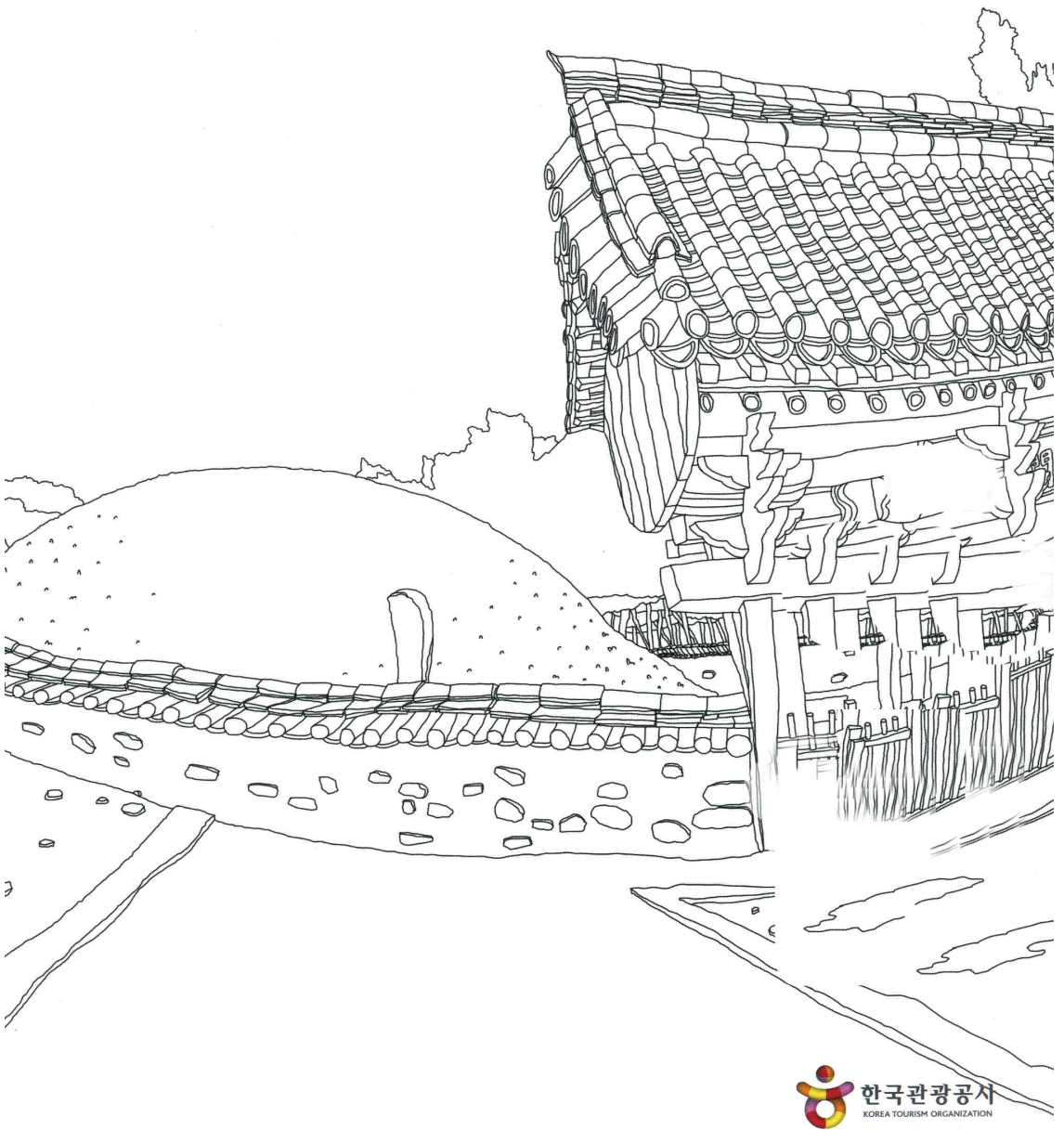
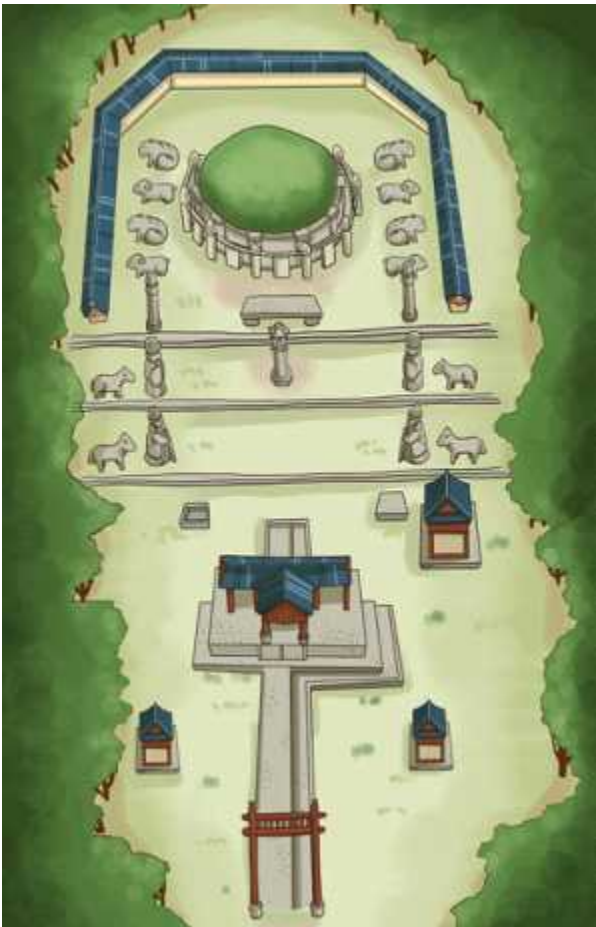


## The Royal Tombs of the Joseon

1. The Royal Tombs of the Joseon
2. Donggureung
3. Seoreung
4. Seosamneung
5. Seolleung/Jeongneung
6. Heolleung/Illeung
7. Gwangneung
8. Yunggeolleung



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| Royal Tombs of the Joseon Dynasty | 1.An Encounter with the Royal Tombs of the Joseon Dynasty, UNESCO World Heritage Sites |
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Welcome to the Royal Tombs of the Joseon Dynasty. A collection of these royal tombs is regarded as an embodiment of 500-year history of Joseon, the last dynasty of Korea. So, you will be able to learn about the tradition and basic principles of the dynasty from these tombs. Joseon was founded in 1392 and ruled by a succession of 27 monarchs from King Taejo to King Sunjong. The dynasty left a total of 42 royal tombs scattered over 18 locations in the Korean Peninsula. Among them, 40 royal tombs located in South Korea are registered on

the list of UNESCO’s World Heritage Sites since 2009. The Royal Tombs of the Joseon Dynasty tend to be more highly regarded historically and culturally than the similar structures in other countries. Royal tombs of all ruling kings and their queens are included and the tombs have maintained their original conditions of architecture and landscape. Also, the annual ancestral rites are well preserved to honor the memory of deceased kings and to show respect for their achievements. Both the tombs and the ancestral rites are often cited as tangible evidence of the tradition, history and aesthetic creativity of the Joseon Dynasty. What makes these cultural legacies even more valuable is the philosophy embedded within them. Joseon kings wished their graves to represent the austere and dignified life of their ancestors and to be

simple rather than grand, so that their construction would reduce the burden upon their people. They were extremely careful in paying respect to their ancestors through traditional rituals and the meticulous management, and sought to build sanctuaries in harmony with nature, thereby inflicting little damage on the surrounding environment. That explains why the tombs still maintain great harmony with the surrounding natural environment even though they are now located in urban areas. Today, a variety of structures in the graveyards are comfortably embraced by the natural environment, and many of these royal tombs are regarded as historic parks. Now, let's start an exciting tour of these valuable heritage sites and enjoy a leisurely walk through the attractive greenery. You will also have an opportunity to learn some interesting aspects of the Joseon Dynasty.

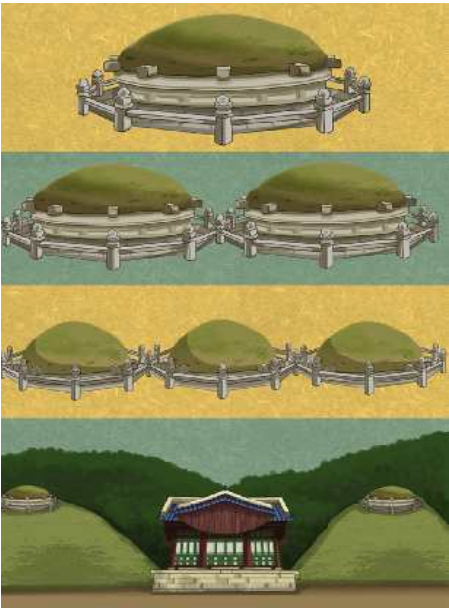
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| Royal Tombs of the Joseon Dynasty | 2. The Construction of the Royal Tombs of the Joseon Dynasty |
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The Royal Tombs of the Joseon Dynasty were planned and built on the basis of Confucianism and the principles of feng shui. According to feng shui theory, the energy of natural surroundings, such as mountains and bodies of water, was believed to affect one's life and fortune. Therefore, it was crucial to find an auspicious site for building houses or graves. Especially, the burial site of a king or queen was regarded as being particularly important because it would be directly related with the state's destiny. As for the royal tomb, they preferred a serene and snug place located within about forty kilometers of the royal palace. Spots of outstanding natural beauty were chosen for royal tombs, and they have their back protected by mountains and face wide open space at the front. However, it was not just feng shui that played a crucial role in preparing the royal tomb. The Confucian society put a high value on filial piety. Finding the best place for their deceased parents was also regarded as an expression of the filial piety. Of course, the construction and management of these tombs was one of the most important duties for the people, even in today's Korea. Therefore, the construction of a tomb for a dead king or queen was a very important state affair, and each of Joseon's kings was obliged to complete it successfully.



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| Royal Tombs of the Joseon Dynasty | 3. Understanding the Royal Tombs of the Joseon Dynasty |
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The Royal Tombs of the Joseon Dynasty exhibit interesting similarities in terms of their layout, buildings and monuments. However, there are some variations according to the period they were built. Such differences can be found in the details of their stone monuments, figures, shrine buildings, and grave mounds. These differences are due to the decisions of the kings who actively participated in the construction, offering their own views and intentions. Here are some interesting facts you should know before you visit the royal tombs. First, the Royal Tombs of the Joseon Dynasty are classified into several different types according to the features of their burial mounds. Some tombs have separate burial mounds for the king and his queen, while others have a single mound and they were buried together. Second, in accordance with the ritual decorum of Confucianism, people of higher status were buried west of those of lower rank when they shared the same burial ground. That explains why the king’s burial mound is typically located west of the queen’s. If a king had two legitimate wives, his first consort was buried next to him, and the second was buried next to the first queen, farther away from the king. Finally, each of the royal tombs had its own name, and the names were given according to the virtues or achievements of the king or queen. These virtues and achievements were also reflected in the posthumous honorary titles conferred upon the deceased royals.



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| Royal Tombs of the Joseon Dynasty | 4. A Road to a Royal Tomb of the Joseon Dynasty |
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Each of Joseon’s royal tombs consists of three sections. The first section of the tomb precincts covers the space from the outer entrance to Hongsalmun, or Red Arrow Gate. It marks the boundary between the two realms, the sacred and the profane. The section contains a passageway leading to the burial mounds, and this passageway gently winds itself to preserve the burial mounds from the visitor’s view. The gate standing at its end was painted red, because the color was believed to help repel evil forces from the sacred burial grounds. The second section is where annual ancestral rites are held. Here at the gate begins the two-lane path leading to the tomb’s shrine called Jeongjagak. The raised lane was intended for the spirit, while the lower lane was for the king. There are two buildings on both sides of the lane. One is a kitchen where offerings were prepared, and the other is a guards’ house. The path ends at the shrine, where the ancestral rites took place. The third section is located at the innermost, loftiest part of a royal tomb and is marked by either one or two burial mounds. Each mound is typically protected by stone statues of guards, court officials and animals, and furnished by a variety of stone objects used in the ancestral rites held here.



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| Royal Tombs of the Joseon Dynasty | 5.Stone Guards and Structures around the Burial Mounds |
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Burial section of the Royal Tombs of the Joseon Dynasty houses a variety of stone sculptures. They were designed to decorate these tombs just like the royal palace they had lived. The most conspicuous feature of the burial section is the mound containing the remains of the king and his queen. The mound is enclosed by a set of stone railings and is further protected by a stone screen built on three sides. It is also guarded by stone statues of animals, such as rams and tigers, placed around the mound just inside the screen. Also, stone statues of court officials, both civil and military, stand immediately in front of the mound with their horses to serve their king and queen. There is a rectangular stone table where the ancestral spirits rest, a stone lantern emitting “the light dispelling evil spirits”, and a pair of memorial posts as well.

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| Royal Tombs of the Joseon Dynasty | 6.Ancestral Rites Held at the Royal Tombs of the Joseon Dynasty |
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The rites are still held every year by the descendants of the royal family, and they follow the same procedures established over 600 years ago. The rites are another important factor that registered the Royal Tombs in the UNESCO World Heritage list. The Royal Tombs of the Joseon Dynasty enshrine the bodies of the kings and their queen consorts while the Jongmyo Shrine houses their mortuary tablets. In the Joseon Period, the rites in honor of the virtues and achievements of the royal ancestors were held at both these royal tombs and the Jongmyo Shrine. Before making a formal visit to the royal tomb, the king cleansed his mind and body. Usually, the king's visit was conducted as a ceremonial procession starting from the palace. As the king needed to show himself in person at the rite, all the royal tombs had to be located in the vicinity of the capital, today's Seoul. After arriving at the T-shaped Wooden Shrine, the king burnt incense, offered wine, and recited prayers to his ancestors. These tombs represent the Korea's special cultural legacy, such as loyalty and filial piety, and the core tradition of holding ancestral rites. In other words, the Royal Tombs of the Joseon Dynasty can be regarded as a perfect ensemble that resonates with the basic principles of the Confucianism and its aesthetic sense. From now, let's visit to the individual royal tombs and meet the rich dramas



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| <b>Donggureung</b> | 1. Donggureung, the Largest Royal Cemetery of the Joseon Dynasty |
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Donggureung literally means the “Nine Tombs of the East”. This royal cemetery was named so because they are located in the east of Seoul, today’s City of Guri. Joseon Dynasty was built on the basis of Confucian ideology and highly regarded virtues such as loyalty, filial piety and humility. Naturally, the ideology affected all aspects of the Joseon Dynasty including the establishment and management of the royal tombs. As humble Confucian followers, the Joseon kings wanted the tombs of their ancestors to be simple and modest. However, the royal ancestors were regarded as parents of all their people and symbols of the state itself. So, the royal tombs still should be solemn enough to pay maximum respect to them. That is why the Royal Tombs of the Joseon Dynasty feature comfortably small sizes, giving little burden to the surrounding nature and creating a peaceful harmony with it. Of course, the nine royal tombs in this royal cemetery are no exceptions. Especially, Donggureung tends to attract more attention than others, because it includes the Royal Tomb of King Taejo, the founder and the first king of the dynasty. This huge royal cemetery was established as his successors built royal tombs near this area for more than 400 years. Now then, let’s move and meet at each tomb.

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| Donggureung | 2. Sureung - Crown Prince Hyomyeong and His Consort, Queen Sinjeong |
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Sureung is the royal tomb of Crown Prince Hyomyeong and his consort. He was the eldest son of King Sunjo, the 23rd king of the dynasty, and his consort was posthumously titled Queen Sinjeong. Traditionally, husband and wife were buried under a single mound in the belief that such burial would help the couple continue the marital relationship even after death. And this tomb is a fine example for this tradition. According to historical records, the prince was a devoted filial child and an ambitious young man full of reformatory ideas. When he was eighteen, he started active participation in political affairs on behalf of his sick father and continued to make distinguished achievements in the political arena in the 19th century. For instance, he tried hard to restore royal sovereignty by counteracting the political influence of maternal relatives. He also maintained politically impartial stance in recruiting capable resources for the government. Also, he was a talented man of letters and performing arts enthusiast. He wrote many poems and published essay collections. He even wrote lyrics for the musical works and choreographed dances performed in the court. Unfortunately, the prince died at the age of twenty two before receiving the opportunity to be crowned. Accordingly, his tomb was built as that of a crown prince at first. His tomb was changed later to fit the status of a king, after his son was enthroned to be King Heonjong, the 24th king of the Joseon Dynasty. Queen Sinjeong Crown

Prince Hyomyeong, the occupant of this royal tomb, died young before he was given an opportunity to be crowned. However, his consort relished a long, prosperous life, and she is generally referred to by her posthumous title Queen Sinjeong. History shows that she was a powerful charismatic figure and actively engaged herself in the state and royal household affairs until her death in 1890 at the age of eighty two. After the prince died in 1830, an eight-year-old boy born between the prince and his consort was enthroned. The new king, Heonjong, honored his deceased father with a king's title, and raised his mother's royal status to a queen dowager. Sadly, King Heonjong died young, too, leaving no heir to succeed to the throne. It was eventually given to a minor royal who had been leading a poor farmer's life. The farmer king died only fourteen years after he was crowned, again, leaving no heir. By then, Queen Sinjeong was in the status of the queen grandmother and the most senior member of the royal family. It meant that she had the right to appoint the heir to the crown. After much consideration, she adopted the twelve-year-old son of a distant relative of the royal family, and crowned him into the 26th king of the dynasty. She expected the alliance with the boy king's biological father to help her remove her political rivals and move ahead with various reform plans. In the following ten years, the two regents drove out corrupted officials and reformed the tax system. Also, they decided to abolish private Confucian academies because their political influence had been a lot of threats to royal sovereignty. Crown Prince Hyomyeong's untimely early death deprived him of the opportunity to be king and rule the country as he had planned. Ironically, however, the opportunity was given to his consort. While relishing a long life, she had a large influence in the history of Joseon during the late 19th century.

## Donggureung

### 3. Hyeolleung-A Tragic Chapter in the History of the Joseon's Royal Family



Hyeolleung is the royal tomb of King Munjong, the 5th king of the Joseon Dynasty. He is buried with his consort, Queen Hyeondeok, under separate mounds. The mound in the west is the king's and that in the east the queen's. He was the first child of King Sejong, the 4th king of the dynasty who is generally regarded as the greatest king in Korean history. Historic records say that King Munjong was a devoted filial son and a man of great knowledge. Even when he was a crown prince, he played a very important role in the political arena and actively helped his father ruling the country. Unfortunately, he suffered from ill health for most of his life, and abruptly died just two years after being crowned. Misfortune had attacked his consort, before it did her husband. Queen Hyeondeok, then crown princess, died just three days after giving birth to a boy. This boy later became King Danjong, and he was also the subject of one of the most tragic events in the history of the dynasty. King Danjong inherited crown at the age of twelve. However, his uncle Suyang decided to take the crown from his young nephew. His excuse was that the newly founded dynasty needed a powerful ruler to be protected from ambitious aristocrats. The usurpation of the throne was followed by the boy king's tragic death and the disgrace upon his mother. However, Suyang had to face the

tragic destiny as well. After he was enthroned, he suffered from skin disease for a long time. Moreover, his eldest prince died at the age of 20, in the same year when King Danjong died, and the second son also died only 13 months after the enthronement.



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| <b>Donggureung</b> | <b>4.Mongneung-King Seonjo who Endured the Darkest Period of the Joseon Dynasty</b> |
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The occupant of Mongneung is King Seonjo, who ruled the dynasty during the late 16th century. He came to the throne at the age of sixteen, following the untimely death of his predecessor, King Myeongjong. As he was young and born to a minor royal, the teenage king tried hard to establish his own power base by recruiting new, talented officials. Actually, some of the greatest historic figures in Korean history were produced during this period. Unfortunately, his reign was also one of the most challenging, turbulent years in the entire history of the dynasty. The hard times began in 1592 when several tens of thousands of Japanese troops arrived at the southeastern part of Joseon. It was the start of the seven year war. The formidable invaders were armed with advanced weapons like matchlock guns, and the miserably unprepared land troops of Joseon lost almost all the early battles. However, the Japanese invasion ended in failure, owing to the rise of civilian fighters and the support from the Ming Dynasty of China. More than anything else, Admiral Yi Sun-sin led the impossible victories in all the battles fought in the seas. After the war, King Seonjo tried his utmost to rebuild the devastated country and boost people's morale. He restored government documents burnt during the war, and awarded prizes to people who accomplished distinguished achievements.

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| Donggureung | 5. Geonwolleung -King Taejo, the Founder of the Joseon Dynasty |
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Geonwolleung is the royal tomb of King Taejo, the founder and the first ruler of the Joseon Dynasty. That explains why the tomb is located at the most elevated part of this royal cemetery. Before founding his own dynasty in 1392, he was one of the most capable general of the Goryeo Dynasty. During the 14th century, the rulers of Goryeo were suffering from a lack of royal authority and political intervention from the Mongolian Yuan Dynasty. Corrupted aristocrats and Buddhist monks were also threats to the royal court. In addition, military conflicts with neighboring countries made people's life harder. During this turbulent period, he won numerous battles and rose into prominence. His distinguished service as a military leader helped him earn the people's favor and supports from the emerging Neo-Confucian elites. He exploited the favorable condition to overthrow the old, already crumbling, dynasty and set up his own kingdom. He chose Joseon for the name of his new kingdom and Seoul as its capital. While he was an excellent warrior, he was also a competent politician. He actively invited ideas of great Confucian thinkers of his time as a firm spiritual base for the new kingdom. He established a foundation for the government based on the rule of law for the first time in Korean



history, and reformed the land system to increase agricultural productivity. King Taejo's achievement can be summarized by the establishment of a country governed by Confucian ideology and the development of agriculture to boost people's welfare. These two, among others, helped form the identity of Joseon. How the King Taejo's Dying Wish was Ignored King Taejo had two wives, but he is buried alone in this tomb. Where are his wives, then? His first wife died in 1391, one year before he founded the new dynasty. She was buried at a site in today's Gaeseong in North Korea. He loved his second wife, Queen Sindeok, so dearly. Using his affection, she persuaded him to hand over the throne to her son, not to his first wife's son. Also, when she died before him, the old king was left in total devastation. So, he broke the regulation and built her grave within the Seoul City Wall, and even constructed a Buddhist temple to commemorate her. However, two years later, a tragic incident happened and it changed the destiny of Joseon. King Taejo's son from the first wife, resented his stepbrother's succession to the throne, and struck the palace and killed the king's supporters including the crown prince. After this incident, the founder of the Joseon Dynasty lost his power. Moreover, when he planned to be buried beside his second wife, the new king never allowed his father's earnest intention. Finding that his plan would be infeasible, the founder king asked his son to build his burial mound planted with pampass grass brought from his hometown in the dynasty's northernmost province. The new king found the most auspicious burial site in the capital, and buried his father here. Then, he had the burial mound of his father's tomb planted with pampass grass brought from his father's hometown. It must have been an act of atonement for his unfilial conduct. If you visit here in autumn or winter, you can see the mound is covered with pampass grass while the rest of the royal tombs are covered with turf. King Taejo was a great war hero and the founder of a dynasty which existed on the Korean Peninsula for over five hundred years. The last phase of his life was, however, infused with a sad story of a man who lost loved ones because of the political struggle.



Hwireung is the royal tomb of Queen Jangnyeol. She was the second wife of King Injo, who ruled the dynasty during the mid-17th century. Records tell us that she experienced six state funerals during her lifetime. Some of these funerals led to extremely fierce controversies over the type of mourning garments the queen should wear and how long. The Joseon Dynasty was built on the Confucian ideology, and it had extremely strict rules about funerals. For instance, the rules of the state funeral provided details about who wear what type of garments for how long. In short, the protocol meant the status of the deceased and the mourner's relationship with them as well as the royal authority. The controversies over her mourning garments were not only developed into a matter of the conventional formalities. It also intensified the strife between political factions and disrupted the state administration. In the end, the mourning garment controversies reflected the vulnerability of the royal family. King Injo had removed his predecessor from power via a coup to take the throne. So, this left the new king's family vulnerable to the influence of powerful aristocrats. The conflicts over the queen's mourning garments were dramatic examples to show the political situation at that time.



Wolleung is the royal tomb of King Yeongjo, the dynasty's 21st ruler, and his second Queen. Along with his grandson, King Jeongjo, he is widely regarded as a wise and capable ruler who opened up an era of unprecedented social stability and cultural achievement. He was born to a court lady of low rank, but grew to the longest living and longest reigning monarch of the dynasty. He ruled Joseon for 52 years until his death in 1776 at the age of 83. Once brought to the throne, he started to cure his dynasty's chronic disease of factional strife in the government. He adopted a policy to recruit talents regardless of what faction they belonged to and contributed to the achievement of political stability. The king was also fond of learning, so he regularly held academic meetings on Confucian classics. Through these meetings, he studied and exchanged views on various state affairs, and made significant achievements in legal and agricultural policies. He was faithful to the teachings of Confucianism and led a frugal life. He focused all his attention on people's safety and welfare as well. For example, he reformed tax system to reduce the burden of taxes on people, and prohibited harsh corporal punishment. His achievements include the anti-flood project for Cheonggyecheon stream flowing across the heart of Seoul. This project also created many jobs for the poor families, and boosted the economy in the area. His

people-centered governance and love of knowledge were transferred to his successor, and the dynasty's cultural achievements reached a zenith. Take a look around the two burial mounds of the royal couple. There is no stone screen behind them, and the stone railings enclosing them are marked by delightfully plain carving. They still reflect the king's austere lifestyle.



Seooreung literally means the “Five Tombs of the West”. As it suggests, this royal cemetery is located at a site in the west of the royal palace. It is the second largest royal cemetery following Donggureung. As you may have noticed already, it’s easily accessible from downtown Seoul. That is why it tends to attract more visitors than other royal tombs of the Joseon Dynasty. Visitors in this royal cemetery can get to another royal cemetery located nearby, called Seosamneung. This royal cemetery began to be created in 1457, when a tomb was built to bury the first son of King Sejo. Today, the cemetery contains the tombs occupied by King Sejo’s two sons and their consorts. Also, it can be regarded as the family cemetery of King Sukjong, the 19th king of Joseon. His three queens, daughter-in-law and king himself are in this cemetery. The cemetery also contains another woman of King Sukjong, Royal Lady Jang. She was one of the most famous royal concubines and had once been in the status of Queen. Except for the tomb of King Sukjong, all the rest of the tombs in this cemetery are only partially open to the public for the protection of valuable historical heritage. Now, let’s start our tour to the graves of Joseon kings and their queen consorts in this cemetery.



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| Seoreung | 2. Queen Died Young from Small Pox,<br>Ingneung |
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Ingneung is the royal tomb occupied by Queen Ingyeong. She was the first wife of King Sukjong, but she is buried alone although her husband is also buried in the same royal cemetery. What happened to this royal couple? Born to a powerful aristocratic family, she was selected to marry the crown prince when she was only eleven years old. Two years later, she became queen when her husband was enthroned in 1674. However, she died from small pox at the age of twenty, just ten years after she was brought to the palace. Just as in the West until the eighteenth century, small pox had often been a fatal disease for many people, and she was one of the unfortunate victims. Once she was found to have been caught by the horrible disease, she had to be isolated even from her husband until the very final moment. While she was the king's first wife, little is known about the love story between the royal couple. Sadly for her, King Sukjong didn't seem to insist that he would be buried with his first wife. He is buried with the two wives he married after her.



Directions Gyeongneung contains two burial mounds built for Crown Prince Uigyeong and his wife. The prince's wife is now known with her posthumous title Queen Sohye. According to the Confucian tradition, a husband's mound should be west of his wife's. However, in Gyeongneung, the prince's grave is located east of his wife's. More interestingly, the queen's grave appears far grander than her husband's. You must be curious why. The crown prince died at the age of twenty. It's typical that crown prince's grave must be plain compared with royal tombs for his senior family members. Contrastingly, his wife's grave is much grander with more elaborately carved monumental stones. This is because her status was the queen grandmother at the time of her death. Records show that she was a woman of literary talent, political vision and iron will to attain her vision. She wrote a book on the instructions for women to deal with the duties of royal and aristocratic ladies. She was also one of the most influential political figures of her time, and lived a turbulent life full of ups and downs. She witnessed her father-in-law taking the crown from his young nephew, and exploited her political skills to make her fatherless son succeed his uncle and become the king. Her son's enthronement gave her the title of queen mother along with enormous political power. However, her glorious life ended abruptly and tragically when she had to confront the misrule of her violent grandson.





Hongneung is a grave of a queen who was destined to wait for her husband who would never come back to her. The heroine of this sad story is Queen Jeongseong, the first wife of King Yeongjo who ruled the dynasty during the mid-18th century. She married him when she was just thirteen years old. She shared many great moments in his life, when he was invested as the crown prince, and then enthroned. Later, the king wrote about the 43 years he spent with his first wife, and appreciated her filial piety. Actually, the king wished to be buried next to his devoted first wife at his death, and had a plot for his own grave to the right of the queen's grave. That is why the queen's burial mound appears a little lopsided in the tomb's burial section. However, his wish was never realized. King Jeongjo, his grandson and successor to the throne, wanted a more auspicious site for the grandfather and the dynasty. Also, the new king had to think about his grandfather's second wife who was alive at that time. In the end, the deceased king was buried in Wolleung, sharing it with his second wife.



Changneung is the royal tomb of King Yejong and his wife Queen Ansun. The king was born as the second son to King Sejo, and succeeded to the throne after his brother who died young. However, he died just fourteen months after being crowned, at the age of nineteen. The young king reigned for such a short period, but some of the most significant achievements were made under his ruling. Especially, through his achievement in land reform, farming lands were distributed to poor farmers so that they could relieve themselves from poverty. However, his tomb site was not regarded as auspicious. Feng shui experts even in his period warned that using the site would end with the death of important members of the royal family. Was it because of the inauspicious site? His successor was not his offspring but the son of his elder brother who had also died young before him. All of the king's children, two sons and a daughter, died without children. This tomb has also suffered many fire accidents, and often dubbed as the tomb of ordeals.

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| Seoreung | 6. Tomb for a Heroic Fighter against Powerful Political Factions, Myeongneung |
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Myeongneung is the royal tomb of King Sukjong and his two wives. He is renowned for the efforts he made to break a political deadlock during his reign. The government of the Joseon Dynasty was organized and run by officials. They belonged to several different political factions, and the system was similar to today's political parties. To strengthen royal authority and maintain balance in his government, he made many transitions of major policies and key positions between the political factions. Such reformation of the government often involved dramatic changes in the lives of his queens and concubines. As they were almost always connected with the major political factions, their destiny tended to be affected by the political situations. Therefore, the rise and fall of the royal ladies had a direct impact on the factions supporting them, and vice versa. Among the king's several wives, Queen Inhyeon and Royal Lady Jang had particularly dramatic lives. Many Korean people were fascinated by the story of these two women, and a number of TV dramas and movies have been made based on the queen's ordeal and happy ending and Jang's ambition and tragic death. King Sukjong was an astute ruler armed with political skills. He fought hard with ruling conservatives to expand his tax reform plan to the entire nation. He adopted a new, much practical, monetary system, and

greatly contributed to commercial development. He also introduced the identification plaque system for more effective governance, and it can be comparable to today's national identification system.



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| Seosamneung | 1. Graves for the Royals Suffered by Mischievous Destiny |
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Seosamneung literally means the “Three Tombs of the West”. This royal cemetery not only contains three royal tombs, but also includes graves for minor royals and placenta chambers. When royal members were born, the afterbirths were collected and enshrined in these monumental stone chambers. The tradition of the Joseon Dynasty did not allow the graves of royal concubines, princes or princesses in any royal tomb. However, these graves for minor royals and childbirth monuments were gathered here in the middle of confusion during the Japanese colonial rule and the rapid industrialization in the 20th century. It is rather sad to witness such violation of royal traditions and rules in this cemetery. Among the three royal tombs in this cemetery, only two, Huireung and Yereung, are open to the public.



Huireung is the royal tomb of Queen Janggyeong, the second wife of King Jungjong who ruled the Joseon Dynasty during the early 16th century. She died of a post-natal illness at the age of twenty five. Originally, her grave was built at a site near the royal tomb of Heonilleung in the south of Seoul. But the grave had to be moved to the current location, according to a plot by an aristocrat named Kim An-ro. After his son married to a princess of King Jungjong, he insisted that the queen's grave was on an inauspicious site. He exploited the occasion to remove his political rivals who had been related with the construction of her tomb. Despite the complications, all seemed to end well for her when the king was buried next to her. But there was a dramatic reversal of destiny waiting for her. The king's powerful new wife lived long after his death, and moved his grave to a new location, leaving the short-lived queen all alone.



Hyoreung is the royal tomb of King Injong and his wife Queen Inseong. Unfortunately, this tomb is not open to the public. He was born as the first son to King Jungjong. He became a king of the Joseon Dynasty in 1544, but died just 9 months after enthronement. He is widely known and admired for his extraordinary filial piety. His last wish was that he should be buried beside his parents. That explains why his tomb is named Hyoreung which literally means the “Royal Tomb of Filial Piety”. His wish came true as he was buried in this royal cemetery near the tombs of his parents. Sadly, his father’s grave was moved from the cemetery to a new location by his stepmother. Her excuse was that her husband’s tomb site was not auspicious according to the feng shui principles. But everyone knew that the queen’s intention was to separate the king from his other wife and their son.





Yereung is the royal tomb of King Cheoljong and his queen. This king has a dramatic story about his enthronement. His predecessor, King Heonjong, died without an heir in 1849, and the dead king's mother moved fast to find the best candidate to be the heir to the throne. Finally, she found a young, uneducated farmer living at a remote village to the west of the capital. Actually, he was a grandson of a royal family member, who was banished as a victim of political strife. For the queen, he was surely closest in line of succession to the throne, and swiftly declared him the heir to the throne. The young farmer became the 25th king of the dynasty at the age of nineteen. However, the dead king's mother became the queen grandmother, and she ruled the country as his regent. In fact, he was chosen to be king not because he was the most legitimate heir to the throne but because he was a royal with no power behind him. So, the dynasty in this period was under the control of the powerful queen grandmother and her relatives. Gradually, the king came to prepare himself to rule the country with his own plan. He tried hard to make his country to a better place for common people to live in. However, even after the queen grandmother's regency ended, there was not much for him to do. He died at the age of thirty three, just fourteen years after enthronement.

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| Seolleung | 1. Tomb for the Builder of the National Code,<br>Seolleung |
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Seolleung is the royal tomb of King Seongjong and his wife Queen Jeonghyeon. He became king in 1469 when he was just thirteen years old, and reigned for 25 years when he died at the age of thirty eight. He made distinguished achievements in many areas, and systematically established the foundation for the dynasty. Today’s historians agree that the greatest of all he accomplished is the completion and publication of The National Code. As the title suggests, The National Code is a vast, systematic collection of laws to rule the country. It includes all laws, edicts, regulations and customs established for about one hundred years since the foundation of the dynasty. For the king, it was a complete record of the past and a blueprint for the future. Surprisingly, the code shows that the dynasty had modern features in the system of running the country. For instance, the kings operated a highly developed system for the inspection, expostulation and impeachment of government officials. The system was effective to prevent corruption of officials and misuse or abuse of their power. King Seongjong is also admired for the cultural achievements made in various areas. He promoted learning and education, and diverse books on philosophy, history, music and other topics were published during his reign.

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| Jeongneung | 2. Grave of a King Sleeping Alone and Restless |
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Jeongneung is the royal tomb of King Jungjong, who took the crown via a coup in 1506. His predecessor, King Yeonsangun, turned into a hideous despot after he found that his biological mother was hated by the royal family and punished to death. Therefore, King Jungjong's coup could receive widespread support not only from the ruling class but from common people as well. Following the success of the coup, the new king committed to consolidating the royal authority and stabilizing his government. He tried to rejuvenate the Neo-Confucian politics and promoted education. He also reinstated victims of political strives and used resources to improve defense capabilities. The king had three queen consorts, but is buried alone in this tomb. He couldn't be with his first queen because she was from the family directly related with his disgraced predecessor. So, he was once buried next to his second queen who had died before him. But his tomb was moved to this place, because his third queen didn't want her husband to sleep with her rival. Meanwhile, the king's third queen had to give up her plan to be buried next to her husband because the site was regularly flooded. So, her grave was also built alone in another place. That explains how King Jungjong was separated from all his three wives and buried here alone.



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| Heolleung | 1. A King who Became Cold-hearted for His Dynasty |
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Heolleung is the royal tomb of King Taejong and his wife Queen Wongyeong. He was born as the fifth son to the founder of the Joseon Dynasty, and he played a crucial role in the process of revolution led by his father. However, after the new dynasty was established, he was excluded from the process of distributing honors. Instead, other participants in the revolution feared his will and capability. And they were right because the prince pulled off a coup and removed all the known political opponents. The success of the coup brought him to the throne, and he gained all the power. He could become king right away if he wanted to, but he insisted that his elder brother should succeed his father. Later, he became the third king of the dynasty. He purged all his political rivals to eliminate threats to the construction of a new kingdom, and his wife's family was not an exception. In fact, his cold judgments and decisiveness helped the newly founded dynasty fast recover stability and authority. He also adopted the administrative system of six ministries and divided the country by eight provinces. This system became the basis of the administrative divisions of Korea today. It was also during his reign that the dynasty began to make official historic records. It is called The Annals of the Joseon Dynasty, and is now registered in UNESCO's Memory of the World in 1997. The systems and institutions established during his reign became a firm basis of the dramatic development during the reign of his son, King Sejong.

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| Illeung | 2. Tomb for the Victim of the Struggle with Powerful In-laws |
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Illeung is the royal tomb of King Sunjo and his wife Queen Sunwon. He was the only surviving son of King Jeongjo. His birth was celebrated nationwide, and he was crowned at the age of eleven after his father's abrupt death. His enthronement aroused a lot of hopes and expectations among people. However, there was not much he could do because most of the key government posts were in the hands of his wife's family. As a desperate effort to create a balance of power, he married his heir to a girl from another powerful family. Also, he actively employed the relatives of his daughter-in-law. While the government was still largely controlled by the queen's relatives, the king could bring stability and balance to his government with his queen's support. He was particularly interested in people's lives. He adopted relief programs to support poor families in the years of bad harvest and reduce tax burdens. Personally, the queen had to witness the untimely death of her first son and her grandson. As her grandson died without an heir, the queen, now the queen grandmother, had a right to appoint the successor. So, she found an unknown minor royal leading a farmer's life at a remote village, and appointed him as her grandson's heir. Today, she is generally regarded as one of the most charismatic royal ladies of the dynasty. Indeed, she was an unprecedented powerful figure who acted as a regent for two young kings during the 19th century.

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| Gwangneung | 1. Tomb for a Vicious Usurper who Turned into a Great King |
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Gwangneung contains two burial mounds, one for King Sejo and the other for his wife Queen Jeonghui. King Sejo is a controversial monarch, who ruled the Joseon Dynasty during the mid-15th century. For one thing, he snatched crown from his young nephew, banished him to a remote place and made him died there. He also killed many loyal ministers who censured his disgraceful deeds. On the other hand, he made remarkable achievements in many aspects of state affairs. So, he is widely admired as a true successor to the great monarch King Sejong. Today, historians seem to focus more on the achievements he made than his misdeed. It is generally agreed that it was King Sejo who laid a firm foundation for the newly established dynasty. To strengthen royal authority, he fought hard against powerful and ambitious aristocrats in and around the royal court. Thanks to correct population survey and land reform, his state treasury with tax revenue grew dramatically. He also reformed the military as an effort to strengthen national defense against foreign enemies. Moreover, it was also under his rule that Joseon established a government agency responsible for the grain price management. For the price stability, the

agency bought grains from farmers in the years of good harvest and sold them back in bad years. He had long been blamed for his choice of extreme actions for his ambition and stability of royal authority. But his outstanding achievements gave him a special status, and his spirit tablet is enshrined for good in the royal ancestral shrine. Gwangneung, a Historic Turn in the Royal Tombs of the Joseon Dynasty The royal tomb of King Sejo tends to attract more attention, because it has a special position in the history of the Royal Tombs of the Joseon Dynasty. As a devoted Confucian follower, he tried to lead a frugal life. He also left a will to his descendants that they should make his tomb simple and humble so that his people would not suffer much from its building. With the simpler tomb, he wished to save people from hard labor and preserve state funds. His decision influenced the royal descendants to continue to reform and change their burial system. That is why these two burial mounds have only stone railings and no stone screen encircling their lower parts. The tomb also has no paved passage linking the entrance to the T-shaped Wooden Shrine. Still, the vicinity of this tomb has great scenery. The Gwangneung Forest containing the tomb and the Korea National Arboretum was inscribed to the UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserves in 2010. You can here relish a peaceful walk around one of the most valuable and best protected green areas in Korea.



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| Geolleung | 1. Tomb of a Ruler Devoted to State Reform |
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Geolleung is the royal tomb of King Jeongjo and his consort Queen Hyoui. He ruled the dynasty during the late 18th century, and is generally regarded as one of the most successful rulers. He is widely admired as a reformer and pragmatist, and made distinguished achievements in many areas. He established the royal library called Gyujanggak to provide ample opportunities for talented scholars regardless of their social status. The library played a crucial role in the accumulation of knowledge and publication of books on various subjects including law and agriculture. Also, he was a good archer himself and keenly interested in military affairs. He encouraged the compilation and publication of books on military strategies, too. Especially, he tried to be extremely careful regarding the imposition of the military service duty. It contributed to the stabilization of the country on the basis of strong supports from people. But his path to the throne had been tough, largely because of the hostility of the powerful aristocrats. That is why the king felt he needed a major reform for the dynasty. Unfortunately, he died in 1800 at the age of forty nine, and all his reform programs abruptly ended. His mysterious death is one of historic accidents modern Korean people feel most sorry about. His tomb was built at the current location according to his wish to stay nearer to his parents even after death. His wife is buried beside him in this tomb. She was a devoted filial lady who took good

care of her mother-in-law Queen Hyegyeong. She was also widely admired for the frugal and simple life. King Jeongjo's Historic Royal Procession to Hwaseong During his 24-year reign, King Jeongjo was greatly revered for his devoted filial piety among others. He was always conscious of his duty to his parents as a son. In particular, he moved his father's grave from Seoul and built a new city including palace and fortress. Especially, Hwaseong Fortress in Suwon is generally accepted as the greatest architectural heritage from Joseon. It was also registered on the UNESCO World Heritage list in 1997. The project should complete fast to avoid the interruption of powerful aristocrats. So, he needed the most advanced and efficient construction methods. It led the dramatic development in the building science and technology of the dynasty, and the 5.5km-long fortress walls with related defense facilities and the royal palace were constructed in just eight months. After the construction of the city, the king wanted to display his firm will to protect royal sovereignty. So, he decided to hold a large state event at the new city, to celebrate the sixtieth birthday of his mother Queen Hyegyeong. This huge formal banquet involved the pageantry of royal processions and carried almost the entire royal family and the government. According to the records, all the celebratory events took eight days and over ten thousand people participated in this banquet. Indeed, it was one of the largest events in the history of Joseon. Remarkably, the details of the entire event were carefully depicted by the court painters on a 15m-long folding screens. It includes the royal procession from Seoul to Hwaseong, and is regarded as a valuable cultural heritage of Korea.