
The first history of Korean art was published several decades ago by Andreas Eckardt\(^1\) (Leipzig/London, 1929). Although Eckardt knew some Korean at that time, his source of information was chiefly secondary, and consequently the book suffered from factual errors and misinterpretation. Another accurate and critical history of the subject has, therefore, been long awaited. In 1962, Charles E. Tuttle Company brought out Evelyn McCune's *The Arts of Korea*, which surveys in chronological order the major art medium of each era in Korean history; the tomb murals of Koguryŏ, the jewelry of Silla, the sculpture of the United Silla, the celadon of Koryŏ, and the painting of Yi. Unfortunately, however, Mrs McCune’s book fails to fulfil our expectations for several reasons.

First, the book repeats the very mistakes that had plagued its predecessor's work. In the preface, the author states that her book is „the first attempt to present the subject in a nonscholarly way for the use of the ordinary people“. But a book for „the use of the ordinary people“ can be accurate without being pedantic. Her sources on Korean history are, for example, still Hulbert and Gale on whose works no conscientious scholar should rely today. The book reproduces uncritically the errors committed by both Korean and Japanese as well as Western publications. But these mistakes could not possibly have occured had the author known some Korean and consulted such a handy reference book as the *Han’guksa yŏng’yo* („Chronology of Korean History“, 1959). Indiscriminate copying of the existing studies in Western languages result in embarrassing confusion. On page 64, we are referred to „the king of the Fuyu of north Manchuria“. Fuyu is an ancient Korean state Puyŏ\(^2\), and there is no other reason to pronounce it in Chinese but that Ikeuchi Hiroshi and Shiratori Kurakichi did so in their works.\(^2\) On page 269, the Korean term „sŏnin“\(^4\) („sŏn‘ is „hsien‘ in Chinese) is pronounced as „sennin“. When she ventures into the field of Korean literature or philosophy, the matter becomes worse. Any art historian who cannot distinguish between „cha“\(^5\) („polite name“) and „ho“\(^6\) („pen name“) will have difficulty with his subject (p.247).

Second, the more serious shortcoming of the book lies in its failure to consult some of the important recent studies on Korean arts. In the discussion of such remains as dolmens and cists dating from the neolithic or chalcolithic periods in Korea, for example, the book nowhere mentions or incorporates the material contained in Mikami Tsugio’s *Mansen genshi funbo no kenkyû* (Tokyo, 1961). In Chapter 10 which deals with Koryŏ celadon, neither the book by Ko Yu-sŏp nor articles by G.St-G. M. Gompertz are consulted.\(^3\)

Third, the author's consideration of a particular art object under discussion is not critical but descriptive and impressionistic. The following is typical of her description of a work of art, this time a painting, entitled „Sage in Meditation“ by Kang Hŭi-an:

\(^1\) Eckardt's *Geschichte der koreanischen Kunst* or *A History of Korean Art* approaches the subject topically: architecture, sculpture and pagoda-art, Buddhist sculpture, painting, pottery, and handicrafts other than pottery.

\(^2\) IKEUCHI in „A Study of the Fuyu (sic!)“, *MTB*, 6 (1932), 23–60 and SHIRATORI in „The Legend of the King Tung-ming (sic!)“, the Founder of the Fu-yu-kuo (sic!)“, in *MTB*, 10 (1938), 1–39.

\(^3\) For the articles on Koryŏ celadon by Gompertz, see *Far Eastern Ceramic Bulletin*, XI/1 (1959), 9.
The influence of Son (Zen) Buddhist ideas is seen in his painting of a sage in meditation on a rock. The hanging foliage overhead and the water beneath give the viewer the illusion that the world is not real and that only the thoughts of the sage, suspended as it were in space, are real – a central concept of Buddhist doctrine. (p. 235)

The most important maehyōng in Korea, the Ch’ŏnhakpyŏng[(7) („Thousand Crane Vase”), is rightly termed „the most spectacular maehyōng“, but only seven lines are given to its consideration (p. 180). Here again, her method is only descriptive, and the reader is informed neither of the significance of the crane motif in Koryŏ celadon nor that of the crane symbolism in Korean arts in general.

In order to put an end, once and for all, to a further transmission of factual errors concerning Korean history and other related fields, some of the more serious must be discussed here.


P. 35 „The founder of the ruling house of Silla had the family name of Mo (read Pak in Korean).“ We would be grateful to the author for her references.

P. 63 „Stimulated by establishment, during the first century B.C. of the Chinese colony in the northeastern part of the peninsula, Korean tribes, not quite a hundred in number, … consolidated into three confederations … “ (Italics mine)

This will also require a lengthy comment. What are the names of those tribes?

P. 66 „Paekche capitals, … were moved twice, farther south each time; from Namhansong on the Han River to Kongju on the Kumgang in 478 and to Puyo, near Kongju, in 538."

Should read: from Namhansŏng … to Ungjin[(8], modern Kongju, on the Kŭm River in 475 and to Sabi[(9], modern Puyŏ, in 538.⁴

P. 72 „414, the erection on the Yalu of a monument whose 1,800 characters recite Koguryŏ’s history to that date, as well as achievements, wars, and glory of King Kwanggae Toji, … “ Later, on the same page, this stone monument is referred to as „the monolith of King Kwanggae“.

This is of course the famous stone monument erected in 414 to commemorate the distinguished service rendered to the state by King Kwanggaeto (391 –412). The inscription to the monument is a significant work of literature and consists of 1759 characters. See Boleslaw Szczesniak, „The Kottsio (sic!) Monument“, Monumenta Nipponica, VII (January 1951), 242–268.

P. 72 „645, T’ang T’ai-tsung’s invasions”; not only 645, but 647–648 as well.⁵

P. 78 „Kuk-kang-sang (place name), Kwanggae Tojiko Taewang … “ This is nonsensical. The complete temple title of King Kwanggaeto is „Kukkang-sang Kwanggaeto Kyŏngp’yŏngan Hot’aewang[(10]“, and his title during his reign was Yŏngnak t’aewang[(11]. Sometimes Hot’aewang appears as Ho’aesōngwang[(12]6.

P. 80 „In 424, Buddhism was informally … introduced by … Mukhoja.“

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Mukhoja came to Ilsŏn kun (modern Sŏnsan) of Silla some time in 417–458, during the reign of King Nulchi, 19th king of Silla.7

P. 80 „It (Buddhism) was introduced again a hundred years later (to Silla) in 524, …“ The propagation of Buddhism was allowed in 527.8

P. 80 „In 603, according to the record, Confucianism was introduced, …“ What record is the author referring to? Nothing of this kind appears under the 4th year of King Chíjang (503) in SGSG 4, 61–62, 77a.

P. 81 „… in a semichivalric code called hwarangdo, in which swordsmanship was stressed.“ Nothing can be further from the truth. The author is referred to Peter H. Lee, Studies in the Saenaenornae: Old Korean Poetry, Serie Orientale Roma XXII (Rome, 1959), 139–140.

P. 89 „The Hwangnyong Temple was destroyed in 1229 by the Mongols …“ Under King Kojong 16, which corresponds to 1229, we read no such event. The burning of the Temple was, however, entered in the year 1238, 25th year of King Kojong.9

P. 91 „The monks also undertook to organize festivals on Buddhist holidays, which were gay with banners, flags, colorful lanterns, mystery plays, …“ We like to know what sorts of mystery plays they were.

P. 91 „Haejo, a Korean monk, traveled to India in the seventh century.“ This refers to the celebrated Silla priest, Hyedi’u,[13] who arrived in India by sea and made a pilgrimage to five countries. A book of his travel had long been known to us only by title until a volume containing the first two chapters of the book was discovered in a stone cave at Tunhuang in Kansu (1908). Walter Fuchs translated it in „Huei Ch’aos (Hyech’o) Pilgerreise durch Nordwest-Indien und Zentralasien um 726 A. D.“, Sitzungsberichte der Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philologische-Historische Klasse (Miinchen/ Berlin, 1938), 426–469. See also Peter H. Lee, op. cit., 136–137.

P. 92 „Certain favored foundations such as the Hwaom even functioned as a sort of department of state …“ This passage is beyond comprehension, and we will be grateful to the author for her elaboration on it.

P. 159 „Koryŏ, beginning in 918 and ending in 1391, …“ No, Koryŏ ended officially when General Yi Sŏng-gye was enthroned on August 5, 1392 at the Such’ang Palace in Kaesŏng.10

P. 159 „There were five incursions into the peninsula during the Wang dynasty.“ Why five? There were at least three Khitan invasions (993, 1010–1011, and 1018–1019), several Jurchen raids, and three Mongol invasions (1231–1232, 1232–1233, and 1235).

P. 159 et passim „…, the Khitans rode down into Korea and, in 1014, burned its capital at Songdo.“

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8 According to SGYS 3, 125, it was in 527 (Pŏphŭng 14) while SGSG 4, 63–64, 78a–b gives 528 (Pŏphŭng 15).
10 T’aejo sillok (Chosŏn wangjo sillok ed., 1955) 1, 37a–38b; Ch’urwŏn segye (Han’guk sa yŏnp’yo ed., 1959), 4b.
No, it was in 1011 (Hyŏnjong 2). In 1014, the palace were rebuilt according to KRS 4, 15a.

P. 160 "... the repeated attacks of the Mongols from 1200 to 1250 ..."

The first Mongol invasion came in 1231–1232.12

P. 160 "In 1234, the major book of the Son sect, the Sangjong Yemun, was printed in movable type."

The Sangjŏng (kogum) yemun[14], compiled by Ch'oe Yun-ui and others, deals with ceremonies and etiquettes as its title states. See Tongguk Yisang-guk hujip[15] (1958) 11, 7a–b.

P. 161 "... after 1097, when it (Sŏn) was introduced into Korea by Prince Cho Taejong, ..."

The teaching of the T'ien-t'ai school was introduced to Korea, in 1085, by the National Preceptor Taegak[16]. See KRS 90, 13b–15a, esp. 14b. For further information see Naitô Shunpo, „Koryŏ no Taegak kuksa ni kansuru kenkyū“, Chosŏn-shi kenkyû (Kyoto, 1961), 1–80, esp. 49–63.

P. 165 „Another departure was the unique Korean ‘radiant heating’ system of the ondol floor, which became widely used in this capital (Songdo) ...“

What are the written evidences which can support this generalization that the ondol system came into being only in the Koryŏ period?

P. 229 „Because he [Yi Sŏng-gye] was supported by his son [Yi Pang-wŏn, later T'ae-jong], who had made a good impression while acting as diplomatic agent at the Chinese court, General Yi's act of banishing the last Koryo king did not arouse the opposition in the Chinese capital that it might otherwise have done. “ There is a good deal of thin ice here.

P. 236 „Chŏng In-ji, ... who was also one of the inventors of the Korean alphabet. “

Chŏng In-ji participated in the preparation of the Haerye section of the Hunmin chŏngŭm, which consists of explanatory notes and examples of usage. Chŏng also signed the Postscript, but nowhere is it stated that he was one of the inventors of the Korean alphabet.13


P. 240 "... the first of which [sŏwŏn] was built in Kyŏngsang Province in 1541, ..."

The first private academy (sŏwŏn) was built by Chu Se-bung[19] in 1543 (Chung-jong 38). See CMP 209, 21b.

P. 240 Division of the Easterners and Westerners began in 1575, not 1568. Why is the year 1649 (Injo 27) also introduced?

P. 242 "... the Yolyo chon (Book of Virtuous Widows). “ This is Lien-nü chuan by Liu Hsiang (d. A.D. 6), the title of which was translated by Hightower as „Stories of Famous Women“.14

11 KRS 4, 6b and 15a.
12 KRS 23, 1aff.
13 See Hunmin chŏngŭm (Chŏn Hyŏng-p'ŭl text, discovered in 1940), 5aff, esp. 30b–33b (Postscript); Yi Sung-nyŏng, „Sejong ŭi ŏnŏ chŏngch'ae k e kwanhan yŏn'gu – t'ŏkhi unsŏ p'yŏnch'am kwa Hunmin chŏngŭm kwaui kwan'gae rŭl chungsim'ŭre hayŏ“, Journal of Asiatic Studies, 1/2 (Seoul, 1958), 29–80, esp. 67.
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P. 251 „A rebellion by Yi Kwal (1623) …“ 1624 (Injo 2), not 1623.
...: the country's defeat at the hands of the Manchu (1636) ... It was on 24 February 1637 that King Injo surrendered to Ch'ing T'ai-tsung. See Injo sillok 33, 41aff.

P. 266 „Yonnyo Sil Pyol Chip (Supplementary of the Works of the Yonnyo Collection)“ Yŏllyŏsil[20] was the pen name of Yi Kŭng-ik15, author of the Yŏllyŏsil kisul.

P. 277 „... pyongjo ch'amp'an (staff member, military board, second rank, junior grade) ...“ Second Minister of the Board of War, junior second rank.

P. 363 „Confucian Temple; Sunggyeong-gok“ Does the author want to say „Sŏng-gyun kwan“ (National Academy) [21]16?

P. 415 These masks are used in the Korean mask play, the sandae.

P. 430 „204: control of Lo-lang by Kung-sun family; ...“ It should be 206.
„663: Paekche defeated by Silla“ It should be 660.17.

P. 433 Chapter 3, note 6, should refer to page 16, not 15, of Umehara's work.

P. 444 On page 51 of the Han'guksa yŏng'yo there is no information on Paekche-Chinese relationship.

P. 436 Chapter 8, note 1: Koryŏ sa is said to consist of 139 vols. On page 442, however, the same book consists of 100 vols. The Koryŏ sa consists of 139 chapters.

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<td>Yunsan</td>
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15 For Yi Kŭng-ik (1736–1806) see Chosŏn jimmei jisho (1920), 538f.; Kosen sappu, 1577a–9c; Kim Yong-yun, Han’guk sŏhwa inmyŏng sasŏ (Seoul, 1959), 355a–b.


There are also many wrong characters on pp. 444, 447, 448, 449, 450 and 451. It is discouraging that a book of this kind was allowed to see the day. What is startling is that none of her mentors mentioned on pages 16 and 17 was in position to correct these mistakes. The book is essentially a compilation, based on secondhand material, and I cannot recommend it to the general reader, much less to the student.

University of Hawaii
Peter Lee
| [1]  |  | 王建
| [2]  |  | 李齊民
| [3]  |  | 夫餘
| [4]  |  | 仙人
| [5]  |  | 字
| [6]  |  | 璽
| [7]  |  | 千鶴
| [8]  |  | 頹
| [9]  |  | 洗
| [10] |  | 國岡上廣開土境平安好太王
| [12] |  | 好太聖王
| [13] |  | 慧超
| [14] |  | 講定古今禮文
| [15] |  | 東國李相國後集
| [16] |  | 大覺國師
| [17] |  | 退溪先生續集
| [18] |  | 退溪全書
| [19] |  | 周世鵬
| [20] |  | 燃藜堂
| [21] |  | 成均館
| [22] |  | 火田民
| [23] |  | 泰薇

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