

The Royal Tomb of Joseon Dynasty

Can you imagine yourself to have a tomb that is acres of land?

In South Korea, the King's of the Joseon dynasty had their own royal tombs when they passed away. There is a collection of 40 royal tombs of the Joseon Dynasty scattered over 18 locations. These tombs honor the memories of the ancestors and show the achievements made by the king. According to the confucian beliefs, people had a certain guidance on how they picked the burial location for the royal tombs. The people believed that the royal tombs should be protected by a hill and face south toward water. The tombs should also have mountains in the distance. However, the tombs should not be positioned on a mountain or on a field.



Following this guidance might be a reason why 20 of the royal tombs are found near Seoul, which used to be called “Hanyang” in the Joseon dynasty. Till this day, these tombs still create a sacred atmosphere. People believed that if the tombs were close to the capital the spirits of the king and queen would always be with them to guide the next dynasty. Some of the royal tombs have guardians which are like stone warriors that protect the tombs. These warriors stand on each side of the stone lantern with their horses behind them.



In Korea, they did not open every tomb to be visited and toured. However, I did go to a royal tomb located in Jeonju and they actually dug up one of the graves and made an exhibit inside. It showed the remaining parts of the king's treasure and all the items that might have been used in the past. I heard that the government puts a lot of effort into preserving the royal tombs.



After researching more about the royal tombs located in South Korea, and actually visiting one gave me a couple of insights. It showed me how important the king's were back then and how the country would put so much thought into every detail of the tomb starting from the burial area to how it is buried to what is placed with the tomb. When I am comparing American burial sites, I am very amazed at the difference between the size and meaning. Today, people just have a tombstone or are burned into ashes and stored in a building. The royal tomb stones have a perimeter of acres of land. It is actually like one park is used up for one king. Korea is a small country so taking up this land proves how significant the King and their confucian beliefs were.

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