

Traditional Jewish Ritual Art on View

By Chung Jin-youn
Staff Reporter

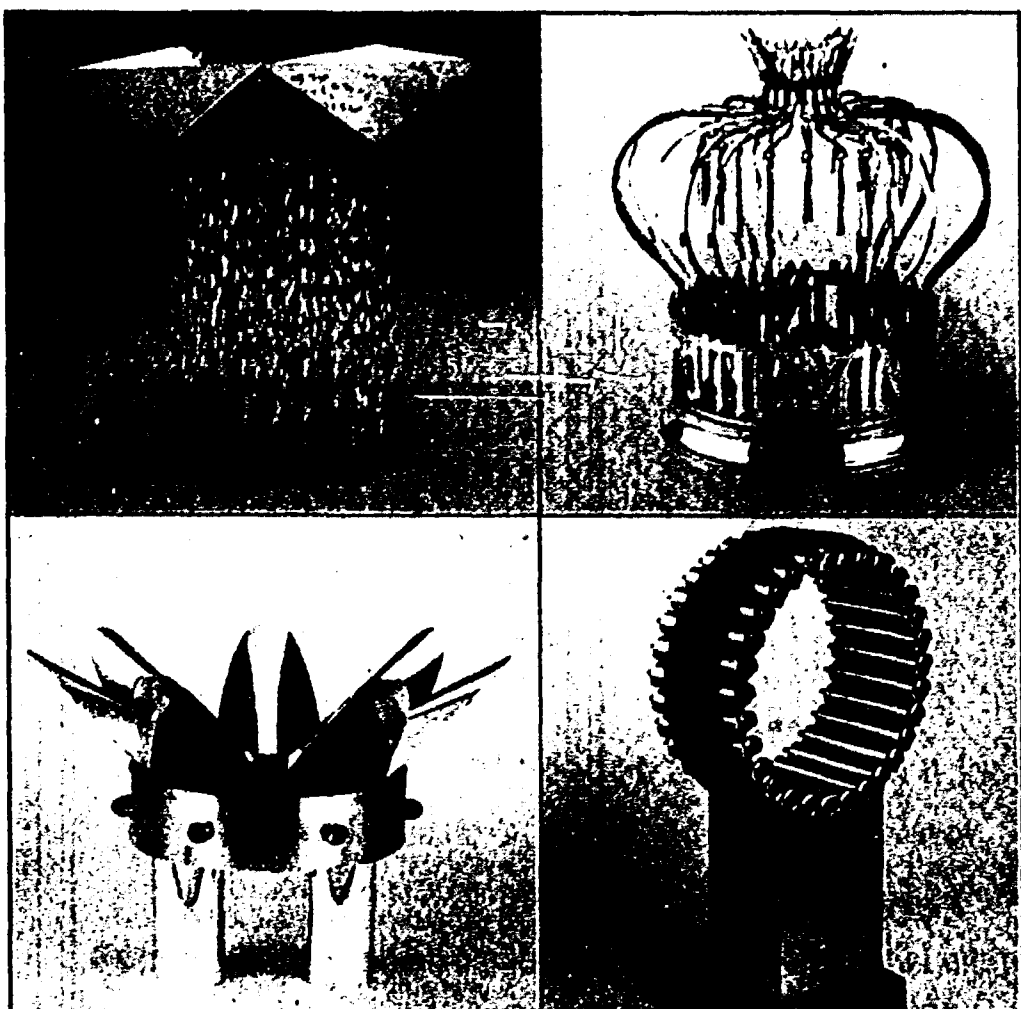
The biggest task for artists from countries, which recently acquired their sovereignties, is often finding cultural paradigms to establish their new identity. Artists in Israel, which became an independent nation only a half-century ago, have sought solutions in recreating the past in a modern context. A clear example is offered by the current Judaic art exhibit at the Design Gallery of the Seoul Arts Center, where millennia-old Hebrew tradition finds a refreshingly contemporary expression.

The exhibit showcases some 140 pieces of ritual paraphernalia, otherwise known as Judaica, which are traditionally found in Jewish homes and synagogues during holidays and festivals.

Judaica is categorized into three groups: Hebrew religious documents, such as the Jewish Holy Book and the Talmud, ritual items, like candles and wine containers, and artworks derived from Hebrew religious motifs. The current exhibit is mostly focused on the second group.

On view are a series of ceremonial candle holders, wine vessels, religious objects and home accessories, such as sent boxes and lunar clocks — all reflecting Biblical messages and stories while at the same time boasting highly contemporary styles.

Although most Korean audiences are not familiar with the religious symbolism associated with each object, its overriding beauty makes



Jewish ritual paraphernalia, otherwise known as Judaica, are on display at the Design Gallery of Seoul Arts Center throughout this month, offering an excellent introduction to the culture of a people known for their resilience and deeply religious lifestyle.

the artwork enjoyable for its esthetics.

The eye-catching pieces are a series of devices called the Crown of Law. Used for holding Jewish holy scroll, known as the Torah, the items range from an extravagant gem-studded silverware to a more abstract and minimalist-styled pieces. The level of

expertise and labor melted into the works reflect the essence of spiritual ideals cherished by the Jewish people.

The designers of the collection are top-notch artists in the country, who attended the renowned national design institution known as the Bezalel Academy. Set up in 1906, the institution

played a leading role in researching the ancient traditions and transcended them into contemporary styles. Many of the featured items are reminiscent of the Baus House Art School design from the early 20th century, when the academy produced many of its prominent artists.

As one of the world's most religious people, Israel has only two non-religious holidays — the national independence day and the memorial day — with the other ten or so originating either from Biblical or historical events involving their Jewish God.

Accordingly, Judaic art, like those at the current show, reflect intricate religious symbolism and the rituals that have evolved over the years. There are certain types of foods that has to be consumed during certain holidays and different names for numerous ceremonial items used for each occasion.

Menorah, for instance, refers to the ritual candle holder with seven hands, and is also featured as a national insignia, whereas Hanukkah, another type of candle holder with nine hands, is used during a holiday to mark the recapturing of Jerusalem in 167 B.C. Havdalah set, another important ritual item, consists of a wine vessel, candle holder, and scent box, and are used during the Sabbath, an ethnic holiday observed every Friday.

Overall, the show offers an excellent introduction to Israeli culture, which have maintained a remarkable ethnic homogeneity despite years of living apart. For details, call 580-1300.

gvoing72@mailcity.com



Musicians and performing artists are entertaining residents in Sorok Island in the South Sea, home to some 900 Hansen's disease patients, in a week-long cultural program organized by the Culture and Tourism Ministry.

Cultural Groups Reach Out to Victims of Hansen's Disease

Korea's major performing art institutions and museums will visit Sorok Island, Chollanamdo, which is home to some 900 victims of Hansen's disease, to present the residents with a variety of cultural events throughout the week.

Among the participating groups are the National Museum of Korea, Contemporary Museum of Modern Arts, National Center for Korean Traditional Performing Arts and Korea National University of Arts.

The event is part of the "Traveling Cultural Tour" organized by the Culture and Tourism Ministry in its effort to offer those living in remote areas and socially disadvantaged exposure to cultural programs.

An exhibition, "Nature and People" at the lobby of National Sorokdo Hospital will showcase paintings and sculptures by modern Korean artists. A photo exhibit on Mt. Kumgang and a mobile exhibit of historic artifacts are also scheduled for the

week. Meanwhile, musicians and dancers from the state-run art troupes will entertain the residents, who are mostly over the age of 70, with a wide range of folk music and dance pieces along with pansori and salmunori shows all day Wednesday.

Currently, the island has a population of some 1,180, which include patients' families, medical staff and volunteer workers. The residents have lived there in almost total isolation from the rest of society.

A deadly epidemic that flourished in the early part of the last century, Hansen's disease has disappeared in most parts of Korea thanks to improvements in hygiene and overall living conditions. However, the patients there are unable to live on their own not only because of osenility but also the serious physical deformations caused by the disease.

gvoing72@mailcity.com

Comfort Women Film to Be Aired on TV in US

By Hong Sun-hee
Staff Reporter

PBS, a U.S. public broadcasting station, will air a documentary film on Korean women who were forced to become sex slaves for the Japanese Imperial Army during World War II.

The film, "Silence Broken: Korean Comfort Women" produced by Kim Tae-sil, 62, a U.S.-based Korean-American, will be shown Thursday and Monday night.

It is the first time that a film dealing with the issue will be broadcast nationwide in the United States. PBS has edited the 90-minute film into an hour and will air a repeat.

The documentary reveals the miserable life led by the young girls who were forced to serve as sexual objects for the Japanese soldiers and the atrocities committed upon them, through interviews with ex-comfort women.

The film also details documentary and other material evidence newly found concerning the "comfort women" and confessions by former Japanese soldiers and officials in charge of providing girls from Korea for Japanese army posts in Southeast Asia.

It traces the abuse and maltreatment they suffered at the hands of their family, community and the government upon their return to Korea and touches upon the nonchalance shown for the subject on the part of Japanese scholars.

Since it premiered at the 17th Asian-American International Film Festival in San Francisco in March last year, the film has been screened in a number of film festivals and in museums in Los Angeles, New York, Denver, Boston and Pusan.

Kim is noted for a series of films looking in-depth into the hardships and wrongs Koreans have suffered in recent times, including "America Becoming" (1991) which projects the realities of emigration experienced by Koreans in the U.S., "Sa-I-Gu" (1995) dealing with the aftermath from the April 1992 ethnic riot in Los Angeles and "Forgotten People" (1995) on ethnic Koreans living in Sakhalin, Far East Russia.

uhuru@koreatimes.co.kr

Guatemalan Archaeologists Discover Ancient Mayan City

GUATEMALA CITY (AP) — Guatemalan archaeologists have unearthed part of what they believe is a Mayan city as large as the sprawling, majestic ruins of the country's famous Tikal site.

A team of national scientists uncovered the "El Pajal" ruins in the northern Guatemalan state of Peten late last

week. The city is 670 to 800 years old, said Salvador Lopez, who led the dig.

Lopez, who could not be reached for comment Sunday, told Guatemala City's Siglo Veintiuno newspaper that it could take several years before all of what El Pajal has to offer is uncovered.

Tikal, about 60 kilometers (37 miles)

northwest of the new site, rivals other great Mayan ruin sites such as Mexico's Chichen Itza and Honduras' Copan. It has attracted international scientists and tourists for decades because of its breathtaking temples — some of which rise more than 45 meters (150 feet) high — and its unique location under the cover of dense jungle.



A model shows a mandarin gown during a fashion show held in Shanghai, China Saturday. A total of 188 mandarin gowns of 20 series were presented during the show. AP-Yonhap

Pope Seeks to Put End to Decades of Fatima Secret

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope John Paul II on Sunday spoke of his deep emotion springing from his trip to Portugal, where, a day earlier on his orders, faithful learned that the so-called third secret of Fatima was a prophecy of the 1981 attempt on his life, not some doomsday vision.

The Vatican's No. 2, Cardinal Angelo Sodano, whom the pope chose to reveal just what was the vision seen by three Portuguese shepherd children in 1917, was quoted as saying in an interview that the pope wanted to put an end to decades of speculation surrounding the secret.

"It seemed opportune to reveal these symbolic visions, also to show that there wasn't anything mysterious," the Italian cardinal said in Rome daily La Repubblica Sunday.

Many believers had feared the secret was about some apocalyptic end looming for humanity.

The other two secrets, based on several visions the little Fatima shepherds had of the Virgin Mary starting on May 13, 1917, had been revealed decades earlier. The visions foretold the end of World War I and the beginning of World War II, and the rise and fall of Soviet Communism.

The pope's third pilgrimage to Fatima was timed to coincide with the anniversary of the May 13, 1981 shooting in St. Peter's Square in which he was gravely wounded.

"Still strong in my heart is the emotion felt yesterday at Fatima in beatifying the little shepherds Francesco and Giacinta Marto, who, together with



Russian Orthodox Church Patriarch Alexy II, center, is escorted to the stage prior to a special service at the Nichorai Church in Tokyo Sunday. Alexy is currently on an eight-day visit to Japan, the first ever visit by a Russian patriarch to the nation. AP-Yonhap

Lucia, still living, had the privilege of seeing the Madonna and speaking with her," John Paul told the public gathered in St. Peter's Square at noon Sunday.

Sister Lucia, the 93-year-old cloistered nun whom the pope met with in Fatima and a cousin of the two other shepherd children, also reported the visions.

Sodano told the faithful at Fatima that the shepherds interpreted a vision of a "bishop clothed in white" as signifying

the pontiff. In the vision, the figure "falls to the ground, apparently dead, under a burst of gunfire," Sodano said.

The cardinal on Saturday said that the pope has credited the Virgin of Fatima with lending a "motherly hand" to guide the bullet's path and spare his life.

Seemingly to want to leave no doubt that for the Catholic church the visions are believable, John Paul has asked a commission led by Cardinal Joseph

Ratzinger, his top guardian of orthodoxy, to issue a text and commentary about the third secret.

Asked in the interview why the pope chose now to reveal a secret that he learned in 1978 in the first days of his papacy, Sodano replied: "Fatima was the most proper place, a symbolic place in the moment in which a millennium, especially such as a tormented century so full suffering, closes."

Referring to the demise of Communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union which promoted atheism, Sodano said on Saturday that Fatima's call "to conversion and penance, issued at the beginning of the 20th century, remains timely and urgent today."

The pope picked up on that theme in his remarks on Sunday, encouraging prayer and penance for the church, "for the conversion of who those who live in sin and for peace in the world."

Milan daily Corriere della Sera quoted the pope's 1981 attacker, Mehmet Ali Agca, a Turk who is serving a life sentence in an Italian prison, as saying: "I am sure a supernatural force pushed me to shoot that May 13th 1981."

Most serving life sentences in Italy rarely spend more than 20 years in prison before being released, and Agca has been petitioning for early release.

"If I get out of prison, I will go to kneel before the Madonna of Fatima and I will stay there 10 days in prayer," Agca was quoted as saying.

Looking weary at times, the pope, who turns 80 on Thursday, led a 90-minute ceremony in the square on Sunday morning to ordain 26 priests.

Joyce Jillson's

Horoscope



TUESDAY, MAY 16

Tensions mount as we get closer to tomorrow night's full moon in honest Scorpio. If friends and lovers don't seem to be saying all that's on their mind, tomorrow will change this with an outpouring of everything, good and bad, that you wanted to know. In the last few days of the sun's journey in Taurus, you may feel slightly more driven to stray.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Before embarking on something new Finish a current project. Your leadership ability carries you into a whole new realm. If you feel indecisive, don't worry, you'll pull through with flying colors.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). A new relationship with a Pisces sparks luck with business and finances. Legal awards or settlements of some kind arrive in the very near future. Spend additional income on a home improvement project. Be a good listener.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Love makes its way into your life; take a chance, and find the happiness you deserve. You want more out of a friend but keep accepting less. An outsider sheds new light on an old issue, but only if asked. Indulge a nagging curiosity.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Be kind to co-workers. Avoid innuendo — use your natural ability to deal with people to solve conflict between family members. Career goals seem crystal-clear, but will change before your eyes. Relationships are intimate.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Opportunities abound, but it takes a trained mind to make the most of things — pay attention. If a friend doesn't care for your new romance, you'll have to assert independence. Take advantage of the love offered to you in small ways.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (May 16). You are determined this year to take full advantage of every opportunity. In June and July, study the possibilities. In August and September make a move to a new city home or job! Healing techniques bring exciting results in September and November, creative efforts bring material rewards and satisfaction in October. You may get hitched in December to a Leo or Cancer.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). A "too good to be true" business venture presents itself. Discuss any doubts you have before committing to it. Get necessary obligations out of the way, and everything will run smoothly. Your recent actions attract attention.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Intricate romantic designs are lucky, so start planning now. Be more accepting of your own and others' weaknesses. Hidden resentment sabotages all relationships. Remember, nobody's perfect, includ-

ing you. SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Make a fresh start — prove that you're ready, willing and able. A disillusioned friend may need a dose of reality. Correct misconceptions, and you'll have a last-minute invitation. You've a knack for details and accuracy.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Stick to your original plan, and you'll make huge gains over foes and competitors. Opportunities come to those who pursue them; don't wait for something to happen. Money is not crucial to success; change your mind-set.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). An idea that comes to you early in the day could be profitable if you put out some serious effort. An unexpected romance springs up in the most unusual place; spend time seeking out new environments. Get at a new restaurant.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). As fun as it is, passion alone does not solve a romantic problem; discuss it openly and calmly. Set personal boundaries with friends. Finances recover quickly. Honesty and vulnerability deepen your connection to a mate.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Let others see your dynamic creative skills, and you'll find you have more clients than you can handle. Say goodbye to an unfeeling companion. Excitement mixes with opportunity when you recognize your hidden talents.

ASTROLOGICAL QUESTIONS: "I still don't know what I want to do with my life. I was born July 2, 1964, and I think I have plenty of time to figure it out, right?" Why wait? Not choosing is dangerous for you — far more dangerous than making the wrong choice. Stop making excuses, and just narrow it down to one path. Which path you choose is not as important as the commitment to follow through. You are a Cancer native with your moon in Aries; Venus and Mars are conjunct in Gemini. This planetary combination reveals a great deal of activity and persistence, plus a love of fame and a desire to lead. You could sell your own product, or become a spokesperson for a large company this year. With your moon in Aries, you can push yourself forward when you're feeling reticent or shy. The debit side of a moon in Aries is that you are sometimes headstrong and tend to go to extremes. With regard to your career direction, there are a number of avenues you could explore. Sales is perfect. You also have performance in your chart, such as acting or speaking. Commercial work is also favored. Whatever you do, get going in that direction today, and stick with it for at least three months before you give yourself permission to change your mind.