

# KOREAN HERITAGE

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# 공존

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gong

共, together

jon

存, existence

In today's world, fraught with war and conflict, the concept of *gongjon* – a combination of *gong* (共, “together”) and *jon* (存, “existence”) – holds significant relevance. While seemingly equivalent, the English word “coexistence” does not encompass *gongjon*'s nuance of mutual respect and harmonious living, deeply rooted in Korean cultural tradition. The English term “coexistence” often implies maintaining and operating within respective territories. In contrast, the Korean concept of *gongjon* implies a fusion through mutual respect and communication between nature and humans, as well as among individuals and cultures.



# Traditional Korean Farming: Community Cooperation and Coexistence with Nature



*Nonggi* (Village Agriculture Banner)

Shennong is depicted riding a blue dragon and holding a salpo, a traditional farming tool. Set against a white background, the mythical god of farming is surrounded by motifs of turtles, carp, and clouds.

Korea's cultural arts, particularly its TV dramas, movies, and music, have captured international attention since the early 2000s. Today, over ten million people visit Korea every year, with many flocking to Seoul, the nation's capital. In addition to international visitors, many Koreans have moved to Seoul, transforming it into a vibrant hub of cultural and artistic diversity. Yet, just an hour's drive from the bustling capital, you can find a completely different landscape. Korea has four distinct seasons and a natural bounty. Its culinary culture revolves around rice, which has defined the nation's landscape and daily life for its people. Despite significant changes in dietary habits over time, many fields and paddies remain, contributing to Korea's picturesque scenery. It is in these rural areas that the community spirit of Korean



*Jing* (Gong)

A round brass percussion instrument with shallow engraved concentric circles on the resonating surface. A hole is drilled on the side to attach a braided strap. The mallet is made of woven straw.



*Buk* (Drum)

An instrument played during dure activities. It is made by crafting a hollow, round wooden body and tightly covering each end with leather.

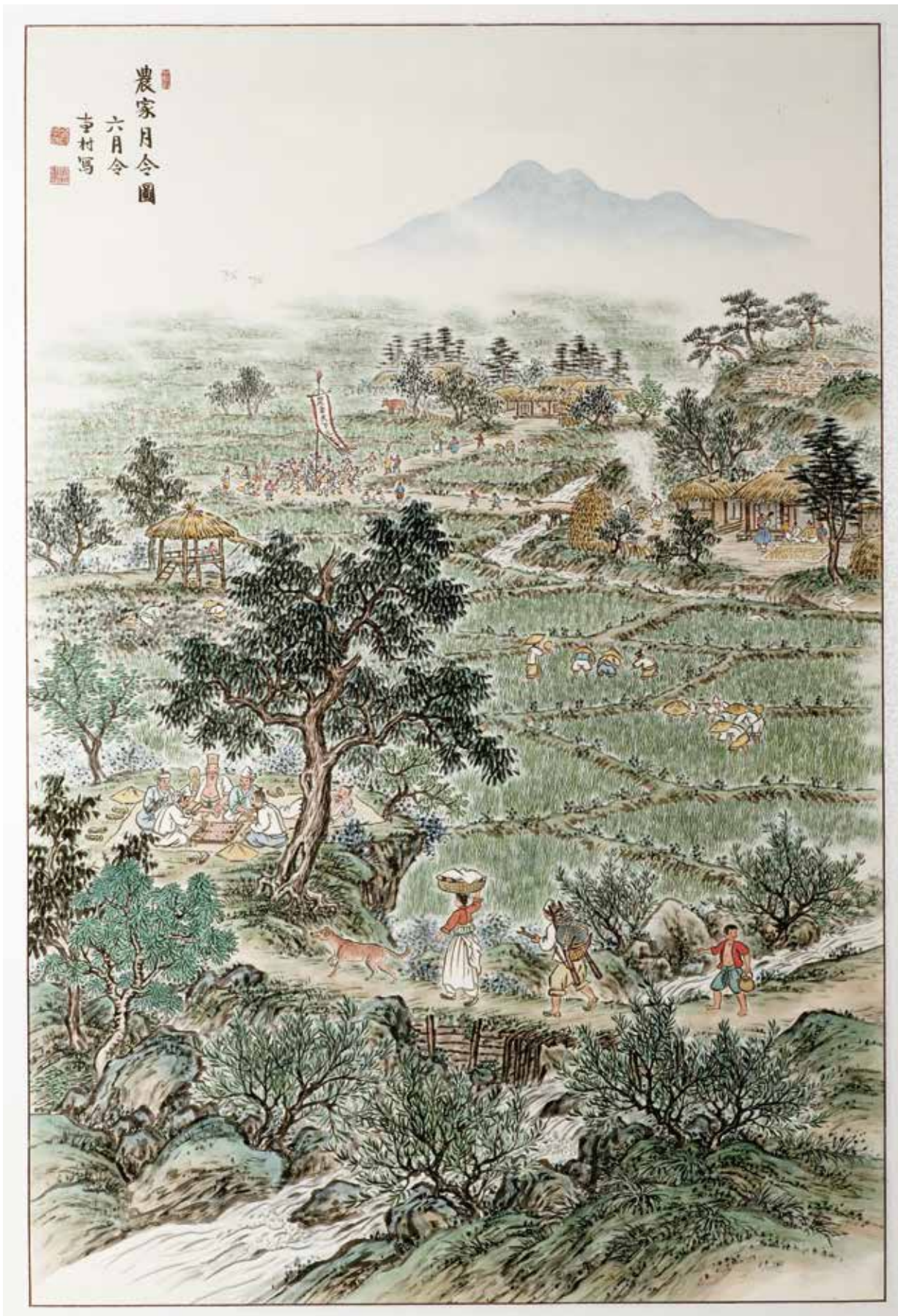
*Nabal* (Bugle)

A wooden instrument played at the front of dure group processions to signal the start of dure work and each subsequent task.



Nonggi (Village Agriculture Banner)

On the white banner is written the phrase "Shinnong yueop" (神農遺業), meaning that agriculture is the legacy of Shennong, the Divine Farmer.



Kim Hak-soo, The  
Twelve Months in  
a Farming Village:  
June, The Museum of  
Agriculture



Kim Hong-do, Lunchtime, Album of Genre Paintings, National Museum of Korea



Kim Hong-do, Plowing a Rice Field, Album of Genre Paintings, National Museum of Korea

farming culture truly comes to life. Farming is seasonal. Rice, the national staple, is usually planted in February according to the lunar calendar. The first breaking of the ground with a plow harnessed to oxen used to herald the beginning of the year's farming. According to historical records, oxen began to be used in farming in the third year of King Jijeung of Silla (502 CE), and such implements as the *ttabi*, a wooden handheld plow, and the *gyeorijaenggi*, a plow pulled by two yoked oxen, were also used. A variety of farming tools, such as

plows and hoes, were used depending on the field location and size and planting method. Farmers soaked rice seeds in water to get rid of empty husks before sowing. In preparation for rain, they cleared the paddies of stagnant water and made new waterways. Water was lifted from streams or puddles using such tools as the *matdure*, a big wooden water bucket usually carried by two people. Drawing water was an important task that required village residents to work together. *Monaegi* refers to transplanting rice seedlings in spring after sprouting rice



**Matdure (Water Scoop)**

A wooden bucket with a narrow bottom and wide top, with ropes attached to the four corners. Two people use it, while facing each other, to scoop water from a pond and transfer it to a rice paddy.



**Motjul (Guide Rope)**

A rope marked at regular intervals (approx. 14 cm) used when planting rice seedlings to ensure alignment and even spacing.

seeds in a separate patch of paddy. Rice seedlings before transplanting are called *mo*, and the place where *mo* are grown is called *motjari*. When farmers transplanted the seedlings from the seedbed to the paddy, two people, known as *motjuljabi*, stood at either end of the paddy holding a rope. Other farmers planted the seedlings at regular intervals along the line indicated by the overhead rope. *Monaegi* is a task typically requiring that the seedlings are planted at the same pace, so breaks are taken together. It is a productive yet intensive task, which led to the formation of *dure*, a communal labor organization at the village level, and *pumasi*, a reciprocal labor exchange based on *dure*. *Pumasi* combines the word *pum* (working) and *asi* (repayment).

Besides those who planted *mo* in paddies,

*saechamkkun*, who prepared food – known as *saecham* – for the workers and delivered it to the paddy in large baskets, were also considered participants in *pumasi*. Farming required hard physical labor, so there were breaks to eat *saecham* between meals, usually consisting of simple food and *makgeolli*. Farmers enjoyed the refreshment along with impromptu farmers' music, *nongak*, such as the representative folk song of Gyeongsang-do, "Kwaejina Chingching Nane," to wash away fatigue and recharge. They sang the chorus together with traditional Korean instruments such as the *kkwaenggwari* (a small flat gong), the *jing* (a large gong), and *buk* (a drum).

Recently, a Korean hand hoe known as *homi* has been attracting attention overseas. *Homi* is used in *gimmaegi*,



*Moteul* (Spacer Tool)

A tool used to maintain even spacing when a person plants rice seedlings in a small paddy alone. It consists of three long wooden rods—parallel and equidistant to each other—marked with measurements at 20-cm intervals.

which refers to removing weeds that hinder crop growth and loosening the soil between plants. Overall, the use of homi is intended to ensure the optimal growing environment for the crops, which is essential in farming. Gimmaegi was traditionally done three to four times a year through pumasi. The practice of pumasi, in which villagers shared labor, savory food and lively music to ensure a good harvest and make the arduous work of monaegi enjoyable, epitomizes the long-held wisdom of our ancestors.



Gyeorijaengi (Plow)

A traditional agriculture tool, pulled by an ox to plow rice paddies or fields. The size of the blade and the shape of the plow vary with the type of soil and crop to be planted.

Homi (Hand Hoe)

Used to weed fields and mound soil. A long triangular blade is attached to a wooden handle wrapped with hemp cord for better grip.

*Garae* (Three-Person Shovel)

Used to move soil and trim rice paddy banks. One person holds the handle and scoops the shovel into the soil, while two others help lift it, with its load of dirt, using the ropes attached to either side of the blade.

# Seongyojang: Sharing in the Interest of Mutual Prosperity



Seongyojang Manor in Gangneung is a remarkable example of a wealthy estate from the late Joseon period. If the wealthy desire respect from the general public, three conditions must be met. First, wealth must be acquired through legitimate means. Second, wealth should be maintained and managed in a way that does not harm others or create resentment. Third, the use of wealth should produce social benefit. Seongyojang, a sprawling estate of over 4,000 *pyeong* (approximately 13,200 square meters) of houses and gardens, was guided by a philosophy of mutual prosperity and sharing. Among its notable figures was Lee Hu, a scholar in the late Joseon era who greatly increased the family's wealth. In his will, he emphasized the importance of accumulating wealth fairly and sharing it with others. He believed that a commitment to sharing and living harmoniously with one's neighbors would ultimately benefit Seongyojang itself.

In managing its land, Seongyojang sought to promote mutual prosperity with tenant farmers, as it was guided by a philosophy of compassion. The primary criteria for selecting and managing







these farmers were focused on ensuring their stability and economic independence. Seongyojang prioritized the tenant farmers' well-being, adhering to the principle that they would not be replaced unless they chose to leave. A testament to the community's appreciation of Seongyojang's benevolence was their gift of the "Maninsol" umbrella, called so for bearing the inscribed names of over ten thousand people (*manin*).

Serving the nation was also an important commitment for Seongyojang. When the nation faced a crisis in the late Joseon period, Seongyojang established Dongjin School and introduced modern education to cultivate the talented youth needed for the nation's recovery. During the Japanese colonial years, Seongyojang believed in national liberation and provided financial assistance to the independence movement.

Seongyojang also played an active part in aiding the local poor. In times of drought, flooding, typhoons, heavy snow, and other severe hardships, the manor would provide much-needed relief to the impoverished. A prominent example occurred when Lee Ui-gu, a descendant of Lee Hu, served as the governor of Tongcheon-gun. During a famine, when the people were starving, Lee Ui-gu distributed rice from Seongyojang's granaries to aid the populace, earning widespread appreciation. This practice of opening the storehouses to support the community became a lasting tradition at Seongyojang.

Seongyojang was also an active supporter of artists and cultural figures. By creating spaces for *pungnyu* – cultural and artistic enjoyment – such as Hwallaejeong Pavilion and providing generous hospitality and travel conveniences, Seongyojang attracted many cultural and artistic figures who created some of the finest works of the time while staying there. In addition to opening its premier cultural spaces to artists, Seongyojang acted as a patron to impoverished artists, offering them unlimited board and lodging to allow them to concentrate on their creative work. Financial support was also provided to ensure they were not hindered by economic constraints. As a result, the artists were able to interact with the country's leading cultural figures and dedicate themselves solely to their creative pursuits.

# Makgeolli:

The Korean Brew Nourishing  
Minds and Bodies



Written by Lee Gyung-geun

Photographed by Kim Han-gyeol



Yeast and *nuruk* are added to the steamed rice for fermentation. The mixture is stirred to ensure proper fermentation. Afterward, the rice is strained through a cloth, separating the makgeolli.





The steamed rice is spread out evenly to cool before making makgeolli.

Every nation and culture has its own forms of alcoholic beverages. Alcohol has been indispensable for entertainment and social affairs, and has profoundly influenced most cultures. Riding on the back of Hallyu (the Korean Wave), soju has recently become more recognized. However, Korean history shows that makgeolli has traditionally been more enjoyed by people. Overshadowed by soju's current popularity, makgeolli's export volumes are only one-fifth those of soju. Although increasing exports to Japan have meant rising volumes in the last few years, it is still disappointing to see makgeolli go relatively unappreciated. In its simplicity, makgeolli offers a unique appeal among Korean alcoholic beverages.

Traditional soju was considered a high-end spirit because it involved several rounds of distilling *cheongju* (lit. "clear alcohol"), the clear supernatant obtained during the process of filtering makgeolli. Until recently, ordinary people could not afford soju. On the other hand, makgeolli was home-brewed, and many households had their own recipe. People would sit together drinking makgeolli to drive away fatigue after a hard day, to loosen up or simply to enjoy it with a meal during a break from farming. It was "our drink" that helped alleviate the hunger and exhaustion that came with physical work. "Makgeolli" is a combination of the Korean words *mak* ("roughly") and *geolleonaen* ("filtered"). This simple, unpretentious name suits its characteristics. Makgeolli is a milky, creamy alcohol with a starchy sweetness that is both fizzy and slightly sour. It is smooth and refreshing to drink. Korea's makgeolli has evolved, with new branding and product development emphasizing the local characteristics of each establishment that crafts it. Kim Jong-han is the youngest of three brothers and the CEO of one such establishment: Doorumi Brewery. Both of his brothers also run their own breweries, following in the footsteps of their mother, who ventured into making traditional liquor in Cheorwon, Gangwon-do while the eldest brother, Kim Jong-min, pursues the traditional brewing of liquor through his Nogeumjuga Brewery, and the second, Kim Jong-ho, offers makgeolli with a youthful vibe from his Guruma Brewery in Seoul. Inspired by its locality, Doorumi Brewery's name pays homage to the *doorumi* (red-crowned crane), a migratory bird celebrated as the city bird of Cheorwon. The

brewery uses local ingredients, including rice and volcanic water from the region. According to Kim Jong-han, the CEO of Doorumi Brewery, “Korean alcohol involves multiple stages of fermentation. That is the beauty of it for me. The more stages it goes through, the richer the flavor becomes, while microorganism activity varies with the environment. New flavors are sometimes discovered along the way.” Indeed it is true: makgeolli, much like Seoul today, is diverse and ever-changing. There may be as many hidden makgeolli recipes as there are individual home-brewing households. Unearthing these recipes and continuing the tradition of Makgeolli brewing is a worthy endeavor.

In 2021, Makgeolli Bitgi (Makgeolli making and sharing) was designated as Intangible Cultural Heritage in Korea, paving the way for potential listing with UNESCO. The domestic makgeolli market has embraced tradition and diversity to strengthen its presence, while Europe and the US have recently been paying attention as well. Makgeolli in cans is now popular and is being produced by Kooksoondang and other large companies. Breweries that produce makgeolli outside Korea are emerging, such as Hana Makgeolli in Brooklyn, USA, and Geonbae Makgeolli in Quebec, Canada. Public sector efforts are combining with private sector initiatives to help introduce the world to the enjoyment of this very Korean alcohol that is a valuable part of the nation’s traditional culture.

As makgeolli continues its journey from a local tradition to a global sensation, it not only brings a taste of Korea to the world but also enhances global appreciation for cultural diversity, inviting us to savor the rich flavors and stories it offers.





Chrysanthemum flowers are floated in the fermented liquor to infuse it with fragrance.

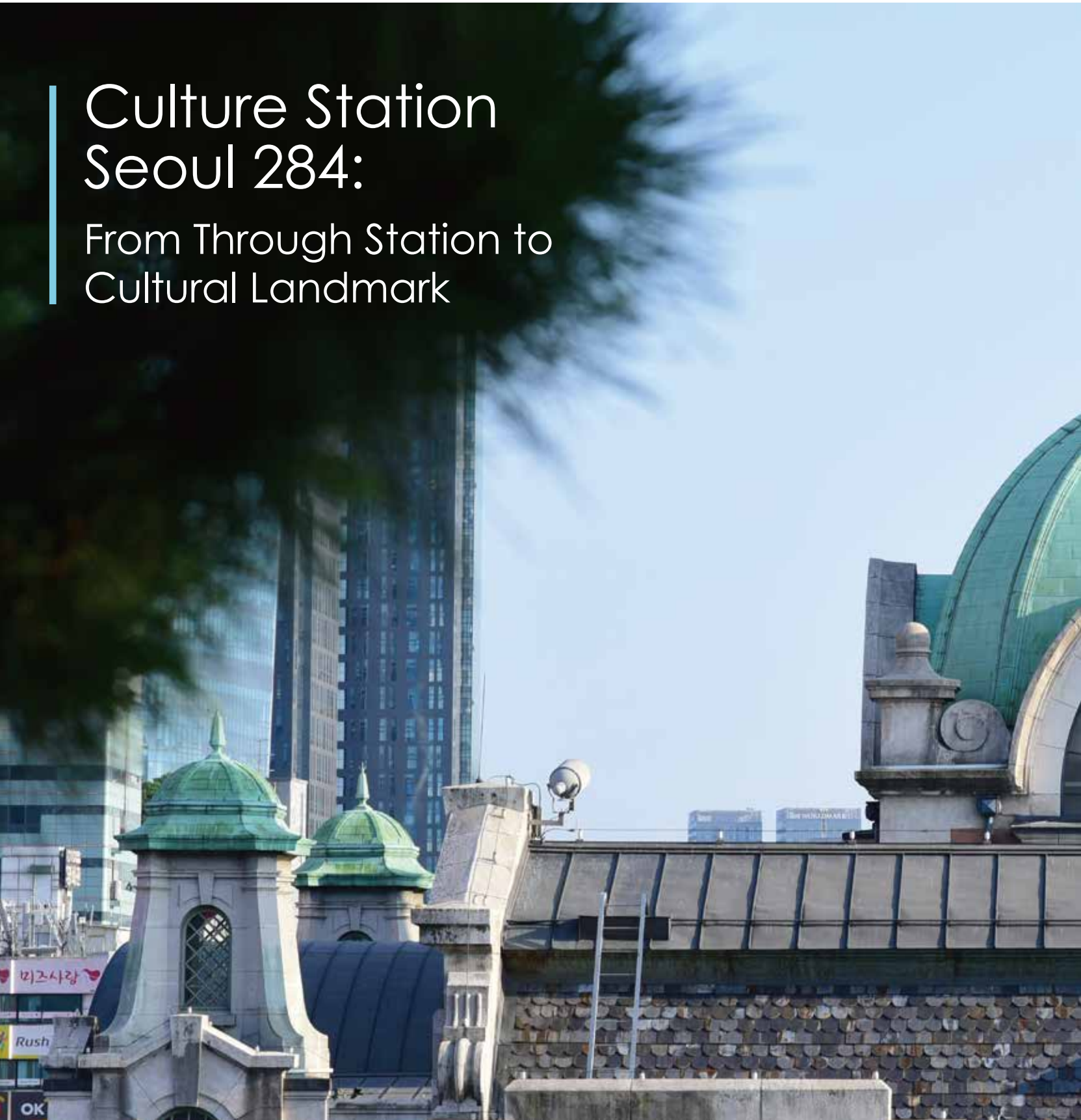


A traditional liquor package using the red-crowned cranes, the symbol of the brewery.



# Culture Station Seoul 284:

From Through Station to  
Cultural Landmark



Photographed by Kang Min-jung





For international travelers entering the Republic of Korea, the typical itinerary begins with a landing at Incheon International Airport, followed by a journey to the nation’s capital on the Airport Railroad Express (AREX), likely all the way to its final stop – Seoul Station. Since the introduction of the high-speed KTX rail service in 2004, travelers have been greeted by a steel-and-glass station. Close to this new station stands the historic old Seoul Station, now repurposed as a cultural complex known as Culture Station Seoul 284.

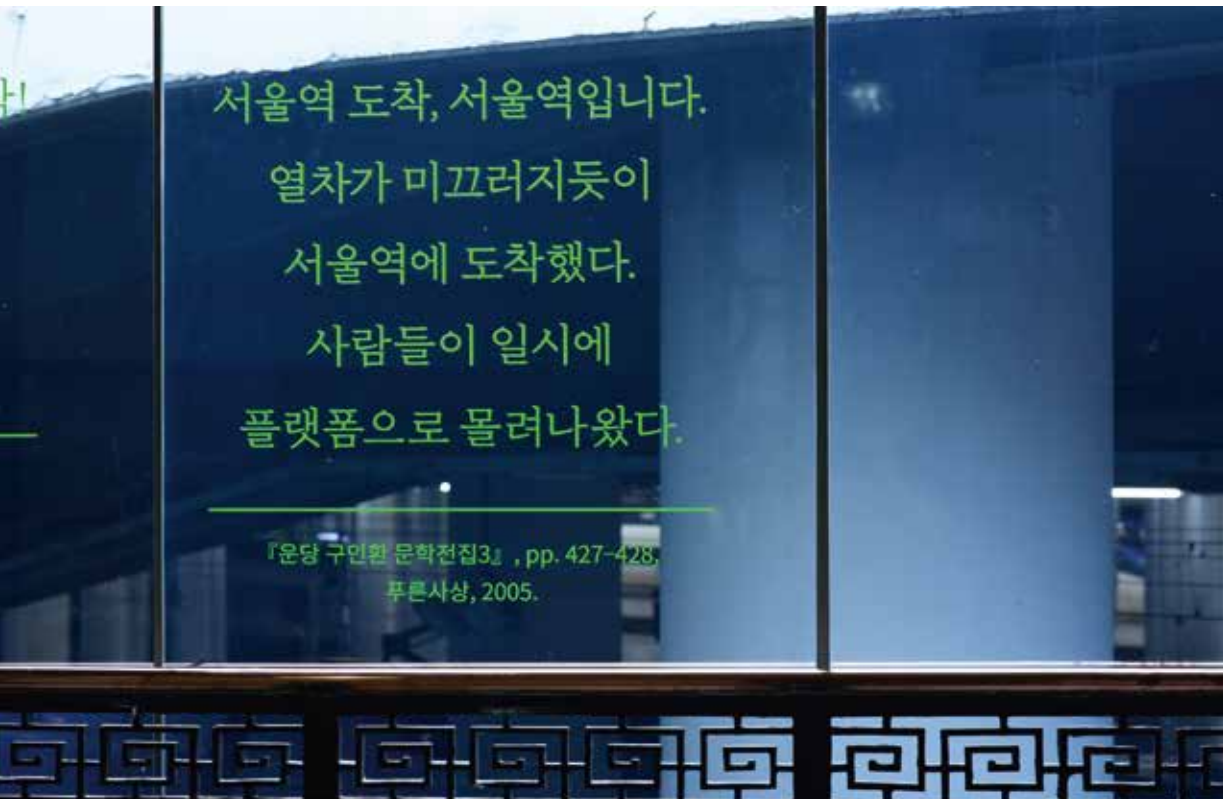
The old Seoul Station is a symbolic heritage site that bears witness to the



history of Korean railroads. In 1900, during the Korean Empire period, the Gyeongin Railroad – the first in Korea – was completed, connecting the port city of Incheon with Seoul. The opening of the nation’s ports led to an influx of foreign powers, and Gyeongseong (the former name for Seoul) became a central railway hub for the Korean Peninsula. With the onset of Japanese colonial rule in 1910, railroads were used not only as a means of transportation but also as tools for the exploitation of resources and expansion of the empire. In 1925, Japan completed

Gyeongseong Station (now Culture Station Seoul 284), as if to showcase its colonial ambitions and strategies for continental dominance.

Following Korea’s liberation in 1945, the capital’s name was changed from Gyeongseong-bu to Seoul-si. In 1947, Gyeongseong Station was renamed Seoul Station. The old Seoul Station is not only architecturally significant as one of the first modern Western-style buildings in Korea, but it also encapsulates the growth of the Republic of Korea and





the joys and sorrows of countless citizens in the last 70 or so years, having served as the backdrop for numerous historical events. It was rightfully designated as a Historic Site in 1981.

Seoul Station plays a central role in the country's rail network, serving as the terminus for major national lines and a key transfer point for the Seoul Metropolitan Subway lines, including the AREX and GTX (Great Train Express) services. As Seoul is the nation's capital, all trains bound for Seoul Station are marked as "upbound" (*sanghaengseon*), regardless of where they originate.

In line with the growth of rail transportation, a new Seoul Station was built in January 2004. The old station, a national heritage site, remained vacant after its closure until it was renovated and reopened in 2011 as Culture Station Seoul 284 to serve as a public cultural venue, hosting a variety of exhibitions and performances.

Originally, Seoul Station was designed as a through station rather than a terminal, which meant that it essentially separated the city into eastern and western parts along the railroad. However, initiatives like the construction of underground passages and the conversion of overpasses into pedestrian walkways are reconnecting these areas and restoring urban cohesion around Seoul Station.

Culture Station Seoul 284, originally built as Gyeongseong Station, has been standing for 100 years. Seoul remains the capital of the Republic of Korea and a central rail hub connecting all parts of the nation. In the event of Korean reunification, Seoul Station could become a global gateway, with rail lines already in place to connect directly to Europe. Despite the losses suffered during Japanese colonial rule and the Korean War, the Republic of Korea has achieved remarkable growth. It now possesses both the will and the capacity to preserve its historical heritage. Through Culture Station Seoul 284, which offers a diverse range of cultural programs to the public, Seoul Station will continue to serve not only as a central transportation hub but also as a cultural center and a cornerstone of the nation's century-long railroad history. Culture Station Seoul 284 stands as a vibrant symbol of Korea's cultural renaissance, inviting visitors to explore its rich history and dynamic future at the heart of the nation.

# Korean Chestnuts: Satisfying Hunger, Conveying Love



Photographed by crowdpic.







Chestnuts, a versatile ingredient in Korean cuisine, hold a variety of symbolic meanings. Chestnut trees have grown across the country for centuries, making chestnuts an integral part of Korean life. During holidays or other special occasions, chestnuts are placed on ritual tables to honor one's ancestors. Due to the tree's ability to thrive even in barren soil, its fruit provided energy in the past when other crops were scarce. They are popular in cooking as well. Because of their mild sweetness, chestnuts have often been used in *tteok* (rice cake) and added to sticky rice to make it more nutritious, as well as in steamed chicken or duck dishes. Finely sliced chestnuts have also been added to premium kimchi to enhance the flavor.

Chestnuts hold great significance in the traditional wedding custom known as *pyebaek*, where the bride and groom make their first deep bows to the senior members of the groom's family. During the ceremony, chestnuts and *daechu* (jujube fruits) play an important role as they symbolize fertility. The elders of the family throw chestnuts and *daechu* into an upturned fold of the bride's skirt, wishing for the family's prosperity and healthy children.

*Gunbam* ("roasted chestnuts"), a popular street food during the winter, is a cherished memory for most Koreans. The sight of *gunbam* vendors on the streets has been part and parcel of Korea's

winter landscape. It also brings back personal memories of family happiness when my father came home from work and pulled still-warm roasted chestnuts from his coat pocket.

Recently, chestnuts have become an increasingly popular ingredient in modern desserts. Cafés offer a variety of drinks such as chestnut lattes and chestnut matcha soymilk lattes. New desserts such as roasted chestnut cookies and pies are also being embraced by the younger generation.

With the popularity of the song “Bamyanggaeng” (“Chestnut Confection”) by K-pop star Bibi, it became a sought-after item. The song likens bamyanggaeng to love that is simple and undemanding – just like the chestnut. In this way and others, K-pop has embraced the charm, symbolism, utility, and appetite-satisfying features of this multi-faceted ingredient and reinterpreted them for today.

In Korea, chestnuts are more than just food. They have had important cultural and symbolic significance both in the past and in the present, evoking warm memories and emotions. Each bite is a chance to savor the taste of Korean culture and history. On your next trip to Korea, why not give some chestnut specialties a try?





The bride is catching daechu and chestnuts in her skirt during the paebaek ceremony



# A New Take on Heritage

## Rediscovering the Value of Hanji



While tradition and heritage are often carried forward through academic studies and preservation efforts, creating products from these cultural elements plays a vital part in keeping them alive for future generations. Tool Press, a company that participated in the 2019 Hanji Product Development Project organized by the Korea Craft & Design Foundation (KCDF), exemplifies this approach. It specializes in transforming *hanji*, traditional Korean paper, into products that seamlessly blend artistic expression with commercial appeal.

“The project was incredibly valuable, especially the workshop we attended in Jeonju. Visiting the production site and interacting with the artisans there deepened our understanding of hanji. That experience was truly beneficial to the project,” the company remarked. Since that experience in Jeonju, Tool Press has consistently used Jeonju hanji in its products. It prints custom letterpress illustrations and in-house designs on this hanji to create postcards, posters, wrapping paper, and boxes. Some items are embellished with delicate hand-painted details, adding a “handmade” touch.



The main type of hanji that Tool Press uses for its products is *sunji*, or pure hanji, made entirely from mulberry bark. The naturally intertwined mulberry fibers provide a texture that is both visually appealing and soft to the touch. Sunji is also known for its strength and durability. Paper made by layering multiple sheets of sunji is called *hapji*, which

possesses material properties and aesthetic qualities that differ by the thickness of the layers. While there are countless types of paper collectively known as “hanji,” not all of them are accurately labeled. For example, the common type of paper used for calligraphy, which is made by combining mulberry fibers with shorter fibers, is often



mistakenly called “hanji.” This general-use calligraphy paper, known as *hwaseonji*, originated in China and was introduced to Korea via Japan.

Tool Press founders Na Kyung-in and Na Kyung-soo began their careers in the fine arts in their 20s, later venturing into fashion and film before focusing on

paper. They believe that their interest in paper was almost inevitable. There is an old saying that while silk lasts for 500 years, hanji lasts for over a millennium. Even in China, where the paper was invented, Korean paper was highly prized for its superior quality. With its high density and smooth texture, hanji prevents ink

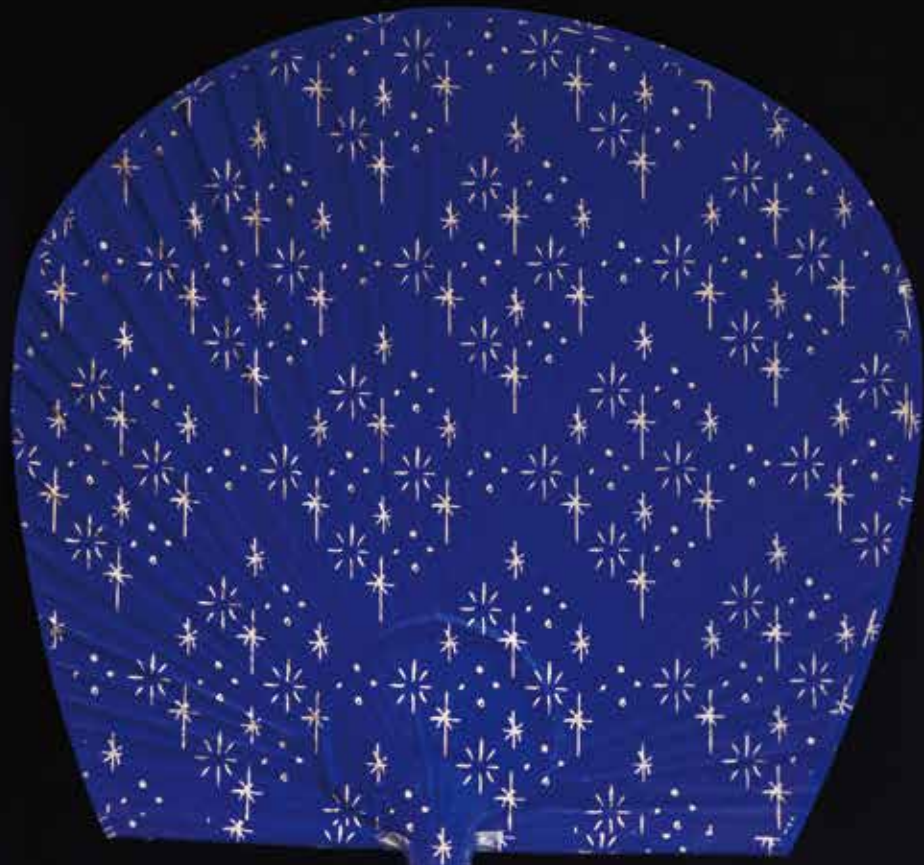
from bleeding, resulting in sharp, clear lines and characters. Today, its value is being rediscovered. For instance, the hanji on which some Buddhist scriptures from the Silla Dynasty were printed in the 8th century has survived for 1,300 years, demonstrating its exceptional durability. The excellent quality of this traditional paper has been recognized internationally; in Italy, for instance, it has been used in conservation projects, including for Leonardo da Vinci's notebooks.

As hanji gains attention for being a natural material with unique textures, patterns, and eco-friendly qualities, Tool Press is showcasing its intuitive beauty to a wider audience through a more flexible and market-oriented approach. Its efforts are sparking curiosity and interest in hanji in Japan and the United States. This approach undoubtedly has an essential part to play in preserving and promoting our traditions and heritage.

In addition to the high-end Jeonju sunji, Tool Press uses a range of widely available hanji products for printing, chosen to suit the specific needs of each project. This selection showcases both traditional craftsmanship and contemporary, mass-produced options, reflecting the contributions of artisans and product developers alike. While there are numerous hanji makers across Korea, many remain relatively unknown. Tool Press is dedicated to exploring lesser-known varieties from these makers and creating innovative products that demonstrate the material's versatility.

The practical application of heritage in everyday life is as crucial as its preservation. In today's world, individual efforts to promote Korean culture have a significant impact. The story of Tool Press serves as an inspiration, encouraging the creation of diverse heritage-related products that make cultural treasures more accessible and relevant in contemporary society.





# Baekje Cultural Festival: Keeping the Legacy Alive



Photographed by Buyeo-gun Office



Korea's long and rich history predates the Joseon Dynasty. Baekje (18 BCE - 660 CE), with its flourishing culture and art, was one of the dynasties that contributed to this extensive history. As one of the three ancient kingdoms, Baekje occupied the southwestern part of the Korean peninsula, which is now known as the Buyeo and Gongju areas. The Baekje Cultural Festival, considered the nation's best-known festival celebrating history and culture, was first held on April 18, 1955. At that time, Korea's traditional culture was declining following the Japanese occupation and the subsequent Korean War. Local leaders in Buyeo worked together to establish an executive committee to organize the "Great Baekje Festival."

Residents raised funds to set up an altar at Busosanseong Fortress and performed a ritual to console the spirits of Seongchung, Heungsu, and Gyebaek, known as the Three Loyal Subjects of late Baekje, as well as the royal court women who threw themselves into the river when Buyeo Palace fell to the allied forces of Silla and Tang China. In 1957, Samchungsa, a shrine dedicated to the Three Loyal Subjects, was established and memorial services were held. In 1965, the festival was renamed the "Baekje Cultural Festival" and held jointly with Gongju County (now Gongju City), making it an established celebration. Initially held in April, the second Great Baekje Festival took place in early October 1956, which remains the time of year it is held today.

Despite its limited scale, the festival bustled with tourists from all over the country because events like it had rarely been seen in Korea before. The 11<sup>th</sup> Baekje Cultural Festival began on October 8, 1965, and lasted for three days. Revolving around Samchungje (a memorial ritual for the Three Loyal Subjects), Gungnyeoje (a memorial ritual for the royal court women), and Eunsan Byeolsingut (a ritual held in Eunsan village), the festival also featured folk games and cultural and sporting events. Korean President Park Chung-hee attended the opening ceremony, which brought national attention to the area. As the first history and culture festival in Korea, the Baekje Cultural Festival has been a source of pride for local residents and has significantly contributed to the development of regional tourism and the local economy by attracting large numbers of tourists.







This year, the 70<sup>th</sup> Baekje Cultural Festival will take place over the nine days of September 28 to October 6, under the theme of “Beautiful Baekje, Shining Sabi” in Baekje Cultural Land, where one of the Baekje palaces was reproduced and a theme park and other facilities were built. Kids’ Zones will be set up to make the festival a family-friendly occasion for fun and relaxation. This year’s festival is the only history and culture festival taking place at the royal palace. In celebration of its nearly seven decades of history, the festival will incorporate advanced technology and new features to further



develop its main programs and enhance the hands-on activities, exhibitions, and heritage walk programs.

In addition to the official opening and closing ceremonies, there will be 38 culturally rich programs across seven areas. Major programs include the Sabicheondo Festa and Jeongdogoyuje, reenacting the procession of King Seong to relocate Baekje's capital to Sabi (today's Buyeo); Baekje Culture Fantasy Parade, incorporating modern elements such as LED costuming and props; Sabigung Sumunjang Gyodaesik, which shows the changing of the Sabi Royal Palace guards; a historical exhibit titled "70 Years of the Baekje Cultural Festival," documenting the festival's history and tradition; and musical performances around the festival theme.

The Baekje Cultural Festival, which began in 1955, is the longest-running history and culture festival in the Republic of Korea. According to *Baekje bongi* ("Main history of Baekje") in *Samguk sagi* (*History of the Three Kingdoms*) and *Joseon gyeongukjeon* (*Administrative Code of the Joseon Dynasty*), Baekje's aesthetic philosophy can be distilled into two four-character idioms: "Geom-i-bul-lu Hwa-i-bul-chi" (儉而不陋 華而不侈), meaning "Frugal but not shabby, Splendid but not extravagant." The festival, inheriting the beauty of Baekje's culture and spirit, aims to reintroduce Sabi Baekje, a highly sophisticated culture that interacted with Japan, China, and possibly nations in Southeast Asia. Well-known in Korea, the Baekje Cultural Festival has its sights on becoming a global event, bringing the beauty of Baekje culture to the world stage.



# Heritage and Ontology:

## Recasting Heritage with New Perspectives for the Future



As of May 17, 2024, the Cultural Heritage Administration (CHA) has been rebranded as the Korea Heritage Service (KHS). This change, aimed at creating an integrated heritage management system, has attracted the attention of leading heritage experts from around the world. Among those who visited Korea to take a closer look was Rodney Harrison, Professor of Heritage Studies at the UCL Institute of Archaeology, whom I met at Seokjojeon Hall in Deoksugung Palace a day before he was to speak at the International Symposium on the K-Heritage System. Professor Harrison is renowned for his research on conserving natural and cultural heritage in the Anthropocene era. He has been a strong advocate for the integrated management of cultural, natural, and intangible heritage in both policy and practice. His insights are, therefore, highly valued by KHS members and others involved in this systemic transformation. During our meeting, Harrison remarked, “Rarely anywhere in the world does the management of cultural, natural, and intangible heritage come together under one umbrella. I therefore applaud







this outstanding innovation.” Why is it important to manage cultural, natural, and intangible heritage together? Harrison believes that dividing heritage management into separate systems and departments can lead to conflicts in management practices and hinder interdepartmental efforts. He emphasizes that conservation requires a collective mindset able to adapt to change; otherwise, valuable time is wasted, and certain heritage values or biodiversity may be compromised.

As an example, Harrison shared his experience with a national park authority responsible for managing both indigenous cultural heritage and biodiversity. Due to

departmental divisions, it was difficult to know how the actions of one department affected the others. He recalled that the national park authority he worked with often ordered the culling of indigenous animals to control populations. However, this directive frequently conflicted with the cultural values of local indigenous staff, who were reluctant to participate in such actions, making it a contentious issue in the region.

Harrison emphasized the importance of creating “some kind of shared context where experts and practitioners from previously siloed fields can learn from each other as they share knowledge and their practices.” Such shared learning, he added, “could potentially lead to all



kinds of innovation.”

Stressing the importance of understanding and bridging the gap between public perceptions and the perspectives of heritage managers, Harrison elaborated, “I think it is important to be open to the whole range of different values and to find ways to encourage not only professionals but others to articulate and champion those values in the places that are managed. We often focus on preserving specific buildings, but in fact, many people visit heritage sites simply to enjoy a day out with their families, often running around in the gardens.” Referring to KHS’s emphasis on the “use” value of heritage, he advised identifying the reasons, other than scientific or educational value, why people want to visit national heritage sites. He also encouraged creating opportunities for the public to participate directly in determining the value of heritage.

Harrison cited climate change as another critical area requiring our thoughtful response. He noted, “Climate

itself is a legacy that our children will inherit because of the way we have chosen to live.” He acknowledged that it is time for us to accept the inevitability of some degree of change and think about how to manage it. Similarly, he suggested, it is time to move beyond traditional notions and redefine heritage, its social role, and its future from a more creative and forward-looking perspective.

Finally, Harrison remarked, “The truth is, we don’t really know what future generations will want or need or what their values will be. What we do know is that those values change all the time.” Since we cannot predict our future needs, would it not be wise to avoid neglecting the present in the name of safeguarding the future? Harrison has strongly advocated for policies that open up more historical sites for public use and enjoyment. Through his extensive research and practice, he conveys that rather than living under the constraints of the past or the uncertainty of the future, we should build our future from the present.



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# KOREAN HERITAGE



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