Joseon 朝鮮 조선 1392-1910

- Established by former general Yi Seonggye.
- Lasted 518 years!

Adopted the name Joseon in 1393.
Capital: established in 1394 at Hanseong (漢城 한성), modern day Seoul.

"Unlike the Confucian intellectuals behind Zhu Yuanzhang’s (朱元璋 r.1368-98, first Ming dynasty emperor) rise, intellectuals who, looking back on the failure of the Song dynasty, harbored grave doubts about the ability of the Confucian bureaucracy to rule successfully, the Yi [Joseon dynasty] Neo-Confucian founders, with no past failures to contend with, were driven by a commitment to forge a new Confucian social order which would be a complete break from the old Buddhist Goryeo society. With this sense of mission, they engineered and carried out the change. The founding of the Yi dynasty was thus more than anything else a Confucian revolution." (Haboush 2001:12)

Jeong Dojeon (鄭道傳 정도전 1342-98)

- Ideological architect of the Joseon dynasty.

  "In his philosophical works he outlined the Confucian point of view and aggressively turned against Buddhism. He put an end to the Confucians' traditional tolerance of the Buddhist creed and advanced philosophical arguments against it." (Sources of Korean Tradition Vol.1 281)

- Compiled Joseon dynasty’s first law code, Joseon-gyeongguk-jeon (朝鮮經國典 조선경국전).

- "He envisaged a strong standing for the chongjae (總裁 prime minister), whose major task was to assist the king at the head of a well-organized administration. He also recognized the importance of the censorial agencies (see below) for checking the king as well as for supervising the officialdom."

- Began the compiling work for the dynastic history of Goryeo, Goryeo-sa (高麗史 History of Goryeo). Urged for the mourning period of parents to be made 3 three years for all members of society (like Jeong Mongju had observed.)

- "Jeong Dojeon’s major concern, however, was the building of a government that would function through benevolence rather than force. In this sense he followed the Mencian ('of Mencius') tradition that eschewed coercion and espoused virtue as the sole means for winning the people’s hearts. Jeong Dojeon’s ideas exerted a lasting influence on the legislative process during the dynasty’s first century." (Sources 282)

- Jeong was murdered by Yi Bangwon (이방원 3rd king Taejong) during the first Strife of the Princes succession dispute.

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Admonitions to the New King:

- Presented by the Inspector-General office (사헌부 Saheon-bu) to king Taejo (aka Yi Seonggye) shortly after declaring the new dynasty.

- Included the following 10 suggestions on how to be a good Confucian king which were by extension, of course, criticism on what had gone wrong with Goryeo:

1. Establish rules and laws.
2. Have a clear system of rewards and punishments.
3. Distinguish between superior and inferior men of talent.
4. Accept remonstrance (諫 gan) by your ministers:
   "The sovereign’s majesty is like thunder; his power is as weighty as iron. Is it an easy thing for the minister to brace the thunder and bear the heavy weight to offer his sovereign words as if to cure his ailments? And yet the difference between accepting and rejecting such advice can mean the difference between good fortune and disaster, between profit and loss for the state." (Sources Vol.1 p275)

One of the chief means to remonstrate the king was during Royal Lectures (經筵 gyeong’yeon)

"A session might begin with the reading and exposition of a specific [Confucian] text that had been selected for study, but it was a simple matter to relate the text under discussion to a topic of current significance, much as a Biblical passage is elaborated in a [Christian] sermon. A Royal Lecture session, then, was tantamount to an extraordinary audience, at which the actual order of business was to debate the issues of the day. When this institution was functioning under optimum conditions, it was the major means through which the participating officials could offer remonstrance (諫 gan) or present to the king their views on current policy...

Ideally, Royal Lecture sessions were held three times each day, in the morning, at noon, and in the afternoon. Kings differed, of course, in their willingness to make themselves available so frequently." (Wagner 1974:16)

5. Root out slanderous talk.
6. Beware of indolence and dissoluteness:
   "The desire to be in repose in the palace; to feast on fine food; to enjoy the ministrations of your queen and palace women, the pleasures of the hunt, raising dogs and horses; and to amuse yourself with flowers and plants: all these things harm men's disposition and dissipate their will. Therefore, one must exercise caution. For indeed, the Mandate of Heaven is a transient thing." (Sources Vol.1 p276)

7. Respect frugality and economy.
8. Shun eunuchs. "The problem of eunuchs is an old one."

9. Weed out unqualified Buddhist clergy.
   "We beseech Your Majesty to round up these Buddhist clerics and examine them carefully...

their doctrine and practice. Those who truly know the doctrine and truly practice virtue should be allowed to teach: all the others should be made to let their hair grow out and return to their former occupations."

10 Regulate access to the palace.
"We beseech Your Majesty to order the gate guards to prohibit the unauthorized entry of anyone without official position, and especially to spurn shamans who practice women's magic and those who cunningly flatter."

Most famous Korean king ever.

4th King Sejong the Great (세종대왕 1418-50)

- Taejong’s 3rd son: celebrated as the most enlightened king in Korean history.
- In 1420 he developed the jiphyeon-jeon 'Hall of Worthies' (集賢殿 lit. 'hall of gathered wise people') into a royal research institute which:
  - Provided a secure position for scholars chosen by Sejong.
  - Developed movable type and printed many books, both Chinese but also many new Korean works including histories, books on farming, medicine and music.
  - Developed a system of musical notation, jeonggan-bo (井間譜).
  - Invented or improved various scientific instruments including a rain gauge, sundials, water clocks and instruments for astronomical measurements.
  - Improved farming techniques with better seed strains and irrigation.
- The Jiphyeon-jeon was most productive during Sejong’s reign, and was later closed by Sejo the usurper (after scholars there plotted against him).

Economic policy:
- Farmland was divided into 6 grades of quality whilst harvests each year were differentiated according to the weather into 9 degrees (bad to good).
- Taxes were then calculated accordingly.

Foreign policy:
- In 1419, advised by his father Taejong, a military invasion of Tsushima island was successfully carried out defeating the Japanese Wakó pirates based there.
- Subsequently the Só clan of Tsushima was granted the right to trade at three Korean ports (三浦 삼포), Busan, Ulsan and Jinhae.
- In the far northeast, between 1434-49, six garrisons (六鎭 yukjin) were established securing the Tumen River border region against the Jurchen people (a process which had begun with campaigns involving Yi Seonggye’s father during Goryeo king Gongmin’s [r.1351-74] reign).
- Jurchen people continued to live in the northeast of Korea into the 20th century.

Negatives:
"...he was, of course, a man of his own age and not ours. He confirmed the execution of an official’s wife for committing adultery: he supported an official who divorced his wife for failing to bear him a son: and he approved an order that yangban women should not be allowed out onto the streets of the capital in daytime." (Pratt 2006:124)3)

Hangul script (한글 han'geul)

- Invented by King Sejong himself in 1443.
  - There is a debate over whether he invented it himself, or it was invented by other scholars in his name, but all evidence points to him.
  - Scholars of the Jiphyeon-jeon actually opposed the project.

1446 promulgation of the han'geul (aka hangul) script

- Officially named hunminjeong'eum (훈민정음 'correct sounds to instruct the people') after the title of the promulgation text but referred to by most Confucian officials as eonmun (언문 'vulgar/vernacular writing') or amgeul (암글 'women's script').
- Not named han'geul until 1912.
- Widely rejected by the Confucian aristocracy and yangban nobles but used by lower classes and women.
- The Hunminjeong'eum has been made a part of South Korea's brand identity, it's what you see on Starbucks (스타벅스) mugs sold in Korea!

Yongbi'eocheon-ga (용비어천가 'dragons flying august celestial songs') 1447.

- Translated by Peter H. Lee as Songs of Flying Dragons (1975).
- Cycle of 125 poems (with short prose annotations), celebrating the exploits of the 'six dragons': Yi Seonggye (Taejo), his four paternal ancestors (father, grandfather, great-grandfather etc), and 5th son, Yi Bangwon (Taejo).
  - Each poem is written both in vernacular Korean language, using mixed script, and separately in Classical Chinese. They were actually first composed in Chinese and then translated into vernacular Korean.
  - For the majority of poems 3-109, the first half of each poem evokes Chinese history whilst the second half then provides a poetic antithesis recounting history relating to the establishment of the Joseon dynasty. These comparisons are designed to enhance the legitimacy of the dynasty.
  - Composed to demonstrate the usage of han'geul on a strongly Confucian theme in order to encourage acceptance from hostile Neo-Confucian officials.
  - Upon completion, some 550 copies were printed and distributed to officials.
  - The Korean poems were also set to music.
  - Despite being blatant propaganda for the dynasty, it remains a valuable source both on history, but also on the 15th century Middle Korean language and, of course, early usage of han'geul.

Political factions

Hun'gu-pa faction (훈구파 'meritorious old faction')

- The Hun'gu-pa essentially denotes the Confucian scholars also known as the "Bureaucratic school" (관 학파 gwanhak-pa) which had influence from the beginning of the Joseon dynasty until the rise of the Sarim-pa faction): i.e. those who chose to support the new dynasty.
  - Many Hun'gu officials were also Merit Subjects (공신 공신 - descendants of those who had supported
Yi Seonggye in establishing Joseon - and some married into the royal line.

- The Hun’gu came into confrontation with the emergent Sarim-pa faction.
- In contrast to the Sarim-pa, they were more concerned with practical administration and empirical knowledge than Neo-Confucian metaphysics.

Sarim-pa faction (士林波 'scholar forest')
- Came to political influence during the latter half of 15th century
- The Sarim-pa were Neo-Confucian idealists and greatly influenced the ideology of the Joseon dynasty.

"Under Jo Gwangjo (趙光祖 1482-1519, disciple of Kim Jongjik), the ideals of the Sarim-pa concerning the nature and form of society were instituted in a way in which Buddhism had never been able formally to influence Korean society. The nature of Korean society was radically reshaped under the followers of Jo Gwangjo. Although they were defeated at the end of Jungjong's (r.1506-44) reign, the effect of what they had done was not significantly altered. The truly Confucian shape of Korean society began here, in the early 16th century. Subsequent actions taken by various schools in later generations only built on what the Sarim-pa had accomplished. Later generations amended the achievement of the Sarim-pa, but did not erase it." (Grayson 2002:115)

Factionalism (朋黨政治 'factional politics')
- Occurred amongst former Sarim scholars

Hideyoshi Japanese Invasions 1592-98
Collectively referred to in Korean as the Imjin-waeran (壬辰倭亂 - 'Japanese disturbance/war of the Imjin year [1592]')
- More specifically the Imjin-waeran refers to the 1592 invasion whilst the 1597 'surge' was termed the Jeong’yu-jaeran (丁酉再亂 'repeat war of the Jeong’yu year')

- Hideyoshi’s invasion force of some 156,000, led by the Christian general Konishi Yukinaga (小西行長) landed on Busan in May 1592 and in just 20 days had taken Seoul, continuing up to Pyeongyang.
- Korea was completely surprised and unprepared for the invasion.
- King Seonjo and the court fled to Uiju on the far northwestern border with Ming China.

Only the southwestern province of Jeolla successfully repulsed the Japanese onslaught, allowing it to become a base of operations for both localuibyeong 'righteous armies' (義兵 의병), and the navy led by Admiral Yi Sunsin.

Days after Seoul was taken, Admiral Yi Sunsin (李舜臣 1545-98) destroyed 37 Japanese ships and maintained control of the western coast helping to cut off supplies to the overextended Japanese.

- Japan withdrew, leaving around 43,000 troops occupying fortresses on the southeast coast; Ming China opened peace negotiations which ultimately failed, leading to the second invasion attempt of 1597, involving a Japanese force of some 120,000.
• The objective of the 2nd invasion was no longer invading China, but gaining control of the southern region of Korea, thus it focused on Jeolla and Gyeongsang provinces.

• At the outbreak of the 2nd invasion, Yi Sunsin was imprisoned on false charges owing to the jealousy of his rival admiral Won Gyun (元均 1540-97); only after Won Gyun was defeated in battle (losing many ships) was Yi Sunsin reinstated; he subsequently won a string of victories against the Japanese armada.

• Despite Yi Sunsin’s exploits, the Japanese were never entirely defeated but ultimately withdrew on orders sent following the death of Hideyoshi (which itself was kept secret).

  Yi Sunsin remains today as South Korea’s most popular national hero.
  • He won significant battles against the Japanese and died fighting (but not in any large defeat).
  • Whilst North Korea has Kim Il Sung, South Korea has no modern military heroes, e.g. equivalent to Mannerheim, so the memory of Yi Sunsin is evoked as the imagined symbol of victory over the Japanese.
  • Chungmuro (忠武路 'loyal warrior') street in central Seoul is named after his posthumous title Chungmu (忠武 'loyal warrior')

Manchu Invasions 1627 and 1636

• The dominant faction of the Joseon court was staunchly pro-Ming and anti-Later Jin (Jurchen-Manchu Qing); they refused to deal with the Later Jin leading to the two Manchu invasions of 1627 and 1636.

First Invasion of 1627 (Jeongmyo-horan 丁卯胡亂 'barbarian disturbance of the Jeongmyo year')
  • Later Jin invaded with a force of 30,000: King Injo and the court fled to Ganghwa-do island.
  • A peace was negotiated on terms as fraternal allies and the Jurchen withdrew.

Second Invasion of 1636 (Byeongja-horan 丙子胡亂 'barbarian disturbance of the Byeongja year')
  • Later Jin declared itself the Qing dynasty, but was ignored by Joseon.
  • Qing Emperor Hong Taiji (洪太極 r.1626-43) led the invasion with around 100,000 troops.
  • The Joseon court once again fled to Ganghwa-do, but King Injo could not reach it and took refuge in Namhansan-seong mountain fortress (南漢山城) to the southeast of Seoul together with some 120,000 others where they were besieged by the Qing. Rather than attack, the Qing simply waited for their supplies to run out and after 45 days, in January 1637, Injo surrendered and was forced to bow before the Qing Emperor pledging vassalage.
  • Terms of the surrender included severing ties with Ming; behaving as a vassal state to Qing (i.e. sending tribute); sending two princes as hostages to Qing and dispatching troops to aid Qing against the Ming.

Subsequent to the overthrow of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) and establishment of the Manchu Qing dynasty (1644-1912), Joseon came to regard itself as the last bastion of Confucian civilization. They looked down on Qing China and restricted relations such that they remained largely unaware and uninterested in its contacts with the West and new technologies and knowledge.
Only a certain small group of scholars, known as the "Northern Learning" school (北學派 北학파) took active interest in contemporary China towards the end of the 18th century, but they had little political influence at the time.

Primary sources for studying the Joseon period dynastic history

*Joseon-wangjo Sillok* (朝鮮王朝實錄 조선 왕조실록) 'Veritable Records of the Joseon Dynasty'

Can also be accessed through the Korean History Database: [http://db.history.go.kr](http://db.history.go.kr)

- Primary source on Joseon dynastic history.
- Consists of 1,893 books (卷 권 gwon) cover the 1st Taejo until 25th Cheoljong (哲宗 r.1849-63).
- c.64 million characters.

3rd king Taejong (太宗백종 aka Yi Bangwon 이방원) ordered the first compilation of history following the death of Yi Seonggye, his father, in 1408. These covered the period of Yi Seonggye’s reign as Taejo (1392-1398) and were completed in 1416.

The Sillok 'veritable records' were consequently compiled for each king in the subsequent king's reign. Compiled under the Chunchu-gwan Bureau of State Records (春秋館 � ImageIcon bureau of spring and autumn'): staffed in total by around 78 members (who also held other positions). Most important were the 8 diarists termed sa'gwan 'historians' (史官 사관) or hallim (翰林 한림) who were present to record all official happenings.

The Sillok were based on the daily records written by the 8 royal diarists during the reign of a king. No one, including the king was allowed to see the diarists' reports.

The 1498 sahwa literati purge targeted the royal chroniclers.

The Sillok typically went through a three stage process of initial and secondary drafts before creating a final draft.

Upon completion all primary materials and earlier drafts were destroyed leaving only the final version.

"Once the Sillok [of a given king] was completed, no one including the king was allowed to read it. This was to insure the autonomy of the historians and compilers as well as the objectivity of the historical records... Only when a certain important decision required consulting precedents were historians permitted to view the relevant section of the Sillok and report their findings." (Haboush 2001:247)

*Sungjeongwon-ilgi* (承政院日記 숭정원일기) 'Daily Records of the Royal Secretariat'


- The Sungjeongwon 'Royal Secretariat' took care of the king’s daily schedule.
Alongside the historians, 2 diarists of the Royal Secretariat attended all public activities of the king including his discussions with officials, his ritual functions, royal lecture sessions, dealings with diplomatic matters, and the memorials and other written communications he received.

Unlike the historians' records, these daily records of the Royal Secretariat were viewable by the king and ministers: they were also consulted during the compilation of the Sillok but were not destroyed after.

They are much longer than the Sillok.
Contain on average 4 times more detail.

The Daily Records were begun during the reign of Sejo (1455-68) but early records were lost during the Hideyoshi invasion: records until 1721 were subsequently lost in a palace fire. The period of 1623-1721 was subsequently reconstructed in 548 volumes based on other surviving records at the time.
• In total 3,047 volumes survive covering the period of 1623-1894.
• Total c.240 million characters!
• Digitization took 15 years and has only recently been completed.

Early Joseon paintings

*Dream Journey to Peach Blossom (Water) Spring* (夢遊桃源園 萬夑道원도)
• Korea's oldest surviving landscape painting.
• Painted by An Gyeon (安堅), a professional artist at the Office of Paintings (圖畵署), in the Southern Song style; depicts a dream described by Prince An Pyeong (安平大君 安平大君) in 1447.
• The dream is based on a short piece of prose *Taohuayuanji* (桃花源記) by poet Tao Yuanming (陶淵明) (365-427) describing a hidden utopia.
• Beside the painting Prince An Pyeong wrote the title and a poem: subsequently some 20 other scholars, including Sin Sukju (申叔舟) added their calligraphy praising the painting (with the scroll being extended to accommodate them).
• Currently kept in Nara and designated as a Japanese, "Important Cultural Property". It is not known how it originally came to be in Japan but it is thought to have been there before 1893 and maybe as early as during the 1592-97 Hideyoshi invasions. It has been exhibited in Korea several times.

Gang Hui-an (姜希顔) 1417-64) - scholar-official who painted two of Korea's earliest surviving paintings:

*Picture of a lofty scholar looking at water* (高士觀水圖 고사관수도)
*Picture of a lofty scholar crossing a bridge* (高士渡橋圖 고사도교도)

17th-18th Centuries

• Koreans' popular notion of 'traditional Korea' essentially relates to the 17-18th centuries.
*When Koreans today look back on their past and the civilization their ancestors created before Japan and the West began to play such an important role on the peninsula, it is the culture of the latter half of the Joseon dynasty that most often comes to mind.* For it was only after 1600 that the family structure solidified into the Confucian patriarchy Koreans today view as traditional. Only after 1600
did rival political camps adopt the rigid factional postures that have come to symbolize traditional political culture, and not until after 1600 did Koreans begin enjoying the vernacular fiction and folk arts that modern Koreans consider products of traditional culture.” (Sources II 1997:4)

- This was a period of domestic peace (without popular uprisings which came in the 19th century) and relative - albeit unequal - prosperity.
- Population grew from perhaps around 6-9 million in 1681, to 8-12 million in 1814.

Slavery (奴婢 노비 'slave')

"The Joseon elite heavily relied on slaves for every step of their lives. It was probably slaves... who delivered most of the letters... [and] performed errands such as delivering food and catching fish. They traded goods and conducted land transactions for their masters. They even received bodily punishments in lieu of their masters... During the 16th and 17th centuries, a yangban household often had from several dozen slaves to several hundred, and these slaves constituted the economic foundation for the ruling elite of the time.” (Haboush 2009:230)

- During the 17-18th centuries, and from perhaps as early as the 11th century, around 30% of the population were hereditary slaves.
- There were both official government slaves and private slaves.
- Commoners were said to marry their children to slaves in order for them to avoid military service.
- Hereditary slavery came under criticism by the silhak 'practical learning' (實學 심학) scholars, including Yu Hyeong-won (柳馨遠 1622-73), Yi Ik and Yu Suwon, as being un-Confucian.
- By the late 18th century the slave population had declined to around 10%; in 1801 King Sunjong (1800-34) emancipated nearly all government slaves.

Silhak 'practical learning' (實學 심학)

- Emerged in the 18th century as a reaction to factionalism actively criticizing the dogmatism of Neo-Confucian metaphysics.
- Silhak scholars concerned themselves with practical matters and empirical investigation but had little political influence so their ideas were rarely realised.
- They still regarded themselves as orthodox Confucians but took a critical view of their contemporary society.
- Many of the Silhak scholars knew one another, or at least read one another’s works, but they were not in any sense a consolidated faction.
- Silhak is a modern label, and the notion of silhak may not be so useful because the term is used so broadly.

Seongho Yi Ik (星湖 李瀷 성호 이익 1681-1763)

'Widely versed in many areas of learning, from the physical sciences such as astronomy and geography to legal matters, Yi Ik was very concerned about the reform of agriculture and rural life. He advocated among other matters the abolition of slavery, the citizen’s identification tag (號牌 ho’pae), the gwageo civil-service examination, and all practices which led to the creation of class barriers. He strongly advocated scientific research and study as a means of improving the rural economy. Yi Ik also urged the abolition of money and of the practice of money-lending, which he felt led to usury, and which in turn created misery in the lives of the people. Like his predecessors, Yi Ik did not envisage the development of a commercial economy, but instead abhorred the possibility of its

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emergence. All of the scholars of the Silhak-pa who followed these lines of thought envisaged the continuation of an essentially agrarian economy.” (Grayson 2002:130)

Bukhak 'Northern Learning' (北學 極學)
- A small subgroup of the Silhak scholars.
- They took an active interest in contemporary Qing China.
- 'Northern' refers to China.
- They all travelled to China.
- Hong Dae-yong (洪大容 洪大容, 1731-83) in particular actually learnt colloquial Chinese in order to be able to speak directly with Chinese scholars.

- Several were secondary sons (庶子 師子) - born to secondary wives, and therefore ineligible for government positions, regardless of their ability.
- Were all highly educated and skilled at writing literary Chinese.
- Were an absolute minority - essential a group of friends - with little to no political influence.

Bak Jega (朴齊家 朴齊家 1750-1805)
- Travelled to Beijing on diplomatic missions some four times.
- Wrote Bukhak-ui (北學議 'Discussions of Northern Learning' 1778) which negatively compares conservative Joseon to progressive Qing China.

Other countries were ruined by their extravagance; our country has declined because of its frugality. Why? Because we do not wear patterned silk clothes, there are no looms in the country to weave silk, and the women’s skills have consequently declined. Because we do not appreciate music, the five tones and six pitches have gotten out of tune. Because we use leaky boats and ride unkempt horses, eat out of cracked dishes and live in earthen hovels, craftsmanship, husbandry and pottery have disappeared. This has resulted in farmland lying waste and proper farming methods being lost and in trade being slight and business lost. All four categories of people - scholars, peasants, merchants and artisans - are destitute alike and are unable to assist each other. Even if these poor people were driven every day to strive after luxuries, it would be to no avail." (from a 1786 memorial to King Jeongjo quoted in Sources II 1997:110-11)

On the need for international trade:

"Nowadays the greatest evil facing our country is poverty. By what means can poverty be remedied? By nothing other than trade with China.. The Chinese would certainly grant such a request on the same day it was made...

Books and pictures from all over the world might be procured, and thus the obstinate and narrow-minded views of our local scholars might be shattered without attacking them directly." (from the same 1786 memorial in Sources II 1997:107-8)

Last great but tragic king:

21st King Yeongjo (영조 b.1694 r.1724-76)
- Longest reign in Korean history.
- Genuinely concerned for the plight of commoners: would go to visit them at the palace gates and visited Jongno market where he spoke with merchants.
- Tried to reduce the tax burden on commoners.
- Tried hard to reign in political factions at the court.
- Closed down around 300 unauthorized private schools.
- Insecure because his mother was of low birth and he was accused of murdering his older step brother, the previous king. As a result he strove hard to be the most perfect Confucian king.
- In 1762 killed his own son Prince Sado by having him locked in a rice chest where it took him eight days to die (this was to avoid the moral dilemma of being a good Confucian king and not 'executing' his son).

Prince Sado (思悼世子 사도세자 1735-62)
- Went insane due to the pressure from his father to be perfect.
  - Nominated regent when married aged 15 in 1749
  - Married to Lady Hyegyeong (혜경궁 홍씨 1735-1815) who wrote in han’geul a detailed account of her husband’s descent into madness and death, titled Hanjuung-nok (閑中錄 한중록 1795).
  - In 1759 was replaced as heir apparent by his own son, future King Jeongjo.
  - Drank heavily; had fits of violence; brought prostitutes into the palace; killed people at random.
  - Refused to drink poison so was locked in a rice chest where he expired.

22nd King Jeongjo (정조 r.1776-1800)
- Very good king, felt guilty for his father’s death which he had witnessed as a young child.
  - Concerned for welfare of poor: distributed grain and accepted petitions.
  - Tried to protect abandoned children.
  - Abolished office that hunted runaway slaves (wanted to abolish slavery completely but failed).
  - Taught personally at the Gyujanggak royal library (奎章閣) established in Gyeongbukgung palace in 1776.
  - Approved the building and rebuilding of Buddhist temples though not within the walls of Seoul: founded Yongju-sa temple (龍珠寺) himself, near Suwon, where rites were held for his father.
  - At the same time he remained a diligent Neo-Confucian: during his reign he paid 70 processional visits to royal tombs around Gyeonggi-do (perhaps out of guilt for his own father’s death).
  - In 1789 he had his father’s remains reburied at a geomantically auspicious spot on Mount Hwa south of Seoul: in 1794 he began building a castle-city nearby called Hwaseong (華城 화성 completed 1796 - modern Suwon city, now a UNESCO heritage site) and intended to move the court here but ultimately didn’t.

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Mid Joseon painters:

Sin Sa’imdang 申師任堂 신사임당 1504-51
Flower and insect paintings 草蟲圖 초충도 chochung-do

Gyeomjae Jeong Seon 謙齋 鄭敾 겸재 정선 1676-1759
- Came from a lowly yangban family which had failed the civil examination for several generations.
- His father died when he was aged 13 and so he was brought up by his mother’s family.
- He worked at the Office of Paintings (圖畵署 도화서) before taking up an official position at Cheongha, North Gyeongsang-do province.
- During his fifties, he introduced the jin’gyeong-sansu 'true view' landscape style (眞景山水) as opposed to gwannyeom-sansu 'idealistic' landscapes (觀念山水) based on Chinese scenery. In essence, he started to paint actual Korean landscapes.

Danwon Kim Hongdo 檀園 金弘道 단 원 김홍도 1745-1806?
http://tayler.tistory.com/276?nil_profile=tot&srchid=lliMkVM10
- Most famous painter of the Joseon dynasty.
- Also worked at the Office of Paintings, for some time.
- Painted in a broad range of styles and themes but most well known for the pungsok-hwa 'genre paintings' (風俗畵 風俗畫) depicting scenes of daily Korean life.

Hyewon Sin Yunbok 蕙園 申潤福 혜원 신윤복 1758-?
- The only fact really known about Hyewon is that his father, Iljae Sin Hanpyeong (逸齋 申漢枰 1735-1809?), was also a painter.
- Hyewon also painted genre scenes, known for their racier depictions, often featuring female gisaeng (妓生 娼生) entertainers.
- Both Danwon and Hyewon also painted erotic genre paintings, chunhwa (春畵 春畫).