Editorial Note

Roderick Whitfield
Percival David Professor, Emeritus
SOAS, University of London

This fifth annual volume of the Journal of Korean Art and Archaeology is designed to be more accessible to its readers, with a great deal more space for excellent color and monochrome illustrations, and a more legible with-serif version of the previous typeface for the text. The half-tone illustrations used in earlier issues at the head of each paper have gone, to make room for the occasional full-page color illustration, tailored to the needs of each paper. With these changes, and a discerning selection of recent scholarship on Korean art and archaeology, it is hoped that the Journal will have an ever-increasing international reach and impact, even though, for the sake of brevity, the word International has been dropped from the title.

The new format allows each issue to devote plenty of space to a Special Feature on a single topic, in addition to Feature articles on other topics, and the occasional Collection article. The present volume focuses on Joseon Dynasty portraits, with four articles on different aspects of this important field. The late Professor Dietrich Seckel's otherwise monumental study of East Asian portraiture, *Das Porträt in Ostasien* (3 vols., Heidelberg 2005), published when he was already 95, has scant material on Korea, so these articles are especially welcome. Between them, they cover all aspects of the production, display and, all too often, destruction of portraits, and their changing purposes over time. Foremost is Cho Insoo's article on the production and enshrinement of Royal Portraiture: portraits of Joseon monarchs that were originally intended for display during court rituals. Of these, the most important was the portrait of the founder, King Taejo, displayed in a special royal portrait hall. Unlike in Western Asia and in Europe, where portraits of the monarch were familiar to everyone because his likeness was depicted on coinage, in Korea this was not the case, and the royal portraits were central to prescribed ceremonies and rituals to which ordinary people had no access. The author has investigated the checkered history of the royal portraits and the halls where they were displayed, noting the destructions during the Japanese and Manchu invasions, and the subsequent revival of the tradition after a century of disuse, following which the Joseon kings used royal portraiture to strengthen the power of the monarchy, often against strenuous opposition from the Confucian bureaucracy.

Scholar-official portraiture, on the other hand, the subject of the second article, by Kang Kwanshik, was principally used in the early Joseon dynasty to recognize merit subjects, those who had done meritorious service for the state or the monarch. It is interesting to note, in the portrait of Shin Sukju, showing him around 1453 when he was in his mid-thirties, that the rank-badge appears to be embroidered directly on the robe, exactly like those worn by three leading Chinese officials in Xie Huan's painting of *Literary Gathering in the Apricot Garden* of circa 1437 (former collection of Wango

Weng, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City). By the early seventeenth century, however, Korean portraits of literati had evolved a distinct style of their own, and featured carpets that in Ming China were the prerogative of imperial portraits alone. Following the example of Song Siyeol who wrote a self-deprecating inscription on his own portrait, balanced by a royal encomium, Joseon literati portraits came to have a commemorative role, and were displayed in shrines devoted to the memory of Confucian scholars, to encourage self–cultivation and reflection.

The third article, by Lee Soomi, continues the theme of Joseon portraiture, but with especial regard to the actual manufacture of the portrait paintings, from initial sketches on paper to the finished work, and examining in particular the role of pigments applied to the back of the painting silk, in order to achieve a heightened opacity and depth of color. An understanding of the processes involved in the making of a portrait is not only intrinsically valuable, it is also useful in the evaluation of some of the actual portraits that are still extant, for example the unique and mesmerizing *Self-Portrait of Yun Duseo*, still in the collection of Nogudang, the Confucian shrine honoring the memory of Yun's grandfather, which, although painted on paper rather than silk, also proves to have some coloring applied to the back. This article includes a series of illustrations of front and back, only feasible when the paper backings are removed during conservation and remounting, that show exactly what colors were applied on the back, and to which areas: generally pink for the facial features, and white for the beard or throat.

Continuing the main theme, the fourth article, by Kwon Heangga, returns to royal portraiture, this time in the reign of King Gojong, in the late nineteenth century, when photography had already made a significant impact. Whereas very few portraits of earlier Joseon monarchs have survived the invasions and other trials of time, King Gojong's portraits are quite numerous, and include photographs taken by western visitors, in particular Percival Lowell from America, who in 1884 was granted two audiences to photograph both the King and the Crown Prince. His carefully composed and extremely dignified photographs of King Gojong, both standing and seated in the Nongsujeong Pavilion inside the Changdeokgung Palace, with pine trees visible in the background, published in 1885 in his book, *Chosön, Land of the Morning Calm*, are a far cry from traditional royal portraiture, and show to what extent King Gojong was willing to engage with the outside world.

While few examples remain of early Joseon portraiture and of royal portraiture in particular, two of the remaining four articles in this issue offer even greater challenges for their authors, in that material evidence is extremely scarce, or difficult to interpret, while the last deals with a very particular instance and a veritable superabundance of actual remains. The first of these, by Seong Chuntaek, examines the probable patterns of hunter-gatherer interactions in the Post-Glacial period of Korean prehistory, with the aid of comparisons with archaeological theory in other regions of the world. Most worthy of note is that at the period of maximum glaciation (Last Glacial Maximum, circa 12,000 BP) what is now the West or Yellow Sea was considerably narrower, and the sea passage between the Korean mainland and the archipelago of Japan was also very narrow, allowing for possible contacts across the straits. As the ice receded, the sea level rose, progressively widening the West (Yellow) Sea to its present extent, and distancing the Korean peninsula from Japan. The author suggests that the paucity of archaeological evidence from the post-glacial period may be the result of foraging bands having to search beyond their original areas as the land area in the south of the peninsula shrank from the rising sea level, together with concentrations of population in estuarine areas, leading to new patterns of exchange with neighboring groups.

The second feature article, by Kim Jongil, on the archaeology of the Neolithic and Bronze Age of the Korean peninsula, also has to contend with a scarcity not so much of evidence, since in this case and especially in the Bronze Age there are plenty of finds, as of interpretation, due to the long-term domination of the field by mainly male archaeologists who have been slow to recognize or indeed to document at all the female perspective in the prehistory of Korea. As with the previous article, the author has taken full advantage of recent archaeological theories from other parts of the world, such as post-processual archaeology, and applied them to the archaeology of Korea, to suggest how one should interpret finds from burials of the Neolithic, when images of female figurines indicated that women and femininity were recognized as being of clear social value in the community, and of the Bronze Age, when there was a more significant assertion of masculinity, for example in burials with bronze weapons.

Two articles are devoted to ceramics, both involving trade between the Korean peninsula and the Chinese mainland. The first, by Jang Namwon, is devoted to the question of ceramic exchanges between Korea and northern China during the first two centuries of the Goryeo dynasty, contemporary with the Liao and Jin dynasties on the mainland. Two arguments emerge from the discussion: firstly, that the early Goryeo kilns, by producing white wares as well as celadons at the same kilns near the Goryeo capital Gaegyeong, and by the adoption of a two-stage firing technique, bisque firing followed by glaze firing, were predominantly influenced by northern Chinese kilns, even if the structure of the kilns themselves, and some production methods, show evidence of southern Chinese practice. Numerous bowls show a broad flat ring-foot, typical of northern Chinese white wares such as Xing and Ding, which were at the height of their success. Secondly, some artifacts such as fragments of *janggo* (ceramic drum bodies) from at least two sites, show carving of designs either in the body or through black slip, that were then filled with white clay, while other vessels such as *maebyeong* were decorated with painted designs in iron oxide. These techniques parallel those found in northern Chinese wares, and demonstrate that the inlay technique was already being practiced in Korea in the tenth century, prior to its more common use in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

The last article in this issue, by Lee Taehee, appearing under the heading Collection, is also devoted to ceramics, but in this case the artifacts under discussion are, with a handful of exceptions, all from China. They were discovered by accident by a fisherman in 1976 when pieces of ceramics surfaced in his fishing nets. Following eight years of underwater excavation, in eleven stages when the weather conditions permitted, and subsequent examination of the cargo, now housed in the National Museum of Korea, the heavily-laden vessel was determined to have set sail from the Chinese port of Ningbo, probably en route to Japan, in the summer of 1323, under the Yuan dynasty. Crucial evidence for the precise date was provided by inscribed wooden tags, some dated, many of them accompanying a consignment of twenty-seven tons of copper coins. Even this staggering quantity of valuable metal, however, must take second place to the well over 27,000 pieces of ceramics from the cargo, mainly Longquan celadons, but also from several other Chinese kilns, and including a couple of items of Japanese pottery, together with seven Korean celadons which must previously have been exported from Korea to China. It can truly be said that this amazing find has led to a great deal of research on the maritime trade of the time, as well as on the ceramics themselves. Among the items illustrated here, one should mention one of special significance: the oval porcelain dish with floral decoration in underglaze copper-red, showing how well this technique had been developed, at a time when the parallel technique of underglaze painting in cobalt blue had yet to be seen: significantly, not a single piece of porcelain decorated in underglaze blue surfaced from this cargo.

It is hoped that readers will welcome the changes in presentation of this fifth volume of the Journal of Korean Art and Archaeology, the first to appear under the leadership of the new Director of the National Museum of Korea, Kim Youngna: suggestions for further improvements, as well as for articles deserving to be included, are always welcome. Warm thanks are due to the members of the Editorial Board, to the several translators of the articles, whose names now appear at the end of each article, rather than remaining in anonymity as before, as well as to Park Myoungsook who as Managing Editor has transmitted queries to and responses from the authors and the design team.