

**Behind the scenes at the New National Museum of Korea:
an investigation of the museum's role in constructing
notions of Korean national identity**

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by

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Behind the scenes at the New National Museum of Korea: an investigation of the museum's role in constructing notions of Korean national identity

Jeong-eun Lee

Abstract

National identity and nationalism are some of the most controversial and contested issues in contemporary society in the Republic of Korea. This thesis examines the New National Museum of Korea, which opened on 28th October 2005, to explore both the ways in which conceptions of national identity have been encoded within the museum's archaeological displays and the diverse ways in which visitors respond to and engage with the displays they encounter.

The thesis identifies the influences which shape the process of exhibition-making and explores the intentions of individual curators within the context of the aims and operating context of the museum as a national institution. The complexities involved in processes of reception and the messages decoded by museum visitors are also examined. The in-depth audience research conducted for this thesis identified the significant role which mass media and history education within schools plays in informing the ways in which visitors respond to perceived messages concerned with concepts of national identity.

The research findings suggest that there is a considerable discrepancy between the intended messages of the museum's curators – shaped by their expectations, prior knowledge and attitudes towards the 'national story' – and the meanings decoded and constructed by visitors. This analysis reveals many of the difficulties and challenges encountered by national museums and museum professionals when they attempt to represent national histories. Also the prefix 'national' has been found to be especially significant. Whilst museum practitioners involved in producing exhibitions may seek to be 'moderate' and 'non-nationalistic' in the messages they seek to communicate, the museum's status as a national institution of Korea significantly influences both how it is shaped and perceived.

Ultimately, drawing on theories of communication and those concerned with concepts of nationalism and national identity, this work seeks to contribute to both broader social and cultural studies, but at the same time, it represents an attempt to contribute to a Korean-specific field of Museum Studies.

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Acknowledgement

This thesis is dedicated to my greatest mother Mee-za Hwang (1952-2007)

Glossary

Dangun Myth and GoJoseon

Dangun is a national mythical figure in Korea history, who is believed to found the first nation of Korea, GoJoseon. The first record of Dangun and GoJoseon is in 'The Chronicles of the Three Kingdoms' written by monk Il-yeon in 1281. Dangun and GoJoseon are the main gist of Korea's national identity and symbol which explored throughout in the thesis.

Sam Guk Yu Sa [The Chronicles of the Three Kingdoms]

The history book written in 1281 by monk Il-yeon, containing the story of Dangun myth and the GoJoseon. This book is crucial history book as the record of the Dangun and GoJoseon firstly appeared in here.

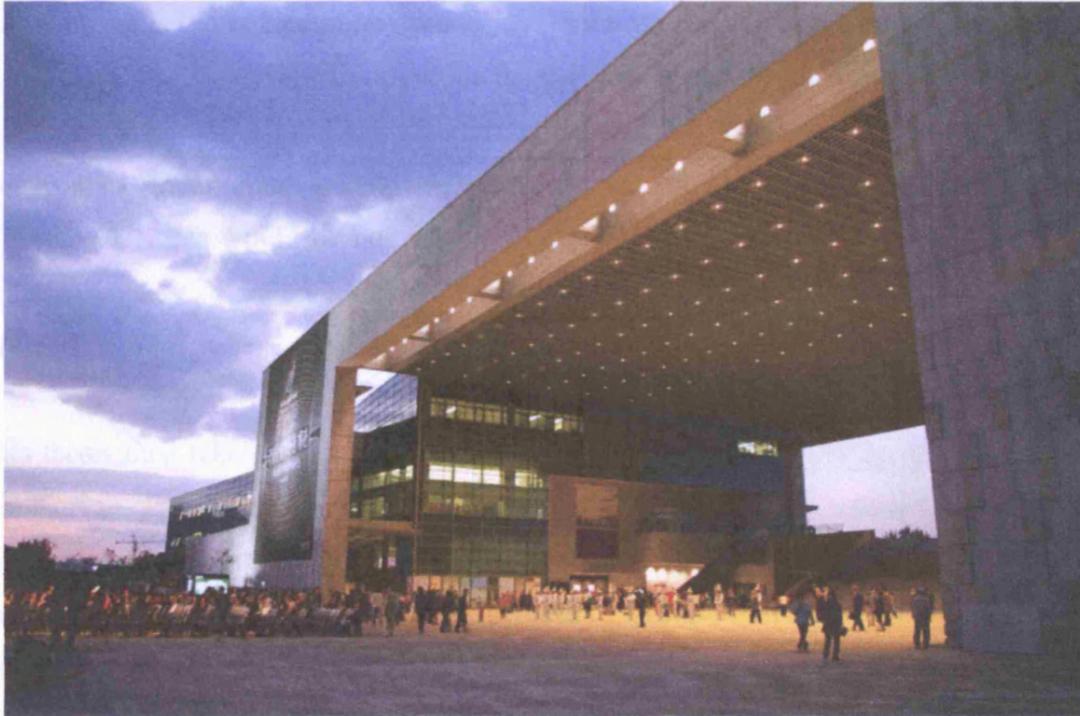
The Chinese East Asia Project

Launched from 2002 and terminated in 2007. Initiated by the Social Science Centre which is a Chinese governmental institution. In 2002, this centre started a history project involving the area of north-eastern China, which included the study of the ancient Korean history of GoJoseon, and kingdoms of Goguryeo and Balhae. This research insisted that GoJoseon and the other two kingdoms in this particular historic period in Korea, which were located in the northern area of the Korean territory, were historically part of their colonized provinces.

Gallup Korea

Private Research Company. The New National Museum of Korea regularly requests the audience research. The last audience research Gallup Korea involved in the New National Museum of Korea was conducted early December 2005.

Introduction



The New National Museum of Korea (Photo taken by Lee Dae Woo)

The New History starts with the opening of the New National Museum of Korea today. This New Museum, I may say, will be the very symbolic representation of Korea, and will be the national emblem of Korea. This is the right moment for us to prepare for the global era, and I strongly believe that the great New National Museum is the very first stage to facilitate this preparation.

Museum Opening Speech of President Roh Moo-hyun on 28 October 2005

Introduction

'[M]useums face an unremitting questioning about whom they are for and what their role should be [...] and competition from the electronic media and other leisure pursuits all threaten the future of the museum' (Macdonald 1996, 1). With this sentence, Sharon Macdonald presents some of the most demanding challenges and questions related to contemporary museums. Moreover, these challenges are, in many ways, more intense when the museum in question is one which carries the prefix 'national'. In the Ministry of Culture and Tourism's 2004 document, 'Cultural Policy', the Korean government stated that self-declared mission of the New National Museum of Korea would be not only the begetter of the country's national identity and a palimpsest of national history but also the central museum in East Asia (2004, 194).

This thesis then takes four main concepts – of nation, national identity, the museum and Korea – and examines how they work when they are brought together. 'Heritage supplies identities with precedent and legitimacy through the invocation of 'tradition' and, in the case of established cultural institutions like museums or heritage sites, by lending those identity-claims the authority which public institutions command' (Mason 2006b, 18). Mason (2007, 29) also points out that 'there are many ways that a museum can be understood as 'national''. Additionally, I would argue that when the new national museum opened at the start of the 21st century in Korea, in which the concept of the nation and national identity are perhaps more contested and pertinent than ever before and in which forces of globalization are blurring the boundaries of nations, then the issue of national identity and the role of the museum becomes even more hotly contested and debated.

The research questions I address are investigated in relation to the ways in which the New National Museum of Korea constructs concepts of Korean identity within the Archaeological Gallery and how the people of Korea, who are in the middle of contested and competitive realities of national identity, perceive their brand New National Museum in relation to their own conception of national identity. As a consequence, this thesis is concerned with exploring the extent to which conceptions of national identity, constructed within the museum's exhibitions correlate with the

ways in which visitors read the museum and the factors which might explain a lack of equivalence between intended and decoded messages.

Mason (2005b, 10) has argued that current museological concerns focus on questions of ‘public importance’ which means that ‘contemporary museums in the UK are expected to make more of an effort than ever before to be explicitly representative of, and answerable to, their present constituents’. Mason also (2006b, 19), in her study of the Museum of Welsh Life points out, most studies regarding national museums tend to focus on historic and ideological perspectives and have sometimes neglected the ‘effects of practical current factors like marketing, audience development, visitor profiles and visitor surveys’.

As we shall see, tensions surrounding the narratives presented in national museums and the ways in which audiences read and engage with these is not only relevant to UK museums but to Korea also. This thesis, then, examines processes of consumption and reception from the perspective of visitors to try and identify how messages, embodied within the displays of the New National Museum of Korea, are read, decoded and recoded by contemporary visitors.

As Stuart Hall (1997) has argued, meanings are fluid and subject to change according to where the subject will be located. Also meaning can be considered in three main ways; ‘[w]hat we might broadly call the world of things, people, events and experiences; the conceptual world – the mental concepts we carry around in our heads; and the signs, arranged into languages, which ‘stand for’ or communicate these concepts.’ (Hall 1997, 61) Drawing on Hall, the museum exhibition is not seen as a purveyor of fixed meaning but rather as part of a communication process which is not completed unless it is signified by spectators. Meanings are produced and the interpretation has to be practiced to realise the meaning, and so there are processes of encoding (‘putting things into the code’) and decoding (‘through which interpretations and responses are made’) (Hall 1997, 62). Using the theory of encoding and decoding from Stuart Hall, this thesis will examine the New National Museum of Korea with a particular focus on the Archaeological Gallery.

When Stuart Hall (1997) explained about the intricate relations between language, representation and culture, he also explains that languages can be approached in relation to both semiotics and discursive formations. Semiotics are ‘vehicles of meaning in culture’ whereas discursive formations are ‘constructing knowledge about a particular topic of practice’ (Hall 1997, 6). Consequently one of the purposes of this thesis is to explore both the construction process of the languages in the museum setting alongside stated curatorial intentions (the semiotic approach in Hall’s terms (1997)) and also to investigate ‘the *effects* and *consequences* of representation – its ‘politics’” which is a discursive approach.

This thesis has been structured according to six main chapters. Chapter One explores the contemporary Korean society and investigates the significance of concepts of identity and nation. Blending analyses of contemporary Korean culture with recent events, this chapter reveals the extent to which conceptions of nation and national identity are particularly pertinent and contested within twenty-first century Korea.

Chapter Two then turns to theoretical understandings of the nation, national identity and nationalism using key theorists such as Anthony Smith and Benedict Anderson amongst others. This Chapter explores the different components of Korean national identity before interrogating the New National Museum of Korea.

Chapter Three explores in greater detail the rationale for focusing on the New National Museum of Korea and, within it, the Archaeological Gallery in particular. It also reviews related research regarding national museums and national identities and constructs a conceptual as well as methodological framework for the empirical investigations on which the thesis is based.

Chapter Four describes the main features of the Archaeological gallery and identifies the components and characteristics of the messages related to concepts of nation and national identity – both intended and unintended – that are encoded within it.

Chapter Five turns to the ways in which visitors engage with and respond to the messages they encounter within the Archaeological Gallery. Drawing on the findings of in-depth interviews with museum visitors it explores the ways in which visitors

decode perceived narratives on the theme of national identity and nation. These findings are considered in the light of the current situation regarding audience studies in Korea and contemporary Korean museums.

Chapter Six concludes by examining the disparities and similarities between encoded and decoded conceptions of nation and national identity within the museum. This Chapter also reveals which aspects of nation and national identity are marginalised and which are given more prominence by both the museum and visitors than others. It also considers the factors which might account for such similarities and differences.

Chapter 1

Korea: Nation and Identity

Introduction

As one of the countries in the eastern part of the Asian continent, Korea¹ has, at least in the past, held the reputation of being a Hermit Kingdom² in the eyes of western countries. The country locked herself away at a time when Christopher Columbus was discovering the new world in the fifteenth century and other parts of the world were starting to explore other cultures³. Korea was, to many westerners, an unknown and mysterious country, until its place in world history was highlighted by the Korean War of 1950 to 1953. Apart from the Korean War, however, there are not many facts known about the nation of Korea, and it is still difficult to define Korea as one nation. This is not only the case for the rest of the world, but also for Korean people. The issue of Korea and its national identity has stood, until relatively recently, in the midst of ambiguities and uncertainties, and so this Chapter will establish some background knowledge about Korea and its complicated national identity in modern society. The chapter will begin with brief discussions about identity and nation before looking at the sense of nationalism in Korean society in the 21st century, demonstrated through recent contemporary events.

The Korean Peninsula lies in the north-eastern area of the Asian continent (Figure 1.1, 1.2), extending 1,000 kilometres from north to south. It shares most of its northern border with China and touches Russia. To the east, west and south it is bordered by the sea and the south is close to the Japanese islands. The total population of the Republic of Korea is 48,575,510⁴ and the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2005 was

¹ Discussion of the official name of the country is outside the scope of this thesis, so the Republic of Korea will henceforth be referred to as 'South Korea' whereas the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will be referred to as 'North Korea'. Since this thesis deals mainly with the museums and society of the Republic of Korea, throughout this thesis the word 'Korea' refers to South Korea, and 'North Korea' will be used when necessary.

² The term 'Hermit' was first applied to Korea when American preacher and author William Elliot Griffis published the book 'Corea: The Hermit Nation' in 1882. The author did not have any first-hand experience of Korea and the book justified Japanese incursions in Korea, so the word 'hermit' is an outdated name which no longer applies to contemporary Korea. However, back in fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, this seems to be a name that western people were used to using in relation to Korea.

³ See Appendix 1.

⁴ The Online Korean National Statistical Office <http://www.nso.go.kr/nso2005/index.jsp> as of 24



Figure 1.1 Map of Korea (sourced from The Republic of Korea Official Website)

KOREA AND VICINITY



Figure 1.2 Korea and Vicinity sourced from national Geographic Information Institute

\$7,875 million⁵. It has frequently been reported that, after the Second World War, Korea was a devastated country and one of the poorest in the world. However, it is increasingly argued by economists, sociologists and scientists that Korea has now become one of the most advanced countries in the world, economically, technologically and culturally (Kang 2000).

Capitalism, technology and postmodernism coloured 20th century Korea, and globalisation swept over the southern half of the Korean peninsula in the 21st century (Nelson 2000, Breen 2004, Cumings 2005). The search for an understanding of Korea and its culture has become the critical focus of studies since the issue of globalisation was taken up in Korean society, and this has been proved by a burgeoning of recent publications on the travel, modern cinema, food and so on from 2000s onwards. These have evoked diverse discussions and criticisms about Korea in social and humanitarian studies and can be viewed as part of many attempts to prepare for the new conditions of the 21st century. Also, unsurprisingly, studies on Korea in the global era seem to have become popular with the Everyday Life Culture Research Centre (1998) and the International Association of Korean Studies (1998) becoming actively involved with these issues. In accordance with these researches, individual researchers are discussing the difficulties or problems of identifying Korean identity (Cha 1999) with the process of globalisation in Korea. Also critical analysis has been given to the lack of Korean studies in terms of broad cultural and sociological perspectives (Choi 1997, Hong 1998) in the complicated global era. So it is not too much to say that there still are considerable questions to be posed and answered in order to understand contemporary Korea and its identity. Before looking in detail at Korea and its identity issues, brief definitions of identity and nation will be explored.

Identity and Nation: An Elusive Concept

It is worth keeping in mind that identity is not an easy concept to grasp. Speaking metaphorically, Dundes (Jacobson-Widding 1983, 30) describes identity as ‘the elephant’⁶, which is ‘the snowman of ethnicity, whose footprints have been around us

November 2006

⁵ The Online Korean National Statistical Office http://kosis.nso.go.kr/cgi-bin/sws_999.cgi?ID=DT_1C20001&IDTYPE=3&A_LANG=1&FPUB=3&ITEM=T1&CLASS1=A.17 as of 20 July 2006

⁶ The term ‘elephant’ metaphorically means that people are aware that there is something big near them

for so long but which has been so curiously difficult for academic hunters to track down.' Woodward (2000, 7) states that the definition of identity depends on solving the issues of 'How I see myself and how other people see me' and 'What I want to be and the influences, pressures and opportunities which are available'. The answer to the question of who 'you' are could be easy to define if it came accompanied by certain elements such as a person's name or a nation's name. However, identity is not a problem of superficial recognition. It is a far more complicated concept, and it has multiple characteristics. As identity has a multi-layered nature and can be viewed from various different perspectives, it is hardly surprising that there will be differences of approach to defining identities, whether they are national identity, cultural identity or individual identity. Since this thesis is concerned mainly with issues of national identity, they will receive most attention in the Chapters that follow but, this does not mean that other identities are irrelevant. They are inevitably linked to each other as is the nature of the concepts of nation, culture and citizens, but what I focus on here is the national identity of Korea. What should be remembered here is that identity is 'produced, consumed and regulated within culture, whilst creating meanings through symbolic systems of representation' (McLean 1998, 247).

How then can we understand the term 'nation'? In dictionary terms, nation and nation state are defined as follows:

Definition of *Nation*; Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary 2005:

'a country, especially when thought of as a large group of people living in one area with their own government, language, traditions, etc.'

Definition of *Nation state*; Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary 2005

'an independent country, especially when thought of as consisting of a single large group of people all sharing the same language, traditions and history'

Guibernau and Goldblatt (2000) distinguish between the role of nations and states by arguing that the nation-state is a political and legal entity whilst the nation is a cultural entity. In other words, the nation is comprised of 'a named people who acknowledge a shared solidarity and identity by virtue of a shared culture, history and territorial homeland.' (Guibernau and Goldblatt 2000, 125) It is often difficult to draw the dividing line between a cultural entity and a political entity, but using this argument of Guibernau and Goldblatt it is possible to say that South Korea and North Korea can

but they are not sure exactly what it is unless they can see the whole thing.

be understood as nation states but that the concept of the nation can be applied to the entire Korean Peninsula.

According to Connor (1994, 202), the nation is defined as ‘a group of people who feel that they are ancestrally related. It is the largest group that can command a person’s loyalty because of felt kinship ties; it is, from this perspective, the fully extended family’. A slightly simpler definition has been proposed by Banks (1996, 2) stating, ‘a people inhabiting a given extent of territory, united by shared political institutions and by a community of descent...’ Smith (1991, 11), on the other hand, emphasises the importance of the cultural and historical contexts of nations and notes that ‘*nation is a named human population sharing a historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members*⁷.’ Smith (1998, 178) also made clear divisions to identify the concept of the nation. In Smith’s analytical review, he states that:

By the early twentieth century, the lines of division between the ‘objectivists’ who stressed the role of culture, and more especially language, in the definition and formation of nations, and the ‘subjectivists’ for whom nations are formed by popular will and political action, were well entrenched in European historiography. One consequence of this debate was that for the ‘objectivists’, nations and national sentiment could be found as far back as the tenth century, whereas for ‘subjectivists’ both were products of the eighteenth century (Renan 1882; Tipton 1972; Guenee 1985: 216-20; Guibernau 1996: ch. 1).

As can be seen from these various attempts at definition, there seem to be various components used to describe what a nation is. No matter whether the nation can be defined objectively and subjectively, the concept is comprised of cultural, historical, social, geographical and political aspects that are shared or united by the people, though the relative significance of each component will vary. These definitions of a ‘nation’, however, using the criteria of ‘shared territory or historic memory or ancestral origins’ can be challenged in the 21st century, in a world where answers are being sought concerning the new phenomena of multi-ethnic or multi-cultural societies in the global era. For example, immigration and the establishment of international communities are on the increase in many countries, such as the UK, France, the USA, Canada, and China. The boundaries of nations are more blurred than ever before, and not only in those nations but also in Korea. As this thesis will explore,

⁷ Italics are as used by Smith.

the concept of 'nation' in Korea is getting blurred and ambiguous in the global era, and this is not only caused by internal reasons but there are other external factors we also have to consider and which I will revisit shortly.

Although it is obvious that countries in the 21st century face diverse challenges and questions in defining their nationhood, it should also be remembered that the approaches to understanding them need to respect the distinctive natures and characteristics of each nation which means linear perspectives should be avoided. For example, countries that were once colonies, and whose national identity only began to emerge after they obtained their freedom, are required to be seen in a different context compared to western countries or others which have no legacy of being colonised. Many of these nations are concerned with establishing and shaping their identity which is believed to have disappeared or been diluted over time, and one such country is Korea. After regaining its independence from Japan in 1945, Korea was divided into two different states, the Republic of Korea (South Korea) and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea). It was not only colonialism but also the ideological gap that finally split the nation into two. This adds further layers of complexity and seems to make it even more difficult to consider Korea as one nation with a singular Korean identity than in the case of those countries mentioned above. Not only colonial memory and division make Korea and its identity complex but there are also further factors which shape and influence Korean identity and these are interrogated in the next part of this Chapter.

Returning to the main issue of this part, however, the nation can be understood in a way that draws on all of the pivotal understandings, as compiled by Smith (2004, 17):

The nation is a form that is never finally achieved, but is always being developed, its features are the outcome of incremental cultural, social and political processes. Typically, these processes involve the following.

1. Self-definition – the growth of a sense of 'we' as opposed to 'them', those around us versus outsiders.
2. Myth and memory cultivation – the growth and cultivation of a fund of shared myths, symbols, traditions and memories of one or more culture communities.
3. Development of a uniform public culture – that is, the spread of a distinctive public culture forged from this common heritage to all the members of the community.

4. Territorialisation – the possession of particular historic lands, or ancestral homelands, within recognized borders, and the development of collective attachments to them.
5. Legal standardization – the spread of common customs and laws and their observance by all the members of the community.

What comprises Korea and its identity then? The next section looks at these concerns based on these definitions and understandings of ‘nation’.

The twenty first century Korea: The growth of the sense of national identity

Four distinctive modern events in Korea shape knowledge about the nation and its national identity. Firstly, it seems that other countries have had an enormous impact on Korea’s culture and this, in a way, resulted in shaping Korea’s national identity and nationalism. Secondly, and more particularly, the relation between Korea and Japan has also impacted on Korea’s national consciousness and identity. Thirdly, the national myth of Dangun and the first nation GoJoseon⁸ have strong implications for modern Korean society and identity, manifestation of which can be found in contemporary sports games and drama. The myth and the first nation have also been reinforced more recently through the Chinese East Asia Project⁹. Fourthly, the division between North and South Korea has been heavily explored in modern Korean movies.

Korea and others

Other cultural influences exerted from all around the world should not be forgotten in Korea. It is true that Korean culture has been greatly influenced by western culture, in particular by the period of American control after the Korean War (Lee, K., B., Wagner, E. and et al. 1990) and this western culture, whether in tangible material things or intangible conscious things, seems to be prevalent in contemporary Korea. In his analysis of modernist nationalism in Korea, Go (2003) asserts that there is a serious, on-going identity crisis in Korean society. One of the reasons he gives is the one-way nature of the cultural transmissions constantly received from other nations with little attention being paid to the need for a full understanding of one’s own national identity. It is also worth remembering that national identity can be blurred by the process of cultural assimilation, and could be diluted unintentionally unless people

⁸ See the Glossary

⁹ See the Glossary

fully understand the origins of their identity. As seen below, Korea might have negative national identities as a result of impacts from others.

Certain aspects of Korean history - the recurrent theme of foreign invasions, ambivalence regarding the legacy of the long Choson era, the shame of Japanese colonial domination, and the brief period of U.S. occupation as well as the legacy of South Korean authoritarian leadership - diminished the power of history to generate positive national feeling. (Nelson 2000, 19)

The main argument here is that the nation's existence had been interrupted by external forces, such as Japan and the USA, and this could give rise to certain type of nationalism, which can be negative nationalism, with respect to other countries on their boundaries. At the same time, it has influenced the feelings of Koreans about themselves, making them critical of their own nationhood.

It could be difficult to prove that historical issues have had a direct impact on the negative image that Koreans have of their own nationhood, but to a certain extent these issues can also trigger a sense of national consciousness or provoke argument over the historical facts. As Nelson (2000, 17) says, Korean history can be studied under the dichotomous aspects of 'vulnerability' and 'resistance' to invasions by other countries. In a similar vein, a certain sense of insecurity in the Korean people arising from their history is also reflected in Kwon's work (Kwon 2000). Kwon (2000, 138) states that 'historically, Korea has been used as an overland bridge linking the Asian continent to Japan [...] During the late 19th century and the early 20th century, for instance, Japan and Russia competed against each other for inroads into continental Asia.' Schmid (2002) has also highlighted that the geographical location of Korea meant that it served as a convenient corridor for the two empires, Japan and China, who sought to dominate Asian countries in the 19th and 20th centuries. Inevitably this led Korea into constant historical conflicts with Japan and China. It also meant, however, that the resulting nationalism of the Korean people led them to develop a negative attitude towards other nations who invaded Korea and also to acquire a negative perception of their own identity, which can be related to vulnerability and resistance in Nelson's terms (2000, 17). Having been influenced by several countries historically and culturally, Korea might have a rather negative national consciousness and self-definition, in Smith's terms (1998). Regarding the issue of globalization, which is one of the main characteristics of the 21st century, this self-definition seems

more challenging than ever before. The next issue of Korea's relationship with Japan explains this point further.

Korea and Japan – from territorialisation to public memory

As Smith (1991, 34) articulates in defining the nation, the idea of having a 'uniform public culture' seems applicable in Korea's case.

The Koreans have been slow to change. This is an important clue to the understanding not only of their art but of their whole culture. It is not because they do not like novelties that they have been slow to change, but because they have been unwilling to relinquish the emotional satisfaction connected with their old arts until they are sure that the new will bring them equal comfort. (McCune 1966, 50)

This excerpt may be seen as a very insightful piece of writing by a non-Korean, but it does not seem to be quite correct in the light of present movements in Korean culture. The gate to Japanese culture remained firmly closed right up to the 21st century even though Korea was free from the occupation by the middle of the 20th century. This means that any kind of Japanese cultural influences in modern Korea have been legally limited in the Korean peninsula.

Because of the colonisation of Korea by Japan in the early 20th century, the attitude of Koreans to the Japan is very critical and negative. It is generally believed that Korean identity and culture were threatened by another people, namely the Japanese. The effects of Japanese culture on Korea, and the experience of the colonial period, have reinforced Korea's sense of aggressive nationalism against Japan or, more precisely, about the colonial past.

However, this has been demolished with a wave of cultural exchanges in the 21st century. As of 1 January 2004, the Korean government agreed to open the door to Japanese culture, particularly popular culture, such as animation, music, drama, movies and video games, and stated that no further barriers will remain¹⁰. According to studies conducted in Korea, approximately half of the people think that this

¹⁰ This is the fourth decision to open the door, following the first in 1998, the second in 1999 and the third in 2000. The fifth opening, according to the Korean Ministry of Culture and Tourism, will be re-announced after the fourth opening and in the light of its impact on Korean culture. See The Online Ministry of Culture and Tourism http://www.mct.go.kr/open_content/administrative/civil_infomation/policy_view.jsp. as of 29 July 2006

opening is timely, but more than half of the people think it could lead to a greater Japanese influence on Korean popular culture¹¹. This new policy of ‘opening the cultural door’ could provide opportunities for Korean people to taste Japanese contemporary culture in the context of globalisation, but this seems not to be the main focus of Japan’s influence on Korea’s identity. Although Korea and Japan seem to share an amicable political relationship after the occupation, there are still on-going disputes and controversies between two nations.

The first example is the issue of the sexual abuse of Korean women (forced to be prostitutes for Japanese soldiers) during the Second World War. About 200,000 Korean women were abused by the Japanese and this issue was addressed in 1991 for the first time when those Korean women sued the Japanese government (Nam, Park, et al 2002). Since then the Korean government has tried to find a solution, but the Japanese government has persisted in denying the facts and, until recently, has refused to show proper remorse or apologise (Lee 1997a). This issue became national controversy recently in Korea when a Korean celebrity (Lee, Sung-yeon) had her career ruined by a furious Korean public after she attempted to bring reconciliation between Japan and Korea by organising a nude photographic exhibition of herself of the sexually abused Korean women, entitled, ‘The pain of the sexual slave in the 2nd World War’ (Lim 2004). After this she found herself facing terrible criticism from the Korean public, who condemned her idea as shameful and thoughtless, arguing that this issue could not be solved until proper Japanese apologies were given. Analysing this, Lim (2004) assesses this event as being strongly suggestive of the robust relationship between the Korean people and their national identity and nationalism regarding Japanese colonial legacy. The issue of comfort women was highlighted again in Korea when the Hideaki Kase (2007) mentioned in the on-line journal that ‘U.S. Army records explicitly declare that the comfort women were prostitutes, and found no instances of “kidnapping” by the Japanese authorities. It’s also worth noting that some 40 percent of these women were of Japanese origin.’ This again triggered excessive criticism by the Korean government and public, and what should be noted here is that Korean public feeling about Japan has been influenced by these on-going

¹¹ The Online Daum <http://news.media.daum.net/digital/computer/200309/24/etimesi/v50> as of 25 November 2003 and The Seoul Newspaper, ‘Open the door for Japan?’ 6 January 2005

issues of unresolved history, which have resulted in negative nationalism towards Japan.

The second issue is the Japanese distortion of history in textbooks produced by private companies (Lee 2000a). This began in the 1980s, and the problem is that, Lee argues, the Japanese do not provide a balanced historic view in their textbooks of the Second World War in Asian countries. In particular, they have justified their colonization and their practices by referring to the principle of 'imperialism'. The Korean and Chinese Governments criticized this attitude and demanded that the Japanese admit to what they did during this time. However, very recently in 2005, one of the private companies publishing Japanese textbooks again produced 'distorted'¹² textbooks and, again, this was bitterly criticized by Korea and China¹³. The textbook affair is one of many which has provoked severe criticism by the Korean Government and people of the Japanese perspective on history (Jin 2005) and so this again could result in negative images of Japan in Korea.

Thirdly, there is the territorial issue over 'Dokdo (Dok-Islands)', which is located between Korea and Japan in the eastern sea (Figure 1.3). Sporadically, the Japanese have raised historical issues such as that of Dok-Islands, and the Korean Government and people have consistently condemned Japan's non-historic claims¹⁴. Dokdo has officially been Korean territory since 1953¹⁵ with its main value being that of fishing in the surrounding waters. The islands were annexed by Japan in 1905, five years before Korea was annexed by Japan. Korea then sent coastguards there in 1953, after the Korean War in 1953. During the Japanese occupation, Dok-Islands were called 'Takeshima' (Japanese name, meaning Bamboo islands) and, even after the liberation, Japan insisted that it had a right to the territory of Dok-Islands¹⁶. Goizmi Junichiro, the previous Japanese Prime Minister, was criticized in Korea after insisting, in his

¹² This is the word used by the Korean and Chinese Governments.

¹³ This criticism and further research have been actively carried out by several institutions in Korea. More useful information can be found in The Academy of Korean Studies, and in particular The Centre for Information on Korean Culture. Also the National Assembly Library has organised an interpretive centre for the history of the book distortion and provides in-depth information and resources to support it. See The Online National Assembly Library http://www.nanet.go.kr/japan/h_fact/fact.html

¹⁴ See further information in Official Website of Republic of Korea http://www.korea.net/News/Issues/issueView.asp?issue_no=45 Accessed on 15 June 2007.

¹⁵ BBC On line News 'South Korea survey angers Japan' on 3 July 2006. Accessed on 26 March 2007.

¹⁶ There are several studies on this and more judicious examples can be obtained from The Centre for Information on Korean Culture, The Online ikorea <http://www.ikorea.ac.kr> as of 29 July 2006

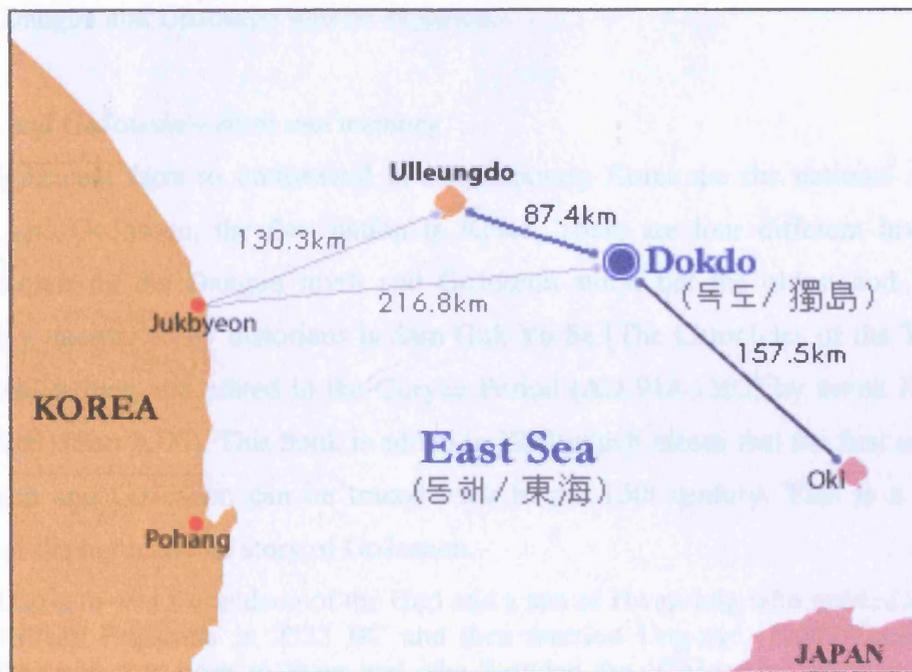
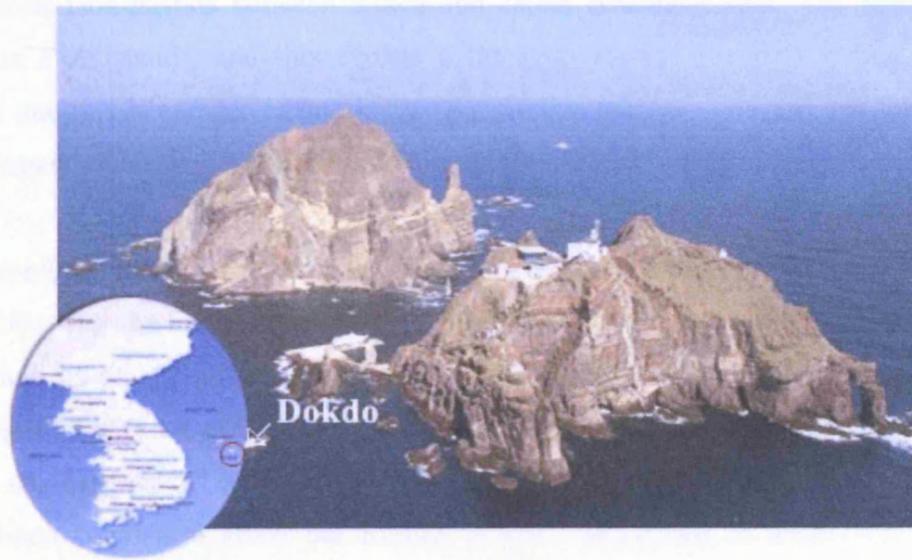


Figure 1.3 Dokdo (sourced from the Republic of Korea Official Website)

first speech of 2004, that 'Takeshima' formed part of the territory of Japan. Territorialisation is one of the conforming ideas of being one nation (Smith 2004) and the issue of Dok-Islands between Korea and Japan articulates this. The Japanese claims on Dok-Islands, and this evokes a threat in Korean people's minds over territory, and this is another example showing Korean people's concern and anxiety against Japan.

There have been many demonstrations against Japan over such issues throughout the period following the liberation from Japan, and some people are concerned that this could spoil diplomatic relations between the two countries¹⁷. These three issues are still a significant cause of controversy between the two countries, and they seem to trigger an aggressive nationalism, directed particularly against Japan. This phenomenon could also affect the Korean people's perception of themselves, and reflect a sense of historical insecurity and inferiority in relation to other nations. Thirdly Dangun and GoJoseon will be explored.

Dangun and GoJoseon – myth and memory

Other significant facts to understand in contemporary Korea are the national myth Dangun and GoJoseon, the first nation in Korea. There are four different historic books containing the Dangun myth and GoJoseon story, but the oldest and most commonly interpreted by historians is Sam Guk Yu Sa [The Chronicles of the Three Kingdoms] written and edited in the Goryeo Period (AD 918-1392) by monk Il-yon (1206-1289) (Seo 2000). This book is edited in 1281 which means that the first record of Dangun and GoJoseon can be traced back to the 13th century. This is a brief version of the myth and its story of GoJoseon.

Dan-gun was a grandson of the God and a son of Hwan-ung who arrived in the Korean Peninsula in 2333 BC and then married Ung-nye (Bear-Woman)¹⁸. Dan-gun was born to them and s/he founded the 'GoJoseon', of which the main doctrine was 'Hong-Ik-In-Gan (Humanitarianism)'. This was the 'beginning' of Korea and he is the first known Korean progenitor and the ancestor of the Korean people, who built up Old Joseon (GoJoseon), the first nation on Korean territory, and the origin of the Korean nation, in 2333 BC in the area of the Liao and Taedong rivers, which is in the northern part of Korea. [The Chronicles of the Three Kingdoms, Volume 1, GoJoseon]

¹⁷ In, K.,J 'Relationship between Korea and Japan', *Yonhap News*, 25 April 2006

¹⁸ This Bear-Woman symbolises the shamanism of the ancient people who worshipped the Bear as their religion.

This Dangun is believed to be the leader of GoJoseon (Old Joseon), which existed in the Bronze Age and is believed to have been based near Pyeong-Yang, the capital of North Korea¹⁹. Dangun had the characteristics of both a politician and a religious chief but more precisely, Dangun is/was considered to be a 'celestial being' (Seo 2000, 123). This is one of the most widely believed national myth of Korea and could form the basis of the Koreans' sense of unity and homogeneity, implying that all Koreans since Dangun and GoJoseon have originated from the same clan or tribe. In contemporary Korea, this myth, and GoJoseon, particularly appealed during the 2002 World Cup and in modern drama.

Many sociologists have discussed the influence of the Korean national football supporters - the 'Red Devils' - from diverse perspectives (Figure 1.4). For example, their ability to create a sense of national unity such as 'we are one' (Lee 2002a) and to contribute to the construction of a new nationalism (Tak 2004) has been the main focus of the social studies in Korea after 2002. What is certain, according to Choi (2002), is that the 'Red Devils' made a big impression all over the world by their performance during the 2002 World Cup in Korea and Japan. The younger generation of 10 to 20 year olds, who are regarded as being detached from any sense of national identity (Lee 2005a), also became enormously involved with the squad. As Choi (2002) explained, such sports fervour cannot define a nation's nationalism and identity and is more likely to be a temporary effect of a major event. However, it cannot be denied that the 2002 World Cup gave rise to a great deal of discussion with respect to its effects on the nation's sense of identity. Arguing that sports events are relevant to national and ethnic identities, MacClancy (1996, 2) asserts that 'they (sports) are vehicles of identity, providing people with a sense of difference and a way of classifying themselves and others, whether latitudinally or hierarchically.' One of the examples, according to MacClancy, is adult football fans that support their own regional football club and the 'Red Devils' could exemplify this. Therefore, the 2002 World Cup in Korea and Japan gave a good opportunity to re-examine Korea's national identity and nationalism in the context of a modern event (Lee 2003a, Park 2002a, Park 2002b).

¹⁹ The location of GoJoseon is still controversial. I am not going to analyse deep details of which theory is proper as it is too much depended on the archaeological academic research, but it has to be highlighted that Dangun and GoJoseon are still influential research areas in both Koreas.



Figure 1.4 Photo of the Red Devils making a Korean flag during the World Cup Match (sourced from Naver image)

Interestingly, the World Cup seems to be discussed in terms of the national mythical figure of Dangun. When France failed to get through the second round of the 2002 World Cup, Song (2002) suggested the idea of a 'Curse of Dangun'. Song (2002) pointed out that France and The Netherlands which scored nil against the Korean team in 2002 World Cup must have been cursed by the national progenitor, Dangun, even though both had scored five in the previous World Cup in 1998 and the Confederation Cup in 2001 against Korea. Those teams did not even qualify for the next World Cup (The Netherlands) or get through the second round (France). More interestingly, it seems that this curse was expected to have a bright side for the World Cup in 2006, which is a 'Celebration of Dangun'. Park (2006) named the article: 'Is there a 'Celebration of Dangun' for this World Cup as the teams who draw with or lose against Korea have good records?'²⁰ Park (2006) suggested that the Curse had been transformed into a Celebration, illustrated by the fact that France, which obtained a tie with the Korean team this time in 2006, had been successful. More interestingly Park (2006) mentioned other football games, such as the 2000 Olympic Games, to illustrate such a 'Celebration' for other sports teams. One example is Chile, who lost against Korea in the events of the 2000 Olympics but whose defeat was linked to the 'Celebration of Dangun' when Chile won an Olympic Bronze Medal. It seems that Park (2006) and Song (2002) believed 'Where there is a Korea, there is a victory or a defeat, and there is Dangun.' As seen above, therefore, it is not too much to say that Dangun is deeply involved in modern Korean society.

Another unavoidable example is television programmes, such as period dramas with stories about ancient Kingdoms related to the GoJoseon. Korea's main three broadcasting systems, Korean Broadcasting Systems (KBS), Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation (MBC), and Seoul Broadcasting System (SBS) all produced dramas based on the stories of mythical heroes, legends, or national sagas of Goguryeo and Balhae which are subsequent Kingdoms of GoJoseon (Figure 1.5). Using drama and communication theories, Lawrence Kincaid (2002, 142) explains that 'Drama has more effect on an audience than many other forms of communication because it tells an engaging story, it involves the audience emotionally, and it depicts changes in characters with whom the audience identifies'. Alasuutari (1992) said that period

²⁰ Exact quote from the article written by Park.



Figure 1.5 Daejoyoung who erected Balhae in KBS Drama ‘DaeJoyoung’ (Sourced from KBS)



Figure 1.5 Jumong who erected Goguryeo in MBC Drama ‘Jumong’ (Sourced from MBC)



Figure 1.5 Story about Goguryeo Hero in SBS Drama ‘Yongaesomun’ (Sourced from SBS)

drama is of a more realistic nature than the romantic soap, and that this is the attraction for the viewers. Hoijer (1998) also comments that audiences react more to social realist fiction than to glamorous stories, because the plot is more realistic.

Unsurprisingly these period dramas in Korea are all very popular and particularly the landmark drama 'Jumong' from MBC. This was the top drama and ran from May 2006 to March 2007. It attracted more than 50% of audiences in its final series. Dhoest (2007, 62) mentioned that 'if television fiction has any relation with national identity, it is primarily by representing, and thus producing, discourses about the nation – or to draw on Anderson, by producing images of an imagined community'. So as Dhoest (2007) asserts, media can be used to contribute to national unity, providing shared images and experiences, unifying viewers from diverse backgrounds. There are criticisms of these period and nationalistic dramas as well. As Corner (1999, 97) notes, some critics on television said that 'it blurs different orders of knowledge' with 'little regard for the procedures of knowledge production and the protocols of evidence and argument.' Literature critic Kang (2006) and Nam (2006) also critically analysed the recent trends in Korean period dramas and expressed concerns that the strong nationalism embodied in the dramatic plot was without historic foundation. Kang (2006) and Nam (2006) both argued that the play was designed to promote nationalism. Although there are considerable concerns with these dramas, what this demonstrates is that they are all based on, or related to, the GoJoseon history and this clearly shows the significance of GoJoseon in Korean people's national identity.

My last example is the Chinese East Asia Project, which is also related to GoJoseon but it is distinctive as there is a territory involved. In 2002, China started a history project involving the area of north-eastern China, which included the study of the ancient Korean history of GoJoseon, and kingdoms of Goguryeo and Balhae. They insisted that GoJoseon and the other two kingdoms in this particular historic period in Korea, which were located in the northern area of the Korean territory, were historically part of their colonized provinces. This has worried Korean historians and historical institutions who have taken the issue very seriously. Forums and studies in an attempt to address this project and problems have been made²¹. The main argument

²¹ More information available on On-Line www.lovegoguryeo.com and www.historyworld.org

of these academics is that if Korea loses the history of GoJoseon it would imply that the first nation being of Korea did not arise there and, consequently, the fundamental identity of Koreans would be threatened. At the same time the founder of Korea, Dangun, even though Dangun is a mythical figure, can be regarded as having never-existed in Korean history, along with the lost GoJoseon. Also if Goguryeo is absorbed into the history of China, Korea would lose its links with this historical kingdom, and this would have an extensive impact on ancient Korean history and on the current Korean people's sense of national identity (Lee 2005b, Yun 2004, Ju 2001).

The Korean Government held back from planning any countermeasures officially, since the Chinese Government had officially asserted that it had only been undertaken for academic purposes in order to explore the history of the particular area²². However, four ways of dealing with the Project are suggested (Internal Document; The Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Korea 2005).

1. Creating a co-operational structure such as the National Museum or Cultural Heritage Administration and promoting the research on this issue
2. Organisation and support of public sites
3. Academic research and conferences joint with Mongolia, Russia, Vietnam and Japan
4. Promotion of North Korea's Goguryeo sites and international marketing of the UNESCO World Heritage

The Chinese Project terminated in 2007 after five years, but the official reports are held only by the Chinese Government and this indicates the delicacy and controversy of the project. Why did the government plan these four resolutions? And why the excessive interest from academics over this project? This is because the Chinese Project seems all related to one main focal issue of GoJoseon and Dangun which are rooted to Korea's national identity. Therefore, the World Cup, period television dramas, and the issues of the Chinese Projects are all hotly debated and in the central focus of contemporary Korea. The preoccupation with those issues suggests that the national myth Dangun and the first nation GoJoseon are deeply embedded in Korean identity and national consciousness. Also the controversy in GoJoseon and its related kingdoms from Goguryeo to Balhae (Rho 2000, Song 2004) are all concerned with one nation's territorialisation as Smith (2004) elaborated, so it is not surprising that

²² Jeong, J., H. The Hanguk Ilbo, 'Korean Government and the Chinese Project', as of 8 September 2006

Dangun and GoJoseon are strongly linked with Korea's nationhood. There is one final issue in Korea; the division between north and south Korea and the contemporary movies.

One homogeneous Korea but not one legal standardisation

As with its robust bond with Dangun and GoJoseon, the idea of homogeneity in Korea is another public view over its identity and the concept of one nation. As Smith (2004) discusses, one legal standardisation is one way to identify as one nation, but this cannot be applied to contemporary Korea, although they believe they are one cognate nation. The same legal process and practices cannot be the case for North and South Korea anymore. This ideological devolution has been most vividly shown in recent Korean movies.

There are more recent examples of the relationship between movies and the public's national identity. According to a survey, people in six major cities each watched more than seven Korean movies in 2003²³, and so watching movies is one of the most popular cultural activities in Korea and the success of these (nationalistic) movies appears to show that national identity issues are becoming more significant in Korean contemporary society. By analysing the contemporary popular culture of Korea, Go (2003) attempts to identify the elements that have the greatest influence on the construction of nationalism and national identity for the Korean public. The study of Korean movies is a good way of understanding public and national identity and nationalism, according to Go (2003). 'Se-Pyon-Je (Korean Opera)', 'Life of Hollywood Kids' and 'Flowers' are examples used as illustrations by Go (2003) because all of them deal with big dilemmas in the society of South Korea: loss of traditions and the strong emotional attachment to what has been lost in 'Se-Pyon-Je' (1993); the prevalence of western culture in South Korea and people's unawareness of it in 'Life of Hollywood Kids' (1994); and the tragedy of anti-communist society in 'Flowers' (1996). After the movie 'Flowers', the issue of divisions has been a popular theme in subsequent film making. Park (2004) analyses the success of Korean movies about the Korean War (Taegukgi²⁴) and about South Korea spying against North

²³ The Online Daum <http://ucc.media.daum.net/PrintPage/news/culture/art/200401/19/yon>, 19 January 2004

²⁴ Particular Korean words which are historic and unique were translated into English directly, and the

Korea (Silmido) and then argues that those movies reflect a strong sense of national identity. Both of these movies attracted more than ten million viewers, nearly a quarter of the Korean population, even more than for 'The Lord of the Rings'. 'Silmido' and 'Taegukgi' were applauded by critics and audiences as sending a strong message about a divided Korea and national identity when they were released in 2003.

However, the response was not always so complimentary for more recent nationalistic movies. Three years after 'Silmido', its director filmed 'Korea Peninsula' in 2006. Containing a nationalistic message, it is a fictional story in which Korean people who live in the 21st century struggle to stop the annexation with Japan in the early 20th century. Mun (2006) criticised the movie for not posing the right questions or providing answers concerning the positive nationalism of Korea. They considered the movie to be very nationalistic and argued that, in one sense, it 'could be dangerous' by justifying aggression and offences towards other countries, namely Japan and USA. By the same token, this movie was not as successful as many of the other 2003 movies were, suggesting that the Korean people held similar attitudes to the critics. These changing attitudes from 2003 to 2006 towards similar stories about the nation are very interesting, because they suggest that a more analytical and objective attitude to nationalism is developing. What should be remembered though, is that the issue of the division of Korea into two separate countries is of strong interest to Korean people. It is not only because of the inapplicable legal standardisation as one nation but because the concept of homogenous and cognate Korean people has been broken as a result of the division.

As discussed above, the most salient issues relating to Korean nationalism and national identity are distinctively linked with modern events, appearing open towards other influences from diverse nations, and also there is the concern of the effect of negative nationalism or self-conscious negativism on national identity. This self-definition as one nation is also deeply related to the relationship with Japan and the modern conflicts between two countries. Dangun and GoJoseon have also been proved to have a robust connection to the Korean identity and are evident in period dramas, sports event and Chinese academic project. Division of north and south is

meanings are followed after the words.

another considerable identity-related issue in Korea as it plays against the concept of one nation.

Many studies to date have concentrated mainly on the negative aspects of Korean identity issues and nationalism, rather than producing affirmative and reflective advice for further studies. It can be argued that in the 21st century, Koreans face the most challenging period for defining their nationhood and setting their national identity, given the diverse modern events that have happened to contemporary Korea. Korean nationalism and national identity are still in question, and Koreans need to determine where they are or where they need to go. There will be many different attempts to answer the questions that Koreans face now, but it is certain that more academic research from a social science perspective could provide a richer comprehension of Korean identity and nationalism covering diverse and cross-cultural aspects. Although the essential ideas linked to the Korean identity and nationhood have been discussed here as seen through modern and contemporary events, it seems useful to look at them in more detail in order to understand the theoretical in-depth meanings and also to scrutinise them in the New National Museum of Korea. The next Chapter then, starts with the theoretical reviews of nation and nationalism and then focuses on greater discussions of Korea and its national identity. At the end of the next Chapter, the research outlines will have been set.

Chapter 2

Korea: National Identity and a new Museum

Introduction

As has been discussed in Chapter One, Korea's identity can be understood to have multiple, interlinked characteristics, embodying from Dangun to the division between North and South Korea. In order to understand Korean identity in the New National Museum of Korea, however, it is also important to analyse these characteristics in more detail. This Chapter first of all explores a range of theories of identity and nationalism and then attempts to understand Korean identity in relation to the key concepts that emerge from this literature review. Finally, based on the foci of nationalism and national identity in Korea, this New National Museum of Korea and its history will be discussed.

According to Kohn's arguments (1967), nationalism in non-Western countries is surrealistic in that it is mostly related to myths, dreams and future prospects rather than connected to the present day. The foci of Kohn's analysis of the non-Western world are that the nation was constructed centred on the concept of irrational and pre-civilized folk which is an idealistic or a mystery. However, given the rapid rate of change taking place throughout the world, particularly in Asian countries, it would be difficult to conjure up a single category that would apply to the whole of the non-Western world, since that includes so many nations, and each of them has a distinct history and their own cultural character. For example, it could be said that the people of Korea might be focusing their nationalism on an irrational and pre-civilized folk concept. Recent on-going disputes over the question of nationalism in Korea, however, indicate that the issue seems to be more complicated than it looks, tending to engender polysemous understandings.

The binary concepts concerning western and non-western countries in terms of the understanding of 'national identity' and 'nationalism' are no longer valid, considering the complexity of the world and its race towards globalisation, and so nationalism or national identity has different boundaries for those Asian countries. The next part

therefore explores the theories of national identity and nationalism with reference to key theorists in the field and attempts to discern key issues within the debates.

National Identity: The Theoretical Paradigm

There have been many attempts to define what national identity and nationalism are. Many academics have taken an interest in these subjects and the concepts are contested areas that need to be defined. This is now theoretically reviewed before highlighting the institutionalised national identity and nationalism in the New National Museum of Korea.

Primordialism and Perennialism

Smith (2004) has tried to analyse the various debates surrounding the concepts of the nation and nationalism, and has defined the classical approaches to nationalism as primordialism and perennialism. Smith's most recent work (2004, 5) describes primordialists as those who are, 'generally thought to regard nations as 'substantial' and 'natural', possessed of 'essences' and 'organic' qualities, terms with negative connotations of inherent biological constraint and ahistorical fixity 'outside time''. Criticising the ahistorical approaches of the primordialists who were attached to the 'nature-ness' of the nation, Smith (2004, 8) pointed out that 'they have neglected many other aspects of ethnicity and nationalism'. When Smith (2001, 49) describes the perennialist idea of the nation that boomed before the Second World War, he identified that perennialists believe that the nation 'had always existed in every period of history, and that many nations existed from time immemorial [...] It is probably fair to say that many members of the public hold a perennialist view to this day, especially where their own nations are concerned'.

It seems that primordialists and perennialists see the concept of the nation as an organic and natural entity in relation to an ethnic group, but there are limits to its application in the case of some new countries, which have very little connectivity with their ethnic group in their motherland. Such would be the case, for example, of the United States, New Zealand, Canada and Australia which, generally speaking, started to formulate their national entity on the basis of immigration from another continent. However, as perennialism is centred on the idea of ethnicity, some nations do recognise themselves in this context. Koreans are one example of a people who

predominantly view their nation in a perennialistic way in their concept of homogeneity and this is going to be explored further in later this Chapter.

Modernism

Modernism views nationalism in a very different context, claiming that that 'nationalism, nation-states, and even nations themselves, are products of modern historical developments' (Day and Thompson 2004, 41). In their comprehensive study, Day and Thompson (2004) describe the different research trends, ranging from the Marxist approach to liberal nationalism. Of these, the Marxist tradition, for example, tries to define the characteristics of nationalism as it arose during the 18th and 19th centuries in the context of the sociological class system of Marx and Engels. This can be seen from the following extract from their Manifesto:

The Bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. To the great chagrin of reactionists it has drawn from under the feet of industry the national ground on which it stood. [...] In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal interdependence of nations. And as in material, so in intellectual production. The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible (The Manifesto of the Communist Party, 1848). (Day and Thompson 2004, 18)

An extensive study by Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (1984), is also considered to provide one of the leading theories of the modernist view. Anderson saw the nation as an accumulation of cultural processes which occurs in people's imagination and so the nation is something culturally constructed.

Smith (1998) argues that the modernist approach has emerged since nation-building was adopted by Asian and African countries in order to counter the colonial past in their national history, and that this has gained support since the 1960s. So there are some who believe that nationalism has been raised in Korea during the Japanese occupation. As revealed in Chapter One, Korea still has a strong anxiety surrounding Japan as a result of its history and this influences Korean identity. This modernist view is therefore highly relevant to understanding Korean nationhood too.

Ethno-symbolism

More or less opposite to the idea of modernity is the historical ethno-symbolist idea. A key theorist supporting the ethno-symbolic approach is Anthony Smith. Understanding the current tendency to view nationalism in a modernistic way, the main argument of Smith (1991) is that the nation existed before nationalism in a shadowy, primordial or vague shape. Smith (1991, 44) said, '[B]efore the period leading up to the French Revolution we have only fleeting expressions of a national sentiment, and vague intimations of the central ideas of nationalism, with its emphasis on the autonomy of culturally distinctive nations'. Smith (2004, 52) discerns clearly the distinctions between modernism and nationalism, stating that 'the myth of the 'modern nation' greatly exaggerates the impact of modern conditions of industry, capitalism and bureaucracy on the nature and role of nations today'. What is then, the main concept of ethno-symbolism? It is worth quoting fully Smith's definition of ethno-symbolism before scrutinising it. Ethno-symbolism seeks:

to uncover the symbolic legacy of ethnic identities for particular nations, and to show how modern nationalisms and nations rediscover and reinterpret the symbols, myths, memories, values and traditions of their ethno-histories, as they face the problems of modernity. Here too the attempts by Armstrong, Hutchinson and myself to trace the role of myths, symbols, values and memories in generating ethnic and national attachments and forging cultural and social networks, have added to our appreciation of the subjective and historical dimensions of nations and nationalism. This is matched by a parallel concern with investigating the ways in which nationalists have rediscovered and used the ethno-symbolic repertoire for national ends, in particular the myths and memories of ethnic election, sacred territory, collective destiny and the golden age (Smith 1998, 224).

Having pointed out the distinctions between primordialists and perennialists, and partially accommodating modernist ideas of the nation and nationalism, the ethno-symbolists perceive the nation as having existed before nationalism and its ties into the ethnic community through its symbols, myth and history. It seems that a demotic understanding of nationalism and national identity in Korea can be encapsulated in the ethno-symbolic sense. One of the reasons for this is the crucial myth of Dangun and GoJoseon, and this can be seen as a sign of the judicious relationship between Korea's nationalism and its myth in the context of ethno-symbolism.

Banal Nationalism

According to Smith (1998, 225), banal nation and nationalism can be seen as the post-modern paradigm of recent tendencies. Smith explained that:

Postmodern analyses have revealed the fragmentation of contemporary national identities, and suggest the advent of a new 'post-national' order of identity politics and global culture. Analyses of such postmodern themes as fragmentation, feminism and globalisation can be seen as continuations of components of the modernist paradigm. Some of them, notably those of Bhabha, Chatterjee and Yuval-Davis, have embraced a 'postmodernist' deconstructionism, whereas others – for example, those of Mosse, Schlesinger, Kandiyoti, Brubaker and Billig – are intent on exploring novel postmodern dimensions. Though they may eschew a more general theory of nationalism, they embody significant advances in our understanding of the dynamics of identity in plural Western societies.

Billig (1995), who focused particularly on the idea of the national flag, goes on to say that national identity is embodied in things that are all around us in our everyday life. The national logo, badges, fashion objects, maps, anthems and even banknotes and so on mean that people are always surrounded by symbolic objects which provide them, consciously or unconsciously, with an image of national identity. Billig (1995, 61-69) asserts that national identity is embodied in social life and is 'more than an inner psychological state or an individual self definition: it is a form of life which is daily lived.' Another crucial figure is Edensor (2002, 17), who emphasises that 'national identity is grounded in the everyday, in the mundane details of social interaction, habits, routines and practical knowledge.'

Banal nationalism is the most interesting point we have to bear in mind when seeking to understand contemporary Korea. As shown in Chapter One, Korean society is facing a protean paradigm of nationalism and national identity which can be identified from elements of banal nationalism. The historical ethno-symbolist elucidates whether there is a link between the nation and the ethnic group, and Dangun and GoJoseon seem to deeply relate to the 'ethno-symbolic' Korea. In the mean time, the modernist believes that the nation and nationalism are created as a result of historical processes, and that the nation would not exist unless nationalism made it work. This is applicable to the case of Korea which will be shortly revisited next part. More strongly bonded with the ethnic relations, perennialism is another pivotal protagonist to elucidate Korean identity.

It can be hard to decide which theory would be the most appropriate to illuminate and to grasp a particular nation's nationalism or identity. This is particularly difficult in the case of Korea, as none of them encapsulate all of Korea's complex history and culture. Other Asian nations, such as Japan, China, India or South East Asian countries have been researched, but with the focus on the anti-colonial or anti-imperial nationalism that arose after the Second World War. In one sense, research on Korean identity and its nationalism is too intricate to elucidate, but it must also be said that it has suffered from a notorious lack of understanding on the part of the academic world. The next part then, will investigate Korean identity based on the theoretical views discussed above.

Defining Korean identity

Seo (2003) demonstrates that the various problems faced by Korean society can be related to a lack of, or crisis in, national identity, meaning that many Koreans cannot really identify or understand what their national identity or nationalism is. It is important to throw light on what Korean identity is, but the first priority must be given to the identification of the paradigms that will be used to understand Korean identity and nationalism

Perennialism is one of the most appropriate concepts for analysing Korea and its nationalism, because of Korea's high interest on the concept of homogeneity, ethnic origin and roots. As Gu (1992) points out in her work, Korean identity has connected to its homogeneity and Kim Hogarth (1999) also described the shamanistic culture of Korea in relation to homogeneity critically with the examples of Dangun myth and its meaning.

However, negative connotations have been found by some scholars. Using Pak's theories (1997) of nationalism in Korea, Jeon (2002) supports the idea of a similarity between the nationalisms in Germany and Korea, both of which endorsed the concept of perennialism, and felt that this was the biggest risk inherent in Korea's nationalism. Both of them analysed Korea's education system with respect to history education, and concluded that the concept of the nation had been firmly embodied in the text books to promote or to educate the people about the nation's identity in the perennial context. Jeon (2002) and Pak (1997) demonstrate, however, that it is not true that the

nation has existed perennially. They make the point that there is a close parallel with Nazi propaganda in this view, leading people to believe that their nation was a divine entity which is a dangerous concept. Then what are the modernists' views on Korea?

Korean researchers and academics studying nationalism appear to have been highly influenced by Hobsbawm's work (1992) on 'Nations and nationalism since 1780: programme, myth, reality'. These include Hong (1999), Lee (1999) and Seo (1990) who identified three different phases of Korean nationalism: 1876 to 1910, the Great Korean Empire; 1910 to 1945, nationalism under Japanese rule; 1945 to the present, nationalism following independence. The period between 1876 and 1910 was a period of autonomy from other countries, and modernisation. The Enlightenment movement, the Donghak peasant movement (to resist corruption and foreign powers in Korea) and the Wijeongchucksa movement (Save ours for good, and exclude others for bad) are the main movements which were typical of Korea and its nationalism in this period. The Enlightenment was seeking the modernisation of Korea, whereas the other two were devoted to preserving its autonomy. Jeon (2002) believed that, although none of these movements were successful, they could be good indicators of the early emergence of nationalism in Korea. Taking up Benedict Anderson's point (1984) about the production of mass circulation newspapers, Schmid (2002) also perceived that nationalism emerged in Korea as a novel concept during the Japanese colonial period, as a tool of protest against the occupation.

The above discussion shows that modernism can only provide a partial understanding of Korean nationalism but the main ideas of the modernists seem to play a pivotal role in scrutinising Korean nationalism in relation to the Japanese occupation and its modern implications on contemporary Korean society. There is also another crucial point to be discerned, which is ethno-symbolism.

As Smith (1986) asserts, the sharing of an ethnic core is a condition that is common to perennialism and ethno-symbolism. It cannot be denied that the ethnic ties implied here by Smith are not the main, or the only, factors for understanding the nature of the nation, given that there are many nations which have been constituted on the basis of more complicated concepts. At the same time, however, the concept most frequently

used in the search for Korean identity and nationalism is Dangun and GoJoseon which is the ethno-symbolic nature of Korea. Smith (1986, 202) asserts that

in the confusion and rootlessness of the modern world, ethnic mythologies and symbolisms can restore the collective heritage and explain 'who we are' to ourselves and to others, by clearly demarcating what is authentically 'ours' from what is alien, in much the same way that traditional religions distinguished the sacred from the profane.

In that context, the cases of Dangun and GoJoseon could help Korean people to perceive their origins and to differentiate themselves from other nations. Unbroken linkage with, and the influence of the ancient nations on present day Korea could demonstrate the significance of ethnic ties for modern nations in accordance with Smith's historical ethno-symbolist approach. Finally, banal nationalism in modern Korea needs to be articulated.

Park (2003) seems to support the concept of banal nationalism using examples of contemporary popular culture in Korea that are related to nationalism and national identity. His critical point is that popular culture is in the process of construction and is subject to change in the dynamic and fluid modern society. In his research he seeks to show that there are traces of ethnic influences in present day Korea, so he tries to make a bridge between Korea's ethnicity and contemporary nationalistic movements. Park (2003) stressed that Korea's national identity is facing a new wave of influences, as demonstrated in popular cultures through movies, sports events, dramas and even the use of the national flag in fashion. Although Park (2003) insists that banal nationalism will emerge from the popular culture, his main argument could lead to the conclusion that nationalism and national identity cannot exist in isolation from the history and the mythical symbolisms of the country.

It could be said, therefore, that nationalism and national identity can be examined from several different perspectives in Korea, ranging from the historic ethno-symbolist to the banal, including the modernist and perennialist or primordialist trends. The definitions of national identity vary, and can be widely different, as already discussed. Jenkins (1996, 190) said that 'identity is a process, not an essence, which is continually being remade in consistent ways, through an *'internal-external dialectic'* involving a simultaneous synthesis of internal self-definition and one's ascription by others'. National identity is mainly composed with a sense of historical memory and

cultural matrix, at the same time and within the same territorial boundary. In addition, national identity is a fluid concept, and can be changed by contact with the cultures of other nations (external factors) or by internal factors that motivate the population to re-think their concept of the nation itself.

As Jeon defined (2002), 20th century Korean history is all about the history of nationalism. Having been colonised for thirty five years and split for more than half a century, with an authoritarian government dictatorship focusing on military power, nationalism was treated as the most controversial and pivotal discourse in Korea (Jeon 2002). So the issue of the nation, national identity and nationalism is difficult, contested and elusive in Korea. In particular, the historic memory and cultural matrix seem to need an authoritative venue where those particular concerns can be eloquently displayed.

It is for this reason that the New National Museum of Korea, as a historic and cultural reservoir, was chosen for this research, and its story will be described in Chapters Four and Five. What kinds of features and characteristics of national identity and nation have been constructed within the New National Museum of Korea, and how do visitors see the nation in the exhibitions? Before looking at these issues, the next part of this Chapter looks at the history of the National Museum of Korea in general within the concept of nationalism in order to understand the brand New National Museum of Korea.

The National Museum of Korea and nationalism

The New National Museum of Korea (Figure 2.1) opened on 28 October 2005 after 10 years of intensive preparation. All six Galleries have been installed which include Archaeological Gallery, History Gallery (in the first floor), Korean Art Gallery 1 and Donation Gallery (second floor), and Asian Art Gallery and Korean Art Gallery 2 (third floor). The entire site area is 307,227 m² and exhibition spaces are 26,781.25 m². Korean Art Gallery 1 contains Lacquer ware, Buddhist Painting, Calligraphy and second Art Gallery includes Buddhist Sculptures, Metal Art and Ceramics. The first floor galleries are the largest as the Archaeological Gallery is 3,284 m² and History Gallery is 4,401.59 m². Apart from the Archaeological Gallery which deploys a



Figure 2.1 The New National Museum of Korea

chronological structure, the other Galleries all conform to the thematic approach. In its size, this New National Museum of Korea claims to be the sixth largest museum in the world.

'[N]ational museums can be understood to be 'for the nation' in terms of being perceived as a valuable asset for the national public to see and visit but not necessarily needing to hold collections which are representative or 'reflective of the nation''. This is the first condition to be a national museum in Mason's (2005b, 11) terms. Korea's New National Museum follows this condition and it also contains mainly Korean collections. As Mason (2005b) points out, museums (or equivalent facilities in one nation) can be used in the statement 'about the standing of a particular nation' and in a way the museum can be seen as a 'calling card – a means of announcing the 'arrival' of a nation at a certain level of cultural or educational sophistication'. As seen in the opening statement made by the Korean President Roh on 28 October 2005, this calling-card idea has been introduced by a 'museum for the nation Korea and its pride'. Mason's (2005b, 11) second condition for being a national museum is found in the protocol of 'nation-in-miniature' which is, in her own terms, contrary to the first point and it is that 'museums should be explicitly representative of the nation in an ethnographic style; in the case they collect or represent that which is considered to be typically national whether it be Swedish, German, or Welsh.' The New National Museum of Korea may also qualify on these terms as the main collections are focused on Korea itself as explained above, except the Asian Gallery²⁵. However, the main characteristics of this Museum are certainly primarily concerned with Korea itself so, as Mason (2005b, 11) indicates, there are certain difficulties involved because 'it always involves selectiveness over which elements of the nation are deemed appropriate to be celebrated and legitimised'. What kind of picture is the most important in terms of narrating the nation in the museum is obviously a complex question to answer. However, in the case of the Korean museums, it is very much lined up with history including archaeology and art collections. It is even found in the names of Galleries and their collections, such as Archaeology/History and Art history

²⁵ There are six halls in the Asian Arts Gallery; Indonesian Art, Central Asian Art, Chinese Art, Nangnang Remains, Relics from Sinan Seabed, Japanese Art. According to the official Website, it introduced the Asian Art Gallery as such; 'In the Asian Arts Gallery visitors can gain an understanding of both the common and diverse features of Asian cultures and appreciate the characteristics of the various cultures in Asia.' Accessed on 22 April 2007 On Line The New National Museum of Korea http://www.museum.go.kr/eng/display/sub_01_05.jsp

galleries. So the selectiveness of the Korean Museums is heavily focused on the Archaeology, History and Art.

In many ways, therefore, the New National Museum of Korea is narrating and presenting Korea's identity and nationhood. What seems interesting in this museum is that it is complicated but ultimately related to political and nationalistic agendas throughout its history. This is found in Chung's comprehensive study (2003) on history of the National Museum of Korea and its relation to nationalism. Discussing the New Museum's location in Yongsan where the US military base was located, more specifically according to Chung, 'US military base and their 18-hole golf course', Chung (2003, 239) commented that the new museum building has been used as a political tool of the Seventh Republic from 1992-1997 for reinforcing Korean identity, saying: 'Little by little, the seventh republic was acting upon dormant issues, of the repression of Koreans, to face using the new museum building as a powerful tool to win the hearts of a nation'. One of the aims of this new building in Yongsan is 'to show the world about Korean culture and architecture emphasising the superiority of Korean culture and its beautiful nature with advanced functions in an advanced building' (Chung 2003, 239). Chung (2003, 240) added that the 'new building both stresses nationalism, reunification, and the glory of the seventh republic'.

It is also worth noting that this New National Museum of Korea has moved its premises six times before settling in Yongsan - the seventh movement, and this is also deeply involved with nationalism in Korea, particularly during the 1990s. This table 2.1 helps the movements of the National Museum of Korea.

Period	Name	Location	Notes
1945-1950	The Museum of Korea	Kyeong-bok Palace, Seok-jo Jeon, Seoul	Undertaking the Government-General Museum Building
1950-1953	The Museum of Korea	Kwangbok-dong, Busan (Temporary as of the Korean War)	Evacuation
1953-1954 (1 st move)	The Museum of Korea	Kyeong-bok Palace, Seok-jo Jeon, Seoul	
1954-1955 (2 nd move)	The Museum of Korea	The Annex Museum of Namsan, Seoul	
1955-1972 (3 rd move)	The Museum of Korea	Deok-su Palace, Seok-jo Jeon, Seoul	
1972-1986 (4 th move)	The National Museum of Korea	Kyeong-bok Palace, New Building, Seoul	Change the official name to 'The National Museum of Korea'
1986-1995	The National	Capitol Building,	Demolished in 1995

(5 th move)	Museum of Korea	Seoul	
1996-2004 (6 th move)	The National Museum of Korea	Kyeong-bok Palace, Education Hall, Seoul	Temporary before moving to Yongsan. Closed on 17. Oct. 2004
2005-onwards (7 th move)	The New National Museum of Korea	Yongsan USA Military Base Camp, Seoul	Newly opened museum and the research venue

Table 2.1 The movements of the National Museum of Korea

One of the most vivid instances of the exploitation of nationalism of Korea through the museum is its fifth movement (Figure 2.2), in 1986, to the Capitol building, ‘the former seat of the Japanese government that ruled in Korea from 1910 – 1945’ (Crooke 2000, 15). The transfer of the National Museum of one nation, a representative symbol of national identity, to the embarrassing symbol of the Japanese occupation period was a very controversial and an unacceptable issue to the Korean people. The Government therefore decided to demolish the Capitol building in 1995 and the sixth move, to the palace of Kyong-Bok (Figure 2.3), was made (Choi 2001). This Capitol building of the national museum symbolised the ‘haunting history’ for Korean people, according to Chung (2003, 240), and in order to get over the history of Japanese liaison, the demolition of this Capitol building and the construction of a new building of the New National Museum of Korea was initiated. It seems that national museums and national identity are very closely interwoven in Korea, and they are sometimes perceived as mutually reinforcing concepts. Also, as Chung (2003) and Crooke (2000) indicate, this is a very strong example of the Korean museum’s direct relation to nationalism. This can be also found in the then President Kim Young Sam’s address:

“Fellow citizens, History is a creative process in which what is wrong is liquidated and what is good is preserved. Today we have undertaken the historic task of beginning the removal of the former Government-General office building. Only by dismantling this building can we truly restore the appearance of Kyongbokkung Palace, the most important symbol of legitimacy in our national history.” (Addressed by President Kim Young Sam on the 50th Anniversary of National Liberation, Seoul, 15 August 1995) in Korea and World Affairs, Vol. XIX No. 3, P 533.

Mason’s work of 2005b is a good example in which to see the relationship between national identity and national museums. Mason tries to delineate the role of the prefix ‘national’ in the National Museums and Galleries of Wales, and identify both what kind of national identity the museum is trying to convey, and what has not been told in the national museum settings. What is distinct or unique about this New National



Figure 2.2 Capitol Building (sourced from Naver Photos)



Figure 2.3 The National Museum of Korea (sourced from www.encyber.com)

Museum of Korea is that it is describing Korea as a nation which is deeply rooted in ancient society. It became very obvious, particularly in the Archaeological Gallery which is the largest and richest in its objects in this museum, that this is ultimately a different form of the national museum compared to western museums. When Mason wrote about the Museum of Welsh Life (2005b), she discussed that 'They [national museums] are therefore key spaces within which to examine and debate the construction and representation of national identities and national cultures' (Mason 2005b, 9). In part, it is right that the national museums and national identity have deep relations, as Mason points out here, but what I would like to argue from this statement is that the New National Museum of Korea at least is not seeing their nation as an imagined community but rather as something which originated from pre-historic times and this is the reason for researching the Archaeological Gallery. Mason (2005b, 9) asserts that 'as they [national museums] bore the name the National Museums and Galleries of Wales, these organizations should be able to tell us something about what it means, and has meant, to be Welsh as distinct from Scottish, English, or British'.

As articulated above, Korea's identity is deeply involved with homogeneity, the Dangun Myth and GoJoseon, its relationship with Japan, and the division of the country into two Koreas. Defining nationhood in Korea is a complex and challenging issue, one which is going to be more interesting when trying to find these particular resources in the museum setting, most of all, in the New National Museum of Korea which opened in the 21st century. To a certain extent, this newly opened museum also can be the place to discuss on GoJoseon and Dangun myth. As Rho (2000) analysed, Dangun myth and GoJoseon cannot be thoroughly researched only with the documents or archives, but rather can be supported with material culture or physical evidence which is a direct link with the discipline of Archaeology.

The complexity of defining a nation, particularly in the museum setting in the United Kingdom, is another concern for scholars and academia as Mason (2005b) highlights here, but it is also quite challenging and elusive in the context of contemporary Korea (Republic of Korea). This is partially because of the neighbouring countries like China and Japan, but partially because of the current division between two Koreas. Also the strong impact of other cultures since the Korean War makes it more difficult for the Korean museums to define its own nation and identity. But what is important

here is that the national museums, as Mason (2005b) indicates, should define their own terms and their own definitions of nation and identity and it is, in a way, the obligation of those museums.

The next Chapter firstly explores the research objectives and then develops in more detail, the theoretical frameworks which underpin this thesis. Finally the methodologies used in the research will be discerned. In order to set the research objectives, the next part starts by looking at the characteristics of the New National Museum of Korea.

Chapter 3

Ethnographic Research in the New National Museum of Korea

Introduction

Nineteenth century municipal museums in Victorian society in England and their governmental connections have been fully investigated by Hill (2005) using Tony Bennett, Michel Foucault and Hooper-Greenhill. Analysing the museum display as a text, Hill also extensively explores social histories and class relationships in nineteenth century English museums. Based on Bourdieu's cultural capital, issues around the production and consumption of culture in this particular historic and cultural setting are also discussed, alongside those related to inclusion and exclusion in terms of the locations of municipal museums. As Kate Hill's work (2005) shows here, one particular theme of research of this kind brings different and complex elements to understand the museums from various perspectives. Bearing this work in mind, this Chapter first highlights the research objectives for the thesis, then it articulates macro theoretical concepts which underpin this research and then thirdly, the research methodology employed during the fieldwork.

Research Objectives

As discussed in Chapter Two, the history of the New National Museum of Korea is coloured by strong political propaganda and nationalistic ideology. In order to create a framework for this research project, it is useful to outline the objectives of the research. Firstly, the collections of this Museum should not be ignored, and secondly it is appropriate to discuss the Museum's apparent lack of understanding with regards to its audience and visitors.

Archaeology-focused Museums

According to Park (1997), most of the collections of the national museums and municipal museums in Korea fall within the categories of history²⁶ (over 75%), and art. Ku and Suh (1999) have established that most university museums (ninety-three of them) deal mainly with history, and especially archaeology. With respect to

²⁶ In this thesis, the category 'history', in respect of Korean museums, indicates that they contain both historical and archaeological collections.

independent museums, almost 40% of them fall into the art category and 50% into the category of history and ethnology²⁷ (Park 1997). It seems reasonable, therefore, to conclude that most Korean museums' collections focus on history and archaeology (52.9%) and fewer on ethnology (19.9%) and art (17.7%); the disciplines of science, anthropology and technology are difficult to find in Korean museums. In addition, an imbalance of the collections in the New National Museum of Korea has been critically examined by Jeon (2000) and Choi (2001). Why is this the case with regards to the New National Museum of Korea?

When Smith (2001, 49) elucidated the relationship between archaeology and nationalism he asserted that:

Nor should we overlook the great advances made in national historiography and archaeology, disciplines that, if they were fed by nationalist conceptions, also encouraged and bolstered those conceptions with apparently 'hard data' and the tangible remains of distant material cultures.

Also there are various examples to reveal the nationalism and archaeology in museum contexts. For example, the Swedish Museums and their archaeology collections have been discussed in depth by Gillberg and Karlsson (1996), Bohman (2000), and Denmark and its museums by Diaz-Andreu (1996). Greece is another example of the relationship between archaeology and nationalism (Avgouli 1994). Work done by Elizabeth Croke in Ireland (2000) is also helpful. Thoroughly investigating the background of the establishment of the National Museum of Ireland in Dublin during the early twentieth century, Croke analysed the relationship between archaeology and the political situation, which was, at that time, dominated by nationalist demands for Ireland to secede from Britain. In her introduction, Croke (2000, 10) also revealed the tensions and problematic usage of archaeology in cultural propaganda, exemplified by the Nazi regime to proclaim 'purity and superiority of the Germans and so justify genocide.'

²⁷ These numbers represent very recent information from the Museums Association, but this does not include information on the types of all museums. Even the Ministry of Culture and Tourism does not record the nature of every museum. It is, therefore, hard to identify the contents of a museum based on the current documentation. However, the most recent official report on Korean museums, entitled 'The policy of 21st Century Korean museums and the development of museum programmes', was conducted by the Ministry of Sports and Youth (the formal name of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism) in 1997.

Seo (2003) elucidates that archaeology could become the most important discipline when Korea is unified, not only in the form of academic exchanges between the two nation states, but also by recovering a sense of national identity for a unified Korea. A leading scholar among Korean archaeologists, Choi (2005a) extensively discusses what archaeology means in the Korean context and locates archaeology in the relationship between the past and Korea's national identity. However criticisms are also made, such as when scholars like Kim (1973) ultimately insist that GoJoseon was erected in the Neolithic period with evidence of a relationship to the mythical Bear religion. This idea is now regarded as an outdated academic theory, because there are clues that GoJoseon dates back to the Bronze Age and it cannot be related to the Bear religion. Also in the 1960s Korean archaeology actively sought to establish a link between GoJoseon and the Dangun myth, according to Seo (2000) and so it became a big movement in Korean archaeology. What this example highlights, therefore, is the way Korea's archaeology can be and has been used to promote nationalistic propaganda in a way which resonates with the ways used by the Nazi regime.

It is also worth noting that a Korean national identity has been established through archaeological and historical approaches to attempt to show that the Koreans are a homogeneous ethnic people (Nelson 1995). In addition, critically arguing that Koreans obsessively concentrate on the viewpoint of homogeneity and national identity, Nelson (1995) implies that this might have distorted archaeological interpretations. Because of its deep relation to nationalism, archaeology is also a pivotal aspect from which to scrutinise Korea. Regarding the overwhelming amounts of archaeological artefacts in the New National Museum of Korea, this - in a way - shows Korea and its connection to the archaeology too. Therefore, this thesis is going to look at the Archaeological Gallery in the New National Museum of Korea, employing ethnographic research methodologies.

Mason (2005b, 11) clearly states clear that one of the defining features of a national museum is whether the museum is representative of 'a specific national element' and in this case, the collections and its presentation within the New National Museum of Korea shows 'specific national elements' such as archaeology, art history and history. Mason (2005b, 11) points out the difficulties in this case, whether 'visitors will pick up and link together the other threads of the national story or instead

compartmentalize them according to their visiting habits'. So visitors are able to see different nations according to different presentations of material cultures in the museum. Then it is interesting to reveal how the visitors in the Archaeological Gallery see the nation. To a certain extent, a detailed comparison of visitors' images of the nation vis-à-vis the different types of the collections is not going to be dealt with here although there is great potential for future research in this area. However, it should be noted that art museums may produce a certain type of identity which can include and exclude communities, as Duncan articulates (1991, 102), 'What we see and do not see in our most prestigious art museums – and on what terms and whose authority we do or don't see it – involves the much larger questions of who constitutes the community and who shall exercise the power to define its identity'. From this, it is then possible to encapsulate how the different nature of collections and associated methods of display may produce different images of the same nation, and also how the acceptance of the image of the nation can be limited, as Duncan (1991) explicitly mentions. Another example can be found in Hooper-Greenhill's work (2000). Analyzing the National Portrait Gallery, London and its collections in the historical contexts, Hooper-Greenhill (2000, 48) elaborates that 'museum collections make statements about how the world and its peoples, histories and cultures are conceptualised'. Explaining that public displays inevitably and commonly provide a visual narrative, Hooper-Greenhill (2000, 24) highlights that, 'The National Portrait Gallery enabled the achievement of that peculiarly masculine aspect of English culture, the representation of the self to the self. This self was pictured as the nation'. Different national images can be embodied in different museum and collection settings but, as it has been delineated above, this thesis is going to look at the nation from the perspective of the Archaeological Gallery and the archaeological discipline.

Lack of understandings about audiences

In a comprehensive study, Lee (1993) concludes that the Korean museums' overall lack of an educational function (especially in the case of the national museums) was due to the history of the Japanese occupation in Korea and the Korean War. These historical events led Korean museums to ignore the importance of education, to focus rather on collection management. During the Japanese occupation, the national museum focused only on the display of objects (Choi 2001) while during the Korean War, the artefacts were evacuated and protected within shelters (Lee 1993). After

liberation from Japan, therefore, this National Museum was heavily focused on the restoration and re-display of objects in order to get over the distortion and bias of the artefacts' previous interpretation, mainly by Japanese scholars (Choi 2004). To a certain extent, the artefacts were under the threat of destruction during the Korean War, so this led to the development of an object-based function in national museums. Also curators' perception of the objects could be influenced by these historic occurrences. Because of these reasons, the National Museums in Korea lack perception of its public and educational role, and to some extent, there might be a lack of awareness of the significance of visitors as a crucial element of the museum. Museums in Korea perceived visitors as having only a passive role, so that - until recently - only a few attempts have been made to study and understand their needs (Song, Yang and et al, 2002). Further discussion will be re-visited shortly in Chapter Five with analysis of the visitor studies conducted in this New National Museum of Korea by the author. Lack of audience understandings in the National Museums in part explains the fact that there are no departments or services caring for, nor linking with, audiences in any of the national museums (Yi 2003). The New National Museum of Korea did establish an Education Department in 2004, but audience development was not taken up seriously until early 2006. During the period of this research, conducted from July 2005 to January 2006, an audience or visitor department did not exist, but it seemed important to investigate the visitors and their experiences in this New National Museum of Korea²⁸. This research, therefore, also focuses on audience studies as a requisite process by which to study the New National Museum of Korea and its representation of the nation, Korea. The following section delineates why an understanding of audiences is crucial to the macro theories which underpin this entire thesis.

Elucidating Korea and its national identity and nationalism brought forth another consideration, in Chapter Two, about the national museum and its connection to nationalism. As it has been discussed in this Chapter, archaeology also can be understood as being deeply connected with Korean nationalism, and this is reflected by the focus of this study on the Archaeological Gallery in the New National Museum

²⁸ It seems that the Audience Service team was very much focused on front of house services rather than in-depth audience studies or research until October 2006. So the validation of the audience research carried out for this thesis would still be worthwhile.

of Korea, the search for a Korean identity and, in particular, its presentation in the museum environment. The 'nation' embodied in the Archaeological Gallery can be different from the idea of nation presented by art galleries, because of the nature of archaeological materials, but also due to the strong links between archaeology and Korean nationalism. Another point which has been drawn here is the lack of understanding of audiences and visitors in this particular Museum, which is raised in this thesis as a potentially dysfunctional aspect of this Museum, so this study not only investigates the idea of nation as it is presented by the Archaeological Gallery, but the visitors' perceptions on this issue of 'nation' in the same Gallery is going to be drawn. To articulate the objectives of the research therefore, it is to find firstly the idea of nation in the Archaeological Gallery in the New National Museum of Korea and secondly, reveal the idea of nation seen (or read) by the visitors in this particular environment. The next section explains first where this research sits in the domain of contemporary museological research and secondly, a discussion of its overarching theoretical perspectives.

Museum, National Identity and Communication

Museum and National Identity

As Mason (2006b, 18) explicitly comments, 'Heritage and the past provide one important way of claiming and securing identity positions' and questions of the nation in museums are not totally the sole concern of museological studies. The issue has attracted enormous interest from various scholars in the cultural and sociological fields. Mason's recent work (2006b) on the Museum of Welsh Life provides a rich source of reflections on definitions, roles and functions of the national museum. Discussing revisions in narrating national stories in the museum, which was the Welsh Folk Museum but changed to Museum of Welsh Life, Mason (2006b, 18) claims that 'such revisions are inevitable in national museums which by their very nature, aim to tell a universal story and that, as a consequence, these museums function both as a catalyst for discussion and a public forum within which debates over the accepted nature of national identity and history will occur'. Mason (2006b, 19) also asserts that 'museums are palimpsests of their earlier incarnations but also the way that any subsequent changes are circumscribed by, and sometimes at odds with, those earlier legacies.' Another work done by Mason (2004) on the devolution of museums in Scotland and Wales heavily demonstrates the political implications of the

narration of national identities from an historical perspective in the museum setting. In terms of national museums' role, Mason (2004, 327) articulates her conclusion, saying 'they [museums] are constantly being rewritten over and over again while still bearing the traces of earlier values and belief-systems in their architecture, organisation, design, collections and purposes'. This raises a number of facets from which to analyse national museums.

McLean (1998) also sheds light on the search for national identity in Scottish museums. She (McLean 1998, 244) argues that: 'A museum, the repository of a nation's culture, which connects the past to the present through recounting stories about the artefacts of past cultures, is clearly significant in representing the culture of the nation'. Additionally McLean (1998) discusses that the upsurge of nationalism in nineteenth century Britain exemplified by the Victoria and Albert Museum established in 1909, perpetuated into the twentieth century in Scottish museums²⁹. Explaining nationalism in contemporary Scotland and its connection with the development of the new national museum, NMS (National Museum of Scotland), the NMS Williams Committee report stated that:

The new museum should be more than a repository for collections satisfactorily catalogued, conserved and researched. We expect it to contribute greatly to the interpretation of Scottish culture, and to be a magnet for visitors to Edinburgh and educational groups of all ages who want to learn about Scottish history... (McKean 2000, 41)

Also several attempts have been made to understand national museums and colonial experiences in nations like Australia (Anderson and Reeves 1994, McIntyre and Wehner 2001), South Africa (Kusel 2001) and Korea (Jeon 2000), all with the intention of analyzing their museums from the historical contexts of colonialism and imperialism, exploring museums' collections management, policies, historic backgrounds, and cultural values. However, there are also different perspectives to be sought in researching national museums.

Mason (2006a) extensively researched cultural theories and their applications to museum studies, and one of her key theoretical perspectives is based on communication theory and cultural consumers. Highlighting that reception studies of

²⁹ See McLean for the further descriptions on national identity and museums during the 1980-90s.

mass communication have been perceived more actively by academics after twentieth century, Mason (2006a, 26) further elaborates that 'so museum studies too is increasingly recognizing and researching the complexity of people's responses to these multi-faceted cultural phenomena'. Emphasising Stuart Hall's encoding and decoding model, Bella Dicks' comment (2000, 75) also seems useful here:

The outcome of this negotiation between locally based knowledge and professional, exhibitionary knowledge cannot be assumed in advance, or simply read off from a reading of the texts. Instead, it will be necessary to examine how visitors then resolve the texts' narrative prevarications into the categories and distinctions through which they map their own experiences and life-worlds

As Mason (2006a) and Dicks (2000) point out, the readings and receptions of visitors are considerably discussed as the crucial feature of modern museological understanding in both national museums and regional or local museums. Another interesting study has been carried out in the National Museum of Scotland. McLean and Cooke (2000) conducted visitor research in relation to the national museum's role in 20th century Scotland. According to their findings, the commonest reason for visiting the museum was a general interest in the objects on display or simply a desire to have an outing. The memories of the visit were primarily those of a personal experience, and not about receiving an image of national identity. When visitors were asked about national narratives, which they might have noticed in the environment of the museum, the responses showed that devices such as logos stating the aim of the museum, 'Presenting Scotland to the World', were most likely to make them understand the museum's role as a national narrative (McLean and Cooke 2000). McLean and Cooke (2000, 157) admit that museums could be used as a place to reflect national narratives but they remark that this is 'subject to critique and renegotiation' and add that '[T]he authorial voice should be present but should be decentred and non-prescriptive, allowing the visitors to negotiate between their own 'routes' and the 'routes' presented for them by the Museum'. More research was carried out by them in 2002 and this recent study shows clear distinctions between the ways in which Scottish and non-Scottish visitors read exhibitions and found instances of the misinterpretation of messages by visitors, contrary to the curators' will (McLean and Cooke 2002).

From above discussions, therefore, it is clear that research on national museums in diverse contexts is carried out in many countries for distinctive and varying reasons, and again Kate Hill's extensive research (2005) indicates how hard and complicated it is to interrogate museums from diverse aspects. These different approaches can be historical reviews and cultural value studies, or it may be carried out using the spectrum of communication studies with visitor research. Drawing on the research objectives for this study, since national identity is subsequently subsumed in the setting of the National Museums in Korea and the discipline of archaeology at that institution, a more in-depth understanding or scrutiny is needed to discern the messages concerning current national identity as presented by the New National Museum of Korea and this can be achieved by the interrogation of the exhibition making process (from the curatorial perspective) and exhibition analysis. However, the New National Museum of Korea lacks an appropriate understanding of its audiences, and so this aspect has to be investigated from theoretical perspectives of communication, and this can be mainly done by audience/visitor research in the Archaeological Gallery. Before highlighting the research methodologies employed for this research project, the theories underpinning this study are briefly introduced next.

Museum and Communication

Stuart Hall has been a central figure in the field of communication theory and its museological application. His model of encoding and decoding (1980) is the main theory that this thesis is going to draw upon. Three reasons can be sought here. First of all, Hall understands meanings as multilayered characters. As many museologists from Mason, Hooper-Greenhill, Maerovic and Bicknell and so on point out, museum exhibitions do not transmit only one meaning to the audiences, and the meaning produced by curators are also multi-vocal in their nature. Secondly, as McQuail (2005, 74) insists, one of the key principles of the 'encoding and decoding' model is 'the existence of varied 'interpretative' communities', which exist in the museum environment. Visitors also read the messages on their own, but these messages – intentionally or unintentionally – are encoded with curators' own beliefs or points of view and, to a certain extent, the process of encoding and decoding can have different environments when the messages are encoded and decoded. So these various interpretative impacts cannot simply left out. Lastly, Hall's concern is also with targeting the audiences' (or receivers') meaning making in the process of

communication and this certainly can relate to current museological perspectives which value audiences to a greater, or - at least - equal, degree to their collections. As McQuail (2005, 72-73) describes, the theory of encoding and decoding 'has its origins in critical theory, semiology and discourse analysis' which gave rise to 'reception analysis' which means an emphasis on the 'power of the audiences' in giving meaning to messages'.

In more detail, Stuart Hall's idea of representation (1997) seems related to the museum and its representation of nationhood. Hall (1997, 15) defines representation in this way; 'Representation means using language to say something meaningful about, or to represent, the world meaningfully, to other people'. Applied to the museum exhibition, it is possible to argue that the messages about 'nation' are, thus, represented by the exhibition and as Hall states (1997), these messages can be exchanged by individuals who belong to the same community or culture, like the Korean public. Based on the three theories of representation, 'reflective, intentional and constructionist', Hall (1997) explains how language is used to represent the world. The most interesting idea, from the point of view of modern social and cultural studies, is the constructivist perspective which means 'meaning constructed in and through language' (Hall 1997, 15). As Hall states (1997, 17), representation is 'the link between concepts and language which enables us to refer to either the 'real' world of objects, people or events...', and if it can be applied to the scene of the exhibition, the concept of the nation is produced through the exhibition and it is a representation. In Hall's words (1997, 18), there are two systems of representation, and the first is *mental representation* which can be as simple as a desk, chair, but equally as complex as something we have never seen before such as war, death, or friendship which are intangible and abstract. 'Nation' is an elusive and intangible concept which we can hardly describe its physical shape in our mental representation system but can be understood as an intangible and abstract concept. However, what Hall argues (1997, 18) is that even though every person's conceptual map is different to each other, it is possible that people can share similar meanings and understandings of a representation as they 'inhabit together' in the similar social world, sharing the same culture. Therefore, seeking of the 'nation' in the exhibition can be hard and difficult as the producers (curators) and others who are involved in or influence the exhibition making process all have different concepts of nation. According to Hall's

conceptual map of the people, however, it will not be entirely miscommunicated, but rather share similar meanings as we are living in the same social world, in this case Korea. The second system of representation – language – follows this conceptual map. The mental representation can be communicated with the common language and so via the language, Hall (1997, 19) asserts that the representation will be arriving in its final stage. Therefore, the representation in the museum (nation) is completed when the message (which regards to the nation) has been made with the language (exhibition).

Hall's remarks (1980, 131) on encoding and decoding can be summarized here as such; 'The message is a complex structure of meanings, which isn't as simple as you think it is. Reception isn't the open ended, perfectly transparent thing at the other end of the communication chain. And the communication chain doesn't operate in a unilinear way'. What is also of interest here is that meaning is unfixed and plural or multilayered, so there 'is no overall determining logic which can allow you to decipher the so-called meaning or ideological import of the message against some grid' (Cruz and Lewis 1994, 254). Hall (1994, 265) also asserts that 'negotiated readings are probably what most of us do most of the time' while 'only when you get to the well-organized, fully self-conscious revolutionary subject will you get a fully oppositional reading'. So preferred reading or oppositional reading when people decoded the messages are unlikely as most of people usually do negotiated reading, and so Hall (1994, 266) refers to museum audiences as a 'positionalities'. Bicknell (1995, 284) goes on to say 'In any communication the meaning of the original message can be altered by the medium, and the message that is received is determined to some extent by the visitors and their own unique circumstances (their previous experience, their knowledge, the reaction to their environment, how they are feeling, and so on).' So mainly in this thesis, I will reveal the different messages received by the different entities, curators and visitors, and then will discuss the background of those encoding and decoding processes.

Hooper-Greenhill (1995, 9) appears to admit that the museums may need to learn, or at least adopt from Mass Media studies, which has a history of analysing audiences since the 1950s, whereas museums have only just become aware of their role in influencing their audiences. Hooper-Greenhill is mainly discussing British museums,

but Korea's situation is not so far from this context. Educational programmes, outreach, publications and exhibitions and so on are all methods by which museums attempt to transmit their messages to their audiences (Hooper-Greenhill 1999, 40-41). However, as Dernie (2006, 6) mentioned 'an exhibition design considers the simple dialogue between the object(s) to be exhibited and the space in which they are presented: where the objects are, and how they are arranged will determine the nature of the message they communicate.' Exhibition is therefore one of the best aspects through which to explore museum communications. So, I will take an in-depth look at exhibitions at the New National Museum of Korea, and how it communicates to its visitors, with a focus on the Archaeological Gallery. As Mason (2005a, 200) mentions, 'what is being communicated will depend on many factors; some of this communication will be implicit, some explicit, some intended, some unintended. At the same time, visitors will participate in and contribute to this meaning-making process in many different ways'. Mason (2005a) asserts that many factors contribute to communication in the exhibitionary context and so there will be many questions which need to be raised in order to analyse museum communication and they are all explicitly explored in Chapters Four and Five.

Hall (1997, 21) discussed that 'The meaning is not in the object or person or thing, nor is it in the word. It is we who fix the meaning so firmly that, after a while, it comes to seem natural and inevitable. The meaning is constructed by the system of representation'. Constructivist theory seems to be a very useful means by which to understand the exhibition and the messages of nationhood. These messages, regarding the nation, are constructed by the curators' conceptual map and the languages of the exhibition. Hall (1997, 28) said 'signs are arbitrary. Their meanings are fixed by codes'. When thinking about the 'nation', therefore, there are many different signs to write and speak the word nation in each language, but are the meanings fixed by codes? It is quite hard to say yes, as the nature of 'nation' is complicated and multi-layered, but most of all, it is because the codes are also multi-vocal in nature and this is going to be explored shortly in Chapter Six.

As described above, museum communication is extensively discussed in various and broad research manners, and particularly Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model (1980, 1994) and theory of representation (1997) seem the most suited concept to be

hired for the thesis here. More detailed theories regarding communication and encoding/decoding are elaborated throughout Chapters Four to Six as they are the primary theories underpinning this thesis. What should be remembered here is that there can be complex layers of unintentional and intentional encoding which may not be fully decoded by visitors, and also that there is a possibility that new meanings and representations will be read by visitors. Particularly exploring national identity from the point of view of both visitors and museum exhibitions can be difficult and complex as the nature of the national identity is elusive but also the identity of Korea is very contested. However, this is worth exploring in order to answer those questions raised about contemporary Korea in the twenty-first century as only rare attempts have been made so far in defining the idea of the nation presented by Korean museums. What is particularly unique is when this research takes into account the communicational context, investigating museums' audiences too. Envisaging these difficulties and complexities in conducting this research, therefore, ethnographic approaches to interrogate museums and audiences are employed in this study, and are explained in the next section.

Research Methodology

The research design which employs ethnographic approaches has been devised to address the main questions, which in turn arose out of ongoing disputes about the relationship between national identity, museums and their audiences. Ethnographic research has been defined by Van Maanen (1995, 23) in the following way, '[I]n the case of ethnography, what we continue to look for is the close study of culture as lived by particular people, in particular places, doing particular things at particular times.' As the aim of the thesis is to shed light on national identity (particular things), in the national museum (particular place), regarding their audiences of Korean people (particular people), ethnography can be seen as a reasonable and reliable methodology to utilise in this research. It is also important to note that objectivity, partiality and reflexivity should be considered when employing ethnographic methodologies. Denscombe (2003, 88) asserts:

Making sense of what is observed during fieldwork observation is a process that relies on what the researcher already knows and already believes, and it is not a voyage of discovery which starts with a clean sheet. We can only make sense of the world in a way that we have learnt to do using conceptual tools which are based on our own culture and our own experiences. We have no

way of standing outside these to reach some objective and neutral vantage point from which to view things 'as they really are'. To an extent, we can describe them only 'as we see them', and this is shaped by *our* culture, not theirs.

It must therefore be accepted that certain biases will affect the research process which stem from the researcher's own national identity, age, gender, educational environment and so on. As Denscombe (2003, 90), however, explicitly suggests, particular strategies can be used to combat these lenses of bias. Personal beliefs, interests, experiences and expertises might impact on the shaping of research interpretations, and the researcher's social background (class, family, environment), age, sex, ethnicity, education and qualifications, and world experience and skills should be considered when the data is being analysed and interpreted. It is the task of the ethnographic researcher to acknowledge that their own background inevitably shapes the way they see things and to consider how this can be accommodated in the research to ensure rigour. My national identity as a South Korean is one of these aspects that the research needs to take into consideration. When the relationship between South Korea and Japan is centre-stage, it is hard to be objective because of the researcher's own identity, but also the resources that the researcher tried to access are limited as well, such as information about the Dok-Islands, Comfort Women, and history textbooks. The lack of succinct research into these areas in South Korea are the main problem, however, the researcher also faced difficulties balancing my own national identity. Apart from this aspect of difficulties as a South Korean researcher, throughout the research in the New National Museum of Korea, the researcher attempted to remain aware of the potential impact of the background on the analysis and interpretation of data.

Theoretical Background of the Research Methods

The main research method employed was conducting interviews, lasting from thirty minutes to about an hour and a half, with curators and audiences. As Mason (2002, 62-67) indicates, interviewing is the most common method for social science research and the features of the interview technique are 'interactional exchange of dialogue, a relatively informal style, a thematic, topic-centred, biographical or narrative approach, and so on.' In addition, as described by Denscombe (2003), semi-structured interviews of the one-to-one type seem to lead the research in a more constructive and

determined way. Participation in, and observation of, the functioning of the Archaeology Department was arranged (Figure 3.1). This reinforced the investigation into the conceptualisation of national identity within this Museum, and facilitated a broad and in-depth investigation into the image of national identity as projected in the museum exhibition. Field notes were used to ensure that the observation and participation part of the research was carried out correctly and that it produced a 'detailed, non-judgmental, concrete description of what has been observed' (Rossman and Marshall 1999, 107-109). As O'Leary (2004) has emphasised, the data from observation and participation can be organised into two different categories. One is raw material, that is, audio, video recording and photography, and the other is note-taking/journaling, which includes space, actors, acts and events. During the fieldwork, both raw materials and journaling were used.

In line with the recommendations of Rossman and Marshall (1999) concerning secondary methods of investigation, it was useful to think of alternative tactics for preparing uncompleted research plans or unexpected obstacles and, to some extent, to broaden the research database. These include 'unobtrusive measures' such as the use of documents, archival records, and physical evidence which do not require the (Rossman and Marshall 1999). Accordingly, relevant museum documents and archives were investigated and it was possible to gather ethnographic research data while at the same time working with the curators as an intern. As Denscombe (2003) recommends, the granting of access to restricted documents will be acknowledged³⁰. Following MacDonald's (2002) example, written records such as newspapers, official minutes, letters and speeches about the museum and national identity were also used in support of the main research. As Rossman and Marshall (1999, 136) have emphasised, those written records are valuable for the 'participant as observer' in checking the reliability of observed data.

³⁰ According to the Act of the National Museum of Korea, access to all information is free unless a researcher intends to use the information for profit or for personal use. This means that academic researchers should have free access to all information about the Museum (from the online 'The National Museum of Korea – Information Access'). However, during the fieldwork, certain archives were inaccessible, such as the archives or reports of curatorial meetings. On the other hand, during the intensive interviews sufficient overall information was obtained.



Figure 3.1 The researcher



Figure 3.1 Working with curators

The fieldwork has been designed based on these considerations³¹. From July to October 2005, just after the start of the fieldwork, the main task was to assist in the work of preparing the exhibition. Even though there were only three months to go before the opening date, the plan of the archaeology exhibition was much less advanced compared to the other galleries. The main reasons for this were the very great number of objects to be displayed³² and the difficulties of displaying various types of archaeological objects. Part of the work the researcher was given during this period, consisted of reviewing the English versions of museum texts, including rewriting some of them. During this process the researcher had access to different Korean versions which were constantly kept under review by academics and curators. These were a good source of information and provided data that could be used to gain an understanding of the main ideas behind the exhibition. In addition to the research related to the texts, there was another opportunity to participate in the preparations for the exhibition. This included displaying objects, fixing panels and labels, adjusting the lighting, and relocation of the showcases. This work provided an insight into what was acceptable and what was not. It was particularly valuable to work with the curators who were in charge of the high value objects, because this provided a clear blueprint of the process of exhibition making and the techniques designed to transmit a strong message about national identity. During this process of physical participation, which is a major part of the methodology of such ethnographic research, discussions with the curators about how they think about the nation and how they make the exhibition itself are all reflected in the research notes³³.

Following the example of Gutwill-Wise and Allan (2002), who tailored their method to analyse the meaning making of their audiences, the cued interview immediately after the gallery visit was used to record visitors' opinions. The interviews and visitor survey were held between 6 December 2005 and 12 January 2006 by the researcher. As in the case of the interviews with museum staff, the period for the audience research had to be extended. Originally scheduled to end in December 2005, the audience research required more time, so it was extended until the middle of January

³¹ See Appendix 6.

³² The New Museum's displayed collections contain over 10,000 objects, and 4,500 of them are in the Archaeology Gallery.

³³ See Appendix 10.

2006 by which time a total of 503 people had completed the survey questionnaire³⁴. The survey questions posed were based on the interviews with the curators, and were renewed and reviewed each day after the research was finished. Survey sheets were given to the visitors on leaving the Archaeological Gallery. Of those who replied, 148 were briefly interviewed from five to fifteen minutes about their experience and expectations of the Gallery. The survey of these numbers was made possible by the help of Kwak Jin-seon and Na Yoon-jeong, then research assistants in the Archaeology Department. In addition, the Head of Department, Jo Hyen-jong and the supervisor of the researcher, Senior Curator Lee Ju-hun, granted free access for the conducting this research in the Archaeological Gallery.

Access to the Museum and research venue

In February 2005, the researcher requested permission to continue the research within the Museum in a telephone call to the Head of Collection Management, Seong Nak-jun, who was a lecturer in Dong-A University, Busan, Korea. However it is important to point out that the research plan, aim and objectives were all drawn up by the researcher, and did not reflect any intention on the part of the Museum to explore the subject of national identity and their audiences in the context of the Museum. Even though access was gained using a personal route, the research validation and reliability remain intact. The Archaeology Department was selected as the most appropriate venue for the fieldwork in the New National Museum of Korea. In March 2005, permission was finally granted for the research to be undertaken in the Archaeology Department, starting in July 2005.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

As many ethnographic researchers suggest in their extensive works, the data gathered during the fieldwork will be the one perfect piece of research work when it is actually presented in written form. Social science researcher, Wolcott (1994) emphasised three different writing approaches; Description, Analysis and Interpretation. Regarding different characteristics of various social science researches, Wolcott (1994) suggests the D-A-I Formula, which means those three processes (or contents) could be used all together in one thesis paper, if necessary. In this thesis, the description will be mainly

³⁴ See Appendix 7.

given in the first part of the Chapter Four, which gives a brief gallery description and offers a general way of understanding the data that is heavily reliant on the analysis and interpretation.

One of main concerns of the data gathered in this Museum is related to peoples' cognitive process of national identity through the archaeological exhibition, and the other concern is the curators' encoding process of national identity in the exhibition. It must be remembered that the data is very much related to the people's understanding and personal opinions or ideas. The data, which has been selected for the thesis, includes the most significant and eloquently constructed comments among several similar responses from the staff and the audiences. Even when it is a short sentence, if the meaning is symbolic and heavily related to the holistic subject of national identity, I tried to put it in the thesis. In terms of data coding in the thesis, the curators are coded with certain letters, such as Oa, Lb and Cb, which are indications of each curator.

Curators and other Key Figures

It was not surprising that the plan to start interviewing the curators in August had to be delayed until November, after the opening, since all of them had so much pressure on their time. However, when things finally settled down, it became possible to arrange the interviews. Four curators, who were in charge of the controversial or particularly interesting Halls in the Archaeological Gallery, were selected and two senior curators were also interviewed. All of these peoples devoted between half an hour and over an hour.

- Junior curators Oa, Cb, Aa from Archaeological Gallery.

- Exhibition Manager Hb from Archaeological Gallery.

- Senior Curators Lb and Kb from Archaeological Gallery.

To investigate the objectives of the exhibition from a different angle, such as museum policy, the senior curator from Museum Policy Department from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Korea, was also interviewed.

- Senior Curator Mb from Museum Policy Department

Finally the Head of Archaeology Department was interviewed at the end of the field work.

Research Ethics

As Denscombe (2003) states, the research should consider ethics as one of the most important features of the research. The access to the Archaeological Gallery was openly made, so the Museum staffs were all aware of the purpose of the research. Most of the data I gathered was disclosed as they were interviewees and participants. Whenever the interview was conducted with staff, they were all informed as to why the record was being used and I explained to them how I intended to use the information, i.e. in the writing of my thesis. The actual consent form for the interview has not been provided, as all the interviews were conducted in a very open and casual (informal) environment. The reason for this is that the researcher had worked in the museum for five months already, so the personal relationship was considered as the first priority when they agreed to take part in the interview process. The translation was carried out by the researcher, and every effort has been made to maintain the meaning of what the interviewees wanted to describe. As Rossman and Marshall (1999, 150) pointed out ‘the search among data to identify content for ethnographies and for participants’ is “truths”, so truths seeking in the interpretation of the data has been highly credited.

The next Chapter explores with the encoding of the ‘nation’ in the Archaeological Gallery with the exhibition analysis and then it articulates what kind of the nation in the Archaeological Gallery is encoded and what the main messages regarding its national identity are.

Chapter 4

The Archaeological Gallery and National Identity: the Process of encoding

Introduction

‘When considered alongside the other factors in the circuit of culture model, the production, consumption, regulation and representation of identity, the meanings of national identity construction in museums begin to be unravelled’ (McLean 1998, 251). This is a comment made by McLean when trying to unravel museums’ relations to national identity. Then, what is national identity in the Archaeological Gallery in the brand New National Museum of Korea? This Chapter explores national identity in the exhibition and how it has been encoded, and what lies behind this complex encoding process. ‘Exhibition or display in a museum or gallery can also be thought of as being ‘like a language’, since it uses objects on display to produce certain meanings about the subject-matter of the exhibition’ (Hall 1997, 5), and given this, it is possible to see the exhibition as a representation of curators’ languages. Hall’s (1980, 128) distinctive communication process is ‘produced and sustained through the articulation of linked but distinctive moments – production, circulation, distribution/consumption, reproduction’. In the process of production, Hall (1980, 129) asserts that production ‘constructs the message’, and says ‘the production process is not without its ‘discursive’ aspect: it, too, is framed throughout by meanings and ideas: knowledge-in-use concerning the routines of production, historically defined technical skills, professional ideologies, institutional knowledge, definitions and assumptions, assumptions about the audience and so on frame the constitution of the programme through this production structure’

When discussing the concept of language, Hall (1997, 5) refers to it as a series of ‘signs’ saying, ‘Signs stand for or *represent* our concepts, ideas and feelings in such a way as to enable others to ‘read’, decode or interpret their meaning in roughly the same way that we do’. Hall (1997, 5) also emphasised the ‘importance for language is not what they *are* but what they *do*, their function’, so it is crucial to examine how the language works, and how it transmits its meaning, and Chapter Five will deal with this consumption aspect. Initially though in this Chapter, I will focus specifically on the aspect of language production and its encoding process.

Mason (2005a, 208) defined communication as ‘an on-going process of exchange and dialogue dependent on many different factors’ and Dernie (2006, 6) put it simply that ‘[A]t the heart of any exhibition is the notion of communication, and the focus of the designer is to articulate the intended messages’. Communication is no longer an unfamiliar concept in interrogating the museum exhibition and its messages. Applying Hall’s mass communication theory of encoding and decoding (1980) in the museum exhibition setting, and regarding the exhibition messages about the nation as ‘meaningful discourse’ in Hall’s terms, this Chapter is to identify the process of encoding the nation and national identity in the Archaeological Gallery in the museum communication context. Also as Mason asserts (2005a, 208), it is important to note that the ‘meaning-making process cannot be easily divided into production and consumption, because producers are also consumers of meanings and values’.

Curator interviews are used to understand what their languages are and what they wanted to produce. Then, the objects displayed and the texts in the exhibition along with the entire exhibition design are examined to interpret the curators’ intentions and this is followed by examinations of the real exhibitions produced. So the Chapter starts with an overall description of the whole Archaeological Gallery, its overarching aims and the main messages that the Museum, or more precisely the exhibition producers, put into the exhibitions. This is followed by a more detailed examination of how these messages are constructed in the exhibition, involving an investigation into the curators’ primary intentions when making the exhibition in relation to the formulation of messages about ‘nation’ and ‘national identity’. After this, the Chapter explores the produced exhibitions in five different Halls within the Gallery to identify any unintended messages of national identity. The Chapter concludes with the overall discussion of the concept of nation and national identity as presented in the Archaeological Gallery. As discussed in research ethics in Chapter Three, the actual names of the curators have not been revealed, instead they were given pseudonyms. This Chapter is primarily focused on the result of the research conducted in the Archaeology Department before the opening and uses the resources acquired within the department and the exhibition.

The Archaeological Gallery

General Information

This part examines general information about the Archaeological Gallery and then its overarching aim is discussed later. The Archaeological Gallery³⁵ (total size 3,284 m² out of a total exhibition area of 26,781 m²), consists of eleven Halls, containing 4,480 objects which is the largest number of artefacts displayed in a single gallery in the New National Museum of Korea. This Archaeological Gallery presents the history of Korea in a chronological order, from the Palaeolithic to the South North Kingdoms Period (676 to 918 AD)³⁶. All subsequent periods up to 1910 are covered in the History Gallery, which is located on the same floor as the Archaeological Gallery.

The Halls in the Archaeological Gallery and their brief descriptions are as follows;

1. Introductory Area (Figure 4.1); Present 'World History Chronological Table' (Figure 4.2) and 'Satellite Map of the World' (Figure 4.3) alongside four selective artefacts from the Archaeological Gallery.
2. Palaeolithic (Figure 4.4); The first Palaeolithic Hall in the history of the National Museum of Korea.
3. Neolithic (Figure 4.5); People in this Age are believed to have been the first potters in Korea and so the exhibition focuses explicitly on pottery.
4. Bronze and Early Iron Age (Figure 4.6); Bronze first introduced in Korea and society developed and the first nation GoJoseon believed to have been founded at this time.
5. Proto Three Kingdoms (Figure 4.7); With the introduction of iron in Korea, the second wave of social development occurred. The time before Three Kingdoms and one confederacy appeared in Korean history.
6. Goguryeo (Figure 4.8); The first Kingdom in Korea. Successor of GoJoseon. One of the Three Kingdoms.
7. Baekje (Figure 4.9); One of the Three Kingdoms. Its representative object 'Gild Burner' is displayed in the Lounge³⁷ in the Archaeological Gallery.
8. Gaya (Figure 4.10); Confederacy in the time of Three Kingdoms Period. Kingdom of Iron.
9. Silla (Figure 4.11); One of the Three Kingdoms, Silla unified not only the Three Kingdoms in 668AD but also Gaya, leading Korea into a period of being a unified territory, a period known as Unified Silla.
10. Unified Silla (Figure 4.12); Kingdom after the Three Kingdoms and one of the periods belonging to the South North Kingdoms Period.
11. Balhae (Figure 4.13); Another Kingdom of the South North Kingdoms Period, and successor of Goguryeo.

³⁵ See Appendix 3.

³⁶ See Appendix 1.

³⁷ A lounge (Figure 4.13(1)) is in between Goguryeo and Baekje Halls, but it is not an exhibition area but rather a 'rest area' for the tired visitor. So I am not going to analyze this area. However, there is one object displayed and two walls are covered with the information about the Gild Burner and Goguryeo Tombs UNESCO Heritage Designation. They will be revisited when necessary.



Figure 4.1 Introductory Area

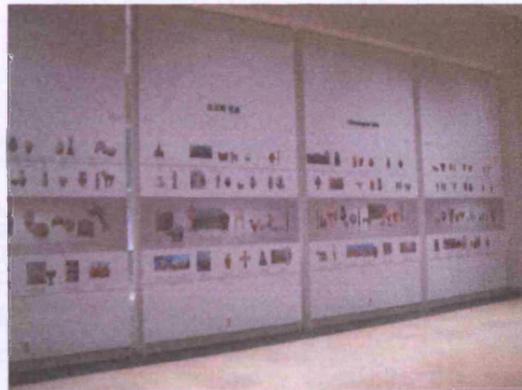


Figure 4.2 Chronological Table

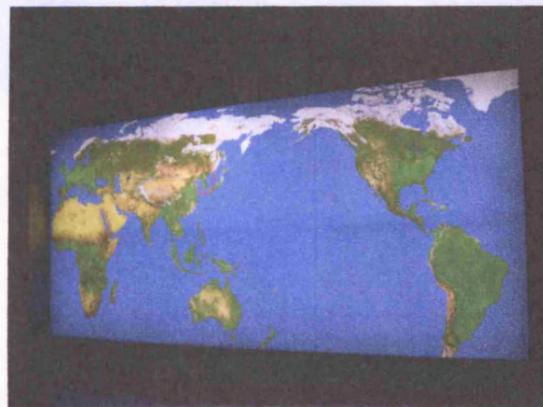


Figure 4.3 Satellite map



Figure 4.4 Palaeolithic



Figure 4.5 Neolithic

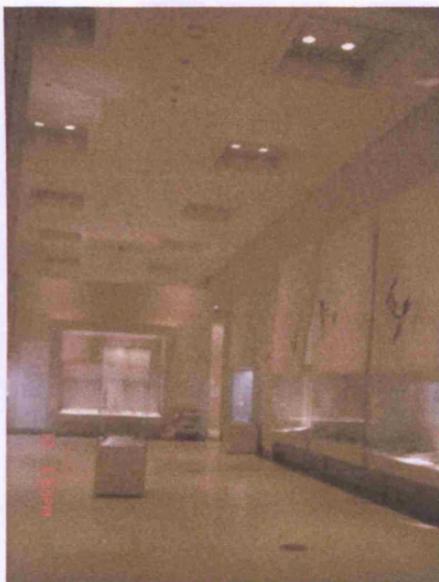


Figure 4.6a Bronze and Early Iron Age Hall (Bronze Period Part)

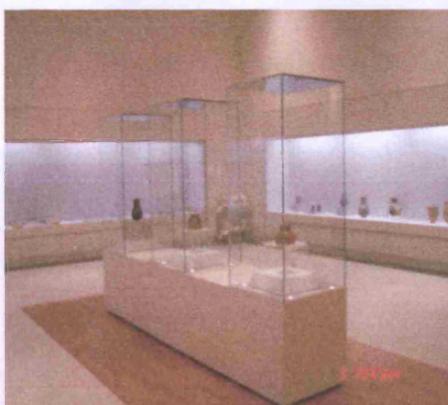


Figure 4.6b Bronze and Early Iron Age Hall (Early Iron Age Part)



Figure 4.7 Proto Three Kingdoms Period Hall



Figure 4.8 Goguryeo



Figure 4.9 Baekje



Figure 4.10 Gaya Hall



Figure 4.11 Silla



Figure 4.11 Silla



Figure 4.12 Unified Silla



Figure 4.13 Balhae



Figure 4.13(1) Lounge

Changes in this New National Museum of Korea have been made in the way the various periods have been exhibited in the Halls compared to the erstwhile National Museum of Korea. Firstly, the periods from the Palaeolithic Age to Early Iron Age were formerly grouped in a 'Prehistoric Ages' Hall rather than individually exhibited. The Proto Three Kingdoms Period, which is the period between Prehistory and History, is a name which reflects the three collective historic chiefdoms of the Korea peninsula, namely Ma-Han, Byeon-Han, Jin-Han and early Goguryeo. This was formerly exhibited as the Three Han Period in the erstwhile Museum, but it was felt that the term 'Three Han (Ma-Han, Byeon-Han, and Jin-Han)' excluded Goguryeo, and so the New National Museum of Korea decided to re-name it the Proto Three Kingdoms Period. After this Period, the Three Kingdoms Period³⁸ comes next, which includes Goguryeo, Baekje and Silla mainly but also the Gaya confederacy. There are few differences between the former exhibition and the new exhibition of this period, but one difference is that there is now a dedicated individual showcase which accommodates representative objects of Three Kingdoms Period, the Golden Crown and Belt in Silla, Wall Paintings in Goguryeo and Gild Bronze in Baekje³⁹. After this period, the South North Kingdoms Period⁴⁰ comes, which includes Unified Silla and Balhae. When Silla unified the two kingdoms and Gaya into one, it formed the Unified Silla which was located in the Southern part of Korea, but at the same time, there was also the Balhae Kingdom in the Northern area in Korea which inherited Goguryeo. The former museum did not have a Balhae exhibition and did not put the term South North Kingdoms Period either in the exhibition but the Archaeological Gallery in the New National Museum of Korea uses both the Period term and has the Balhae exhibition.

How then are the objects displayed? Generally the Archaeological Gallery uses wall cases, table cases, some open displays, and also some reconstructions. Lidchi (1997, 173) advocates that 'Putting material artefacts in glass cases therefore underlines the dislocation and re-contextualization that is at the root of collecting and exhibiting'. Lidchi offers this view in relation to ethnographic exhibitions, but it can also be applied to the Archaeological Gallery, suggesting the glass cases create more distance

³⁸ See Appendix 2.

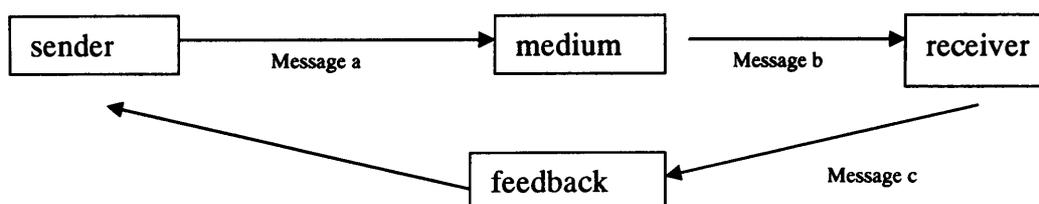
³⁹ Gild Burner is not in the Baekje Hall but in the Lounge in between Goguryeo and Baekje. See footnote 38.

⁴⁰ South Kingdom means Unified Silla. North Kingdom signifies Balhae.

than other display methods. In addition, handlings and interactive technologies are not presented in this Gallery, but there are three computers in the Lounge where people can take part in interactive quizzes about the exhibition.

All the exhibition halls are equipped with main panels which provide general summaries of each period, and chronological tables indicating where the period is located in Korean history (Figure 4.14). This main panel is in Korean, English, Japanese and Chinese. The labels on the specific exhibits describe, in both Korean and English languages, the objects themselves in detail or the historic backgrounds of the artefacts. All the objects have basic name cards written in Korean, Chinese, and English. There are photographs and reconstructions of objects in parts of the exhibition but they are generally few in number. For a small charge, visitors are able to borrow a PDA machine (Personal Digital Assistant) or MP3 players at the information desk, which contain all the information basically presented in labels and panels about the artefacts and also curators' recommendations and comments about various artefacts, from which visitors can design their own route during the visit. A detailed analysis of audience interaction with these digital assistive technologies is beyond the scope of the current thesis but is worthy of further research. Therefore, the boundary is set to cover the texts in general in the exhibition and objects as well as the overall exhibition design. So, what are the primary messages that this Archaeological Gallery is trying to narrate in terms of Korea and Korean identity?

Exhibition Messages – Korea seen through the objects and technological development. According to Bicknell, there are several messages involved in exhibition communication. The first aspect is that '[T]here are three messages: first, the message dispatched by the member of staff; second, the message transmitted by the medium; and third, the message interpreted by the individual visitor.' (Bicknell 1995, 284) This is presented in diagrammatic form below.



'Communication model for goal-oriented evaluations' (Bicknell 1995, 284)



Figure 4.14 Main Panel

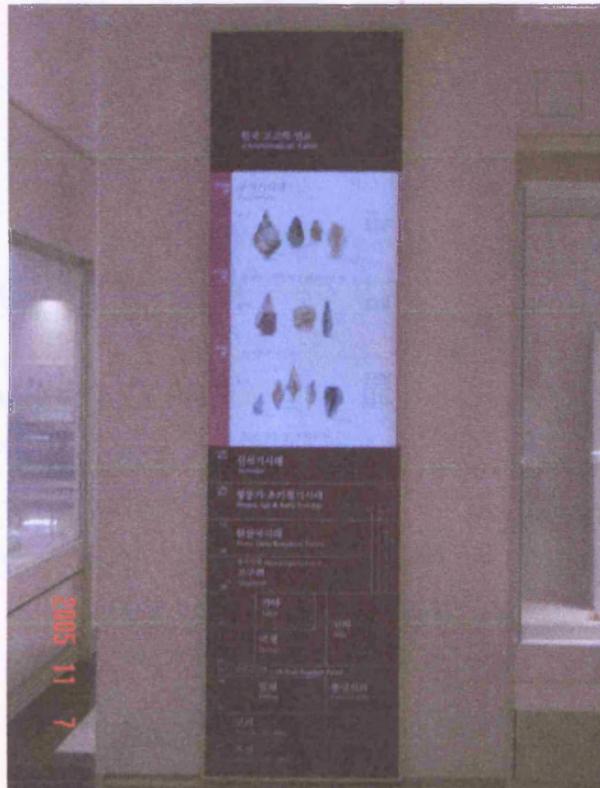
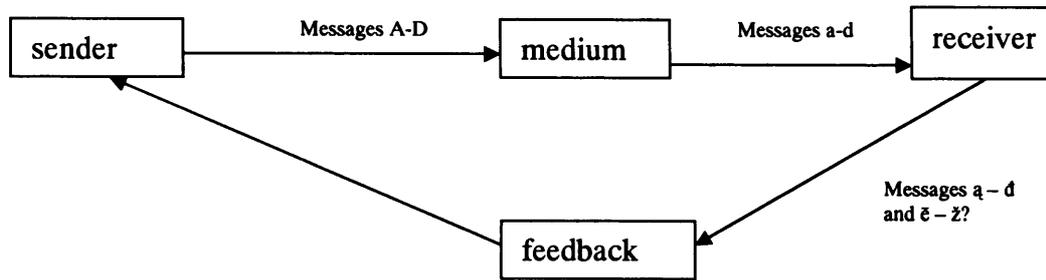


Figure 4.14 Chronological Table

However, Bicknell (1995) raised another aspect of this process, that there are multiple messages being sent at any one time rather than one message as in the first model.



‘Communication model for goal-free evaluations’ (Bicknell 1995, 285)

Goal-free evaluations not only acknowledge that diverse messages exist in the communication process in the exhibition, but even suggest that there may be new messages which will be created when messages are delivered to the receivers and when the receivers digest them (see e – z). So, why are there various messages? Before answering this, it is necessary to look at the meaning transferred through the messages. Meaning is transmitted through languages which are represented by signs and symbols (Hall 1997). The messages are not exactly the meanings constructed by the museum but the exhibition itself can be seen as a language representing with signs and symbols where the messages themselves lie. So the messages are in the centre of the meaning-making process, and investigating messages of the exhibition can help to understand one part of the meaning makings in the museum. How then is meaning construction seen in the New National Museum of Korea?

Mason (2005a) articulated that the intended meaning of the exhibition can be seen in the methods of display, selection of the objects, and also in label, text panel, and educational programmes, so the composition of the exhibition affects the meaning-making process. Lidchi (1997, 168) comments that ‘the meaning of objects is neither natural nor fixed: it is culturally constructed and changes from one historical context to another, depending on what system of classification is used.’ McLean (1998, 247) echoes this view by stressing the importance of the method of display adopted saying; ‘Meaning is not derived directly from the object, but from the way in which the object is represented.’

Mason (2005a) extensively analysed discussions of constructivism and semiotics put forward by Hall and De Saussure, then applied them to an understanding of museum communication and the issue of meaning making. It is worth quoting the excerpt from Mason's work (2005a, 203) which summarises well the relationship between the two theories of constructivism and semiotics and museum communication;

So far, it has been argued that meaning is not fixed within objects, images, historical resources, or cultural sites, but is produced out of the combination of the object/the image/the site itself, the mode of presentation, what is known about its history and production, and visitor interaction.

So there are many factors which decide the meaning of the objects in the exhibition. In particular, the meanings can be changed in many ways when the exhibition focuses on national identity or the nation. However, what will be generally discussed in this Chapter is not only the objects' meaning-making process but also the overall production or encoding process of the Archaeological Gallery. Also, as there are various complex messages expressed through the exhibition, these messages need to be carefully scrutinized, and in the case of the Archaeological Gallery, messages specifically relating to national identity or nation.

Maroevic (1995, 29) defined museum messages as the 'means by which the museum communicates the information contained in its collective resources and stimulates the production of new information within the museological context. The authentic museum message is expressed by the form of the object and it occurs within the given context, i.e. on the space axis.' However, the message is inevitably affected by the outer 'influences' such as museum exhibition design or internal hierarchical structure, and also can be biased by the receivers themselves, as Bicknell (1995) articulated. Also the messages yield meanings constructed in the exhibitions, so before exploring those which influence the messages in Chapter Six, it is now important to reveal what the messages are in the Archaeological Gallery.

It can be said that the main message of the Gallery is to present Korean culture and history by means of archaeological materials. According to the 2004 'Cultural Policy' outlined by the Korean Culture and Tourism Ministry, the overarching aim of the Archaeological Gallery is to contribute true narrations of the history and culture of

Korea, and also to promote national pride (in this sense ‘identity⁴¹’) (2004, 198). This aim is to transfer the main messages intended by the curators into the layout and make-up of the Archaeological Gallery. Aside from this broad, general message, a more specific message is to illustrate technological development in ancient times in Korea. All curators interviewed in the Archaeology Department echoed the messages described above and the following excerpt summarizes their answers well.

The main concept of the Archaeological Gallery is this; showing the process of cultural material development according to each period. This is an archaeology exhibition so we put more emphasis on the development of technology and the tool-making process than other historical facts. So you may find stone tool-making techniques, iron-making processes and so on a lot in this exhibition compared to others Galleries in the museum.’ (Interview with curator Oa on September 2005)

The Archaeological Gallery is organised in chronological order with a focus on technological development in ancient Korea through the display of archaeological materials and the exhibition is essentially used to show Korea’s culture and history. As one curator mentioned ‘this gallery is not named as a prehistoric gallery but it is named as an archaeological gallery’ (curator Aa interviewed on November 2005), the discipline archaeology has played a significant role in narrating Korea in this New Museum, and also it shows how important archaeology is in Korea as discussed in Chapter Three. However, is this message contained in this Archaeological Gallery? And is this message really the final product of this exhibition?

It has been discussed that the meanings in the exhibitions are not just fixed and monolithic but rather diverse and fluid; the messages which contribute to meaning making can in effect be multi-vocal. Mason (2005a, 203) argues that there is communication intended or not intended by the curators, and says that ‘The ways in which the various components are selected and combined will provide different results in terms of what a site or an exhibition will communicate to its visitor.’ The next part then, explores how other kinds of messages are encoded in the exhibition and this focuses not only on the main message which has been discussed here but also other intentions they had when producing the exhibition.

⁴¹ Author’s words

Encoded 'nation' - intended messages in the exhibition

This part aims to discuss what the other messages are, reflected in the exhibition designs generally such as exhibition type, its format and exhibition texts. Dillenburg (2006, 31) articulates that 'Design does affect everything. Colour, light, material, shape, sound-all have a tremendous effect on the exhibit experience', and so the entire exhibition design in the Archaeological Gallery firstly discussed here to show what the real producers' intentions are under the main title of technological development of ancient Korea.

Exhibition Type; Korea – great, long and one nation

Hooper-Greenhill (1999, 15) stressed that '[a]lthough visitors will make sense of objects in their own ways according to their interests, skills, prior knowledge and interpretive strategies, the museum has the responsibility for producing an exhibition.' A way to deliver the intended messages, as Mason asserts (2005a), can be through exhibition design such as aesthetic, didactic, emotive, and celebratory means (Belcher 1991, Ettema 1987, Pearce 1992, Shanks and Tilley 1992, Kavanagh 1990, Corn 1989). Mason (2005a, 204) goes on to argue that 'By means of such techniques, museum, gallery and heritage professionals seek to guide visitors towards certain ideas, areas or objects, and thus prioritize the points or narratives they wish to communicate', and so the exhibition type in the Gallery certainly reflects the intention of the curators. According to Maroevic (1995, 35), the 'Artistic exhibitions are special phenomena, where meaning merges with the irrational, unreal and emotional. [...] Museum messages with aesthetic functions have an ambiguous structure in relation to the system of expectations represented by the code.' Explaining the complexity existing between the exhibition context and the display of works of art, Maroevic's opinions (1995) can be validated to understand the Archaeology Gallery's exhibition type as the archaeological objects are coupled with aesthetic concepts in the curators' terms in this New National Museum of Korea. Also the selection of great objects (which are often national treasures) in the Archaeological Gallery can be seen as delivering intentional messages. Discussing elite historic houses, Mason (2005a) argues that their particular histories can be regarded as having an important part to play in our understanding of a particular historical period and so can be chosen to narrate particular messages. Is this the case then, in the Archaeological Gallery? From the interviews, it seems the curators do agree that most of the objects were selected

because they were ‘perfect artefacts’, rather than because they were necessarily of great historical or archaeological value. However, it may be that the use of objects in good condition is the best way of the New National Museum of Korea to engage the public, and so provide a means for Koreans to identify with their country’s history.

The Archaeological Gallery intended to display the objects in good condition, in what has been termed a ‘masterpiece exhibition’⁴². One curator thinks that an archaeology exhibition can be like an art exhibition⁴³, and he goes on to mention ‘the criteria that I use to choose the objects for the exhibition are that they are the best ones in their time and space condition’. Among the different types of exhibition, there are some concentrated on the beauty or physical appearance of the objects and most of the displays in the Archaeological Gallery are of this nature which can be called ‘aesthetic, celebratory, and art and treasure’ types. The so called masterpiece exhibition, however, displays objects of perfect shape and the selection is based mainly around the visual aspect. Furthermore, what is also distinctive with regard to this masterpiece exhibition vis-à-vis these celebratory and aesthetic qualities is that the Archaeological Gallery intended to display 4480 objects said to be masterpieces, whereas the other galleries seem to have chosen fewer ‘perfect’ objects to transmit the message of the exhibition. Although all objects were selected according to the standard of their physical shape, the best examples in the Archaeological Gallery are the Baekje Incense Burner in the Lounge, the Gold Crown and Belt in Silla Hall, and the Wall Paintings Room in Goguryeo Hall. They are not just objects considered to be masterpieces but also the space of the exhibition is primarily dedicated to these objects in the individual rooms.

The Silla’s Gold Crown and Belt are National Treasure No. 118 and 119 and the Gild Incense Burner is National Treasure No. 287 (Figure 4.15). The Wall Paintings Room (Figure 4.16), however, contains only copies of the Wall Paintings, as the original paintings belong to Goguryeo Tombs in North Korea which were designated as World Heritage Sites by UNESCO in 2004. According to Bitgood (1996, 149), the visitors

⁴² This is the term used commonly by all curators who were interviewed. They all mentioned ‘명품전시’ which is translated directly to the masterpiece exhibition.

⁴³ Personal communication with him on 15 July 2005. See Appendix 10. Research Journal 15 July 2005: ‘I was very amazed by the way this curator exhibited the artefacts. He is very much focused on the design and how it looks and attracts rather than carrying the meaning of the artefacts and the story.’

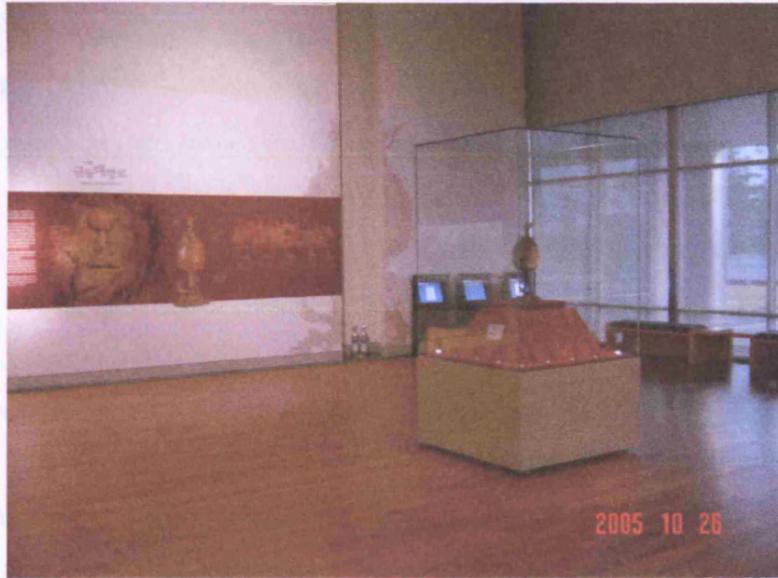


Figure 4.15 Gild Incense Burner



Figure 4.16 Wall Paintings Room

will be attracted more by ‘landmarks, moving objects or animals, sound, and large objects’ than other objects. These masterpieces in the Archaeological Gallery can be said to fit with the ‘landmark’ description, as national symbols attracting visitors and as a means for curators to direct or distract the visitor’s movement around the exhibition. In addition, it seems fair to argue that these masterpiece displays could play a role in ‘signalling’ that Korea has a great history which makes the visitors to feel proud of. Next, the chronological order in the Archaeological Gallery will be reviewed.

As has been emphasised previously, the entire Archaeological Gallery is framed in chronological order. According to an exhibition designer Ralph Appelbaum (1997, 140) museums should be ‘active forums that encourage people to talk about ideas. Our first job is to find a museum’s voice, then to search for relevance. But most importantly, our job is to create wonder’. Based on these, Dernie (2006, 16-17) divided exhibitions into three groups.

Themes	Narrative spaces			Performative spaces	Simulated experiences
	formatting	Story telling	Collage narrative		
	Simplest Chronology or biographical info	Individual objects	Radial juxtaposition Unexpectedness	Experiential Audience centred Use bodies	Simulated immersive environments Inner world of exhibition

According to Dernie (2006, 20-23), the three processes of making the narrative spaces are distinctive. Firstly, it is ‘a strategic planning of the story, which may not be wholly told through the exhibition alone’, and secondly ‘the artefacts are grouped according to the thematic structure of the proposed narrative, and from this emerges a spatial arrangement for the show’. The final process is ‘the design of more detailed arrangements within each room’, which means ‘a complex narrative is made comprehensible through these arrangements, where the individual can engage with ‘a story within a story’’ (Dernie 2006, 30). Dernie exemplified this stage in the British Galleries at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, showing diverse exhibition tools or supportive technologies could help the understanding of the various audiences in the gallery. Other examples were given in Dernie’s book (2006, 30), such as the temporary exhibition *Titanic* and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum which worked ‘the content of a historical theme into the narrative structure of a visit.’

In many ways, therefore, the Archaeological Gallery in the New National Museum of Korea seems to have similarities with the narrative modes in Dernie's approaches. The main message of the Archaeological Gallery is to present Korean culture and history in terms of technological development and this has been done by tracing the material culture in chronological order from the very early past, such as the Palaeolithic Age, up to the Balhae kingdom in the South North Kingdoms Period. According to curator Aa, some museum staff were against using a chronological order in the Archaeological Gallery and insisted that geographical or thematic approaches would be more suitable. However, there was general agreement among the Museum curators that, since the Gallery is concerned with archaeological artefacts and material culture through looking at the process of the technological development, a chronological order was the most suitable way to present Korean history. So the Archaeological Gallery is narrative in its nature as the main structure is focused on the chronological order.

The practice of using a chronological structure also raised a terminology issue in the Archaeological Gallery, regarding the terms Proto Three Kingdoms Period and South North Kingdoms Period which are newly used in this Gallery. These Periods were previously called the 'Three Han Period (the formal term of Proto Three Kingdoms)' and 'Unified Silla Period (South North Kingdoms Period formal name)' but the terms were criticised during the preparation of the new museum as they only acknowledged the histories of the southern part of Korea (Bak 2006). When Three Han existed in the southern area, the early Goguryeo Kingdom developed in the northern area and when Unified Silla was in the peninsula, Balhae was made by the successors of the Goguryeo Kingdom, mainly in the northern part. So, the chronological order is a means not only of seeing Korea's development in history, but also as a way of including the history of northern parts of Korea into the history of entire Korea.

Another point can be presented here. As the Archaeological Gallery is chronologically organised, Korea's history is presented inevitably from the Palaeolithic Age onwards, yet for the first time the northern area where Goguryeo and Balhae existed has been included as part of this history. So alongside the masterpiece exhibit types which delineate Korea with great and perfect objects, Korea is seen as a nation with a long history and its history is bound up within one nation, rather than just the southern part,

as had previously been the case. As seen in the type of the Archaeological Gallery, therefore, the messages that the exhibition conveys are the majesty and the breadth of Korean history under the roof of Korea's technological development. Next the exhibition contents are reviewed.

Exhibition Formats: Global Korea from ancient perspectives

In relation to the increase in ethnographic museums in the West, Lidchi (1997) examines representation within them. Lidchi (1997, 162) shows that there are two aspects affecting museum issues in recent times, both related to constructionist ideas, namely the poetics and politics of exhibiting and they can be explained as such;

By considering how meanings are constructed and produced, this critique concerns itself primarily with the semiotics or *poetics* of exhibiting. [...] By exploring the link between knowledge of other cultures and the imperial nations, this critique considers representation in the light of the *politics* of exhibiting.

Lidchi (1997, 200) goes on to question how to define museums, asserting that 'museums have emerged as highly contestable entities, with distinct histories and purposes' and this statement seems particularly apt in respect of the Archaeological Gallery under discussion. As Lidchi (1997, 204) suggests, there are several ways to see a museum:

One could consider the historical location of the museum, to examine the 'world view' it sought to put across. Alternatively one could highlight the manner in which the museums make objects meaningful and exhibitions create a complex web of signification – the *poetics of exhibiting*. Lastly, one could try to look at museums in terms of the link between power and knowledge in order to look at the discourses articulated throughout their displays – the *politics of exhibiting*.

Based on the discussions made by Lidchi, *the politics of exhibiting* is the 'viewpoint' which will now be looked at in the context of the Archaeological Gallery.

Korea is keen to explore, protect and display its heritage in the New National Museum of Korea as archaeology's nature has an extending link to the Korea's nationhood which has been explored in Chapter Three. However, there are some foreign artefacts displayed which articulate ancient Korea's relationships with other countries like China, Japan and, to an extent, Rome. As can be found in the manifestos of the New National Museum of Korea which promises to be the '6th

Largest Museum in the world' and 'the best Museum in Asia', (Museum Policy 2004, Opening Statement by President Roh 2005, and Museum Planning Guide 1995), engaging with other countries is one of the primary aims of this Museum and so there is another message of the Archaeological Gallery which attempts to show Korea's ancient relation with other countries; not only to focus on Korea but to look also at its relation with others, as Lidchi (1997) termed it, the *politics of the exhibition*. This is a comment made by one curator Hb:

The main subject of the Archaeological Gallery is not only Korean culture but also other cultures like Japan and China. So, for example, the Palaeolithic Display mentions neighbouring areas, and also the chronological table featured in the Introductory Area mentions the cultural exchange with others. So we put a showcase focusing on cultural exchange at the end of each Hall. Anyway, showing only our culture is not right, is it?

As this exhibition manager said, the Archaeological Gallery is trying to acknowledge ancient Korea's internationality using certain objects which give clues to such cultural exchanges in ancient times. Evidence of international exchanges is most clearly seen in the Silla Hall where artefacts are shown to indicate cultural exchange with Central Asia, Northern China and Rome. While other halls simply end with a single showcase containing foreign objects, the Silla Hall starts with foreign objects and explanations as if to stress its importance to this Period. This Hall will be explored later this Chapter so I shall not elaborate further here.

Additionally, the Archaeological Gallery starts with the Introductory Area which contains a chronological map illustrating Korean history, alongside world history, and Chinese and Japanese history. Also Korea is marked by a red circle on a satellite image of the world positioned on the opposite wall. Not only does this help people to understand the cultural exchanges of ancient Korea with other countries as the world history map aims, but it also opens up the question of Korea in its global context in the Archaeological Gallery. It seems fair to say that the statements '6th Largest Museum in the world' and 'the best Museum in Asia' have driven the exhibition to display some non-Korean objects, emphasising international exchanges of ancient Korea. According to the Head of the Archaeology Department⁴⁴,

The chronological table in the introduction works backwards from the present time to the past, and this order means we are trying to see the history from the

⁴⁴ See Appendix 9 for an example of the Curator Interview Script.

present perspective to the past, not seeing the present from the past. This table tries to suggest that current material culture is a kind of accumulation of our ancestral past, so that is why the table starts from the present.

The Head did not elaborate about other histories presented together with Korean history, but the chronological table both aligns Korean history with Western history and Chinese and Japanese histories from very recent times back to the Palaeolithic Age and also contributes to an understanding of Korean history in the world context. Also, the Head asserts that the satellite map sets the Archaeological Gallery in a global context, and will catch the attention of the audiences when they first enter this Gallery. So, the Introductory Area can be perceived as an attempt by this Museum to show its global vision along with the overarching aims of the New National Museum of Korea.

Also there is a Balhae Hall, which is another example of the Archaeological Gallery's effort to narrate Korea in the global context. As explained in Chapter One, the China's East Asia Project⁴⁵ concerned the history of Goguryeo and Balhae. Having an exhibition on Balhae and also naming the South North Kingdoms Period clearly indicate that Balhae is an integral part of Korean history. This Hall will be discussed in more detail later in this Chapter. However, by presenting Balhae in the Archaeological Gallery of the New National Museum of Korea the crucial role that the politics of exhibiting play in this New Museum is highlighted. In other words, the history of Balhae will be disseminated to the world as Korean history because it has been endorsed in the authoritative national institution of Korea. While displaying foreign objects and having Introductory Area in a way indicate ancient Korea's global perspectives, Balhae Hall carries contemporary Korea and its global concerns which are related to the next discussion. So these formats in the Archaeological Gallery signify *ancient Korea in the global context* which is another message encoded in the exhibition regarding the nation.

Exhibition Texts; Present Korea to the World

There is final message of the Archaeological Gallery which can be found in the exhibition texts. This message concerns how to present Korea to the world most likely.

⁴⁵ See the Glossary.

The New National Museum of Korea decided to use CE/BCE⁴⁶ instead of AD and BC in their museum texts from panels to labels. The choice of terminology is clearly of great importance in the Archaeological Gallery as it is chronologically organised from ancient times. The reason for this new practice, according to the curators, is that the most developed museums in the world⁴⁷ now use these terms and so the New National Museum of Korea needs to follow this new global practice. Although this new system is not used or has been approved by some of the museums that they quote such as the Smithsonian or the British Museum⁴⁸, it seems that the New National Museum of Korea is trying to update itself with some other museums which they believe are the greatest museums in the world. Although using the new terms CE and BCE may seem a small example, it certainly reflects the 'global' message the exhibition is keen to send out.

The question of the museum languages used in texts also needs to be considered to understand the Museum's attempt to accommodate the global context. The entire museum uses four different language versions for the texts, Korean, Japanese, Chinese and English. The summary panels at the beginning of each Hall are in all four languages. The middle panels in the showcases, giving thematic information about the period, contain both Korean and English texts, and the labels for each object give the Korean name using Chinese characters as well as their English names. As of these different languages, the entire preparation process of the exhibition in the Archaeology Department took more time than expected. All the language experts, not necessarily from this Museum but academic institutions in the University or Language Units, needed to translate and review the four languages. Even though the preparation is ultimately time-consuming and requires an enormous effort, these uses of four representative languages indicate how the Museum is trying to achieve their aim of being seen as a 'world museum'. The global overview in the terms of CE/BCE and the four languages in the panels are all indicative signs of this key message; 'presenting Korea to the World'.

⁴⁶ CE; Common Era, BCE; Before the Common Era.

⁴⁷ In their own terms it is the most developed type of museum, but they did not say why this is so. The museums are The British Museum, Smithsonian Institution and the Louvre mainly.

⁴⁸ Information obtained through e-mail contact with the Museums. See Appendix 4.

When the curators were all asked ‘what is the main message of the Archaeological Gallery?’, they all concurred that it was the ‘technological development of ancient Korea seen through the archaeological materials’. It seems this is the overarching message of the Archaeological Gallery as all the exhibition producers articulated this in their first responses. Examining the overall exhibition design in more detail, however, there are more distinctive messages which can be construed from the exhibition. The masterpiece exhibition centres on the physicality of the objects in their best condition and so signifies the majesty or greatness of Korea. Also the chronological order employed in the Gallery embodies the vastness of Korean history and also equally shows Korea to be a unified, single territory. Secondly, the exhibition formats show the importance of international exchanges in ancient Korea, most vividly in the Silla Hall. This shows that the Museum is trying to explain ancient Korea’s global natures. Third the exhibition texts are related to the message of presenting Korea to the world. Although it seems that the notion of technological development is the message that the curators themselves prioritised as most important, my analysis and interpretation suggests that a number of other key messages regarding Korea and national identity are embodied in the modes of presentation and in the objects selected.

Presenting Korea’s culture and history, being a world-stage museum, the 6th largest size in the world and also playing a major role as Asia’s central museum are all said to be the primary aims of this New National Museum of Korea, and presenting technological development of Korea is articulated by curators like main message of the Archaeological Gallery. However, as seen in overall exhibition design, this aim seems to have several branches of its meanings such as ‘one great Korea with a long history in global era’. However, it is important to measure whether this message is really reflected in the produced exhibition. Mason (2005a, 205) identified several studies on unintended messages by curators in exhibitions, and argued that the result of the exhibition can be altered by unintended messages saying, ‘both individuals (curators) and institutions – as products of a given society – will inevitably participate in the values and beliefs circulating within that society’. Although the exhibition seems to have clear messages as elaborated above, it may not be the only message and it may not necessarily be effectively encoded in the real production. The next part of this Chapter examines the real produced exhibition halls and then tries to identify

whether the message which has been discussed so far is in the exhibition or whether any other messages regarding the nation can be found.

Encoded 'nation' – unintended messages

As the Archaeological Gallery is composed of eleven individual halls in chronological order it is useful to choose certain halls to examine. The first area to be scrutinized will be the Introductory Area. It embeds the message of Korea co-operating with other nations, but it also has a very strong sense of Korea looking out to the world in general. In addition, as the main message is technological development there are three halls regarding this issue, namely the Bronze Hall, Proto Three Kingdoms Hall and Silla Hall. All of them are heavily influenced by the newly introduced metals, Bronze, Iron and Gold. As heavily explained in Chapters One and Two, GoJoseon and Dangun myth are all related to Bronze Age, so it is crucial to see how they are featured in the Bronze Hall. In the case of Silla Hall, the exhibition type is primarily a masterpiece exhibition and is comprised of contents denoting its rich international exchange. The Proto Three Kingdoms Period is one way that the exhibition constructs the message of one nation which acknowledges early Goguryeo in this historic period. A further two Halls, Goguryeo and Balhae, are worth investigating here too. In the case of Goguryeo there are several aspects involved. Not only the museum's acknowledgement of Goguryeo as a key part of Korean history, but there is also recent Chinese History Project involved in this Hall which provide a good reason to investigate. Balhae is another useful Hall in both its relation to Goguryeo and its showing that the New National Museum of Korea officially admits Balhae as an integral part of Korean history sending out a message to open up Korean history to the world. Also it cannot be ignored of the influence from the Chinese Project in this Hall too. So all those halls mentioned now are investigated to see what messages lie in the exhibitions. At the end of this part, holistic messages and representations about Korea and Korean identity are sought.

Introductory Area (Figure 4.17)

This way of starting the exhibition seems to be consistent with the overall aim of the Museum, to 'be ready for globalisation'. Some curators, however, see the Gallery and globalisation as being quite distinct, and view globalisation as a form of national



Figure 4. 17 Towards the Global Era

propaganda. They feel strongly that the idea of globalisation was a 1990s government agenda which people were trying to embody in the Museum.

In terms of globalisation, I think that was the motto for Korea in the 1990s. If you think of this motto, 'Having the most originality for Korea is the best way to achieve Globalisation', which is the most popular propaganda in Korea in the 90s, yes, we aim for globalisation as we are the Korean museum. (One junior curator)

As explained in Chapter Two, this New National Museum of Korea has heavily related to the nationalistic idea of Korean Government throughout history, so globalisation message in this Museum has been propagated by the 1990s government when the museum was under the construction. As a result and inevitably, the Introductory Area has a strong global slant in its telling of Korean history. It is also clearly shown as the curators and Head of Department claim that the aim of these features was to place Korea in the context of a wider global network. This is a comment from the Head. 'There is a map in the Gallery which can confirm where we (Korea) are in the world. This creates a very good self-image or opportunity for self reflection and self-confirmation for us. This will make people understand that we are Koreans'. As seen from this intention, this area predominantly appears to code transnational and global perspectives about Korea. So it seems fair to argue that this area embodies one of the main messages that the curators and this Museum want to deliver to the visitors. However, when considered the presentation of the artefacts, there seems a rather different story encoded.

Four artefacts beyond the satellite map and table should also be considered here. These are a comb-pattern pottery from the Neolithic Age, a bronze dagger from the Bronze Age, and a decorated brick from Baekje, followed by a pair of ear-rings from the Silla Kingdom. They are all very representative and indicative artefacts in Korean history and culture, not only in an archaeological sense but also in the sense of national identity. Displaying representative national objects in this Area can encode rather different messages than the curators' intention of transnational Korea.

In the post-modernistic view, transnationalism in the theory of nationalism and national identity is the most recent development and is seen to be at the centre of globalisation. However, inevitably, transnational and globalisation theories can delineate Korea's national identity and nationalism distinctly. Highlighting several

impacts of globalisation such as blurring the boundaries of the nations in the global era, however, Ozkirimli (2000) and McCrone (1998) mentioned that globalisation had helped to build a strong sense of national identity. Arguing about contested identity issues in the global era, Smith (1995) also believes that national identity still matters in the complex phenomena of globalisation. McLean (1998, 244) discussed how the issue of globalisation is bringing forward discussions about national identity in the National Museums and seems true of Korea today. So globalisation, which is the main message of the Introductory Area, can be linked to national identity in many senses which is different from curators' intention. Although the main message that the Introductory Area sends out is one of a global Korea, this area can also send rather strong nationalistic images of Korea's heritage.

Bronze and Early Iron Age (Figure 4.18)

Korea's Bronze Age is thought to have begun around the 10th century BCE under the cultural influence of northern regions including Northeast China, and lasted until the 4th century BCE. Rice cultivation began to be practiced from this period, which resulted in the formation of large villages and social strata. The introduction and development of iron weapons and farming tools from the 3rd century BCE accelerated social stratification and socio-political integration. (The Summary Panel of the Bronze and Early Iron Age Hall)

In this description there is little relating Bronze and Iron's impact on Korean society. However, the clear intention of the curator is to highlight the importance of the introduction of metals in this period.

Ninety-eight per cent of this Bronze exhibition aims have been successful. The characteristics of the Bronze Hall are the appearance of metal and agriculture. Two big problems solved here, and it must be a success. When people come to the Bronze Hall, they start to say, 'Wow, the bronze objects appear here...', '... from now on, developed culture starts to blossom,' and so on. In particular, the four showcases along the wall containing distinctive bronze artefacts are very well organised in terms of the intention of the Hall, and so it is successful. (curator Aa interviewed on November 2005)

Although the text in the exhibition did not fully convey the importance of metal development, the curator's focus has been fixed on bronze and also, in her own terms, the message has been vividly embedded in the exhibition. So in a way, the message this hall constructs is to display archaeological proof of metal introduction in this period. Diverse bronze artefacts are displayed in the first part of the exhibition, and in the second part of the exhibition different assorted types of pottery from the Early



Figure 4.18 Bronze Hall – Before Bombard

Iron Age can be seen. There seem no eloquent explanations and discussions of metal usages, but those displayed artefacts clearly signify the metal impact onto Korean society. Rather the displays show the perfect shape of the objects in their best conditions which are the idea of the masterpiece exhibition. However, there is no dedicated space intended to immediately capture the visitors' attention as there is in other halls. So the intended message of the curator is overall well presented through the exhibition in this Bronze Hall.

However, there is an issue related to national identity in this Hall, as discussed earlier which is about GoJoseon and Dangun that constitute one of the crucial national identity issues in contemporary Korea. Interestingly the curator acknowledges this issue, indicating 'The Bronze Hall must be very controversial in Korean archaeology as there are many undetermined things, which means that the Bronze Age is related to the origins of the Korean people in many senses.' (Junior curator Aa). However, the concept of GoJoseon and Dangun and homogeneity are not explicitly articulated in the final produced exhibition. To be precise, there is no evidence on narrating Dangun and homogeneity here, but there is one panel regarding the GoJoseon alongside some indicative artefacts which are presented as proof of GoJoseon existing. The objects such as the Liaoning-type bronze dagger, the Misong-ri type pottery and the panel explanation of 'dolmens', which are found in the north-western part of Korea and the Liaoning Region of modern China (Hwang and Ahn 2005), are all displayed next to the panel 'GoJoseon'. Although these artefacts describe GoJoseon which is crucial and pivotal to Korean identity, they are all well reflecting only the main encoded message of 'metal introduction' in Korea.

Another aspect that needs to be considered here is Dangun and its embodiment of the Korean people's concept of homogeneous group. The Archaeological Gallery does not have a presentation of Dangun in any particular part of the exhibition, as no archaeological proof for Dangun has yet been found, whereas there was material evidence to focus on with respect to GoJoseon. Also the issue of homogeneity subsequently is not noted or quoted in anywhere in the Bronze Hall.

In this sense, therefore, the intended message of the curator regarding the Bronze Hall is generally embodied in the exhibition and no additional unintended messages were

identified. However, what should be remembered here is that there is no explicit discussion on GoJoseon and Dangun, and the concept of homogeneity which all signify extensive significance of Korean identity in Bronze Age. As discussed in Chapter Two, GoJoseon and Dangun are the indicative symbols of Korea's ethno-symbolic national concept. To sum up, according to the curators' intentions and their presentation of the artefacts, the Bronze Hall is mainly trying to present the technological development of bronze as its main message. However, it is not just a simple Hall showing this development but rather a very complicated and intricate area with deep relations to the concept of homogeneity, and the first political entity GoJoseon and the national myth Dangun. Whereas the curator's intention is effectively encoded in the exhibition, all of these ethno-symbolic points have not been explicitly articulated in the Bronze Hall. I return to these points in Chapter Five when I consider audience responses.

Proto Three Kingdoms (Figure 4.19)

The Proto Three Kingdoms period was the time when the foundations of the Three Kingdoms period were laid. In the northern part of the Korean Peninsula, Goguryeo was growing into a state, while in the southern part emerged the Samhan confederacies, which were later to become Baekje, Silla, and Gaya Kingdoms. In terms of material culture, iron tools produced in large numbers and of various types became commonly used in daily life, and more refined types of clay vessels appeared with the introduction of new devices such as the tunnelled kiln and the wheel. In addition, wooden ware and lacquer ware, used in everyday contexts, were increasingly produced. (The Summary Panel of the Proto-Three Kingdoms Hall)

This is the second largest Hall in the Gallery and like the Bronze Hall it is quite clear from this text that the exhibition is underlining the issue of metal introduction. The first exhibition section contains iron and lacquer wares mainly, and the second part displays pottery. This Hall is mainly focused on the underlying factors leading to the Three Kingdoms Period and the respective role of technological developments. So, significant emphasis has been placed by the curator on the importance of iron for the nation's growth, in this sense Three Kingdoms' growth.

Ironware was starting to be made and it has been the basis of helping the nation to grow. And writing started to appear during the Proto period, so it is very much a turning point in Korean history. That is why there are many contentious issues between historians and archaeologists about the Proto period. (Interview with Oa in November 2005)



Figure 4. 19 Proto Three Kingdoms – One day to go

Furthermore, as the curator intended, saying that ‘based on iron culture and Chinese relation to the Korea at that time, I hope the audiences believe that there was a nation in the Korean Peninsula at that point’ (junior curator Oa), it is important to note that the concept Proto Three Kingdoms Period contributes to the ‘basis for constructing ancient Korean Kingdoms’ which made a major contribution to the construction of first Korean nationhood. So it seems that this particular period is seen by this Museum as the starting point of the ancient nation. Emphasis on Korea’s long history seems quite connected to the concept of perennialism when looking at ‘the nation’. Smith’s definition (Smith 1998, 159) for perennialism is convincing as it has a firm historical foundation:

[Perennialism] refers to the historical antiquity of the type of social and political organisation known as the ‘nation’, its immemorial or perennial character. In this view, there is little difference between ethnicity and nationality: nations and ethnic communities are cognate, even identical, phenomena. The perennialist readily accepts the modernity of nationalism as a political movement and ideology, but regards nations either as updated versions of immemorial ethnic communities, or as collective cultural identities that have existed, alongside ethnic communities, in all epochs of human history. On the other hand, the perennialist refuses to see either nations or ethnic groups as ‘givens’ in nature; they are strictly historical and social, rather than natural phenomena.

The Museum views the Proto Three Kingdoms as the period in which Korea was created as a nation, and for this reason the Proto Hall can be interpreted from a perennialist view which is another considerable paradigm of Korean identity, whereas the Bronze Hall is more of an ethno-symbolic Hall with its relation to the symbolic, mythical and political entity GoJoseon. The curator’s main intention of showing iron impact onto growth of Three Kingdoms in Korea, therefore, has been reflected in this Proto Hall with various iron objects. Through these artefacts, the curator has sought to encode the message that Korea as a nation started from this period, although this aspect of long existed Korea has not been explicitly narrated in the final exhibition.

Some might argue that GoJoseon in the Bronze Age should be considered as the starting point of the Korean nation. Rather symbolically, however, the Archaeological Gallery sees GoJoseon as a political entity which existed in the northern part of Korea, but it does not indicate one single nation due to its limited location. This emerged when the National Assembly inspectors asked about the lack of an individual GoJoseon Exhibition and the Museum replied that,

GoJoseon is part of the Bronze-Early Iron period, but in the southern part of the Korean peninsula we did not have a nation like GoJoseon, so the Museum puts GoJoseon in the Bronze-Early Iron Age as it is not the whole story of the Korean peninsula⁴⁹.

Korea's nationhood has been understood to be commenced since the Proto Three Kingdoms Period. This is the intention of the curator and the museum to encode the long nationhood of Korea in this Hall, but what also should be noted here is that the fact of being one nation Korea played a significant role in here. Endorsing this period as the first nationhood in Korean history then resulted to encode another, rather unintended message which concerns 'one Korea'. This is also related to the term itself 'Proto'. The use of the new term Proto Three Kingdoms signifies early Goguryeo as a part of Korean history, and so this conveys the message that Korea is a single nation which is not the main intention of the curator as nothing can be found in curator's comment or the exhibition texts. Therefore, the Proto Three Kingdoms Hall is not only encoding the message of technological development and long history of Korea but it is also delivering the message of one unified Korea.

Silla Hall (Figure 4.20)

Silla evolved from Saro, a walled town in present-day Gyeongju. Silla established its ideological and political foundation with the introduction of Buddhism and the administrative code. Culturally, Silla achieved its own styles as is evident in the wooden chamber tombs with stone and earthen mounds, its pottery featuring shapely lines, and the gold crowns with unique upright ornaments. A variety of glassware and other funerary objects of foreign origin attest to the cosmopolitan aspect of Silla culture. (The Summary Panel of the Silla Hall)

This panel explains Silla's cultural aspect the most, focused on religion and artefacts. Silla Hall, as a whole, contains diverse artefacts from other countries which convey the main message of this Hall; Korea's good relations with other countries. This is shown in the curator's comment:

Silla's main feature is its gold culture and its relation with Rome and so on. The message I want to communicate mainly is about Silla's involvement internationally and its connection with Roman culture. Also, glass and silver cups from other cultures have been displayed together so that people will understand its international involvement more easily.

⁴⁹ Internal document of the inspection report.



Figure 4. 20 Silla - Perfectionism

The main panel did not fully encode the message of the curator of Silla Hall, however, the displayed objects speak for themselves particularly with the exhibition design, and the entire design of the Silla Hall entails different message. Silla is the largest Hall in the Gallery because there is a separate area specifically set aside for the display of the gold crown and belt. The entrance to the Silla Hall leads into the separate gold crown and belt display area, followed by various golden artefacts, from ornaments and diadems to golden shoes. In the next area, objects from Western or other countries are on display. The symbolic power of those gold objects and exotic artefacts from other countries requires that they be displayed in a prominent way, as they are so distinct from the other artefacts⁵⁰. Also, creating a separate area for the Gold Crown and Belt in the Silla Hall makes this a masterpiece exhibition which focuses on the great power of one object. Elizabeth Crooke (2000) has commented in a critical analysis that the gold objects seem to represent national power in the National Museum of Ireland, and this could also be the case with the Silla Hall. The main golden artefacts in this Hall come from the tombs of Kings and Queens and so the Silla Hall could be more related to power and royalty than any of the other Halls containing golden objects. So it seems that the this Hall presents a symbolic image related to the nation and its power, with which people could engage in an ethno-symbolic way.

Although the curator did not intend to show the strength and power of Silla through the gold objects and other cultural materials, heavily focusing on the golden artefacts and its sumptuous exhibition can be related again to an ethno-symbolic understanding of the nation which could have been the unintentional result. The visitors could connect their national identity with wrought symbolic objects in a dedicated display space which is the main gist of ethno-symbolism. From this design and object point of view, this Hall conveys one of the distinctive messages of the Archaeological Gallery; Korea's greatness seen in its beautiful, wrought-metal artefacts. The curator acknowledged that gold objects are the main feature of the exhibition but he also said that the entire Hall is not focused on this golden aspect but rather mainly considers Silla's internationalism. So the design of the entire Hall and the presentation of the

⁵⁰ Taken from the research diary of 18 July 2005, in a personal comment by the Head of the Department, saying that since the artefacts of Silla are very sumptuous and skilfully wrought they deserved to be displayed accordingly. The audiences had to be able to appreciate the objects as something really great.

golden artefacts can encode another unintended message of the curator which is concerned with Korea's majesty.

Overall the exhibition in the Archaeological Gallery can be said to be narrative in style, as Dernie (2006, 11)says:

Narrative has been central to exhibition design in recent times. It is quite literally about an approach to ordering objects in space in a way that tells a story. In that sense exhibition design is regularly defined as narration. More broadly, narrative space is concerned with the contextualization of a displayed object. Narrative space can be about a simple relationship between a single object and its setting in space, a question of light and shadow, reflections and material configuration which evoke visual correspondences and engagement.

In light of this view then, how can the Silla Hall be interpreted? Regarding the curator's intention to highlight the international aspects of Silla, this particular hall with a vast number of golden artefacts is narrating the object story itself. So this is one case of the Hall's intention differing from the explanation offered by the curators. Even if the intention of the curator is to show the internationalism of Silla, it is possible that using an independent area for the treasured golden objects, and displaying the golden artefacts from the royal tombs in an ethno-symbolic way, would not influence people in the way that the curator had intended. Regardless of what curators encoded intentionally, the great Korea in the masterpiece exhibition is rather interpreted with its golden objects as a 'symbolic' nation, and this symbolic national image can be said to have overshadowed the side of internationalism of Silla.

Goguryeo and Balhae (Figure 4.21)

Goguryeo, one of the Three Kingdoms, was founded around the middle reaches of the Amnokgang River and gradually expanded to finally form a great empire spanning from the east of the Liaohoe River to the middle of the Korean Peninsula. Goguryeo actively received foreign cultures from northern and western regions as well as China while preserving its own cultural heritage. Goguryeo's dynamic and practical culture inspired the cultures of Baekje, Silla, Gaya and Wae (refers to Japan), and was succeeded and further developed by Balhae and Unified Silla. (The Summary Panel of the Goguryeo Hall)

The Goguryeo Hall contains two small rooms, a video room, which describes the Goguryeo culture and the wall paintings room. The number of artefacts of this period on display is fewer than in the other Halls, but the dedicated individual room with the wall paintings contains four wall paintings (copied from the real wall paintings in the



Figure 4. 21 Goguryeo

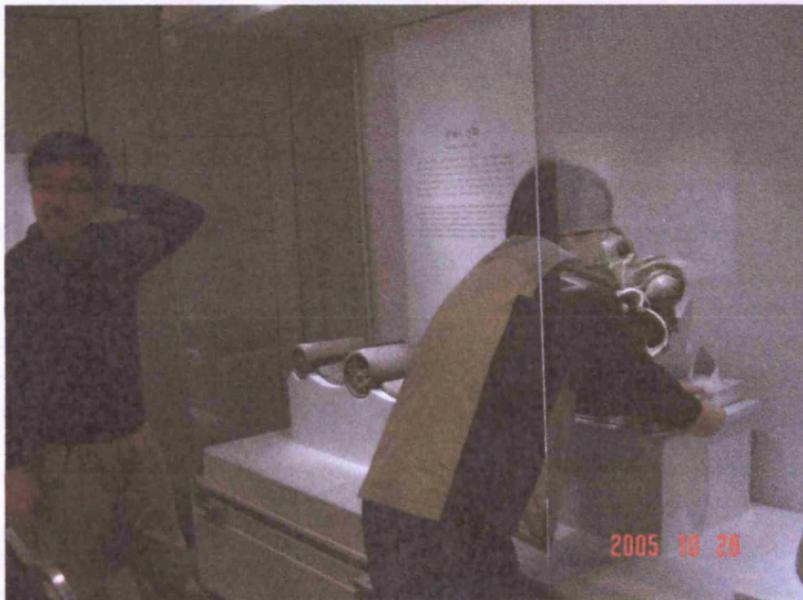


Figure 4. 21 Balhae

tomb) from The Great Tomb of KangSeo in North Korea.

Balhae was founded at Mt. Dongmosan in Manchuria by former Goguryeo subjects led by Daejoyeong. The successor state of Goguryeo grew side by side with Unified Silla to eventually occupy the largest territory in Korean history. Culturally, it reached such a height as to be referred to by the Chinese as Haedongseongguk; the 'prosperous country to the east of the sea'. Balhae's cultural levels are evident in the splendor of its palace architectural plans as well as various relics, such as highly decorative bricks, roof tiles, pottery, stone images of Buddha and dragons. (The Summary Panel of the Balhae Hall)

The smallest Hall in the Archaeological Gallery, the Balhae exhibition is the last in the Archaeological Gallery. Most of the objects on display were borrowed from the National University of Tokyo (23 objects)⁵¹. As shown above, Balhae is considered to be the kingdom that is a successor of Goguryeo. Goguryeo was mainly located in the area of North Korea and some parts of China (near the border areas) and was the successor to GoJoseon. Balhae is considered to be the successor to Goguryeo. As successors to GoJoseon, these both seem to have a direct relation with national identity. What then is the intended message of these two halls?

During the interview, the curator⁵² mentioned that the main messages he wanted to encode in the Halls concern the real culture of Goguryeo and Balhae rather than their power or greatness. This means the initial intention of the curator was in line with the overarching aim of the Archaeological Gallery; to show 'true' Korean culture and history. Also another message can be found from his view which is a perennialist view as one unified Korea. Ultimately the curator mentioned that Balhae and Goguryeo have to be presented in the New National Museum of Korea as Korean people could not access Balhae across the centuries, mainly because it has not been dealt with well in Korean history and also because all of its heritages are in North Korea, China and Manchuria.

That is why we need to keep talking about Balhae and Goguryeo, as we can't access that time. Their essence can only be seen in the Museum, where real and direct experience of these cultures is possible. So, as the national museum,

⁵¹ Personal communication with Choi Jang-yeol by email on 28 April 2006.

⁵² One curator is in charge of these two Halls. On the one hand, this is because of his educational background as a specialist on Goguryeo. But on the other hand, it was an ad-hoc decision as it was only decided to include the Balhae exhibition in 2004. As he was originally in charge of Goguryeo and Balhae is related to Goguryeo more than any other period the Department gave the responsibility to him.

we have to be involved more actively and dynamically in communicating the history of Goguryeo and Balhae.

So the curator narrates Goguryeo and Balhae in the exhibitions based on the academic point of view 'as they are our history which was hardly acknowledged and accessed'. However, the curator also confessed that both exhibitions were not in line with his own ideas as there were complications arising from the Chinese project. The curator explained the political implications of involving other nations, referring in particular to the attempts by other nations to include Goguryeo and Balhae in their own context. As of this Chinese Project, the curator cannot be totally freed from political influence of the Korean Government which pays an enormous emphasis on these Kingdoms, so inevitably there are some highlighted parts which satisfy political agendas in the exhibitions.

How deeply the halls of Goguryeo and Balhae carry the political meaning can be shown below. Initially the discussion has been made by the Culture and Tourism Ministry since 2004 about the Chinese Project and this resulted that the Goguryeo historic heritage in South Korea will be researched from 2004-2010⁵³. This countermeasure from Ministry also includes these; In terms of the New National Museum of Korea, the exhibition on Goguryeo needs to be enhanced within the museum. This new museum should aim to reach to the public in Korea and also to the tourists who visit Korea that Goguryeo is Korean history. Also the New National Museum of Korea should empower Goguryeo history and culture in the exhibition. Here the projects of the New National Museum of Korea are as such:

1. Enlarge Goguryeo hall
2. Display the resources about Goguryeo Tombs
3. UNESCO World Heritage advertisement in the museum
4. Making video and display it in the exhibition; to show the people vividly about the greatest and powerful Goguryeo Kingdom in East Asia
5. Making Goguryeo Tomb movie
6. Regular changing of exhibition collection
7. Exhibit the Gwangaeto Stele printing in the History Gallery;

According to the inspection of the administration conducted by the National Assembly in early 2005, the Assembly kept inquiring about Goguryeo and the

⁵³ Cultural Policy 2004 by Culture and Tourism Ministry, Korea

Chinese history project and what this Museum proposed to do to counter them⁵⁴. The New National Museum of Korea answered that they enlarged the Goguryeo exhibition by an additional 99.174 m² and with 60 artefacts. In response to the distortion of history in the Chinese project, this Museum did four things:

1. A special exhibition of Goguryeo was held in the old museum from 14 September - 17 October 2004.
2. The special exhibition on the UNESCO designation.
3. The wall painting exhibition in the New National Museum of Korea.
4. The Museum Outreach programme for schools and remote areas in Korea.

Films of the Goguryeo tombs and UNESCO panel are also all in the Archaeological Gallery. Also the project which is a joint exhibition between North and South Korea has been planned in April 2005. As a result of this, the New National Museum of Korea organised the exhibition in summer 2006⁵⁵ in the Archaeological Gallery.

In terms of Balhae, the political intentions have been found in here. It is interesting to point out the fact that the Balhae Hall was not in the initial plan of this new museum, but it was added in 2002 on board right after the Chinese Project had announced. The exhibition manager admits that 'the Balhae exhibition is a protective project against Russia and China which will claim the history of Balhae as theirs.' Specifically, the Head of Department states that:

In terms of Balhae, this was definitely part of Korean history and territory; however, we (the museum in South Korea⁵⁶) were located in the southern part of the peninsula and we did not pay much attention to it in the past, so some political issues have arisen around Balhae. However, Balhae is very much a part of Korean history, in the same time as Unified Silla. That is why we put Balhae here in the Gallery.

This is an obvious indication that this Museum sees Balhae as belonging to Korea and not to China, which sends a clear political message. Also the use of the 'South North Kingdoms Period' could appeal directly to the audience which indicates concrete evidence of vindicating Balhae as part of Korean history. The political influences in both halls, therefore, resulted to have the Lounge of the panel of UNESCO World Heritage Designation of North Korean Goguryeo Tombs in 2004, and the new term

⁵⁴ Museum Internal document from a personal memo of 5 October 2006.

⁵⁵ However, it is hard to analyse how this exhibition went and what kind of responses the museum encounters as of the lack of official reports in one sense, and also this exhibition has been made when the researcher was out of the reach in Korea.

⁵⁶ Authors words

'South North Kingdoms Period'. More vividly, the creation of Balhae Hall itself carries how deeply the Archaeological Gallery embodies the political intention. All of these examples show how much the New National Museum of Korea would like to show Goguryeo and Balhae in their own accounts.

Also these halls are very good examples to show the relation between Korean archaeology and its nationalism. Archaeology arose in response to the rise in political nationalism during the 18th century according to Diaz-Andreu and Champion (1996) and they believed that archaeology has been legitimised and institutionalised to educate people about nation. This could explain some of the complex issues that surround the Goguryeo and Balhae Halls. According to Choi (2005b), Goguryeo archaeology was first discussed in the 1880s when the stele of the Gwanggaeto King, which shows the national boundary of Goguryeo in the past, was found. Because of the unofficial Japanese invasions in the late 19th century, Korea experienced serious threat onto their national identity. In this difficult time, the Gwanggaeto stele became a great national symbol and national identity because it is the historic evidence which records strong and greatest (or largest) Kingdom of Korea which extended to enormous part of Chinese territory. Goguryeo's diverse relationships with other countries also have recorded in this stele and this proves that Goguryeo was a very influential kingdom in Asian history⁵⁷ (Schmid 2002). Other representative relics from Goguryeo are the hundreds of wall paintings discovered in tombs in North Korea, which in 2004 became World Heritage Designated Sites by UNESCO (Choi 2005c).

The intended messages by the curator are to show Goguryeo and Balhae in their own cultural and historical accounts within the perennial view of Korea. Both Kingdoms are successor nations to GoJoseon and this strengthened the argument for perennialism in the understanding of Korea as one nation. Although the curator intended to encode the perennial Korea, the real exhibition of wall paintings are held in dedicated and individual space in small exhibition Hall of Goguryeo, which is

⁵⁷ This stele now in Jirin where is Chinese Territory, so this Museum did not have the stele itself. But the rubbings of this stele have been displayed in History Gallery, not in the Archaeological Gallery. This is also an interesting point to consider given Goguryeo is one of the important periods in the Archaeological Gallery. But this discussion seems related to overall divisions between history and archaeology and its subsequent design issues, so I shall not elaborate this here in the thesis as it may over-limit the boundary of the main theme of the thesis.

rather masterpiece exhibition type, and this can encode ethno-symbolic message of Korea which underlined the great majesty of Korea. However, there are political intentions heavily involved in both Halls, which resulted to lead the exhibitions having UNESCO, Balhae Hall. They are the results of countermeasure of the Chinese Projects mainly, so it is not the intentions of the curator here. UNESCO Panel then entails Korea's global aspects focusing on its world class level of designation, and the term 'South North Kingdoms' and the Hall Balhae can be all seen in the politics of the New National Museum of Korea. This institution is not palimpsest of Korea but also it is an authoritative national organisation so these two aspects regarding Balhae Hall delineate Korea and its history officially and legitimise Balhae in Korean history, presenting to the world audiences as the overarching aim of this new museum is being a global museum.

This suggests that several reasons can be made for having Goguryeo and Balhae Halls but they do not seem to all have the same background and messages. Goguryeo and Balhae, with their origins from GoJoseon, have been suggested as the reason for Korea becoming one strong nation, and this is the main message embodied in the exhibition alignment fulfilling the curator's intention. However, the curator's main intention has been 'infected' by the political agenda. The Government wanted to have exhibitions that legitimised Goguryeo and Balhae as Korea's history, however, with a link to the Chinese Project.

Concluding thoughts

The primary role of the past is that it can be used to anchor the nation by making it simultaneously timeless and very old, and through this, nationalism itself has its reasons as well as its roots in the past. Through the past it is possible to create the historically very interesting illusion of the nation as natural. Naturalness is, at the same time, a strongly cohesive quality and a very effective legitimating force. (Sorensen 1996, 28)

It is, therefore, highly possible that the Archaeological Gallery in the New National Museum of Korea may unintentionally be sending a message about nationalism or national identity through its symbolic objects, which embody a strong nationalistic message, and through its design, usages of new terms. As discussed above, the ways that the concept of nation is viewed in the Archaeological Gallery are diverse and multi-layered. It seems that the overall messages of the Archaeological Gallery are

quite simple and direct; one Korea has a great and long history and its presentation in global era. However, the produced exhibition seems to be more multi-vocal with various meanings which differ from the intentions of the curators.

The Introductory Area at the entrance sets out the aims of the Archaeological Gallery, and even, to a certain extent, this Museum's overall aim of presenting Korea in a global context. This has been called the transnational aim of the New National Museum of Korea, but this can lead the museum being seen in a more nationalistic way as there are some concerns and discussions involving the issue of globalisation.

Although the Bronze Age is one of the best examples of the ethno-symbolic understanding of the nation, the Bronze and Early Iron Age Hall in the Archaeological Gallery carries the main message of technological development of bronze and this is clearly shown in the curator's intention. However, this period includes GoJoseon and various issues such as the myth Dangun and homogeneity directing a broader understanding of nation and national identity which is an ethno-symbolic in character. So the messages intentionally encoded may be too unilinear to reflect the complexity of the entire Bronze period. Although there seems no unintended message can be found in this Hall as the produced exhibition appears to effectively embody the curator's intention, it seems that the message about the nation may be decoded differently by visitors and this will be discussed in the next Chapter.

The importance of the Proto Three Kingdoms Period seems to centre on the fact that the Three Kingdoms originated during that period. Although the message relating to iron culture development is encoded here, there are other meanings to be found. This Museum seems to see this period as embodying the creation of the kingdoms, which are regarded as fundamental to present-day Korea. Through this, the clear intention of displaying this period as perennial Korea can be understood but using the new name of Proto Three Kingdoms in a way delivers unintended message which underlines one unified Korea.

The Silla Hall is another good example of the way the New National Museum of Korea presents the nation from an ethno-symbolic perspective through its focus on golden artefacts. Gold is the representative message of Silla but this is not entirely the

curator's intentions, as he said internationalism is the main message he wants to deliver. However, the overall design and display in this Hall encode another unintended meaning, which is heavily focused on the golden artefacts in the masterpiece exhibition. So it is also interesting that the exhibition design gives a different message than that the curator suggests and this is more in line with an ethno-symbolic Korea.

Goguryeo and Balhae are recognised as significant features of Korean history, and what the curator intended was to show the essence of their cultures, rather than their greatness. Also the New National Museum of Korea has tried to preserve the history of Goguryeo and Balhae by treating them in a perennialistic way. However, this Museum is a national institution and since these particular periods had raised complex issues in other nations, such as China, political nationalism has been revealed in the treatment of these periods in this Museum. At the same time, Balhae was allocated a place in the Archaeological Gallery, reinforcing the claim that it is also part of Korean history. The use of the term South North Kingdoms Period seems to highlight this issue too.

The nations and national identity have been represented in diverse ways in the Archaeological Gallery. The most frequently detected approaches are the ethno-symbolic and the perennialistic perspectives. In Korea reviewed in Chapters One and Two, the ethno-symbolic and perennial ideas are mainly found in GoJoseon, Dangun myth and homogeneity in ethno-symbolically and also divisions between two Koreas as perennial view. However, GoJoseon and Dangun, homogeneity have not been explicitly demonstrated in the Bronze Hall, but rather golden artefacts in Silla and Wall paintings in the Goguryeo Hall bolster the image of strong nation in the context of an ethno-symbolic nation in the Archaeological Gallery. The division between South and North Korea seems to affect Korean people and their views on the national identity. Perennial one nation has been separated into two different nations, and so the issue of division is clearly one of the elements which compose the modern Korean identity. In this sense, this Archaeological Gallery seems to worth analysing. Both Proto Three kingdoms and Goguryeo/Balhae Halls all acknowledge Goguryeo and Balhae as Korean history officially although both were located in North Korea and still the relics are extensively in North Korea. Perennial national concept has

concerned contemporary Korea mainly through the nationalistic movies about the division between nations but in the New National Museum of Korea, it has differently connoted as the exhibition put two Koreas as one Nation. Therefore, the messages which are intended are not necessarily in the produced exhibition and also the unintended messages can be encoded in the exhibition through the museum design or historic background of the period.

This Chapter has focused on processes of production and on the messages encoded through these processes. However, there are more investigations necessary, to complete the communication process, in regard to decoding. Highlighting the importance of 'interpretation' of meaning Hall (1997, 32) states that 'Meaning has to be actively 'read' or 'interpreted'. [...] The meaning we take, as viewers, readers or audiences, is never exactly the meaning which has been given by the speaker or writer or by other viewers.' So there are significant meanings in the representation, constructed by both culture and history, which can be interpreted in different ways by different individuals. In light of this, the next chapter will investigate the visitors/audiences themselves.

Using The Cosby Show's ethnographic audience research in Lewis's 1991 work, Hooper-Greenhill (1995, 9) believed that the message interpretations of museum audiences can be varied and multilayered with enormous potentiality to develop further studies of audiences. It is not enough simply to find what is most popular among the exhibitions, what Hooper-Greenhill (1995, 10) suggests is also important to understand the signifying principles behind those successes requiring in-depth and resourceful audience researches with different agendas such as race, class and gender and so on.

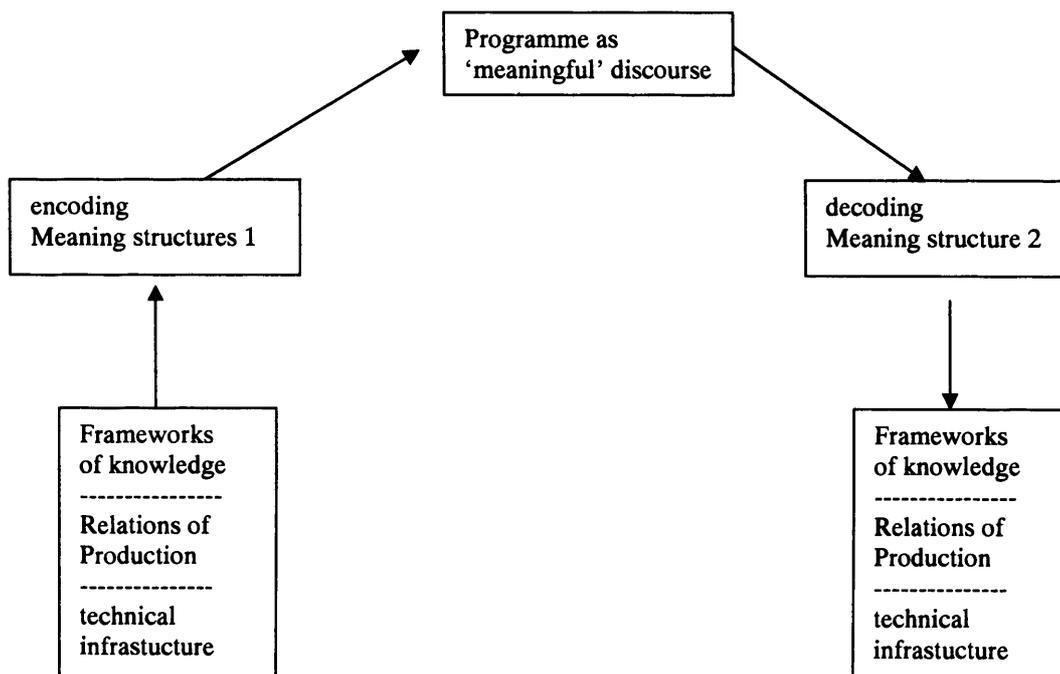
Focused on the inside story of the New National Museum of Korea before its opening, this Chapter regarded the encoding process based on the ethnographic research with interviews and observations, and then revealed the complicated messages intended and unintended; in order to complete the entire process of communication, the next Chapter deals with how the Museum was viewed from the outside following the opening and it starts to examine the various views on audiences in the 21st century.

Chapter 5

After 28 October 2005

Introduction

When Stuart Hall (1980) developed mass communication theory, he asserted that it is the 'lack of equivalence' which causes 'distortions' or 'misunderstandings' between broadcasters and audiences. However, Hall (1980, 131) also emphasised that, 'there seems some ground for thinking that a new and exciting phase in so-called audience-research, of a quite new kind, may be opening up.' Using Philip Elliot's view points, Hall (1980, 129-130) argues that the audience is both the 'source' and the 'receiver' of the television messages and goes on to assert that 'The consumption or reception of the television message is thus also itself a 'moment' of the production process in its large sense [...] Production and reception of the television message are not, therefore, identical, but they are related: they are differentiated moments within the totality formed by the social relations of the communicative process as a whole.' When we only look at the production side, which is composed of complex layers as explored in Chapter Four, we do not see the completed version of communication. Only by considering both the production and the reception process will we gain a fuller picture of the process of communication. It is now useful to borrow Hall's diagram of communication here (Hall 1980, 130).



Whilst Chapter Four looked at the encoding side of this diagram, Chapter Five will interrogate the decoding aspect in the exhibition, following Hall's assertion that (1997, 33), 'interpretation becomes an essential aspect of the process by which meaning is given and taken. The reader is as important as the writer in the production of meaning'. Also Hall states that (1997, 4) 'Members of the same culture must share sets of concepts, images and ideas which enable them to think and feel about the world, and thus to interpret the world, in roughly similar ways.' However, what has to be remembered here is that the museum visitors or audiences are not simply readers, but they are interactive participants in the construction of meaning; a concept widely discussed in the museum studies literatures from Mason, Hooper-Greenhill, Bicknell, Dicks, Serrell, and Marovic. Also, although the visitors (the Korean Public) are sharing some similar cultural meanings and values as they belong to one national identity Korean (South Korea), they may decode different and various messages and meanings in the exhibitions as Cooke and McLean (2002, 120) discussed about the National Museum of Scotland; 'this [different possible readings of visitors when they visit the museum] is mediated, though, through references to their conceptions of the political, social, economic and cultural landscape of contemporary Britain.' Also there is a possibility that the visitors may not have access to the messages which have been encoded by the curators intentionally and unintentionally. As Marovic said (1995, 31-32):

Each exhibition contains a tension between emission and absorption. Creators of the exhibition who prepared the emission formulate the message and the goals of the exhibition, transmitting their own experience to their target audience. The exhibition as communication is by this fact limited to the public it is intended for. The larger the conception of the exhibition the wider the public intended, the more noise there is in the communication channel.

Through the audience research, therefore, it is possible to identify whether there is a 'lack of equivalence' between the encoders and the messages received by the audience, and if so, what they are. This Chapter, based on audience research following the New National Museum of Korea's opening, will review how the public decoded the Museum's exhibitions. To a certain extent it also investigates what kind of criticism the Archaeological Gallery received. Using contemporary theories of media audience research in order to understand the response of museum audiences, this Chapter starts with a theoretical review of mass communication and related audience studies. After this, the audience response is critically analysed to explore the

ways in which they decoded the Gallery and the main messages they 'received' regarding national identity, using the research data from the fieldwork.

Defining audiences

Audiences and The New National Museum of Korea; off-limits?

After a decade of preparation, the New National Museum of Korea finally opened its doors to the public on 28 October 2005 (Figure 5.1). This was a historic moment for the Korean people, who had been waiting ten years for their new National Museum, and also for the museum staff who had worked so hard for a successful opening. As the opening day approached, several events were organised to raise the public awareness of the New National Museum of Korea. A celebrity fashion show, an Open Music Festival and public events targeting families and young people were held. On the opening day 19,164 visitors attended, a record that was broken on the 29th with 35,390 visitors and again on the 30th with 41,522⁵⁸. As of the 15th December 2005, less than two months after the Museum opened, one million visitors had been to the Museum, and one year and four months later (4th February 2007), a total of five million visitors had been recorded in this Museum⁵⁹. What, then, did they see in this Museum, and what did they take from their visit? What kind of messages does this Museum have in the exhibition regarding national identity and how do these relate to audience responses? Many questions have been raised inevitably when considering exhibition communication. Although visitors do not determine the meaning, they are still a necessary part of the process of meaning making in the museum (Lewis 1994, 25).

However, there is one point which should be considered here. It must be said that audience research in the museums is still relatively undeveloped in Korea. Current audience research in Korea is more associated with art galleries⁶⁰ than with museums, although the latter have recently been given more attention. Based on the rich resources of the art galleries, Kim (2003) asserts that contemporary audiences in art galleries are intelligently demanding and have specialist interests, and Yang (2001), Kim and Yu (2003) argue that the art galleries need to find ways to meet the needs of

⁵⁸ Official records of the Museum, published on the website as of 14 December 2005.

⁵⁹ KyeongHyang Newspaper 5th Feb 2007

⁶⁰ *Art Management Studies* is a leading periodical dealing with visitor studies, particularly those concerned with art galleries, and contains material that has been used for this research.



Figure 5.1 After the Opening (People queuing for entry)

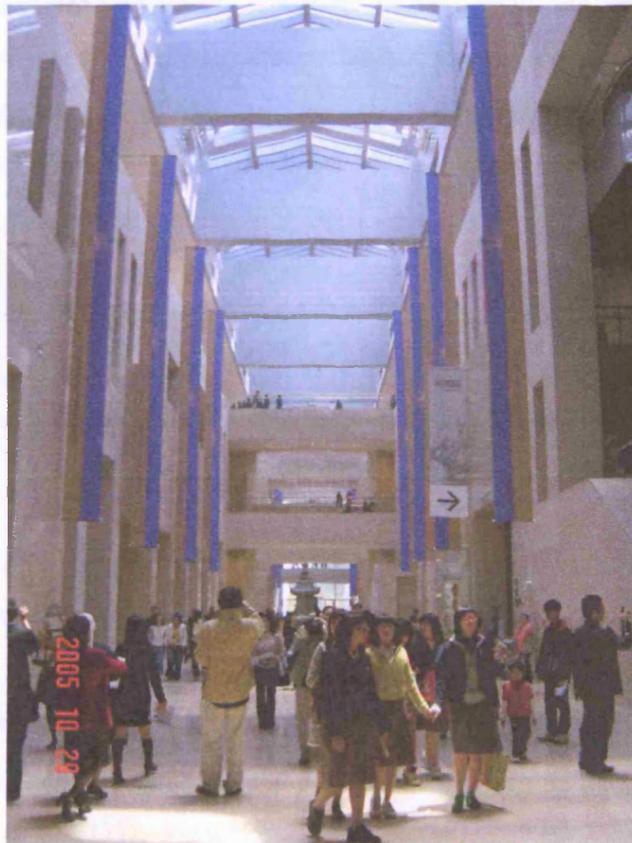


Figure 5.1 After the Opening (Inside the Museum)

those people. More specifically, however, the information about museum audiences focuses primarily on numeric and demographic data, and so it is insufficient for a full understanding of museum audiences in great detail. So capturing the museum visitors' stories in Korea is difficult as this area of study is rather lagging behind vis-à-vis other sociological studies undertaken in many different sectors such as media studies.

The National Museum of Korea, before it moved to the New Museum in Yongsan, has itself undertaken few visitor studies. To date, no qualitative audience research has been developed at this museum. An example (of a typical) study was in 1995, which was aimed mainly at gaining an insight into what audience research involved and who the target audiences for the New National Museum of Korea would be (Yoon 1995). This included an in-depth examination of the literature related to museum exhibitions worldwide, with an emphasis on the visitors' physical experiences in the galleries, covering such aspects as the visual effectiveness of displays, museum fatigue and physical access. Even though the study was undertaken specifically to ensure that the New National Museum of Korea would be designed and run with an insightful understanding of potential audiences, it was conducted over ten years ago, and the findings were not fully employed in this New Museum design during its construction. It is interesting to quote one of the curators who had been working since 1997 to prepare the New National Museum of Korea, which draws attention to the limited information they had access to:

When we prepared this new Museum our goal was to make it friendly to audiences. However, we had no idea what the audiences wanted. In the former Museum we had only exhibits, and we had only limited audience research, even regarding very basic or simple things. Indeed the information was limited to how many people in different age groups attended and who paid for admission. After we moved to Yongsan, I thought that it is very important to address the lack of audience researches.'

In one of the quantitative research which this Museum carried out from 4 to 15 December 2002, 946 visitors (846 South Korean and 100 foreign) were questioned to obtain information regarding their demographic data, the extent to which the communication tools provided in the Galleries were used, the effectiveness of Gallery interpreters and the front of house museum services, and the Galleries they found most interesting⁶¹ (Yi 2003). However the information that emerged from this

⁶¹ No information is available about the discrete methodology and research plan used for this study, so

research is limited to the visitors' demographic data and basic knowledge obtained after the visit. Also it is difficult to know whether this Museum analysed the data and then acted upon it in subsequent exhibitions of 2003 and 2004. After the opening, the New National Museum of Korea hired Gallup Korea⁶² to conduct visitor research from 8 to 14 December 2005. In total, 1015 visitors were surveyed at the museum, and non-visitor research was conducted using telephone interviews with a further 1014 people from 12 to 13 of December. However, this research also maintained the quantitative format, which resulted in data on how many people had visited the museum, which Gallery (or objects) were the most popular, and why they had visited⁶³. This quantitative survey could have led to an understanding about the visitors that might be holistic in terms of numbers and demographic data, but it was superficial in terms of whether the audiences were really engaged by the exhibition or the messages that they were taking away.

Given the research discussed above, it is possible to say that understanding the audiences who visit the New National Museum of Korea is at present limited to quantitative rather than qualitative data. Therefore, in addition to the current superficial demographic information, there seems to be a need for more in-depth surveys to give a deeper understanding about the visitors to the New National Museum of Korea. Also given the meaning of this brand new Museum for Korean people, regarding their extensive interest in national identity and museum's own strong bond to the nationalism, it must worth exploring this Museum's visitors regarding the national identity. Furthermore, as explained in the introduction of this part, museum communication is a pivotal concept of the entire thesis, and so this part attempts to explore the consumption side. Before considering the visitors' responses to and decoding of the Archaeological Gallery, it is critical to review the current discussions about audience studies in different disciplines, with a particular emphasis on the study of mass communications, a field in which changed attitudes towards ways of understanding museum audiences are becoming evident. It will also suggest ways in which Korean audiences can be categorised using the theoretical perspectives

it is difficult to determine how the Museum carried out this research and who undertook it. Furthermore, the 2004 Annual Report contains no reference to any discussion or action in relation to the study.

⁶² Launched June 17th 1974, this is the first specialized research company in Korea.

⁶³ See Appendix 5.

of audience studies. This is required in order to be able to articulate the character of contemporary audiences and their behaviour when visiting the museum and heritage.

Diversified audiences

This section will examine audiences and relevant studies about them, using mainly Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998) who have written extensively on this subject. Later in this section, Korean audiences will be investigated. The nature of audiences is diverse and colourful. Brooker and Jermyn (2003, 4) have defined them in protean terms as, ‘the ‘audience’ is equally and simultaneously identifiable and elusive, imaginable and unpredictable, and enduringly fascinating for all those reasons.’ In their comprehensive mass communication study, Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998, 3-4) recognised the rapidly changing nature of audiences in modern society and describe three paradigms of audience research: ‘Behavioural, Incorporation/Resistance and Spectacle/Performance’. They constructed the following model to illustrate these paradigms, which will be described in turn below.

	1 Behavioural	2 Incorporation/ Resistance	3 Spectacle/ Performance
Audience	Individuals (in social context)	Socially structured (e.g. by class, gender, race)	Socially constructed and reconstructed, especially by spectacles and narcissism
Medium	Stimulus (message)	Text	Mediascape(s)
Social consequence(s)	Functions/dysfunctions, propaganda, influence, use, effects	Ideological incorporation and resistance	Identity formation and reformation in everyday life
Representative studies and approaches	‘Effects’ literature, uses and gratifications	Encoding and decoding, Morley (1980), Radway (1987) Fans studies	Silverstone(1994), Hermes (1995), Gillespie (1995)

Table 5.1 The Three Paradigms (Source from Abercrombie and Longhurst 1998, 37)

1. Behavioural

The Behavioural paradigm is concerned with the way in which audience studies have developed over time and so reflect an earlier understanding of audiences. In the behavioural paradigm, research in the ‘effects’ phase reviewed the impact on people from being exposed to the negative impact of the media with respect to sensitive issues such as sex, violence, or racism. It is useful to consider Perry’s research in 1996 to encapsulate the ‘effects’ phase. Regarding ‘effects’ as one of the conventional approaches to research into mass communications, Perry (1996, 97) emphasised that it

was often not proved that people's behaviour was consistently affected by the messages constructed in the mass media. To support his arguments, Perry (1996) cites 'The NBC Study', conducted in the United States by the National Broadcasting Co. in the 1960s. It was designed to measure the influence of the depiction of violence in the media on young people. The results showed that children who had watched violent and aggressive programmes for 15 years had no particular problems with violent or offensive behaviour (Perry 1996, 162-3). So the biggest challenge that studies of behavioural perspectives may encounter is that people do not simply and directly take on board the message which was encoded by the sender. Although it might be the case that the senders would want the audiences to decode those negative messages, what should be concerned here the most is that the decoders do not simply behave according to the effect they might have from the messages.

2. Incorporation and resistance

In this phase, the question can be asked whether audience members are 'incorporated into the dominant ideology by their participation in media activity or whether, to the contrary, they are resistant to that incorporation' (Abercrombie and Longhurst 1998, 39). The 'encoding/decoding' phase can be regarded as characteristic of this paradigm and building on Stuart Hall's theory, Morley (1980) suggested that audiences decipher encoded messages in three different ways. In the 'dominant code', people absorb all of the meanings that the messages give and in the 'negotiated code', audiences modify the messages by overriding them with the preferred meanings they have chosen themselves. Finally, decoders could interpret the meaning for themselves in such a way that they end up with a meaning that is the opposite of what was intended. What Morley (1980) emphasises is first, the complexity of the audiences' responses to the messages, and second, the crucial function of the 'intersection of a variety of social, cultural and discursive positions including class, ethnicity, age and gender⁶⁴' of the decoders when they receive the messages. On the other hand, Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998, 17-18) critique Morley's arguments in that '[t]he crucial issue for Morley is the relationship of those positions to the distribution of power and to a particular account of that relationship, in which consent is secured by the establishment of hegemony.' They also argue that Morley's idea would set a limit to

⁶⁴ Term used by Abercrombie and Longhurst.

the range of the questions used to understand how the audience is influenced by the media. Additionally, Stuart Hall's main theory of encoding and decoding (1980) is part of this aspect as Morley is heavily influenced by Hall. Encoding and decoding will not be discussed here but it will be re-visited shortly when the analysis turns to audiences in the Archaeological Gallery.

3. Spectacle/Performance

In order to understand this paradigm, the following quotation should be considered:

Critical to what it means to be a member of an audience is the idea of *performance*. Audiences are groups of people before whom a performance of one kind or another takes place. Performance, in turn, is a kind of activity in which the person performing accentuates his or her behaviour under the scrutiny of others. That accentuation is deliberate, even if unconscious. (Abercrombie and Longhurst 1998, 40)

As contemporary society faces post-modern times, the mass media dominates the world, and performance is a major part of audiences' lives. Additionally, '[c]ontemporary life in general is a question of spectacle and the aim of modern life is to see and be seen, an aim that has come to dominate leisure activities of all kinds and not just tourism but also work and home life.' (Abercrombie and Longhurst 1998, 81) Abercrombie and Longhurst cite the example of the contemporary excessive fan culture to illustrate the lifestyle of spectacle and performance audiences. Most importantly, they (1998, 39) imply throughout their study that contemporary audiences can be split into three categories according to this paradigm: simple, mass and diffused. Simple and mass audiences are suitable for the analysis of the Incorporation/Resistance paradigm whereas diffused audiences are relevant to the Spectacle/Performance model (Abercrombie and Longhurst 1998, 39).

Simple audiences are characterised by fairly direct communication between a sender and a receiver and are localised in public spaces, for example, at concerts, plays, films, festivals, football matches and other events with the quality of sacred ceremonies (Abercrombie and Longhurst 1998, 44). The image is of a passive and permissive audience, clapping and cheering together. *Mass* audiences are 'largely operated with simple audiences' and are the results of the advent of mass communication. Compared to simple audiences,

Mass audience events do not involve spatial localization, the communication is not so direct, the experience is more of an everyday one and is not invested in quite the same way with ceremony, less attention is paid to the performance, which is typically received in private rather than in public, and there is even greater social and physical distance between performers and audience. (Abercrombie and Longhurst 1998, 58)

The principle underlying a *diffused* audience by Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998, 68) is that 'in contemporary society, everyone becomes an audience all the time. Being a member of an audience is [...] constitutive of everyday life.' Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998, 73) also emphasise the paradigm that '[e]veryday life is performance that we are unaware of in ourselves or in others. Life is a constant performance; we are audience and performer at the same time; everybody is an audience all the time. Performance is not a discrete event.' The paragraph below from Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998, 97) effectively conveys the definition of diffused audiences:

To say that the world is conceived as a series of spectacles is to say that it is treated as something to be attended to. No longer can people, objects or events be simply taken for granted; they are instead constituted as performances that command audiences. At the same time as the world is full of performing entities, the characteristic personality structure of contemporary societies is narcissistic. In the sense in which we use it, that means that individuals see themselves as performers in front of an imagined audience.

Snyder (1994, 215-231) reviewed audience research in relation to vaudeville theatre and he found that the nature of the contemporary audience has much in common with the diffused audience. However, Snyder (1994) also endorsed the idea that there are groupings of people who can be understood as both simple and mass audiences in the contemporary setting. Similarly, Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998) emphasise that none of these types of audience imply superiority or a privileged position and, to some extent, that they are all compatible with each other.

Of the three paradigms in the above discussion, the spectacle/performance paradigm currently seems to be the one most often used in understanding contemporary, modern audiences. In addition, although modern audiences tend to have the characteristics of diffused audiences, this does not mean that the simple and mass forms of audience are not compatible with modern audience studies. The crucial point here, notwithstanding, is that audience studies involve complex multi-dimensional understandings in the

discipline of mass communication. Taking this into consideration, the next part briefly looks at the Korean audiences and academic views on them.

Korean Audiences

It seems that Korean audience studies are highly dependent on the phenomenon of public consumption of mass media and communication. Lee (1998) critically reviewed Korea's mass media, particularly television programmes, in the context of consumerism in the 21st century. Lee (1998) asserts that Korean audiences can be identified as simple and mass audience types because they are passively consuming their culture through television rather than actively engaging with those programmes. However other researchers in this field would argue that the diffused type would be a more appropriate way in which to define Korean audiences.

For instance, Park and Hwang (2001) divided Korean audiences into four behaviour groups: (1) selectivity before viewing, (2) involvement during viewing, (3) re-evaluative channel switching and (4) usage after viewing. Using these four types, they concluded that contemporary audiences are no longer simple and one-way communicators⁶⁵. Focusing on television talk shows, Park (2000) discerns how audiences have developed in Korea and what kinds of audience type exist which are simple, mass or diffused. Park (2000) distinguished two reasons for the existence of diversified audiences in Korea which are, firstly, changes in the broadcasting systems with various types of technological input, and secondly, the growing sense of citizenship in present day Korean democratic society. Audiences can be seen to be engaging with the media interactively in the light of modern technological developments and Park (2000) asserts that this is a requisite process in the 21st century. Analysing various television programmes Baek (2003, 373) acknowledged diffused audiences in contemporary Korea, stating that '[t]he contemporary value of television programmes will be understood when audiences actively interact with it, as this attitude will reveal the reality and directness to the society.' Assigning the diffused audience style to Korean people, Um (2003) suggested that people saw themselves reflected in modern advertisements and that this in turn helps to create a new consumer culture in society. Um (2003) also believed that Korean audiences no

⁶⁵ More recent publications can be found online in the Korea Education & Research Information Service website (www.riss4u.co.kr)

longer fitted into the categories of the mass or simple audiences, and emphasised that contemporary audiences are more likely to engage themselves with the mass media.

From the above discussion, it appears that Korean audiences have been mostly investigated in the context of the diffused audience model rather than the mass or simple audience paradigms in mass media perspectives. It might be more accurate to say that while mass and simple audiences do still exist in contemporary society, the diffused audience experience is increasingly evident. It can also be said that recent studies on mass communications in Korea have focused on the audience side more than previously, so the multifaceted characteristics of audiences are more easily detected. However, do those audiences only exist for the mass media such as television or newspapers? Or to an extent, can they be the museum visitors of the future or are they already museum visitors? If those who are most likely diffused mass media audiences are museum visitors, are they all having the same characters as diffused people when they visit the museum? In order to answering these questions in the Korean context, it is worth looking at how research in the rest of the world characterises the audience in the museum setting.

Some museologists have argued that the museum will also have to face up to the need to see their audiences from different perspectives. Serrell (2006, 27) specifically defines visitors as such:

By “visitors” we mean culturally diverse people who are spending leisure time, are curiosity-driven, have no specialized prior knowledge, are likely to have a social agenda, might be in an intergenerational group, who desire engaging experiences, need and appreciate orientation, might be first-timers to the museum, are time-limited, and are ready to learn if it can happen easily and quickly

Casey (2001) emphasised that with the rapid development of media technology, museum audiences are no longer passive receivers (of encoded messages) but instead are active and enthusiastic gatherers of information, which coincide with the contemporary understanding of audiences in mass media studies. Bradburne (2000, 387) also apparently supports the notion of the diffused audience, arguing that audiences in museums are now intelligent, competent and highly educated, stating that ‘[t]hey tend to know exactly who they are and where they belong ... [they] create

their own understanding, and the museum gives them opportunities to create new knowledge during and after their visit.’

This does not fully answer the question of whether parallels can be drawn between mass media audiences and museum visitors, but it seems that the dominant museological understanding of their audiences has much in common with the mass media context. However, given the lack of audience studies in Korean museums, it is difficult to define exactly who the Korean museum audiences are and what meaning they make or messages they receive from museum exhibitions. This lack of an understanding was a valid reason for undertaking audience research in the New National Museum of Korea, after its opening. Therefore, based on the previous discussions of audiences and their nature, research data was gathered from museum visitors between December 2005 and January 2006 by the researcher and was analysed with this in mind. The research was by nature qualitative, but the survey also contained quantitative questions. In total 503 exit surveys were collected, these were self-completion questionnaires (Figure 5.2), and 144 of the respondents gave face-to-face interviews ranging from five to ten minutes⁶⁶. The research was carried out at the Archaeological Gallery in the Museum and all survey respondents and interviewees were met by the researcher at the Archaeological Gallery exit.

Decoding the Nation

Process of decoding – Audiences meaning making

Examining the public role of the National Museum of Australia, McIntyre (2006, 14) recommended that ‘Museums do not construct identities; rather visitors come to define, interpret and negotiate their own identities within the museum, which is a catalyst for memory, reflection, cultural and political debate’. From this stance, it would not be too much to say that the New National Museum of Korea is trying to construct identities through its exhibitions and also that visitors are likely to respond to these construction in different ways. Hooper-Greenhill (1999, 35) considered that ‘Once the receiver is brought into the process to play a more active role, the whole process changes and begins to break up. [...] The meaning of the message is no longer defined only by the sender, but also by the receiver. The work of meaning-making

⁶⁶ See Appendix 11.

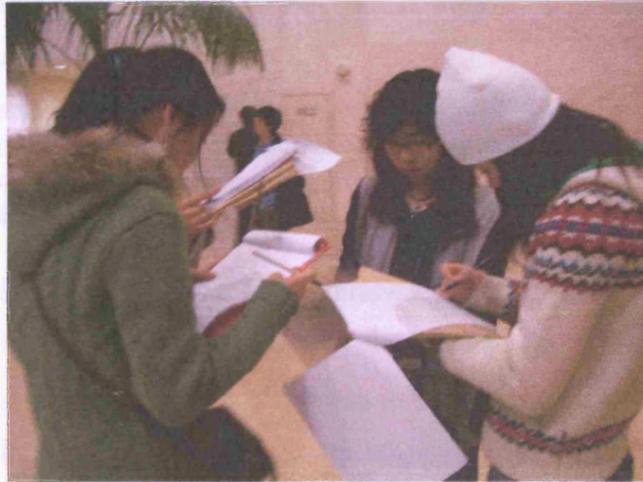


Figure 5.2 At the Exit of Archaeological Gallery (Researcher)



5.2 Audiences doing survey sheets

begins to be shared between the two parties.’ In addition, it is also worth looking at what Maroevic argued (1995, 31):

the museum message is formulated through the conscious creative intention of the exhibition author, Nevertheless, the message reaches the visitor partly transformed by the numerous possible communication processes taking place between the museum objects and people.

Explaining the exhibition in the process of emission and absorption, Maroevic (1995, 32) further explained that ‘in the exhibition everybody can find some special interest or special message, regardless of the intentions of the creator of the exhibition. The museum message therefore can be both an intentional target and a spontaneous one, the result of the receiver’s individual inclinations.’ Before looking at the answers for the questions posed above, it is worth understanding different modes of decoding. According to Hall (1980, 136-137), there are three decoding modes;

1. Dominant hegemonic position; ‘when the viewer takes the connoted meaning from, say, a television newscast or current affairs programme full and straight, and decodes the message in terms of the reference code in which it has been encoded, we might say that the view is *operating inside the dominant code*.’
2. Negotiated code; ‘Majority audiences probably understand quite adequately what has been dominantly defined and professionally signified. The dominant definitions, however, are hegemonic precisely because they represent definitions of situations and event which are ‘in dominance’, (global).’
3. Oppositional code; ‘He/she detotalizes the message in the preferred code in order to retotalize the message within some alternative framework of reference.’

Pillai (1992, 231) explained, ‘Hall’s theorization of the three decode positions shows that readings are articulated both by the codes present in the text and those available to the reader, and the asymmetrical structural positions of the encoder and decoder’. Pillai, however, has made substantial criticisms of the model of encoding and decoding presented by Hall. One of the criticisms was made regarding the interchanged concept of preferred meaning and reading. Preferred meaning in the text can be ‘dominant or preferred’ in the practices of encoding but Pillai (1992, 222) argued that ‘practices of encoding [...] cannot prescribe a correspondence between the encoded and decoded meanings.’ In terms of reading, Pillai (1992, 230) mentioned ‘[A] preferred reading occurs when a decoder operating within the dominant code decodes a message in terms of the codes with which it has been encoded’. Following Morley’s work (1980), Pillai (1992, 230) argued that the three models of decoding ‘do not reflect the diversity of discourses in society’ and this

point is proved by the visitor research undertaken for this thesis, which will be discussed below.

Both Morley (1980) and Lewis (1991) argue that, theoretical prescriptions on the decoding context in three categories will not be effective unless they are 'established by empirical evidence' (Pillai 1992, 231). Finalising the points, Pillai comments that (1992, 232)

The assumption of the equivalence among preferred meaning, preferred reading, and the dominant ideology, point to another serious problem. Such an equivalence assumes that if, for instance, a decoder opposes the preferred reading of a text, he or she necessarily opposes the dominant ideology as well. This, however, need not be the case. It is possible for a decoder to oppose the preferred meaning of a text and still remain within the terms set by the dominant ideology.

It seems that the three categories of decoding presented by Hall (1980) remain in the highly debatable situation as Pillai points out (1992). However why Hall's encoding and decoding framework is crucial for this thesis can easily be explained also in the following comment from Pillai (1992, 232): 'Although the encoding/decoding model has various limitations as discussed above, it continues to provide an important framework within which the theorization of specific cultural practices can be developed.'

Then how do the visitors to the Archaeological Gallery in the New National Museum of Korea make their own meanings? Also can these meanings be related to the three modes of Hall's decoding process? To help in this endeavour, there are several studies which have been conducted to understand museum audiences in the communication environment. For example, Bella Dicks' exploration (2000) of encoding and decoding in the Rhondda Heritage Park in Wales, United Kingdom revealed different types of audiences in terms of the ways in which they came to understand the past and their own identities. Cooke and McLean's work (2002) in the National Museum of Scotland interrogated visitors' understanding of the exhibition and its messages regarding the nation 'Scotland'. They found out that there were subtle and different perceptions of the Scottish nation between visitors identified as 'Scots' and 'non-Scots.' Furthermore, these perceptions did not align with the perceptions of the curators. Fyfe and Ross (1996) also investigated museum visitors' readings of

museum exhibitions in the English Midlands area, concerned with Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle under Lyme. Their findings were heavily related to the visitors' individual identity in regards to the social, class and cultural backgrounds of the visitors.

With images of nation in mind, it is worth looking to Cooke and McLean's study carried out at the National Museum of Scotland in 2000 and 2002. It is an interesting example of how to deploy audiences' meaning making with the image of Scotland. One of the interesting findings in their research is quite similar to the finding in the New National Museum of Korea which is discussed shortly. As Cooke and McLean (2002, 115) articulated, the 'non-Scot' visitors saw the exhibition as narrating a nationalistic voice and defining Scotland in ways that run counter to those of the exhibition producers. As Hall (1997) argues, it is right that people from a similar cultural and historical background will share a similar understanding of an exhibition and so it is not surprising to see how visitors react on the issue of national identity. However, still there are high possibilities that on the one hand, different individual backgrounds/identity can affect audiences' meaning making in the exhibition, and on the other hand, the parameters of messages communication, which are encoded in the exhibition by curators with their own intention or without, may or may not be received by the visitors.

In order to understand the individual's variable circumstances, therefore, it seems very useful to consider Mason's work here. Using Hall's concept of 'shared conceptual maps' Mason (2005a) suggested six different communities to which audiences can belong. Mason (2005a, 206-7) asserts that 'Individuals may therefore be members of more than one of these communities or groups simultaneously. The ways in which individuals will respond will depend upon which affiliation is called to the fore at a given moment'. The categories are as follows;

1. Communities defined by shared historical or cultural experiences
2. Communities defined by their specialist knowledge
3. Communities defined by demographic/socio-economic factors
4. Communities defined by identities (national, regional, local, or relating to sexuality, disability, age and gender)
5. Communities defined by their visiting practices
6. Communities defined by their exclusion from other communities

As Fyfe and Ross (1996) found from their research of decoding audiences, local or regional and class identities of individual visitors have directed visitors to decode the museum messages in the exhibitions. However, relating to the main research question of national identity and its practicality for visitor research in the thesis, it therefore seems reasonable to analyse the audiences of the New National Museum of Korea from the perspective of communities defined by their national identity in line with shared historical and cultural experiences rather than any other factors from Mason’s categories (2005a).

Considering that the nature of the museum and heritage experience is different to that offered by television, Mason (2005a) refuses to totally agree with Hall’s three preferred/negotiated/oppositional patterns. Also Mason (2005a) feels that much more complexity can exist in reading audience responses, not only according to their different, individual backgrounds but also in respect to their different reasons for visiting the museum. For instance, visitors may bring their own expectations to the museum in regards to what they want to know about the nation. In explaining the complexity of communication in the exhibition, Mason underlined that (2005a, 208) ‘consumers – in the shape of visitors – are equally producers of meanings, because they are active participants in the process.’ As discussed previously it is generally acknowledged that museum audiences/visitors are active participants and engagers in meaning-making, and whose characters are much in line with diffused audiences. As Mason elucidates (2005a), the audience’s meaning making can be understood in a more complex and multilayered manner, which accommodates greater complexity than the three decoding aspects of Hall for instance. The next section explores what kind of messages concerning national identity the visitors have decoded from the Archaeological Gallery.

Visitors Profile in the Archaeological Gallery

This research did not target any particular age group.

Age	Below 16	17-19	20-24	25-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	Over 60	Total
Number	21	27	168	152	74	31	16	12	501
%	4%	5%	34%	30%	15%	6%	3%	2%	100%

Age ranges of the visitors in the Archaeological Gallery in the New National Museum of Korea

Most of the people who responded to the survey were in their 20s, which is similar to the visitor profile for the New National Museum of Korea's general visitor survey done in 2005 by Gallup Korea. The survey conducted by the researcher showed that 43% of visitors to the museum who answered a questionnaire were in the age range 19-29. The next largest group was aged from 30-39 (24.6%)⁶⁷. The information sources through which visitors heard about the New National Museum of Korea were television (300, 59.6%), newspapers (150, 29.8%) and the Museum's website (70, 13.9%)⁶⁸. Television was the primary source of information from this account and it was clear that most of the visitors had learned about this Museum through the mass media. Also it is unique to highlight the satisfaction rates for young people. Of the 320 visitors aged 19-29, 179 visitors (56%) said that they enjoyed visiting the New National Museum of Korea. A further 25 (8%) said that they really enjoyed visiting this museum. Among visitors aged 19-29 years, 245 visitors said that they enjoyed the Archaeological Gallery and 35 people responded they really enjoyed the Archaeological Gallery⁶⁹.

As Dicks (2000) indicates, the individual's background in terms of gender and class for example, can influence how they interpret the history in the exhibition. However it is also crucial to remember that social background may not be the main factor to direct individuals to see different interpretations of history. For example two respondents in Dicks' visitor studies could tell quite different stories although they shared the same gender and class background. In the case of Fyfe and Ross (1996) however their study showed that class and power are both related to the visitors' decoding process of the museum and as such their concept is rather in competition with Dicks (2000). Also where the audience comes from might lead to different perspectives as Dicks indicated (2000, 76). Here the analysis will demarcate these formats of variables but the strong influence of mass media and education will mainly be explored in Chapter Six. Now we will turn to the kinds of messages that the visitors gained from the New National Museum of Korea.

⁶⁷ See Appendix 5.

⁶⁸ People were given various options to tick, and multiple choices were allowed.

⁶⁹ This rate for young people, but it does not mean that other age ranges have more or less enjoyed the exhibition. Rather as the focus of the analysis has lain onto the young people, so that is the reason of mainly discussing the responses from this particular ages.

Preferred reading by audiences – museum and national identity

This section highlights the readings that audiences made about this Museum and national identity. After these more general readings have been considered, specific readings in the Archaeological Gallery will be discussed. Most of the visitors who responded to the interviews answered that it was the natural thing to represent the nation and national identity in the national museum setting, and it seemed that they believed it is the main role of this Museum. When Hein (1995, 196) evaluated the Boston Museum of Science's exhibition 'Two of every sort' which dealt with gender and sexuality, Hein found that people who did not agree entirely with the messages in the exhibition did, however, believe that, by its nature, the museum should be doing such an exhibition questioning sexuality and its controversies and that it is the main role of the museum. Hein (1995) did not specify the background or give a more in-depth analysis on this idea, but it is in a way obvious that the role of the museum in people's minds would impact on the way in which the visitor's sees and understands the exhibition and its messages. This attitude of audiences can be referred to as the '*normality of presenting the national identity in the National Museum*⁷⁰'.

This is a national museum, so I think this Museum should represent national identity. Compared with other national museums, which consist of objects looted or stolen from other countries, this Museum is composed purely of Korean stuff, and so this means the Museum represent Korean-ness.

Visitor aged 20-24 years

Knowing about our history as Korean people, helping foreigners find out about the country of Korea, knowing about myself for me; this Museum is about national identity and so the Museum needs to express our own national identity.

Visitor aged 20-24 years

I think this Museum should address the issue of national identity as it is about national history and this is a national museum.

Student aged 17 years

These comments from visitors all clearly indicate how they think about the national museum and its role. They are all concerned with the prefix 'national' that the museum carries, and visitors also have quite a clear idea that the primary objects on display are most likely to be Korean objects. This has signified for them that this Museum needs to be predominantly about Korea. The visitors, generally speaking, believe that the crucial role of the New National Museum of Korea is to help them to

⁷⁰ See Appendix 8 for a sample of Audience Interview Script.

construct their own sense of national identity and so the Museum is the right place for this purpose. Macdonald (1996, 63) asserts that exhibitions are a place for visitors where they can enhance or re-formulate their knowledge through cognitive and sensory experiences. However, it seems that the role of the 'national' museum strongly appeals for the visitors in that it reinforces rather than re-formulates or enhances the sense of Korean identity.

In the similar vein, visitors argue that the New National Museum of Korea does not need to worry or think about being the begetter of national identity as they are already the palimpsest of nation. They indicated that the name of the 'national museum' is somehow carrying national identity in nature. This is a slightly different view from the one which sees the national museum's role as presenting identity as of its prefix 'nation'. One student in their early 20s said 'The Museum is the place for national identity, so they don't have to try to show it on purpose. It's just here.' In the same context, this comment from a male student in his late 20s is helpful. 'I think the Museum needs to show national identity, but not on purpose. Anyway, the Museum is about our history, so people come and see what it is and then they acquire a sense of national identity on their own.' These are the views of audiences who read that this museum naturally embodies the message of national identity as a palimpsest of a nation, and so they believe that there is no need for the museum to take the message out of the exhibition and then represent it strongly.

As defined in previous part of this Chapter, those visitors can be located in the category of communities with a high interest in their nation's culture and history. So there are visitors who visit this Museum for their own interest in nation and national identity. Those who were highly interested in the issue of national identity often gave that as their reason for visiting, for example a school teacher in her 40s who made this point clearly:

Probably most Koreans are very interested in the issue of national identity. I am also very interested in this issue and that is why I visited the Museum today. The Museum is a special place that accommodates national identity. That is why I have been eager to visit the Museum for such a long time.

What is interesting about this school-teacher is that she did not come from Seoul where this Museum is located, but she travelled from Jeollabukdo in the southern part

of South Korea three hours away by train to visit this Museum with her husband. The commitment to visiting the museum is reflected in the length of her journey as well as in her words. Judging from these perspectives, the New National Museum of Korea lies at the heart of the concept of national identity. People tend to see the nation reflected in the Museum itself not only because it is a national institution, or because it is a museum but also because of their personal interest about the issue of national identity.

People do care about the origins of Korea within this Museum setting, and they particularly have an interest in the authenticity of the collections. The generally held view of why visitors come to the Museum is related to identity construction in a trusted place. This response is from one female visitor in her late 20s who had been in the Museum for a whole day. It subsumed the idea of '*Origins of Korea*'.

The purpose of visiting the Museum is to learn about history and ourselves. What I am and who I am will be answered in visiting the Museum and this is related to the issue of national identity. It is important to know more about myself in relation to my own family, blood line, and then ancestors, which finally relates to the nation. In this sense, I think the Museum has a close relationship to national identity.

David Carr's point (1999, 34) is explicitly articulating this issue as such:

People go to museums for profound reasons of hope, identity, and self-construction [and] every cultural institution is challenged to live up to the trust placed in it by the mere presence of the user, a trust or contract or alliance devoted to creating a situation that offers the optimal experience.

Carr (1999, 56) goes on to say, 'The Museum should show the development of Korea and make Korean people understand why we are Korean and what the roots of Korea are. That is the way the Museum needs to go.'

So the New National Museum of Korea is not only a milestone in the history of the nation, but it can also be a reflection of the nation in which they live in the present time. Dicks (2000) identified three different types of audience and the ways in which they saw the past at Rhondda Heritage Park. The first type of audience reaction was 'alienating themselves from the past'; this audience saw no significant relation between their life and history, while 'The second 'parallel' framing does not position the past as an 'other' which is finished and complete. [...] so that 'the people then' are brought into the visitors' explanatory framework for understanding their own lives.'

(Dicks 2000, 70) The third one is a more ambivalent approach which ‘questioned the wider validity of the stories presented.’ (Dicks 2000, 68) As Dicks found out, those audiences who saw the origins of a nation in the Museum can be located in the ‘parallel’ frame, which does not divorce the past from the present and conflates the past into their current life. It can be emphasised here that the visitors consider the New National Museum of Korea to be a venue where they can construct their national identity through presentation of the origins of Korea, however, they also understand the past through the parallel paradigm of the present.

The nature of the Museum collection also plays a pivotal role in helping people to ‘read’ the messages constructed around national identity in the Museum. In this respect, some of the findings are of particular interest. Some visitors enquired about the *authenticity* of the objects displayed because they felt that this was very relevant to the national identity issue. Well-made and wrought objects displayed in the exhibition appeared to make audiences sense, or at least, think about Korean identity and this is reflected in people’s enquiries about authenticity. People were interested in finding out if the objects on display were real or copies. One school teacher in her late 20s said that ‘I sense strong national identity a lot in the exhibition as most of the great objects are real, and they are not like in the textbooks. Compared to other national or regional museums, I sensed it.’ Including this school teacher, eight interviewees specifically express their interest on the authenticity of certain objects such as the Gold Crown and the Gild Incense Burner, which are located in dedicated showcases. When they found out that the Gild Incense Burner is a copied object⁷¹ in the Archaeological Gallery, they were very disappointed. This seems related to that because they felt the exhibition area was imbued with such a strong national inspiration, their question of authenticity was closely related to the authority of the nation. This was particularly so if the objects were representative of the Archaeological Gallery and of Korea, in which case their authenticity seemed to attract the most intensive attention. As seen below, this visitor, who is in his 30s, even felt frustration regarding the authenticity of the objects.

I am very disappointed by the copy of the incense burner in the lounge area. I really wanted to see the real one in the Gallery, not a fake one. This is a

⁷¹ The real object of Gild Incense Burner is from 28 October 2005 to 30 November 2005. After this short period, it returned to the National Museum of Korea, Buyeo branch where it was originally found and displayed.

National Museum, and for the nation's sake, the Museum should have the real object.

He identified himself as a 'non-specialist in archaeology and history' and claimed himself to be a 'pure lay person' with no connection to the museum world, but he had already spent three and half hours only in the Archaeological Gallery which was not intentional. Throughout the interview, he was very enthusiastic about the museum and the issue of national identity, which recurred during his visit, and also particularly interested him in the authenticity of the objects. The power of the objects for him was to reflect the power of national identity. Alongside this, there were also comments from some visitors that the Museum should put a clear indication of the artefacts' authenticity in the label, again because it is related to national identity. As regards these findings, it appears that, in general, visitors see this Museum as embodying national identity itself and also they think this is the main characteristic of this New National Museum of Korea.

The visitors were equally emphatic about the need for *objectivity* and the moderate presentation of national identity in this Museum. A very frequent comment was that 'objectivity' and being 'realistic' were the most important things when it came to how the Museum narrated history and the nation. A business woman in her 30s states that,

It is better to have history represented in a less great and proud manner. People could be disappointed when they find that the history they learned at the Museum turned out later not to be so great, so the best way is to show history as it is.

There was evidence that visitors wanted to learn from and engage with the museum displays judging by comments that suggested the Museum needed to make its audience think in an objective, realistic or neutral way. The following comment is from a student in his early 20s. 'This is history, so the Museum should be objective and reflective and realistic and then make the audiences define and make judgements about it. So the Museum should make the audience think.' Another visitor who was a student of history in his late 20s mentioned objectivity in relation to national identity in the Museum, but used a slightly different viewpoint and introduced an academic perspective.

If the exhibition is too focused on national identity, there must be some limits or restrictions to displaying certain objects and also ideology will be involved. The Museum needs to show a certain amount of national identity, but it must

not be too much. People who study history or archaeology may need to have the chance to study objects, but so do lay people. So it is important that audiences receive an objective view of our history.

Similarly one businessman in his 30s felt that vigorous and objective history was required in this Museum, saying ‘the National Museum needs to make the people proud of themselves as Koreans and this is the first aim of a National Museum. Second aim is that the Museum needs to explain real historic facts without any distortions.’

Given the responses from these visitors, it seems that issues of national identity and the Museum are as appealing to them as most other audiences. However they also want the Museum to be an objective historical institution. This kind of reading therefore is concerned not only with what the message is predominantly about but also how they want the message to be constructed. So it is possible to see that these audiences are not passive listeners to the messages which the museum narrates, but want to become more closely involved in the museum setting. As well as the respondents who wanted the Museum to be an objective institution there were also some who had negative feelings about the entire issue.

There is not much *negativity* found in the audience research, but a few visitors commented on the issue of national identity with certain negative viewpoints. All visitors who expressed negative readings about national identity and nation in the Museum had the commonality that they were very reluctant to speak to the researcher and this may be for the reason that this is a difficult subject to talk about. Rarely, but surprisingly, a few visitors posed the question that, if the concept of national identity is a very modern one, was it something that should be embodied in the historical environment like the Museum. Visitors such as the school teacher asserted that:

It is difficult to understand why I have to think about national identity in this Museum. I don't think people in the past had any concept of national identity, or ethnic identity, whereas contemporary people like us have. The concept of national identity is not so embedded in the past. It is a very new concept.

A female student in her early 20s said ‘There is no need for national identity in museums. National identity is quite problematic these days, and the museum is not the right place to show national identity’. In the same vein, a school teacher in his 40s argued strongly that dealing with national identity in a museum was ‘nonsense’. He

goes onto say that ‘trying to understand national identity in the objects or in the museum is not consistent with the contemporary understanding of national identity.’

The preferred readings in this exhibition can be found as seen here. It cannot be too much to believe that people would like to see this Museum as a vigorous cultural setting which treats the nation’s identity and history with objectivism and reality. However there are some who show only negative understandings towards the idea of portraying national identity in this Museum. It seems that there are various readings being made by audiences. Generally audiences are aware of the national museum’s role in expressing national identity, or even, for some of them, it is generally the museum’s role to be a palimpsest of nation. Also there are visitors who come to the museum as of their personal interest in national identity, whereas people came to seek their origins in the museum vis-à-vis national identity. Authenticity also matters as of the national museum’s authority to speak of the nation through their national collections. Being an objective place is another view widely held by audiences and there were a few comments about the non-relation between the museum and national identity. From this, it is possible to identify that overall the preferred reading by audiences who took part in the research is that this New Museum has a robust bond with national identity and national images which are presented via culture and history. This echoes the overarching aim of the New National Museum of Korea which is to show true Korean culture and history through the artefacts. Audiences’ readings are more detailed and various than the museum’s message, and this is because of the audiences’ diffused character which means that participatory and engaging attitudes towards the exhibition are evident. Also meaning-making processes are entwined with personal interest, social settings, educational background and media influences. Rather than deeply exploring the complexity at this point, it is now time to investigate how Korea is decoded in the Archaeological Gallery. As explored in Chapter Four, multiple messages with the curators’ intentional and unintentional attitudes have been encoded in the Archaeological Gallery. The next section looks at these messages in order to find out whether these messages have been decoded by audiences and, if not, or what other messages might have been decoded to the audiences.

Korea in the Archaeological Gallery: Decoded Messages

Kavanagh (1995, 125) gives an insightful description of the term ‘museum partnership’, considering that visitors can be seen as partners of the museum, and so when the exhibition does not fully appreciate or reflect this perspective, ‘the exhibition begins and ends with the curator’s own mind and personality: such work becomes easy to identify. These exhibitions leave the visitor with the feeling that they are walking uninvited around someone else’s space and are at best unwelcome and at worst trespassing’. This may not be the case with the Archaeological Gallery as 498 out of 503 visitors who took part in the research answered that they really enjoyed their visit to this gallery. However, the important thing to remember here is that the audiences can decode the messages their own way regardless of the intended meanings of curators. According to the survey (Chart 5-1) it was found that 72.5% (365) of the visitors had enjoyed the Gallery and a further 12.5% (63) had enjoyed it ‘very much’. Much fewer visitors, 13.5% (68), answered that their enjoyment of the exhibition was average. Only 1.5% (5) said they were strongly dissatisfied, or they were not satisfied, with their experience in the Gallery⁷². From this response, it can be suggested that audiences have a good visiting experience generally when in the Archaeological Gallery. Next, each Hall of the Archaeological Gallery, discussed in Chapter Four, are revisited in relation to the audiences’ responses in order to articulate the messages being decoded by them

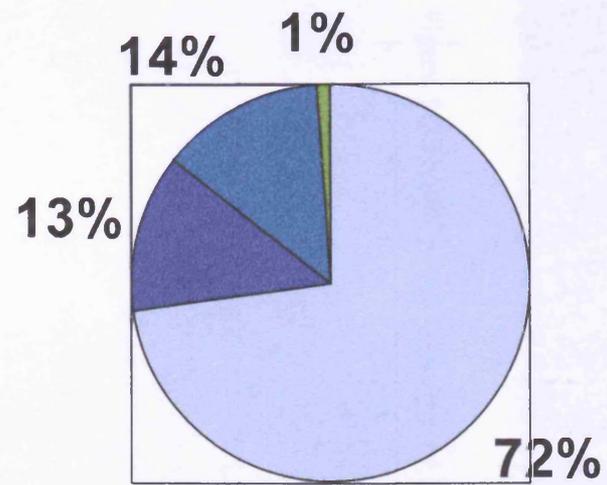
Introductory Area presenting the global context (Figure 5.3)

When multiple choices were given to visitors to choose their favourite Halls in the Archaeological Gallery, despite the multiplicity of choices, only six out of 503 visitors chose the Introductory Area as their favourite and this is a relatively small number. Visitors also seemed to have a different set of emphasis in this Area⁷³. The Gallery attempts to show Korea in the global context (‘Korea to the world’) here but some felt that its purpose was to present a strong image of national identity, as it placed Korea in the global context. A female school teacher in her 30s commented, ‘At the start of the Gallery, world history has been compared and this makes me realise more about my national identity as a Korean’. There is also an interesting

⁷² See Appendix 7.

⁷³ I did not ask them about the global perspectives in this area directly. Rather when people checked they enjoyed the Introductory Area during the survey, I asked them to specify the reason.

Chart 5-1 Gallery Experience



Enjoyed Very much Average Not enjoyed



Figure 5.3 People in the Introductory Area

comment on this area from one female visitor in her 30s, which emphasised how people saw the map and table, 'I think the Museum should mention the names of the nations on the satellite map. I like this map very much, but more specific names need to appear on this map to let people such as foreigners know where Korea is.' Also, as I identified in Chapter Four, whereas the curators encoded this area for the transnational Korea, four artefacts in this area may suggest quite opposite meanings of national identity. However, no visitor mentioned the four representative objects here at all, and they were most attracted by the satellite map and chronological history table.

Lohman (2006, 19) suggests three main responses to the present 'threat' of being globalised. The first is 'Assimilation', in other words, the national culture incorporates the other culture, although to some degree it may be supplanted by it. The second response can be 'Exclusion' with clear borderlines to restrict the entrance of other cultures into what may be termed the 'inner circle'. In respect of these first two categories, when Rogers (2006, 480-1) explores the term 'cultural appropriation', he suggests four different types of appropriation and one of them is cultural dominance which includes 'assimilation, integration, intransigence, mimicry and resistance'. So Lohman's assimilation and exclusion categories (2006) are subdivided into more specific categories in Rogers' work (2006), through which he perhaps intended to show that globalization can influence the culture in multilayered and versatile ways. Lohman's third response (2006, 19), 'Liberal coexistence', is described as the way 'to acknowledge difference as equal and as having the right to co-exist within a neutral public space, while pursuing difference and expressing it within private spheres of individual social reality'. Based on all of these definitions, what can be seen clearly is that globalization has diverse influences on the culture within a particular society. As discussed here, globalisation carries colossal meanings vis-à-vis national consciousness as of the threats that Lohman described (2006), but it seems that the transnational agenda in this particular area was not thoroughly given full attention in the Archaeological Gallery. It is in a way witnessed through the visitor comments that visitors see this area instead as enhancing national identity and national images.

Bronze and Early Iron Age Hall – ethno-symbolic presentation and GoJoseon (Figure 5.4)

Seventy-four out of the 503 visitors surveyed commented that they were impressed by the Bronze and Early Iron Age Hall, which is again a relatively small proportion. Since the opening of this Museum this Hall, however, has been in the middle of controversial discussions. The issue of GoJoseon seems to provoke intense reactions and disputes among the visitors and it is very possible that this is related to the issue of national identity. The New National Museum of Korea, therefore, has attempted to encode a message in the Hall that focuses heavily on the technological development but in practice this period contains many resources of an ethno-symbolic nation. Considering himself to be an evolutionist in terms of defining the nation as a modern concept, Anthony Smith (2004, 76) has recently presented a slightly modified view on the ethno-symbolic nation, stating that:

[T]here is considerable evidence that modern nations are connected with earlier ethnic categories and communities and created out of pre-existing origin myths, ethnic cultures and shared memories; and that those nations with a vivid, widespread sense of an ethnic past, are likely to be more unified and distinctive than those which lack that sense.

GoJoseon, therefore, can represent Korea in an ethno-symbolic way which still has a robust connection to the present time. Including GoJoseon in the Bronze Hall is justified by the rich academic and archaeological materials, but the Museum's focus was not directed onto the GoJoseon but in archaeological development of ancient Korea.

It seems, however, that audiences were seeking primarily the strong ethno-symbolic focus of GoJoseon and Dangun. After the opening of this Museum, the Archaeological Gallery was severely criticised by the visitors and the media because GoJoseon did not have its own Hall or a special section of its own and the public felt that it should have had one. Not only GoJoseon, but also Dangun has no clue in this Hall and these omissions in the Archaeological Gallery meant also a lack of the national spirit and symbol. A male visitor in his 30s shows a strong sense of this.

GoJoseon should be exhibited here in the Archaeological Gallery. Even though there are a lot to discuss about GoJoseon academically, this GoJoseon means a lot to the Korean people as it is about the origins of Koreans. You (the Museum) should display first and then discuss its academic worth later. GoJoseon should have been exhibited here as it is our essence and it is such a shame that you did not do so.



Figure 5.4 People in Bronze Hall

All visitors who mentioned lack of GoJoseon were showing great concern as they felt it was all related to the Museum's representation of national identity. A student in her late 20s criticised the character of the Archaeological Gallery for being too neutral and over generalising the historical narrative, and then judged that this Gallery had an identity issue, as exemplified by the omission of GoJoseon. She said that 'the Archaeological Gallery seems to aim at being a universal history gallery. There are many ideas about Chinese history and influences from other countries. But pure Koreanness is not the main focus in this Archaeological Gallery, which means there is no GoJoseon.' A rather more academically driven comment was also found from a school teacher in his 50s.

As the Museum focuses on the material culture, GoJoseon seems rather to have been ignored by the Museum. But it is part of history, so I think more archaeological research may need to be carried out to find out more about GoJoseon. GoJoseon at the Gallery is different from at school where its existence is acknowledged and it is such a shame that the Museum has not done the same.

From these responses above, it is possible to say that an ethno-symbolic nation is deeply rooted in the minds of Korean people. A slightly more moderate but still indicative perspective was taken by a number of other visitors. More or less, audiences want to engage with the exhibition about GoJoseon intellectually, demonstrated by their asking the Museum for a proper explanation which they are ready to listen to. It is not just listening, however, but also a desire to engage with the historical facts, a characteristic of diffused audiences with their own standard of judging the exhibitions. This can be found from a comment made by a student in her early 20s, who was aware of academic controversy about GoJoseon and so she is rather moderate in her views but still has a point to make:

GoJoseon should have been explained more fully. If there was a GoJoseon Hall it would have been much better, but considering the academic situation where GoJoseon is not acknowledged fully yet in Korean archaeology, it would have been difficult to have had a GoJoseon Hall. However, the Gallery should have put up more explanations about the lack of a GoJoseon Hall. At least the Gallery should have explained the academic situation.

The treatment of GoJoseon in the Archaeological Gallery seems to have touched a sensitive point of national identity amongst the visitors, and is clearly echoed in visitors' voices that they want to engage more closely with the exhibition. The overall responses about GoJoseon in the Bronze Hall may show how strongly audiences feel

that symbolic beings are a way of seeing the nation, and they also suggest that the audience is keen to engage with the Museum. At the same time, it can also be understood that people who see the national museum in the context of a strong national identity may have a problem in this Hall when GoJoseon is not decisively narrated as a national symbol. As found previously, it is a generally held view that many people understand the strong link between the national museum and national identity, so it is not surprising to see that GoJoseon has been the subject of dispute among audiences.

The Proto Three Kingdoms Hall (Figure 5.5)

Apart from the interest in the question of GoJoseon, it seems that audiences are rather less impressed by the other prehistoric Halls, from the Palaeolithic to the Proto Three Kingdoms Period. In total, forty-three visitors out of 503 answered they enjoyed the Proto Three Kingdoms Period. There are two main curatorial intentions embodied in this Hall. Korea's first real nation has blossomed based on this period with iron culture and this leads to the message that (modern) Korea has existed since that point which means 'long existed perennial Korea'. The other encoded message is 'one unified Korea' which is rather unintended by the curator. Naming this period as a 'Proto Three Kingdoms' rather than its erstwhile name 'Three Han' is acknowledging Goguryeo as Korea's history officially. What has been discussed in Chapter Four is that, notwithstanding curator's encoded messages of a long perennial Korea in this Hall, it is highly possible that the message of 'one unified Korea' also fits here rather than a more simplified message of Korea's longevity.

It is interesting that not many of those who were interviewed mentioned the Proto Three Kingdoms in specific detail or with great interest. There were also few in-depth responses. 'Is Proto about the Bronze-age period?' was one of the frequently asked questions among few responses regarding this Hall. So it can be easily assumed that the term 'Proto' was not well received by the audiences as Proto literally signifies after the Bronze Age. In addition some people believed that the use of iron started in this period even though iron was already in use before this period. Using the concept of the most blossomed iron culture in this period, the curator is trying to encode the idea of a long existing nation, but this is rarely decoded by visitors. Also the message, 'one nation' is similarly not picked up by visitors. Overall there were not many



Figure 5.5 People in Proto Three Kingdoms

responses concerning this Hall, and it can be concluded that the Proto Three Kingdoms Hall did not effectively capture the attention of the visitors.

Silla: a great ethno-symbolic example with its grand design (Figure 5.6)

As one of the most popular Halls in the Archaeological Gallery 43.1% (217) out of 503 liked the Silla Hall the most; 24.5% (123) of Silla Hall and 18.6% (94) of The Gold Crown and Belt display which belongs to the Silla Hall. One reason for this seems firstly related to the dedicated individual space for the Gold Crown and Belt and secondly it seems that the golden artefacts exhibited are a popular attraction. However it seems the curator's encoded messages are rather different as seen here which is one curator's opinion.

I am not trying to show the power of Silla, because I don't want people to think that Silla was a very great culture in isolation from others. They should think of other countries nearby. Other Halls in the Archaeological Gallery put the international exchange story in the last part of each Hall, but the Silla Hall starts with these exchanges with diverse cultural exchanges.

Silla has been encoded mainly with its international aspects rather than using the golden objects as representative of the character of Korea. It seems, however, that visitors have different readings on this. When they were told to choose three of the most impressive Halls, 115 respondents chose the Gold Crown and Belt in the Silla Hall. They liked it the most because the individual space housed objects which are very beautiful, delicate and sumptuous in such a dedicated manner. So the display of Silla's Crown and Belt appealed to the visitors the most because they demonstrated Korea's symbolic and representative past, which was rather different compared to the curator's intention. On the other hand, the internationality of the Silla period seems to have been valued by few visitors. This is a comment from a student in her early 20s, who felt that 'showing how Silla and other cultures connect to each other with international exchanges lets me know that we were an international country. It is pretty much related to national identity as I now have a better idea about Korea's past.' However, generally held view on this Silla and the exhibition is a strong ethno-symbolic Silla.

Another aspect of the visitors' responses should be given a focus. There are visitors who comment on the issue of the overloading of the Silla exhibition in the Archaeological Gallery. One visitor in his 30s said 'the Baekje culture is better than



Figure 5.6 People in Silla Hall

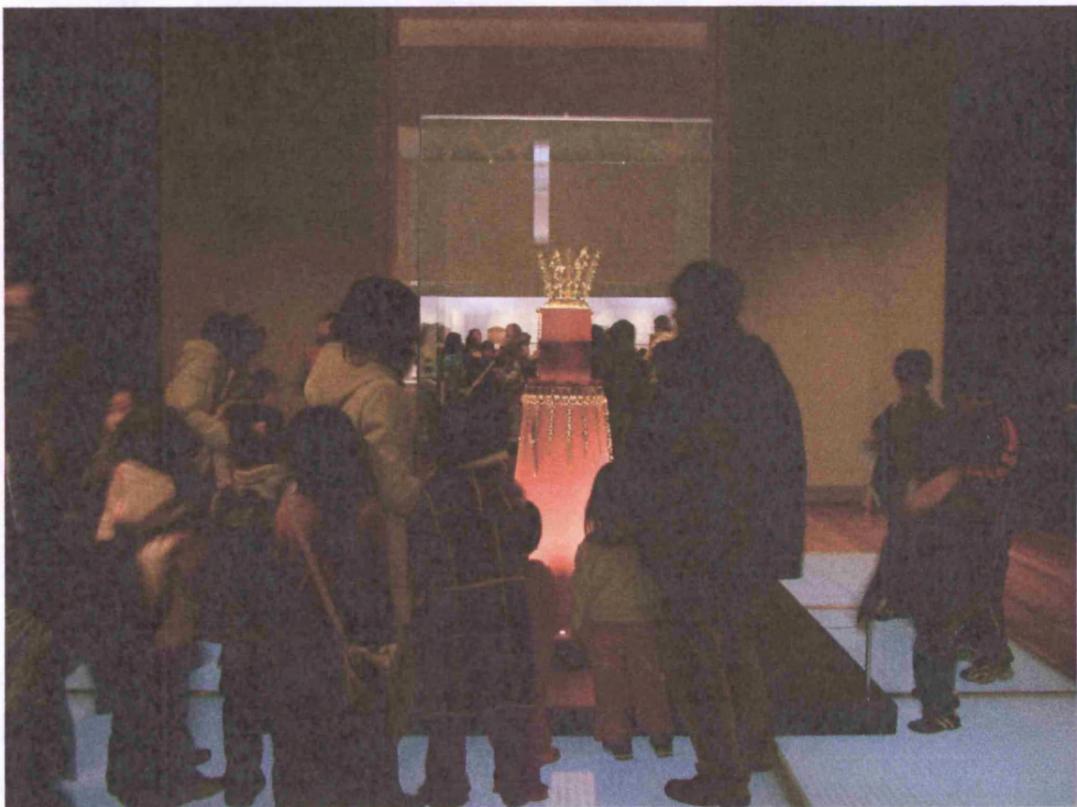


Figure 5.6 Silla Crown and Belt

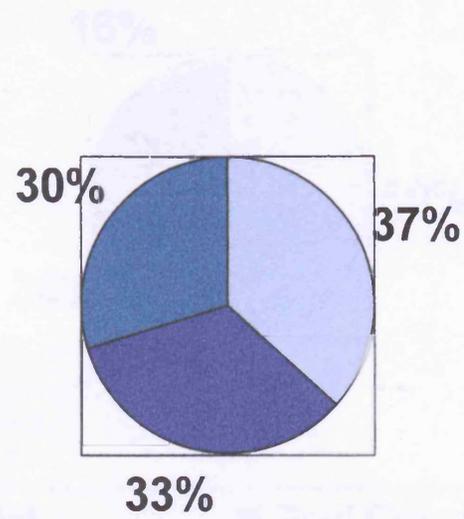
that of Silla, but Baekje is not well represented in the exhibition. Baekje was as great as Silla but the focus seems to have been put on Silla and I think it is weird'. Similar points were made by some people, suggesting that Silla is always the centre of attention whereas the others were given less prominent treatment. One female in her 30s said

In the case of the Silla Hall, loads of objects were already well known to people, so people would recognise a national spirit from these popular Korean objects. But Goguryeo and Balhae are not so well known in terms of their objects so people would not get the same sort of recognition as they might from the Silla Hall.

This indicates that the Archaeological Gallery has not done as much to show a clear sense of national identity elsewhere as they have in the Silla Hall, which appeals directly to people as it has the most famous artefacts which represent Korean history. It is right that the Silla Hall is the largest one in the Archaeological Gallery because of its dedicated space for the Crown and Belt. Also golden artefacts, mostly jewels and royal family belongings, are displayed in the first exhibition space along with exquisite artefacts from Rome, Central Asia and Middle East. Not only its space but also its main artefacts create an overshadowing image of Silla against the other Kingdoms and Halls in the exhibition. Although the encoded message of the curator is not so dependent on Silla's symbolic value as a great Korea, but rather the emphasis is on its international resonance, it has been decoded by the visitors as most likely a symbolic representation of Korea, and this has mainly resulted from the exhibition's space and focus on the artefacts.

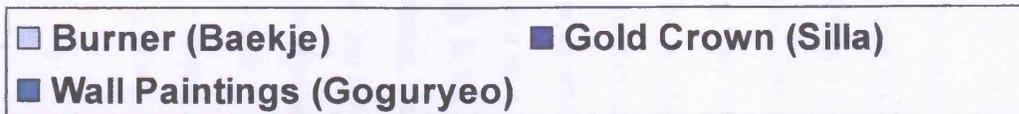
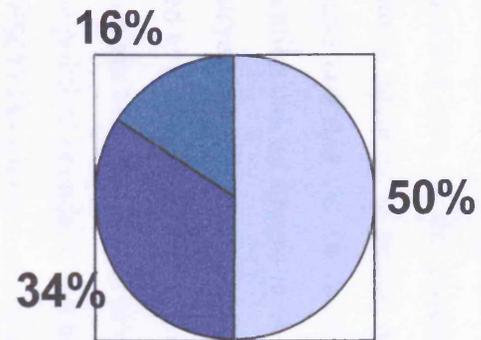
It seems that visitors have a very clear idea of the story that they want to hear more about in the exhibition, and they can identify which part of that story is given less attention in the museum. The visitors considered Silla to be the most memorable Hall (Chart 5-2), with the high interest in the Gold Crown and Belt display (Chart 5-3). Even though the curator had been trying to put across the international history of Silla in this Hall, it is the great objects that people remember, and give the impression of Korea as a great nation. At the same time, however, the visitors also see another aspect of the Hall, and make the point that Silla overwhelms the presentation of Korea's overall history. This is, in a way, a good sign that Korean audiences who came to this Museum were not passively aware of what was encoded by the curators,

Chart 5-2 The most Impressive Halls



■ Silla ■ Goguryeo ■ Baekje

Chart 5-3 The most Memorable Objects



but rather they tend to decode the message actively, identifying what story has been told and what has not been told in the Gallery.

Another perennialism in the Gallery – Goguryeo and Balhae (Figure 5.7)

Because of the political propaganda related to the Chinese history project, it was inevitable that these aspects of political involvement would be evident in the Goguryeo and Balhae Halls, although the intention of the curator was to narrate the non-political, cultural and historical perspectives of Goguryeo and Balhae. What should be mentioned here first is that generally visitors do believe Goguryeo and Balhae are Korea's history which is one of the main intentions from the curator. However, when it relates to the political intention, it is interesting to see the visitors' views. What kind of political influences are there to be seen in the exhibition and how do visitors respond to these? The first point to be made is the individual exhibition space of wall paintings of Goguryeo Tombs which are located in the Goguryeo Hall. Second only to the Silla Hall, 22.2% (112) of the visitors said they were impressed by the exhibition of wall paintings in the Goguryeo exhibition and this rate is relied on the dedicated and individual area of the paintings. So this has resulted different outcome from the curator's intention as people tend to see the majesty of Goguryeo and its objects (paintings) and this can be an ethno-symbolic Korea. Secondly, the Museum's political intention can be sought in the Lounge whose wall contains a full description of the Goguryeo tombs' location and its designation as a World Heritage by UNESCO. Compared to the popularity of the wall paintings in the Goguryeo Hall, however, this Lounge has not been paid much attention by visitors, although there is a strong implication of the political agenda. It can be found here that when visitors were asked whether the UNESCO designation of the sites had been successful in 2004⁷⁴, 75% of them (350) said that it had failed to be designated, which is actually wrong. Visitors like the wall paintings area but the UNESCO designation has been less popular. However, there is one more aspect to consider in order to understand visitors' readings for this exhibition.

There are visitors who believe that the designation was not a matter for South Korea but for North Korea. The Museum's attempt to portray Goguryeo and Balhae as part

⁷⁴ The survey asked respondents to choose between two statements. See Appendix 7 Survey Sheet.

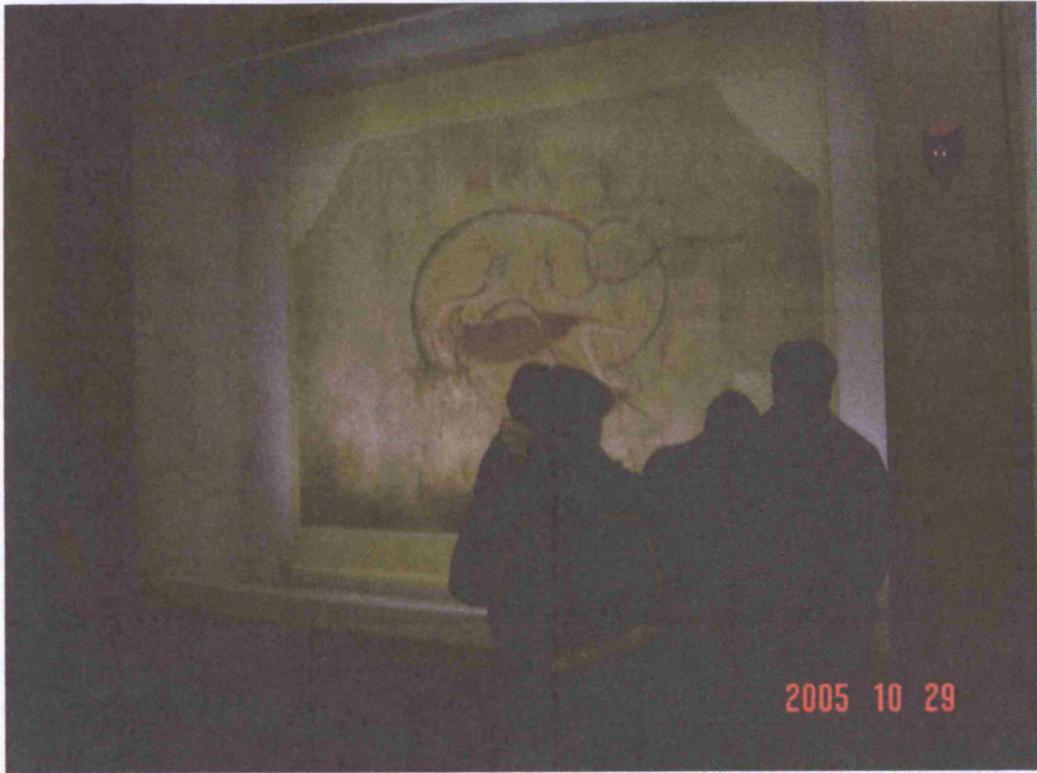


Figure 5.7 Goguryeo



Figure 5.7 Balhae Hall

of the perennial character of Korea has not been very successful, as the audiences perceive North and South Korea to be separate entities. In one sense, the Korea represented in the Archaeological Gallery has not been seen as covering the whole nation, including both South and North Korea, but rather the Museum has been perceived as a South Korean museum. There is certainly a dichotomy to see the history of Balhae and Goguryeo as Korean's own but to understand this Museum as a South Korean's museum. This is not majority of visitors' comment but very few mentioned or confused whether UNESCO Designation is for South Korea as of its current division. This issue will be revealed in greater detail in Chapter Six. Overall, it can be said that the Museum's encoding in Goguryeo Hall has not been understood as much as they would have liked firstly because of the exhibition design issue and secondly, because of current political understandings between the two Korean nations .

However, the term 'South North Kingdoms Period' introduced by the New National Museum of Korea, has been perceived successfully by visitors. It also embodied a political intention which is a countermeasure of the Chinese Project, but in total, 308 visitors amongst 390 respondents of the survey noticed that this Museum used the different name of 'South North Kingdoms Period' rather than the erstwhile 'Unified Silla Period.' One visitor in 50s said that 'I was confused about this term South North Kingdoms Period. I did not know about this before but I confirmed it here in the Museum that we use South North Kingdoms Period, and learnt that Balhae is one part of South North Kingdoms Period.' Using this new term is one attempt this Museum has made politically to announce that Balhae is part of Korean history. The following viewpoint also seems relevant to this new term but rather negatively, as pointed out in relation to the objectivity and neutrality of the historic narrative for a national museum. The respondent is a university student in her early 20s, who believed that the Museum should not be commenting on this issue of territory;

The South North Kingdom period appeared very strongly nationalistic and it was quite aggressive towards China or Japan. This is a very sensitive issue, so if the Museum puts the words 'kingdom period', I think it appears very nationalistic. I don't know why the Gallery puts it like that. Why don't you put just 'Balhae' and 'Unified Silla'?

Over these confusions, there are visitors who read the political messages from both Halls, and one visitor in their late 20s commented that:

Balhae is included here in the Museum and this means that the Archaeological Gallery is arguing that Balhae is part of our national identity. By including the facts about the UNESCO designation of the Goguryeo sites the Gallery also implies national identity. In that sense I think more needs to be added to the Balhae Hall in terms of explanations and objects.

One student in her 30s said she even wanted to see a big map of the Goguryeo and Balhae areas on the Museum map, clarifying that they are part of our Korean history. In relation to the locations, one visitor in his 50s believed that most of the evidence about Goguryeo was located in North Korea, so pictures of those sites should be displayed in the Gallery. He went on to say:

I believe that the Archaeological Gallery has not shown an aggressive or strong national identity. However, Goguryeo and Balhae must be explained more. Also in the case of the Chinese project, I believe the Museum should let people know about it and make it clear that this is our history so that in the future there won't be more such attempts by the Chinese.

Based on these comments, some contrary views can be found here regarding Goguryeo and Balhae. The exhibition is encoding a message that Korea is a perennial one unified nation. This is on the one hand the message the curator intended to encode within the exhibitions but because of the political outcry over Goguryeo and subsequently to Balhae, the exhibitions have a heavy significance in relation to political nationalism. On the other hand, therefore, the exhibitions have Wall paintings room, UNESCO Panel and the usage of new term 'South North Kingdoms Period' and creation of Balhae Hall made. This seems to appeal to most visitors who did read the political issues underlying the exhibitions as much as the mainly encoded message of the curators. However UNESCO Panel is what visitors could not decode in the same intention of the Museum and also the wall paintings seems to be decoded as an ethno-symbolic way. It is therefore, both the intended and unintended messages of Goguryeo and Balhae Halls that are decoded by the visitors. Although there are just a few comments that this Museum should not posit Balhae in the Archaeological Gallery, it is worth concluding these views as an active participant response about the role and function of the national museum which makes clear that the audiences tend to have a diffused nature.

What has been decoded?

Several points arose from the readings of the Halls by the visitors. First of all, the transnational message encoded in the Introductory Area does not seem to be greatly

decoded by visitors. Secondly, the idea of the ethno-symbolic nation, which was mainly and heavily decoded by visitors in the Bronze and Early Iron Age although it is not encoded in the Bronze Hall at all. In case of Silla Hall, what was consciously intended by the curators is international resonance, but as of the design and object presentation, it has been richly decoded by the visitors as an ethno-symbolic nation. In the case of GoJoseon, people see it as a direct source of their national identity at the present time, and so the lack of explanations about GoJoseon in the Archaeological Gallery is considered to be a sign of an identity crisis. The national symbols described in both Halls turned out to be crucial figures for visitors in the exhibitions after the Museum opened however this was not necessarily given any importance by the curators. Third, the perennialist message in the Proto Three Kingdoms Period was not well received by visitors compared to the messages about Goguryeo and Balhae. In the case of Goguryeo and Balhae, the curator's intention had been influenced by political propaganda but overly visitors do decode the message which encoded by the curator equally as much as the message unintentionally with political agendas.

So the paradigms of national identity and national narration in the Archaeological Gallery as encoded by the curators and the Museum are not necessarily the same as those decoded by audiences, who read the messages for themselves and, in some cases, in unexpected ways. They even appear to have different ways of understanding the exhibition setting so, as discussed above, the audiences are a varied group imbued with the desire to be caught up in the exhibition and to be interactive.

As Mason (2005a) encapsulates in her work, using the concept of cultural capital developed by Pierre Bourdieu and Alain Darbel (1991), evaluating museum audiences in the context of cultural capital of power, economic and class can benefit the museum's understanding of their audiences but it will also be beneficial to the development of audience research itself in the museological context. However, as it has been discussed in the earlier part of this Chapter, audience (visitor) research is less developed in Korean museums than in the United Kingdom. The visitor research that I did in the Archaeological Gallery is the first one ever done with a qualitative methodology, and its capacity to deal with multi-voice theoretical framework in this thesis seems beyond the space here. So it might be overwork to draw further this research onto the issue of 'cultural capital' of Bourdieu (1991) and Mason's works

(2005a). However, as has been eloquently discussed in Fyfe and Ross's work (1996) on decoding audiences, there is considerable possibility to discuss and develop further on audiences' researches with the concept of cultural capital regards class, social environment and economic influences.

Mason (2005a, 210) said that 'the meaning-making process occurs in relation to a number of structural factors within society, such as the socio-economic, educational, familial and cultural background of individuals, to name a few. The combination of these factors will affect an individual's opportunity to acquire certain forms of cultural capital and, moreover, to feel inclined to want to access cultural institutions.' In addition, modern and contemporary audiences' nature, which can be most appropriately identified as a diffused audience, supports the idea that multiple meanings are potentially made during their visit. Furthermore the decoded messages are not necessarily the ones that the curators have encoded in the exhibition. Equally, the messages encoded by curators can be read by the visitors, but there are inevitable aspects such as museum design and display space which mitigate against these.

Focusing on Stuart Hall's theory of encoding and decoding, Dicks (2000) exemplified how the living 'experience' museums in the UK interrogate the encoding and decoding match in the museum settings. Using Rhondda Heritage Park in Wales, Dicks (2000, 67) discussed that two different ambivalences have been encoded in the park which are the 'anthropological construct of community, which exoticizes community and locates it temporally and spatially as a 'vanishing other', and a political discourse of the 'good community', which imagines it as a resource for future-oriented collective action, protest and self-provisioning'. Dicks (2000, 68) also conducted audience research in Rhondda Park and found that 'most visitors read the Rhondda as other, i.e. as an identity removed both temporally and culturally from visitors' own lives.' Therefore the message of the good community of political context may be hardly read by visitors. In the Archaeological Gallery in the New National Museum of Korea, although visitors were commenting that an objective and realistic history and culture should be narrated in this Museum, it is not too much to conclude that an ethno-symbolic and perennial Korea has been decoded the most by visitors responding to the research and this came with a strong view of national identity and nationalistic narrations. Compared to the messages encoded by curators,

the visitors have decoded different meanings and this should be considered by the Museum.

Highlighting the distortions and the unequal message transmission in the Archaeological Gallery, the next Chapter draws together vigorous discussions regarding the main concerns and disparities between the two entities of audience and the Museum and it also analyses the background and communication variables, as Mason mentioned (2005a), to these concerns and issues.

Chapter 6

The Museum and its Audience: Communicating National Identity

Introduction

An insightful understanding of Michael Foucault's discourse of power and knowledge has been made by Stuart Hall (1997) using the painting of *Las Meninas* (1656) by Diego Velasquez to understand the discourse and meaning making with the subject that the painting produced. Hall's point is that (1997, 60) 'the painting does not have a completed meaning. It only means something in relation to the spectator who is looking at it. The spectator completes the meaning of the picture. Meaning is therefore constructed in the dialogue between the painting and the spectator.' This thesis also takes the view that the meaning produced from the exhibition will be completed by the spectators. Hall (1997, 3) explains that meaning is made in everyday life through behaviour, from personal and social context, and influenced by the massive role of media plays in modern society, and the boundary and speed of sharing these meanings have never before been experienced by people. 'Meaning is what gives us a sense of our own identity, of who we are and with whom we 'belong' – so it is tied up with questions of how culture is used to mark out and maintain identity within and difference between groups' (Hall 1997, 3) As Hall (ibid) ascertains, 'Meaning is also produced whenever we express ourselves in, make use of, consume or appropriate cultural 'things'' and here, the 'things' can connote the museum itself.

Chapters Four and Five illustrated the substantial processes of how meanings are made in the Archaeological Gallery primarily. In order to examine the museum's communication of national identity with its visitors rigorously, this Chapter highlights the complexities of communication when each side encodes and decodes the messages in the exhibition. This Chapter is to answer the final research question of what the unmet communication is and why the unequivalence of communicating nation and national identity are happening. Firstly, a brief summary of the messages in the Archaeological Gallery which have been encoded and decoded is discussed which is followed by a definition of Korean identity as given in the Archaeological Gallery. Secondly, the communication environments of each side are explored in order to enhance understandings of the museum's communication regarding national

identity, and this part answers the reason of disparities and similarities of seeing the messages in the Archaeological Gallery. This discussion entails why certain nation and national identity have been marginalised in the exhibition.

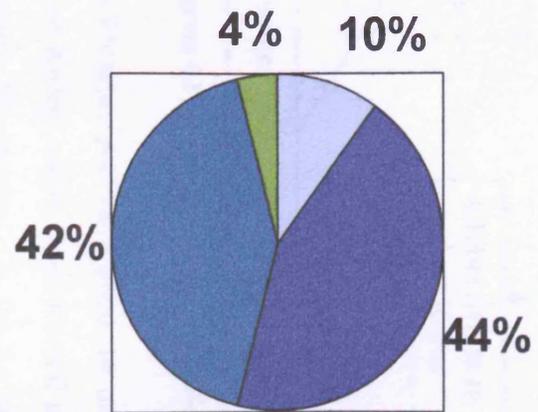
National Identity - encoded by curators and decoded by audiences

I think Korea has developed very fast recently and very much in a global sense. It appears that we have ignored our national identity during that development. So personally, I think we need to know or be more aware of our national identity these days than ever before.

This is a comment from a visitor in her 40s who believed that the Museum had an important role to play in making people realise what their national identity is. Three hundred-eighty-six visitors to the New National Museum of Korea were asked about their interest in the issue of South Korean national identity (Chart 6-1). The answers showed that 50.9% (197) were highly interested in the issue (very high; 9.5% (37), high; 41.4% (160)), whereas 39.8% (154) said they had an average interest. Only 3.6% (14) said that they had little interest in the issue. These results suggest that the concept of national identity is a matter of considerable concern to Koreans, so an attempt is made here to clarify the issue and the implications for the Museum.

Korea and its national identity, as discussed in Chapter One and Two from diverse social events and dynamics of contemporary Korean culture, have direct connection to, first of all, the GoJoseon and Dangun myth which lead Korean people to recognise their origin and homogeneity. However, Korean identity was also deeply influenced by the Japanese occupation in early 20th century which seems to have caused particularly nationalistic views towards other countries such as China and Japan. Contrary to the first point made about homogeneity with GoJoseon and Dangun, another complexity interrupts here again when talking about Korean identity, namely the division between South and North Korea. Because of these characteristics of national identity, Korean people tend to consider themselves as one 'pure blooded' people, which enhance people's concept of 'we are one'. However, because of the Japanese occupation and American influence after the Korean War, it caused multilayered characteristics of Korean modern culture which still impacts on contemporary Korean people. More intense problems of identity seem to have been created in the 21st century, in the global era. As seen in audiences' responses, the

Chart 6-1 Interest on National Identity



Very High High Average Low

national identity of Korea is certainly a pivotal concept underpinning the New National Museum of Korea. So this part next will examine the Halls of the Archaeological Gallery and the image of national identity depicted therein, as well as the reactions of the visitors. This diagram below indicates the messages encoded and decoded of nation in the exhibition.

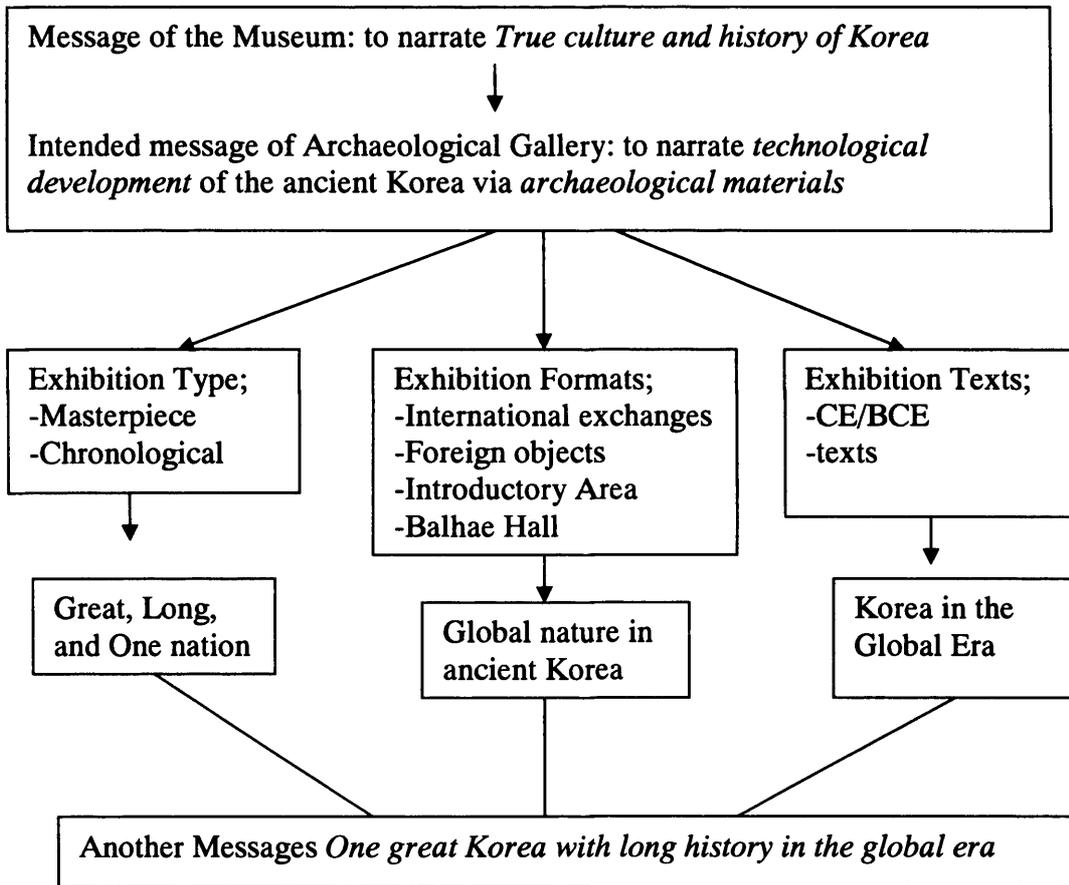


Diagram 6.1 Intended messages of the Archaeological Gallery

As seen above, this Museum was built upon the main message of narrating the ‘true culture and history of Korea’ which is reinforced in every manifesto of the Museum archives and documents. The emphasis in the Archaeological Gallery is to narrate the ‘technological development of ancient Korea with Archaeological artefacts’. Reviewed by whole exhibition type, formats and texts, a more specific intention has been found to present ‘one great Korea with a long history in the global era’. Not only has the exhibition put its focus the technological aspects of Korea but also the exhibition narrates Korea’s culture and history as great, unified and long in the global context. Extensive research around communication theories has been achieved by

McQuail⁷⁵ (2005) and it seems useful to summarize Hall's ideas in a succinct way here from McQuail's viewpoint. McQuail (2005, 73) puts forward two aspects for Hall's main idea, saying; 'First, communicators choose to encode messages for ideological and institutional purposes and to manipulate language and media for those ends. [...] Secondly, receivers ('decoders') are not obliged to accept messages as sent but can and do resist ideological influence by applying variant or oppositional readings, according to their own experience and outlook.' Although this diagram above ultimately shows the intentions of the curators, however, there can be unintended messages encoded in the exhibition and as McQuail explained (2005) and as discussed in Chapter Five the decoding can be diverse. Several Halls in the Archaeological Gallery have been used to demonstrate the complexity of encoding and decoding, as explained in the table below.

	Encoding by Curators			Decoding by Audiences
	Intended	Exhibition	Unintended	
Introductory Area	Global Korea (Transnational)	Four National objects	Nationalistic	<i>Unintended Messages</i>
Bronze Hall	Technological development; Bronze	Reflecting Intended messages	x	<i>New Message decoded; ethno-symbolic Korea</i>
Proto Three Kingdoms Hall	-Technological development; Iron - Long Korea Perennial Korea	Acknowledging Goguryeo; naming 'Proto Three Kingdoms'	One Korea	<i>No particular messages read</i>
Silla Hall	Global Korea	-Gold objects -Masterpiece exhibition	Great Korea; Ethno-symbolic	<i>Unintended messages</i>
Goguryeo Hall	- Korea's culture and history -One nation Perennial Korea	-Wall Paintings area -UNESCO	-Great Korea Ethno-symbolic - Korea and globalisation	<i>Intended messages/ Unintended messages</i>
Balhae Hall	- Chinese project involvement	-Term; South North Kingdoms Period -Hall itself		<i>Intended messages/ Unintended messages</i>

Table 6.1 Encoded and Decoded Nation

These processes were all explained in Chapters Four and Five. As viewed here several messages have been identified in the exhibition by the author. Each hall conveys all

⁷⁵ His immense works on various communication theories in chronological formats are particularly valuable for studies concerning communications.

different intended messages and there are also unintended messages which are found. What is also interesting here are the decoded messages construed by the visitors. Using the archaeological objects in the Archaeological Gallery, there might be a limitation in narrating a nation but the kinds of understandings about the nation which have been circumscribed in the Archaeological Gallery makes for an interesting question, and are which will be discussed below.

Korea in the Archaeological Gallery and read by its visitors

The main message of technological development in the Archaeological Gallery has been deeply embedded in the Bronze Hall and the Proto Three Kingdoms Hall with clear distinction by the curators. Particularly, the Proto Three Kingdoms Period is the time which the Museum has put high importance on as Korea's first political entity, as a nation-like can be seen in this period. Apart from this main message in the exhibition, the Introductory Area and Silla Hall admit that their intention is for showing 'global' Korea. There are two different ways in which 'global Korea' has been encoded. The Introductory Area targets to appeal modern Korea in global era, while Silla Hall's encoding is its international exchanges of Silla with other ancient Kingdoms in history. The Goguryeo and Balhae Halls have been made by one curator who clearly stated that his intention was to encode the pure cultural and historical aspects of Balhae and Goguryeo. He admits that they are histories of Korea, not Chinese history, which, in a way, delivers the message that Korea is one nation. Territories where Goguryeo and Balhae existed are now mostly in North Korea, China and Manchuria, and so these two Halls certainly show that this New National Museum of Korea does not only record South Korea's history but also the history of North Korea. However, as the curator confessed, the political intention of the Korean Government, which dealt with the Chinese project has intervened with the curator's own intention to create the Halls, so there is a clear political agenda embedded in the Goguryeo and Balhae displays. This is a distinctive example in the Archaeological Gallery of how a strong political implication was embodied in the exhibition itself and its unintended messages become hard to unravel.

Firstly, the Introductory Area's four objects do not seem to be related to the curators' intention of a 'global' Korea here. These are displayed at the level of national treasures in each showcase on the wall leading visitors to the Palaeolithic Hall which

means these objects are presented in the manner that visitors should see them first and it cannot be too much to say that four objects do not align with the encoded message. However, the Satellite World Map and Chronological World History Table clearly encode the message of 'global Korea'. Visitors' responses in the Introductory Area are mostly echoing the unintended message of the exhibition which means the strong appearance of Korea as one nation. Those four objects seemed not appear for the visitors mainly but because of the map and table, visitors see another message which was unintended by the curators in this area and it is rather related to delivering a national image than a transnational intention.

The Bronze Hall deals mainly with metal bronze artefacts and its wrought objects, so this is reflecting the intended message of the curator and it seems that therefore there is no unintended message encoded in the Bronze Hall. However, the Bronze Hall, as read by audiences, seems very interesting. Visitors seem to have decoded, to a certain extent, a new message which is a strong ethno-symbolic message of Dangun and GoJoseon. Among the other five Halls, this Bronze Hall is distinctive because of the new message as read by visitors but not encoded in the exhibition. The message newly decoded seems related to Korea's robust relations to the ethno-symbolic idea of the nation. Anthony Smith (2004, 18) makes a very clear distinction of ethno-symbolists perspectives. It is worth quoting here that

[A]n ethno-symbolic perspective places the link between nations and core *ethnies* (or ethnic communities) at the centre of its concerns. However, unlike perennialists and primordialists, ethno-symbolists refuse to conflate ethnicity and nationhood. [...] ethno-symbolists argue that the concept of *ethnie* and the model of an ethnic core are crucial for the development of the idea of the nation, as well as for particular nations⁷⁶.

From this stance, the first political entity GoJoseon and its relevant myth Dangun in the Bronze Age seems related to the understanding of an ethno-symbolic nation of Korea. Academic understanding of Dangun and GoJoseon in archaeological and historic disciplines needs further research and study, according to Rho (2000, 33), but he also notifies that the symbolic meanings of the two concepts for Korean people play a very crucial role in constructing Korean identity. For this reason, visitors seem to read totally different messages from the Bronze Hall than was intended by curators.

⁷⁶ A clear distinction between *ethnie* and nation has been drawn in Smith's research.

Generally, the Proto Three Kingdoms Hall has been encoded the same message like the Bronze Hall as the curator's main intention was showing the technological development of iron. The exhibition substantially displays diverse kinds of ironware and this eloquently leads to the explanations of Korea's nation-making process since then (which was 0 AD – 300 AD). Naming this Period as 'Proto Three Kingdoms Period', however, delivers the message that Goguryeo is taken into account as belonging to this period, which was not considered in the erstwhile museum. This is the attempt of the Archaeological Gallery to account for Goguryeo as Korean history and given this new term the exhibition uses, it is possible, therefore, to articulate one of the unintended messages of the exhibition, which is Korea as one unified nation. However, compared to the Bronze Hall, this Hall did not attract much attention from the visitors, and even people mislead the message of one unified nation as the new term 'Proto' was not successfully recognised by them at all.

In terms of Silla exhibition, it is richly decorated with golden artefacts in dedicated exhibition spaces from the beginning of the Hall. Visitors see first the Gold Crown and Belt which are National Treasures and these do not seem to underline the curator's intention of presenting an international Silla as one of the global aspect of the Museum tries to show. Although there are artefacts displayed from foreign relationships, it cannot be said that the main encoded message of this Hall can appeal as much to visitors as the golden Silla with its grand presentation of crown and belt. As for its exhibition style of masterpiece-centred and its focuses on golden objects, this Hall directs unintended messages of a great Korea with great artefacts and an ethno-symbolic representation of Korea with gold. This aspect exactly seemed to appear for the visitors the most. An ethno-symbolic image of Korea has been encoded regardless of the curators' intentions. This is again related to the Korean people's understanding of their nation in the nature of ethno-symbolic perspectives. So the visitors tend to read the message of an ethno-symbolic Korea whether it is main encoded message of Silla or not.

Echoing political recalls on Goguryeo and Balhae in the Archaeological Gallery, two Halls reflect these intentions. One of them is the wall description panel in the Lounge area about the UNESCO World Heritage designation in 2004 of Goguryeo tombs in North Korea. This is not even in the Goguryeo Hall, but in the Lounge which is found

in between Goguryeo and Baekje. One of the walls has been entirely covered with information about the Goguryeo tombs designation in North Korea, but the artefact displayed in the Lounge area is Baekje's national treasure. Political intentions are even more obvious in Balhae Hall. This Hall was not in the master plan of the New National Museum of Korea in 2002. After the Chinese Project had been initiated, Balhae Hall was added in the Archaeological Gallery. This resulted in the Museum's new name of 'South North Kingdoms Period' for Balhae Hall. So the new historic name and Balhae Hall itself, in a way, signify this museum's intention of showing one unified Korea but more broadly, it encoded another intention of presenting Korea's history to the world. Legitimising one nation's history in the national institution like the newly opened museum symbolically represents the Museum's clear intention to record it not only in Korean's history but also in the World history too. However, there are responses which convey that the political intention is not all read by visitors. The UNESCO designation of the Goguryeo Tombs has less recognised by visitors, although people do recognise the new term of South North Kingdoms Period.

Then what of Korea and Korean identity encoded intentionally and unintentionally in the Archaeological Gallery and decoded by the visitors? Bronze and Iron's cultural importance in Korean history has been particularly underlined and the internationality of ancient Korea also has been highlighted. The term of 'Proto' and the messages regarding Goguryeo and Balhae have portrait Korea as one unified Korea rather than two separate nations of South/North Korea. From this stance, it is also possible to think that the perennial image of Korea has been encoded in the Archaeological Gallery as of Proto and Goguryeo/Balhae Halls. Another point is that it is also important to encode Korea for the world to know, which is sought in the Introductory Area and also in Goguryeo and Balhae Halls' political intentions. Not only considering ancient Korea in a perennial and symbolic way but also the messages are concerned with present day Korean identity. However, it is not too much to say that, overall, the Archaeological Gallery is concerned the most with the representation of ancient Korea as a perennial nation and the representation of present Korea in the global era.

From the evidence presented, what can we say about the audiences reading of the nation Korea? Seen from the Bronze Hall and Silla exhibitions, it seems likely that

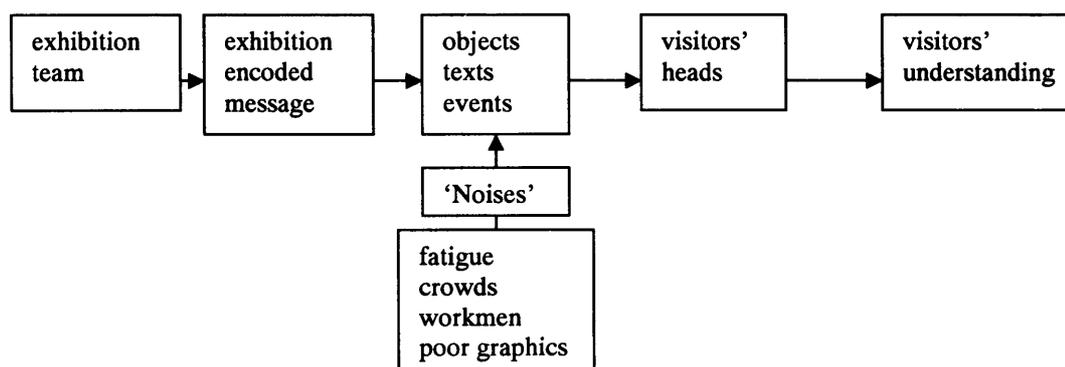
visitors mainly read the messages which correspond to an ethno-symbolic image of Korea. This is certainly interesting point as any particular messages in the Archaeological Gallery encoded the ethno-symbolic aspect. The transnational image of Korea with which the Archaeological Gallery is encoded has been perceived less than the ethno-symbolic nation. Perennial Korea, which is defined as one unified Korea with long history has been also decoded by visitors in Goguryeo and Balhae Halls but not in the Proto Three Kingdoms Hall. So Korea has been much decoded by its ancient symbolic representation in the Archaeological Gallery rather than through the material development of ancient Korean culture. In addition the focus of the museum's intention to narrate contemporary Korea in the global era has hardly been decoded by visitors. This means that visitors read the messages in the context of historical and cultural aspects of Korea rather than modern Korea.

'An exhibition is an event where society and time meet and link in a defined space. Chronological time is transformed into communication time in the exhibition which thus becomes a closed system.' (Maroevic 1995, 30) This is a definition from Maroevic's insightful description about the museum exhibition, but Maroevic added that 'The museum message of the exhibition is realized only in the communication time and 'availability' of the exhibition to the audience.' (1995, 30) However, still the availability of an exhibition seems limited to certain messages. As Dicks (2000, 73-74) found out in her visitor research in Rhondda Park, although encoded in the exhibition were two main ideas of the 'vanishing other and the good community' in the context of 'professional exhibitionary discourse deploying its nostalgic tropes of community, while professional historical discourse preferring to emphasize a different kind of trope, in the 'ongoing march of history'', the decoded version has focused on the 'vanishing other' rather than the idea of the 'good community'. The above discussions reveal certain disparities and similarities in the ways in which the Museum encodes the nation and how the visitors decode the nation as reflected in the Museum. There are certainly different readings made between the curators and the visitors when they encode and decode the nation in the exhibition. Then why these different manners to encode and decode have been caused? Why have these failures of communicating the intended messages leading to distorted communication and inability to involve audiences with the intentions of the exhibition happened? In order to respond these various questions, the next part discusses internal variables which affect certain

encodings of the nation in the Archaeological Gallery and external reasons for why the visitors decode those messages in certain way. After this part, the answers of miscommunication and unequivalence are sought, followed by the exploration of the marginalised nation and national identities in the Archaeological Gallery.

Communication Variables – internal aspects

Hooper-Greenhill asserts that ‘In museum exhibitions there is frequently a subjective element – the exhibition can be, and has been, seen as an act of expression on the part of the curator’ (Hooper-Greenhill 1999, 30), but this subjectivity may have a boundary it will reach. Although this diagram below is greatly simplified in the explaining the contemporary concerns of communication theory in the exhibition, it can be partially used to provide the complexity of the encoding process which I am going to present it. This model was criticised by Hooper-Greenhill (1999, 32) who emphasised that communication is far more complex whereas this model is far too simple as it presents a one-way type communication. The feedback loop in the communication process was introduced by Hooper-Greenhill (1999, 35) which enables receivers (visitors) to become part of the communication and to change the messages. What I am interested in regarding this model are the noises such as ‘Fatigue, crowds, workmen and poor graphics’ which interfere the construction of the messages in the exhibition.



‘Figure 2.4 The Shannon and Weaver model applied to exhibitions’ (Hooper-Greenhill 1999, 35)

What can be argued here is that it is not necessary to consider the noises in the physical sense of fatigue, crowds and wrong design, but more likely other backgrounds, to a certain extent can be termed as a noise, which have a crucial role to influence the encoding and decoding processes in the exhibition. In the next section

the difference of 'background' will be examined first on the curators who encode the exhibition and secondly, on the visitors who decode the exhibition.

National Identity and Nationalism: The Curatorial View

Hooper-Greenhill (1999, 30) asserts that 'For museum workers, it is important to try to understand as well as possible the communication process itself, both in general and in museums.' In addition, Mason (2005a, 205) believes;

The key point is that just as visitors draw on their pre-existing knowledge to understand what they see in museums, galleries and heritage sites, so too will museum, gallery and heritage professionals inevitably draw on, and be informed, by the various discourses circulating within society when they produce displays, or interpretation. Wherever possible, professionals should strive to recognize this and critically examine the paradigms and discourses within which they work.

It is a crucial part of analyzing the exhibition by taking into account the communication how are audience's perspective, but as Mason (2005a) and Hooper-Greenhill (1999) comment, it is also worth looking at how the curators in the Archaeological Gallery, who are responsible producers for the displays, think about national identity and national issues which help to understand the 'noises' or variables during the encoding process.

Most of the curators believe that the Museum is generally constructed on sound historic facts. During the interviews with the curators, they seemed to adopt a rather careful and distant attitude to the concept of national identity and nationalism in this Museum. When the curators were asked about national identity regarding the Archaeological Gallery their responses are divided into those who found the subject difficult and those who had negative feelings about the issue.

Identity construction seems a very difficult issue for me. It is very hard to say in one sentence what is our national identity. Also it has always been an issue for us (Koreans) to construct national identity in the Museum. But I really don't know how to do that. (Senior Curator Kb)

This is one response from a senior curator which generally represents the curators' idea about national identity. One senior curator expressed even stronger feelings. He is one of the curators who believe that national identity and nationalism cannot be expressed in one concise definition, suggesting that one could 'ask everyone in the Museum about national identity. Nobody will know and we (the curators) don't know

either.’ To a certain extent, this curator believed that national identity did not matter in present day Korea, and that, since the role of this Museum was to show the history of the nation, there was no need to talk about national identity in the Museum context. In the same vein, a junior curator Aa suggested that the question of national identity and its construction in the New National Museum of Korea could evoke some antipathy, as it has quite negative connotations in Korea, and to some extent the curators were not familiar with this topic. However, when a question was asked about connections between the Archaeology and nationalism, the negative responses from curators became even got vivid, so it seems that their educational background as archaeologists could have influenced their ideas of national identity and nationalism in Korea⁷⁷.

All curators interviewed rejected the modern relationship between archaeology and nationalism in Korea. One curator said that Korean archaeology had originated with the attempts to find national treasures to build a strong national identity after Korea was freed from Japanese rule and this curator emphasised that modern archaeology had risen from the ashes of nationalism in Korea and this is certainly a dangerous problems that Korean archaeology embodied. A junior curator’s comment supports this argument. She said ‘it should be noted that archaeology has moved on since the time when it was invented for nationalistic purposes, and this is because archaeology in contemporary Korea is more accessible to the public for the pure purpose of archaeological researches, but nothing really about the nationalism and national identity’. One senior curator strongly implied that nationalism and its connection to archaeology is a ‘dangerous liaison’, given that their relations began on the basis of the idea of imperialism and colonialism, so he insisted that ‘the theory about nationalism and archaeology is now outdated.’ He added more on that, saying:

⁷⁷ Curators who were interviewed were aged from early 30s to early 50s. When they were in schools, history education was highly concerned with nationalism and national identity issues as the education system had been reformed, firstly in 1955 and this resulted interwove reformations until 1987 when less nationalistic views became the emphasis of history education. This history education will be dealt with later on in this Chapter referring to audiences’ decoding on the exhibition mainly, but it seems interesting that although the curators were subject to a strong national identity education in their schools, they see national identity and nationalism from a distance with rather negative connotations, and it seems their views have resulted from their educational background of archaeology. The reason they have not been analysed regarding the Korean education system is because their school education, not archaeology, does not seem in my opinion to be much related to their understanding of the nation. So the focus is rather on their archaeological background.

No one in the Museum considers nationalism in the context of Korean history. Who is going to care about Silla and the Korean nation, or Goguryeo and the identity of Koreans? If there are any such persons, then they are very narrow-minded and nationalistic.

So not only do the curators in the Museum have negative opinions on the issue of national identity and nationalism itself, they also seem to believe that the relationship between archaeology and nationalism or national identity is no longer very relevant in modern Korea. These views can be understood in one sense that the liaison between archaeology and nationalism is denied by the curators, but in nature the discipline of the archaeology plays a pivotal role to research Korea with material cultures. As explored in the Chapter Three, the overarching aims of most Korean archaeologists are to find true Korea and its history through the archaeological artefacts. Given the attitudes of the curators towards national identity and nationalism, however, the Archaeological Gallery may have been made with less intention towards these particular aspects of nation and national identity. This attitude results in the encoding of certain national images, and one of the examples can be transnational Korea that the curators believed that the Archaeological Gallery is not only encoding the message regards Korea but also the others. Second example can be lack of the ethno-symbolic Korea in the Archaeological Gallery. Negative images and views on the Korean identity and nationalism influenced the views of the curators and it resulted to rather moderately encode these particular aspects of Korea. These two paradigms will be shortly revisited after this section when the entire discussions are made, answering the research questions.

Exhibition Design practicality

There is also another factor which influences the curators' meaning making in the Archaeological Gallery. Taking example of the Museum of Welsh Life, Mason (2006b, 24) draws attention to the 'rescue-mission mentality' in history museums. Mason discussed that the history museum starts to realise the value of particular historic artefacts when they are just about to disappear as new technology or materials are threaten those traditional ones. In this sense, Mason (2006b, 24) reads that 'this museum [Museum of Welsh Life] has been engaged not so much in the representation of what constitutes Welsh Life, but more in the representation of what has disappeared from it.' In terms of the marketing and audience development in the

museum, Mason (2006b, 25) also indicated that the visitors to the Museum of Welsh Life are more likely to be 'Anglophone, post-industrial area of South Wales which had for so long been excluded from the museum'. Therefore, this museum needs to consider the local audiences who are 'South, industrial 'Welsh Wales'' and this is certainly contrary to the main representational ideal of the museum which is 'rural, welsh-speaking'. After the Museum of Welsh Life realised this results, they tried to accommodate industrial history in the museum and Mason (2006b, 25) asserts that 'What this clearly demonstrates is that the museum's representations of Welsh national identities are not driven solely by changes in academic and curatorial thought but result from the complex interplay of concrete issues of location, marketing, and audience development with theoretical discourses and debates surrounding national identity'. As discussed here, there are some issues which can influence the practicality of the museum exhibitions and to a certain extent, those issues can play against the museum's own agenda and their governing concept. The Museum of Welsh Life is trying to show the history of the Wales through the folklore artefacts but in terms of the audience development and marketing they ended up collecting the industrial artefacts which caused the confusion and erratic plot of Welsh history. Although the Welsh National Museum network claims about Welsh history in different settings, with different collections for different people, as Mason (2006b, 28) successfully describes, there are problems raised, 'concerning demarcation between sites, disciplines, and collections'.

Not only those external facets but also the particular exhibition types in the museums can play against the museums' intention as shown in the Archaeological Gallery. The exhibition is very much focused on the physicality of the objects rather than the meaning. For instance, the dedicated exhibition showcase in the independent area delivers the obsolete image of the national treasure for visitors, which reminds them of the great ethno-symbolic Korea. As Lidchi (1997, 162) points out 'Their *physicality* delivers a promise of stability and objectivity; it suggests a stable, unambiguous world'. At the same time Lidchi's point (1997, 162) also refers to the meaning of the objects. 'The fixity of an object's physical presence cannot deliver guarantees at the level of meaning. In the museum context, a conflation may be encouraged between the stability of presence and that of meaning'. What Lidchi argues is that the meaning of the objects can be changed over time, and so this

meaning equally cannot be 'recaptured or replayed' in the museum settings. This is a comment from one curator about the exhibition style in the Archaeological Gallery.

I was a bit worried about this type of exhibition (which is a masterpiece exhibition). If there is a shard of pottery which is archaeologically important, it would have been displayed in the old museum (the erstwhile National Museum) but would not be in the new Museum, even though it is an academically important piece. So basically you can say that most of the critical archaeological objects are not included as we pursue a masterpiece style exhibition.

The objects exhibited therefore may not be the best ones to represent the history of Korea, but they are more likely to be displayed because of their perfect shape, and to represent the physicality of objects. One senior curator worried that the chronological structuring of the Archaeological Gallery would not be obvious enough, making this Gallery no different from the other Galleries that were arranged in a thematic way.

The Gallery is very much focused on the chronological time table compared to other Galleries in the Museum, so we (curators) have presented objects in perfect condition, implying that they are the masterpieces of Korean history. However, I am not so sure how these objects would have been understood in their own period, and also personally I think that the periods have not been connected together very successfully because of the focus on those so called masterpieces in each period.

These design issues of the Archaeological Gallery, therefore, would contribute to the delivering unintended messages of the nation which is an ethno-symbolic aspect. There is one more example concerned to exhibition design. Unified Silla, which formed part of the South North Kingdoms Period with Balhae, was also a crucial historic period for the Archaeological Gallery, as it was then that the people of the Korean Peninsula were first unified as one nation. According to one curator, however, attention to the Unified Silla period has been minimised because of Balhae.

We enlarged the Balhae space instead of the area for Unified Silla. Initially the Balhae Hall was very small, but we extended it as other countries raised problematic issues about Balhae. That is why artefacts from Unified Silla ended up in small spaces, which were smaller than those initially intended.

The initial plan of the Archaeological Gallery did not include Balhae until 2002 when the Chinese Project was announced first (Yoon 1995). What seems important here is that the actual planned size of the Unified Silla display was reduced to accommodate Balhae Hall. So this caused a blocking of the connection flow from the Silla Kingdom to Unified Silla, as Unified Silla Period was included in the South North Kingdoms Period. As Smith discerns (1991), there is always a strong issue of identity involved

when it comes to territory and the sovereignty of nations, so the urgent call for the inclusion of Balhae Hall in the Archaeological Gallery is directly related to the issue of the national identity of Korea connected with a strong political agenda. This influenced visitors' understanding of Silla and Unified Silla, as a high volume of visitors were not aware of Unified Silla's culture and its link to the Silla Kingdom. One more political intention seemed to result in the miscommunication in the Archaeological Gallery. The UNESCO Panel in Lounge has been hardly decoded by the visitors as the issue of Goguryeo. This Panel is one of the resolutions of the Archaeological Gallery as a countermeasure of the Chinese project, but locating it in Lounge, not in the Goguryeo Hall makes its perception rare by the decoders. So the design of the exhibition inevitably affects the narration of the nation in the Archaeological Gallery with an ethno-symbolic image which the curators are not intended at all. The political agendas are not only devoted to create the new Balhae Hall but contributed to divorce the Silla's connectivity to the Unified Silla. Also the panel of the UNESCO designation has hardly been recognised as a misuse of the design.

The National Museum and Government

It seems that the intentions of the curators in the Gallery were not totally free from political issues. As Mason discussed (2005b, 12) 'those with political or economic interests in promoting a national agenda may well expect that the museums should highlight national representativeness while museum professionals might place as much value on the outstanding national value aspect of those same collections.' What all tried to do throughout this thesis is focusing on the poetics of the exhibition regarding the messages of the nation and the recognition from the audiences about the national identity. However, at the end of the findings, it has been received that the national museum has been used as the place for a political agenda. Historically this Museum has a particular relationship to Korean nationalism and Balhae Hall in the Archaeological Gallery is the proof of relationship between this Museum and the political propaganda. This leads to another mechanism with which to understand the New National Museum of Korea through the 'politics of exhibiting' (Lidchi 1997, 205). As McLean (1998, 247) argued, the poetics of the museum refers to all the elements in the exhibition which create the meanings, whereas the politics 'refers to the role of museums in the production of social knowledge'. McLean (1998, 248) goes on to argue that 'Museums, then, that are created to celebrate the nation, whether

in a local, national, or international level, are indicative of this institutionalising of power, and with it the legitimising of selected representations of national identity.’ Tony Bennett’s work (1995) on public museums and their relationships with policies of government also suggests that museums, particularly national museums or public museums, inevitably have been ruled by the government or subjugated by its policies and this is also the case for this New National Museum of Korea.

The idea of the governmentality of the museum is certainly contrary to the impressions of the curators and their understanding of the New National Museum of Korea. Most curators believe that nationalism and the idea of national identity are not the focus of this Museum, and also the political agendas of the government of Korea are not a first priority for the exhibition. One senior curator who is in charge of the general museum policy in the Ministry of Culture and Tourism Korea articulates that this New Museum plays an independent role from the Ministry, which connotes a lesser link between the governmental organisation and the Museum itself. However, it is noteworthy that the Government plays a very crucial role in making the Museum arrange the Halls such as Balhae Hall and UNESCO wall panels. They are all intended aims of the governmental agenda played in this Museum. The name of Proto Three Kingdoms and South North Kingdoms Period do also connote the political intention embedded in the Archaeological Gallery. While the Balhae and Goguryeo Tombs in North Korea are firmly held academic views as a part of Korean historical context, the terms of ‘Proto’ and ‘South North Kingdoms’ are still quite controversial and unresolved issues in Korean archaeology (Yi 2003).

The Balhae exhibition was hard to mount in view of the very small number of objects available, and the even more limited research opportunities, but the inclusion of a display on Balhae in the Museum was not only a statement that it was a part of Korean history, but was also an implied response to the Chinese Project. As Macdonald (1998, 2) has stated, the public who visit the exhibition can see unequivocal statements in the exhibition and so ‘[t]he assumptions, rationales, compromises and accidents that lead to a finished exhibition are generally hidden from public view.’ The presence of Balhae Hall seems to have fulfilled the intentions of the Government, as the majority of the visitors perceived the Hall as a counter to the Chinese Project, which is exactly in line with the political intentions. The

Archaeological Galley has succeeded in convincing visitors that Balhae is part of Korea's history, but the underlying political intention was, nevertheless, perceived by the visitors, so the New National Museum of Korea cannot be really considered as to have a distance from the idea that it is a national institution for the representation of the nation's history.

A slightly different view on this political connection can be found in other cases. A challenge from the Government was made by the right wing MP, Min Byeong-du. Min asked to see all of the Museum texts on 7 September 2005. A week later he announced publicly that the New National Museum of Korea was under fire, criticising grammatical mistakes⁷⁸ in the Korean versions. His point was that the wrong usage of Korean Language in the New National Museum of Korea could be an insult to Korean identity, as it is, called the 'National Museum' of Korea. He also attacked Japanese writing styles in the Korean grammar, saying that the New National Museum of Korea had failed to emerge from the ashes of the Japanese era. However, the drafts that MP Min analysed were not the final versions, so the New National Museum of Korea was able to respond appropriately, but the Museum was under the considerable debates and had to respond to criticism by visitors and the media about the wrong usages in the panels⁷⁹. This event is concrete evidence of pressure being exerted by the Government and, to a certain extent, it illustrates the close relationship that exists between a nation's Government and a national museum. Another view which can be taken from here is that this New National Museum of Korea has been used as a political tool by the Government for raising the issue of national identity and so the Korean Government obviously plays a pivotal role in the Museum.

Generally, the curators feel that this Museum is not the place to present nationalistic views of the nation, but that it should have a moderate attitude towards national identity, or the nation's history. However, since the New National Museum of Korea maintains a strong relationship with the national Government, and the Government wishes to define a strong image of national identity, there seems to be a close link between the National Museum and the concept of national identity. Even though the intention of the curators was to show a less nationalistic and more moderate image of

⁷⁸ Munhwa Ilbo, Choseon Ilbo, Hankook Ilbo of 13 - 14 September 2005.

⁷⁹ Research Diary of 17 October 2005.

national identity, it seems that the New National Museum of Korea itself is not free from the obligations arising from its status as a symbolic institution of the nation. Also the politics found in this particular narration can be understood as this Museum's effort to accommodate transnational idea of the nation. Legitimising Korea's history in the institution of the nation is the attempt to acknowledge them into Korean's own terms officially and so it is the presentation for the world viewers. This is very much the attempt that this new museum is accommodating or to a certain extent concerning the issue of globalisation and the presentation of Korea for the transnational era.

As highlighted in the above discussions this section attempted to find what the 'noises' are caused in the Archaeological Gallery when they encoded the message of the nation and national identity; the curators' own perceptions, design issues and the governmental link to the museum. It seems evident that transnational Korea is one of the main ideas encoded in the Archaeological Gallery whereas ethno-symbolic Korea is subsumed. However, the exhibition design resulted to bolster the aspect of an ethno-symbolic nation, on the other hand, the design which is influenced by the political issues is misleading the messages that the Archaeological Gallery encodes. Heavy relationships between the museum and the government are found and this leads the Archaeological Gallery to use new terms and to equip new Hall of Balhae.

Bearing this in mind it is equally important to remember that the visitors interpret the exhibition in a different way from the one intended by the curators and this raises some issues. For instance, the most controversial laid in the lack of the ethno-symbolic national image in the Archaeological Gallery, and it would be useful to understand why the visitors interpret the exhibition the way they do. There seem two main aspects which should receive attention; the history education in Korea and the influence of mass media. The first aspect to be considered is history education in Korea.

Communication Variables – external aspects

History Education and Nationalism

When the audience reaction to the exhibition was informed after the opening, all of the curators agreed that history education has an enormous influence on the visitors and that is the cause of the gap between audience understanding and this Museum's

exhibition. This comment from a kindergarten teacher in her late 20s is indicative response that has been received by the visitors which imply the school education embodied nationalism and this influences the museum visitors to see certain aspects of the nation: 'the Museum objects were the ones we learned about at school. When we learned in school, they were related to nationalism and nationalistic viewpoints, so seeing these objects here appeared to me as nationalism in that sense.'

It will be worthwhile, therefore, to consider Korean history education and the messages they convey about nationalism. Reviewing current history textbooks and research data by textbook specialists will give some idea of the impact that education has had on the Museum audiences. As Song (1999) points out, it is interesting to see that the study of history education from 1963-1998 in Korea is highly focused on the study of the history textbooks (49.5% of MA dissertations and 32.2% of articles on all history education issues). Behind these numbers, what Kim (2002c) emphasised is that the textbook is the clearest and the most vivid way to deliver the concept of nationalism and national identity. This is one reason why research into history textbooks is on the increase, but it is also why criticism of the promotion of nationalistic views is voiced (Kim 2002c). Analysing the Korean History education system, Jang (2002) defined the term 'National identity education' as: seeking national traditions and myths to construct national identity, and so making pupils aware that they belong to a certain group of people in the territory/boundary of the contemporary national concept. Jang (2002) concluded by saying that being a global citizen in the 21st century was only possible on the condition that a person knows their own national culture and is proud of it, and this can be achieved by education. Kim (1999) also argued that the main gist of the history narration in the textbooks is that Korea is a country with a long and great history, and that this could instil in Korean people both confidence and stability.

Kim's main argument (2002c) on nationalism in the high school textbook makes the point that the impact of GoJoseon being in the textbook, without any explicit historic or academic proof, will cause confusion for students, leading pupils to believe that GoJoseon was a single nation like the other ancient kingdoms in Korea. Kim (2002c) explicitly made the point that GoJoseon in Korea is not a nation, but a chiefdom type of group that existed in the northern part of the Peninsula, so it could not be described

as the first 'nation' of Korea. In terms of the longevity of Korea, the textbook said that GoJoseon started in BC 2,333 based on the Bronze Culture, but Kim (2002c) pointed out that GoJoseon of BC 2,333 could not be based on the Bronze Culture, which was believed to have begun around the 10th century BC. Kim's work (2002c) was based on the textbook of the seventh education reform in 1997, but the GoJoseon story also figured in earlier textbooks so most Korean people are likely to have a certain idea of GoJoseon in relation to the national symbol and power. Rho (2000) thoroughly discussed Dangun's political emphasis in 1950s and he highlighted that Dangun and GoJoseon have been reinforced in history education in 1970s Korea the most. Song (2004, 208-211) also one of the prominent scholar who deals with the GoJoseon and Dangun, and he goes on to criticise current history education and its heavy implication onto two concepts. Heavily criticising the fact that the textbook describes the Dangun as a real existed human being which is not proved in any means, Song (2004) asserts that Korean history textbook should seriously consider their description of Dangun and GoJoseon because of their nationalistic influences to the students in general. From the discussions here, GoJoseon and Dangun are also appeared in the history textbook which seems to bolster people's national identity.

The inclusion of international story about Silla is another problem, according to Kim (2002c). Kim (2002c) considered that the history of Silla has been always emphasised in terms of great artefacts, namely golden objects. Underlining that Korean history education is heavily centred on the Silla, Kim (2002c) believes that it is another strong and great nationalistic story of the textbook. Enormous interest placed on Silla and its golden objects by the museum audiences in the New National Museum of Korea, therefore, can be explained that the heavy and rich resources that the people were educated play a pivotal role to convince the audiences that Silla is a representative period of Korea. As seen here, the history education in Korea richly employs the concept of national origin GoJoseon and Dangun, and also great Kingdom Silla, and so inevitably people who were educated in this manner might have a very certain idea of their national identity.

Another illustration of a nationalistic interpretation is the story of Balhae in the textbook. Kim (2002c) points out that Silla's unification in the Korean Peninsula in 668 AD was recorded in the textbook as 'imperfect', as Silla had borrowed the

military power from the Tang Dynasty, China. So the textbook gives much more importance to independent Balhae Kingdom, also the successor kingdom to Goguryeo, rather than dependent Unified Silla Kingdom (Kim 2002c). The problem the textbook has, in Kim's opinion (2002c) however, is the lack of understanding of the Balhae people and society, which included a partially Chinese minority. The textbook heavily focused on the power and large territory of Balhae and its symbolic meaning in Korean history, rather than other cultural and historical aspects which should be paid much more attention in order to understand real and true Balhae. So when people who were taught in school that Balhae was a strong national symbol come to see the Balhae exhibition in the New National Museum of Korea, it is possible that the exhibition could evoke a heightened sense of nationalism or national identity.

What Kim (2002c) insists on overall is that the theme of nationalism in history education is a perennialist concept, under which it is proposed that the nation of Korea has existed since ancient times, and also that the concept of the nation is above all a historic divine entity. Although the perennialist idea is now regarded as a classic paradigm of nationalism theories, as discussed in Chapter Two, people who were educated about this historic understanding may still have the idea of a perennial Korean identity. Seeing GoJoseon as the first nation can reflect the perennial point of view and the narration of Balhae is also another manifestation of the textbook nationalism because of its emphasis on Balhae's succession to Goguryeo. Korean education has emphasised that the concept of the nation has always existed, and Kim (2002c) implies that this is the main problem of Korean history education. However, what I would like to draw further here is that it is not only the perennial view which inculcates Korean nation and national identity. In case of the meaning of GoJoseon and Dangun, and also Silla, they can also be articulated as an ethno-symbolic nation, which the highlights have been given on to not only ethnic ties (perennialistic) but also to the revival of these ties into the contemporary time as such a symbol, myth, memory. Fully explained in Chapters One and Two, therefore, these particular figures and kingdom can be ethno-symbolically understood. Viewing the present concept of the nation in terms of a symbolic national representation is one of the main characteristics of ethno-symbolic understanding, so this is an important perspective where Korea and the people's ideas about the nation are concerned.

It is, however, not too much to say that Korean history education system excessively and extensively focused on GoJoseon, Silla, Goguryeo and Balhae, which has resulted in the visitors of the New National Museum of Korea having strong views on these particular exhibitions. Unsurprisingly, this can explain that why the visitors did not fully appreciate the significance of the academic approach to the Proto Three Kingdoms Period and main encoded message of transnationalism in the Archaeological Gallery. Although the Proto Three Kingdoms' main message is rooted from the perennial understanding which is Korea's longevity, but it can be said that excessive focus on to the nation and national identity in particular aspects in the history education seems to result less focuses on other period such as the Proto Three Kingdoms. Also it is not surprising that transnational aspects of the Archaeological Gallery have not been read by the visitors. It is mainly because that Korea's history, as seen above, is not mainly dealt in the context of the international exchanges but rather it is written in nationalistic manner which heavily focused on the descriptions of Korean history only rather than others' history vis-à-vis the history of Korea.

Some people can argue that the nationalistic approach to narrating history appeared only in the most recent textbooks, so it is worth describing the various education reforms in recent Korean history. As Hwang (2001) points out, the Korean education system changed seven times between 1945 and 1997⁸⁰. Each time the Government changed, the education system was reorganised, and the ideology of history education also changed. Hwang (2001) asserts that the Korean education system has been closely aligned to the ideology of the Government of the day.

The first reorganisation in 1955 was very much focused on the idea of independence from Japan and the national pride of the Korean people, with an emphasis on ancient Korean history (Kim 2002c). The third reform, lasting from 1973 to 1981, was when the History discipline became independent from the Social Studies discipline. It was also carried out under a military government that strongly emphasised the national and ethnic identity of Korea (Hwang 2001). In addition, Kim (2002c) saw the second and third reforms of education as the most memorable times in terms of the promotion of a strong nationalistic viewpoint, as this was the policy of the military government

⁸⁰ 1st: 1955 2nd: 1963 3rd: 1973 4th: 1981 5th:1987 6th:1992 7th: 1997

of Park Jeong-Hui, then President of Korea. So world history was given less attention, while national history was emphasised. By the same token, it can be said that all aspects of historical research, from methodology to theoretical frameworks, developed enormously in this particular period and Hwang insists that this is because the then Korean Government was focusing on national and ethnic identity in history education (Hwang 2001). Also it needs to be considered that most of the Palaeolithic and Neolithic archaeological sites were found in this period (Kim 1986), so not only historical studies, but also archaeological excavations, were very active during this time, reflecting the political agenda of the 1970s in Korea.

The fourth period, from 1981 to 1987, also seemed to be centred on the issue of national identity in history education, but the history discipline was again subsumed in the category of social studies. Hwang (2001) analysed this period as a very depressed time in Korean history education, compared to the third education system, and political power over the education system was still strongly maintained. History education did encounter criticism in this particular period, on the grounds that too much emphasis was given to nationalism in the education, and there was a lack of global perception (Hwang 2001). The fifth reform, between 1987 and 1994, was made in the light of the criticism of the previous system of education and focus on nationalism but it also was not free from nationalism (Kim 2002c). The fifth reform was a time of focus on the 21st century and globalisation, so history education was perceived to be a method of constructing national identity and of national unification, as well as helping people to have a proper understanding of globalisation (Hwang 2001). The sixth reform, therefore, raised controversial issues about national history and nationalism in education, and was believed to support the teaching of a more objective history compared to the previous reforms. However, this triggered a barrage of severe media criticism, particularly attacking the lack of nationalism in history education. Kim (2002c) asserts that this criticism showed the deep relationship between history education and nationalism in Korea.

The majority of the visitors who participated in the visitor survey in the New National Museum of Korea were in their twenties or thirties. This means that they were school students from the 1970s to the 1980s, which corresponds to the third to fifth reforms of the education system. More specifically, the students under the fifth reform are

now aged from 20/21 to 27/28 years, which means that they provide the bulk of the audience research participants in the Museum. So the majority of the visitors to the Museum had not been studying during the period when history education had been imbued with strong messages on nationalism or ethnic identity. National identity and nationalism have always played a crucial role in history education overall, but it was no longer so strongly opinionated or such a one-sided story of the nation during the fifth reformation, because the global dimension was included. Ultimately, however, it cannot be denied that the nationalism and national identity are embedded within the history education at a certain level. As discussed above that the seventh education reformation still carries extensive meanings of GoJoseon, Dangun and so on, the fifth reformation also could signify nationalistic views in their contexts. What needs to be focused on here is that people who were educated in this nationalistic paradigm of perennialism and an ethno-symbolic idea would expect the New National Museum of Korea to take a similar stance, and so this resulted to decode the ethno-symbolic messages in this Museum heavily with the issue of GoJoseon, Dangun, and Silla.

As discussed in Chapter Five, audiences are no longer regarded as passive receivers in terms of communication with the Museum. Instead they are seen as proactive and interactive information sharers. In the matrix of national identity in the New National Museum of Korea, these audiences are able to understand what the New National Museum of Korea is trying to say but, at the same time, they are making their own demands and these could be for the presentation of a perennial and ethno-symbolic Korea in this Museum. Because of the strong nationalistic narration in the history textbooks, therefore, Korean people could expect to see a perennial Korea in the New National Museum of Korea, and also an ethno-symbolic understanding could be another reason that visitors have strongly decoded the Archaeological Gallery regarding GoJoseon in the Archaeological Gallery. Another factor, which needs to be considered in order to understand the audiences, can be the media responses.

The Role the Mass Media Play

Stuart Hall (1997, 3) has described the influential role of the mass media, which produce and circulate meanings between people and, to a certain extent, between groups, or nations. Such meanings help people to define their sense of belonging and also to construct their identity. The heavy role of the media in contemporary society

in terms of meaning making is increasing and so the media cannot be ignored with respect to people's perceptions. The role of the television is to circulate modern knowledge, according to Corner (1999). Lewis (1991, 52) mentioned that television news for the audiences can be difficult to interpret as it is 'hierarchical (the most important first and so on, a model borrowed from print journalism) rather than chronological or developmental, and they do not move, as most popular narratives do, from enigma to resolutions'. Audiences can potentially respond in different ways to the intentions and meanings the producer intended. However, it is important to remember that 'Audiences are still guided (albeit by default) toward the construction of certain meanings, and these meanings have ideological consequences' (Lewis 1994, 30) News watchers' responses are divided by Stuart Hall into three main groups which are hegemonic, negotiated and oppositional (Hall 1980) and Jensen (2001) said space, power, time and identity are involved when readers see the news. How about museum visitors when it relates to the media connection?

Watson (2006) argues that museum visitors are almost certainly influenced by the media, using visitor research conducted in 2004 and 2005 at the Norfolk Nelson Museum in Yarmouth. Visitors in 2004 did not have a special interest in Nelson, whereas in 2005, the bicentenary year of the battle of Trafalgar, the visitors, from Watson's perspective (2006, 142), 'had a clearer grasp of Nelson's role in defeating the French (and in a few cases, the Spanish) than the visitor in 2004'. In conclusion, Watson (2006) felt that there was considerable mass media influence involved.

When visitors were asked about their information sources for the New National Museum of Korea and its exhibition, nearly 60% (300 out of 503) answered that they had heard about it from the news. The mass media seemed to play quite a crucial role for the audience. Not only did the media influence people to develop an interest in visiting the New National Museum of Korea, but the media also influenced how the visitors viewed the objects, especially television. One visitor in her late 20s interestingly comments 'I saw some of the objects on television and so visiting this Museum was very interesting as I could make the link with them. The photos of the sites and the artefacts kept making me associate television with the objects.' She also stated that the communication tools like PDA or MP3 players did not give detailed information but that she had seen several objects on the television, mainly in dramas

and documentaries, and this had helped her understand the objects more. One serious issue should be considered in the light of this comment made by a school teacher in his 50s. He said ‘the facts I learned from the media about Baekje do not match well with the facts at this Museum, which is a bit of a shame. I want to hear more about Baekje and its relation to other countries.’ Therefore, he appears to have been quite heavily influenced by the media and so was looking for the same facts that had been presented through the media.

Another point, regarding the media role, is a recent wave of Korean dramas about Goguryeo, Balhae and GoJoseon which were described in Chapter One. The upsurge of such dramas is a very interesting modern tendency. Three of the main broadcasting systems in Korea (KBS, MBC and SBS) have produced dramas concerning the national heroes, national myths and national power of those three historic periods since the winter of 2005. Further period dramas on national history themes are also planned and in the process of the production and what is also interesting here is that they are all again concerned with Goguryeo and GoJoseon. Madianou’s recent publication (2005, 77) about the media’s role, in terms of helping audiences to construct national identity, discussed several examples of research into the relationship between media and national identity. One of the most interesting approaches is Morley and Brunson (1999), who emphasised that the nation can be evoked through television programmes, which deal with contemporary concerns. The nation is now under the light of the mass media so, along with school education, the mass media plays a crucial role in influencing audience perceptions of the New National Museum of Korea and also the messages within the exhibitions.

The interest of visitors about GoJoseon can also be oriented on to the media. What is distinctive about Song’s recent study (2004) about Dangun and GoJoseon is not only that he focused on the archaeological and historical facts about GoJoseon but also that he explored the impact of Dangun and GoJoseon through school education and the media. It is, indeed, a broad and thorough investigation about the myth of Dangun and GoJoseon, both academically and publicly. When Song (2004, 142) particularly criticised the television programme “Secret Kingdom – GoJoseon” in ‘History Special’ Documentary produced by KBS, broadcasting on 7 October 2000, his study seems to reach the highest pitch on its own criticism about publicising Dangun and

GoJoseon with no sound evidence. According to Song (2004), the television programme supported the idea of historians who strongly believe that GoJoseon is a great and largest kingdom in Korea history and Dangun is the leader of GoJoseon which means Dangun has been existed as a real human being. Also another problem defined by Song (2004) was that the programme was too much focused on the North Korean view which has announced that they found the tomb of Dangun. Song (2004) mainly criticised the lack of academic understanding of Dangun and GoJoseon of the programme and tried to explain the problem that can arise when a programme is not based on rigorous academic research. What has to be highlighted again here, however, is that these kinds of television programmes on Dangun and GoJoseon might have had an impact on their viewers and they might expect or imagine Dangun and GoJoseon really exist. This needs not to go further, as it has been revealed in the museum exhibition and its perceptions of the visitors regarding the Dangun and GoJoseon. Visitors are critically expressing sarcastic attitudes towards the Archaeological Gallery, as the exhibitions lack or omit the story of Dangun and GoJoseon. Song (2004) himself, as a historian, confessed that he faced several criticisms by readers and other academics as of his 'non-historic' minds which has been vindicated, in their views, by Song's criticism on the television programme of KBS.

Apart from GoJoseon, the most highlighted area of all exhibitions in the Archaeological Gallery is the Silla Hall with the gold crown and belt. By showing strong interest in these particular objects the media might have influenced the people's way of seeing them or seeing the exhibition. Even though the curator of the Silla Hall had intended to highlight Silla's great interest in, and contacts with, other cultures and relations, the intense focus of the media on the gold crown and belt may have blurred the intended message. As proved by the visitor researches again, people decoded Silla as of its great artefacts, most likely the Gold Crown and Belt.

In the quantitative audience research carried out by Gallup Korea in the New National Museum of Korea after the opening, it emerged that the people's primary information sources about the museum were the media⁸¹, so it is evident that issues highlighted by the media will affect people's perceptions when they visit the exhibitions. Equally, the

⁸¹ Audience research by Gallup Korea. Appendix 5.

media have focused more particularly on the national symbols and their representation, which can be seen as an ethno-symbolic approach to Korea. Silla and GoJoseon, also Goguryeo and Balhae are highlighted by mass media through various television programmes from news to dramas and this also managed in leading the visitors to decode certain kind of messages in the Archaeological Gallery. Therefore, it can be suggested that the media played a pivotal role in leading the audience to adopt an ethno-symbolic approach to the exhibition.

Although the exhibition was constructed by the curators with certain encoded messages, it seems that those outside the museum, such as the media and the visitors did not entirely share those views. Audiences who had been influenced by a strongly nationalistic history education and the media seem to have a tendency to see the exhibition in their own way. Although the history educations are told to have perennial understanding of Korea, what should be noted here is that there is also strong acknowledgement of ethno-symbolic Korea which is represented by GoJoseon and Silla. So visitors see the Bronze Hall and Silla Hall in the context of the ethno-symbolic GoJoseon and Gold Kingdom in Korean identity. Also distinctions of Goguryeo and Balhae history education seem to influence those visitors to decode them in strong national image context. As revealed here, the Korean mass media and its heavy emphasis on particular aspects of Korea and national identity from GoJoseon, Dangun, Silla and Goguryeo/Balhae also play a pivotal role to grab audiences view and limit visitors decoding areas. This again seems related to the ethno-symbolic nation and so overall, it can be concluded that Korean visitors who go to the New National Museum of Korea are under the excessive influence of seeing a nation in the specific perspective which is an ethno-symbolic nation.

Based on these variables and environments of encoding and decoding, it is to be revealed why those various miscommunications and unequivalences have occurred.

Miscommunications and Unequivalences

There seem two major miscommunication and unequivalence are vividly found. Firstly, transnational Korea the New National Museum of Korea encoded is hardly recognised by the visitors and secondly, ethno-symbolic Korea which is not encoded in the Archaeological Gallery mostly encoded by the visitors.

Korea and Transnationalism

Why has transnationalism not been decoded even though it is a prominent influence on encoding? It is, first, possible that Korean society is oversimplifying and overuses the concept without much consideration. Secondly, it is possible that Korean people are not expecting the Museum is talking about the global Korea, but rather Korea's history and culture which are in line with the overarching aim of this Museum. It seems that the New National Museum of Korea also overuses and overwhelmingly tries to put the themes of the globalization without enough consideration, but this is not the simple concept the Museum can deal with. This shows the politics of exhibiting, in which the power control determines what should be in the exhibition and what is omitted. Thirdly, the school education does not give enough time or space for the visitors to reflect the issue of globalisation in the context of Korea history and culture. This area might require further research into how the image of the national museum can be encoded in the history textbook, but this certainly influences how people see this Museum. However, as discussed above in this Chapter, Korean history education which seems to influence the views of the Museum visitors is less concerned with transnational issues, but rather the historic narration in the textbook is nationalistic, demarcating other contacts with other countries.

In many ways, there are messages in the Archaeological Gallery which present Korea as belonging to the global era, and this attitude can be understood from the point of view that the Museum is trying to bolster globalisation and Korea than any other concepts of nation. It seems interesting to point out some theoretical backgrounds of globalisation and national identity. The challenge for this New National Museum of Korea is not only describing or positing Korea in the global era which is rather oversimplifying the effect and role of the globalisation, but also initial understandings of globalisation which are versatile and meticulous should be considered first.

Considerable discussions of the relationship between the museum and globalisation have been made recently. Positioning the National Museum of Australia in the public sphere, McIntyre (2006, 13) described how 'Museums around the world are rethinking their role and purpose in society as they face the twenty-first century.' Museum audiences are invariably discussed from the contemporary museological perspective regarding global impact. For instance, Flynn (2004, 18-9) emphasized that:

Museums are currently undergoing a Manichaeian struggle between those wanting to re-emphasise the museum's role as a place of aesthetic engagement and those determined to turn the museum into an instrument for social change [...] Advocates of the latter stress the function of the institution in fostering a certain kind of citizenry, usually one located in an evolving globalized world.

Crofts Wiley's investigation (2004, 78) into looking for nationality in the globalisation context raises another point of discussion here. Analysing globalisation in the spectrum of communication theory, Crofts Wiley (2004, 79) highlighted the fact that globalisation also needs to be seen as playing a major role in constituting nationality and insists that 'we need to widen the conceptual field within which we think about nationality and globalization'. When discussions related to nation are made, a crucial point to consider is that the nation-state is influenced by globalisation and, from the perspective of the Museum, I think, this needs to be reflected in its display of exhibits. Reviewing all the relevant theories of globalization and the nation, one nation's historical context can only be made through the influence of others and Crofts Wiley (2004, 84) succinctly makes the point that 'we cannot fully understand the historical construction of a particular national space – our own or others' – without examining how it is connected to and dependent upon other contexts and broader regional and global flow'. This belongs to one of the significant theoretical paradigms which Crofts Wiley suggested and it is particularly relevant to this discussion of Korea and its national museum.

So the so-called 'global impact' on the New National Museum of Korea can be seen in its positioning and defining Korea in the world at large. To be more precise and critical, not only does the Museum see globalization in a simple way with little consideration about its various characteristics, but its reflection of the global wave has been made simply in terms of identifying and emphasising the nation's location on the world map. Having said this, however, to some extent, this can be seen as a positive aspect. Discussing multiple impacts of globalization, Scholte (2005, 230) explained globalization, in a way, 'positively reinforced national sensibilities' and '[g]lobal tournaments like the Olympic Games and various World Cups have also thrived on nationalist sentiment'. From this point of view, Korea's present understanding of the country's place in the world can lead to optimistic attitudes about the nation and the process of globalisation. Scholte (2005) also reviewed the "redundant" concept of globalisation, and made four distinctions, namely 'internationalization, liberalisation,

universalization and westernization'. 'Internationalization' signifies the 'growth of transactions and interdependence between countries', whereas 'liberalisation' can be defined as 'a process of removing officially imposed constraints on movements of resources between countries in order to form an 'open' and 'borderless' world economy' (Scholte 2005, 54). 'Universalization' can be seen as a means of 'standardization and homogenization with worldwide cultural, economic, legal and political convergence' and the last concept is 'westernization' which could also be termed colonization, Americanization or 'westoxification' (Scholte 2005, 56).

What can be found from the exhibition in the Archaeological Gallery in the New National Museum of Korea regarding these views is that of the four concepts outlined by Scholte (2005) it veers more towards 'westernization'. It can be clearly seen with the issue of accommodating four languages in the panels that what the New National Museum of Korea probably meant when it talked of wanting to become a global museum is that it wanted to be more like one of the renowned museums from the West. Although they have Asian Galleries which include exhibitions on Japan, China and other parts of South-East Asia, their biggest role-model seems to be the West regarding all the issues discussed above and this seems to hint at the 'westernization' of this Museum. However, this is not the only case for Korea. Criticising the western-centred concept of 'globalization' with reference to the New York Guggenheim Museum's failure to have global perspectives, in general, Saloni (2005, 705) suggested the idea of globalization and the museum should be understood in terms of a 'comparative frame' which Saloni expanded on by saying 'we should be asking how, for instance, museums in New Zealand, Australia, India, Japan, Korea, Brazil, and so on, are grappling with their specific contexts'. Therefore, it is not only Korea that is finding the term 'globalisation' problematic, countries throughout the world continually have to consider and re-consider what offering a global perspective really means to them.

A final point which needs to be made here surrounds the use of the word 'international'⁸² in the exhibition. Borrowing from Scholte's definition (2005, 65); 'international' exchanges occur between country units, while 'global' transactions

⁸² This English word 'international' is also translated to the meaning of 'international' rather than 'global' whereas the curators meant 'global' when they discussed the messages of the exhibition.

occur within a planetary unit. Where international relations are *inter*-territorial relations, global relations are *trans*- and sometimes *supra*-territorial relations'. Regarding this point, the word 'international' is not a word commonly used in the museum exhibition, especially when the curators try to give meaning to the term 'global'.

Given all these arguments made above, therefore, the New National Museum of Korea needs to understand globalization from diverse and multi-layered perspectives rather than currently superficially applies to their exhibitions. The next discussion draws the opposite example of the exhibition of Bronze Hall which is rather rejected or ignored aspect of Korean national identity; the ethno-symbolism of Dangun and GoJoseon.

Why is GoJoseon less encoded and Dangun rejected?

According to historian Song (2004, 16) GoJoseon is not only important in studying the first nation erected in Korean history but also it is the archetypal research in Korean history and identity. Historic understanding on GoJoseon should be put at the forefront as Song (2004) suggests, and that is simply because all other kingdoms and political entities after the GoJoseon have been influenced by and based on GoJoseon. Song (2004, 39) defined that the Korean people's originality is only completed when Korean people have shared a unified language, territory, and economic life which can be sought in the concept of one nation. Also Song (2004, 49) argues that the date of BC 2,333 is just a mythical date when Korean people believed that the Dangun started to exist in Korea peninsula, so therefore, it does not signify historical fact.

It can be said that the curators' attitude of encoding a national image in the exhibition also influenced how they put GoJoseon in the exhibition, excluding the Dangun myth. However, the exhibition design says different story which means the masterpiece type exhibition bolsters the Korea's image in ethno-symbolic way. Not only this design, but also the education of history and enormous mass media play a pivotal role that the museum visitors are expecting the museum narrates those symbolic nations. Amongst many examples, GoJoseon and Dangun should be considered the most. People expected and wanted to see GoJoseon and its mythic leader Dangun presented as part of the Korean identity, and when this was lacking in the New National Museum of

Korea, visitors felt that what this Museum had done was not appropriate. This lack was also severely criticised by the media and the visitors after the opening. One curator in the Archaeological Gallery mentioned after the opening that

As for GoJoseon, I have thought again about the national identity and Museum identity. However, my conclusion is that emphasising Korea's excessive nationalism and its special characteristics of nationalism is very problematic. On the other hand, I also have experience that the demand for information about national identity, as it relates to GoJoseon, from audiences or the Korean public is enormous.

As revealed in this comments, GoJoseon and Dangun have been perceived by the curators as bolstering a strong nationalistic idea which is contrary to their perspective of nation. However, there is an interesting comment from one visitor in his 60s who believes that the New National Museum of Korea is the very place to display GoJoseon and Dangun:

Even though there are no material traces of its history left, we have to acknowledge that this is part of Korean history. The historic records cannot all be lies and also there are artefacts that provide evidence that proves the existence of GoJoseon.

Why have Dangun and GoJoseon been marginalised and even excluded in the Archaeological Gallery? As revealed, the strong connotations of national symbol and nationalism associated with them seem to have influenced the curators. However, there are more academic reasons behind this. GoJoseon arose around BC 2,333, based on bronze culture during the Bronze and Early Iron Age (10th century BC to AD 3rd century). GoJoseon is not only believed to be the first political entity in Korean history, but also several national aspirations are involved. The first national myth emerged here as well as the myth of the supposed national progenitor, Dangun. From the academic point of view, however, GoJoseon and Dangun are controversial. First of all, the existence of GoJoseon and Dangun first appeared in a private history book (Chronicles of Three Kingdoms) written by Monk Il-yeon in the Goryeo Period around the 13th century (Song 2004, Lee 2004). Given that the 13th century was characterised by devastating wars with the Mongolians in Korea, it has been suggested that Korea needed a strong national hero (or historic figure), who would strengthen the national spirit to defend the country against invasions by other peoples (Kim Hogarth 1999). So this myth of Dangun could have been created by the Goryeo people, although GoJoseon had existed, to strengthen the sense of national identity, and this is the main argument put forward by most Korean archaeologists and

historians (Song 2004). In one sense, Dangun is perceived as only a myth but GoJoseon is academically discussed as actually existing.

The other problem is the date attributed to it, namely BC 2,333. This literally means over 4,000 years ago, and chronologically this would have been in the Neolithic in Korea. Archaeology cannot prove the existence of any chiefdom or clan communities during the Neolithic. The people living in the Neolithic are not considered as being a nation or forming a state. So GoJoseon, as a political entity, cannot have existed in the Neolithic. On the other hand, Korean academics believe that an ancient entity did exist in the Bronze Age, which means that people began to live in communities and to shape a social structure. The main theoretical paradigm of Korean archaeology is that the Korean people were believed to have originated in the Bronze Age anthropologically⁸³ (Kim 1972, 1979, Kim 1986, Jang 1987, Han 1995, Jang 2000 and Hong 2006) and the traces of their material culture proved that they had formed communities and social strata. The material culture is represented by agricultural tools and military equipment, providing clear evidence that communities existed in the Bronze Age. The archaeological evidence in Korea is proof that there was a community that could be considered as an ancient political entity or chiefdom. Even though 'The Chronicles of Three Kingdoms' set the myth of the first national progenitor and the entity nearly 4,000 years ago, which would be in the Neolithic, the archaeological evidence places it in the Bronze Age. In addition, Chinese historical archives record that there was an ancient state, called GoJoseon, in the northern part of Korea in BC 108, which would also be in the Bronze Age. The historical and archaeological evidence confirms the existence of a state called GoJoseon in Korea, but it existed in the Bronze Age and not in the Neolithic around BC 2,333.

The dating of GoJoseon may be controversial from an academic point of view, but it can also be quite hard to acknowledge it as Korea's first nation or nation-like entity from the modern point of view since GoJoseon existed only in the northern part of Korea. So when it comes to exhibiting or talking about GoJoseon in the Museum, the situation gets even more complicated. And this is the same as the myth of Dangun. There is no evidence at all to prove Dangun existed in GoJoseon, therefore this has

⁸³ There have been many attempts to detect anthropological traces of the Korean people but these will not be discussed here, as it would be outside the scope of this thesis.

not been encoded in the exhibition in the Bronze Hall. This becomes obvious in the real exhibition as there is only one panel which is dedicated to the GoJoseon.

The founding of the first Korean state, GoJoseon, was based on bronze culture. Judging from the distribution of relics such as dolmens, Liaoning type bronze daggers and Misong-ri type earthenware, its realm embraced the northeastern region of the Korean Peninsula and the Liaoning region of Manchuria. It became stronger and more prosperous with the introduction of iron culture in the 3rd century BCE. The growing kingdom established a system of governance and an eight article law to maintain social order. GoJoseon thrived through transit trade, growing into such a formidable power as to threaten Han China's supremacy before ultimately perishing in 108 BCE. (Summary Panel of 'GoJoseon, the First Korean State')

During the exhibition preparation, the idea of placing GoJoseon in the Bronze Hall was not disputed or considered as a problematic issue. For instance, when asked what the main messages are in the Hall, the curator said that it was 'the Korean people's settlement and usages of the metal bronze' (Curator Aa). By charting the changes based on material culture a picture of GoJoseon can be built up, but it seems that the Gallery was more concerned with the developments during the Bronze Age than with the concept of GoJoseon.

I personally believe that not many Koreans are keen to see GoJoseon and Dangun in the Museum, which means that it is not the biggest interest of Koreans. However, if there is someone who is interested in it, it will matter to the Museum. Presenting the concept of GoJoseon more vividly is not a big deal but I have to say it is not of very much interest to a majority of people in Korea. National identity won't be shattered if we do not put GoJoseon in the Gallery, or vice versa. It is a small problem. It is only important to strongly nationalistic people who want to express themselves through this matter.

This is the view of a senior curator from the museum policy department in response to the challenges the Museum encountered right after the opening and this explains how this museum sees the issue of GoJoseon and Dangun and its reflections onto the exhibition. Compared to the transnational idea of curators, therefore, GoJoseon is less important and Dangun has not been encoded at all. This can be linked to the archaeological academic reasons discussed: however, for visitors they connote strong nationalistic ideas behind which are ethno symbolic ideas.

Although the national myth cannot directly represent the national hero, it seems useful to think about Watson's recent work (2006) on national hero and identity. Watson argues that (2006, 131) the perceptions of the public towards the national hero are

changed according to the changing perception of national identity. Another findings of Watson's research (2006, 131) is that 'individuals and groups mould their understanding of the life and significance of a national icon according to their own personal needs that may include elevating the significance of the area in which they live'. This seems to be reflected in how the GoJoseon and Dangun played its pivotal role in the Archaeological Gallery. As Watson suggests (2006, 132-135), the memory of Nelson 'is kept alive although these are not so much real memories, but more a duty to remember a common past'. Dangun is so much embedded in contemporary society in Korea and one of the examples is Football World cup 2002 and also Dangun has been used for the disseminating the humanitarianism of Korean education charter, which was founded in 1949. Misztal (2003, 13) explained that 'Collective memory is not limited to the past that is shared together but also includes a representation of the past embodied in various cultural practices, especially commemorative symbolism'. So it should be remembered that Dangun and GoJoseon have been embodied in many aspects of Korean culture and history as a symbolic memory outside the museum. Although it seems that curators' attitudes towards nationalism could cause the lack of the GoJoseon and Dangun story in the exhibition, as Misztal (2003) points out, they are strongly embedded in Korean people's collective memories and so cannot be ignored.

What is the marginalised nation in the Museum? And why?

It should noteworthy to point out that the Museum has omitted other aspects of the narration of the nation in the exhibition, namely relations with Japan. The relationship between Korea and Japan discussed in Chapters One and Two is one of the pivotal concerns of the Korean public, but this perspective certainly does not appear in this Museum. This seems heavily related to the exhibition collections' time period as the time the museum can deal with is ancient histories and culture (Interview with Lb). Although the exhibition in the Archaeological Gallery is delivering international exchanges in ancient time, but still it is not enough to accommodate the aspect of relationship between Japan and Korea which influences modern society in Korea and the people. However, what can be suggested in this particular omission are a number of powerful political factors. As discussed by Tony Bennett (1995), if the museum narrates what the governments want to say, then equally, it is possible that the museum avoids the strong controversial issues which the governments want to avoid.

This is an inevitable liaison between the national museum and the governments, so the aspect of the Japan and Korea relation is rather neglected or left out by the New National Museum of Korea, although it contributes enormously to the modern Korean people's identity construction.

This also explains why the issue of North Korea and South Korea has not been explicitly reflected in the Archaeological Gallery, but rather implicitly embedded in the exhibition. The new name of Proto Three Kingdoms and South North Kingdoms Period, and Balhae Hall and UNESCO Panel are all the attempts the Museum articulates the one Korea and they can be understood as the Museum seeing itself as the One Korean museum, not just South Korean Museum. However, it can be argued that these attempts are hard to be recognised by the audiences as revealed in audience researches. Also unless the Museum vividly and explicitly demonstrate the Museum's own view about the issue of the division between South and North Korea, it can create confusions about the Museum identity itself whether it belongs to the entire Korea or in South Korea for the visitors. All I am trying to suggest here is that the Museum attempts to show one perennial Korea, but with its implicit and vague narrations, this message would have not been read by the visitors, or even it could result in oppositional meanings that the Museum tried to make. Again, this narration of North and South Korea also can be seen in the perspectives of the museum's governmentality. The Korean Government somehow uses the Museum as the political tool as shown above but ambivalent attitudes of the Government are also found here. The Government may not intend to show their overruling and overcontrol over the Museum which could result in controversial issues on the museum identity itself, but rather chooses to portray a detached relationship. This ambivalent attitude of the Korean Government, therefore, may prevent the Museum from explicitly showing the image of one unified Korea because this can be interpreted by the visitors as a nationalistic propaganda of the Korean Government. So the New National Museum of Korea, particularly in the Archaeological Gallery, rather vaguely delivers the narration of one Korea, putting the new terms with Balhae Hall and the UNESCO Panel. There might be different view in terms of the North and South Korea. As Bella Dicks (2000) found out, people or visitors tend to have binary or ambivalent attitudes towards seeing history and seeing contemporary issues like the division between nations. So history can belong to the one nation, but not the Museum itself. Another

issue should also be raised which is the exhibition design. The UNESCO Panel should be included in the Goguryeo hall, not in the Lounge and more resources need to be displayed in order to assist the interpretation of the UNESCO designation. This has also been proved that the visitors well recognised the name of the South North Kingdoms period but not UNESCO. It simply oriented by the museum design and texts, so UNESCO is marginalised by the design itself.

However, more vividly, governmentality can be found in Chinese Project and the countermeasure of this project, using this Museum. The official announcement from the Korean Government has been withheld as the Chinese Government only acknowledged the research value is limited to the academic understanding and purposes. As found in Chapter Five, however, the countermeasure of the government heavily based on the New Museum to promote the proclaim of Goguryeo and Balhae as Korea's history which were richly encoded in the real exhibition. So it is not too much to say that the marginalisation (relation with Japan) and emphasis (Chinese Project) of certain aspect of Korean identity in the New National Museum of Korea is not simply based on the lack of the collections but it is oriented by the national museum's relation with the government. This governmentality is also found in the case of the narrating the issue of division of Korea.

Concluding thoughts

The overarching aim of the New National Museum of Korea was promoting and disseminating the national identity of Korea. This can be found in the official statement from President Rho and also archive material of the construction of the new Museum which was written from the 1990s onwards. However, from the interview with the curators in the Archaeological Gallery, their intentions were not aiming to show the national identity in the way the Museum pitched itself, but rather it was to show Korea in a global context. Although the curators had their own personal agendas in creating the exhibition, they are not totally free from other influences including, for example, the aims of the Museum as a whole and its relationship with government.

As Mason discussed, 'the museums may be collectively understood and managed by staff and management but recent research indicates that this internal view was not shared externally by visitors' (2006, 27). For instance, the Welsh National Museums

tried to brand the image of Wales in a unified way with a logo and website, however, still people continued to refer to the 'Museum of Welsh Life' and its home name of 'St Fagans' where it is located. Although the internal structure was working on the issue of national identity in different layers, there are still possibilities that the external views may differ from the internal ones and here the overall understanding of internal encoding and external decoding needs to be considered.

It has been revealed that the New National Museum of Korea is trying to show national identity and national narratives to the audiences, and the curators intended to show the 'what'. However, there are also questions regarding 'how' and it is worth using Mason's comment (2006b) here. 'The Museum of Welsh Life might function as a jumping-off point to encourage visitors to be more self-reflexive about their identities and their perceptions of Welshness. [...] the museum might pose Day and Suggett's questions: 'How many Wales?' are there or 'How many ways [are there] of being Welsh?'" (2006b, 28) As Mason articulates here, the question of 'how many ways of representing Korea' in the Archaeological Gallery is tried to be answered through this part. It seems however, mainly one way is vividly found which is a transnational Korea, but there is also another way of representing Korea which attracts considerable interest from the visitors; an ethno-symbolic Korea.

As Bicknell concluded in her work (1995, 292) it is important to attempt to see how visitors see the exhibition and to evaluate their understanding. Also Lewis (1994, 20) defines, 'Audience research is, in this broad definition, the accumulation of evidence about the meaning of things. The question we should put to textual analysis that purports to tell us how a cultural product "works" in contemporary culture is simple: Where's the evidence? Without evidence, everything is merely speculation'. As clearly distinguished here in these comments, audience research is needed to complete the process of meaning making. Especially when the museum, like the New National Museum of Korea, lacks information regarding their audiences, there might be the possibility of making assumptions about audiences which is literally 'mere speculation'. Ultimately, through qualitative research with visitors, it is possible to find out more about the perceptions of visitors and the factors which shape the ways in which they decode the messages they encounter in the Museum.

The construction of meaning between two different entities has to deal with many intricate layers of various inputs. A Museum with 'National' in its title is shaped by influences from the Government, its audiences and the media. The curators who devise the messages underlying the exhibitions appear to be subject to several influences, so their primary intention is not always the only angle reflected in the process of encoding. The views of audiences have been shaped by, amongst other factors, their history education and the influence of the media, but they also have a wealth of information about other cultures and nations. In this complicated environment, the visitors did not decode the messages as originally intended, but sought what they expected to see in a particular setting. In the mean time, some visitors show many of the characteristics of a diffused audience, asking the Museum to include more stories about national aspirations, which they believe should have been present. So these two different entities create their own meanings and representations, and in terms of the construction theory, this raises some considerable issues that need to be discussed.

As discussed in Chapter Two, there are various paradigms surrounding nationalism and national identity, and it is hard to define which paradigm best fits the contemporary Korea and the New National Museum of Korea. However, given the above discussion, it seems that Koreans have been identified as seeing the nation through the paradigm of perennialism. The nation has been maintained and will be maintained forever, according to this perennial concept, and so Korean people are educated, told and made to see the concept of the nation in this sense. Interestingly the New National Museum of Korea seems to accommodate, to a large extent, the transnational concept. However, it must be pointed out that the national identity of the Korean people has been heavily constructed through the ethno-symbolic idea. Modern Koreans want to see themselves in the reflection of the symbols, myths or power of ancient kingdoms and this is closer to the ideas of the ethno-symbolist, and it is more likely that the entire paradigm surrounding the Archaeological Gallery and its audience is the ethno-symbolic paradigm. What needs to be remembered with respect to Korean nationalism is that modern culture has heavily influenced Koreans and their consciousness of national identity construction, and this needs to be taken into consideration, as a complement to the ethno-symbolic theory.

The New National Museum of Korea also has to face pressure from outsiders such as the media or the Government, and this is because of its status as a 'national' museum. This illustrates the complexity of the role of a national museum, at a time when the nation is also under pressure to define its national identity and trying to achieve transnationalism in the modern global society. The Museum and the form of history education seem to be closely intertwined and so the issue of history education in Korea cannot be ignored by the New National Museum of Korea. It is clear that this Museum and the schools (or educational settings) have not yet established a strong bond, but given the current discussions on the issue of history education and nationalism or national identity, it could be that this Museum has an important role to play in defining the nation in the textbooks. The eighth education reform will take place in 2012, and it will be interesting to see what approach will then be taken with respect to the use of perennialism when narrating Korea. It would also be interesting to know how much the Museum will be involved with the eighth reform. The Museum is no longer a self-sufficient organisation that simply exhibits and communicates its message to its audiences. It is rather a co-operational, multi-systematically processed entity.

McIntyre (2006, 19) emphasised that the museum faces new challenges in respect to 'popular consumption, comprehension and, in many instances, interaction.' It is synthesised in the following statement regarding McIntyre's views of the National Museum of Australia. 'It will have failed in its mission if a broad range of Australians do not find relevance in and access to the museum's stories, and engage with them accordingly.' Also, O'Neill (1994, 12) comments that 'Museums tend to show a past with few internal tensions, without looking at how people negotiate their identity with the prevailing culture'. The failure implied by McIntyre and the ignorance suggested by O'Neill can all possibly be seen in the New National Museum of Korea in the future. However, the New National Museum of Korea opened its doors to the public one and half years ago in 2005, and during that year there have been many on-going disputes over the Museum, and also many inputs from many sources. The New National Museum of Korea is still operating within the various paradigms of a strong nationalism and the national identity of contemporary Korea and they are striving hard in order to deal with all failures they made and successes they contrive to achieve. This is a very early stage to judge those failures and successes the museum

encountered but this place is certainly the venue of discussions for contested and competitive concept of Korean identity and Korean nationalism.

Conclusion

Overview

Stuart Hall (1980, 135) mentioned that ‘perfectly transparent communication’ is an ideal but in reality communication is inevitably and systematically distorted by the viewers. Hall (ibid) goes on to say:

... since there is no necessary correspondence between encoding and decoding, the former can attempt to ‘pre-fer’ but cannot prescribe or guarantee the latter, which has its own conditions of existence. Unless they are wildly aberrant, encoding will have the effect of constructing some of the limits and parameters within which decoding will operate.

Also Hall (1997, 11) highlights, ‘We should perhaps learn to think of meaning less in terms of ‘accuracy’ and ‘truth’ and more in terms of effective exchanges – a process of *translation*, which facilitates cultural communication while always recognizing the persistence of difference and power between different ‘speakers’ within the same cultural circuit’. Museums make claims regarding the ‘facts’ and the ‘truth’ of history but, as Hall points out, the processes through which these are communicated are important and lie at the core of my investigations. This thesis has explored the processes of encoding and decoding in the context of the New National Museum of Korea and the ways in which concepts of national identity are approached by both museum staff and visitors. The following is a comment from one school teacher in his 40s, which concisely represents how this person sees the Archaeological Gallery in the context of national identity.

As the Archaeological Gallery is about our roots so it is our gallery of national identity. I want to bring my children. Through this exhibition, I have become very proud of myself and also my country.

In the meantime, it is difficult to identify how the curators of the Museum’s Archaeological Gallery would respond to this particular comment. There would be some who would be satisfied and believe it was a successful exhibition, whereas others may think that is not what they meant to capture and convey within their displays.

McLean (1998, 252) asserts that ‘Through museums, we can come to a deeper understanding of identities, and notably national identity’. Given contemporary

Korea's preoccupation with and high levels of interest in issues of national identity and nationalism, it is inevitable that the newly opened National Museum of Korea has received a lot of attention and scrutiny. Explaining the role of museum messages embodied within exhibitions, Maroevic (1995, 36) concludes that 'The museum message thus brings the past world nearer to the present and refines the present world by suggesting new possibilities in the understanding of the future.' What needs to be seen here is that the museum messages which are constructed and communicated can help visitors to have better understanding of their past, present and the future, and it may be also important to think that when the messages are concerned with the nation, then, people would have an opportunity to re-consider and reassess their own identities, and national identities in particular.

In Chapters Four and Five I examined the ways in which concepts of nation and national identity are encoded within exhibitions and variously decoded by visitors. A key message the New National Museum of Korea aims to deliver to their audiences concerns the true culture and history of Korea and the Archaeological Gallery in particular operates to show the 'technological development of ancient Korea with its archaeological materials'. Within this overarching intended message, other elements emerge, for example the notion of 'one unified great Korea with a long history in a global era'. This newly found message has been encoded into the exhibitions in the Archaeological Gallery in various ways. The Introductory Area and Silla Hall highlight Korea relationship to a global context. The Bronze Hall and Proto Hall reinforce the technological development of Korea, but more emphasis has been given to the notion of a perennial Korea in the Proto Hall. Here, the curator intended to encode the cultural and historical aspects of Goguryeo and Balhae which is aligned with the main theme of the New National Museum of Korea. However, these are not the only messages encoded in the exhibitions. In the case of the Introductory Area, quite a nationalistic message can be discerned through the presentation of the objects, map and table; one that is commonly decoded by audiences. Silla Hall's intention of emphasising the global aspect has been shadowed by the exhibition hall design and the ways in which the golden objects are presented and this leads many visitors to identify the notion of an ethno-symbolic. In the case of Proto Three Kingdoms, against the curator's intention of showing Korea's perennial longevity, the

presentation of the new name 'proto' and the objects displayed also operate to convey the notion of one unified Korea.

The Goguryeo and Balhae exhibits both encode unintended messages of curator concerning the political influence on both Halls. The countermeasure against the Chinese Project of the Korean Government seemed highly embedded in these exhibitions and so they carry quite a strong political agenda in showing Korea. Also acknowledging the history of Goguryeo and Balhae in the national institution means the legitimisation of both as part of a Korean context, and this is the attempt to let the world know about Goguryeo and Balhae. In case of these two Halls, both unintended and intended messages are perceived by visitors. What is the interesting point about the Bronze Hall is that it seemed there are no unintended messages found here. However, many visitors respond to this Hall by highlighting the lack of information regarding GoJoseon and the omission of Dangun. Many responses focused on this show how deeply rooted GoJoseon and Dangun are in Korean people's mind regarding their national identity. As Andreas Huyssen discussed (1995,102-3), 'No matter how much the museum, consciously or unconsciously, produces and affirms the symbolic order, there is always a surplus of meaning that exceeds set ideological boundaries, opening spaces for reflection and counter-hegemonic memory'. In this way, we can see how visitors will decode the messages they encounter in diverse ways.

As explored in Chapter Six, there are various factors which shape the processes of encoding and decoding. In particular, I identified three main issues which informed the encoding of messages within exhibitions; curators' personal views on nationalism and national identity, exhibition design issues and governmental influences. Curators' views in particular led to a privileging of concepts relating to Korea in its global context but also to the underplaying of the role of GoJoseon and the omission of Dangun within the Archaeological Gallery. The practicalities of museum design shaped the ways in which the Archaeological Gallery encompasses a message which highlights the longevity and majesty of Korea. However, regardless of curators' intentions, particular emphasis on particular Halls seems to have led to some unexpected results. The Silla Hall has been read by visitors as an overshadowing of other histories such as those relating to Baekje or Gaya. Balhae Hall's ad-hoc plan in

the New National Museum of Korea limited Unified Silla Hall's representation. The UNESCO Panel in the Lounge area was overlooked by many visitors although it encoded various meanings of national identity of Korea, not only acknowledging Goguryeo as part of Korea but also its great role in terms of world history. In the Archaeological Gallery, this Museum encoded the message of one unified Korea since ancient time, which may also be taken to imply that the division between North and South Korea is a temporary one. The overall exhibition design, however, seems to play against the intentions of the curators who sought to encode the concept of one Korea. Inevitably the Museum is a governmental institution, and so there are strong bonds between the Museum and the government. The Balhae Hall provides evidence of how this Museum has been influenced by governmental forces. The New National Museum of Korea is governmentally institutionalised by the agendas of the Government but this Museum can also be critically challenged by them. As the case of MP Min shows, the New National Museum of Korea has been used as a political tool in order to bolster the national identity of Korea. Because of this governmental influence, therefore, the Archaeological Gallery inevitably embodies a number of political intentions; the most explicit example being the Balhae hall and the UNESCO Panel. In terms of marginalised national identity, as discussed in Chapter Six, the Museum pays more attention to Korean citizens concerns with Korea's relationship with Japan.

In terms of museum audiences, I have found two major contextual factors that have influenced exhibition readings; the role of mass media and history education. Mass media seems to play a pivotal role in enhancing visitors' views on particular histories of Korea, especially in relation to supporting strong ethno-symbolic conceptions of Silla, GoJoseon and Dangun which are embodied in many popular television programmes. In addition, many modern period dramas in Korea are related to Goguryeo and Balhae and this seems also to bolster how Korean visitors see their histories in relation to these two Kingdoms. As discussed in Chapter Five, museum visitors are also consumers of other media, a factor which informs their perceptions of the museum's messages concerning national identity. This influence is one of the factors that account for the way in which Silla and the Bronze Halls have been heavily decoded in an ethno-symbolic manner. The ways in which Goguryeo and Balhae are also understood by visitors ethno-symbolically and perennially may also be related to

the tremendous popularity of period dramas on television. From this perspective, it is perhaps not surprising that fewer people recognize the Proto Kingdoms' historic significance, as it is not so familiar for the Korean people.

Secondly history education also appears to play a strong role in shaping Korean people's perceptions of national identity, mainly in relation to the great and perennial histories of GoJoseon, Silla, Goguryeo and Balhae. It is not surprising that visitors in the Archaeological Gallery strongly criticised the lack of material related to GoJoseon and Dangun because secondary education, as learned in schools, gives considerable emphasis to these two features. As a national institution dealing with Korea's own culture and history, the omission of GoJoseon and Dangun creates considerable controversy for the visitors, in terms of their own national identity and also of the Museum's identity itself. These perceived 'oversights' appear to have resulted in visitors reading certain unintended messages into the Archaeological Gallery. This led me to see visitors operating as part of what Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998) called the 'diffused audience' who play an active role in constructing their own meanings from the media they encounter and engage with. In the next part, I turn to consider what is distinctive about this thesis is and where this thesis can be posited in terms of academic studies.

According to Hall (1997, 10);

Speaker and hearer or writer and reader are active participants in a process which – since they often exchange roles – is always double-sided, always interactive. Representation functions less like the model of a one-way transmitter and more like the model of a dialogue – it is, as they say, *dialogic*.

From this stance, this thesis is trying to identify what kind of dialogue is taking place between the museum and the visitors. The relationship between the museum and its audiences is considered in the absence of existing detailed visitor studies in Korean museums in general. Borrowing from Minda Borun (1992) Bicknell (1995, 282) distinguishes between evaluation and audience research. 'Research asks: what is the nature of the museum experience? What is its impact on the visitor? Evaluation asks: is this exhibit or programme doing what its developers intended it to do?'

This thesis has considered a mixture of these two questions. What the thesis concludes found out from the audience research however is that the New National Museum of Korea could do considerably more to develop their understanding of audiences through research, and also they need to investigate further audiences behaviours and the knowledge, background, values and attitudes they bring to their museum experience. As Hein (1995, 201) points out ‘In order to understand the museum visitors and find out what they have learned, we need a broad approach to museum evaluation which includes a rich infusion of qualitative, naturalistic research into the museum field.’⁸⁴ As revealed in Chapter Five, there are various responses from the visitors regarding the issue of national identity and many unexpected results will emerge. In the context of a lack of audience studies in Korean museums overall, this thesis contributes to understand the complexity and multi-vocal characters of the visitors’ decoding process. Compared to many other studies in museums’ communication and audience researches, the thesis takes ethnographic methodologies which enable to understand and analyse the complicated layers and ‘noises’ inherent in the museum’s encoding process too. Dealing with the contemporary concept of national identity and trying to better understand what notions of national image have been particularly encoded and decoded within the Korean context is another distinctive feature of the thesis. To sum up, therefore, this thesis is distinctive in terms of its exploration of both the ‘behind the scenes’ processes involved in exhibition development of the New National Museum of Korea and its in-depth analysis of audiences responses, but also its particular attempts to posit the nation and national identity in the setting of the museum and to analyse audiences in relation to the role of other mass media.

Further Research Suggestions

Two main issues emerge from the research I have conducted which have particular relevance to the administration and management of the museum; notably the need for more substantial audience research and the benefits that might accrue from taking a more proactive response to dealing with criticisms of the museum made by both other media and specific audiences.

⁸⁴ See more details in Dufresne-Tasse in the same book ‘Museum, Media, Message’ about the methodology and development of the audience research but more in line with the adult learning (which is termed Andragogy). It certainly would benefit the Museum’s tactic to develop audience research.

First, it is clear that substantial audience research is required by this New National Museum of Korea, not only in order to bolster the museum's understanding of its audiences, but also to achieve one of the museum's main aims, which is to be an approachable and accessible museum for Korean audiences. An example of how this has been achieved can be seen at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa.

Several reasons have been given for building the New National Museum in New Zealand, but further encouragement by Tramposch (1998, 341) could be that Te Papa has been seen as a venue for 'the exploration of national identity'. Tramposch (1998, 340) wrote about his personal experience in Te Papa as a former senior advisor, pointing out that the success of this new national museum can be traced through the entire process of the opening, in which they 'listen, describe, do and watch'. Te Papa's rich resources are interesting, in that they have been developed from the perspective of visitor needs; the museum started their renovations based upon an understanding of their audiences. As Tramposch asserts (1998, 343), '[l]istening has been a hallmark of the Te Papa effort from the original international tour of museums in the 1980s, to the visitor surveys no doubt being conducted in its halls today'. As Te Papa's overarching aim is to get to know their audiences, Te Papa employs a visitor/market research specialist in the department for audience studies. How the museum functions seems very useful and Tramposch (1998, 349) states that '[e]ach department head, for example, meets with the manager of this unit to discuss their evaluative needs, and the unit attempts to accommodate these needs as best it can'. What is important to remember in the case of Te Papa is that it not only sought to portray national identity through the museum, but it was a new attempt by the New Zealand government to try to change peoples' perceptions of museums (Tramposch 1998, 341). The New Zealand government sees the importance of understanding audiences; the museum collaborated with government agencies to create the new Museum of New Zealand. With comprehensive support from the government, the audience research could be carried out in more multi-faceted and diverse ways in this museum; it certainly helped that the museum won universal approval as a world-renowned museum.

Second, the New National Museum of Korea may need to establish a concrete plan to deal with the issues raised by audiences or the media. After the opening, various criticisms were highlighted and each time the museum appeared uncertain as to how to respond. In other words, engaging more with audiences in a convincing way seems to be a requisite skill for the museum. When the issue of GoJoseon was raised, the museum might, for example, have organised a GoJoseon academic seminar, a curator's talk or a public convention. In terms of other media reviews of the exhibition, it will be useful to organise more resourceful and informative methods to deal with further media responses. It is crucial for the Museum to try and accommodate what audiences and the media say but, at the same time, when the museum analyses those responses, it should be in a way that assists the Museum to be an institution that is approachable to the audiences, while still sustaining the rigorous research and academic nature of the Museum.

Further academic research in the areas addressed in this thesis will also be valuable. This research design has been based on multi disciplinary studies from humanities, social science and cultural studies. The concept of nation and national identity in the museum has been utilised in this thesis. Further development could be carried out in order to define the museum in a broader context and also to explore the role of museums in constructing individual identity or, to a certain extent, cultural identity⁸⁵. Ultimately, wider area research within the discipline of Korean Museum Studies could be conducted in the future, building on this study and potentially leading to an interdisciplinary understanding of authoritative institutions like national, regional or private museums.

When the National Museum of Australia was constructed, the defining role and overarching objectives of the museum were hotly contested but, as McIntyre (2006, 16) suggests, national museums are inevitably entangled with diverse meanings;

The museum's vision continues to be that of a multidisciplinary institution which addresses Australian history in the broadest possible sense and 'speaks' with many voices, listens and responds to all, promotes debate and is a forum about questions of diversity and identity.'

⁸⁵ Rhiannon Mason's forthcoming publication in 2007 '*Museums, Nations, Identities: Wales and its National Museums*' which explores the National Museums and Galleries of Wales will be an important contribution to debates concerning the role of museums in relation to national identity.

This too is the story for the New National Museum of Korea. Although this Museum has faced many challenges and will continue to encounter controversy this study also suggests that there is enormous potential for it to engage audiences in continually rethinking notions of national identity at a time of tremendous change. However, as Mason (2006b) highlights, the realisation of this potential is not entirely within the museum's control. There are a host of complex inter-related social and political factors which will continue to shape the museum and the way it is perceived by visitors.

It is too soon to judge or define whether or not the new museum has yet achieved its aims and objectives, as there seems to be many unanswered questions. However, its launch captured remarkable attention from the people of Korea and it is reasonable to conclude that it was a good stimulus for the review of all relevant ideas. Hopefully, this preliminary research will contribute to the development of the New National Museum of Korea and that research of Korean museums from museological perspectives will continue to develop.

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Appendix 1 Chronology of Korea

*Italics are the Halls which are analysed in the Thesis.

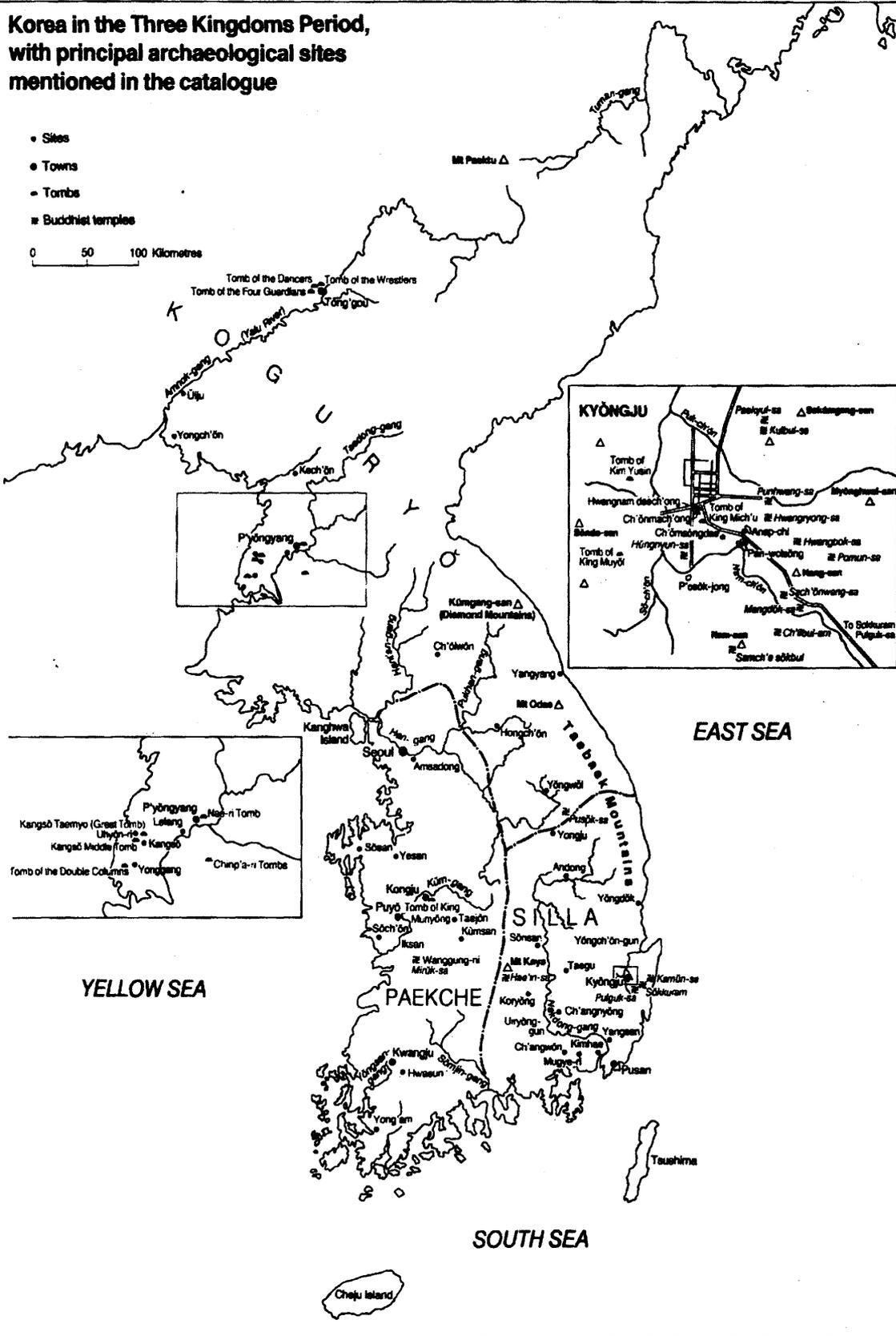
*Time Frame is based on the New Museum Criteria.

Date	Name	Main Characters
BC 700,000 – BC 10,000	The Palaeolithic	
BC 12,000/10,000 – BC 3,000/1,000	The Neolithic	
BC 1000 – BC 400	<i>The Bronze Age</i>	Dangun and GoJoseon
BC 300 – BC 100	<i>The Early Iron Age</i>	
0 – 300 AD	<i>The Proto Three Kingdoms</i>	
BC 57 – 668 AD	<i>Silla</i>	The Three Kingdoms Period
BC 37 – 668 AD	<i>Goguryeo</i>	
BC 18 – 660 AD	<i>Baekje</i>	
42 AD – 562 AD	<i>Gaya</i>	
676 AD – 918 AD	Unified Silla	The South North Kingdoms Period (Archaeology Gallery ends Here)
698 AD – 926 AD	<i>Balhae</i>	
918 AD – 1392 AD	Goryeo	The book 'The Chronicles of Three Kingdoms' by Ilyon (appealed Dangun myth and GoJoseon)
1392 – 1897	Joseon	
1910 – 1945	Korea	Korea under Japanese rule
1950 – 1953		Korean War
1953 onwards	Republic of Korea	Korea Divided

Appendix 2 Korea in the Three Kingdoms Period

*Source from 'Korean Treasure' Brochure (special edition)

Korea in the Three Kingdoms Period,
with principal archaeological sites
mentioned in the catalogue



Appendix 4 Email Contacts with the Museums about CE/BCE

1. Email from Smithsonian Institution

Dear J E Lee,

Your recent inquiry was passed to me for comment.

I do not know of a Smithsonian policy or practice regarding the use of BCE and CE and can only comment from my own experience. I have only seen BCE and CE used sometimes in publications related to southwest Asia archaeology, for example, archaeology reports about sites in Turkey. Use goes back many years.

General archaeology journals "Archaeology" and "Biblical Archaeology Review" use AD and BC, as do general reference works "The Oxford Companion to Archaeology" and the "Dictionary of Near Eastern Archaeology" published by the University of Pennsylvania Press in 2000.

If use of BC and AD is an issue for some exhibit or publication audiences then, BCE and CE seem simple alternatives.

JK

2. Email from the British Museum

Dear Ms Lee

Thank you for your enquiry. If you care to make an Internet search under "Before Common Era" you will find much information and discussion of these terms. Briefly, they have arisen in the last twenty years among history scholars who do not recognise the Christocentric calendar prevalent in the West, and their use does seem to be growing. They are especially used by Jewish/Israeli scholars and in the USA. The British Museum still uses the original BC and AD terms. I hope that this is of some help to you.

Peter Rea

Curatorial Assistant on Duty Desk
Department of Prehistory and Europe
The British Museum
Great Russell Street
London WC1B 3DG
Tel. + 44 (0)20 7323 8629
www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk

3. Email from the National Museum of Australia

Dear Lena Lee

Thank you for your enquiry regarding dating terms. The NMA generally does not use BCE, CE, BC or AD. We tend to say 'years ago' (eg '30,000 years ago'), and we have occasionally used the abbreviation BP (ie Before Present).

I hope that this is helpful.

Kind regards
Matthew Higgins

Duty Curator
National Museum of Australia
GPO Box 1901
Canberra ACT 2601
Ph: (02) 6208 5019
Fax: 02-6208 5398
www.nma.gov.au

Appendix 5 Visitor Research by the Korean Gallup

*Research Conducted from 8 -14 December 2005

*This is a summary of the results which are translated by the Researcher

Three methodologies

1. Museum Perception and Museum Use Pattern - targeting audiences
2. Satisfaction of the Museum Visit - targeting audiences
3. Museum Perception and Intention to Visit – targeting laypeople (non visitors)

Audience Numbers

Non visitors: 1014 (12.12.05 – 13.12.05); Telephone Interview

Audiences: 1015 (08.12.05 – 14.12.05); Exit Poll

Visitor Orientation

43.2% were from Seoul and 25.8% were from Kyeonggido.

Gender 46.6% were men and 53.4% were women.

Age

The majority of visitors (43% in all) were aged from 19-29. .

The next biggest age group was 30-39 (24.6%).

Occupation

Given the job variety, the Gallup indicates that the majority are ‘white callers’ (40.8%).

The next biggest group are students but they do not specify which age of students they mean.

Summary of the results

1. 36.8% said they came with a group of people such as school, work, and one day outing with friends. 3.8% people said that they came alone.
2. 41.6% agreed that they have never been to other museums including the old national museum last year. 60.2% of visitors were aware of the museum opening through the media such as TV. ‘Newspaper’ was cited by 8.1%.
3. 91.7% decided to visit the museum by themselves.
4. Cultural motivation (45%) was the biggest reason given for museum visiting. Other reasons were to enjoy free time (23.8%), child’s education (13.7%) and media motivation (10.1%). So the media’s role in museum visiting cannot be denied. .
5. 71.5% responded that they felt proud of Korean history and culture. Interest in history and objects was increased for 67.9% of visitors whereas new information was gained by 67.5%.
6. 83.7% of visitors said they will consider visiting the museum again
7. 67.8% replied that the New Museum will be one of the world museums in the future.
8. Museum facilities/size/scenery/light are seen as significant elements that can compete with world renowned museums (46.2%). The value of the museum objects are the second most significant element (30.3%).

9. 78.5% of the respondents answered that they knew that this museum is the very first one built in Korea in 60 years.

Consequences

1. 64.1% of people knew about the museum opening and moving of the museum
2. The biggest impact on the people has been TV as 70.2% knew through TV. This suggests the importance of marketing through TV.
3. More than 50% of people said that their experience in the museum is quite positive with better understanding of Korean history/culture, promoting pride in Korean objects, acquiring new information and obtaining energy and pleasure.
4. The more educated respondents were the more they wanted to re-visit. 86.8% of the visitors had studied to university level and they intend to revisit.
5. Over 50% of all respondents say that the objective of revisiting would be to see more objects.
6. No matter which educational degree they have, over 70-80 % of Korean people knew that this is the very first museum of Korea built by Koreans. So having a university degree does not make a difference to people's knowledge of the new museum.

Appendix 6 Research Process

* Duration; 4 July 2005 - 24 Jan. 2006

1. July to October 2005

Main Task; Assistant exhibition work with curators

- 1) Review the panels and labels (texts in the exhibition) in English and Korean
- 2) Join the curators' meeting to write exhibition texts
- 3) Re-write English labels and panels
- 4) Assist with the display of artefacts
- 5) Display panels and labels
- 6) Adjust some of the exhibition lighting
- 7) Discuss with curators about the design of the display stands
- 8) Help the curators to re-design the exhibition (re-location of the artefacts or panels, discuss the concept of the exhibition)
- 9) Clean the exhibition showcases
- 10) Observe curators and the process of the exhibition work
- 11) Collect all relevant documents and archives about archaeological exhibition
- 12) Help to review the whole exhibition before its opening on 28th October

2. November 2005

Main Task; Interview with Curators and Visit to the Tokyo National Museum

- 1) Interview with Curator Oa
- 2) Interview with Curator Cb
- 3) Interview with Curator Aa
- 4) Interview with Senior Curator Lb
- 5) Interview with Mb who is the Museum Policy Manager in the Ministry of Culture of Korea
- 6) Interview with Curator Jb
- 7) Visit the Tokyo National Museum during 11th to 14th November
- 8) Interview with Curator Sirai (Senior Researcher) and Hidaka (archaeological exhibition manager)
- 9) Start to collect the media response about the museum opening
- 10) Observe how the museum responds towards all sorts of exhibition reviews occurred by media and academics

3. December 2005

Main Task; Interview with Curators and Conduct Visitor Studies targeting for the archaeological exhibition

- 1) Interview with Senior Curator Hb
- 2) Interview with Curator Kb
- 3) Survey 295 visitors (archaeological exhibition); Exit End Survey + Comment Card
- 4) Among 295, 42 have been interviewed and 10 have been tracked down.
- 5) Help curators to check the exhibitions

4. January 2006

Main Task; Interview with Head of Archaeological Dept. and curators in Te Papa and Auckland Museum (New Zealand) + Visitor Studies

- 1) Interview with Head of Archaeological Dept.
- 2) Survey 210 visitors; Exit End Survey + Comment Card
- 3) Among 210, 102 have been interviewed.
- 4) Visit to TePapa and Auckland Museum during 16th to 24th Jan.
- 5) Interview with Visitor Research Marketing manager 'Michael Harvey' in TePapa
- 6) Interview with Kulvinder Singh (E-Marketing Co-ordinator) in Auckland Museum

Appendix 7 Survey Sheet

*The questions and choices are renewed according to the findings from everyday research so this is not the final version of survey sheet.

New National Museum of Korea Audience Research

→ Objectives of the Museum visiting

1. How many times have you visited museums/galleries in the last 12 months?

More than 10 times	5-10 times	1-5 times	None
--------------------	------------	-----------	------

Name your favourite museums/galleries _____

2. Please rate your own interest in the museum.

Very High	High	Normal	Low	Very Low
-----------	------	--------	-----	----------

3. Please tick all the options that apply for the information sources where you heard of the museum.

Newspaper TV Radio Please give details _____
 NMK Website NMK Newspaper Museum Posters School
 Other (please give details);

4. Did you visit the old National Museum of Korea?

Yes (go to 5) No (go to 6)

5. Please write the differences you noticed between the Old and the New Museum, if any.

6. Please tick the options according to your objectives of the Museum Visit today

Interest in Korean culture and history Day out Free entry
 Expectation about the New Museum For personal research
 Part of Group Tour For seeking national identity of Korea
 Increase interest by mass media For Children's education

For attending museum lectures and Operas To understand the real objects and history
 that you have learned from school
 Others _____

→ Archaeology Gallery

1. Please rate your satisfaction after AG Visit.

Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Not Satisfied	Strongly Unsatisfied
----------------	-----------	---------	---------------	----------------------

2. What is(are) the most impressive hall(s) among the twelve halls after your visit?

Introduction	Palaeolithic	Neolithic	Bronze Age/ Early Iron Age Culture	Proto-Three Kingdoms	Gogurye	Wall Painting Room
Lounge	Baekje Kingdom	Gaya Federation	Silla Kingdom	Silla Gold Crown	Unified Silla Kingdom	Balhae Kingdom

Can you give some reasons? _____

3. What object did you find to be most impressive from your visit to AG

4. Please tick what you have used during your visit to AG.

PDA	MP3	Pamphlet	Volunteer explanation	Video	Touch Screen
-----	-----	----------	-----------------------	-------	--------------

Please name the most useful one _____

5. How many of the large text panels introducing/describing the different sections did you look at?

All of them	More than half	Less than half	Not many
-------------	----------------	----------------	----------

6. Which of the following statement/s do you think best describes the text panels? (please tick all that apply)

Information is easy to understand.	Information is difficult to understand.
Information is interesting.	They were boring.
I found out new information by reading them.	There wasn't enough information.
It is hard to read them due to bad design.	Information is too simplistic.
It is acceptable (no special comments on them).	They are different from what I have learned from school.

7. From what you found out during your visit to the exhibition, mark the following sentences as true (T), false (F) or don't know (D/K).

	T	F	D/K
Q1. 'Gojoseon' is based on Neolithic Culture.			
Q2. Proto-Three Kingdoms are the fundamental period for Three Kingdoms Period and also production of Iron had been actively developed.			
Q3. The remains of Gogurye has been designated as World Heritage Cultural Asset by UNESCO.			
Q4. 'North-South Kingdoms Period' includes Unified Silla and Balhae together.			

8. What barriers were there for you during your visit to the AG?

- 1) Insufficient rest place in the gallery 2) Complicated exhibition layout
- 3) Difficulties with exhibition texts
- Others;

9. Please tick your viewpoints after your visit AG.

1. There are differences between museum information and school classes.	
2. I have more interest in archaeology after the AG visit.	
3. I would like to investigate Korean History and Culture after the visit.	
4. The visit helps me to understand archaeological objects more.	
5. I would like to revisit the AG.	
6. The AG encapsulates Globalisation.	
7. The AG makes me think about national identity.	

10. If there are any differences between school learning and museum information, please identify them.

11. Is there any more information about certain periods or objects you would want the AG to provide?

12. Please tell us your expectation or viewpoints about the AG.

→ About You

1. Please tick your interest on issues of National Identity.

Strongly High	High	Neutral	Low	Very Low
---------------	------	---------	-----	----------

2. Male Female

3. Age? Below 16 17 – 19 20 – 24 25 – 30
30 – 40 40 – 50 50 – 60 Over 60

4. Who did you visit with? _____

5. If you have child(ren) with you, please identify their age. _____

6. Residence _____

7. Occupation _____

♠ Thank you for your time.

Appendix 8 Audience Interview Script

* These examples of responses are chosen for their representative and unique nature.

The researcher;

What is your opinion about the museum's presentation of national identity?

Response 1 (Male in his early 30s) as of 15 December 2005

I'm more interested in history. So I am here to see history, not national identity. Also I am not particularly interested in Korean history but rather interested in the world history. So I can't really comment on your question.

Response 2 (Student in her late 20s) as of 11 January 2006

Whenever I went to other national museums in the world, I cannot find Korean artefacts there or even I could, it is very small amount, and then I was very disappointed. However, this museum is basically all about Korea and Korea's artefacts. I think it is good for foreigners to come and understand what Korea is in this Museum.

Response 3 (Student in her 20s) as of 12 January 2006

It is overall role of the National Museum to show national identity. Compared to other national museums in Korea, I believe this museum is very accurate and delicate to explain artefacts and history facts. So I thought about national identity a lot.

The researcher;

What is your general experience in this Archaeological Gallery?

Response 1 (Female in her 30s) as of 21 December 2005

The comparisons with other countries in the exhibition make me more realise Korea clearly, and so I believe that the culture in prehistoric time in Korea is very blossomed like the other countries in the world. I am proud of that.

Response 2 (Student in his 30s) as of 22 December 2005

The exhibition is about our land where I live, so through this exhibition I felt I was very ignoring about the facts of our culture and history. I want to study more about my country because of gallery visiting. I think this Gallery influenced the way I see my national identity.

Response 3 (Nurse in her late 20s) as of 10 January 2006

I think Archaeological Gallery shows a lot of Korean identity. Cultural development in each period has been shown in this Gallery well. Also I don't think this Gallery is particularly talking about nationalism.

Response 4 (Student in her 10s) as of 10 January 2006

I have such fun in the Exhibition. We did not learn the history yet, but the real objects in the museum are so impressive and memorable as most of them were seen in the photos and books.

The Researcher;

What do you think about this Gallery in the context of national identity?

Response 1 (Female in her 50s) as of 29 December 2005

Archaeological Gallery is all about our things and so this makes me realise what is the difference with other countries. It is what very clearly appealed to me, so this is, I guess, a way of national identity representation in the Gallery. After the visit, I felt greatness of myself as Korean. When I went to travel abroad, I always felt what our ancestors have done as there are few exhibitions about Korea compared to other countries like China or Japan. But I think we have a great culture, like gold, brick, and ornament which all exhibited in the Archaeological Gallery. They are very great and beautiful, so we can feel pretty proud of ourselves.

Response 2 (Student in his 20s) as of 6 January 2006

The Korean-type bronze dagger indicates purely Korean things and this shows our own things and identity; so compared to other galleries, I think national identity has been shown more clearly in the Gallery. The museum is about our history and our ancestors' lives, so national identity should naturally be in the Archaeological Gallery. I don't know much about national identity, but organising our history chronologically means letting people know about our history within a structure. So I think the museum itself represents national identity and the artefacts in the museum are directly related to national identity. I did not feel that I was particularly proud of being Korean here in the Gallery, but I can see the things of Koreanness here that I have only seen in books. So I don't find anything directly carrying national identity here but everything in the Gallery embodies national identity.

Response 3 (Female in her 20s) as of 10 January 2006

There are many different national identities in history. It is difficult to understand national identity properly. I don't think people who lived in ancient times had any concept of national identity, or ethnic identity. But contemporary people like us have it. A concept of national identity is not so embedded in the past, so it is hard to answer your question.

Appendix 9 Curator Interview Script

*This is an interview with the Head of Department as of 31 December 2005

*It has been chosen for its representative and unique nature.

How do you feel now after the opening?

I studied Korean archaeology for 25 years and these experiences of 25 years of reading, listening and looking at archaeology have been directly melted into this exhibition with the curators' effort.

What is the overarching aim of the Archaeological Gallery?

To show Korean ethnic culture systematically easily and visually nice with objects, which will make audiences come again to the Museum. This is the objective of the exhibition. Generalising the characteristics of archaeology for audiences should make it easy.

So, the first aspect of easiness of this Gallery is low showcases, compared to other European museums and Asian Museums, most of all, compared to other exhibitions in this museum, showcases in the Archaeological Gallery are the lowest. Lots of substitute communication tools and explanations are also used to make understanding easier. In terms of the colour, people are very sensitive about it, so there are some key colours used in the showcases. This is to enhance audiences' memory of the objects which is our consideration for them.

What is your view on the Archaeological Gallery within the National Museum?

This is a so-called 'national museum', so Korean people must have felt proud to be Korean after they visit the Exhibition and that is all I intended to make this Gallery do. However, even we need to feel proud of ourselves through the material culture, this pride should not be directed towards nationalism or national exclusivist attitudes. So this exhibition tends to make Korean people feel proud of having friendly neighbouring relations with Japan and China at the bottom line.

What is the coded meaning of the Introductory Area in the whole Exhibition?

There is a map in the Gallery which can confirm where we (Korea) are in the world. This is very good self-image or self-reflective opportunity for us and also this is a self-confirmative chance to position ourselves on the map. This will make people understand we are Koreans.

The chronological table in this Area is in order to show from the present time to the past. This map means that present material culture is kind of accumulation of our ancestral past, so that is why it starts from the present. Not only talking about Korean culture, but also are there Asian and world cultures in this table so we can exactly see where we are in the global context.

Could you please explain the meaning of the Palaeolithic and Neolithic Halls?

The Palaeolithic Hall has been focused on the human creature's appearance on earth in the Mother Nature. In terms of the Neolithic, it must be the first time of showing the culture in Korea, so this hall tries to show the unification of tool making.

How about the Bronze and Early Iron Age?

The Bronze Age can be identified as a broadening of the human culture, so the settlement has been made and dolmen which is the World Heritage had been in Korea. Lots of arms with social strata had shown which means a more developed period than the Neolithic in terms of developing tools and decoration skills and pottery.

What is your view on Goguryeo and Balhae Halls?

Goguryeo is our national soar up Kingdom and contemporary Korean society wanted to imitate Goguryeo as it is really a strong Kingdom in our history. But practical difficulties to get to North Korea and a small amount of objects from Goguryeo prevent us from investigating Goguryeo deeply. However having exhibited metal work, pottery and wall paintings of Goguryeo, we tried to show the spirit of them in the Exhibition. The designation of World Heritage of Goguryeo sites in North Korea has been presented in one part of the exhibition in the lounge area, which tells how great our ancestors were and how great an influence the people in present time can have.

In terms of Balhae, this is a definitely part of Korean history and territory, however, we (the museum) are located in the southern part of the Korean peninsula so we did not pay attention to this much in the past. There are some on-going issues around Balhae these days, however it is a very important part of Korea. That is why we put the Balhae Hall here in the Archaeological Gallery. As a national institution, we have to show the national culture without any distortion or problems, so that is why there is Balhae exhibition. There are not many Balhae objects unfortunately and this is caused by a location limitation now between Korea and North Korea and China. So Balhae itself will fade away from people's minds. In order to prevent it fading, we facilitate this exhibition of Balhae here and try to maintain people's interest on Balhae. When time passes, if we have more access to China and North Korea, we will have a more fruitful exhibition.

Silla Hall has been acknowledged as one of the best Halls in the Archaeological Gallery. What do you think about this?

Of course, Silla has been credited with their own cultural value which is in the world level in the Gallery. There are 13 to 14 gold crowns in the world, however most of them are from Silla as 6 of them are Silla's. In terms of the motives, or design it is very worth remembering that they are highly and utterly sophisticated ones. Regarding this gold crown's Siberian influence, our national ethnic origins could be traced to Siberia. As examples, Silla's tombs seem to have a relation to Siberia as well. The glass vessels, dagger with designs and necklaces also show the influence from the west like Rome. We can find western people's statues or some mythic stories about the west in Silla history. In a way, this shows Silla's international trends and globalised characters. So the exhibition tries to have an individual hall for the gold

crown and belt. Also other great gold cultures has been focused in here. Also, I think displaying national treasures-level objects will make people want to stay in the hall longer.

Some audiences responded that this museum belongs to only South Korea, not both Koreas. What is your view as a Head of Department on the issue of divisions between Koreas?

I was asked the same question when we had an exhibition in Germany, but my answer is that we (South and North Korea) have a similar cultural flow. Yes, we don't have enough artefacts in Goguryeo because of its location, but I have to emphasise that South Korea and North Korea have similarities in the cultural context. We are not totally different because we are homogeneous culture. This is not the matter of political thing of North and South Korea. It is a matter of Korean culture, homogeneous culture. So as we put red colour on the satellite map in the Introductory Area, it is an attempt to show Korea is one. The disputes over an ideology or political agendas in the exhibition are outdated and useless right now in the Archaeological Gallery. As we are cosmopolitan citizens, and members of the world, why bother to think about an ideology and political issues? The museum and the exhibition are the result of our ancestral past and we just expressed it in the exhibition.

Then, do you have further plans regarding North Korea?

If there's any chance, yes, we will be delighted to support museums in North Korea. We will do something with regard North Korea in the future.

What were your difficulties when you directed this Gallery?

Exhibiting is always very difficult and there are so many opinions and thoughts involved. In order to use one object, lighting, panels, and showcases are all employed to make the presentation the best it can be. There are 4850 objects in the Archaeological Gallery and so we have to organise every single object considering what sort of message or meaning the object has.

As a Head of Department, what do you want the audiences to take with them after their visit?

What I want the audiences to know after the exhibition is; I am one of the Koreans who made this national culture, watching the holistic cultural flow. So being proud of themselves, however not an exclusive pride but a pride of understanding other cultures properly. Most likely the national museum exhibition tends to go for a 'national-centric' tendency. If the museum has a tendency towards nationalism, it means that culture represents national power or political manipulation. However I think culture is for all of us to share in the world all together. No one possesses it, so every single cultural aspect should be admired. As a global citizen of the world, I want the audience to have pride in having Korean culture in this context.

Appendix 10 Research Diary

*This is a sample.

Date; 15 July 2005

Used Tools; note

Job involvement; **Participation**

Location of work; **The Neolithic Hall**

Description;

1. **Assist the Curator to display the objects with a junior curator Oa**
2. **Personal communication with this curator during the work**

Data that I have acquired today related to my research;

I can acquire profound information about the way the Archaeological Gallery intends to display the objects -> It is a masterpiece type of exhibition. Also how this curator felt about this style of exhibition can be found via communication.

Indications of this data; **personal talk and behaviour**

Inquiry or relevant questions of this data;

**Is everyone feeling or thinking the same way with this curator?
Is it really possible to produce a masterpiece type of exhibition for this gallery?**

Further work required in the future;

**Find the literature related to the museum exhibition and archaeological interpretation.
Try to ask other curators too about this issue.**

Any suggestions for the work I am involved in

NA

Comments/Personal opinions

I was really amazed by the way this curator exhibited the artefacts. He is very much focused on the design and the way it looks and appeals rather than how it carries the meanings of the artefacts and the story.

Appendix 11 Chart Review (Audience Survey Sheet)

*This is general information obtained from the 503 survey sheets.

*Italics are my personal opinion during the data analysis.

1. The total number of the visitors who completed the survey sheet was 503, of which 228 were men and 275 were women.
2. More than 50% of the respondents (283) said that they had a (very) high interest in the Museum in general.
3. The information sources through which the visitors had heard about the New National Museum of Korea (NNMK) were TV (300), Newspapers (150) and Museum Website (70) in that order. It was very clear that the majority of visitors had obtained the information about the Museum through the Media.
4. Among 355 respondents, 320 said that this was their first visit to the NNMK.
5. The reasons given for visiting the Museum were that they had an 'interest in Korean culture and history' (236) and also 'have a big interest in the new opening of the Museum' (200). It should also be noted that many came to the Museum for 'a day out' (100). The mass media's influence in triggering people's interest in the Museum cannot be discounted (79). Most students (from secondary to university level) answered that they came to see the objects in real life which otherwise they would only see through the medium of the text book (74).
6. In terms of enjoyment of the Archaeological Gallery, the survey revealed that 365 people enjoyed the Gallery and 63 said that they had very much enjoyed it. 68 visitors answered that they rated the AG as average in their enjoyment.
7. When it came to choosing the most impressive halls, the three most highly rated halls were Silla (123), Wall Paintings of Goguryeo (112) and Baekje (100). The lounge area which contains only the Baekje gild burner, National Treasure No. 287, was voted for by 92 people and the Silla Gold Crown and Belt area, which are also National Treasures No. 191, 192, was favoured by 94 visitors. The Goguryeo hall was selected by 68 people, even though the room of Wall Paintings (Tomb murals) is part of the Goguryeo hall. It cannot be denied that the halls that impressed the audiences most were all related to the Three Kingdoms Period.

(It would be interesting to examine how the Museum highlighted the Three Kingdoms Period in the context of Korea's national history.)

8. Most of the people who chose the Silla (and Gold crown/belt) and Baekje (and the Gild Burner) halls answered that they liked the gallery because it was very beautiful, delicate and sumptuous. In the case of the artefacts and Wall Paintings in Goguryeo, people thought they were solemn and magnificent. In addition, the majority of the respondents who mentioned one of these halls as their favourite said that they were interested because they had learned about them in school and were more familiar with them than with the other artefacts in the Museum. (*Scrutinizing the way that history is taught in schools (from primary to secondary level) will go some way to reaching an understanding of Korean national identity.*)

9. The most memorable object in AG that was selected by 167 visitors was, not surprisingly, the Gild Burner of Baekje. The next most favoured object was, also not surprisingly, the gold crown (114), followed by the Wall Paintings (53). Several reasons were cited by visitors for this propensity such as 'school education that accentuates the Three Kingdoms', 'excessive media reactions to the beauty of Korea in the Three Kingdoms Period', 'lack of understanding of Archaeology in Korean society' and 'Museum's unconscious emphasis on this particular period'.

10. The exhibition texts on panels, name cards and labels were read by most of the visitors, as 355 of them replied that they had read 'all' (146) or 'more than half' (209) of the texts. People who had read the texts answered that the information given was 'easy to understand' (186) and that they had 'acquired new information' through the text (178). However, there was also a negative response from 168 people who believed that the information provided was not sufficient to provide a full understanding of the exhibition.

11. Questions were asked about the presentation of the national identity in the AG, for example the use of the new term 'North/South Kingdoms Period' (which encouraged people to recognise Balhae as part of Korean history) and 'UNESCO's designation of the Goguryeo Relics in North Korea as a World Cultural Heritage site.

12. The biggest barrier encountered by the visitors in the AG seemed to be the complicated exhibition layout which sometimes led them to the wrong places in the halls. 185 people mentioned the complication and confusion of the layout and 116 thought that the AG definitely lacked any place to rest. Ninety nine people mentioned problems with the museum texts. These consisted mainly of difficulties or, to some extent, differences from what they had learned in school because of the use of too Koreanised jargon. (*The archaeological objects were formerly named using Chinese*

characters, but the NNMK had decided not to use such ‘non-Korean’ language. They then created or borrowed new terms from ‘the pre-existing but not commonly used’ language. However, there were a few artefacts that were still named using Chinese characters.) In addition, oversimplified texts were regarded as being a barrier to the visitor’s enjoyment and understanding of the exhibition.

13. Most of the visitors (314) believed that they had learned something about the archaeological objects during their visit. Many of them (307) indicated that they would probably re-visit the AG. 110 of the 355 receiving the revised sheet said that the AG did reveal the national identity of Korea and 67 answered that the AG was directly relevant to Korean national identity. Only 17 people felt that the AG showed a strong nationalistic viewpoint.

14. The age groups of the respondents can be broken down as follows:

Age	Below 16	17-19	20-24	25-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	Over 60
Number	21	27	168	152	74	31	16	12

The majority of those who replied to the survey were in their 20s but this is not surprising in the light of the NNMK’s general visitor survey. Most of the visitors were people in their 20s. *(The reasons for this could be found in the changing society in Korea, and a generation change in the consumers of culture.)*

15. 386 visitors were asked about their interest in the issue of national identity in South Korea. The responses revealed that 197 people regarded themselves as being highly interested in the issue (very high; 37 high; 160), whereas 154 replied that their interest was only average. Only 14 answered that they had a low interest in the issue. *(This question should be analysed further in light of the age group of the respondents, and their interest in the Museum. It is worth trying to find out who the people are who were highly interested both in national identity and in the Museum. Likewise, it would be interesting to see how those visitors who classified themselves as having an average interest in the issue of national identity view the Museum and the exhibition.)*

16. The controversial parts of Korean history in terms of its territorial boundaries with China and North Korea would be Goguryeo and Balhae. This reflected the wishes of the audiences to learn more on these subjects from the AG. They would also appreciate it if the AG paid more attention to the first nation of Korea ‘GoJoseon’. Even though the Three Kingdoms were the most appreciated halls in the AG, people

still wanted to have more information about Silla and Baekje or even additional displays covering the relations between those Three Kingdoms.

People complained that the information provided about the objects was too simple and short, and so did not give the full picture. What people seemed to want to hear from the AG was more of the historical story related to the object, the background of the period, and more about the links between the halls and even between the objects. Some points that occur persistently concern the lack of illustration of the life of ordinary people in the AG. People felt that the AG is only concerned with the glorious past of Korea, and the Royal history. They criticised the failure to present material that could provide an understanding of ordinary people like themselves.