



• Sunday  
• January 29, 2023  
• Vol. 8116

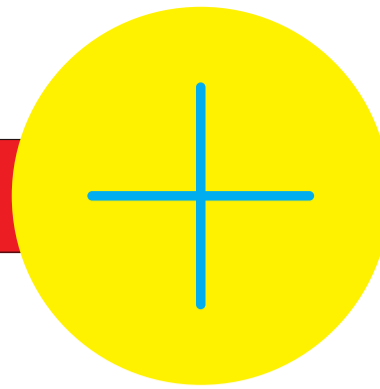
## Recent excavations uncover ancient Greek settlement of Tenea



The ancient Greek settlement area of Tenea has been discovered for the first time during recent excavations, the Greek Ministry of Culture has reported.

**IRAN**  
NEWSPAPER

ISSN 1027-1449  
Keytitle: IRAN (Tehran)  
irannewspaper.ir



# IRAN

Iranian Morning Newspaper

## Drama cooperation between Iran and South Korea should increase: Top Korean drama and cinema official

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**EXCLUSIVE**

The head of the International Theater Association of South Korea called the Fajr International Theater Festival "one of the biggest and oldest theater festivals in the world," calling for the development of theatrical cooperation between Iran and South Korea and the implementation of joint theatrical projects.

In an exclusive interview with Iran Daily, Song Jeong-Woo added, "Due to the history and importance of the Fajr Theater Festival, artists and theater personalities from different countries are interested in participating in this festival every year, and as the head of the International Theater Association of South Korea, I came to this festival to cooperate with the festival as a judge."

Regarding the fields of theatrical cooperation between the two countries, the Korean drama official said that considering that his expertise is

in the field of directing, he is more interested in cooperating with the Iranian side in this field, such as Iranian directors going to Korea and working with Korean actors and vice versa. Korean directors can come to Iran and work with Iranian actors, he said.

Referring to the fact that it is possible to produce a joint work with the presence of actors from the two countries, Jeong-Woo said, "Theater has a universal and international language; therefore, the only thing we are not worried about in the field of cooperation between the two countries is the common language."

Regarding his participation in the Fajr Festival, he said that he first met the people involved in the theater festival, as well as the Iranian performers at a drama festival in Korea, and this is the first time he is attending the Fajr Festival.

The foreign judge of the 41st Fajr International Theater Festival talked about the plays participating in this year's festival, saying that the thing that caught his attention is the diversity of the festival's plays.

"So far, every work I have seen has been different from other works in terms of style and content," he said.

Regarding his assessment of Iranian theater, Jeong-Woo

noted that Iran's dramatic productions each have a special feature that distinguishes them from other performances, but what is interesting to him in particular about Iranian theater is that there is a special energy, love and interest in them, which could be seen among various drama groups.

The top South Korean theater and cinema professor of acting and directing at several South Korean universities continued, "I saw Iranian theater as very prominent in acting. The plays were good in terms of direction, but at least, according to what I saw at this year's festival, there is room for more work and precision in the performances. Of course, this issue is also acceptable because the executive officials of the festival were faced with a time crunch in the field of planning."

Jeong-Woo also explained about the condition of theater and the performing arts in Korea, saying that there are 20,000 theater companies in Korea, and more than 100,000 actors and directors are working in different sections, and these figures show that the interest of Koreans in theater and the performing arts are at a high-level.

Regarding the reason why Koreans are interested in theater, he said that humans are naturally interested in



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acting, but the support of the Korean government for the film industry, theater and performing arts is also a reason to see the development of these fields in Korea.

"Based on this, we have witnessed the success of Korean works at the international level, such as the series Squid Game, or the mixed game reached a large audience at the global level, or the film Parasite won the top awards in various festivals, including the Cannes Film Festival, the Golden Globes and the Oscars," the top Korean drama and cinema official said.

He also said that the Korean traditional theater is called "Pansori," which is performed with the same traditional clothes of East Asia and South Korea, accompanied by singing and percussion in-

struments. In fact, Pan means stage and a gathering place, and sori means music.

He compared Western and Eastern theater, saying that some people believe that the foundation of theater originates in the West, while this is wrong.

"Eastern theater has a longer history. On the one hand, Western theater, which originated in Greece, is performed based on written texts and dialogue, while, on the other hand, traditional Eastern theater is based on movement, music, and dance," Jeong-Woo elaborated.

"Of course, it doesn't matter which theater is superior. What is important is that we all respect and preserve each other's culture and art of theater and performance," he concluded.

## Elegance and artistic plating, common characteristics of famous Zanjan knives

The northwestern province of Zanjan is situated near the Silk Road; therefore, for a long time a large number of its residents have made a living through trade. Moreover, local people have used souvenirs of Zanjan to introduce their province to travelers and merchants.

A knife has been the most popular souvenir of the city since ancient times. Many people, even those who are living outside the borders of Iran, are familiar with this valuable handicraft, which dates back several thousand years.

The craft of knife-making has always attracted talented artists and craftspeople of the region. They have managed to turn useless metal pieces into one of the most used tools, chn.ir reported.

The common characteristics of Zanjan knives are their elegance and artistic plating and cuttings. Zanjan was the center of the



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weapons-manufacturing industry during the Achaemenid Period. However, development of the knife-making industry during the past centuries is definitely the result of various factors including the geographical location of Zanjan in the central Iranian Plateau, the role of the city in the battles that occurred in the area

before and after the advent of Islam, being situated at the crossroads of Eastern and Western civilizations, and the availability of raw materials including iron and copper in the region.

No evidence is available on the exact beginning date of the knife-making industry in Zanjan Province. Zanjan's oldest knife,

which was discovered in Cherabad Salt Mine, is 1,800 years old. The knife's 11cm-long-handle is made of goat horn, and is connected to a 5.8cm-long blade. During the Ilkhanid Period (1256-1353 CE), the cities of Tabriz, Maragheh and Soltanieh (a city in Zanjan Province) turned into the main centers of artwork production in Iran. Oljaitu, also known as Mohammad Khodabandeh, made Soltanieh, the capital of his kingdom, as one of the main metalworking

centers of the country. Moreover, according to some historical documents and travel notes, 17th century Zanjan was a city where knives, swords and daggers were produced in great numbers, and a many knife-making workshops were established all over the region.

Various materials such as precious stones, jewels, thread, pieces of sea shells, horns and ivory are used for making knives. Presently, knife blades

are made of hard steel like iron and brass. The handle is made of three different parts and attached to the blade with a special technique that gives it a monolithic look.

About 700 knife-making workshops are operating in Zanjan Province, where 1,500 people are working.

Experts believe that the flourishing of the art would help preserve the several-thousand-year-old heritage and generate jobs for many youths.



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