



Cultural Heritage Administration
Republic of Korea
<http://english.cha.go.kr>



ISSN 2005-0151

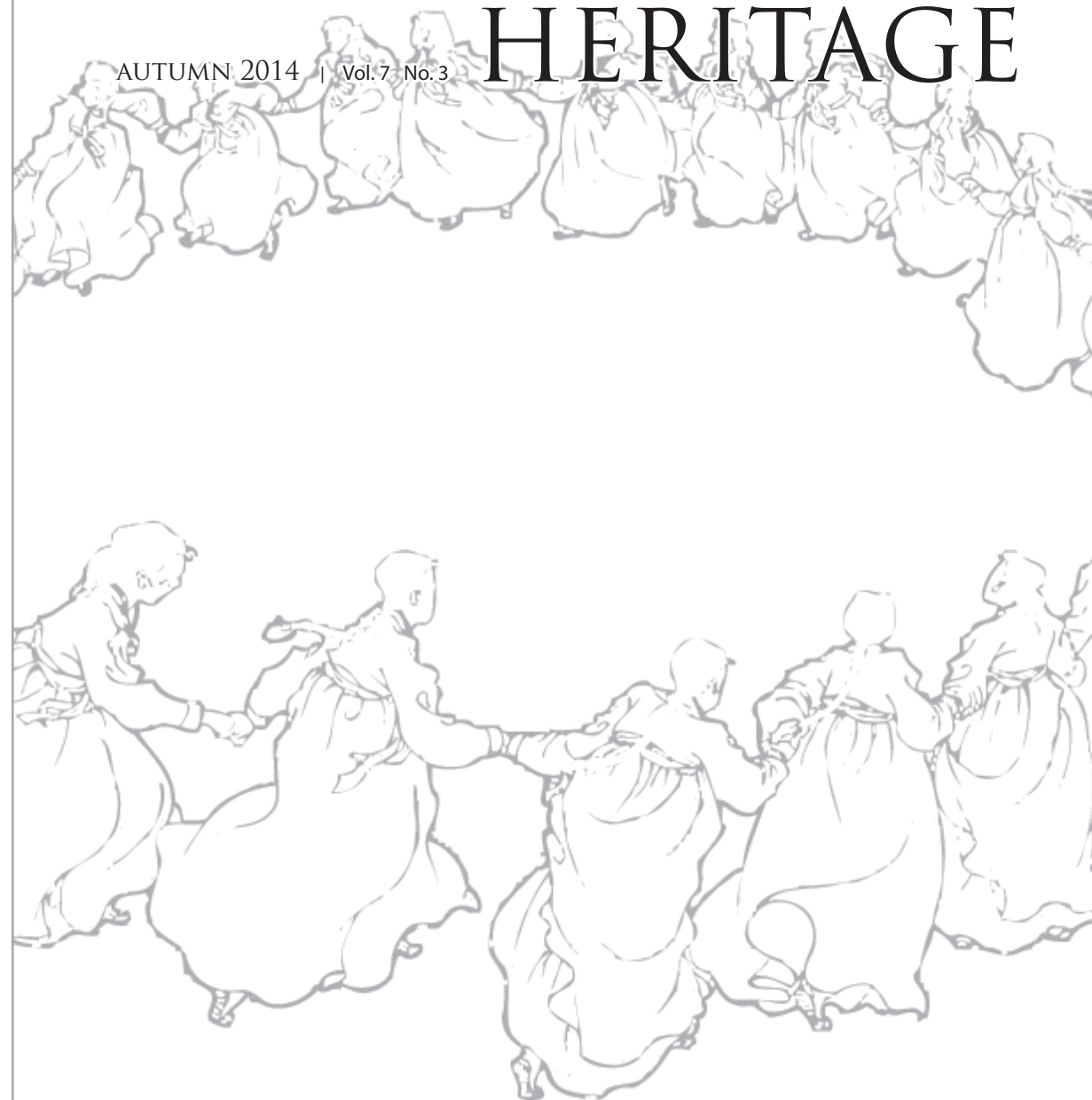
K O R E A N
H E R I T A G E

AUTUMN 2014 Vol. 7 No. 3

Cultural Heritage Administration

KOREAN HERITAGE

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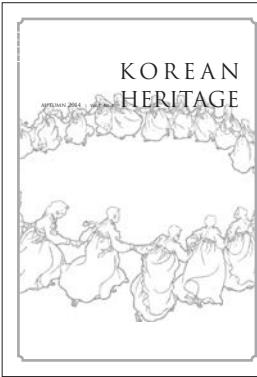
KOREAN HERITAGE

Quarterly Magazine
of the Cultural Heritage Administration

KOREAN HERITAGE



AUTUMN 2014



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 Ganggangsullae, a traditional circle dance. For more stories on this, see page 3.

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CHA News Vignettes

Namhansanseong Entered in the World Heritage List

Namhansanseong Fortress was inscribed on the World Heritage List during the 38th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee held in Doha, Qatar on June 15–25, 2014. Designed as an emergency capital in the 17th century during the Joseon Dynasty, the fortress is notable for incorporating various defensive technologies of the time, drawing on influences from neighboring powers China and Japan, developed to withstand the firepower of new armaments introduced from the West. Namhansanseong bears witness to developmental changes in fortress construction methods and fortification systems dating back to as early as the 7th century. It stands as a living heritage still inhabited today by residents. The entry of Namhansanseong into the UNESCO list pushes up to 11 the number of South Korea's inscriptions.

Korea, U.S. Agree on Cooperation for Return of Cultural Heritage

The Cultural Heritage Administration recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) of the United States Department of Homeland Security on cooperation for the repatriation of cultural artifacts. As the U.S. counterpart, the ICE has successfully conducted cooperative work in returning Korean cultural objects that had been illegally taken from South Korea to the United States. Through such cooperation, the Hojo Convertible Note was repatriated in September 2013 and the nine royal seals of the Daehan Empire were returned home last April. Work on the royal seals led to the signing of the cooperation framework paper. The memorandum of understanding sets out details on how to share information for effective investigations. It is expected to significantly aid collaborative work for the return of Korean cultural artifacts displaced during the Korean War.

Training Center for Traditional Culture Hosts International Heritage Managers Training Program

The Training Center for Traditional Culture conducted its seventh International Heritage Managers Training Program on August 24 to 31 for cultural heritage managers in Asia. Designed to enhance cooperation and mutually benefit Asian countries in the field of cultural heritage, the training program has been in operation since 2007. This year, the participants were 17 heritage managers from 14 Asian countries including Laos and Myanmar, the two cooperative partners in South Korea's official development assistance program. Participants augment their knowledge on management of World Heritage properties and other topics such as Korean wooden architecture, and also visit Korean heritage sites.

A Korean Folk Dance

Ganggangsullae, a Traditional Circle Dance

Ganggangsullae is a circle dance performed by women wishing for a bountiful harvest and fertility. Transmitted in the coastal areas of the southwestern province of Jeollanam-do, the folk tradition combines singing and dancing, performed around the Chuseok Thanksgiving holiday under a bright full moon. Legend has it that the celebrated Joseon naval commander, Admiral Yi Sun-sin, ordered women dressed in men's clothing to keep circling around Mt. Ongmaesan as a military tactic to trick Japanese invaders in 1592 into overestimating the strength of Korean military forces, and that was how the circle dance originated. But it is more plausible to think that ganggangsullae has its origins in an aboriginal practice of singing and dancing on the night of the brightest moon of the year.

As a full moon emerges in the east, young ladies assemble and form a large circle, slowly moving clockwise hand in hand. A leader with a good voice and talent for improvisation starts off with a verse, and the women respond with the refrain, "ganggangsullae." Beginning slowly, the song picks up its tempo, which speeds up the dancers' movements. They dance in a circle at first, then break up into various formations as they whirl faster and faster with the music.

Ganggangsullae was designated as Important Intangible Cultural Heritage No. 8 in 1966 by the Korean government and was inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage for Humanity in 2009.



KOREAN HERITAGE



C O N T E N T S



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Intangible Heritage

Nongak, the Music of Communal Excitement



Architectural Characteristics and Spatial Composition of *Seowon*

Text by Park Jin-jae (Ph. D.), Korea Seowon Association

Photos by Oh Jong-eun, Sosu Museum & Hamyang Museum

The architecture of Confucian academies is characterized by an austere and modest aesthetic, reflecting the cosmology and principles of Neo-Confucianism. Confucian academies from the Joseon Dynasty (1392–1910) were constructed in accordance with distinctive architectural rules.

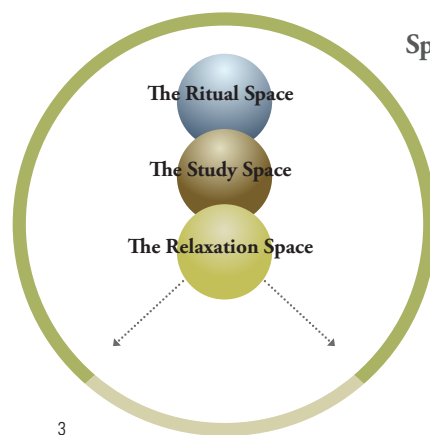
2. A river runs beside Oksan Seowon.



Seowon Positioned at One with Nature

Seowon, Korean Confucian academies, were mostly built in areas with a strong connection to the sage to be honored—where he was born or spent his prime, but only in consideration of the surrounding natural environment. According to the cosmology of Neo-Confucianism during the Joseon Dynasty, the best site for a seowon was a place with a river in front and a mountain to the rear; this was considered ideal for its educational objective of the “unification of heaven and man.” Set against an aesthetic landscape, Confucian academies in Korea naturally blend into the surrounding environment.

3. A diagram of spacial composition of a Korean *seowon*.



Spatial Composition Directed by Confucian Ideology

The space of a Korean Confucian academy is sectioned and composed under the guidance of the Confucian cosmology. Buildings and structures inside it were constructed in respect of Confucian principles centering around the values of harmonization and austerity; they are not grand in scale nor extravagant in appearance but modest and unpretentious, in perfect balance with the natural landscape.

Education at Confucian academies centered around the principle “*jangsu*,” or nurturing scholars imbued with humane character and ethical morality, which required those who studied at seowon to cultivate both their intellectual and spiritual attributes. This goal was to be achieved through education at three spaces in a Confucian academy: the relaxation space, the study space, and the ritual space.

The three spaces are fundamental elements of the spatial composition of a Confucian academy. Scholars could find release from academic stress and enjoy the natural surroundings in the relaxation space; read, discuss and research Confucian scriptures in the study space; and pay respects and conduct ceremonies to honor sages in the ritual space. A Korean Confucian academy is composed of these three major spaces and other affiliated structures.

The Relaxation Space

This space ensured that scholars could break free from daily studying, and appreciate the beauty of nature and thus refresh their mental health. A superlative natural landscape was a critical determinant in selecting the site of a seowon, and its architectural arrangement and spatial layout were set in a way that maximized the possibilities for enjoying nature’s gifts from inside the seowon. The natural landscape surrounding the Confucian academy was used as the relaxation space of the seowon, which were designed to take in magnificent views of mountains, rivers, open fields, and ponds. Man-made structures built in the relaxation place were mostly in the form of a pavilion, thought to be the most appropriate for the purpose of the space. Pavilions were mostly located at the entrance of a seowon.



4. Suwollu Pavilion in the relaxation space of Piram Seowon.

5. Jungjeongdang Hall and the eastern student dormitory of Dodong Seowon

The Study Space

This space is composed of the lecture hall and dormitories. Teachers and students did their reading and studying of the Confucian canon here, and Confucian scholars held assemblies in the lecture hall. The norm, with a few exceptions, was that the lecture hall was positioned to the rear, closer to the ritual space, and opening out to a courtyard facing the eastern and western student dormitories that were located right behind the relaxation space.

6. Sungnyesa Temple, the ritual space of Donam Seowon.

The Ritual Space

The ritual space was designed to house the spirit tablet of the Confucian sage to be commemorated and where the rituals are held in his honor. Constituent structures of the ritual space are the spirit gate (*sinmun*), the ritual hall (*sau*), and the ritual management office (*jeonsacheong*). The tradition of conducting rituals for Confucian sages has been transmitted to the present, and Korean Confucian academies to this day still carry out commemorative rites at the ritual hall where the spirit tablet or portrait of the Confucian sage is enshrined.



Although seowon were constructed with a view to producing scholars equipped with academic knowledge of Neo-Confucianism, they also functioned as a physical venue for the observance of rites. Guided by these functions and the values behind them, the architecture of seowon did not focus on emphasizing architectural beauty, but on securing structures necessary for observing rites and elucidating the ideas of Neo-Confucianism.

Seowon architecture is based on the geographical positioning of *baesan imsu* (a river in front and a mountain to the rear) and on the spatial composition of *jeonhak humyo* (the lecture hall in front and the ritual hall to the rear). Buildings and structures of a seowon are arranged in accordance with strict principles, tempered by a sense of austerity and humbleness. ⑥

Supporting and Affiliated Structures

There are also structures to support the functions of the study and ritual spaces: the administrative office (*gojiksa*), the ritual management office, the ritual vessel storage (*jegigo*), and the relics maintenance hall (*jangpangak*). Other facilities include the sacrifice inspection platform (*saengdan*), the cleaning basin (*gwansewi*), the incineration stand (*mangnyewi*), and the stone lantern (*jeongnyodae*).

Characteristics and Aesthetics of Seowon Architecture

The spatial composition and structures of a Confucian academy are an excellent embodiment of the cosmology of Neo-Confucianism. Inside the seowon, buildings and structures are neither grand nor extravagant, but humble and modest. Outside, however, the architecture of the seowon is in complete harmony with the surrounding natural environment, manifesting the Confucian ideal of unifying architecture and nature. This architectural characteristic stems from the aesthetics of austerity and simplicity.

7. The ritual management office (*jeonsacheong*) of Byeongsan Seowon.

8. The archive hall (*gyeonggak*) of Oksan Seowon

9. The cleaning basin (*gwansewi*) of Namgye Seowon.



10. Dodong Seowon in autumn.





Korea, on the Frontline of World Heritage Conservation

Text & Photos by Kim Gwang-hui (Ph. D.),
Head of the International Exchange Team, Korea Cultural Heritage Foundation

Conserving heritage equates to conserving culture—both material and spiritual—for the advancement of future generations. The Republic of Korea recently initiated modest but important steps toward becoming a leading actor in the conservation of World Heritage sites. The three sites to benefit from Korea's Word Heritage Official Development Assistance (ODA) program are important landmarks in Laos, Cambodia, and Myanmar.

Hong Nang Sida in Laos

The first heritage site conservation project aided by Korea's ODA program is the Hong Nang Sida temple in Laos. Laos is located in the Indochina Peninsula, bordering Myanmar and China to the north, Vietnam to the east, Cambodia to the south, and Thailand to the west. Sitting on a mountainous terrain, the country has a tropical climate, under the influence of the monsoon. The year is divided into the rainy season from May to October and the dry season from November to April. This allows only a narrow window for conservation work in the field— six months in a year, during the dry season.

Hong Nang Sida is part of the World Heritage site inscribed on the UNESCO list in 2001 under the name "Vat Phou and Associated Ancient Settlements within the Champasak Cultural Landscape," which is dated to have been built in the 11th century. Literally meaning the "chamber of Princess Sida," Hong Nang Sida is situated on the starting point of the ancient road leading from the Vat Phou temple in Laos to Angkor Wat in Cambodia. Hong Nang Sida is thought to have been associated with pilgrimage activities, possessing substantial historical and cultural value.

1. Remains of Hong Nang Sida, meaning "chamber of Princess Sida," in Laos.



2. The Korean field office in Laos, opened in February 2014.

There has been progress in the conservation of the site. After completing research on the conservation environment, an analysis of the strata, and a three-dimensional precision scanning of the site as preliminary preparations, Korea signed a memorandum of understanding on the conservation project with Laos, on the sidelines of the Lao president's visit to Korea in November 2013. In February 2014, a field office was opened in the vicinity of the temple, to serve as conservation headquarters in the field.

Under the supervision of the Cultural Heritage Administration, the Korea Cultural Heritage Foundation is operating the conservation project for Hong Nang Sida. Research of historic documents is now underway, and on-site investigation and trench digging are to be completed before the start of excavation work in the second half of this year.

The Ruins of Angkor in Cambodia

Angkor was the capital of the Khmer Empire, which had flourished throughout the Indochina Peninsula during the 9th–15th centuries. The foundation for Korea's involvement in the conservation of Angkor was laid when the Cultural Heritage Administration and the Authority for the Protection and Management of Angkor and the Region of Siem Reap (APSARA) forged a memorandum of understanding on the conservation of Preah Pithu in June 2013. The ruins of Angkor are under the management of APSARA.

Preah Pithu is part of the vast Angkor archaeological site in Cambodia. It is situated within Angkor Thom, on the opposite side of the Terrace of the Elephants and the Terrace of the Leper King. Preah Pithu consists of five temples—identified as T, U, V, X, and Y—and two entrance terraces and moats. The Preah Pithu complex took shape in the 12th century during the reign of Suryavarman II (r. 1113–1150)—although some construction happened during the 13th century; Jayavarman VII (r. 1181–1219), a devout Buddhist, converted part of the original Hindu temple complex into a Buddhist temple. Today, Temple X is a Buddhist temple, and the rest is dedicated to the Hindu god



3. Preah Pithu in Cambodia.

Shiva. The temples are in the same architectural style as Angkor Wat.

As planned, the two entrance terraces and temple gates will be the initial focus of conservation efforts under Korea's ODA program, providing at the same time technology transfer and training for conservation personnel. Concurrently, a master plan will be drawn up for the conservation of the entire Preah Pithu complex.

Bagan Archaeological Site in Myanmar

The next site is Bagan in Myanmar. Built during the 10th–14th centuries, the Bagan archaeological site is dotted with 3,122 Buddhist monuments—temples, pagodas, and monasteries—in an area 13 kilometers by 8 kilometers in size. Bagan fell under the management of the Archaeology Department of the British colonial government in Kolkata in 1885 as a result of the country's defeat in the Third Anglo-Burmese War. The British colonial government changed the name of the area to "Pagan" and dispatched a research team for conservation activities. Much later, a catastrophic earthquake measuring 6.5 on the Richter scale in July 1975 destroyed many of the major monuments. The earthquake brought in emergency support from UNESCO for rescue conservation, and the international organization worked to shore up the weakened structures of the stone monuments using metal supports. From 4,446 monuments in the 13th century 3,122 remain. The site is under the management of the Department of Archaeology, National Museum and Library, Buddhist worshippers, and local residents.

Conservation activities in the pipeline include production of a digital video record of the structures and providing screening equipment, repair of Temple No. 1843, drawing up a comprehensive conservation plan for the Sulamani temple, at the same time training local conservation personnel. The establishment of a conservation plan for Sulamani is expected to have far-reaching implications for the overall conservation of the Bagan archaeological site. Sulamani retains general conservation issues shared by many other monuments, and therefore the conservation plan for the temple can provide guidelines for work on other temples and monuments in the site.

Along with the Preah Pithu project, activities for Bagan are programmed for financial support from the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). The Korea Cultural Heritage Foundation has submitted a conservation plan for Bagan to KOICA, and a feasibility research will be conducted in 2015. 🌐



4. A panoramic view of Bagan in Myanmar.

Seong Sam-mun and Shin Suk-ju King Sejong's Principal Collaborators in the Creation of Hangeul

Text by Kim Jung-seop, Head of the Institute of International Education, Kyung Hee University
Photos by the Cultural Heritage Administration

Hangeul, the Korean script, was born out of collegial collaboration between King Sejong (r. 1418–1450) and scholars of Jiphyeonjeon (Hall of Worthies). Their cooperation went beyond the formal relationship between a ruler and his courtiers. King Sejong, and Seong Sam-mun and Shin Suk-ju in particular, among others, were at the forefront of ushering in an era of cultural flourishing.



1. Portrait of Seong Sam-mun, a critical major contributor to in the creation of Hangeul.

2. Jiphyeonjeon (Hall of Worthies), the birthplace of Hangeul, the Korean script.

Serendipitous Encounter in Elite Reading Circle

Jiphyeonjeon was established in 1420, one year and a half into the reign of King Sejong. There were two major reasons that gave rise to the founding of that academic research center. Primarily, the quality of royal instruction, or *gyeongyeon*, was not as good as it was supposed to be. Scholars tasked with the king's education and promoting his academic knowledge of the Confucian canon including the Four Books were preoccupied with everyday duties, leaving them little time to sharpen their scholarly and pedagogic skills.

Consequently, the lack of academic capability caused difficulties in drawing up diplomatic documents to be delivered to China, to which Joseon paid tribute.

Ming China (1368–1644) once took issue with the wording of a letter Joseon sent, which escalated into a diplomatic dispute. Nurturing talented scholars capable of smoothly dealing with diplomatic affairs was an urgent demand of the time.



2

Since the first two rulers of the Joseon Dynasty (1392–1910), King Taejo and King Jeongjong, stayed on the throne only for six years and two years respectively, they did not have enough time to put in place institutional systems to sustain dynastic rule of the kingdom state. It was during the reign of King Taejong—lasting 18 years, from 1400 to 1418—when the foundation of the dynasty was laid and royal power was strengthened. Inheriting political stability based on royal authority, the fourth monarch of Joseon—King Sejong—could afford to concentrate on enhancing intellectual capability in the early years of his reign. The king established Jiphyeonjeon, and selected scholars with academic promise and allowed them to focus on studying and teaching Confucian scriptures. Scholars affiliated to Jiphyeonjeon were able to get promoted to higher ranks within the organization of the academic agency without the need to serve local secondments like other public officials; they also enjoyed the privilege of being exempted from auditing by Saheonbu (Office of the Inspector-General). Their official duties included lecturing for the king, teaching the crown prince, preparing diplomatic documents, supervising state examinations to select public officials, and managing documentary materials, but their major job was to boost the dynasty's intellectual capability.

To enable intensive studying, a policy for reading retreats was in place so that scholars could be freed from administrative duties and only focus on scholarly pursuits in their own home or at a temple. It was during such a break when Seong Sam-mun and Shin Suk-ju met. In their mid-20s, the two young scholars participated in a private reading circle, along with six other academics, held at Jingwansa Temple on Mt. Samgaksan in what is now Seoul. During the period of that meeting, the 25-year-old Seong and the 26-year-old Shin discovered each other as kindred spirits and intellectual equals, forming a friendship that lasted for the next 20 years. Endowed with academic talent, both of them became King Sejong's most beloved, trusted scholars. The two scholars became the closest of friends and also each other's strongest academic rivals.

The Invention of Hangeul

With a strong commitment, King Sejong published *Hunmin jeongeum* (*Proper Sounds for the Instruction of the People*), a book describing the principles of Hangeul, in spite of vehement opposition from both established and new scholarly and political circles.



3. *Hunmin jeongeum haerye* (Explanations and Examples of the Proper Sounds to Instruct the People), introducing the basic principles in the creation of Hangeul and its usage.

In the preface of the book are written the names of the eight scholars who made the greatest contributions to the invention of the Korean script, including Seong Sam-mun and Shin Suk-ju, along with Jeong In-ji, Choi Hyang, Park Paeng-nyeon, Gang Hui-an, Yi Gae, and Yi Seon-ro.

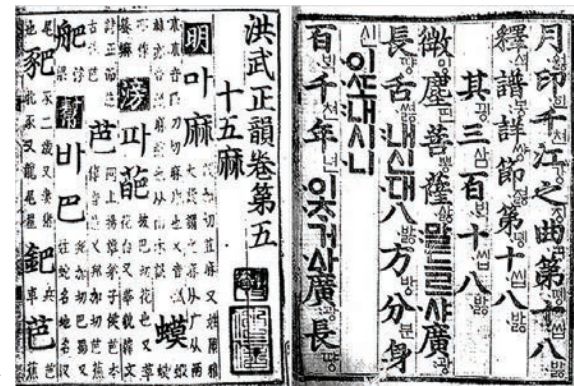
The publication of *Hunmin jeongeum* is the most significant of the four greatest literary achievements of King Sejong. The second is the publication of *Dongguk jeongun* (*Standard Rhymes of the Eastern State*), establishing standard pronunciations of Chinese characters used in Joseon in accordance with Chinese rhyme dictionaries. The publication of *Hongmu jeongun yeokhun* (*Correct Rhymes from the Hongwu Reign with Korean Translation and Commentaries*) is the third literary feat, describing phonetic sounds of Chinese characters in the Korean script. The fourth is the establishment of education institutes for the languages of neighboring peoples—the Chinese, the Japanese, the Mongols, and the Jurchen. Seong Sam-mun and Shin Suk-ju participated in the first three of the king's four landmark linguistic accomplishments and played a crucial role in their completion.

Both Seong Sam-mun and Shin Suk-ju excelled in phonology. Under royal orders of King Sejong, the two scholars received 13 sessions of instruction on phonology from the Chinese scholar Hwang Chan, who was in exile on the Liaoning Peninsula at the time. Hwang Chan was known to have marveled at the phonological knowledge and interpretive competence of Shin Suk-ju. There is a historical record noting that Shin was taught by and exchanged opinions with an envoy from Ming China, noted for his expertise in phonological principles, about *Hongmu jeongun* (*Correct Rhymes from the Hongwu Reign*). Shin was also renowned as a diplomat, distinguishing himself as an accomplished envoy to Japan. Serving in office, he developed an eye for the international situation by making visits to neighboring countries including China and Japan and played a key role in expelling the Jurchen from the northern Korean territory in 1433. It is recorded that Shin was proficient not only in Korea's archaic writing system, Idu, but also in the Chinese, Japanese, Mongolian, and Jurchen languages.

4. *Hongmu jeongun yeokhun* (*Correct Rhymes from the Hongwu Reign with Korean Translation and Commentaries*), describing phonetic sounds of Chinese characters in Hangeul.

Friends Take Divergent Paths

Both Seong and Shin were passionate about reading and studying, and they often volunteered to do night duties at Jiphyeonjeon



to secure more time with books. Favored by King Sejong, Seong Sam-mun served in major official posts related to literary works, responsible for the compilation of books. He served by the side of the king and influenced state affairs through his academic lectures for the king. It is said that King Sejong asked these two scholars to look after his grandson, who would later become King Danjong (r. 1452–1455), the sixth ruler of Joseon.

After the demise of Sejong's son and successor, King Munjong (r. 1450–1452), his grandson acceded to the throne, becoming King Danjong at age eleven. His uncle, Prince Suyang, agitated to usurp the throne. At that time, most of the scholars at Jiphyeonjeon faithfully served King Danjong, but Shin Suk-ju took a divergent path and became a supporter of Prince Suyang, who eventually became the seventh ruler of Joseon, as King Sejo (r. 1455–1468). This is why Shin Suk-ju was both prized as a discerning diplomat and an excellent academician, and criticized as an opportunist who betrayed King Danjong and his fellow scholars.



5. Portrait of Shin Suk-ju, a major contributor in the creation of Hangeul.

Unlike his erstwhile friend, Seong Sam-mun never abandoned his loyalty to the boy-king Danjong. He refused to accept the honorary title “Jeongnan Gongsin” bestowed by King Sejo to scholars of Jiphyeonjeon for their meritorious contributions to his usurpation of throne in 1453. During interrogation about a plot to restore Danjong, Seong addressed King Sejo as “prince,” abiding by the principle, “Do not serve two kings.” It is also known that Seong did not touch the salaries given by King Sejo and just stacked them in a corner of his house. Seong and Shin had parted ways.

Shin recognized the ambition and talent of King Sejo and passively went with the tide. In contrast, Seong along with his father was executed, and his family banished after his failed attempt to restore King Danjong to the throne; it took 200 years for his name to be rehabilitated. Seong Sam-mun remains an icon for fidelity and loyalty.

Although Shin's acquiescence with Sejo's grab for power is perceived as a betrayal, what remains true is that he was one of the greatest contributors to the invention and dissemination of Hangeul. He may be criticized for his political choice, but his accomplishments as a talented linguist and competent diplomat cannot be dismissed. ☺

The Old Road of Daegwallyeong Pass

A Storied Trail

Text by the Cultural Heritage Administration
Photos by Lee Dong-Jun & Good Image

Daegwallyeong is one of the four mountain passes over the Baekdudaegan (White Head Great Ridge), the mountain range that runs along the entire length of the Korean Peninsula. Although there are currently two highways connecting the eastern and western sides of the rocky mountain, the old road of Daegwallyeong Pass long served as the only route for traversing the two sides of the mountain, thereby accumulating over time a rich trove of memories of historical events, legends, and stories.

2. Portrait of Shin Saimdang, a noted poet-artist of Joseon. She was also regarded as a model of Confucian intellectual, filial and mothering virtues.

Shin Saimdang, Poet of Daegwallyeong

*Leaving behind my old mother in the hometown,
I am taking a lonely walk to Seoul.
Bukchon [the hometown] disappearing in sight,
White clouds flying down on dark mountains.*

“Thinking about Mother” by Shin Saimdang

Shin Saimdang (1504–1551) is a literary artist from the mid-Joseon period, noted for her talent as a painter, writer, and poet. Hailing from Gangneung in Gangwon-do Province, located east of the mountain ridge, Shin was married to a man from Paju in Gyeonggi-do Province, on the western side. She looked after her mother in their hometown by commuting between Gangneung and Paju, and the poem “Thinking about Mother” was composed by Shin as she departed from her hometown to head back to Paju. The poem conveys profound love and deep concern about her mother through brooding imagery: the “white clouds” and “dark mountains” of the lonely travel through the pass at that time.



The Old Road of Daegwallyeong Pass, Scenic Site No. 74

Having long been used as a major traffic route, the old trail of Daegwallyeong is intertwined with memories and stories of ordinary people. Seafood from the east and local products from the west were carried all the way to the other side through this

route; scholars carrying a humble bag on the shoulder and wearing straw shoes trod this road to take the state examination to qualify as public officials. Daegwallyeong is also believed to be the dwelling place for the guardian spirit commemorated during the Gangneung Dano Festival, which is inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Renowned for breathtaking views of the landscape, Daegwallyeong Pass, its old road, and the surrounding valleys have been maintained intact, designated as Scenic Site No. 74.



The Old Road in Historical Records

The word “Daegwallyeong” means a “great gateway,” whose east and west are called “Yeongdong” and “Yeongseo” respectively. The old road was the connection between the areas to the east and west of the mountain; for those residing to the east of Daegwallyeong the old road was the only route leading to the capital. Area names associated with Daegwallyeong started to appear in historical records dating from the Three Kingdoms period (57 B.C.–A.D. 668). The poet Kim Geuk-gi from the 12th century during the Goryeo Dynasty (918–1392) used the name “Daegwan.” It was in the 16th century when the mountain pass began to be called “Daegwallyeong,” retaining the meaning of a great gate straddling a perilous passage. According to *Sinjeung dongguk yeoji seungnam* (*Expansion of the Augmented Survey of the Geography of Korea*) compiled in 1530, Daegwallyeong was not only a geographical gateway from Yeongdong to Yeongseo but also a cultural and symbolic place. That Daegwallyeong was perceived as a sacred space is confirmed in a record in *Goryeosa* (*History of Goryeo*), noting that the general Kim Sun-sik from Gangneung held here a ritual praying for victory on a military expedition to help King Taejo (r. 918–943) in the early Goryeo period. Geomantic experts describe Daegwallyeong as in the shape of a lock, meaning that it is difficult to pass through the mountain pass. This mountain trail is so perilous that there is a saying among people in Gangneung, “It is the greatest happiness not to pass Daegwallyeong in one’s lifetime.” The old road of Daegwallyeong is marked in ancient maps including *Haedong jido* (*Map of Haedong*), *Joseon jido* (*Map of Joseon*), *Cheonggudo* (*Map of Korea*), and *Daedong yeojido* (*Detailed Map of Korea*).

Trail Woven with Stories and Memories

The old road of Daegwallyeong Pass begins right after the settlement in Eoheul-ri, Seongsan-myeon, Gangneung, which was called Gamagol in the past. About a 30-minute walk up the trail is found a tavern with log walls, topped by straw roofing, complete with benches lining a packed-earth yard, imbuing the place with a friendly atmosphere. The tavern is a reconstruction of the original one on the site of the old drinking place. Past the tavern and across the valley, trekkers walking the curvy mountain road come across the stele inscribed with lines from “Thinking about Mother,” a poem by Shin Saimdang. Further away up the steep dirt road, they find the sign “*banjeong*,”



4. A shrine to Guksa Seonhwang, the guardian spirit of Daegwallyeong.



5. A reconstructed tavern on the old road of Daegwallyeong.



6. A sheep ranch, popular with tourists, spreads out on the summit of Daegwallyeong Pass.

meaning “halfway completed,” which is also the name of the area. Banjeong is located where the Yeongdong Expressway intersects with Daegwallyeong Pass, no longer in use today after a mountain tunnel was opened nearby.

Unique Weather Conditions

Daegwallyeong is located on alpine terrain, as high as at least 800 meters above sea level, subject to lower temperatures, higher daily temperature fluctuations, and higher amounts of precipitation than other regions in the Korean Peninsula. In spring, it is not that cold, just a little chilly. Cool weather in summer is the greatest benefit for the hilly area, but there are frequent bouts of localized torrential downpours. Clear weather continues in autumn, but once the temperature drops below zero, frosts or snows come earlier than in other regions. In winter, it is freezing; frequently the temperature drops to minus 15 degrees Celsius, and rarely goes up above zero. Under the influence of the northeastern air current created by an air mass originating in Siberia, Daegwallyeong is notorious for high amounts of snowfall.



7. The old road of Daegwallyeong is said to have 99 curves.

99 Curves with the Aesthetics of Being Slow

Noted for its meandering trail, Daegwallyeong Pass is said to have 99 curves. There is a story about the curves of the old road. A scholar from Gangneung hit the road carrying one hundred dried persimmons in his bag and headed toward the capital (present-day Seoul) in order to take the state civil service examination. He took the old road of Daegwallyeong and ate one persimmon whenever he turned a curve. When he reached the top, he was left with only one persimmon and realized that there are 99 curves on Daegwallyeong Pass.

Without question, walking the old road of Daegwallyeong Pass is as pleasurable as taking to the ancient trails in South Korea. Once on the old road, people are able to break free from modern-day complexities. A walk on the ancient trail endows a sense of returning back to earlier times filled with the beauty of slowness. Following the tracks and taking in the stories of those who trod the road many years before—some for simple exchange of local products and others in pursuit of high ambitions through the state examination—people of today can make their memories on this old road as well. 🍵

Seomjingang River

A Natural Connection between Jeolla and Gyeongsang

Text by the Cultural Heritage Administration
Photos by Lee Dong-Jun & Good Image

Seomjingang in autumn is said to turn anyone into a poet. Embellished with multi-colored leaves, the river creates a dreamlike atmosphere, day and night shrouded in fog. Silver grass dancing in the wind, golden rice paddies, and shimmery sand beaches combine to create mesmerizing images, filling any spectator with poetic inspiration.



"Seom-jin" means "frog-port," derived from an old tale that a huge cacophony of crying frogs drove away Japanese invaders in 1385.



Janggumok boasts the pristine waters of Seomjingang.



Seomjingang River.



Fishers harvest marsh clam against a gold sunset.



A panoramic view of rice paddies in Pyeongsa-ri by Seomjingang River.



Fields near Seomjingang River.

Tea in Korea Past and Present

Text by Br. Anthony
Photos by Br. Anthony & Good image



1. A green tea plantation in Boseong, Jeollanam-do Province.

We will limit ourselves here to the first kind, the tea made from the leaves of the *Camellia Sinensis* tree or bush. This tree seems to have evolved on hillsides in the tropical forests of south-east Asia, the regions now known as Yunnan (China), Laos, and as far as Assam in India. In the long centuries during which modern human culture slowly developed, one of the most important activities was the search for the beneficial properties of wild plants. The particular quality those early seekers found in the fresh young tea leaves was largely due to the stimulating effect provided by the high levels of caffeine and similar substances they contain. These brought an improved sense of well-being, clarity of mind, reduction of drowsiness, relaxation of tension, all of which were valuable for people engaged in forms of meditation.

1. A green tea plantation in Boseong, Jeollanam-do Province.

We know that the tribal peoples of what is now south-western China developed orchards of ancient tea trees in the mountain forests and then discovered the benefits of planting varieties of tea that remain as low bushes, easier to pick leaves from. These tea fields then slowly spread across the regions to the south

of the Yangtze River. A major turning-point in the history of tea came in the eighth century, with the composition of the *Cha Ching*, the *Classic of Tea* by Lu Yu in 780, which summarizes everything known at that time about every aspect of tea growing and preparation.

Korean Buddhist monks returning from studies in China during the Tang Dynasty brought tea seeds back with them, while the Chinese emperor also at times sent tea seeds as gifts to the Korean kings. That was how there came to be tea bushes growing around some of the major temples in the southern regions of Korea. During the following centuries, the art of tea was largely or completely lost in Korea. There was a limited revival of interest in tea among the governing class in the 19th century, sparked by a visit to Seoul by the Buddhist monk Choui. Then in the earlier 20th

2. The Buddhist monk Choui (1786–1866) sparked interest in tea in the late Joseon period, and is celebrated as the “Saint of Korean Tea.”



Tea in Korea Past and Present

When we are talking about tea, it is important to start with a clarification. The English word *tea* derives from the Chinese character 茶 (pronounced “tai / cha / ta / etc.” in China and Korea) which was originally the name given by the Chinese to a specific plant (the tea tree *Camellia Sinensis*) and to the drink made using the leaves of that plant. However, by extension the word tea has come to be used both in Korean and in English to designate any drink made by mixing a vegetable substance with hot water. So today, in Korean and in English, we speak of ginseng “tea”, ginger “tea,” quince “tea,” with no suggestion that these drinks contain any tea leaves. So we have two quite different kinds of drink designated by the word *tea*.

3. Hundreds of years-old tea trees native to southern China.



4. Tea fields behind a temple.



century another monk, the Ven. Hyodang, found himself in charge of a temple on the slopes of Mt. Jirisan, Dasolsa near Jinju, that was surrounded by ancient, wild tea bushes. He developed a new method of drying green tea. The Ven. Hyodang shared his tea with the many friends visiting him, intellectuals, artists, politicians, and so slowly a few Koreans began to practice his “Korean Way of Tea” inspired by the quietness of Zen (Seon) meditation.

After the Korean War, some people living in Hwagae Valley, part of Hadong County, at the foot of Mt. Jirisan, began to dry and sell green tea, made using the many wild tea bushes found growing on the slopes there. Then a Korean businessman took over the land in Boseong County, further to the South, where the Japanese had begun tea plantations designed to produce black tea (known in East Asia as “red tea”) for export. Here, too, the leaves were dried to produce green tea for sale and consumption inside Korea. During the 1960s and 1970s, young monks in the temples where wild tea grew began to dry tea for their own use. Their main problem was where to find cheap tea-pots in which to brew it and cups to serve it in. A potter living near Haenssa Temple started producing simple tea sets, comprised of a pot with three or five small cups and a lipped bowl for cooling the water and sharing the freshly brewed tea.

As green tea began to be enjoyed in Korea during the 1970s and 1980s, it was mostly hand-dried by monks and families around Mt. Jirisan. Later, a few more intensive, commercial production units developed. However, the best tea is still hand-made by elderly women who have been doing it for decades. The fresh tea buds and leaves emerging in later April and May are the only ones with a strong enough taste. Picking them is slow work. Then the drying must be done before the juice in the leaves starts to oxidize, which changes the taste and color.

5. Ways of serving tea in Korea today.



A really hot caldron, several layers of gloves, and a lot of energy are needed. The leaves are parched in the caldron for some time to soften them, then removed from the heat and rolled, returned to the caldron, rolled again, back and forth up to seven or nine times. The final process, the next day, involves keeping the now dried leaves moving in a gently warmed caldron for a couple of hours. This brings out the full fragrance and anyone who has witnessed the tea-drying process is always amazed at the wonderful scent given off by the drying leaves. Drying fixes the essential oils so that they cannot oxidize; still, drying by hand takes some time, and Korean “green” tea in fact always looks yellow in the cup, having had time to “ferment” or oxidize a little as it dries.

One of the main problems with Korean green tea, or *nok-cha*, is that it often tastes bitter or tart, even when it is very well dried and brewed. Koreans do not enjoy bitter or tart tastes. Therefore, about ten years ago, many Korean tea makers started to produce what they usually call “yellow” or “fermented” tea, “*hwang-cha*” or “*balhyo-cha*.” This has proved a very popular alternative to green tea because it tastes much sweeter and the “nutty” taste is much more pleasant; it seems to warm the body where green tea cools it. This yellow tea is dried using a process inspired by that used for Chinese oolong tea. The picked leaves are not dried at once but left to wilt for up to 24 hours. Then they are rolled cold on a rough mat for quite a long time.

Rolling brings out the juices and the result is a large mass of moist foliage. This is put into a large pottery jar standing on a really hot *ondol* floor, and left to ferment for several hours. Finally the fermented leaves are dried, either in a warm caldron or spread thinly on paper on the same hot *ondol* for several days.

So when we go into one of the rare “traditional Korean tea rooms” we now have a choice between “green tea” (*nok-cha*) and “yellow tea” (*hwang-cha*). If you are offered a tea-bag in a cup of hot water, you have come to the wrong place. Korean tea is not an industrial product, it is labor-intensive and demands high levels of skill at every stage. That means it is bound to be expensive. Initially, the serving of tea with a tea set might look complicated but it is not really difficult. The basic rule is that no water must be left standing on the leaves. The pot is emptied completely after a very brief moment of drawing, otherwise an unpleasantly bitter taste will emerge. That is all you really need to remember, the rest is a matter of experimentation.

Enjoy your tea. ☺



6. Harvesting tea leaves early in the morning.

Wanggok Village in Goseong and Museom Village in Yeongju

Text by the Cultural Heritage Administration
Photos by Lee Dong-Jun & Good Image



1. A panoramic view of Wanggok Village.

Preserved for hundreds of years as living heritage of an earlier bucolic way of life, historic villages with their combined attributes of beautiful natural surroundings, traditional houses, and agrarian lifestyle remain as Korea's tangible and intangible connections to the land and the nation's past. Two of these historic villages are the 600-year-old Wanggok Village and the 350-year-old Museom Village.

Wanggok Village: Sheltered by Layers of Mountains

Wanggok Village is located in Goseong, Gangwon-do Province in the mid-eastern section of the Korean Peninsula. Although the historic village is situated in the vicinity of the eastern coast, it feels like a mountain settlement, safely nestled within several layers of sheltering mountains. With its back against the exquisite landscape created by the East Sea, Wanggok has been formed as a clan village with a history of 600 years, mostly inhabited by families surnamed Ham, Choi, and Jin. It is said that the village originated in the 14th century during the late Goryeo period, when the Goryeo loyalist Ham Bu-yeol retreated here in opposition to the founding of a new dynasty, Joseon (1392–1910). The settlement was destroyed during the Japanese invasions of 1592–1598 and was reestablished in the course of the next 150 years. Besides the original clans that settled here, families surnamed Yi, Park, Kim, Han, and Yun also make up the residents of Wanggok Village. Mostly constructed in the 19th century, tile-roofed houses in the village are built in a style unique to the northern region, *yangtongjip*, designed for enduring long harsh winters. Residences have been maintained in their original form and shape. Besides housing, the natural landscape and agrarian lifestyle have also been preserved intact, adding to the value of

2. Wanggok is protected by natural fortifications—layers of mountains.



2

Wanggok as a historic village. This may be why visitors get a sense of stepping back in time and being transported back to their old hometown. As they go deeper into the village, visitors find themselves feeling right at home.

But for its location, the village could have perished during any of a chain of historical cataclysms that befell Korea, including Japanese colonial rule (1910–1945), the Korean War (1950–1953), and recurrent destructive forest fires. But Wanggok Village has been spared from those disasters, and has been well preserved as a historic settlement. The good fortune of the village did not come by chance; it is attributable to the area's geographic advantages. The Songjiho Lagoon in front of it and the five mountain peaks to the rear of the village have protected Wanggok from destructive events from the outside. The layers of mountains, in particular, served as a protective screen against aerial bombing during the Korean War. The lagoon, which has turned into a lake, forms an impregnable moat separating the village from the nearby sea. Houses are naturally clustered along the roads inside the village, which also follow the flow of the stream. The road intersection in the center of the village forms a division of sorts between the northern section, mostly populated by Ham families and the southern section, home to the Choi families. Characteristic of the northern region of the Korean Peninsula, residences in Wanggok are made in the style that places the master's quarters, the lady's quarters, the wood floored central hall, and the kitchen all in one building. The cowshed is made as an extension of the kitchen in the shape of “ㄱ,” which provides added warmth, a practical and comfortable arrangement for living in cold weather.



3. An entrance to Wanggok Village.



4. A rice mill in Wanggok, housing tradition and modernity.

Museom Village: Floating in Water for 350 Years

Located in Yeongju, Gyeongsangbuk-do Province, Museom Village is also called Sudori, literally meaning a “village floating in water.” The Naeseongcheon Stream, which feeds into the Nakdonggang River, and the Yeongjucheon Stream, flowing from Yeongju, meet and meander full circle around Museom, cutting the village off from the mainland, hence its name. The meandering stream encircling the village and the surrounding mountains embrace each other, creating an aesthetic and, at the



5. Museum Village is a "village floating in water," connected to the outside only through Sudogyo Bridge.

same time, auspicious scenery. On the inner side of the curving waters have formed floodplains where tile-roofed houses built during the Joseon Dynasty remain intact. The single log footbridge had been the only connection between the village and the mainland for 350 years until the early 1980s when Sudogyo Bridge was built. The log bridge kept getting swept away in the rainy season, and village residents had to rebuild the only route they had to the outside world every year.

The formation of Museum Village started in the mid-17th century when Park Su settled in the area. About 350 years ago in 1666, Park Su constructed the first house here, Manjukjae, starting off the history of Museum. A great-granddaughter of Park Su was married to a Kim, and ever since they came to the village in the late 18th century the Kim clan has settled in Museum as well. Museum is a clan village boasting a long history,



6. The log footbridge kept getting swept away in the rainy season and rebuilt every year in the past.

mostly populated by the Park and Kim clans. Both clans have a scholarly tradition and left behind a number of heritage buildings including the historic house of Haeudang and the historic house of Kim Roe-jin.

The first house in sight right across Sudogyo Bridge over the meandering stream is the historic house of Haeudang, built by Kim Nak-pung who served as chief magistrate of Uigeumbu (Office of Special Justice) in 1879. The house features wide wooden floors and various storage spaces. Although the master's quarters and the lady's quarters are usually positioned in a diagonal line, the historic house of Haeudang has the master's and the lady's quarters situated in a straight line. The largest residence in Museum Village, this house is set in the shape of "口," typical of northern Gyeongsangbuk-do. Before the embankment was built, it was possible to enjoy the scenery of the stream and the sand beach while sitting on the wooden floor of this house. Since Kim Nak-pung was a political advisor for Prince Daewon, the nameplate "Haeudang" is inscribed in the handwriting of Prince Daewon.



7. Haeudang, built by Kim Nak-pung who served as chief magistrate of Uigeumbu (Office of Special Justice) in 1879.

8. The historic house of Kim Roe-jin, assumed to have been built in the early 19th century. The house has been inhabited by generations of the Kim clan, but details of its history are hard to come by.

In the center of the village is the historic house of Kim Roe-jin, also called the "historic house of Manun," inhabited by generations of the Kim clan. On a long- stretch of land, a *jeongchim*—a space for residence and ancestral rituals—and the master's quarters are built on different axes. Constructed about 200 years ago, the jeongchim has a ventilation hole penetrating both sides of the roof ridge (*kkachigumeong*). The master's quarters were additionally constructed about 70 to 80 years ago since the space in the jeongchim was not enough.

Museum Village is also famous for producing a number of anti-colonial activists and built Ado Seosuk as a center of the independence movement against Japanese colonial rule (1910–1945).

Nongak, the Music of Communal Excitement

Text by Kim Hye-jeong, Professor, Kyungin National University of Education
Photos by Topic photo. com



Nongak is a performing art that incorporates music, dance, and drama. Although literally meaning the “music of farmers,” *nongak* is actually the “music of the Korean people,” whose livelihoods were rooted in agriculture. No festive village event was complete without the uproarious music and dance of *nongak*; it is popularly associated with ecstatic excitement among the Korean people. The music and dance derived from agrarian culture have been creatively transformed into modern-day performances as well.

Nongak as Gut

Nongak has various other names depending on what it is played for and in which region it is performed: *pungmul-gut*, *maegu*, *madang-balbi*, *jin-bapgi*, *pungjang-gut*, and *dure-gut*, to name a few. *Nongak* is mostly referred to as “*gut*,” a word that specifically means shaman ritual, but generally refers to any event full of ecstatic excitement and joyful spectacle. The Korean people perceive *nongak* as *gut*, laden with things to see and enjoy.

Composition of a Nongak Band

A local band playing *nongak* usually parades around and forms a circle upon reaching a performance spot. The local band is led by a flag. Farming villages hold up a flag for agricultural spirits, bearing the image of a dragon—the symbolic animal for agriculture—or bearing the slogan “Agriculture is the foundation of the state.” When *nongak* is performed as part of a ritual for a village spirit, a flag marked with the Chinese character “令”—often two of them—is used.

The flag is followed by instruments, mostly percussion, in this order: *kkwaenggwari* (hand-held gongs), *jing* (large gongs), *janggu* (hourglass drums), *buk* (barrel drums), and *sogo* (hand-held drums). The *kkwaenggwari* drummer, called “*sangsoe*,” serves as conductor of the band.

After the musicians come dancers and acrobats, often including mask dance performers and boy dancers. Villagers usually join the parade, taking up the revelry at the rear and joyfully dancing along with the performers to the infectious rhythm of the music.



1. A performing art of music and dance, *nongak* both stimulates and expresses ecstatic excitement among the Korean people.

2. Sangmo, a hat with a streamer attached on top.



3. A *nongak* band consists of flag carriers, percussionists, and dancers, with villagers following them in the end.



4. *Nongak* is an essential part of village rituals for guardian spirits.

Nongak in Village Events

The *nongak* that is played at a ritual for the village's guardian spirit is subdued and solemn. The complex and unusual rhythms created by the *nongak* band underscore the spirituality and sacredness of the ritual proceedings. The *nongak* performance at a village ritual is carried out abiding by strict rules for movements; for example, the performing band circles counterclockwise three times and bows to the spirit three times. Some villages still forbid the presence of

women at rituals for guardian spirits.

A new-year event held on the first day of the lunar year also centers around *nongak*. The local band visits every household in the village, serenading and dancing in order to chase away evil spirits and summon in good fortune. This event starts off with the band paying respects to the village guardian and then at the village well; all the homes in the village are called on by *nongak* performers from the residence of the oldest person or the highest authority. Upon reaching a house, the band first performs in front of the gate and then enters the residence. Once inside the house, the *nongak* band visits first the kitchen, the in-house well, the platform for sauce jars, the courtyard, and the wood floored central hall, where spirits are believed to reside. The band bows to those spirits and performs, wishing that misfortune goes out and good fortune comes in.

During this event, households usually donate money or rice to the performing band, which are used for communal purposes. Although donations are made roughly in proportion to the number of family members, amounts are not set in stone. Giving money is a voluntary act, and households with better means often donate more.

Nongak in Agricultural Life

Nongak is inseparable from Korean farming tradition. At the start of the farming season, agricultural flags are taken out of storage during the winter, and a ritual is conducted for the agricultural spirit believed to reside there. It is believed that the agricultural spirit is in the image of a dragon; this belief stems from the dragon symbolizing rain, and rains are crucial



5. Flags bearing the slogan "Agriculture is the foundation of the state" lead a *nongak* band.

for rice farming. At this ritual, the *nongak* band follows the flag bearing the dragon's image and performs for the agricultural spirit. Out in the fields, however, farmers work and sing in tune with the sounds of one drum, not an ensemble of various instruments.

When the arduous labor draws to an end in the autumn, villagers celebrate by dancing and playing perked up by the *nongak* band. At this event, a line of *sogo* players in the band pantomime the farming process from sowing seeds to planting seedlings, weeding fields, and harvesting while singing and dancing to rhythmic music. The movements mimicking the acts of farming are intended to wish for a good harvest.

Fishing villages play the "music of farmers" as well. When departing for the sea, fishermen carry on their boat *nongak* percussion instruments. When the boat is filled with fish, music created by gongs and drums goes off and fishers sing folk songs, and people who wish to make a purchase come to the fishing boat, guided by the music. When the village is in sight on their way back home after days out at sea, they signal their return to village by drumming and singing. Families and villagers welcome the fishermen at the port and throw a party celebrating an abundant catch.



6. Spinning dancers expertly whirling long ribbons on their *sangmo* hats add to the excitement of *nongak*.

Nongak in Urban Areas

In urbanized areas, private circles have replaced local bands as new communities for *nongak*; *nongak* is also included in the school curriculum. *Nongak* has evolved into modern performances—well known examples are the percussion quartet *Samul Nori* and the non-verbal show *Nanta*, which maximize the musical element of *nongak*.

Attuned to changes of the times, *nongak* has changed in where, why, and by whom it is performed. What remains the same, however, is that *nongak* creates the sounds that arouse an ecstatic excitement, a predominant emotional characteristic of the Korean people. The delicate sounds of *kkwaenggwari*, the perky beats of *janggu*, the heavy feel of *jing*, and the pounding tunes of *buk* all combine to raise the emotions to a climax. Spectacular spinning of *sangmo*—a hat with a streamer attached on top, acrobatic feats, and masked performers' dramatic play are enough to leave spectators in awe. Although transformed on the surface, *nongak* has retained its musical, dancing, and dramatic elements that are quintessentially Korean. Perceived as an exciting "gut," *nongak* is an intangible cultural heritage still relevant in contemporary Korean society.

KOREAN HERITAGE

Quarterly Magazine
of the Cultural Heritage Administration

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189 Cheongsu-ro, Seo-gu, Daejeon, Republic of Korea
Tel | 82-42-481-4735 Fax | 82-42-481-4759
<http://english.cha.go.kr>

Printed		September 15, 2014
Published by		Cultural Heritage Administration Republic of Korea
Publication management		Director of International Cooperation Division
Content coordination		Shin Sung-hee, Kim Min-ok
Translation		Park Jung-eun
Copy editing		Teresita M. Reed
Design · Editing		Graphickorea Co., Ltd
Printed by		Graphickorea Co., Ltd

Cultural Heritage Administration, 2014

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