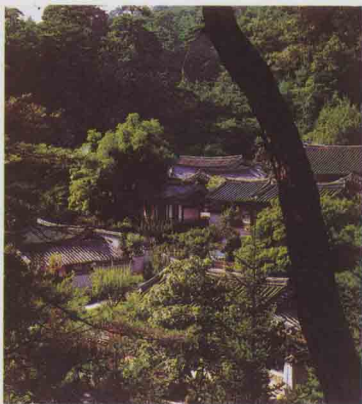


Profiles in Excellence

YI HWANG (1501 ~ 1570)

Though he reached the apex of bureaucracy as minister of rites, Yi Hwang was too devoted to learning to remain a government official. Himself a revered Confucian scholar, he resigned as a member of the cabinet and opened Tosan Sowon, a private hall of advanced learning in Andong. While heading his own academy, he worked hard to expand the scope of dualism as proposed by the 12th century Chinese philosopher Chu Hsi. Chu argued that every existence in the universe was marked by two interdependent elements: "i" (reason) and "ki" (material force). Yi Hwang went further and brilliantly analyzed the role played by "i" in the function of human psyche. By the time he died at age 70, the great scholar had educated, all told, 300 disciples and made his academy one of the largest of its kind in the Choson period (1392-1910).



Tosan Sowon

CHONG SON (1676 ~ 1759)



Chong's masterpiece

Until late in the 17th century, most Korean painters were so much influenced by Chinese masters that their landscape tableaus seemed all but dedicated to glorifying nature—Chinese style. Not Chong. An aristocrat by birth, he was never destined to be another copycat. Instead, time and again he traveled deep into the countryside for his keen studies of nature. Soon he broke away from the habit of many of his confreres by establishing a style of his own, a style marked by a highly rewarding brand of realism. Among his masterpieces were landscape paintings of Mount Kumgang in North Korea and Mount Inhwang, located just north of his home town, Seoul. Clearly Chong, commissioned to do paintings for the court from the early stage of his career, was vastly talented. But that did not prevent him from continuously working hard. Sure enough, posterity calls Chong one of the three greatest painters of the Choson period.