White symbolizes autumn. The symbolism originates from the traditional “five directional colors” based on the ancient Chinese thought of wuxing or ohyang in Korean. The five colors were associated with seasons and other phenomena in nature, including the fate of humans. The cover design features a painting of Mt. Kumkang by Danwon Kim Hong-do. For more stories on his life and work, see page 16.
Songpyeon, Half-moon-shaped Rice Cakes for the Full-moon Day

Chuseok, falling on the 15th day of the eighth month on the lunar calendar, is the Korean Thanksgiving Day to celebrate the year’s harvest of grains and fruits. Half-moon-shaped rice cakes, or songpyeon, are made from newly-harvested grains and offered to ancestral spirits in gratitude for the bountiful harvest.

Among ritual foods prepared for the ancestral table on Chuseok, songpyeon is the most iconic. Rice is pounded into powder which is kneaded with hot water to make dough. Small pieces are torn from the rice dough, shaped into discs and stuffed with sweet fillings made with ingredients fresh out of the field, such as beans, chestnuts and sesame seeds. The stuffed pieces are steamed on a bed of pine needles, rinsed in water, drained and brushed with sesame oil. The bite-sized delicacy is pine scented, hence the name, which means “pine needle rice cake.”

To make songpyeon, each piece of rice dough is first flattened in a roundel shape and then folded in a half circle after being stuffed. Changes in the shape of the dough are reminiscent of the phases of the moon, from full to half-moon, thus embodying the heart-felt thanks of the songpyeon maker for the growing of grains, which took place as the moon’s shape was transformed. Songpyeon is set on a ritual table for ancestral offerings and shared among family members along with other delicacies as they gather together at Chuseok to express gratitude to their ancestors for the abundant harvest.

UNESCO Lists Two Items of Korean Documentary Heritage

*Nanjung ilgi* (War Diary of Admiral Yi Sun-sin) and the Archives of Saemaul Undong (New Community Movement) have been inscribed on the UNESCO Memory of the World Register. Their inscription was recommended by the 11th Meeting of the International Advisory Committee (IAC), held from June 18 to 21 in Gwangju, and approved by the UNESCO Secretary General. *Nanjung ilgi* has no parallel in documentary value; it is a personal journal written by a military commander during wartime, speaking volumes about East Asian power rivalry in the late 16th century. Saemaul Undong is recognized by the United Nations as a best practice for fighting poverty and is being used as a model in developing countries. Their inscription has increased the number of Korean documentary heritage on the Register to 11, the highest in Asia.

Korea and Cambodia Agree to Cooperate on the Conservation of Preah Pithu

The Cultural Heritage Administration of Korea (CHA) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on June 22 with the Authority for the Protection and Management of Angkor and the Region of Siem Reap (APSARA) on the preservation of Preah Pithu located within the complex of Angkor Thom. Retaining both Hindu and Buddhist construction styles, the Preah Pithu temples are suffering from adverse conditions: the surrounding thick layer of forests blocks sunlight from the heritage site, resulting in the growth of lichens and fungus in some parts. CHA is planning to assess the current conservation state of the heritage and draw up a comprehensive repair plan in close consultation with APSARA. Field research will begin in 2014.

Completion of the National Intangible Heritage Center Celebrated

The celebration ceremony for the opening of the National Intangible Heritage Center in Jeonju was held on July 31 in order to promote the Centre’s roles in the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. It was built by the Cultural Heritage Administration with the objective of enhancing the transmission and dissemination of intangible cultural heritage. The ground was broken for its construction in February 2010, and the Centre was completed in April 2013 with a total budget of 75.9 billion won (about 7.59 million U.S. dollars). The 29,615-squaremeter-building stands on land 59,930 square meters in area, with one story below ground and five stories above. The Centre will carry out its mission of implementing UNESCO’s Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and executing CHA’s intangible cultural heritage policies.
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Editor’s Note:
This is the third installment of a four-part series on the Seoul City Wall, a fortification system for Hanyang, the capital of the Joseon Dynasty (1392–1910).

The outstanding characteristics of the Seoul City Wall, the fortifications that surrounded the Joseon Dynasty capital Hanyang (present-day Seoul), are most evident in four aspects: it took advantage of the natural environment; it is the most representative and most complete of Korean city walls; it is an authoritative and cultural space; and it is quite distinct from other city walls in East Asia.

Symbolic Meanings as City Wall

The Seoul City Wall is one of the primary factors that help define Seoul as a historic city. The walls surrounding Hanyang, the chosen capital of the Joseon Dynasty (1392–1910) and present-day Seoul, are not just a military structure to guard against enemies; they carry symbolic meanings and intrinsic value. For this reason, the designation title of the walls encircling Seoul as Historic Site No. 10 has changed from “Seoul Fortress Wall” to “Seoul City Wall,” denoting that the structure was designed and has functioned not just for defensive purposes of protecting the city.

Built as one of the structures that were intended to invest Hanyang with due authority befitting the dynastic capital of Joseon, the Seoul City Wall embodies unique and creative characteristics in comparison with other city walls extant in East Asia. The major features are summarized as four.

Geographical and Topographical Features

As a physical and symbolic boundary around the historic city, the Seoul City Wall was built along the ridges of the four mountains encircling the city — Mt. Namsan, Mt. Inwangsan, Mt. Bugaksan and Mt. Naksan. Depending on the geographical and topographical characteristics of the surrounding natural environment, the walls rise and fall; they are partly built on mountainous terrain and partly on flatland. Making the best of the natural environment, the Seoul City Wall is at one with the surrounding mountains. The curving lines and ups
The Seoul City Wall was constructed in a similar composition as the city walls of Pyongyang of the Goguryeo Kingdom (37 B.C.–A.D. 660) and Gaegyeong (present-day Kaesong) of the Goryeo Dynasty (918–1392). The city wall for the capital of the Joseon Dynasty typifies traditional Korean city walls and, at the same time, is equipped with the most complete composition of them all. The Seoul City Wall was patterned after the fortifications for the capital of Goguryeo, but built both on flatland and mountainous areas.

Inheriting Time-honored Composition

The construction and history of repairs on the Seoul City Wall are recorded in many historical documents, and part of the relevant records are found on the remaining walls in the form of record stones which bear information of the walls’ building. In addition, numerous works of art in the form of literature and paintings which used the four surrounding mountains, pavilions, defensive facilities and landscape as their motifs, have been left for posterity — a rich evidentiary trove on the place of Seoul City Wall in the life of the nation.

Symbol of Authority and Place of Rituals

Serving a practical function for more than 500 years, the Seoul City Wall was one of the principal sources of authority for the capital of the Joseon Dynasty, along with palaces, the royal ancestral shrine, the royal altar to the gods of earth and harvest, and road networks. The construction of the Seoul City Wall made the best of the topographic features of the four mountains that encircle the capital.
The Seoul City Wall is quite distinct from other fortresses in South Korea and in other East Asian countries. In South Korea, fortresses are divided into three categories: mountain fortresses built only for defensive purposes; town fortifications made on flatland; and city walls erected around the country’s administrative and political center. Few if any compare with the Seoul City Wall.

In Japan, many are in the form of a stronghold such as Himeji Castle, and there are no fortifications surrounding a city like the Seoul City Wall. Further comparison can be made with China. China has two types of fortresses: one built for the protection of a city or facilities; and the other built on flatland or mountainous areas for military defense, such as the Great Wall. Comparable with the Seoul City Wall are the city walls for Xi’an, Luoyang, Suzhou, Hangzhou, Nanjing and Beijing, which still stand today. Most of them are built on flatland except for the wall of Nanjing, but the Seoul City Wall is located along the ridges of the mountains encircling Hanyang. The topographical disparities between Chinese city walls and the Seoul City Wall resulted in different profiles: China’s walls on flatland are basically in the shape of a square, but the shape of the Seoul City Wall is curved and waved along the mountains. Additionally, fired bricks were used in China, but the Seoul City Wall is made of stones. All of these differences produced the distinctive composition of the facilities and road networks of the Seoul City Wall.

Furthermore, the Seoul City Wall was closely related with the everyday lives of ordinary people who resided in Hanyang, serving as a space for living, ritual and recreation. Numerous state and folk rituals took place in the four mountains, and within the walls and pavilions. The most typical recreational activity is sunseong, or a promenade around the wall. In spring or summer people who lived within the walls would walk around the city walls and enjoy views of the landscape.

Indeed, the Seoul City Wall was not just a physical structure constructed for military purposes, but a cultural space that embodied the historic values and world of ideas of the Joseon Dynasty.
Kimchi, a traditional fermented vegetable dish, has an indispensable place on the Korean meal table. However humble it is, a meal consisting only of rice and kimchi makes a decent repast. A lavish banquet missing kimchi is simply incomplete. The special position the spicy side dish occupies in Korean cuisine and life has no parallel with any other food in Korea and in other countries.

The Way of Kimjang: Collective Labor, Spirit of Sharing

Living in an agrarian society, ancient Koreans relied on vegetables to provide them with needed nutrients. Since they were not able to secure greens and other plant products in the winter, Korean ancestors began the practice of storing salted vegetables at the advent of winter, which has evolved into *kimjang*. Kimjang is an annual custom of making kimchi in large quantities to see families through the winter. In late autumn or early winter, housewives in a village would gather together to share labor to make piles of kimchi, which would then be buried underground in earthen jars. Even during the Joseon Dynasty when men were criticized for helping with kitchen chores, kimjang was an exception to the strict segregation of gender roles: male family members did take part by carrying heavy materials or digging holes in the ground to bury the kimchi jars.

Today’s busy urban lifestyle makes it difficult to maintain the traditional ways of kimjang, such as sharing labor in a village or burying jars underground, but kimjang is still a significant event for Korean people as a way of ensuring that no Korean goes without the essential side dish throughout the harsh winter months. That is why every year the Korea Meteorological Administration sets an optimal “kimjang date” for each part of the country based on their varying temperatures. In recent years, the traditional practice of winter kimchi making has given birth to another form of social sharing. As winter draws up, a wide range of groups, associations and companies organize kimjang events to make and share kimchi with needy neighbors.
Technology for Enjoying Kimchi Year-round

Temperature is important not only for making kimchi, but also for storing it. Kimchi tastes best when it is stored and fermented at a constant temperature of 5 degrees Celsius. Home appliance manufacturers in Korea invented the “kimchi refrigerator” as a device to maintain the optimum temperature of kimchi year-round. These are widely used in Korean households and exported to other countries.

The Many Flavors of Kimchi

The Korean people have long enjoyed fermented vegetables, seafood, soybean products and fermented sauces as primary side dishes for their staple food, rice. The oldest record of kimchi is from the Book of Wei or Sanguo (Records of the Three Kingdoms), a Chinese history book compiled by Chen Shou in the third century: “People of the Goguryeo Kingdom [37 B.C.–A.D. 668] are good at making fermented foods such as alcoholic beverages, salted fish and sauces.”

Further references to the fermented vegetable dish appear in Dongguk isangguk jip (Anthology of Writings by Minister Yi in the East Country) written by the literary official Yi Gyu-bo in 1241 and in the cookbook Jubangmun (Liquor Making Records) compiled in the late 17th century. As these historical records indicate, Korea’s culinary tradition and enjoyment of kimchi and variants of the fermented vegetable dish has been transmitted from time immemorial.

Kimchi has not always been so spicy-hot. Chili peppers were first introduced to Korea as late as in the late 16th century, and it was from then that red chili powder gave a spicy taste to salted kimchi. Along with red peppers, garlic and ginger started to be added as seasonings for kimchi in the late Joseon period, completing the kimchi recipe as it is known today.

Kimchi comes in diverse types and tastes. Three of the most popular kimchi are tongbaechu kimchi (whole cabbage kimchi) made from uncut cabbage stuffed with seasonings; kkakdugi (diced radish kimchi) radish cut into small cubes and mixed with seasonings; and dongchimi (watery radish kimchi) radish soaked in salted water. Each region, and indeed each household, makes kimchi using different ingredients in different ways. The amount of salt used varies across the country as well: in warm regions people use more salt for better storage, and in cold regions use less salt.

Good for You, Good Mouthfeel

A side dish essential in the Korean diet, kimchi is also good for health. Kimchi is made by salting, seasoning and fermenting vegetables. Cabbage, radish, red pepper, green onion and garlic along with salt are sources of vitamins and minerals such as calcium, phosphorus and sodium, which help in restoring the body’s pH balance by preventing the buildup of acidity from excessive meat consumption. The vegetable dish is low in high-energy nutrients such as carbohydrates, fat and protein, but fermented seafood ingredients provide amino acids. Kimchi is also proven to be rich in lactic acid bacteria which aid digestion, and studies on its anti-cancer effects were recently reported.

Despite Western influences that have driven rapid change in many aspects of Korean lifestyles, the culinary culture has remained intact, which is largely explained by the Korean peoples’ enduring love of kimchi. With its spicy appeal and nutritional benefits, kimchi will not soon lose its place as the indispensable side dish in the Korean table.
Kim Hong-do (pen name Danwon, 1745–?) is recognized as the frontrunner in ushering in the revival of art and literature during the reign of King Jeongjo (r. 1776–1800). He painted pictures ordered by the royal court, high-level officials and members of the nobility. Although his excellence was most evident in landscape and genre paintings which vividly depict the everyday life of commoners, Kim Hong-do also established a unique style of painting diverse subjects, featuring humans, deities, flowers and Buddhist figures. Kim was gifted not only in painting but also in writing. Danwonyumuk (Collection of Writings by Danwon), a book of his poems, was compiled by his son Kim Yang-gi.

Kim’s exceptional ability in painting was recognized by his teacher Kang Se-hwang (1713–1791): “Studying painting from when he was a little boy, Danwon is good at drawing almost all subjects. Paintings of human figures, landscapes, deities, flowers and fruits, birds and insects, and fish and crabs are so delicate and dexterous that there is no equal even with painters from the past. Paintings of deities, birds and flowers are particularly excellent, which are good enough to dominate this generation and to be transmitted for succeeding generations. He also excels in figure paintings and genre paintings: paintings of scholars at study, merchants going to market, wanderers, women’s quarters, farmers, ladies breeding silkworms … houses, double doors, rocky mountains and …”
trees in the fields have uncanny resemblance with the reality; such skills had never existed in history. Ordinary painters are able to make clumsy attempts to mimic reality only after long training copying what has been drawn on paper or cloth. Kim, however, paints creatively, and his proficiency has reached a point where he can reproduce the mysterious harmony of nature in his paintings."

**Court Painter par Excellence**

Kim became a member of *Dohwaseo* (Agency of Painting) before he was 20, on the recommendation of his teacher Kang Se-hwang. Kang himself possessed outstanding skills in poetry, painting and calligraphy which had earned him the king’s recognition. Attaining a reputation in the royal court in his early twenties, at the young age of 29 Kim participated in the prestigious royal project of painting the portraits of King Yeongjo (r. 1724–1776) and his grandson, during which he formed an opportunistic relationship with the king’s grandson, who later became King Jeongjo. After successfully completing the royal portraits, the genius painter took a series of official positions in charge of royal paintings and, upon the enthronement of King Jeongjo, became the most celebrated painter of the royal court. His fame as a royal painter is aptly described in historical records: “During the reign of King Jeongjo, every piece of Kim’s work was met with the king’s compliments” and “the king ordered Kim to draw the landscape of the four districts of Mt. Kumgang and treated him to unprecedented hospitality.”

When he turned 40 in 1784, Kim drew *Danwondo* (Picture of Danwon) and started to use Danwon as his pen name. Posted to work as a local public official, he found that short stint a chance to have a first-hand experience of commoners’ everyday life, sketching them at work and play in a unique, creative style. In his fifties, Kim dedicated his time and energy to creative activities and established his own painting style. Prolifically generating many works of art at this time, he not only worked as a member of Dohwaseo, but also applied his prodigious artistic gifts on privately commissioned works. The mellow and lyrical brushwork from this period attests to both his mature age and mature skills.

Besides his excellence in painting, Kim Hong-do had a refined eye and taste in many other intellectual pursuits including literature, philosophy and music, which in turn served as crucial nourishment for his growth as a painter. His relations with literary officials, in particular, exerted a profound influence on his way of painting: the realism-based literary theory advocated by the renowned scholar Park Ji-won (1737–1805) is thought to have had a great impact on Kim’s genre paintings and “true-view landscapes” (*jingyeong sansuhwa*).

With the sudden demise of King Jeongjo in 1800 and the subsequent deaths of his protégées, Kim Hong-do suffered hardship in his later life. Although blessed with talent and fame as a painter, Kim’s fortunes declined and so did his health. Sometimes he could not even buy brushes, paint and paper, but he never abandoned his all-consuming passion and pure love for painting.
Painter of Landscapes and Everyday Life

Paintings by Kim Hong-do in any genre were outstanding but of all his works, his depictions of everyday life and landscapes are the most well-known. In his genre paintings, Kim employed lively and realistic brushstrokes with fine application of light and shadow. He cleverly described the life and sentiments of ordinary people in humorous and down-to-earth vignettes, often with a satirical edge in his genre paintings such as Mudong (Dancing Boy), Seodang (Village School), Narutbae (Ferryboat) and Ssireum (Korean Wrestling).

The artistic genius of Kim Hong-do is evident as well in his landscape paintings, wherein he vividly portrayed the celestial beauty of the country’s mountains and rivers. In his depiction of Mt. Kumgang included in The Picture Book of the Four Districts of Mount Kumgang, Kim Hong-do developed a new painting style to describe mountains of granite and pine trees, completing the sujibap method used for painting the roots, branches and leaves of trees. Adorned with a dense, detailed description of the subject, a restful empty space on the side and lyrical brushwork, his landscape paintings are testimony to his surpassing skills in the arts of his time.

Recognized as one of the four most preeminent painters of the Joseon Dynasty (1392–1910) along with An Gyeon (most active ca. 1419–1450), Jeong Seon (1676–1759) and Jang Seung-eop (1843–1897), the genius painter Kim Hong-do left achievements that exerted long-lasting influence on painters of the late Joseon period.
Mt. Mudeungsan, Gwangju’s ‘Motherly Mountain’

First, Walk around the Mountain

Situated within 10 kilometers of central Gwangju and rising to an elevation of 1,187 meters, Mt. Mudeungsan is rocky near its peak, but is resplendent with its covering of royal azaleas, silver grasses and other vegetation. The beauty of hiking Mudeungsan is in touring around the mountain before climbing it: the mudolgil route circles around the mountain and is punctuated by villages and low-lying hills — a horizontal, cultural route, not a vertical hiking route. The term mudol-gil comes from mudol-moe, an orally-transmitted old name of Mt. Mudeungsan.

Mudolgil has been newly built up based on a map made in the 1910s, by connecting the roads that Korean ancestors took for going to market or for wedding processions. Its different sections aged between 100 to 500 years old, mudolgil has long facilitated close communication between people who lived on different sides of the mountain and is now reborn as an ecological cultural route. Consisting of 15 connected courses, mudolgil is 51.8 kilometers long in total and is open for coming and going throughout the route. After walking around and looking at the mountain, it is time to climb up Mudeungsan through yetgil, or “old routes.” Possessing stories thousands of years old, yetgil have been spruced up and are now open to visitors. The hiking courses of yetgil are described in the picture on page 26.

Magnificent Landscape of Rock Columns

Climbing up the mountain through one of the old routes toward the peak, hikers are met with the majestic view of rock columns ranged like otherworldly fortresses towering skyward. These monumental landmarks, called columnar jointing, were formed during the Cretaceous period of the Mesozoic Era through the cooling and contracting of lava from volcanic eruptions. Weathered by wind and rain for a long

For people of the city of Gwangju, Mt. Mudeungsan is a “motherly mountain,” comforting and gentle. Located on the southeastern edge of Gwangju, the bosomy mountain embraces the city and is easily accessible from any direction. It was designated as a national park in March 2013.
period, the multi-sided columns have created a breathtaking landscape. Recognized for its natural and scientific value, the columnar joints, Ipseokdae and Seoseokdae bands in particular, have been designated as Natural Monument No. 465. They are estimated to have the biggest individual columns in South Korea.

On the way up to the summit of the mountain, a range of rock columns stands in a row from east to west, resembling a gigantic folding screen. At an elevation of 1,100 meters, Seoseokdae reflects light at sunset and glitters brilliantly like crystal, thus its nickname “crystal folding screen,” a spectacle so impressive that Mt. Mudeungsan is sometimes called Mt. Seoseoksan. The columnar jointing in the shape of a folding screen is visible from central Gwangju on sunny days and is embellished with pink royal azaleas in late May. Ipseokdae is located on the way down from the peak at a height of 1,017 meters. There are dozens of rock columns, five- to eight-sided and each about 10 meters high, rising straight to the sky. The columnar joints in Ipseokdae and Seoseokdae are the result of volcanic activities and natural weathering that took tens of millions of years.

**Home to Abundant Wildlife and Cultural Heritage**

A colony of Mongolian oaks (*Quercus mongolica*) grows near the peak, and expanses of silver grass (*Miscanthus sinensis var. purpurascens*), royal azalea (*Rhododendron schlippenbachii*), evergreen azalea (*Rhododendron yedoense var. poukhanense*), spindle trees (*Euonymus sieboldianus*) and a kind of deciduous shrub (*Lobelia

maximowiczii*) are found in windy locations. Silver grass in particular blankets the whole mountain in spring, creating a magnificent landscape. On the way back from the peak, pine trees, cypresses (*Chamaecyparis obtusa*), cedars (*Cryptomeria japonica*) and poplars (*Populus tomentiglandulosa T. Lee*) are noticeable. The population of Sargent’s cherry (*Prunus sargentii REHDER*) has been significantly increased over the past 20 to 30 years, contributing to the aesthetic scenery of Mt. Mudeungsan. According to a study, 50 percent of the flora growing in the mountain is edible or of medicinal value.

The mountain is also home to varied fauna and birds. While the population of mammals is declining in general, the numbers of wild rabbits, hedgehogs, field mice, moles and squirrels are on the rise. Pale thrushes (*Turdus pallidus*) and Eastern crowned willow warblers (*Phylloscopus occipitalis*) live in areas populated by oak trees, pine trees and larches; great tits (*Parus major* L.) live in Mongolian oaks; and Eurasian jays (*Garrulus glandarius*), vinous-throated parrotbills (*Paradoxornis webbianus*), meadow buntings (*Emberiza citrinella* Brandi) and brush warblers (*Cettia diphone*) live in the valleys. Pheasants and sparrows are growing in numbers. Magpies came back to the mountain after a long disappearance, and nightingales have also been found inhabiting the mountain.
 Positioned at the western foot of the mountain, Jeungsimsa Temple is estimated to have been built in 517 during the reign of King Beopheung (r. 514–540) of the Silla Kingdom (57 B.C.–A.D. 935). The temple has a number of designated cultural heritage monuments, such as the Iron Seated Vairocana Buddha (National Treasure No. 131, national level); the Three-tiered Pagoda (Tangible Cultural Heritage No. 1, local); the Hall of Five Hundred Arhats (Tangible Cultural Heritage No. 13, local); and the Stone Standing Buddha (Tangible Cultural Heritage No. 14, local). Characterized by its youthful face, the iron seated Buddha was created in the 9th century during the Unified Silla period (676–935) and serves as an important material for the country’s scholarly studies on iron Buddha figures.

Mt. Mudeungsan is also famous for the production of watermelons. A historical record from the 1820s notes that Gwangju and Naju were the only two cities that offered watermelons to the royal court at that time. Farmed on alpine land, watermelons from Mt. Mudeungsan are renowned for their high sugar content.

### Walking Paths on Mt. Mudeungsan

**Yetgil Paths:** Each one has stories to tell

1. **Bulls’ Walking Path (From the Entrance of Sujisa Temple to Cheongamgyo Bridge)**
   People walk in steady slow steps enjoying the beauty of slowness.

2. **Path of Promise (Cheongamgyo Bridge)**
   Holding hands, couples stroll through Cheongamgyo Bridge and pledge everlasting love to each other by hanging locks on the wire fence of the bridge.

3. **Path of Kim Satgat (From Cheongpum Rest Area to the Jumak (Tavern) Site of Hwaam Village)**
   The wandering poet Kim Satgat used to go to Hwasun Cliff through this path.
   “However high it is, Mt. Mudeungsan is lower than a pine tree
   However deep it is, Jeokbeokgang River runs higher than sand.”
   (Excerpt from Kim’s poem)

4. **Path to Market (From the Jumak Site of Hwaam Village to Chungjangsa Temple)**
   Residents of Damyang and Hwasun have used this path to go to market.

5. **Path to the Mountain Cabin (From Chungjangsa Temple to Wonhyosa Temple)**
   This road leads to the Mountain Cabin through the forest of pine trees and the area of rocks in Wonhyobong Peak.

6. **Path of Selflessness (From Wonhyosa Temple to Seoseokdae)**
   This road is filled with nothing except for the sounds of birds and wind. People can immerse themselves into a spiritual state of selflessness with only their five senses awake to the sensation of surrounding nature.

7. **Woodcutters’ Path (From Jangwon Three-way Intersection to Deokbong Peak to Chungjangsa Temple)**
   Woodcutters mainly used this path, walking up and down its steep length laden with heavy stack of firewood on their backs.

8. **Path of History (From Chungjangsa Temple to Pungamjeong Pavilion to Hwanbyeokdang Pavilion)**
   This path provides opportunities for exploring history, observation pavilion and farming.
The island located near the Northern Limit Line is in the shape of a crested ibis flying with full-stretched wings, hence the name Baengnyeong, literally meaning "a white bird’s wings." Harboring pristine natural beauty at every corner, Baengnyeongdo is also home to state-designated cultural heritage properties, including Kongdol Beach (Natural Monument No. 392), Jinchon-ri basalt field containing peridotite (Natural Monument No. 393) and Dumujin Port (Scenic Site No. 8).
Kongdol Beach, a one-kilometer stretch of small bean-like pebbles, hence the name Kongdol, literally “bean stones.”

Walking path leading to Dunsujin Port.
Photo Gallery

Elephant rock at Dumujin Port, named for its shape in profile.

The harbor at Dumujin Port is noted for its breathtaking scenery.
Seagulls inhabit the rocks of the island.

An overview of Dumujin Port.
According to Han and Kim, Sopo-ri taryeong only exists in the village of Sopo yet the lyrics are transferrable to the performance of standard folksongs such as Jindo arirang, ganggangsullae, and dungdangae taryeong. Kim carefully recorded, by hand, the lyrics of the song recounting the characteristics of each month of the year. Beyond a recounting of holidays and seasonal changes, the lyrics strongly express both a decidedly female perspective and a strong sense of place.

Sopo is a village on the western side of Jindo Island, Jindo-gun, South Jeolla Province. Residents have historically made their living through fishing and farming, and the village is known for the production of sweet black rice. In 1968, it was comprised of nine divisions with a population of 1,770 (898 males and 872 females) in 330 farm households. Currently, the village consists of approximately five diversions with a population of about 300. Sopo Village once served as the primary gateway to Jindo on a ferry between Jindo and Mokpo on the mainland. When the Jindo Bridge was constructed in 1984, it signified a new era for Jindo, one of urban flight and an increasingly aging population. The gradually decreasing population has meant sustainability of folk traditions and maintaining a good quality of life have become of central significance. Both are inextricably intertwined in a contemporary tale of preservation, transmission, tourism, and rural potential. Sopo-ri has maintained a reputation as a village within which traditional folk games, songs and instrumental performance have been nurtured and maintained to the present.

Jindo, an island off the southwestern coast of the Korean Peninsula, remains a bright star on the map of Korean folk music. Beginning in the 1960s with a burgeoning interest in intangible heritage preservation instituted by the 1961 Cultural Heritage Protection Act, Jindo’s relative isolation and agricultural economic base predestined the island’s importance in the transmission of the southwestern region’s rich cultural heritage. As part of South Jeolla Province, Jindo serves as a source for a good percentage of today’s surviving folk music. While folk song and instrumental performance styles developed and flourished in other regions, the southern Jeolla region’s musical characteristics formed the foundation for today’s most prominent performance genres such as pansori (sung oral narrative), sinawi (improvisational instrumental shaman ritual music), and sanjo (solo instrumental performance).

Jindo-based folk songs, games, and instrumental performance such as ganggangsullae (women’s circle dance, national designation 1966), namdo deulnorae (southern cultivation songs, national designation 1973), Jindo ssikkim gut (shaman ritual for the dead, national designation 1980) have been designated as national...
intangible heritage. Folk songs such as Jindo arirang have received more localized designations as well as international recognition as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity under the collective title of Arirang in 2012. In contemporary Korea, such designations, on the UNESCO list in particular, are a means to an end: a way to ensure the continuation and support for performance forms that, over time, have seen decreasing relevance in contemporary society.

Yet, such a means could lead to an empty shell wherein once a living, breathing culture existed. Times have changed, for certain, but does official recognition guarantee engagement and respect? Kim Byeong-cheol notes in the personal communication on August 10, 2013, “People think that human cultural treasures are the only official representatives of traditional performance. But the performance is on display on stage, like taxidermy. After a performance, the sense of belongingness crumbles and we are, of course, saddened by this reality.” Understanding this truth, the villagers, with Kim at the helm, took matters into their own hands by organizing their own preservation society and instituting their own Center for preservation eleven years ago.

Such a move was fitting for Sopo-ri which, as noted above, has been a significant force in Jindo economic and cultural life for centuries. The women and men of Sopo-ri play a starring role in local legends involving performance. For one, records reveal villagers regularly sponsored the performance of itinerant troops and worked closely with these performers in tricking an invading army during the Japanese invasion of 1592. Likewise, Jindo women, many of whom were supposedly from Sopo-ri, are said to have performed ganggangsullae on a coastal mountain as a trick to convince the Japanese that there was a large Korean force in wait. Regardless of legend, there is no doubt that Sopo-ri has remained one of the most active spots for the continuation of folk culture due to the tenacity of the villagers. With the establishment of the Sopo-ri Traditional Folk Transmission Center, the village has hosted regular workshops and camps for college students and the general public and, through 2011, hosted regular Saturday performances of Sopo-ri specialties such as ganggangsullae, myeongdari gut (a ritual to extend the lives of children foretold an early death) and beteulnorae (loom song), Jindo manga (funeral songs of Jindo), among others. Such activities have boosted the local economy and put Sopo Village on the tourism map. Villagers have also traveled to sites throughout the country to make performances.

While the Center receives subsidies from the Jindo local government, recent budget cuts have meant that the villagers must come up with ways to support the operating costs of the Center. As villagers continued to age, many became tired of preparing weekly performances on top of their daily work. For Kim, Sopo-ri’s agricultural (recently designated a “green village” for its black rice production) and cultural contributions can lead the way in developing and sustaining the local economy. While at the moment there are no regularly scheduled public performances, the past and continuing efforts of villagers have paid off in garnering attention for the village.

As I sit inside the Sopo-ri Traditional Folk Transmission Center, eating watermelon and sipping soju, with these amazing women and the equally tenacious and energetic Center curator, I hear unfamiliar verses of Jindo arirang and get to know Sopo-ri taryeong. I hear stories of how for years Han Nam-rye walked daily 20 kilometers to and from the seaside, carrying a heavy bowl of salt on her head as part of her labor. I hear stories of how her mother, a weaver, would sing loom songs to express her fatigue at overwork and to pass the time, songs that attracted the interest of folklorists and music researchers in Korea. And I hear stories of how she, a bride at 19, delivered her children at her in-laws’ home and labored for years, all the while never forgetting the songs she learned from her parents as a child. Unable to read or write, Han has an impeccable memory which she has exercised for years now as a part of Sopo-ri’s performance community.

The expression “For song to be a part of life, it must sing of life, work and love” rings true here in this space for the mothers of Sopo-ri. The Center is, without a doubt, the nucleus of community life in Sopo-ri. Yet, without the people of Sopo-ri, the Center would not exist. It is the spirit of the community, of life immersed in song and song immersed in life that makes Sopo-ri real and exceptional. ©
Nanjung ilgi (War Diary of Admiral Yi Sun-sin) is the journal kept by Admiral Yi Sun-sin during the Japanese invasion of 1592–1598. Along with personal observations and feelings, the war diary also contains abundant accounts of the historic situation at that time and, therefore, is of significant documentary value. Preserved by his descendants through generations for more than 400 years, Nanjung ilgi was added to the UNESCO Memory of the World Register in June 2013.

Personal Diary, Invaluable Historical Record

Nanjung ilgi is the handwritten diary that Admiral Yi Sun-sin kept almost daily for seven years from January 1, 1592, until shortly before he was killed at the Battle of Noryang on November 19, 1598. The diary consisted of eight volumes, but only seven have been transmitted to the present. The journal holds records of the revered naval commander’s personal experience, military strategies and observations of war situations. Elaborate accounts are included on maritime war strategies, discussions of specific tactics, topographical investigation, military training and secret drills. Also included is a draft report to the king on secret schemes on naval forces, providing critical historical materials for the study of the military system of that time. Information on the progress of the war in its initial stage and the first four battles is found in the journal. Details on the process of building geobukseon (turtle ships), deemed to be the world’s first armor-plated warships, are also part of the journal.

Besides recording the objective aspects of the war, the diary shows the personal character and feelings of Admiral Yi Sun-sin: his devotion to duty — he was never absent from work even on the days of ancestral rites; his rigid discipline, reprimanding subordinates who did not fulfill their responsibilities for managing barracks and soldiers; and his thoroughness, strictly delineating when to reward and when to punish. Personal stories on his family and relatives, changes of posts of officers and letters exchanged were also recorded in great detail.

16th Century Hero’s Words for Today

The diary is replete with memorable words by Admiral Yi Sun-sin. When he returned to the battlefield after a short absence due to a false political charge,
Admiral Yi sent a report to the king, arguing for the importance of maritime forces by saying, “We still have 12 ships.” While he was away from the scene, Korea’s naval forces were crushingly defeated at the Battle of Chilcheollyang in July 1597, and accordingly King Seonjo (r. 1567–1608) gave royal instructions to give up on naval forces in favor of land armies. Well aware of the importance of marine forces, the revered naval commander strongly insisted on their maintenance and, soon after, snatched a surprising victory at the Battle of Myeongnyang in September 1597, where he added one ship to the 12 remaining ones and defeated 133 enemy warships. After securing an unlikely victory at the Battle of Myeongnyang, he recorded in his journal, “Those who dare to die will survive, and those who crave to survive will die.”

The last words that the naval hero spoke when he was shot at the Battle of Noryang on November 19, 1598 are etched in the memory and heart of an adoring nation: “The battle is at its peak. Never let the enemies know of my death.”

The strong-willed naval leader with a brilliant mind also wrote poems in the journal conveying his feelings in the battlefield: “When luminous moonbeams flash upon Hansansem Island / I sit alone in a watch-tower awhile / At a moment of deep tormenting anguish with a scepter sword carried at my side / A lute tune out of nowhere delivers gut-wrenching sorrow.”

Yi Sun-sin as Naval Commander

Yi Sun-sin passed the state examination for military service as an officer at the age of 32, after an unfortunate failure four years earlier due to his horse falling. Equipped with what it took to become a military officer, Yi also excelled in writing literature and poetry along with a devoted belief in loyalty and filial piety. When he was dispatched to Jeolla Province as the General Commander for Naval Forces, Yi muscled up the naval fleet in preparation of possible incursions from Japan. With the eruption of the Japanese invasions in 1592, he eked out a series of victories at battles in Okpo, Noryangjin, Danghango and Hansando. Geobukseon, or turtle ships, were first deployed at the Battle of Sacheon. Admiral Yi himself provides a description of the formidable armor-plated vessel: “The figurehead is in the shape of a dragon, cannons are shot out of the mouth of the dragon, and the roof is covered with spikes. The outside is seen from the inside, but the inside is not seen from the outside. The turtle ship is designed to fire cannons which are strong enough to get through even hundreds of enemy warships.”

After the successful conclusion of the war that claimed his life, Admiral Yi Sun-sin was recognized as the foremost contributor to the decisive victory against the Japanese forces. He was posthumously promoted to Yeonguijeong (first-rank official), and granted the title of Chungmu. With devout loyalty, personal integrity and strong leadership, Admiral Yi saved the country from foreign invasions and left a lasting achievement in history.

Although it is a wartime record, Nanjung ilgi is written in a simple and authentic language, an impressive feat delivering a war commander’s thoughts, experience and feelings to the reader. In the journal, Admiral Yi is revealed not only as a strong-willed commander but also as a warm-hearted, if extraordinary, person. Regarded by a number of contemporary commentators as evidence that “a dead Yi Sun-sin defeated a living enemy”, Nanjung ilgi was designated as National Treasure No. 76 in December 1962 and inscribed on the UNESCO Memory of the World Register in June 2013.
Makers of traditional Korean furniture are called somokjang. They value the innate qualities of timber and try not to alter them when working. Somokjang work by hand, and also harness their extensive knowledge about trees, accumulated through decades of practice.

Wood Furniture Marked by Nature

Traditional Korean wood furniture is not ornate or fancy. This may be because its makers try to embody the texture and grain of trees in their final products. Those who make traditional wooden furniture are like religious priests: they would not alter what nature has given them to work with.

The craftsmen who make traditional wooden furniture are called somokjang, and the term is often used in contrast with daemokjang, artisans of traditional architecture. Both groups are collectively referred to as mokusu, carpenters. In the Korean cultural heritage preservation system, somokjang also refers to the skills and knowledge of the carpenters who make wooden frames, cabinets, desks and any other pieces of wooden furniture.

Somokjang make it a rule to convey the natural beauty of raw materials into the final work. They do not just customarily turn out wooden furniture, but retain the natural features of lumber in what they make based on extensive and profound knowledge of wood.

Korea’s climate and topographical conditions partly explain their broad understanding of trees: the country has four distinct seasons and is predominantly mountainous, providing a favorable environment for growing diverse kinds of trees. The principal qualifications of a good somokjang are a comprehensive knowledge of various species of trees and mastery of the skills to work with them. They may need to master a more comprehensive range of knowledge and skills nowadays, since they can readily use fast transportation to work in different regions which grow different kinds of trees.
Wood is the Greatest Asset

Somokjang are rich: they are rich not by mundane standards, but rich in lumber. Visit their workshop and you will be overwhelmed by the vast amount of wood materials stacked high on one side of the room. What is more surprising is that what you see is just part of what they have: somokjang usually have another space other than their workshop for storing their own treasures.

With all their stocks of wood, somokjang always desire more and are always on the lookout for quality trees. For them, quality wood may be as valuable as their own children. Their stockpiles of dusty wood always bring smiles of satisfaction on their faces. Wood, probably taken for granted by most people, is seen by somokjang as a valuable raw material that they can turn into a decent piece of furniture.

What then makes a quality tree? Since somokjang put a priority on preserving the natural beauty of trees, wood should have authentic grain patterns and no cracks so that they can be reborn as furniture resembling trees growing in nature.

Somokjang do not hesitate crisscrossing the country in search of good wood. Upon hearing that there is excellent wood available, they immediately go to secure it however busy they are. Wood always focuses the attention of somokjang, wherever they go and whatever they do.

What is tricky about working with wood is that it expands in summer and contracts in winter. Wood absorbs water from the air in summer and is deprived of moisture in winter. This is why there are piles of wood in their workshops — they are being seasoned — dried slowly, awaiting use for making furniture.

Traditional Furniture Takes Shape

To make a piece of furniture, tools are needed for measuring, cutting, leveling, smoothing, carving, piercing and dressing of lumber. They include rulers, saws, planes, chisels, awls, adzes and irons, to name just a few. The workshop of a somokjang carpenter is filled with diverse tools for different uses and looks like a tool collection exhibit.

Here is the process of how traditional Korean furniture is actually made. The example is a uigeorijang, a tall wardrobe with a hanger for storing long clothes.

A carpenter draws a plan calculating overall proportions and size. Then, he selects suitable cuts and sizes of lumber for each part. Selecting the right wood for each part of the furniture is the most important step in the whole process. Using the wrong wood materials would cause warping and splitting in the finished product. Somokjang learn from experience to choose the right kinds and sizes of wood for each type of furniture.

The carpenter uses a plane to smooth surfaces and then makes vertical and horizontal elements such as frames and boards. They are made to fit miter joints.

Then, he prepares the wall panels. Front panels are made of zelkova, which has beautiful natural grain patterns. Wood from empress trees (Paulownia tomentosa) is used to make panels for the sides, back and top. To highlight the texture and grain of wood, the panels on the sides or on the back are ironed and rubbed with rice straw.

The trimmed wooden elements are joined together; a hanging rod and the door are attached. Hinges connect the door to the body, and a lock is fixed on the door.

Lastly, the surfaces are polished by fine sandpaper and brushed with camellia oil; thus a uigeorijang is completed.

A Bright Future for Wood Furniture Making

Korea underwent tremendous changes in the 20th century. Widespread urbanization and industrialization during that period gave rise to a hostile
environment for South the transmission of traditional cultural heritage, and somokjang were not spared. Because of this, the central government designated the skills of wood furniture making and the master artisans of somokjang as Important Intangible Cultural Heritage No. 55 in 1975.

Under the designation, one master and two assistant masters take the responsibility of transmitting the intangible heritage. Besides the central government, a number of local administrations have included somokjang on their lists of intangible cultural heritage and are working to preserve the traditional somokjang skills in their areas. Therefore, the public preservation system for somokjang is sound and strong.

Interest from the private sector is growing as well. There are a growing number of programs promoting a maker culture — amateurs crafting wood furniture — and people forming somokjang clubs to enjoy their hobby on weekends. Increasing numbers of ordinary people who have an interest in somokjang is clear evidence of a bright future for traditional wood furniture making.

5. From left to right, some steps in crafting a uigeorijang cabinet: drawing a plan, attaching the back panel, making decorative elements and fitting the door.

6. Somokjang make furniture based on their extensive knowledge about wood acquired through decades of practice.