

Comparative Asian Research Network

Monthly Lecture Series on Issues and Research in the Asian Region Organized by the Department of Japanese Studies, CUHK

National Museums and Asia: Missions, Exhibitions, and Strategies

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Abstract:

During the last decade, a number of Asian countries commissioned to establish a national museum in the state capital. In 2011, China opened its first National Museum by merging the collections in the former Museum of History and Museum of Chinese Revolution in the Tiananmen Square. Similarly, South Korea expanded its national treasure and inaugurated the new National Museum building in 2005 in downtown Seoul. Both museums had attracted high number of visitors every year since their opening. The Chinese and Korean curators experimented with different types of exhibitions, which included the arguable Louis Vuitton designs in Beijing, to construct a young and dynamic image for the national museums. In this talk, I argue that the roles of museums in Asia are presently developed in the way to consolidate national identity. Yet the cases of China and South Korea present two different concepts about national heritage that prescribe different strategies in presenting history and culture.

