial expression, and background.

What does each portrait tell you about the time in which they lived?

What does each portrait tell you about the person's role and status?



WEBSITES

ASIAN ART

ASIA SOCIETY

<http://asiasociety.org/korea>

Provides information on current events throughout Asia in addition to presentations and documentaries on Asian arts and culture

ASIAN ART MUSEUM

<http://www.asianart.org/>

Features a diverse collection of art objects as well as activities and educational aids

ASIAN ART

<http://www.asianart.com/index.html>

Supports the study and exhibition of the arts of Asia through the contribution of scholars, museum, galleries, and public and private institutions

KOREAN HISTORY AND ART

CHOSON KOREA

<http://www.chosonkorea.org/index.php/history>

Offers a historical overview of the Choson (an alternate spelling of Joseon) dynasty, including information about Joseon society, religion, Western influence, and culture

THE KOREA SOCIETY

<http://www.koreasociety.org/tag/gallery-talks.html>

Provides information on a range of topics, from policy and business to art and culture

THE KOREAN FOUNDATION

<https://www.kf.or.kr/eng/main/index.asp>

Features videos and publications about Korean culture, history, and art

CENTER FOR KOREAN STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

http://www.hawaii.edu/korea/biblio/cho_government.html

Encourages an interdisciplinary and intercultural approach to Korean studies through lectures, films, and publications

KOREAN SPIRIT AND CULTURE PROMOTION PROJECT

<http://kscpp.net/KSCPPHome/tabid/73/Default.aspx>

Offers a collection of literature and online sources, as well as the group's own publication about historical and modern-day Korean culture

KOREANA QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

<http://www.koreana.or.kr/index.asp?lang=en>

Provides in-depth articles on art, environment, literature, and lifestyle

EXTENDED TEACHER RESOURCES

INSTROK

<http://www.instrok.org/instrok/home.html>

Provides in-depth interactive lessons for all ages to encourage the exploration of Korean history and culture online

ASIA FOR EDUCATORS

<http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/>

Provides lectures, presentations, and websites that offer an overview of Asian art provided by teachers for the aid of students and faculty

THE SOCIETY OF THE PRESERVATION OF JONGMYO JERYE

http://www.jongmyo.net/sub/company/eng_com_greeting.asp

Provides detailed information on the procedures, history, clothing, and vessels that once existed at the main ancestral shrine of the Joseon dynasty

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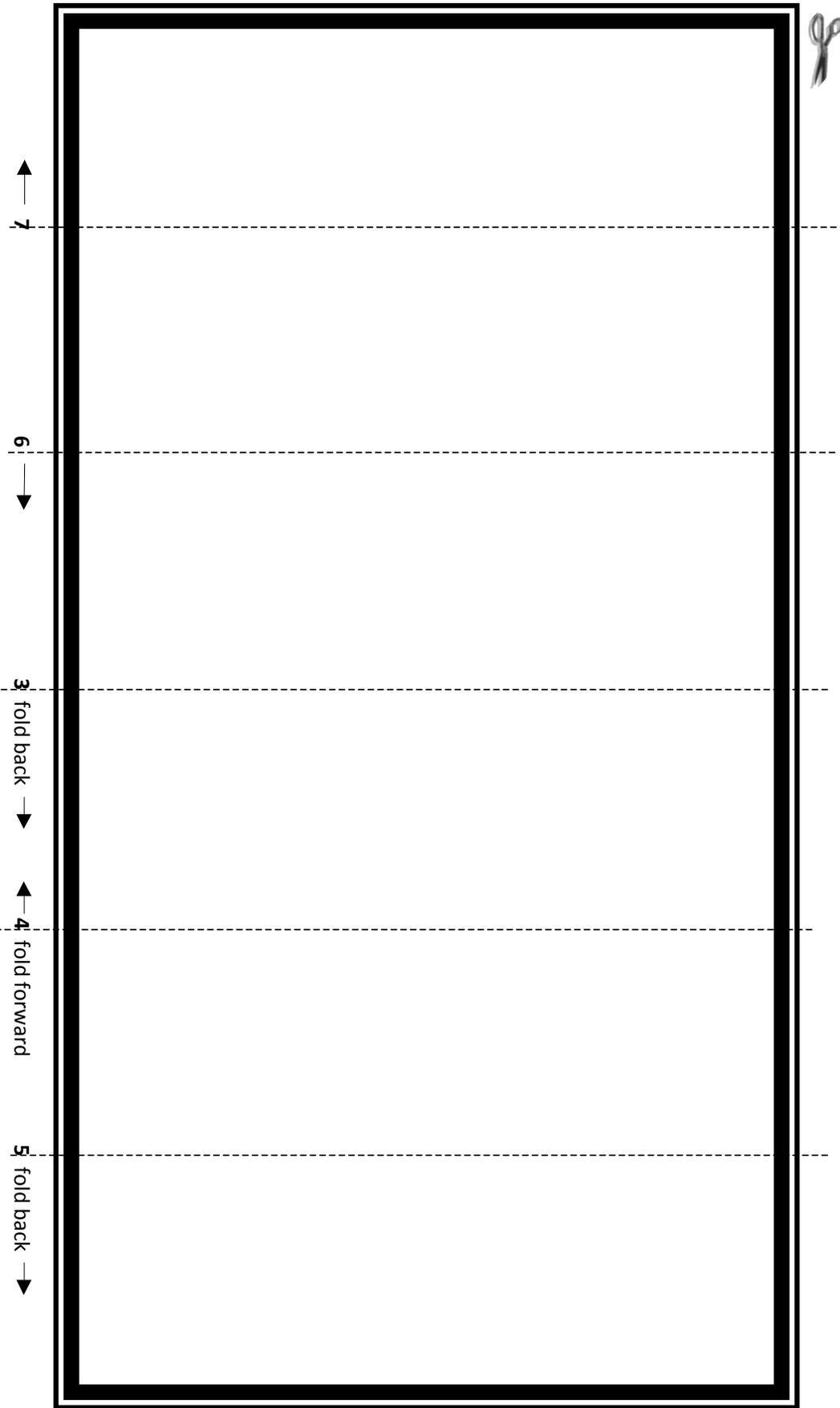
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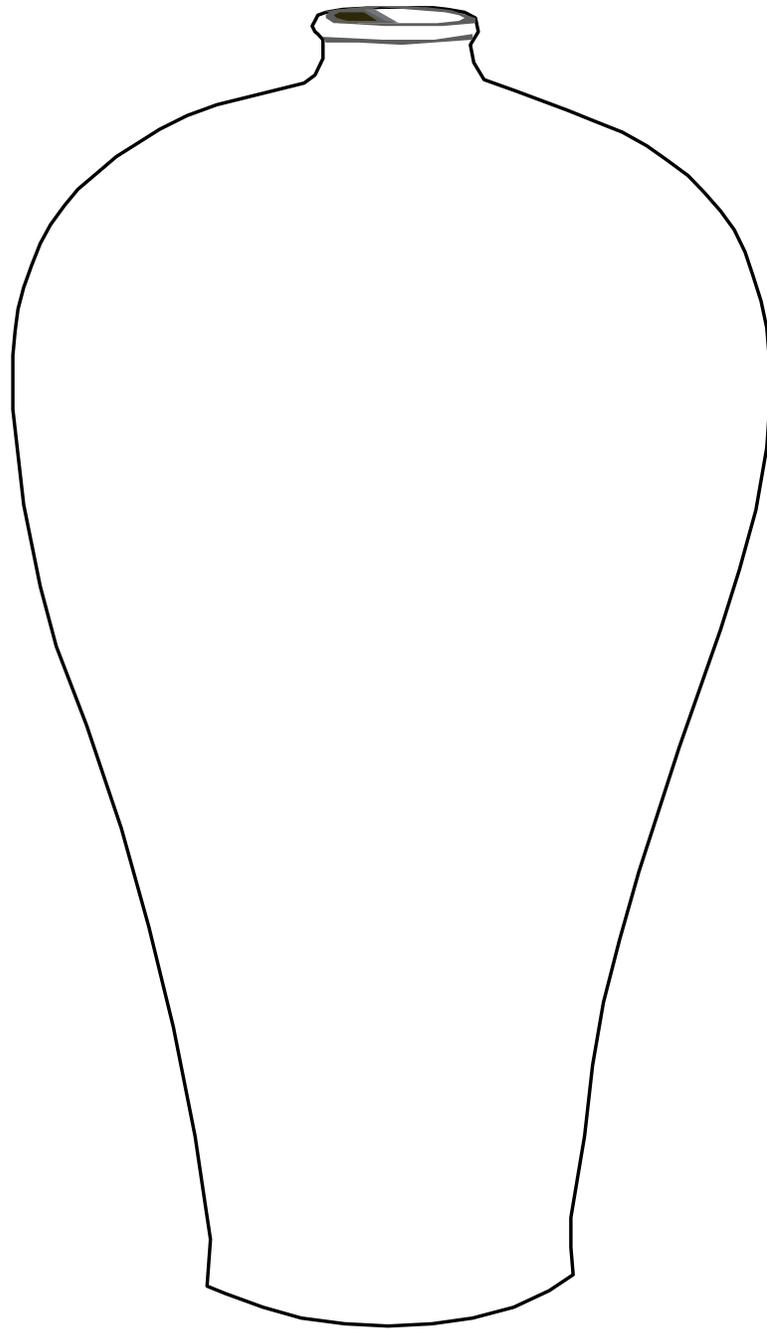
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DRAW a background that includes a sky with clouds and a sun. Add land with mountains, rocks, water, animals, and plants.
CUT around the border.
FOLD paper in half (line 3). **FOLD** paper on line 4. Continue to **FOLD** paper in direction of arrows
OPEN screen.





LOOK for images of nature in Korean art (animals, plants, rocks, water, sky, etc.)

CHOOSE three different natural objects from Korean art to design your own vase.

THINK about pattern and symmetry as you draw the natural objects on your vase.

GLOSSARY

auspicious	Bringing good fortune
grand prince	A son of a king whose responsibilities are higher than a prince but lower than his father
ink stick	A solid, usually rectangular form of ink used for calligraphy that is ground down with water to create liquid ink
inkstone	A tool made from hard stone on which ink sticks are ground
inlay	A decorative technique in which a contrasting material is inserted into a depressed or cutaway design of a different object or surface. The two different materials lay flush with each other and produce an intricate and detailed design.
porcelain	A special type of clay that turns white and often translucent after it is fired in a kiln
Sanskrit	A historical language used for ceremonial Buddhist practices and which is still used today
yin and yang	Rooted in the Daoist belief, yin and yang are contrasting but complementary ideas that work together to create a unified whole. This belief can be seen through the use of sun and moon, male and female, in the arts of the Joseon dynasty.

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Front and back cover: *Ten Longevity Symbols*, 18th century, Korea (Private Collection); page 10: *Sun, Moon, and Five Peaks* (detail), 19th century, Korea (Private Collection); page 18: *Tiger and Magpies* (detail), 19th century, Korea (Collection of Fytie Ludington Drayton); page 28: *Peonies* (detail), 19th century, Korea (Private Collection); page 32: *Eastern Paradise of Bhaisajyaguru* (detail), 1828, Korea (National Museum of Korea, Seoul); page 36: *Scholar's Accoutrements* (detail), 19th century, Korea (National Museum of Korea, Seoul)

