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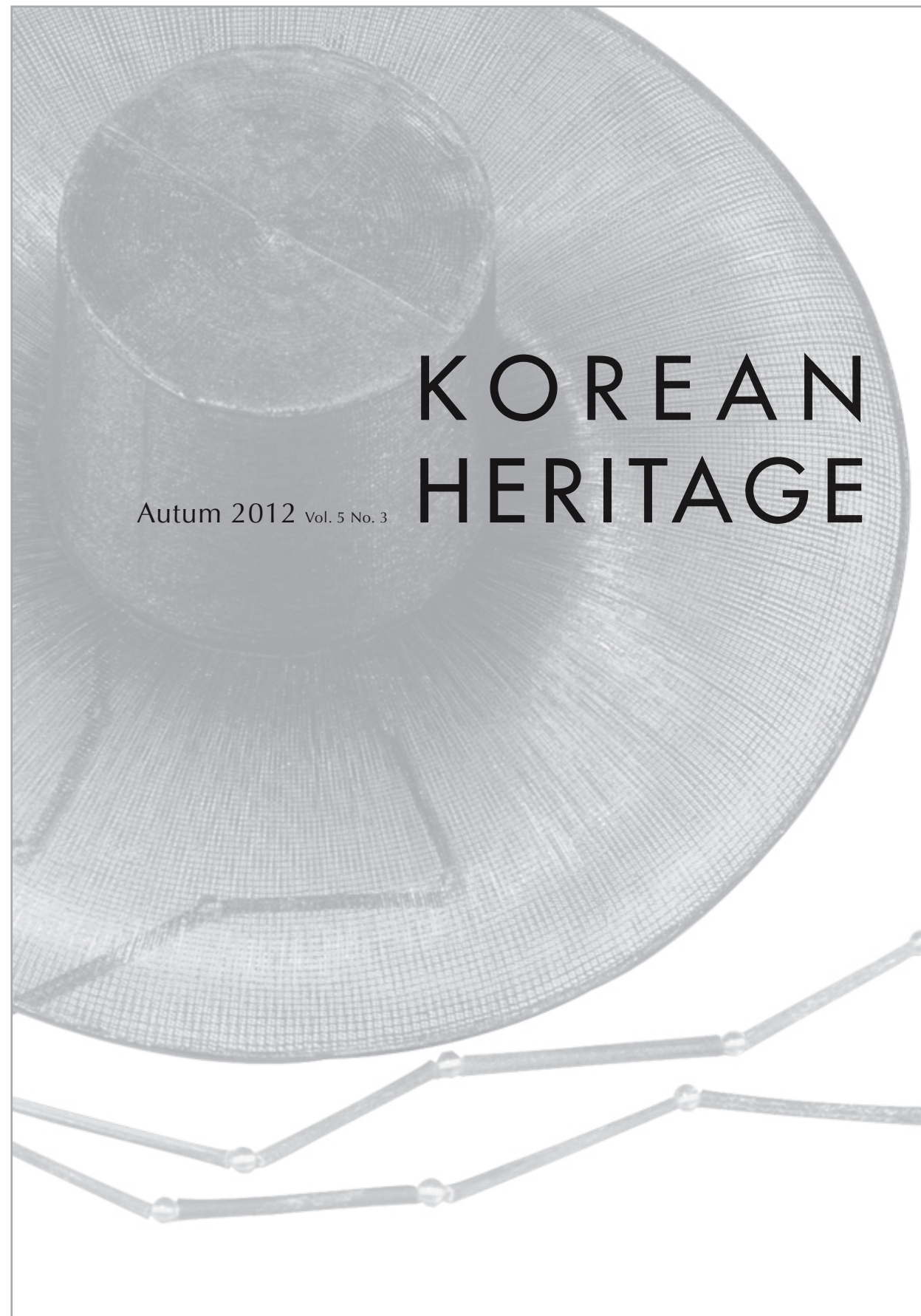
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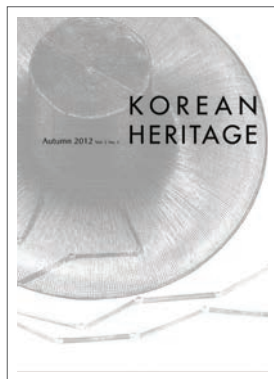
KOREAN HERITAGE

Quarterly Magazine
of the Cultural Heritage Administration

KOREAN HERITAGE



Autumn 2012 Vol. 5 No. 3



Cover

White Symbolizes autumn. The symbolism originates from the traditional "five directional colors" based on the ancient Chinese thought of *wuxing*, or *ohaeng* in Korean. The five colors were associated with seasons and other phenomena in nature, including the fate of humans. The cover design features *gat*, the fine horsehair hat for Korean men. For more stories about this, see p. 44.



CHA News Vignettes

East Asia's First Neolithic Farm Site Found

The National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage held a briefing on June 26 at an excavation site assumed to be the first Neolithic farm field ever found in East Asia. Presumably dating to 3600-3000 B.C., the locale at Munam-ri, Goseong County, Gangwon Province has yielded fragments of comb-patterned pottery, stone arrowheads and a dwelling site. Further analysis of the findings is planned for more precise dating of the site, which shows more primitive traces than Bronze Age agricultural sites.

CHA Signs MOU for Cooperation with ICCROM

The Cultural Heritage Administration signed a memorandum of understanding for joint work with the International Center for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property in Rome on May 18. The MOU calls for cooperation on conservation, education, and training and research to expand institutional and professional capacity in preservation of Asia-Pacific cultural heritage. The CHA will establish a trust fund to undertake the cooperative projects.

CHA to Host Conference on Community Involvement

The Cultural Heritage Administration and the UNESCO World Heritage Center will host an international conference on community involvement in heritage conservation on September 10-12. The conference will be held at Buyeo, an old capital of the Baekje Kingdom, marking the 40th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention. They will seek ways to more actively incorporate communities in decision-making and conservation activities.

Korean Folk Customs

Hand-turned Millstone



A traditional Korean-style hand mill, called *maetdol*, typically consists of two flat, round stones: a stationary bed stone and an upper stone that has a vertical wooden handle to spin it on a steel pivot, crushing grain. This ancient household item evolved from grinding stones of earlier times.

A large wooden bowl or a gunny sack is attached to the millstone. One holds the handle with the right hand and rotates it while pouring grain in the hole in the upper stone with the left hand. Sometimes, two persons such as a mother-in-law and her daughter-in-law, or a mother and her child, work together, singing to keep the beat of their motion. Beyond the practical purpose of preparing food, the millstones thus helped strengthen emotional bonds between family members.

While electric blenders have replaced the traditional millstones at most homes nowadays, some farming households continue to use these simple old devices to grind grains like buckwheat or beans in small quantities. The millstones were ubiquitous everyday articles in the old days, which resulted in the popular idiom “*eocheoguni eopda*,” which is still widely used to describe an utterly incredible situation, like when one cannot find the handle (*eocheoguni*) on a millstone.

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The Land of Buddha in this World

A Stroll inside the Temple Grounds

Text by the Cultural Heritage Administration
Photos by Eurocreon & Simong Agency



Past a series of gates that have neither door panels nor walls on either side, one enters the inner temple grounds. From the four percussion instruments in the bell pavilion to the stone pagodas and lanterns, the halls and the pavilions, the visitor will find all the basic components of the blissful Land of the Buddha, each with its unique and resonant symbolism, and then will eventually encounter the Buddha and the Bodhisattvas enshrined in the dharma halls. As such, a temple is not a mere place where monks live and practice. It is a symbolic representation of Buddhist thought and cosmology.

The Four Musical Instruments

The bell pavilion is usually found near the entrance to the inner temple grounds. The pavilion houses four percussion instruments, or *samul* — a temple bell, a dharma drum, a fish-shaped wooden clapper and a cloud-shaped gong. They symbolize all sentient beings residing on earth, in heaven and hell, in water, and in the sky, respectively. Playing these instruments means echoing the Buddha’s teachings for all these creatures in the universe to awaken their souls and thereby liberate them. At most temples the instruments are played to signify the morning and evening services and major ceremonial events. The bell is struck 28 times in the morning and 33 times in the evening

Stone Pagodas and Lanterns

A pagoda represents the Buddha’s presence. The first known Buddhist pagoda in history was erected to enshrine the sarira from the cremated remains of the historic Buddha; hence it



symbolized the eternal earthly presence of the great teacher. Early Buddhist pagodas in Korea were built of wood but granite eventually became the primary material, whereas the Chinese traditionally preferred brick pagodas and the Japanese favored wooden pagodas. Compared with the pagodas in the neighboring countries, Korean pagodas are said to project sturdy inner strength housed in a gentle outer appearance. Most pagodas typically have a square, hexagonal or octagonal-shaped foundation, and have three, five, seven or nine stories (sometimes ten stories standing for ordinal perfection). This means the pagodas symbolize the harmony of heaven and earth, and yang and yin, represented by odd and even numbers, respectively. A stone lantern has the ritual role; it emits the light of truth. A stone lantern standing in

1. The Precious Hall of the Great Hero is the main hall at Yongjusa in Hwaseong, Gyeonggi Province.
2. The temple bell (*beomjong*) at Hongcheonsa in Seoul.
3. The dharma drum (*beopgo*) at Geumsansa in Gimje, North Jeolla Province.
4. The fish-shaped wooden clapper (*mogeo*) at Seonunsa in Gochang, North Jeolla Province.
5. The cloud-shaped gong (*unpan*) at Hwabangsa in Namhae, South Gyeong-sang Province.



6. The Hall of the Great Hero and a stone pagoda at Cheongamsa in Gimcheon, North Gyeongsang Province.

front of the Dharma Hall represents the wisdom of the Buddha lightening up the darkened minds of sentient beings.

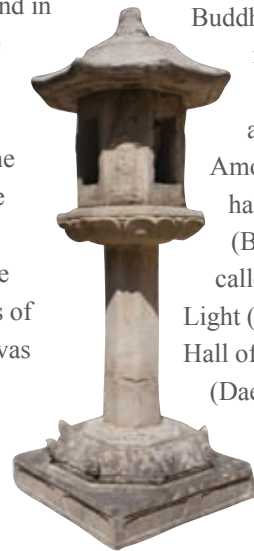
Dharma Halls and Pavilions

The dharma hall, or *beopdang*, is the centerpiece of a temple, where the Buddha resides along with his words. Generally regarded as the abode of a statue of the Buddha, the hall carries deeper meaning than an architectural structure intended to house the Buddha's image. It is the hall of truth embodied in the Buddha and his teachings.

The *beopdang* in a narrow sense refers to the main hall of a temple, and in a little broader sense all of the halls where the Buddha or the Bodhisattvas are enshrined, but it also can include all of the halls and pavilions in a temple that are considered places of worship. More specifically, the halls, or *jeon*, have the images of the Buddha and the Bodhisattvas constituting the authentic Buddhist pantheon, whereas the pavilions, or *gak*, are dedicated to important divinities traditionally

revered in Korean folk beliefs and later accommodated by Buddhism, such as the Mountain Spirit, the Seven Star Spirit and the Dragon King.

The Hall of the Great Hero (Daeungjeon), enshrining Sakyamuni, the historical Buddha, is the highest form of the dharma hall; it is the center of not only a temple but also of the universe. The historical Buddha is called the Great Hero because he taught how to overcome suffering and attain awakening to reach nirvana. The Hall of the Great Hero usually has an image of Sakyamuni Buddha with two attendant Bodhisattvas: Manjusri, the Bodhisattva of Wisdom; and Samantabhadra, the Bodhisattva of Great Conduct. Some temples have the Precious Hall of the Great Hero (Daeungbojeon), which has the Buddhas of the Three Realms: Sakyamuni of the present world; Bhaisajyaguru, the Medicine Buddha who resides in the Eastern Paradise; and Amitabha, the Buddha of the Western Paradise. Sometimes, the halls with this name also have the



7. Stone Lantern (National Treasure No. 17) at Buseoksa in Yeongju, North Gyeongsang Province.

Buddhas of the Three Times, that is, Dipankara of the past, Sakyamuni of the present, and Maitreya of the future. Among other important temple halls are the Hall of Vairocana (Birojeon), which is also called the Hall of Great Tranquil Light (Daejeokgwangjeon) or the Hall of the Great Light of Wisdom (Daegwangmyeongjeon); the Hall of Amitabha (Geuknakjeon, Muryangsujeon or Mitajeon); the Hall of Maitreya (Mireukjeon

or Yonghwajeon); the Hall of Bhaisajyaguru (Yaksajeon or Yurijeon); the Hall of Avalokitesvara (Gwaneumjeon or Wontongjeon); and the Hall of Ksitigarbha (Jijangjeon or Myeongbujjeon). There are also the Pavilion of Mountain Spirit (Sansingak), the Pavilion of Seven Star Spirit (Chilseonggak), the Hall of Lonely Saint (Dokseonggak), or the Hall of Three Saints (Samseonggak), a combination of the other three pavilions, all rooted in Korean native religions.

Iconography in Sculpture and Painting

Sculpted or painted images of the Buddha or the Bodhisattvas are the centerpieces of the dharma halls. Some dharma halls enshrine a single image of the Buddha, but far more common is a troika that features the main Buddha flanked by two attendant Bodhisattvas. The iconic images in the main dharma hall are generally in sitting postures, but standing images are also found occasionally, and more rarely those in pensive position with one leg pendant. Each image has a mudra, or the gesture of hands, corresponding to certain aspects of the Buddhist teaching or to the particular Buddha visualized. Among the symbolic hand signs most frequently seen are the *abhaya mudra* for assuring protection, with the right hand raised to shoulder level with fingers extended and the left palm turned outward at the waist level; *dhyana mudra* for meditation, both hands resting in the lap, with the back of the right hand placed on the palm of the other; *dharmachakra mudra* for turning the wheel of teaching, with circles formed with the thumbs and



8. Gilt-bronze Pensive Maitreya (National Treasure No. 83) at the National Museum of Korea in Seoul.

index fingers of each hand touching one another, the left palm turned inward and the right palm outward; *bhumisparsha mudra* for calling upon the earth to witness enlightenment by pointing to the earth with the right hand, hanging over the knee, palm inward, while placing the left hand in the lap, palm upward; and *vajra mudra* for supreme wisdom, forming a fist with the right hand, index extended upward, and the left hand also making a fist and enclosing the index.

A scroll painting often embellishes the background of each image, depicting the representative sermon delivered by the historical Buddha and other Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas.

9. A Buddha triad is enshrined in a dharma hall, along with a scroll painting that depicts their sermons.



Crude Ceramic Bowls of Joseon Masterpieces Created by Nonchalance

Text from *Essentials of Korean Culture for Global Readers* by Choi Joon-sik
| Professor of Korean Studies, Ewha Womans University
Photos by Goodimage



1

Japanese have displayed a special passion for Korean pottery. This is nothing strange, considering that as far as pottery was concerned, Korea was the only country that could compete with China in ceramic production for a long time. Actually, around the 10th century, Goryeo and Song were the only countries in the world that possessed the technology to produce celadon and porcelain, the two most advanced types of ceramic ware at the time. Goryeo made such excellent celadon products that even Chinese connoisseurs cherished them as rare masterpieces. It is thus natural that the Japanese loved Korean pottery.

Pottery Hallyu Sweeps Japan

What I'm going to discuss here is not those high quality wares, though. I want to talk about the ordinary stoneware bowls, called *maksabal*, the prefix *mak* meaning "roughly made" just like *makgeolli*, the traditional popular drink of Korean farmers. The predominant view these days is that, humble and unpretentious as they are, the bowls deserve some other name with more respectful nuance because they were in fact not so casually made. But I will keep the old name to avoid confusion.

These bowls were given various names in Japan, of which *ido chawan* is most widely known. Unlike celadon or porcelain vessels, these "tea bowls" had many mysteries. They were certainly made by nameless potters of Joseon but failed to draw any particular attention before they began to be known in Japan in the latter half of the 16th century to



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create a sensation. In today's jargon the bowls stirred up a "pottery *hallyu*" in Japan. As a result, Japan has almost all of the top quality bowls of this type while very few remain in Korea. As the crude bowls from Korea became enormously popular among Japanese tea masters, a Japanese potter is said to have lamented, "I would be able to die with no regrets if I can make a single vessel like that." A certain Japanese man is known to have said, "I would not mind dying now if I can touch such a vessel just once." A tea connoisseur declared he would not trade a Korean tea bowl for a whole castle. Another enthusiast bowed toward a tea bowl in his possession, regarding it as a divine vessel.

It is widely known that powerful Japanese leaders such as Oda Nobunaga



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1. Crude stoneware bowls, or *maksabal*, in different shapes and sizes.

2. "Kizaemon Ido," a Korean tea bowl made during the 16th century Joseon Dynasty, is a national treasure of Japan.

3. A white porcelain bowl made during the late Joseon period.



4. A portrait of Sen no Rikyu (1522-1591), the famous tea master of Toyotomi Hideyoshi.

and Toyotomi Hideyoshi were crazy about Korean tea bowls. They presented the bowls as gifts to their favorite subordinates while some of their men attempted to use the bowls as bribes to buy favors. It is a famous anecdote that a daimyo named Tsutsui Junkei barely saved his life by presenting a Korean tea bowl to Hideyoshi after disobeying him. The vessel thus earned the name “Tsutsui-zutsu.”

Original Usage Remains Unknown

One of the mysteries surrounding the ancient Korean ceramic bowls is that scholars have yet to reach a consensus regarding their original usage back home. It was after the bowls began to be used for tea ceremony in Japan that they became famous. But the bowls are obviously somewhat bigger than tea cups used by Koreans these days, even though the Japanese in the 16th century drank a different type of tea, which was brewed from powdered green tea leaves.

The problem is that it still remains unclear how the bowls had been used

5. A traditional Korean kitchen with crude ceramic bowls for daily use.



in Korea before they were carried to Japan. Some believe they were used as rice bowls, and others even suspect they were ritual vessels. The reason for such an utter lack of clarity is because bowls of this type were produced briefly from the latter half of the 16th century to the early 17th century. Also, they were made only in certain areas in the southernmost province of today’s South Gyeongsang. This is why so few of the bowls remain in the country nowadays. Then, how did the Korean bowls become so popular in Japan? It was Sen no Rikyu, Hideyoshi’s most famous tea master, who first recognized the aesthetic attraction of Korean tea bowls. Japanese tea masters and their daimyo patrons fell in love with the simple, unpretentious Korean tea bowls, which they found were exactly appropriate for their tea ceremony. They envisioned a spring quietly pouring forth from the bottom of the bowl.

Juxtaposed to Japanese Aesthetics

While its interior spread mysterious ripples in the hearts of tea lovers, the exterior of the bowl also had a marvelously relaxing effect in the Japanese tea room, where the predominant aesthetic was based on precision and symmetry. The Japanese pursued perfection in every detail, which was no doubt among the greatest strengths of their culture. The obsessive pursuit of flawlessness, however, entailed a certain amount of stuffiness. That cramped feeling was instantly eased by the Korean tea bowl, which was carefree and unassuming, and hence radically different from its surrounding.

The crude stoneware bowls derived from *buncheon*, the bluish-green celadon coated with a white slip, but they are even simpler and coarser with the slip applied on a plain surface by quick dipping or rough brushing.

The most famous Korean tea bowl in Japan is “Kizaemon Ido,” a national treasure of Japan, which is kept at the historic Daitoku-ji temple in Kyoto. Its natural beauty has evoked glowing compliments from multitudes of people over the centuries, of which the most legendary came from a Japanese scholar, who said: “This vessel was not made by a human but by nature through the hands of a Joseon potter.”

Spontaneity and Nonchalance

Whether intentionally or not, the potters of Joseon didn’t seem to mind the cracks and splits that occurred on the surface of their bowls. Nor did they try to remove the traces of the slip flowing down. Once they shaped them, the potters seem to have left the bowls in the hands of nature for the last phase. Thus they minimized human touches, which became a prized characteristic of Korean aesthetics. The crude stoneware bowls epitomize the spirit of Joseon potters who, in a pleasantly spontaneous manner, imbued their vessels with the gracious breath of nature. ☺



6. A crude stoneware tea bowl



7. A celadon bowl in the collection of the National Museum of Korea



8. A celadon bowl inlaid with floral scrolls (National Treasure No. 115), made when celadon technique reached its peak during the Goryeo Dynasty.

The Most Revered King in Korean History Sejong the Great Ruled over Golden Age

Text by the Cultural Heritage Administration
Photos by Eurocreon & Goodimage



King Sejong (r. 1418-1450), who is widely referred to as a “sage king” or a “great king,” is one of the most respected heroes in Korean history. Even before his death, he was deified as a superhuman and often compared to Yao and Shun, the two early Chinese emperors who are looked up as models of a wise and capable ruler. It’s been a kind of taboo among Korean historians to make critical comments on Sejong, but with the shroud for sanctification removed, there still is very little possibility of anyone denying that he brought Confucian politics and national culture to an unprecedented flowering and set an outstanding example of good governance.

Finding the Path in Books

Sejong, the fourth king of the Joseon Dynasty, was born Yi Do in 1397. His childhood name was Won-jeong and posthumous title Jangheon, meaning “Mighty and Knowledgeable.” Starting at an early age, Sejong read enormous amounts of books and became a scholar-king who loved to study. He delved into numerous disciplines beyond Confucian classics, including history, law, astronomy, music and medicine, accumulating expert knowledge in many fields. He said he read all Confucian classics more than 100 times each, except a single volume that he read only 30 times, and all other books on history and other subjects at least 30 times each.

When he assumed full control of government in 1422, four years after his accession, Sejong began demonstrating his scholarly expertise in state



1. Pages from “Explanations and Examples of the Proper Sounds to Instruct the People” (*Hunminjeongeum haerye*), which explained the basics of the Korean script promulgated in 1446.

2. A portrait of King Sejong

administration amid political stability secured by his father, Taejong. Sejong applied his unique academic approach in consolidating the basic frame of government laid out by Taejong. He studied ancient statutes and institutions to define the detailed requirements necessary for efficient governance. Even when writing a minor code of regulations, he examined all relevant historical precedents and analyzed the merits and weaknesses of each statute in comparison to similar measures and then made adjustments to offset shortcomings.

Paving the Institutional Groundwork

In his erudite approach to state management, the first problem encountered by Sejong was the insufficient historical resources available for study. He urged scholars to expand and revise the *History of Goryeo* (*Goryeo sa*) and *Essentials of Goryeo History* (*Goryeo sa jeoryeo*), the two major local sources, while reading Chinese texts as well. He read a complete edition of *Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government* (*Zizhi*



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3. A firearm called *cheonja chongtong* ("sky-class cannon"), which shot iron balls, an upgrade during the reign of King Sejong.

tongjian), an important reference work in Chinese historiography, and had scholars compile *An Annotated Guide to Zizhi Tongjian* (*Jachi tonggam hunewi*), which is said to be more complete than comparable Chinese editions. In order to apply knowledge acquired from Chinese texts, Sejong felt the need to know more about the nation's land and people. He requested information about the geography, society, culture, customs and ecology of each provincial region from local administrators, and compiled the information into books. Publication of the gazetteers led to fast-paced development of printing technology. Printing speeds became 10 times faster during Sejong's reign.

Sejong recruited talented scholars and expanded the functions of the Hall of Worthies (Jiphyonjeon), a court research institution, to carry out these tasks. Prominent scholars such as Jeong In-ji, Seong Sam-mun and Shin Suk-ju participated in the compilation and publication of books on ethical education, agriculture, geography, measurement, mathematics, medicine, etc. These publications were instrumental for improvement of various governance systems, including bureaucracy, taxation, public finance, criminal law, military supplies and transportation, and paved the institutional groundwork for the dynasty.

Sejong also paid tremendous attention to science and technology as well as the arts. He set up the palace institute for astronomical research, named Seoungwan, and led the production of armillary spheres, sundials and water clocks. He employed Bak Yeon as a court musician to reorganize the notation and performance system of the palace music, and supported Maeng Sa-seong to create a new type of music that was based on native folk music and better suited for public enjoyment.

Love for the People

Sejong is recognized as the most capable king who made the greatest achievements among all of the 27 monarchs of Joseon through its five-century rule. But it was not solely due to his ability that he could become a sage king; he was a benevolent ruler who deeply loved his people. He frequently granted favors to people, pardoned



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5. *Episodes from the Life of the Buddha* (*Seokbo sangjeol*), the first Buddhist book compiled in Korean alphabet under orders of Sejong.

prisoners, allowed soldiers to be discharged before their term of service had expired, and improved treatment of slaves. In the face of objections from his courtiers that benevolence would encourage insolence among the people, Sejong persistently implemented compassionate and generous policies.

It was also out of his deep love for people that Sejong invented the Korean alphabet. Strange as it may be, there is no official record explaining the background of the historic project, which was not only the greatest achievement of Sejong but also an epoch-making event in Korean history. Therefore, most basic facts about the event, such as when the script began to be made and what steps were taken to create it, remain a mystery. Also, scholars still continue to debate whether Sejong created the script by himself or with scholars at the Hall of Worthies. Probably, the king had to work secretly because he anticipated fierce objections. There are just a handful of clues. Sejong once remarked: "As to how grave a crime is, even a man of sense can make

judgment based only on articles of the law. Then, how can you expect people to mend their ways on their own? If it is impossible to have every individual understand the entirety of the law, how about picking the articles concerning serious criminal offenses and translate them into the *idu* [an archaic phonemic transcription system borrowing Chinese characters] so that people would read them and know how to avoid committing crimes?" In the preface to *Hunmin Jeongeum* (*Proper Sounds to Instruct the People*), published to promulgate the new script, Jeong In-ji wrote: "Therefore, wise people need

6. A statue of King Sejong at Gwanghwamun Square in central Seoul.



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4. Stone chimes, or *pyeongyeong*, an instrument devised under the direction of court musician Bak Yeon.



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less than a half day to understand the letters, and even ignorant ones can learn them all within ten days. Thus everyone will be able to read and understand the meaning of written words. And they will be able to make judgment on legal proceedings and understand what is going on.” From these statements it can only be surmised why the script was created.

Boundless Spiritual Energy

Sejong needed superhuman energy to work so hard. In the latter half of his reign, he reorganized the government to transfer responsibilities to the crown prince and the State Council (Uijeongbu), whereas the previous system required the six ministries approach the throne. Though the administrative realignment was partly due to his health problems, Sejong was also convinced that he had laid the foundations for realizing his Confucian ideals through the scholars mentored through the Hall of Worthies. His approach was successful enough to be credited with the establishment of Confucian rule, which harmonized the

power of the king and his subjects. Tirelessly working, Sejong suffered from various illnesses in his later years. While proofreading scores of books all at the same time, he died in the second month of 1450, at the age of 54.

When asked “Who is the greatest figure in Korean history?” many Koreans will name Sejong the Great without hesitation. Korea enjoyed a golden age of peace and prosperity during his reign. It means that under his rule the nation achieved balanced development in many fields, including politics, national defense, academic learning, science and music. This was possible because the sage king had an eye for talent and intelligence to measure a person’s ability as well as compassion and tolerance to love and understand his people. This explains why Sejong continues to be revered as a wise and capable monarch and his achievements are highly appraised. 🌀

7. King Sejong’s grave in Yeosu, Gyeonggi Province.



- 8. A caldron-type hemispherical sundial, called *angbu ilgu*, made by Jang Yeong-sil under orders of Sejong.
- 9. A rain gauge invented during the reign of Sejong.
- 10. An armillary sphere for astronomic observation, produced during the reign of Sejong.
- 11. An automatic water clock, the first of its kind in Korean history, made during the reign of Sejong.

Jejungwon Revisited Korea's First Western Medical Institution

Text by the Cultural Heritage Administration
Photos by Eurocreon & Simong Agency



1

1. Jejungwon, Korea's first national hospital offering Western-style medical service, opened in Seoul in 1885.

After it opened doors to foreign powers in 1876, the government of the Joseon Dynasty under King Gojong embarked on a modernization movement. Medical service was one of the priorities. As a result, the nation's first Western-style hospital was opened in April 1885.

Historical Coincidence or Inevitability?

About six months earlier, on the evening of December 4, 1884, a group of high-ranking officials of Joseon and foreign

diplomats were celebrating the founding of the Postal Administration in the heart of Seoul. As the banquet was nearing its end, an assassin stabbed Min Yeong-ik, a nephew of Queen Min, leaving the powerful man in critical condition and triggering a short-lived coup d'etat, which would later be known as Gapsin Jeongbyeon.

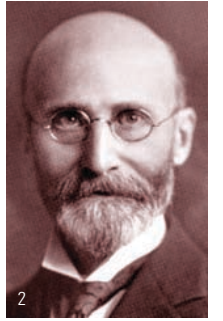
Thanks to treatment by Horace N. Allen (1858-1932), an American Presbyterian medical missionary and diplomat

and the only foreign doctor in Seoul apart from Japanese at the time, Min fully recovered in three months. The incident piqued the king and queen's interest in Western medicine, which helped build trust between Allen and the Korean royal court. Subsequently, Allen proposed the Joseon government to establish a Western-style hospital in Seoul, and acquired its approval.

The founding of Korea's first Western-style hospital, however, was not an overnight event sparked by the assassination attempt. Rather, it was a culmination of a long process. Since the early 19th century, practical-minded scholars of Joseon including Jeong Yak-yong (1762-1836) had written a number of books about Western medicine they had come to learn about via Qing China. In 1877, Japanese doctors opened Jesaeng Hospital in Busan to treat Koreans. In 1883, the Japanese Legation in Seoul opened a medical clinic to offer Western-style medical service. Korean physician Ji Seok-yeong (1855-1935) succeeded in administering smallpox vaccines on Korean children for the first time in 1897.

What is noteworthy is that King Gojong and the Korean government were eager to receive modern Western medicine. Under royal orders, the Joseon government dispatched an inspection team in 1881 to look around the Western-style medical practice in Japan. The next year Joseon closed down Hyeminseo and Hwarinseo, the two leading state dispensaries offering traditional medical care, signifying a turning point in its medical policy.

In 1884, the state organ Hanseong Sunbo published articles that advocated educating the public about Western medicine. In the same year, Robert S. Maclay (1824-1907), an American Methodist missionary, arrived in Seoul and acquired the king's permission to begin medical work. Upon the foundation laid out by a series of these developments, Allen's treatment of Min Yeong-ik served as a catalyst for a Western-style hospital.



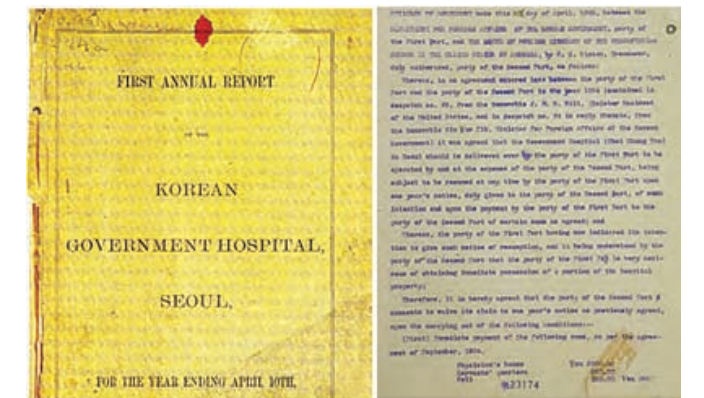
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2. American Presbyterian medical missionary and diplomat Horace N. Allen, who founded Jejungwon.

Korea's First Western-style National Hospital

In April 1885, the government of Joseon founded Jejungwon (House of Universal Deliverance), the nation's first Western-style national hospital, under the umbrella of the Office for Diplomatic and Trade Affairs, the equivalent to today's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The hospital was initially named Gwanghyewon (House of Extended Grace), which was made by the Office for Diplomatic and Trade Affairs and approved by Gojong. But, in only two weeks, the king and the cabinet renamed the hospital Jejungwon. Therefore, Gwanghyewon is rarely mentioned in academic circles.

3. First Annual Report of Jejungwon, covering the hospital's operation during its first year from April 10, 1885 to April 10, 1886. It has been designated Registered Cultural Heritage No. 447.



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4. Oliver R. Avison (right), the Canadian missionary doctor who was the fourth director of Jejungwon, performs surgery with the help of Korean assistant Bak Seo-yang at Severance Hospital in this undated photo. The glass negative of the photo is Registered Cultural Heritage No. 448.

Gojong and the Joseon government ordered the hospital be housed in the home of Hong Yeong-sik (1855-1884), which became state property after the core member of the failed three-day coup was killed in the turmoil. Located at the present site of the Constitutional Court in Jongno district, the house was spacious enough to accommodate most basic medical facilities, including an examination room, an operation room,

patients' room, and a waiting room. As patients continued to increase, the government moved the hospital to Gurigae, currently the site of the headquarters of Korea Exchange Bank, around October to November in 1886.

Patients Came from All Classes

Jejungwon provided medical care to a total of 10,460 patients during its first year, according to the first annual report on its operation jointly written in 1886 by Horace N. Allen and John W. Heron. The patients came from all social classes ranging from beggars and Hansen's disease patients to noblemen and court ladies. Among the patients women totaled around 800. Most upper-class patients requested house calls, while many patients came from the countryside. In terms of the illnesses treated during the first year, malaria topped the list followed by indigestion, various skin diseases and venereal disease like syphilis. Among other diseases often found were tuberculosis, leprosy, helminthiasis and beriberi.

Historical Significance

Jejungwon represented a truly significant first step in the nation's modern medical history in that a national hospital was founded under royal orders to treat the people regardless of their social class or background.

Jejungwon contributed to the development of modern medicine in Korea through two channels. First, it was a model for hospital administration and education of medical professionals, which led to the founding of two

national institutions, Uihakkyo (School of Medicine) in 1899 and Gwangjewon (House of Extended Deliverance) in 1900. Second, Jejungwon sowed the seeds for long-term medical development through its medical missionaries. Thanks to a large donation

by American philanthropist Louis Severance, Jejungwon evolved into Severance School in 1909 and then Severance Hospital in 1938, which is the predecessor of today's Yonsei University Medical Center.

5. The Hanseong Sunbo emphasizes the education of Korean medical personnel to practice modern Western medicine in an editorial on lunar March 27, 1884.



5



6. Horace N. Allen's medical equipment

6

Fall Foliage Tour to Mt. Naejang Nature Produces Vibrant Show of Colors

Text by the Cultural Heritage Administration
Photos by Topicphoto Agency & Goodimage



Autumn is in full splendor around the path leading to the Naejangsan National Park.

Every year Korea's foliage season peaks when Mt. Naejang becomes ablaze with rich and vibrant hues. The breathtaking feast of colors at this mountain, its tunnel of maple trees and fantastic rocky precipices, entice flocks of visitors from all over the country. The fall foliage here boasts a splendid harmony of bright yellows, crimson oranges and burning reds, as over 95 percent of trees on this mountain are broadleaf trees. The dense growth of maples of many different kinds produces a magnificent show of colors, which is so beautiful that no other mountain in the country can come close.



The compounds of Baegyang Temple viewed from Mt. Naejang.

Its name evoking a sense of mystery over the “infinite secrets hidden,” Mt. Naejang straddles the two provinces of North and South Jeolla in southwestern Korea. More specifically, the main Immortal Peak (Sinseonbong), with an elevation of 763 meters, and eight other summits of this mountain rise from the border areas between the city of Jeongeup and Sunchang County in North Jeolla, and Jangseong County in South Jeolla.



A persimmon tree near Baegyang Temple.



Naejang Temple viewed from a hill at the back.



Roof tiles piled up at Naejang Temple.



Stone stupas on the grounds of Naejang Temple.



A family heads to the mountain past Baegyang Temple.



Hikers trek the path along a valley in Mt. Naejang.

Candles and Beeswax in Korean History

Text by Bin Dorim | PhD in Korean Studies from Germany, retired diplomat, translator and candlemaker
 Photos by The National Folk Museum of Korea



1

The written history of a country is mostly filled with political and military quarrels, victory and defeat, success and failure. And the main objective is always the ruling class in their endeavor to establish order, structure and administration. The people carry the workload and their leaders carry the load to make them work. In traditional Korea things were not different. The *yangban* class of the Joseon Dynasty used their power to pursue philosophical knowledge and comfortable leisure amusements at the same time, while the subjects struggled for survival paying taxes and performing socage.

Let us therefore take a tiny glance into the more “profane” items of daily life, documented in historical sources. One of the luxury items reserved for the upper class were candles made out of beeswax. While commoners burned animal fat, oil or wooden torches, the court and some of the wealthier aristocrats illuminated their quarters with this byproduct from beekeeping. Candles must have been in use in Korea from ancient times, since we find candle holders already on the bottom of the royal resort lake Anapji in Gyeongju, the capital of the Silla Kingdom (57 B.C.–A.D. 935) and beeswax was very likely the material these candles were made of. Beeswax can be obtained from wild bees or from the combs of man-made hives. We don’t know when apiculture was introduced to Korea, but *The Annals of the Joseon Dynasty* (*Joseon wangjo sillok*, 1392–1897) mention beekeeping already as a well-established part of agricultural production suited for taxation. In the year 1418 farmers in mountainous



2

1. Candles on sticks
 Diameter (candles)
 140mm; Height 995 mm
 Onyang Folk Museum
 2. Candles
 Height 180 mm

regions were advised by the authorities to put up more hives, so they could pay their dues in honey and beeswax, where the usual products for taxation like rice and other grains were scarce.

Candles were precious articles in those days, so precious that there was a law banning their use in common households as they were considered a “luxury” reserved only for the royal court in the beginning of the Joseon



3

3. Hand-held lantern
 156 x 155 x 290 mm

Dynasty. Among silk, paper and rice, candles were often part of gratifications bestowed by the king to a meritorious subject. In the recorded lists, the *Annals* mention the numbers of candles in such a beneficiary package given by the king as ranging from 6 to 10, so we can easily imagine how expensive they were.

In 1427, during the reign of King Sejong, a conversation between the king and high officials is recorded, where they discussed the amounts of items used during a wedding ceremony. The king asked the officials how the wedding expenditure for a prince could be reduced. The final decision was as follows:

“For the wedding of an official of 3rd rank and lower, 8 torches; from 2nd rank upwards 10 torches; and for the crown prince 40 torches and 10 beeswax candles can be used.”

Interesting for the modern reader could be that debates about restricting “luxury” in times of economic hardship were quite frequent during the 15th century. Arguments like “we would further agitate the people, if the high class and the court feast in luxury while the citizens starve due to a bad harvest” came up as easily as special taxation was demanded for millionaires during the recent economic crises in Western countries. Taking care of the three basic needs, i.e. clothing, food and shelter, as well as keeping peace was supposed to be the utmost responsibility of the state and the paramount goal of all political action.

Candles were also an important item of foreign trade in medieval Korea. The majority of references to candles and beeswax in the *Annals* are found in lists of traded merchandise between Korea and other countries. International

trade in those days was performed as an exchange of “presents” offered by tributary missions. In other words, a supposedly “inferior country” would send an official delegation to the “superior country” and offer presents to the leader of that country. These presents normally included a variety of so-called “local products” from raw material to sophisticated items of craftsmanship. As they were supposed to be gifts, the receiving party wouldn’t take the favor sitting down, so they prepared a package of goods as a “return-present.” In reality, this was nothing else but a form of barter trade, where the amount of the return-present would match the worth of the merchandise given by the first party. We can be pretty sure that there were heated negotiations on the working level preceding the actual exchange. Those trade missions normally came on special state occasions like a royal funeral, wedding or coronation. As any form of private trade with foreign countries was called “smuggling” and forbidden during the Joseon era, these missions were popular and developed into the means of choice for international commerce.

There are many visits by foreign trade delegations recorded in the *Annals*. Those who brought candles and beeswax came from Japan and the Kingdom of Ryukyu, an archipelago between Japan and Taiwan, also known by the modern name of Okinawa. Both countries sent a variety of goods including raw material like copper, iron, lead, sulfur and lime, as well as textiles, herbal medicine, oil, dried foodstuffs, swords, knives, incense and pottery. Sometimes the missions



6. Candles with carved leaf design
Diameter (base) 45 mm,
Height 420 mm; Diameter
(base) 50 mm, Height
315 mm

would even bring live animals like pairs of birds or flower seeds.

All these items were meticulously listed in the official letter from the sender, a middleman, or the monarch himself. These letters were recorded in the *Annals* together with the letter of reply from the Korean king. Korea usually paid back in hemp cloth, an item widely used in Korea for taxation and allowance for civil servants. The recorded number of candles Korea received from these countries reached 50 to 300 pieces per mission. This alone might show how precious these goods were at the time.

Let me now add some remarks on the usage, shape and method of production of beeswax candles in traditional Korea. Because the raw material was scarce and expensive, candles were used only on special occasions or by special persons. The royal household in Seoul had

4. Candles
Height 230 mm



5. Candlestick with butterfly and tortoise design
Height 420 mm



7. Patrol lanterns
Diameter (base) 145 mm,
Height 365 mm

special servants for different foodstuffs and other supplies. One “department” was in charge of “oil, honey, fruits, candles, pepper, vegetables and non-meat side dishes.” Outside of the royal court, though, candles could hardly be seen as a normal means of lightning up the dark. Candles are recorded as being used during important ceremonies like ancestral rites, weddings or funerals and for religious purposes in Buddhist temples. State ceremonies like coronation or the 60th birthday of the king were also among those occasions. This was the reason why the shape of candles in old Korea was far away from being “plain for the purpose,” but mostly came highly decorated with color and carvings.

For the basic setting of the candle, beeswax was melted and rolled out into a thin sheet that could be coiled up around a wick. The wick was made of Korean mulberry paper, twirled or



7

folded like a Leporello. The wicks of Korean candles were quite thick compared to the diameter of the candle, so we can expect a formidable emission of smoke and soot. But the people of the time seemed to be more concerned about brightness than harms from smoke. Within a small room the smoke from those candles must have hurt the eyes of people and they must have shed tears in steady streams.

The candles were shaped either round or rectangular. The surface was often covered with floral design, Chinese characters, or dragon design symbolizing the king. When King Gojong assumed the title of emperor in 1897, six huge candles (1m in height and 12cm in diameter) were used during the outdoor ceremony in the courtyard depicting, for the first time, dragons with five claws as a symbol of equity with the Chinese emperor. Traditionally, the Chinese imperial dragon design had 5 claws, the Korean royal symbol had 4 claws, and the Japanese dragon

emblem had 3 claws. The main body of the candle was rendered in the royal color red and the dragon, carved on the surface of the candle, was plated with gold.

Candles for weddings and other “happy” occasions were often decorated with colorful floral and leaf patterns. For coloring, the Korean candle makers mixed powder of dried plants and flowers with the wax.

In later times, when the use of beeswax candles spread to the households of the rural gentry, a segment of bamboo, with a wick inside, was filled with liquid wax. After the wax cooled down and became solid again, the bamboo was split and the candle taken out. These candles had a somewhat coarse surface and no decorations. They were used during ancestral rites performed within the family.

The end of the 19th century brought the end to beeswax candles in Korea. Japanese and Western merchants introduced the modern paraffin candles, which were much cheaper and thus easily available to everybody, and hence the new word *yangcho*, meaning “Western candle.” Ask any contemporary Korean about “candle,” and you will hear this word. The Korean word for beeswax almost disappeared from the vocabulary. Beekeepers in modern Korea don’t use the wax anymore and throw it away, while cosmetic and pharmaceutical companies, who need it for the production of creams and ointments, have to import it from abroad.

8. Picture of ancestral shrine
Pictures like this were used when an ancestral rite was performed away from home or if there was no proper shrine. A paper memorial tablet was posted at the center.



8

9. Candle with carved flowers and leaves
Diameter (base) 55 mm,
Height 330 mm



9

Millennium-old Cultural Capitals

Gyeongju of Korea, Nara and Kyoto of Japan

Text by the Cultural Heritage Administration
Photos by Topicphoto Agency



There are many historic cities around the world that are enduring sources of pride for their nations as well as precious cultural assets of mankind. Gyeongju which maintains numerous historical monuments dating to Silla, a golden era of ancient Korean civilization, and Nara and Kyoto, as Japan's iconic historic cities widely known for their unique cultural ambience, are the destinations of our time travel in this edition

Gyeongju: The Fragrance of Silla

Located near the southeastern tip of Korea, Gyeongju today is a modest city with a population of some 270,000 (as of 2011). But its history stretches back two millennia to 57 B.C., when the Silla Kingdom was founded here; Silla eventually unified its neighbors to place the entire Korean peninsula under its control and attained a brilliant cultural flowering through its millennium-long rule.

Silla began as a small tribal state named Saroguk, also called Seorabeol. Nonetheless, it grew into a powerful kingdom to overwhelm its two neighbors, Goguryeo and Baekje,

which had consolidated their power as centralized monarchies. On the strength of its political and economic stability, Silla made outstanding accomplishments in science, culture and the arts.

Externally, it had active exchanges with China and Japan as well as the Islamic world in West Asia. With its doors open wide toward the world, Gyeongju was already a thriving metropolitan with international reputation more than a thousand years ago.

During its prime in the eighth century, Gyeongju had as many as 178,936 households, with some 900,000 residents. In terms of urban scale and cultural refinement, it was comparable to major metropolises at the time, such as Constantinople (present-day Istanbul) of



1. Rock-carved Buddhist Images at Chilburam hermitage on Mt. Nam in Gyeongju, the old capital of the Silla Kingdom (National Treasure No. 312).

2. Great Tumuli Park in the old city center of Gyeongju.

3. Ninna-ji temple in Kyoto, an ancient capital of Japan.

4. The main Buddha image in Seokguram grotto in Gyeongju.

5. The most famous Buddhist temple in Gyeongju, Bulguksa stands on an ornate stone terrace. Decorative stone stairways lead up to the main compound.



the Byzantine Empire, Baghdad of the Islamic world and Changan (Xian) of China's Tang Dynasty.

Gyeongju Historic Areas

UNESCO has inscribed Gyeongju on its World Heritage List under the name "Gyeongju Historic Areas," recognizing that the city's rich cultural heritage is worthy of humanity's common effort for preservation. Each characterized by the distinctive nature of its historic remains, the five Historic Areas are Namsan

mountain, a treasure trove of Buddhist art; Moon Fortress, a royal palace site; Great Tumuli Park, a cluster of burial mounds; the ruins of Hwangnyonsa, a state temple; and the Mountain Fortress, the royal capital's defense strongholds.

The inscription acknowledges Gyeongju's indigenous value as a historic city with innumerable cultural remains scattered all around. But it still fails to include a considerable number of relics and monuments located outside of the Historic Areas. Among the treasures thus left out are the two three-story stone pagodas on the site of Gameun Temple and thousands of artifacts housed at the Gyeongju National Museum. The five Historic Areas comprise 52 individual cultural assets.

Nara and Kyoto: Japan's Cultural Gems

It would be impossible to discuss Japanese culture without mentioning the two ancient imperial capitals, Nara and

6. A nocturnal view of the royal resort lake Anapji, in Gyeongju.



7. Heian Jingu, a Shinto shrine in Kyoto, exemplifies ancient Japanese religious architecture.

Kyoto, which remain cherished cradles of traditional Japanese culture.

A serene and cozy city embraced by gentle hillocks, Nara was the capital of Japan from 710 to 784. It has a generally similar ambience with Gyeongju, as an ancient capital which was once the national center of arts and crafts, literature and industry. Eight temples, a shrine, a palace site and a forest in the city collectively form the "Historic Monuments of Ancient Nara," which is a UNESCO World Heritage site. They include Todai-ji, Kofuku-ji, Gango-ji, Yakushi-ji and Toshidai-ji temples, Kasuga Shrine, the remains of Heijo Palace, and Kasugayama Primeval Forest.

Historic Monuments of Ancient Kyoto

The capital of Japan for more than a thousand years from 794 to 1868, dubbed the Heian period, Kyoto abounds in ancient cultural flavors immaculately preserved. The city has

long been prized as Japan's spiritual pillar vis-à-vis Tokyo, the center of modern Japanese civilization.

Knowing the history of Kyoto is tantamount to understanding the stream of transition in Japanese culture and traditions. Kyoto remained as Japan's capital until the imperial court moved to Tokyo in 1869, although military rulers had set up their de facto governments (*bakufu*) in different places, including Kamakura of the Kamakura Shogunate

8. Byodo-in, an ancient Buddhist temple in Kyoto, is a UNESCO World Heritage site.



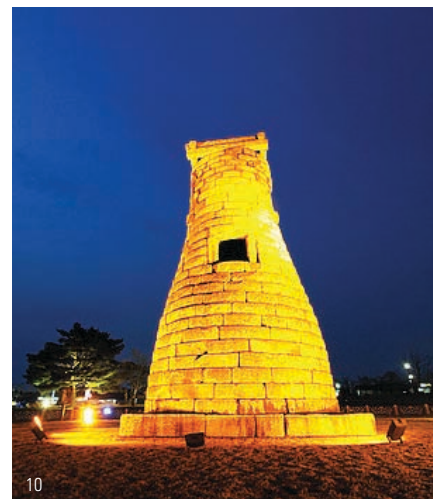
9. A pair of three-story stone pagodas stands on the ruins of Game-unsa, an ancient Buddhist temple in Gyeongju.



(1185-1333) and Edo (present-day Tokyo) of the Tokugawa Shogunate (1600-1867). Much of Kyoto suffered destruction in the Onin War of 1466-1467, which ended the Muromachi Shogunate (1337-1573) that ruled from this city. During the Tokugawa period, Kyoto was extensively rebuilt as the cultural, religious and economic center of Japan. The city became what it is today mostly at this time.

Numerous Buddhist temples, Shinto shrines, palaces and gardens create the unique historical ambience of Kyoto. Of them, the “Historic Monuments of Ancient Kyoto,” a UNESCO World Heritage site, includes 13 temples, three shrines and a castle, such as Kiyomizudera, Ninna-ji, Tenryu-ji and Ryoan-ji temples, Kami and Shimo shrines, and Nijo Castle. Kiyomizudera is one of the must-sees for all visitors to Kyoto. The temple was founded in 778 by the monk Enchin after he found the Otowa Waterfall, above which the main shrine was built with its famously broad

veranda, called *butai*, meaning “stage.” The shrine is designated a national treasure of Japan. Most of the extant buildings were reconstructed during the Tokugawa period. Nijo Castle was also built by the Tokugawa Shogunate in 1603, initially as residence of Tokugawa Ieyasu, and was completed by his grandson Tokugawa Iemitsu in 1626. The castle has, among other buildings and gardens, Ninomaru Palace, Honmaru Palace and Ninomaru Garden, all designated national treasures.



10. Cheomseongdae, an astronomical observatory in Gyeongju, built during the 7th century Silla Kingdom.

Gyeongju, Nara and Kyoto

Nara and Kyoto have unique cultural ambience and dignity accumulated in deep layers of time, which cannot be emulated by any other city. Particularly, Kyoto remains the indisputable “cultural capital of Japan” to this day. The city was spared from U.S. bombing during World War II, owing to consideration of its invaluable historical remains. Indeed, the city is dotted with traces of countless historical events large and small. Gyeongju also is known as an “outdoor museum,” strewn with famous places reverberating with the history of Silla, all of whose 56 kings ruled from here without moving the seat of their throne. Despite its widened roads and new buildings that have appeared amid

urbanization, Gyeongju keeps its cultural fragrance remarkably intact in the 21st century. Archaeological excavations still continue on various historical remains around the city, unveiling its lost treasures.

Gyeongju, Nara and Kyoto share much in common as cultural capitals of two East Asian neighbors. With their rich cultural legacies attesting to their checkered history, these cities beckon the world in an era when cultural diversity is receiving fresh recognition as a source of new vitality to modern civilization. The three cities have a lot to offer to humanity envisioning a new era of cultural splendor. ☺



11. Ninomaru Palace in Nijo Castle, Kyoto, built in 1603 as residence of Tokugawa Ieyasu.

Fine Horsehair Hats

Joseon Men's Status Symbol

Text by Kim Eun-jeong | Professor, Department of Clothing & Textiles, College of Human Ecology, Chonnam National University
 Photos by National Research Institute of Culture Heritage



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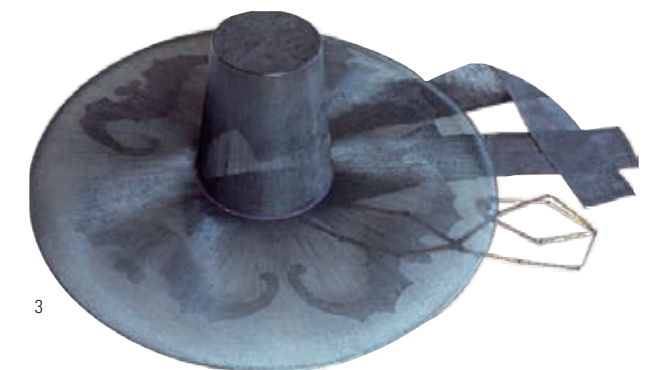
Gat, the fine horsehair hats of Korean men during pre-modern times, evolved from practical weather protection into a status symbol of a rigid class society. The types and forms of these hats changed over time and varied depending on the wearer's status and purpose. A fine horsehair hat became an indispensable element of the stylish appearance of a nobleman of letters, or *seonbi*, during the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1910), and an iconic cultural image of Korea nowadays.

Historical Origins

The oldest written reference to Korean men's hats is found in *History of the Three Kingdoms (Samguk yusa)*, a 13th century text, by the Chinese-character name *sorip*, meaning "white hat," while *gat* is a vernacular Korean word. A mural in Gamsinchong, a tomb of Goguryeo (37 B.C.-A.D. 668), one of the three ancient Korean kingdoms, has a figure wearing headgear consisting of a crown and rim. Similar types of

hats continued to be worn during the Goryeo Dynasty (918-1392), and during the succeeding Joseon period, these hats constituted an important part of an adult man's formal outfit prescribed by the Confucian-oriented dynasty of high moral standard. At the same time, the hats as well as the overall dress style of upper-class men mirrored the simple and austere aesthetic sensibility of the era.

Men of the Joseon period wore black horsehair hats, called *heungnip*, when they went out, or even at home. Civil officials of the major third rank or higher wore red lacquer-coated hats, called *jurip*, along with an officer's uniform when they attended military events. Hats covered with white hemp cloth, called *baengnip*, were used by people of all classes during periods of national mourning. The dress reform in 1884, ordered by King Gojong, purported to simplify the dressing style of people as part of the efforts to modernize the country. Hats became noticeably smaller with shorter crowns and narrower rims. This new type of hats continued to be used through much of the early half of the 20th century, when Koreans began to wear Western-style clothing in everyday life. The traditional hats gradually disappeared. These days, as a quintessential cultural icon of bygone



3

1. An old horsehair hat (*gat*) and case (*gatjip*)

2. A picture of three Korean scholars wearing black horsehair hats, drawn by an unidentified Western visitor in 1895.

3. A standard black horsehair hat (*heungnip*) used by Korean men during pre-modern times.

4. A fine black horsehair hat constituted an essential part of men's formal outfit during the Joseon period.

5. A hat covered with white hemp cloth was used along with mourning garments.



4



5

Korea, men's traditional hats are only worn for authentic ancestral rites, ceremonies for coming of age, cultural festivals, or as part of costumes for period dramas and films.

Joseon Men's Headwear in Genre Paintings

Men's hats continuously altered in length and size during the Joseon period, in accordance with changing social mores and cultural milieu. In most Western societies, men generally take off their hats before someone of a higher status. But in pre-modern Korea, men never took them off, even when kowtowing to the king as they believed the hat was an integral part of their formal attire.

Traditional genre paintings offer an intriguing glimpse of such dressing custom among men of the literati class of the Joseon period. Especially, the genre scenes depicted by Shin Yun-bok (1758-?, style name Hyewon), a famous painter during the reign of King Jeongjo, succinctly portray the highly restrained aesthetic expressed by the headdress of Joseon noblemen of letters; their black horsehair hats seem light and transparent and the crown and

brim have an acute balance of straight lines, exquisitely complementing the white overcoat in symbolizing the lofty spiritual world of the scholar-noblemen. Interestingly, Kim Hong-do (1745-after 1816), a contemporary of Shin, was more interested in depicting noblemen who indulged in drinking, their spoiled dignity suggested by their hats worn askew.

Symbolism of the Gat

Under the influence of Confucian decorum, Koreans through the ages have regarded headdress as an important means of expressing courtesy and etiquette. In particular, the black horsehair *gat* were almost universal headdress for the middle class as well as noblemen. Differentiated from more common types of headwear like the bamboo hats (*chorip*) or cone-shaped straw hats (*bangnip* or *paengnyangja*), which were largely worn by men of lower classes for practical purposes like protection from sunlight or rain, the black horsehair hat had a distinctive ceremonial significance: only males who had had a coming-of-age ceremony were qualified to wear this hat, hence the understandable meaning and pride attached to it. The old Korean proverb,

“Disgraced with a *gat* on your head,” alludes to unexpected humiliation faced in a dignified situation, which adds up to the disgrace felt by the victim.

Craftsmanship of Gat Making

The making of a fine horsehair hat involves arduous procedures undertaken by three types of craftsmen: a crown maker, a brim maker, and an assembler. The crown, shaped like an inverted glass, is carefully woven with ultra-fine strands of the hair from a horse's mane or tail, called *malchong*, and is thus called *chong moja*. The brim, called *yangtae*, is made by weaving together similarly fine strands of bamboo into a disk shape with a hole in the center. These two are joined and lined with silk strips where necessary and coated with lacquer to make a finished hat, called *ipja*. Each procedure requires different skills and materials. Hence they are done separately, often at segregated locations. The entire process as a whole has been designated Important Intangible Cultural Heritage No. 4.

Traditionally, Confucians taught that a man should take good care of his body, attending to even a stand of hair, because it exists solely owing to his parents. Some even risked their lives to uphold this time-honored principle of filial piety. The fierce public resistance to the 1895 royal ordinance to prohibit topknots was based on this principle. The ordinance dealt a fatal blow to the production of men's traditional horsehair hats which were worn over a topknot. Demand eclipsed naturally, and these days, the hat production continues under



6

6. A genre picture of men enjoying an arrow-throwing game (*tuho*), by Kim Hong-do, a famous 18th century painter.

state protection in a few regions around the age-old hubs of Tongyeong, Yecheon and Jeju. ☺

7. Bamboo strands are carefully prepared to produce a top-quality men's hat.

8. Fine bamboo strands are put together to make a crown.

9. A brim is finished by attaching ultra-fine bamboo strands one by one.

10. A finished hat is coated with lacquer.

11. A lacquer-coated hat is dried on a wooden shelf.



7



10



8



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