

SEOUL MUSEUM  
OF HISTORY  
PLACES AND MEMORIES

# HISTORY OF SEOUL



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## PLACES AND MEMORIES

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## HISTORY OF SEOUL

### Notes

- 1 This is an introduction to the permanent exhibitions of the Seoul Museum of History.
- 2 Most of the plates are from the Seoul Museum of History collection. Plates from other collections and sources are included when necessary.
- 3 Plate names in navy indicate artifacts, on display at the museum.
- 4 Plate information is provided in the order of artifact name, maker, period, dimensions and source. The items with no source information are in the Seoul Museum of History collection.
- 5 Unit of measurement is centimeters.

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### The City Model Image Hall

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### Outside Exhibit Area

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## History

Jun. 28, 1985	Construction of the Seoul City Museum planned
Nov. 19, 1993	Museum building construction started.
Dec. 31, 1997	Museum building construction completed
May. 21, 2002	Seoul Museum of History opened
Jun. 18, 2004	Mongchon Museum of History acquired
Jan. 01, 2006	Cheong Gye Cheon Museum acquired
Oct. 27, 2009	Dongdaemun Museum of History acquired.
Apr. 30, 2012	Seoul Baekje Museum opened
Oct. 09, 2012	Seoul City Wall Research Center opened
Jun. 15, 2013	Acquisition of the Gyeonggyojang House



# Forward

Seoul is our focus of interest at the Seoul Museum of History. This city dates back over 600 years, when it was established as the capital of Joseon, and it has remained the Korean capital ever since. Nearly 2,000 years ago the Baekje kingdom had a capital in this area, and the Goryeo Dynasty also maintained a “southern capital” near here for a time. Yet, despite its ancient roots, Seoul is also a young city, experiencing unprecedented growth over two generations since the 1960s to become the dynamic metropolis and major world center that it is today.

The debate over establishing a museum dedicated to the history of Seoul began in the late 1980s as the city was gearing up to host the 1988 Olympic Games. The blueprint for the Seoul Museum of History was established in the mid-1990s while preparations were being made to celebrate the city’s 600th anniversary, and our Museum was officially launched in the spring of 2002, the same year that Korea cohosted the World Cup with Japan. Since then, the Museum has taken over management of five branches — the Cheong Gye Cheon Museum, Dongdaemun Museum of History, Seoul Baekje Museum, Seoul City Wall Research Center, and most recently, the Gyeonggyojang House, the last government office building of the Provisional Government of Korea.

Our Museum was being planned around the same time that Seoul was emerging from its rapid development stage. Therefore, we paid special attention to the city’s historical roots, which had been largely cast aside in the race to develop and modernize, and our permanent exhibitions consisted mainly of historical relics and artifacts. As time goes on, however, public interest in the recent past has grown, and the period of development and modernization is now an important part of the overall historical view. The past is now being seen from a broader perspective as well.

To address this change, we began a large-scale renovation of our permanent exhibitions in 2009, and our work was completed three years later, in time for our 10th anniversary in 2012. Exhibit Zone 1 covers Hanyang of the Joseon Period (14th-19th C); Zone 2, Seoul of the Modernization Period (late 19th-early 20th C); Zone 3, Seoul and its people during the Japanese occupation (1910-1945); and Zone 4, post-liberation Seoul (1945-2002). Zone 5 offers a scale model of Seoul today, along with audiovisual presentations. Our Museum is now equipped to provide a comprehensive view of the 600 years of the history of Seoul. The exhibits are multi-dimensional utilizing new media.

This illustrated catalog provides a look at each of our newly-made permanent exhibition zones. A city is both a place where people live and an environment, and telling the complete story would be difficult by describing artifacts alone. Therefore, we designed our permanent exhibits to encapsulate Seoul in its entirety, and this book is meant to do likewise. I hope that you find it to be both a handy reference for the exhibits displayed in at the Seoul Museum of History and an informative source in its own right on Seoul’s long and colorful history.

**Kang Hong-bin**  
**Director of the Seoul Museum of History**  
**August 2014**

1392~1863

# The Joseon Capital





A photograph of a modern museum interior. The scene features a large, vibrant orange wall that serves as a backdrop for several glass display cases. The cases contain various artifacts, including what appear to be historical documents or scrolls. The ceiling is white with recessed lighting, and the floor is a dark, polished material. The overall atmosphere is clean and contemporary.

## Establishment of the King's Residence

"Having seen the lay of the land, this site is suitable for the royal capital. It is accessible to the sea and is centrally located in the kingdom, bringing convenience to people's lives."

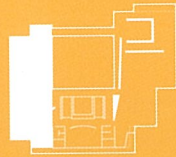
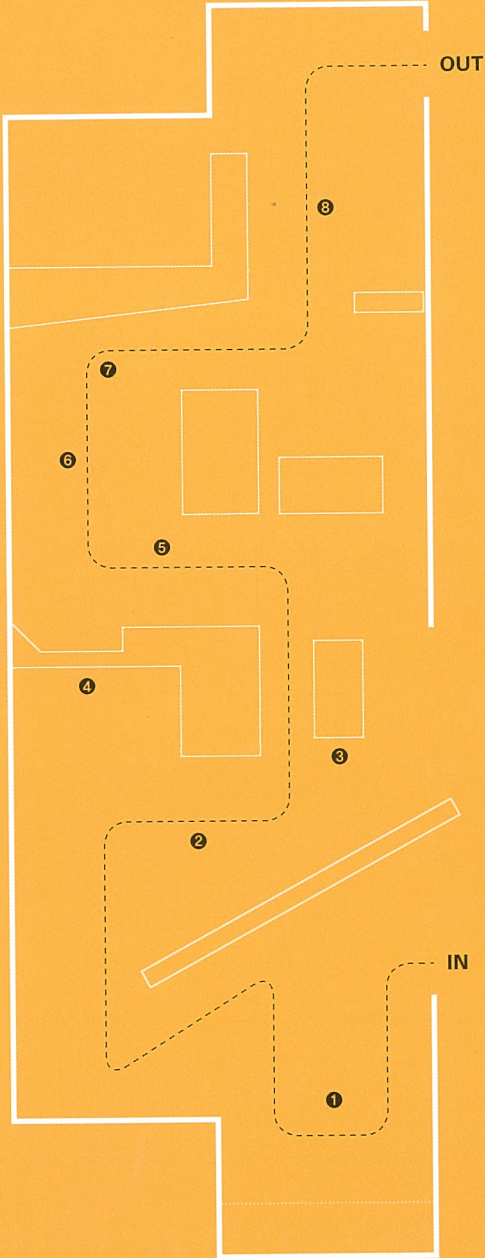
In 1394, King Taejo uttered these words upon viewing Hanyang. Soon after, the Main Palace compound, Altars to the Gods of Soil and Grain, and Royal Ancestral Shrine were built, thereby finalizing the establishment of the new royal house and garnering the loyalty of the people. In addition, products from around the entire kingdom were brought to Hanyang, the new Joseon capital.



# 1 ZONE

The Joseon Capital

Establishment of the King's  
Residence



① Construction of the capital at Hanyang



② The Palaces of Hanyang



③ Yukjogaeori : the Backbone of State Administration



- **1392**  
Yi Seonggye (Taejo, posthumously) founded Joseon
- **1394**  
Capital is moved to Hanyang
- **1395**  
Main palace compound, Jongmyo (Shrine) and Sajikdan (Altars to State Deities) are completed
- **1396**  
City walls are constructed
- **1412**  
Licensed shops are established
- **1446**  
Hangeul is promulgated
- **1485**  
*Gyeongguk daejeon* (National Code) is promulgated
- **1592**  
Imjin Waeran (War with Japan) begun
- **1593**  
Seonjo returns to Hanyang in the 10th lunar month
- **1608**  
Jongmyo and Changdeokgung (Palace) are rebuilt
- **1620**  
Gyeonghuigung (Palace) is completed
- **1626**  
Namhansanseong (Fortress) is built
- **1708**  
Daedongbeop (Uniform Land Tax Law) is enacted
- **1712**  
Bukhansanseong (Fortress) is built
- **1760**  
Cheonggyecheon (Stream) is dredged
- **1785**  
*Daejeon tongpyeon* (Revised National Code) is completed
- **1791**  
"Commercial equalization" enactment eliminates monopolistic privileges of government licensed merchants.
- **1833**  
Rice riots erupt in Jangn
- **1861**  
Kim Jeong-ho produces *Daedongyeojido* (Map of Joseon)



④ Bukchon : the Affluent Neighborhood



⑦ Namchon : the Bedrock of Hanyang Society



⑤ Unjongga: the Commercial Center of Joseon



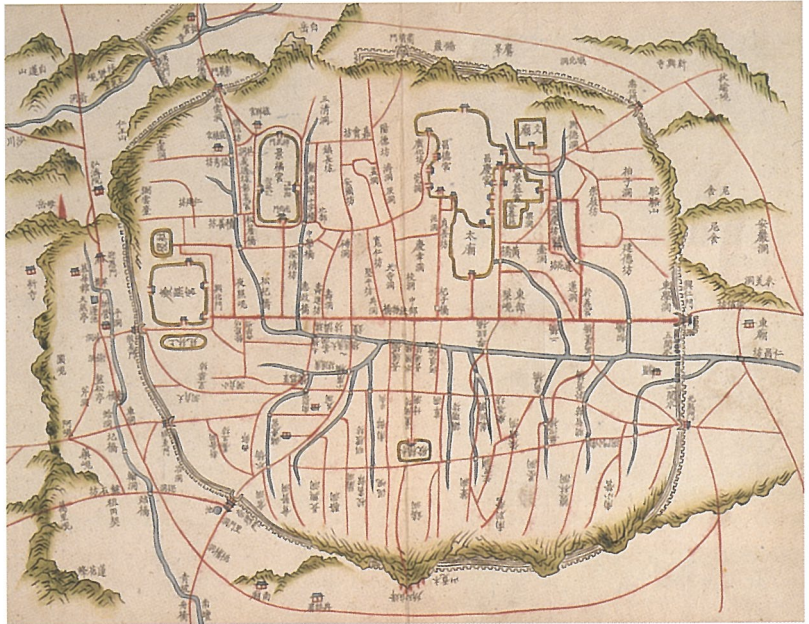
③ Seongjeosimni: the 10 // Radius Outside the City Walls



⑥ Jungchon: Community of Technical Specialists

## Construction of the Capital at Hanyang

In 1394, King Taejo decided to have his new city built on the Hanyang site, and this continued to be the capital through the end of the dynasty. Hanyang was built in accordance with ancient Korean traditions, geomantic principles and Confucian ideology. With the relocation of the royal capital, the palace compound for the king was constructed, along with the initial city walls of rammed earth. The seat of the government was temporarily relocated to Gaeseong, the old Goryeo capital, during the reign of the second monarch, Jeongjong, and the government then returned to Hanyang during the reign of Taejong. He ordered the construction of a second palace compound, Changdeokgung (Palace), and completed the establishment of *sijeon* (licensed stores) along the main street. In the time of Sejong, the rammed earth city walls were replaced with stone walls.



**Doseongdo (Map of the Walled Capital)**

Around 1861 | 30.5x40.0 | Seo3069 | Treasure No.1358-1

*Doseongdo (Map of the Walled Capital)* is included in the *Donggyeodo (Maps of Joseon)*, produced by Kim Jeong-ho. It carries major geographical information of the capital.





### Comprehensive Map of the Eight Provinces of Joseon

Kim Su-hong | 1673 | 141.2×107.0 | Seo13145 | Treasure No.1602 | Donated by Lee Chan

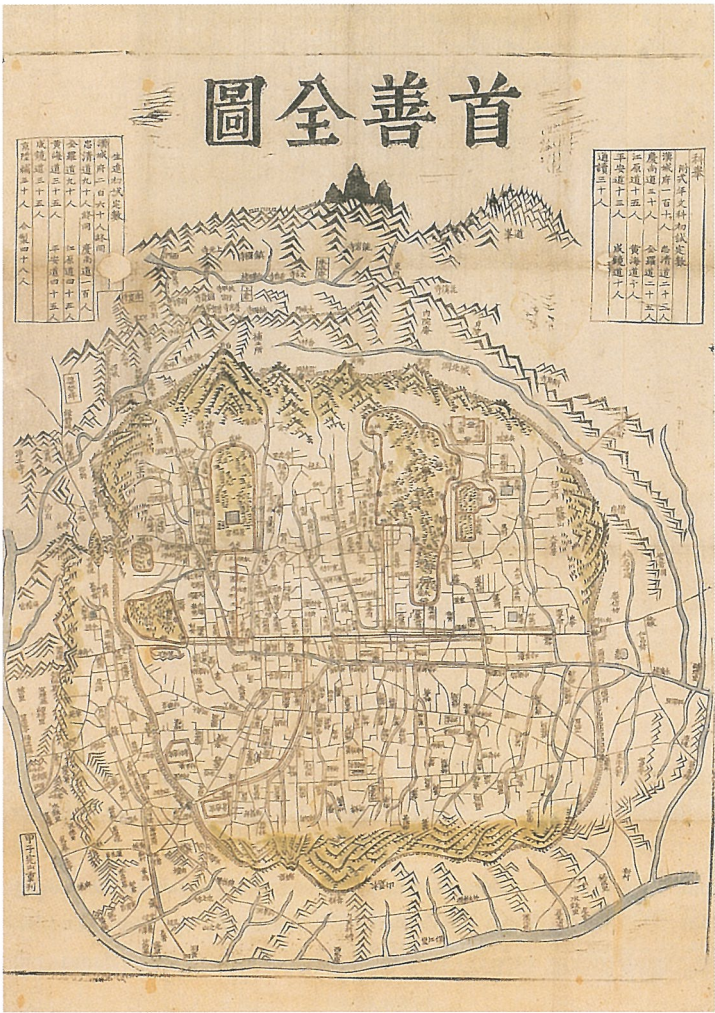
This general map records the names of major historical landmarks and prominent figures of each area.

## Hanyang: the Heart of the Kingdom

In 1393, construction of the new capital began on a site directly south of Gyeryongsan (Mountain), recommended by Gwon Jung-hwa. However, Gyeonggi Provincial Governor Ha Ryun objected to the site, insisting that new capital must be centrally located. Thus, on the 11th day of the 8th month in 1394, Taejo personally inspected the geomantic features around Muaksan (Mountain) and Baekaksan (Mountain), located where Seoul stands today. On the 13th of that month, the king listened to the opinions of Buddhist Master Muhak and prominent officials such as Jeong Do-jeon, and he finally decided to make Hanyang the site of his new capital.

Hanyang's Significance

Hanyang, as the Joseon capital, was where the ruler resided and where the principal parts of the central government were located. Moreover, Hanyang was centrally located within the kingdom, and this was where the ruler and his ministers discussed the affairs of state. It was also the place where the ruler and his people had contact. For these reasons, the capital was yearned for by the literati and commoners who lived in the provincial areas. The literati members would come to the capital to sit for the government examinations in pursuit of their aspiration to rise in the world. In short, the capital was the place to be in Joseon.



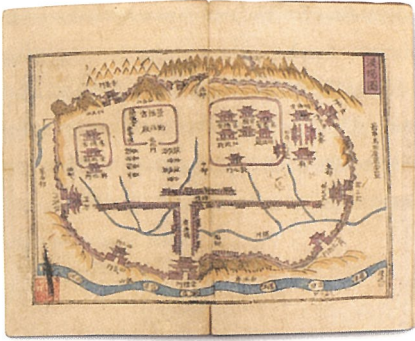
**Suseon jeondo**  
**(Map of the Capital)**

1864 | 160.8x79.0 | Seo2080

This general map shows details of administrative areas, government offices and bridges. Mountains, rivers and important palaces are colored pale yellow.



## History of the Capital Wall Construction



### Hanyangdo (Map of Hanyang)

19th C. | 31.8×40.6 | Seo241 | Donated by Heo Yeong-hwan

This map of Seoul by Wi Baek-gyu shows palaces, city walls, gates, and stores which are arranged in a T-shape layout.

The initial construction of the Hanyang City Wall took place in 1396. Major reconstruction works were carried out during the reigns of Sejong (r. 1418-1450) and Sukjong (r. 1674-1720), leading to the way the walls appear today. The construction methods and stone shapes differed by period. In Taejo's time, the stones varied widely; large boulders were placed at the base and the stones grew smaller the higher up on the wall they were placed. During the reign of Sejong, the wall stones were cut into rectangular blocks measuring 40-60cm long by about 30cm wide. By the time of Sukjong, the stones were uniform cubes about 45cm long on each side.

### Wall Stones with Letters on Naksan (Mountain)

The Hanyang City Walls underwent a major reconstruction during Sukjong's reign. The names of the stonemasons and crew bosses that were etched into the stone blocks in the fourth month of 1706 are still clearly legible today.



Outbreak of Imjin Waeran (War with Japan)

On the 14th day of the 4th month in 1592 (the year Imjin), invading forces from Japan landed on the shores of the south coast where Busan stands today. They reached the outskirts of the capital no more than two weeks later. The capital was taken without a fight, as the Korean defenders had fled from the natural defensive line of the Hangang (River) as well as from the capital walls. The vanguard of the Japanese army slaughtered many of the people who were in the city. In the 4th month of 1593 the capital was retaken by a force consisting of regular Joseon army troops and militia volunteers, and the king who had fled to the border with China, returned in the 10th month.



Chongtong (Cannon)

1591 | Excavated from Cheonggyecheon | L. 74.2 |  
Central Institute of Cultural Heritage

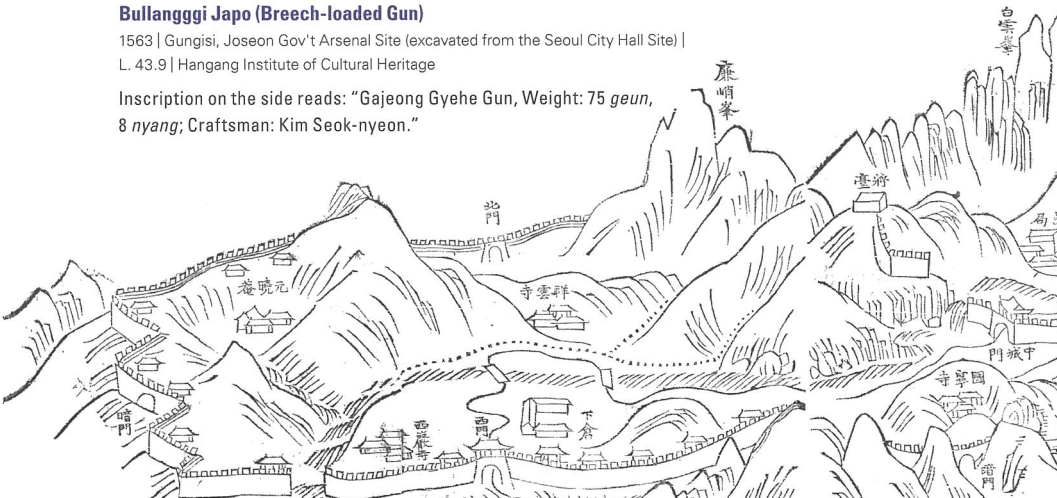
Inscription reads: "Specially made in the third month of  
Mannyeok 19 (1591), Weight: 17 *geun* 6 *nyang*, Craftsman:  
Bugi; 1 medium-sized projectile, 20 small projectiles"



Bullangggi Japo (Breech-loaded Gun)

1563 | Gungisi, Joseon Gov't Arsenal Site (excavated from the Seoul City Hall Site) |  
L. 43.9 | Hangang Institute of Cultural Heritage

Inscription on the side reads: "Gajeong Gyehe Gun, Weight: 75 *geun*,  
8 *nyang*; Craftsman: Kim Seok-nyeon."



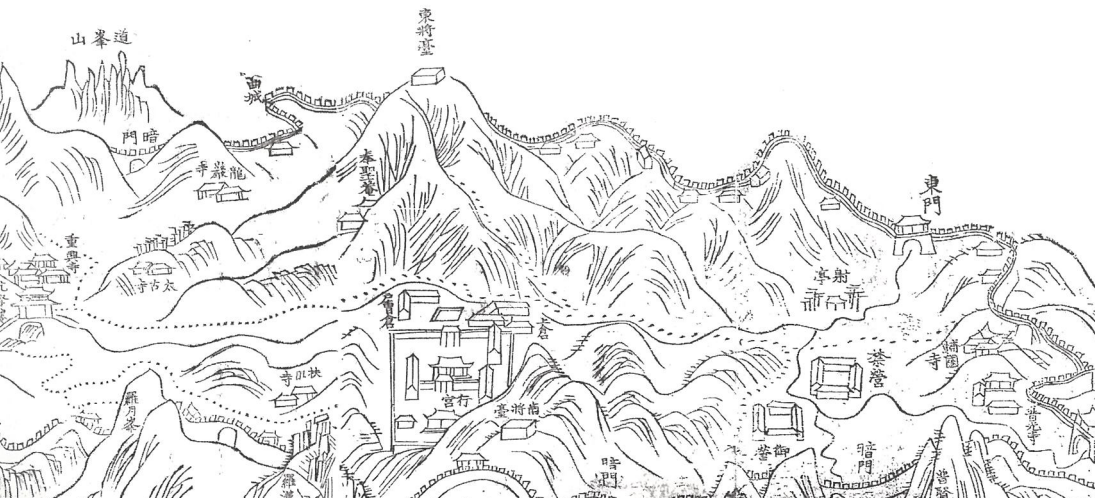


Reconstruction of Hanyang

Many structures in the capital were destroyed during the 7-year Imjin Waeran, including palace halls and government offices. The arduous task of reconstruction began after the war ended in 1598. Gwanghaegun (r. 1608-1623) took the throne in 1608 and immediately had the Royal Ancestral Shrine rebuilt. Next Injeongjeon (the Throne Hall) and other major halls at Changdeokkung were reconstructed. The Altars of Soil and Grain were completed in 1610, followed by the major government offices over the next two years. The capital began to regain its original appearance as the licensed stores and other structures inside the walls were built anew.



**Bukhanji (Book of Bukhansanseong Fortress)**  
Buddhist monk, Seong Neung | Late Joseon | 31.8×20.3 | Seo7667  
Buddhist monk Seongneung, in charge of the Bukhansanseong construction work, compiled and published this geographical book regarding the project.



## The People of Hanyang

Hanyang was crowded with people who were from various social classes and engaged in diverse occupations. The king was at the top of the government administration, supported by the high-ranking officials who served in the various government agencies. Functionaries specialized in medicine, interpretation, law and other fields worked in the government as well, along with the numerous petty clerks. Merchants operated government-licensed shops along Unjongga, the main street in the center of the capital, and farmers lived just outside the city walls. In addition many soldiers lived in the capital, attached to the Military Training Agency and various other units.



### Hopae (Identification Tags)

- ① Shim Ui-pung | 1827 | 6.85×3.2 | Seo8989 | Donated by Shin Sang-jeong
- ② Shin Sang-gwon | 1762 | 8.7×2.5 | Seo27303
- ③ Jeong Yang-bin | 1723 | 8.2×2.6 | Seo2054
- ④ Hong Tae-jeung | 18th C. | 7.1×2.5 | Seo676
- ⑤ Hong Dae-yeong | 1783 | 9.7×2.7 | Seo27306



### Shim Ui-pung's Hopae

The *hopae* served as an official identification tag which was issued to males over the age of 16 during the Joseon Dynasty. This tag shows Shim Uipung passed the military service examination in 1827, and later served as the military commander of Chungcheong-do. He rose to Chief Magistrate of Hanseong, a Senior Rank 2 post, at the age of 83 in 1887.





Jegui 제귀



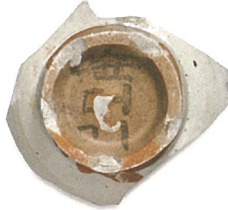
Syuan 수완



Gimsi 김시



Jeong 정



Syundeogi 순더기



Φ



Heuksuk 黒石



Eunjeong 銀丁



Jeong 丁

### Pieces of White Porcelain with Signatures from Cheongjin-dong Site

Characters presumably the signatures of the owner or user are written at the bottom of white porcelain

## The Nebulous Population Statistics for Hanyang

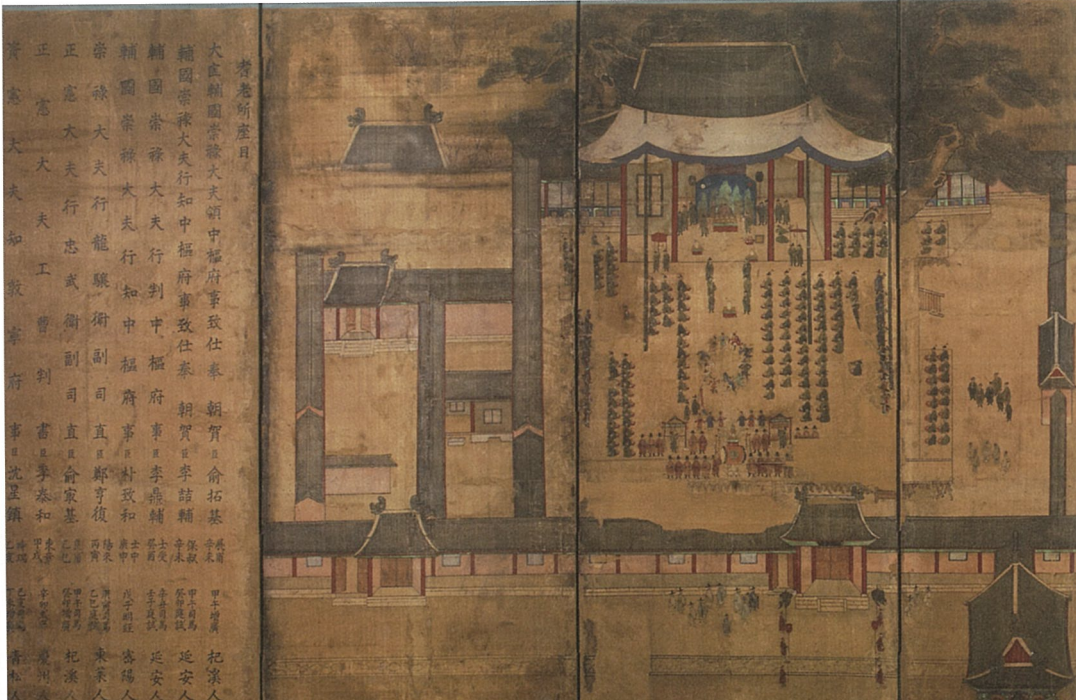
During the Joseon period, the government needed to know how many households and people lived in the capital for tax collection purposes, but many managed to evade the census and accurate statistics were difficult to come by. Scholars today believe that between 30 and 40 percent of the total population was not reported. Census data from 1428 puts the number of Hanyang residents at 109,000, but many more people actually were living in the capital at the time. The population exceeded 200,000 people in the mid-17th century and was more than 300,000 by the end of the 18th century.

# The Palaces of Hanyang

Government administration was centered on the main palace complex. Gyeongbokgung (palace) was the first palace complex in the new Joseon capital, but Taejong, the third monarch, ordered the construction of a second palace complex, Changdeokgung. However, all the palace complexes in Joseon were destroyed during the war with Japan. The Changdeokgung complex was reconstructed and Gyeonghuigung (palace) was newly built during the reign of Gwanghaegun. From this time, Changdeokgung was considered the king's main palace, and Gyeonghuigung was referred to as the secondary palace. The Gyeonghuigung compound was relatively small but Sukjong, Gyeongjong, Yeongjo and other kings resided there for long periods.

**Yeongjo sujakyeeondo (Banquet in Celebration of King Yeongjo's 71st Birthday)**  
 1765 | 120.5x437.6 | Seo8134 | Treasure No.1531

These paintings depict two banquets held in 1765 to mark King Yeongjo's 71st birthday and 42st year on the throne. The scene on the left is at the Bureau of Elder Statesmen. The one on the right is at Gyeonghuigung.

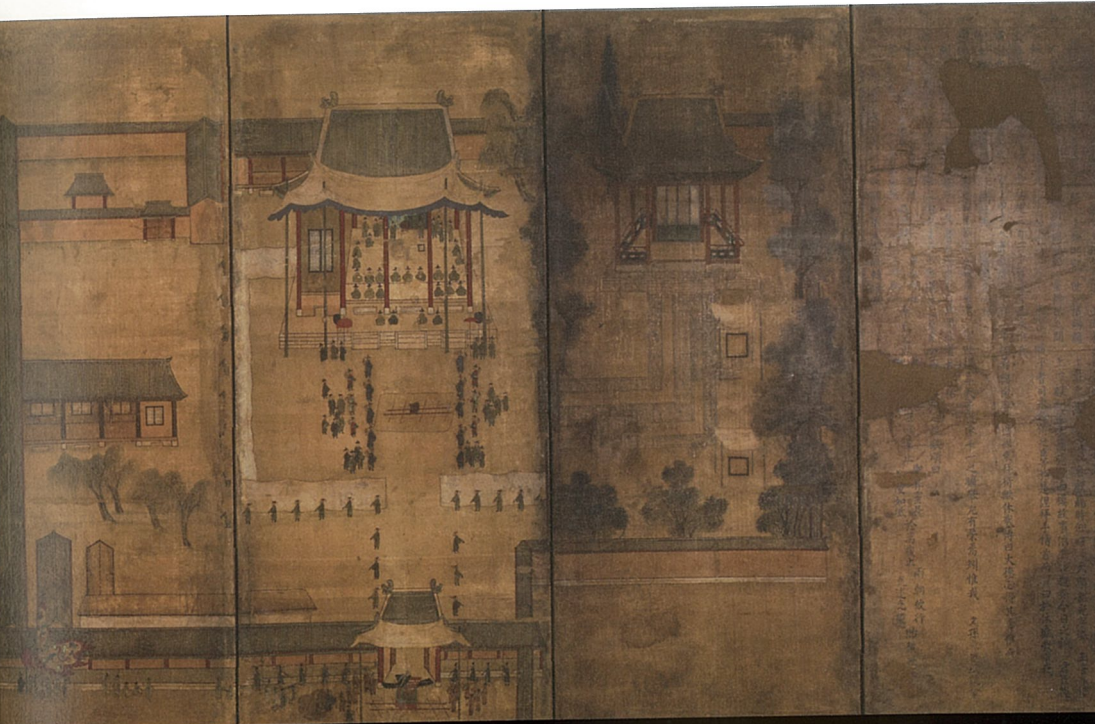






**Donggwoldo**  
**(Painting of Eastern Palace)**  
 Korea University Museum

Because of its location east of Gyeongbokgung, Changdeokgung is also referred to as the "Eastern Palace"(Donggwol). <Donggwoldo> vividly captures one of the Joseon palace compounds that once was filled with magnificent buildings.



## Jongmyo (Shrine) and Sajikdan (Altars)

In traditional times, Jongmyo and Sajikdan were symbols of dynastic legitimacy. Jongmyo was a sacred ground for enshrining the spirit tablets dedicated to deceased kings and their queens. Sajikdan was a pair of altars where sacrifices were held to the Gods of Soil and Grain, the state guardian deities. They were built for the new Joseon dynasty in 1395, with Sajikdan to the west side of the main palace and Jongmyo to the east.



### Ritual Vessel of Jongmyo

16th C. | Excavated from the Jongmyo site | H. 13.1

This ritual vessel is for millet and barnyard millet.



### Ritual Liquor Container of Jongmyo

16th C. | Excavated from the Jongmyo site | H. 18.6

This ritual vessel for wine, with a phoenix pattern engraved, was used at seasonal rites in spring and summer.



### Ritual Liquor Jar of Jongmyo

16th C. | Excavated from the Jongmyo site | H. 23.8

This ritual liquor jar was used at seasonal ceremonies. Inscription at the bottom reads: "jar for Room 3 of Yeongnyeongjeon (Hall); stored at Cheonjago (Warehouse); weight: 9 *geun* 4 *nyang*"