

KOREA

ART AND ARTISTIC RELATIONS WITH EUROPE

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Agnieszka Kluczevska-Wójcik & Jerzy Malinowski

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KOREA
ART AND ARTISTIC RELATIONS
WITH EUROPE

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Agnieszka Kluczevska-Wójcik

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KOREA

ART AND ARTISTIC RELATIONS WITH EUROPE

Agnieszka Kluczevska-Wójcik
Jerzy Malinowski

Introduction

Since 2007, the art of East Asia is one of the important research areas of the Polish Institute of World Art Studies. The Institute was founded in 2011 as a result of the merger of the Society of Modern Art in Toruń (2000–2011) and the Polish Society of Oriental Art (2006–2011). The studies resulted in 11 monographs and volumes, as well as many articles in journals published in Polish and English (<http://www.world-art.pl>). The publications were dedicated to Chinese and Japanese art and artistic ties between East Asia and Europe, including Poland. In 2004, Warsaw and Toruń hosted the *First Meeting of Japanese and Polish Art Historians and Musicologists*. Two conferences were dedicated to the art of China: *Art of China*¹ in Warsaw in 2008 and *The First Conference of Polish and Chinese Historians of Art – Poland-China. Art and Cultural Heritage*² (with the participation of professors from Tsinghua University in Beijing and Shanghai Uni-

versity) in Krakow in 2009. Two conferences addressed the art of Japan: *Japanese Art*³ in Warsaw in 2007 and *The Art of Japan, Japanisms and Polish-Japanese Art Relations*⁴ in Krakow in 2010.

The subject of interest were also neighboring cultural circles: six books on India as well as the conference *Art and visual culture of India*⁵ in Warsaw in 2007; three monographs and the conference *Sacred World of Central Asia* in Warsaw in 2008 devoted to Central Asia and Tibet; two book publications on the culture of Islam and the conference *Art of the Islamic World and Artistic Relationships between Poland and Islamic Countries*⁶ in Krakow in 2009; the conference *South-East Asia: art, cul-*

¹ *Sztuka Chin. Studia / The Art of China. Studies*, Joanna Wasilewska (ed.), Warszawa 2009; ISBN 978-83-7543-098-1 (280 p., 50 color ill.).

² *The First Conference of Polish and Chinese Historians of Art – Poland-China. Art and Cultural Heritage*, Joanna Wasilewska (ed.), Kraków 2011; ISBN 978-83-233-3235-0 (349 p.); “古今波 丁和中波美 交流” (Poland-China: Art and Cultural Heritage), 丁. 雅谷比, 淑君 (者), Marcin Jacoby & Chen Shujun (eds.), Shanghai Jinxiu Wenzhang, Shanghai 2012; ISBN 978-7-5452-0351-6 (272 p.).

³ *Sztuka Japonii / The Art of Japan*, Agnieszka Kluczevska-Wójcik & Jerzy Malinowski (eds.), Warszawa 2009; ISBN 978-83-7181-596-6 (162 p.).

⁴ *Art of Japan, Japanisms and Polish-Japanese art relations*, Agnieszka Kluczevska-Wójcik & Jerzy Malinowski (eds.), Toruń 2012 ISBN 978-83-62737-16-1 (364 p.).

⁵ *Sztuka i kultura wizualna Indii / Art and visual culture of India*, Piotr Balcerowicz & Jerzy Malinowski (eds.), Warszawa 2010; ISBN 978-83-71-81-636-9 (170 p., LLIV color ill.); *Art, Myths and Visual Culture of South Asia*, Piotr Balcerowicz & Jerzy Malinowski (eds.), Manohar Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi 2011; ISBN 978-81-7304-951-4 (320 p., XX color ill.).

⁶ *Art of the Islamic World and Artistic Relationships between Poland and Islamic Countries*, Beata Biedrońska-Słota, Magdalena Ginter-Frołow & Jerzy Malinowski (eds.), Kraków 2011; ISBN 978-83-233-3235-0 (349 p.).

*tural heritage and artistic relations with Europe / Poland*⁷ in Krakow in 2011. The Institute was also a co-organizer of the 10th Conference of the International Society for Shamanistic Research *Shamanhood and its art* in Warsaw in 2011, preparing a post-conference volume⁸ which will cover a vast area of North Asia, China and Korea.

The art of Korea, the third important element of the history and culture of East Asia, appeared occasionally in publications and at the conferences of the Association and the Institute. In 2012, the Institute organized the conference *Korea: art and artistic relations with Europe / Poland* (Warsaw, 25–26 October), which filled the remaining gap. It was attended by researchers from South Korea and Europe. The conference was organized by Dr. Ewa Rynarzewska, Prof. Jerzy Malinowski and Dr. Joanna Wasilewska. We would like to take the occasion to extend our thanks to the main organizer of the conference, Dr. Rynarzewska, for her contribution to its preparation as well as to the State Ethnographic Museum in Warsaw for providing the venue premises. The conference on the art of Korea closed the first period of activity of the Polish researchers of Asian art, gathered today in the Polish Institute of World Art Studies. The conferences organized within eight years and the related publications contributed to the view on the art of the continent, seen – for the first time – from the perspective of Central Europe, which is alien to the post-colonial vision of the world, and close to the long tradition of co-existence of peoples, cultures and religions, not to mention also historical analogies with the peoples of the East.

Thanks to its geographical location, Korea was a natural intermediary between China and Japan, the area of the spread of the great philosophical and religious systems of the East – Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism. For this reason it was a constant subject of dispute between the neighboring powers (that were joined by Russia in the late nineteenth century). For a long time it would remain unknown to Europe. A country so heavily dependent on the Chinese empire that treated as a part of it, away from the main trade routes, as if trapped in a “blind

spot” of Asia, was deprived of the wealth that could be of interest for Europeans. Conscious seclusion, isolation from external influences, only consolidated the myth of the “Hermit Kingdom”, the embodiment of the idea of the mysterious Far East – the land of paradise islands, gardens and Amazons. Korea appeared on the map of the world in the sixteenth century – the name *Core* was recorded Fernão Vaz Dourado in 1571, the first European to get there was a Jesuit father Gregorio de Cespedes in 1593. While the country was initially considered an island, thanks to the stories brought by the missionaries its name (transcription of the name of the *Koryô* dynasty – *Kôrai* in Japanese, *Gaori* in Chinese) was quickly incorporated into European languages. It took much longer to recognize the cultural identity of Korea, the third, next to the Chinese empire and Japan, part of “East Asia” or the “Far East” (both concepts introduced in the late nineteenth century, with the new geo-political division of the continent). Systematic study of Korean art started only towards the end of the nineteenth century, marginalized in the critical reflection by the “overwhelming” artistic achievements of China and Japan. However, already the first researchers were aware of the fact that Korea, being dominated – also in the symbolic space – by the big neighbors, “betrayed so much of independent vigor and genius as to make her art, though only for a short illumination, a special and important centre of creation”, as concluded by Ernest. F. Fenollosa.⁹

The history of the Polish-Korean relations before 1948 has not been adequately researched so far. In the second half of the 19th century, when, following the partition of Poland, most of the territories became occupied by Russia, Polish exiles in Siberia, who fled to Manchuria and Sakhalin Island came into contact with the Koreans settled on the border between Korea, Russia, China. Probably the first Pole to travel across Korea was the deportee – traveler Jerzy Jankowski, however, he did not leave any account of the trip. There is an excellent report from the expedition to Korea in 1904 of the Polish writer Waclaw Sieroszewski, *Korea. Klucz do Dalekiego Wschodu* (*Korea. The key to the Far East*, Warsaw 1905), which presented the situation in the Far East on the eve of the Russo-Japanese War. It was

⁷ *South-East Asia: Studies in Art, Cultural Heritage and Relations with Europe*, Izabela Kopania (ed.), Warsaw–Torun 2013, ISBN 978–83–62737–27–7 (364 p.).

⁸ *Art and Shamanhood* Elvira Eevr Djaltchinova-Malets (ed.), Warsaw–Torun 2014, ISBN 978-83-62737-36-9 (326 p.).

⁹ Ernest F. Fenollosa, *Epoch of Chinese and Japanese Art. An Outline of East Asiatic Design*, London, New York 1912 (reprint Stone Bridge Press, Berkeley, California, 2012: 60).

published the following year in German in Berlin as *Korea, Land und Volk nach eigener Anschauung gemeinverständlich geschildert*. The perceived similarity between the fate of Poland and that of Korea was the reason why, during the Japanese occupation, at the first university, Bosung College (Korea University) in Seoul founded in 1905 in the then still independent Korea, Polish history was taught, being considered a model for the struggle for independence. Due to political reasons, Poland established diplomatic relations with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in 1948. After more than 40 years, in 1989, diplomatic relations were established with the Republic of Korea.

Official contacts and scientific exchange was established between universities, scientific institutions, museums, as well as art centers of Poland and South Korea.

As an art historians we would like to add that the lectures on Korean art are conducted, although in limited scope, at the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Torun. Polish research on the art of Korea has focused on the issues of technology, history and maintenance of *hanji* paper – Dr. Agnieszka Helman-Ważny, Dr. Józef Dąbrowski) – dendrochronological dating of the antiquities of Seoul and South Korea – Prof. Tomasz Ważny) – and, especially in the younger generation, on architecture, art of new media and contemporary film. At the conferences on Asian or contemporary art held so far in Poland, some papers dedicated to Korea were

presented, and published afterwards. Topics related to Korea were also discussed on 10th Conference of the International Society for Shamanistic Research *Shamanhood and its art*. In two years, we intend to organize a major conference on the East Asian theater, giving an ample space to Korean themes.

The volume *Korea. Art and Artsitic Relations with Europe* contains selected papers presented at the conference in Warsaw. The 18 studies are divided into four sections: *I. Heritage, Continuity, Change, II. Korea's Eternal Spirit, III. Korean Art in European Museums, IV. New Korean Art*.

The first part is dedicated to the cultural heritage of Korea in its historical development: from the origins, through the relationship with the European art, to the contemporary forms of its promotion. The second part consists of essays on traditions determining Korean identity, manifesting themselves in beliefs, tea ceremony, attire. The third part discusses the collections of Korean art in the European museums, analyzing at the same time the complex process of reception of Korean art in Europe. The final part proposes to take a look at selected aspects of modern Korean art and architecture, its specificity and contribution to the development of contemporary iconosphere. We hope that bringing diverse voices of the Korean and European researchers, both the representatives of academic circles and museums, will help to complement the picture of Korean art and artistic tradition, underlining its firm presence in the global culture.

Prof. Dr. Jerzy Malinowski

President

Polish Institute of World Art Studies;
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Member of the Board

Polish Institute of World Art Studies
Nicolaus Copernicus University, Torun

Heritage, continuity, change

KOREA

ART AND ARTISTIC RELATIONS

WITH EUROPE

Park Youngsuk
Academy of Korean Studies

Genesis of Korean art - Goguryeo art

The ancient Korean kingdom, Goguryeo (37 B.C.-668) was one of the major regional powers of the East Asia, sophisticated in politics and prospering in economy and culture. Among many relics and artifacts, about 100 mural paintings from the Goguryeo tombs still exist, representing the kingdom cultural aspects and the sentiments of the people, their appreciation of beauty, artistic refinement and dynamics. They also reflect the daily life customs, technical skills, religion and cosmology of this ancient Korean Kingdom.¹ Their well-constructed and large tombs were decorated with mural paintings and furnished with burial items so that the eternal life thereafter, in the existence of the soul, would be vibrant and luxurious. Their hope or belief is not totally in vain, as now, some 1500 years later, it becomes possible to assess the influences of the Goguryeo art on all ages of the Korean and furthermore the East Asian art and culture. Goguryeo was a vibrant cosmopolitan state that adopted external cultures while developing its own traditions and artistry.² A large part of their murals contain features unique to Goguryeo, including numerous abstract and figurative patterns. These patterns suggest an enormous metaphysical world to be de-

ciphered and perhaps providing a soul searching journey for modern humanity to understand this civilization.

The basis of this study is *The Birth of Korean Art* (2007) written by Kang Woo-bang.³ It focuses on the mysterious patterns aiming to search for their “sacred energy” that is expressed in the Goguryeo murals. *Ki* (*Chi* in Chinese), which is interpreted as “spirit, energy, life, life force, or Tao,”⁴ is a concept of long tradition for Koreans far beyond the Goguryeo period. *Ki* has been practiced through martial arts and meditations. The energy profusely expressed in the Goguryeo paintings is the result of their representative concept of *ki*. Kang describes this as *yeong-ki* (sacred energy), which he attentively searches from the patterns of the Goguryeo mural paintings. Although some of the patterns originated from China or farther back to the previous Korean states, such as Gojoseon (2333–108 B.C.E.),⁵ Goguryeo also created unique patterns of

¹ Shin (2009: 42).

² Choi (2000: 21–25).

³ Kang Woobang is a Korean art historian who initiated the *yeong-ki* metamorphosis theory in the history of art. Kang is a professor at the Ewha Women's University and at the *Ilhyang* Korean Art History Research Center in Seoul founded by him in 2005.

⁴ Kang (2008: 576).

⁵ According to *Samguk yusa* (Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms) Gojoseon is the first Korean state established

its own to express their concept of *yeong-ki*. Believing that all things are born from “sacred energy”, they adopted Buddhism and Taoism, which went through the metamorphosis of their archetype forms that continued to evolve throughout all generations of Korean art. This all-encompassing tradition of the Goguryeo art has possessed unique qualities through Korea religious spiritual culture. For instance, we find the uniqueness in today Korean Buddhism that is known as *hoetong* Buddhism.⁶ The Goguryeo archetype patterns are not faded away but vibrantly are representing in today tradition of Korean art. This study approaches the Goguryeo art in search for the soul but also for the genesis of the Korean art.

Goguryeo tomb murals in three periods

Among 13,000 Goguryeo tombs found in regions of China and North Korea, the currently known Goguryeo mural paintings are found in about 90 tombs (about 30 in Jian China, and 60 in Pyeongyang and Anak, North Korea).⁷ Today’s Jian China was the location of Goguryeo’s second capital, Kungnae-söng, and Pyeongyang North Korea was the last capital of Goguryeo since 427. Goguryeo was founded by Jumong (58–19 B.C.E.) and its first capital was located in the *Onyeo san-seong* (Wunu Mountain City), today Liaoning, China. All the above mentioned capital regions of Goguryeo were inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2004. The 63 tombs in Pyeongyang and its vicinity were titled as “The Complex of the Koguryo Tombs” and the 43 tombs in Liaoning and Jian in China, as “Capital Cities, Imperial Tombs and Nobles, Tombs of Koguryö” respectively.⁸

The murals were created over 300 years beginning in the 4th century when Goguryeo advanced into Liaoning Province and emerged as a regional power in North East Asia. Goguryeo murals are the largest group of ancient murals in East Asia. They

show the development of a distinctly indigenous tradition in pictorial expression based on significant changes in form occurring every 100 years.

Those from the early period (Mid 4th – Mid 5th century) are found in *Anak* Tomb No. 3 built in 357 and in *Deokheung-ri* Tomb built in 408, both located near Pyeongyang. They are multi or double chamber Tombs. The subject matter of these tomb murals includes portraits of the tomb occupant, his wife, large processions and court events, and scenes of everyday life related to the kitchen, meat storehouse and carriage shed. The tomb occupant and people of high social status were painted larger than the attendants to indicate the rankings through different size. A variety of abstract patterns are arranged around the portraits indicating “sacred energy” generated from important people. Besides the traditional ways, new trends are added to *Deokheung-ri* Tomb murals. They display a heavenly world on the ceiling of the antechamber, fully embellished with the sun, moon and stars, fairies and floating immortals, and strange auspicious figures from unknown worlds. The sentimental departing scene of the ox-herder and the weaving lady, *Gyeonu and Jingnyeo*, as seen here are rarely seen in other murals.⁹ There are abstract patterns all over the paintings to express the existence of sacred energy. They expressed a *yeong-ki* that not only fills the air but radiates from all the created beings.

The middle-period (Mid 5th – Mid 6th Century) murals, in *Muyong-chong*, Tomb of Dancers, or *Susan-ri* Tombs, for example, reflect the changes and prosperity of the kingdom upon the relocation of the capital to Pyeongyang in 427. A large number of mural tombs were built in the Pyeongyang area during this period. It appears that the elite class enjoyed considerable leisure and comfort during this golden age. Everyday life scenes include the tomb occupants as ordinary citizens in Goguryeo-style clothes, singing, dancing, greeting guests, going on family outings, playing games, and including hunting and wrestling scenes. Among those there were also people of foreign origin, such as nomadic performers from Central Asia. From these paintings including the vivid tiger hunting scene, a viewer could sense Goguryeo characteristic openness, humor and

by Dangun in 2333 B.C.E. It has developed into a powerful kingdom by around fourth century B.C.E. in the basins of the Liao and Taedong Rivers, ruling over northern Korean Peninsula and southern Manchuria. Gojoseon fell in 108 B.C.E. and has been recognized as the incubator for Goguryeo.

⁶ Hoetong means all-encompassing. Beopgwang (2009: 39–42).

⁷ Yu (2010 : 110).

⁸ Choi (2004: 9–10).

⁹ *Gyeonu and Jingnyeo* is a folk tale on constellations. Altair and Vega are depicted as unfortunate lovers who come closer once a year with the Milky Way between them then separated for the whole year again. Yu (2010: 103–140).

artistic energy.¹⁰ Paintings of the Four Guardian Deities, or *Sasindo*, the four sacred animals, placed at four cardinal directions, began to appear during this period. Just as the subject matter becomes more diverse, the artistic quality of the painting also improves. Examples of refined elegance and innocent appearance in fluid lines through their deft expression of sensibility suggest a new stage the Goguryeo art was reached.¹¹ Taoist-related subject matter with Buddhist elements featured on the ceilings with a lotus flower in the apex. The lotus appears as another expression of “sacred energy”, often accompanied by other *ki* patterns, such as the shape of shimmering spring air or clouds. These patterns as well as the sacred energy are related to water. This is based on the idea that water is the source of life. Lotus thus symbolizes water and the cloud shapes of “sacred energy” patterns are found on both sides of the centrally located lotus blossom. The Buddhist iconography from India, all things are born from the lotus, was met and adopted into the sacred energy cosmology of China. The result is the lotus metamorphosis. This is an extremely important idea in the history of the Asian art.¹²

In the late Period (Mid 6th – Mid 7th century), the custom of lavish burials declined and tombs were reduced to the single-chamber type. It means that the previous dualistic composition for the earthly and heavenly worlds painted on the walls and ceilings respectively became one whole world. The murals no longer include a portrait of the tomb occupant or scenes from his daily life, but instead only the Four Guardian Deities, or *Sasindo*, occupy the walls. The ceilings in this period feature an array of immortals and mythological Daoist figures, showing a profound shift in motifs from Buddhist to Daoist and reveal changes in the religion of the ruling class.¹³ The mythological gods and goddesses such as the god of agriculture, goddess of wheel making or decorative patterns in the shape of tree leaves, are found among these paintings. The murals, painted directly on the rock, show a colorful and sophisticated energy of Goguryeo. The coloring technique has remarkably maintained its color for 1400 years. The Four Guardian Deities have come down from the ceiling and now occupy the



Ill. 1. Blue dragon in the Jinpari Tomb, Kang (2007: 154)

four walls which are decorated with the appropriate deities: blue dragon on the east wall, white tiger on the west wall, red phoenix on the south wall, and black tortoise on the north wall. The prevalence of the four-deity murals in this period reflects the cultural sentiments and social environment in the late Goguryeo. The four deities, as symbols of protection from evil spirits, became objects of everyday veneration and such a spirited and dynamic form of expression.

The highest concentrations of “sacred energy” patterns were found in the *Sasindo* paintings. For example, the *Blue Dragon Painting* in Jinpari Tomb No.1 in Pyeongyang expresses a profuse amount of cosmic energy that sweeps the space like fierce wind. Some of the dynamic sacred energy patterns look like parts of a dragon body. This painting depicts “the drama of the birth of a dragon”.¹⁴ The essence of this drama is that the accumulation of such energy is itself a dragon. It is such energy that fills the universe, and it is being actualized as a dragon. A lotus is born from the dragon’s mouth, and from there the immortals paradise is about to open up. The immortals and humans both are coexist there. The phoenix, another form of the accumulation of sacred energy, is about to fly from the top portion of the dragon generating new sprouting energy for new cosmos.¹⁵ (ill. 1) The *Baekje Gilt-Bronze Incense Burner* (6th century) is a 3-Dimensional revival of this drama of the universe.¹⁶ The emergence of *Sasindo* as a dominant theme of the murals is unique to Goguryeo, and they were inherited all the way to the 18th century folk paintings of the Chosŏn Dynasty (1392–1910).

¹⁴ Kang (2007: 154–155).

¹⁵ Kang (2007: 147–155).

¹⁶ The *Baekje Gilt-Bronze Incense Burner*, from the Baekje Kingdom (18 B.C.E.-660 C.E.), one of the Three Kingdoms of Korea, incorporates Buddhist and Taoist themes and is composed of motifs of lotus, phoenix, and dragon. It is the National Treasure of Korea, no. 287.

¹⁰ Im (1998: 21–32).

¹¹ Hong (2011: 28–29).

¹² Kang (2007: 576–585).

¹³ Hong (2011: 29).

Elements of Goguryeo art found in later generations of art

These abstract patterns found from the Goguryeo murals manifest the full variety of *yeong-ki* patterns. All objects radiate the energy that is arranged around the portraits of people, often expressed on the clothing, drawn between or around people performing wrestling or tiger hunting. Sometimes the animal itself is framed in the sea of sacred energy. A variety of these patterns are the countless iconographies that had remained inscrutable by Asian culture until recently when the essentials were understood to exist in all generations of formative art of Korea. For example, a symmetrical *yeong-ki* pattern with a lotus growing from the fork in the middle shows how *ki* from China and lotus from India are integrated. Abstract expressions are replaced with lotus flower patterns, forming a unique design combining elements of the *yeong-ki* and lotus representation. When this lotus, symbolizing water, the origin of all things, meets the dragon, another symbol of water, the origin of all things in China and Korea, it goes through the transformation. This is the lotus metamorphosis that occurs based on the theory that all things are born from the lotus, while the lotus is born from the sacred energy of the universe. This is manifested on the Goguryeo murals by showing that *yeong-ki* is the source of all life. This theory makes it possible to better explain Asian culture in the whole.¹⁷

While the Goguryeo murals are unique in the subject matter featured in the genre paintings apart from their Chinese counterparts, Goguryeo enterprising and liberal stance is noticed in artifacts excavated from the tombs of Baekje, Silla, and Gaya. This indicates that a cultural homogeneity existed during the four kingdoms period (1st B.C.-7th century).¹⁸ Further the rice-cake steamers, heating system, dancing style and wrestling depicted in the murals are still a part of Korean folk culture today.¹⁹ The Goguryeo mural techniques are also consistent with traditional Korean painting ideas which emphasize the line drawing rather than the color application. The way that Goguryeo murals were

painted directly onto a natural stone surface and the line drawings of fresco works influenced East Asian painting techniques. East Asian painting relies on the conceptual line of a watercolor technique that intuitively portrays objects.²⁰

The Buddhist paintings of the Goryeo Dynasty (918–1392) show another important iconography of the East Asian art, lotus is born from sacred energy, while Buddha is born from lotus. The Goryeo paintings are unparalleled in their fineness and complexity that expresses the harmony and order in the universe that looks Lao-Tzu creative chaos. The origin of this art style, so deftly created with *yeong-ki* patterns, is not found elsewhere in China or Japan, but is traced back to the Goguryeo murals, such as *Jinpari* Tomb No.1. The Goguryeo art is proved again through various forms of Goryeo Dynasty art, including the famed Goryeo Celadon, as the matrix of Korean culture.²¹

Furthermore, Goguryeo influence on Japanese art could be said to be profound, as Japan also shares the essentials from Goguryeo art tradition in its various forms and styles. The *Takamatsu* tomb is the first found example of the Goguryeo style tomb in Japan. The *Kitora* tomb is located 1 km from the *Takamatsu* tomb and also has the Goguryeo style murals. It was first found through the use of an endoscopy camera in 1983. The Goguryeo style astronomical chart was discovered in 1998, and the four guardian deities, in 2001. These tombs were constructed in the late 7th to the early 8th century. Although the tomb has yet to be excavated, it proves the Goguryeo art had been transmitted far and wide.²²

Conclusion

This paper examined the mural paintings of Goguryeo tombs, with various *yeong-ki* patterns and features represented the central theme of that art. (ill. 2) The mural paintings of Goguryeo have evolved in three periods during the three hundred years of practice between the mid-fourth century and the mid-seventh centuries. In the first period they portrayed the state events with prominent

¹⁷ Kang (2007: 576–585).

¹⁸ *Gaya* was a relatively short-lived federation state that was annexed to *Silla*. Therefore the period is more often called as the Three Kingdom Period.

¹⁹ Lee (2004b: 12–15).

²⁰ Lee (2004a: 17–19).

²¹ *Goryeo* Dynasty (918–1392) was established by the people who inherited the Goguryeo tradition and had maintained *Balhae* Kingdom (698–926) after the fall of Goguryeo in 668.

²² *Yu* (2010: 103–140).



Ill. 2. Yeong-ki patterns, Kang (2007: 38)

persons' portraits and the Buddhist motif of lotus. In the second period they expressed a sophisticated and unique expressions depicting the lifestyle of Goguryeo people during its golden age centered around Pyongyang and their universe full of *yeong-ki*. In the third period their art assumed Taoist sublimity in depicting the four divine animals of the four cardinal directions (*sasindo*) for their spiritual protection during the turmoil of the end of the dynasty. Those artworks are the product of unique expression and creativity of Goguryeo and its advanced technology, which have had a continuous influence till present time on Korean and East Asian culture. The sacred energy of universe, *yeong-ki*, is the inspiration for this birth of art, and its accumulations become the phoenix and dragon, the symbol of *yin* and *yang* energy. The Goguryeo mural paintings display the metamorphosis theory that lotus is born from the sacred energy and the Buddha is born from the lotus. This theory signifies the better understanding of the Asian art and culture.

The Goguryeo archetype forms have been transmitted through 1500 years to the present time. They have been continuously applied in the art history of Korea not only for building temples and palaces but also in a myriad of ways to decorate handicraft items. It tells us that, in spite of modern civilization and great changes, humans still search for archaic divinity in themselves. This important discovery is yet just beginning to immerge. It is assumed that there are still unknowns waiting to be brought to light so that the archetype of Goguryeo position in East Asia will be known not only up to the seventh century but far beyond into the pre-

sent. What we learn from the Goguryeo art is that the universe is full of divine energy, trees and rocks included, from which the sublime images reveal their divinity, as seen in many stone Buddha images in Korean mountains. The artists who recognized it are divine. With this in mind the divine nature within us is hoped to be discovered while recognizing the genesis of the Korean art.

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KOREA

ART AND ARTISTIC RELATIONS

WITH EUROPE

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Yun Duseo, Korean scholar-painter, precursor in painting of the *Sirhak* movement

Introduction

Yun Duseo (1668–1715), known by the pen name of Gongjae, the Confucian scholar-painter featured here, left us over two hundred paintings and calligraphies, several tens of poems and writings, and made copies of two Chinese books, an astrological treaty *Gwan-gyujibyoo* (管窺輯要, *Collection of essential treaties* [to] *See the Cosmos through Narrow Tube*) and a book of mathematics *Yanghuisanbeop* (梁輝算法, *Arithmologies* [collected] by *Yang Hui*).² He also made a musical instrument and two geographic maps, *Donggukyeoji-jido* (東國輿地地圖, *Map of Dongguk*)³ and *Ilbonyeo-do* (日本輿圖, *Map of Ilbon*, the name how the Chinese referred to Japan from 671 on).⁴

Several paintings of the works mentioned above were made during the beginning of the late Joseon period (ca. 1700 – ca. 1850)⁵, a period that falls within a time of artistic and scientific contacts between Chinese and European civilizations and they partake fully in this period of multiple interpenetration.

Unlike neighboring countries that made contact with European civilization through European visitors – Japan during the Muromachi period (1338–1573)⁶ and China under the Ming (1368–1644)⁷ – Joseon Korea came into contact with European civilization much later, at the time of the Azuchi-Momoyama (1573–1603) in Japan and the Qing dynasty (1644–1912) in China, in an indirect but nonetheless significant manner, for example with the introduction of firearms during the Japanese invasion, *Imjinweran* (1592–1598).⁸

¹ Cha (2003: 151–152). The author, a Korean sociologist, specifies that Yang Hui, man of Southern Song (1127–1279) is not the author but the compiler of four *arithmologies* collected in this book.

² Cha (2010: 152).

³ See Jeong (2011). The geographical exploration of the coast and its islets on the South-East part of the Korean peninsula is part of the tradition of the Yun family of Haenam. This map thus reflects the participation of Yun Duseo on his family tradition, “exploring” the same area on his map.

⁴ Most of these works are held by the National Museum of Korea (NMK), the Gwangju National Museum (GNM) and the private museum of the Yun family of Haenam, Gosan Yun Seondo Artifact Museum (GYSDAM), located in the historical residence in the canton of Yeondong (district of Haenam).

⁵ See Ahn (1990). The history of Joseon art (1392–1897) is divided by the author into three periods.

⁶ See Levenson (2007). The first Portuguese merchants arrived in the Japanese archipelago in 1543, followed by Jesuit missionary Francis Xavier (1506–1552) in 1549.

⁷ See Lacouture (1991). Matteo Ricci reached the port nowadays called Macao as early as 1582 and gradually introduced the influence of the Jesuits and of Western art in Eastern Asia.

⁸ See Fabre (2000). Except perhaps for some Portuguese military technicians who came with the Ming army during the

Contact with the West took place mainly through Korean travellers to China, where Korean diplomatic scholars encountered Western missionaries. Let us recall in particular that the scholar-diplomat Jeong Duweon (1581-?) met the Portuguese missionary Jerónimo Rodriguez in Beijing in 1630, or that the son of King Injo, the Crown Prince “with a tragic destiny”, Sohyeon (1612–1645), became closely connected in Beijing with the Jesuit missionary and German astronomer, Johann Adam Schall von Bell, who was a hostage of the Manchu (1636–1644) following their invasion of Joseon, *Byeongjaboran*.⁹ Later, the Joseon court, although it had received Dutch visitors in 1653¹⁰, adopted a policy of total closure of the country to foreigners, which in the West earned it the nickname of the “Hermit Kingdom”. This attitude prevented early scientific and artistic exchanges with the great kingdoms of Europe, for instance with Louis XIV’s France during the reign of Kangxi (1661–1722).¹¹ Only Korean embassies in China were tolerated at the time.

The closing of Korea reflected both the neo-Confucian concepts and the trauma of foreign invasions, Japanese as well as Manchu. It is also part of a regional approach of withdrawal, for example Edo’s Japan (1603–1868), which adopted a strict policy against Westerners (ban on foreign travel for the Japanese in 1635, expulsion of the Portuguese in 1639), or towards Christianity (the Prohibition of 1613), leading up to the total closure of the country in 1639 for reasons of domestic policy and state control.¹² The closing of Korea was also determined by the desire to limit contacts with the Qing (1644–1911), a dynasty considered barbaric because non-Chinese and which definitively overthrew the Ming in 1644.

The scholars or literati, main actors of Korean society¹³, still continued to visit China on diplomatic missions, especially for the presentation of tributes, sending messages of congratulations,

Japanese invasion.

⁹ See Gang (1999).

¹⁰ See Gang (1999). These merchant sailors who boarded ship in China for Japan and who were shipwrecked the island of Jeju, were taken to the royal court.

¹¹ Amongst the many works devoted to the subject, we will only mention Rey (2006).

¹² Frédéric (1996: 153).

¹³ Balazs (1968: 15–24). We will apply to the Confucian scholars of Joseon the conclusions of Étienne Balazs regarding the position of scholars in Confucian Chinese society.

condolences, etc. These trips were an opportunity for these scholars to return not only with Chinese classic works, but also new comments, compilations or doctrinal, scientific or artistic works. Amongst these, European books translated into Chinese began to circulate in the Korean scholarly society.

Korean scholars collected these publications and multiplied discussions with colleagues returning from China. The scholars, we recall, are divided into two main groups, “scholars with no official function” and “scholars-officials”.¹⁴ Scholars with no official function, excluded from the Royal Court and the administration, had no direct political power. Free from the obligations of public service, they were instead devoted to improve the daily life of the people of Joseon and were concerned about the future of the country.¹⁵ The development of this new knowledge gave rise to a dynamic emulation and a profusion of works related to the most diverse areas from national defense to agriculture and art.

Yun Duseo, though he never visited China, collected European knowledge and completed his training in Chinese culture within this kind of intellectual group, leading to the *Sirhak* movement or the movement of *Practical Studies*, which was opposed to that of official scholars, more strictly speculative in their approach.

Yun Duseo and the circulation of European knowledge

Yun Duseo was born into a literati family, the Yun of Haenam, one of the local scholarly families or *jaejisajok*, which enjoyed preponderant intellectual and artistic influence in the entire country,¹⁶ thanks in particular to his great-grandfather, Yun Seondo

¹⁴ The situation in China as analysed by Étienne Balazs finds a perfect echo here. As in China, the Joseon society even before the period of interest to us is divided into factions (*pa*): *Hungupa* (faction of deserving subjects) for the *scholar-officials* and *Sarimpa* (faction of the scholars) for *scholars with no function*.

¹⁵ Ryu Hyeongweon (1622–1673) is the perfect example. His famous collection of writings entitled *Bangyesurok* (潘溪隨錄, *Written works of Bangye*, pen name of Ryu Hyeongweon) laid the foundations of the *Sirhak* movement or the movement of *Practical Studies*, on which Yi Ik (1681–1763) his renowned successor, built his proper designs.

¹⁶ Those local scholarly families, who had a real economic and cultural influence on the region where they were located outside the governmental capital, are one of the structural elements of Joseon society.