

Sokkuram Grotto and Pulguksa Temple

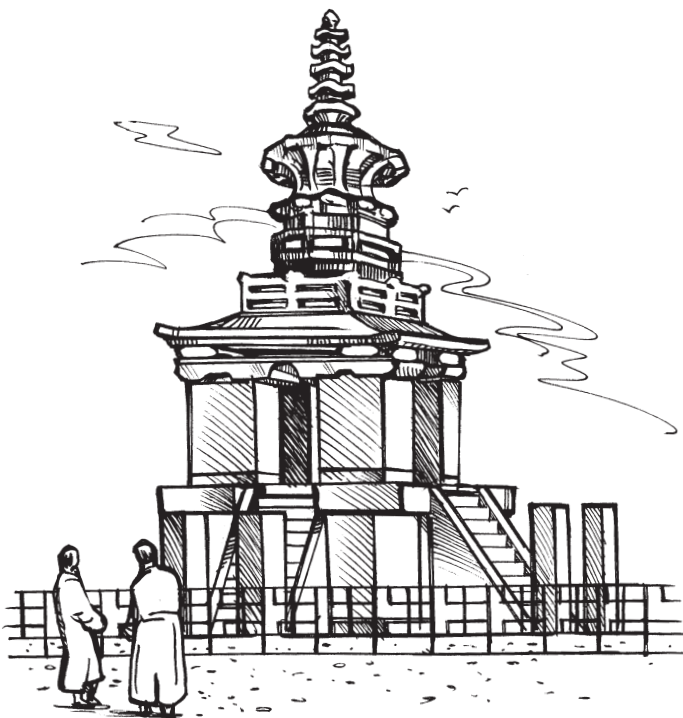
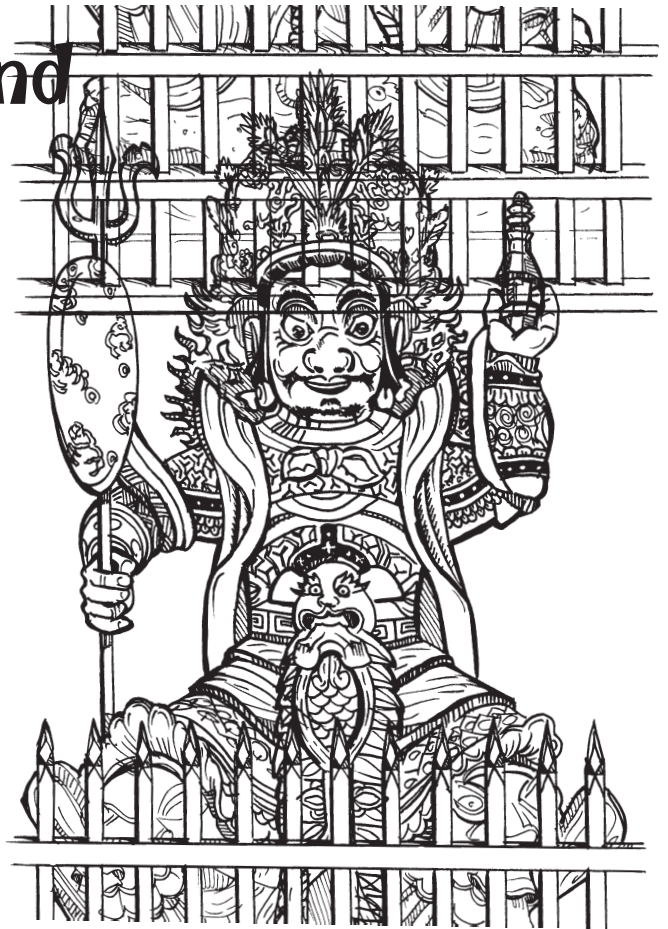
In *Inside King Sejong's Gate*, Alex and Laura visit Sokkuram Grotto and Pulguksa Temple with their Korean friends.

Pulguksa Temple

Pulguksa is one of Korea's most famous Buddhist temples. It is known as the 'Temple of the Buddha Land'. The temple was completed in AD 751, during the reign of the Shilla Kingdom.

The temple is famous for its magnificently painted wooden buildings and stone pagodas and stairways. A pagoda is a tower built as a temple or a monument. It is divided into several stories usually with roofs curving upward at the corners of each storey.

Many wooden pagodas were built at the temple, but only two granite pagodas remain today. *Tabot'ap* 'Pagoda of Many Treasures' and *Sokkat'ap* 'Pagoda of the Buddha' are on the left and right of the temple's main courtyard.



The 'Pagoda of Many Treasures' is an elaborate building which represents the Buddha's rise to heaven. The 'Pagoda of the Buddha' has a much simpler design and represents the Buddha's travels to the earthly world.

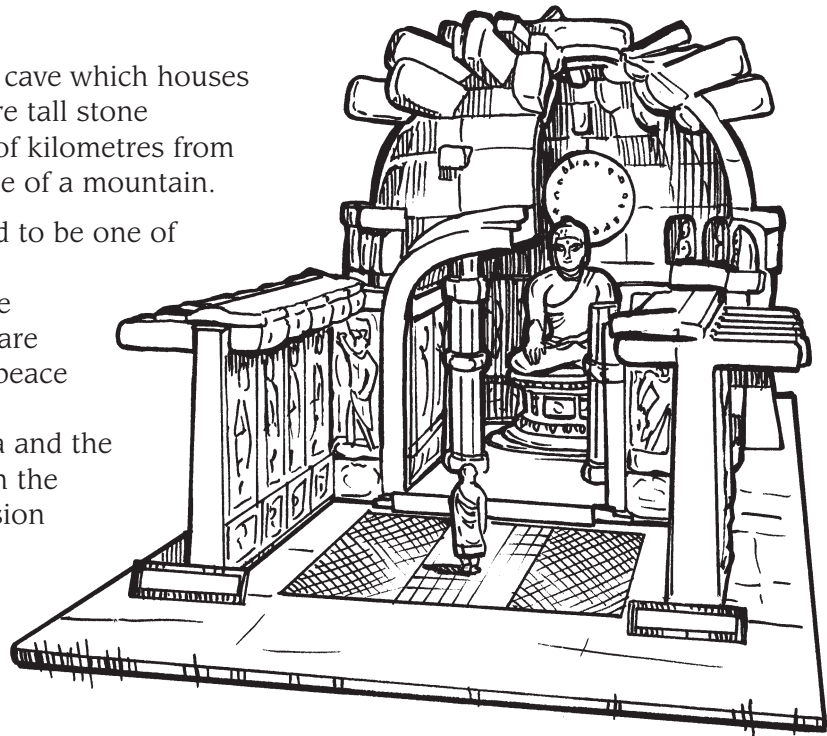
Two stone stairways lead to the temple grounds. The stairways are called bridges and are symbols of the path from earth to the Buddhist paradise. Each stairway has 33 steps, representing the 33 heavens of Buddhism.

Sokkuram Grotto

Sokkuram Grotto is an artificial cave which houses a magnificently carved, six-metre tall stone Buddha. It is situated a couple of kilometres from the Pulguksa Temple, on the side of a mountain.

The Buddha of Sokkuram is said to be one of the finest examples of Buddhist sculpture in the world. Its gentle face and smooth flowing robes are said to give people a feeling of peace and spiritual tranquillity. Many people have studied the Buddha and the Grotto, and have commented on the remarkable mathematical precision used in the construction of the building and the placement of the main sculpture.

The World Heritage Committee decided in 1995 to include Sokkuram Grotto on the World Heritage List. The Committee considers Sokkuram Grotto to be a masterpiece of Buddhist art.



Activities

1. Find out about Buddhism by reading Resource Sheet 3.
2. Take a virtual tour on the Internet to learn more about the design and construction of Pulguksa Temple and Sokkuram Grotto. Visit them at:
http://korea.insights.co.kr/sokkuram/sokk_m.html
3. Make a three-dimensional cardboard model of one of the pagodas at Pulguksa Temple.
4. Using CD-ROMs or encyclopaedias for reference, make line drawings of Buddhist pagodas found in other countries such as India and Thailand.
5. List adjectives that describe the Sokkuram Buddha. Use all or some of these adjectives to compose a poem called 'Peacefulness'.
6. Fill in details about Sokkuram Grotto and Pulguksa Temple on Resource Sheet 25.