Tangible Memories and Intertwined Histories:
Sweden-Korea Relations as Seen through the Collection of the
Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities

Isabelle Leeman, M.A., Museum of World Cultures, Stockholm, Sweden and
Michel Lee, M.A., Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm, Sweden

The Korean collection at the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, National Museums
of World Culture, Sweden is closely intertwined with the historical relationship
between the Korean Peninsula and Sweden in the 20th century. Starting with a
discussion of the earliest objects donated to the Museum, including the collection of
King Gustaf VI Adolf, the speakers will clarify how the establishment of the Korea
collection is rooted in cultural and diplomatic exchange between Sweden and Korea
and reaches back to the very foundation of the Museum itself. The second part of the
talk will focus on objects donated by doctors and nurses who served in Korea during
and after the Korean war, a chapter in Swedish-Korean history that deeply shaped the
relationship between the two countries. The presentation will then provide an
overview of the most recent developments of the collection and give an outlook into
future. In conclusion, this presentation shows that Korean objects held in collections
in Europe can tell the stories not only of a distant culture, but of two peoples with an
intertwined history.