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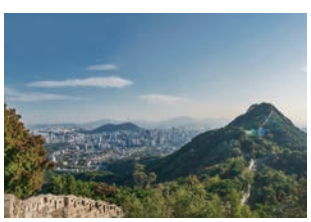
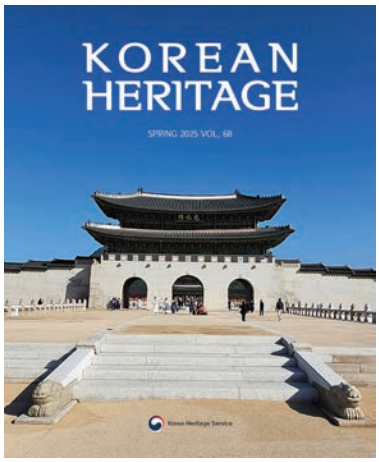
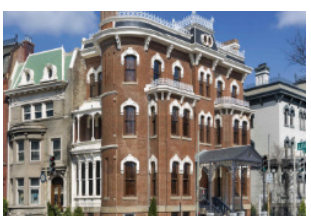


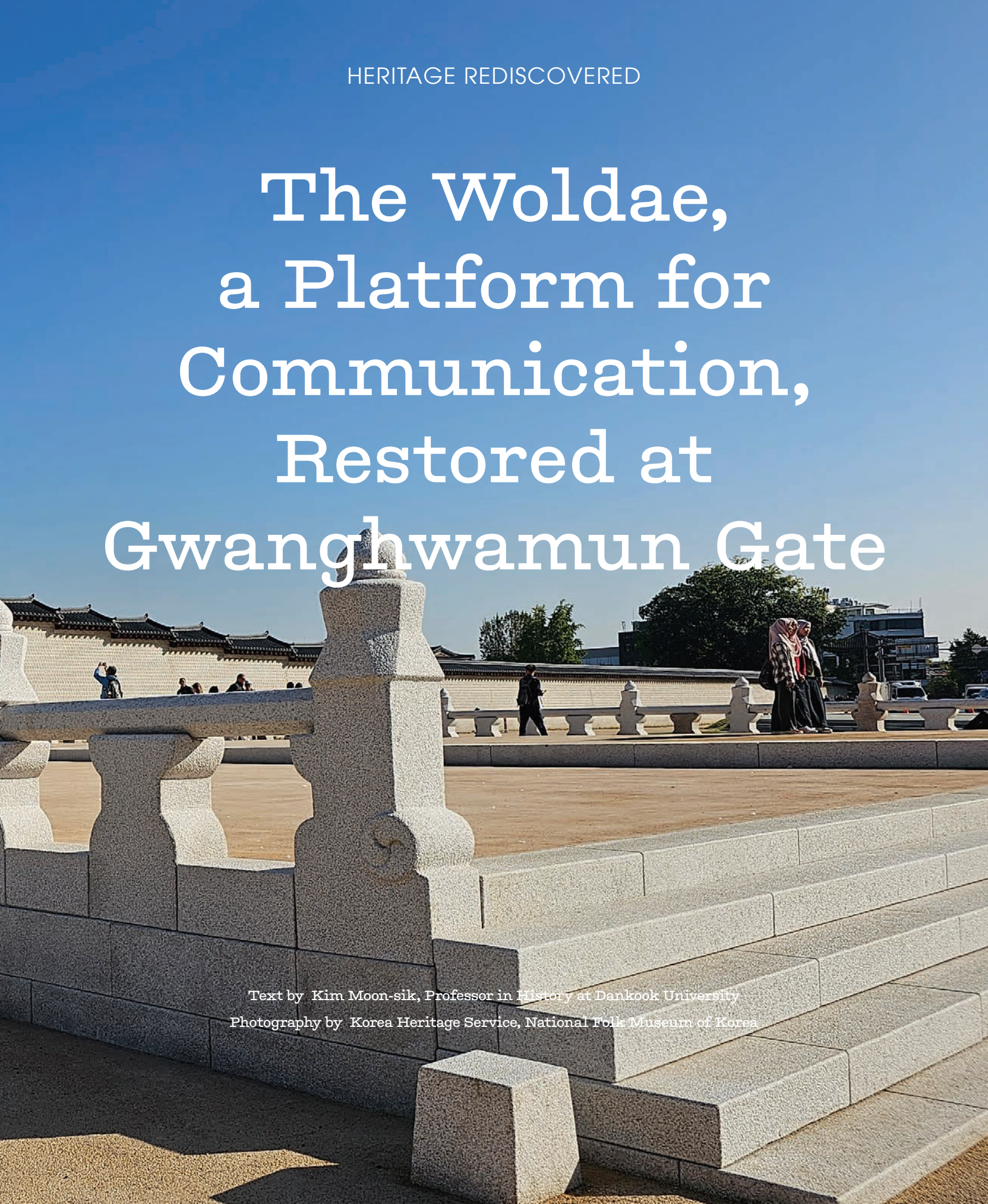


The Woldae at
Gwanghwamun Gate



Joseon kings communicated with their courtiers and other subjects using the *woldae* at Gwanghwamun Gate

The Woldae, a Platform for Communication, Restored at Gwanghwamun Gate



Text by Kim Moon-sik, Professor in History at Dankook University
Photography by Korea Heritage Service, National Folk Museum of Korea

Traditional Korean royal architecture often included a raised platform known as a *woldae* in an effort to elevate the magnificence and dignity of the building. Positioned in front of major palace buildings, woldae were installed at a lower level than the structures they were intended to dignify. A woldae platform could be narrower or wider than the building, and was often paved with *bakseok* (flat stone slabs). Woldae were mostly used as a space for royal ceremonies. Guests and musicians would be seated together on these raised platforms running along the front side of important palace buildings.

Royal Encounters with Court Officials

Seoul is home to five royal palaces dating to the Joseon Dynasty (1392–1910): Gyeongbokgung, Changdeokgung, Changgyeonggung, Gyeonghuigung, and Deoksugung. A woldae was erected at the front gate for each of them, and at some of the major halls as well. One prominent example is the woldae for Gwanghwamun, the front gate of Gyeongbokgung Palace. As the first royal residence built for the Joseon kings, Gyeongbokgung was the main palace of the dynasty. The woldae at its front gate was the only one with railings along its sides. Joseon-era protocols dictated that government officials should come in and out of Gyeongbokgung through the west gate (Yeongchumun), while members of the royal family, court ladies, and other service personnel used the east gate (Geonchunmun). The front gate was reserved for the king during royal processions. Those who had been selected to become queen or crown princess also entered the palace through the front gate on the day of their weddings. Foreign emissaries could be welcomed into the palace through the front gate as well. During these significant state events, the area in and around Gwanghwamun, including its woldae, was lavishly decorated with flowers and enlivened with exuberant music and dance.

Besides serving as the main royal passageway, the woldae of Gwanghwamun Gate provided a space for the king to meet with court officials. The *gwageo* examinations, held to select government officials, were among those occasions. The final stage of these gwageo examinations took place at the palace. While candidates for literary positions sat their tests in front of the throne hall (Geunjeongjeon), aspiring military officers needed an area spacious enough to fully show off their archery and equestrian skills. The area around Gyeonghoeru Pavilion was considered suitable, as was Six Ministries Street (Yukjo geori), a thoroughfare running straight from Gwanghwamun Gate that derived its name from the offices of the ministries flanking it. According to records in *Joseon wangjo sillok* (The Annals of the Joseon Dynasty), there were five occasions when gwageo examinations for military officers were held in front

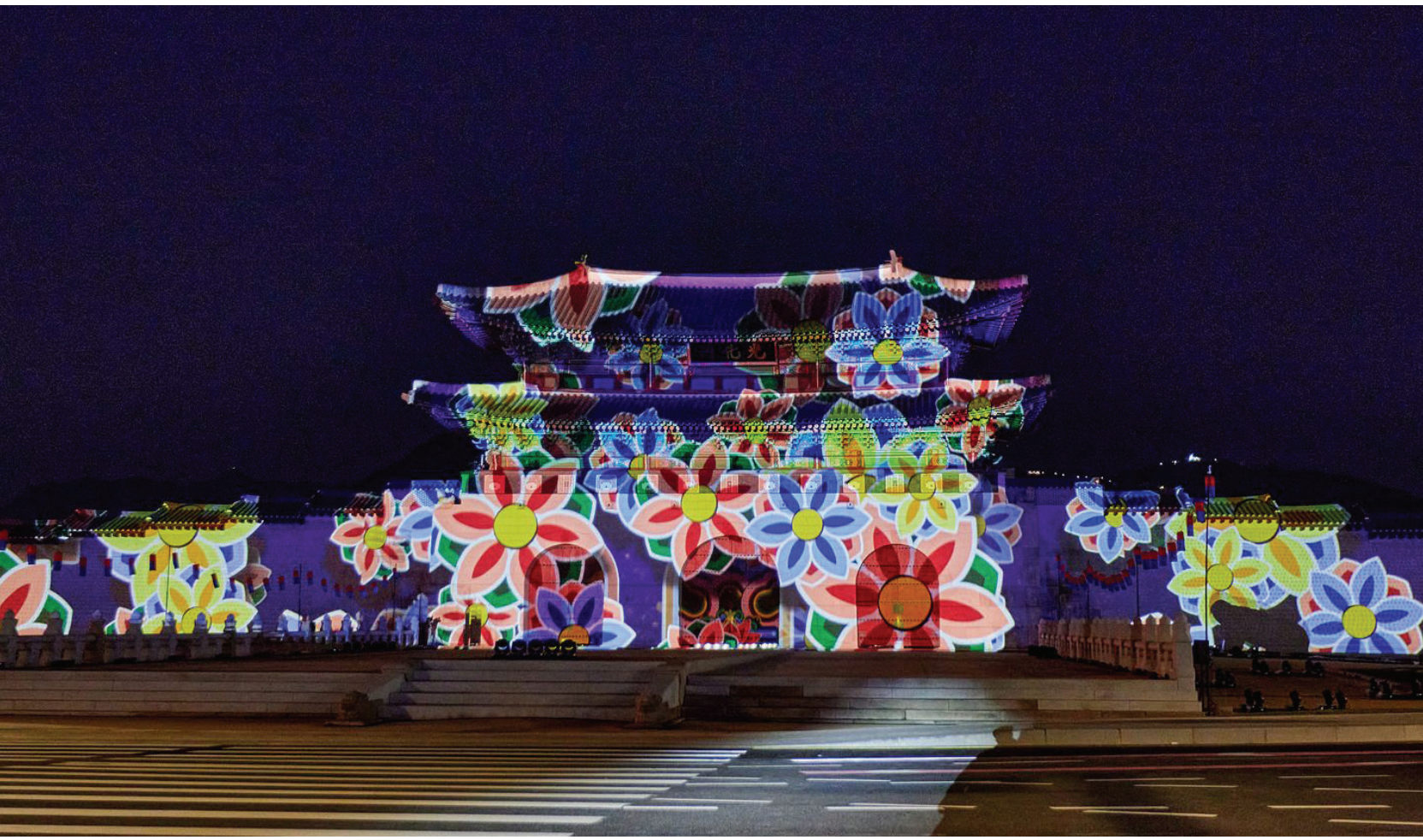
Top
Before the restoration of the woldae

Bottom
After the restoration of the woldae

A reenactment of the Royal Guard Changing Ceremony at the celebration for the completion of the woldae reconstruction

of Gwanghwamun Gate. Each time, the king came out onto the Gwanghwamun woldae to supervise the military tests with flocks of commoners crowding the site to catch a glimpse of the event.

The king would also appear on the Gwanghwamun woldae to watch archery contests between members of the government and test firings of newly developed artillery, events that were often held on Yukjo geori. King Sejo (r. 1455–68) and King Myeongjong (r. 1545–67) are recorded to have observed archery competitions between officials from the vantage point of Gwanghwamun's woldae. King Sejo also took to this raised platform to witness the power of a newly invented cannon. Yukjo geori, the most spacious open area in Seoul, hosted a wide range of state events attended by the king, and no commoners wished to miss the rare opportunity to see such a spectacle.



A media-façade show celebrating the reconstruction of the woldae

Interactions between the King and Commoners

The woldae at Gwanghwamun Gate also offered a means for the king to communicate with his people. During the reign of King Sejong (r. 1418–50), an individual who had been unable to have his complaint heard by other means came to Gwanghwamun Gate and spread out sheets of paper detailing his complaint. The complaint and his suggestions for its redress were so extensive that the papers spread all the way from Gwanghwamun Gate to the Jungchuwon Office (where the southern boundary of the Seoul Government Complex is located today). The complaint was mostly composed of accusations of illegal behavior among local and central government officials. Another complaint was posted on the walls of Gwanghwamun Gate during the reign of King Jungjong (r. 1506–44). It detailed the wrongdoings of four high-

ranking officials from the reign of Jungjong's immediate predecessor, Yeonsangun.

King Sejo made an active use of the woldae to collect public grievances. Feeling compassion for the frustrations of his people when they failed to have their voices heard, King Sejo sent close aids to the raised platform at Gwanghwamun to receive public complaints. When the volume of complaints grew unmanageable, those wishing an audience were made to draw lots to have their opinions recorded by officials and reported to the king. Following the spirit of this 15th-century practice of communication on the woldae, King Yeongjo (r. 1724–76) and King Jeongjo (r. 1776–1800) embraced a policy of actively listening to the opinions and suggestions of people who submitted their complaints in writing (Sangeon) or verbally (Gyeokjaeng) along the route of a royal procession.

Suffering and Rehabilitation

Gyeongbokgung's status as the main Joseon palace was transferred to Changdeokgung Palace in the late 16th century when most of its wooden structures were destroyed during the Japanese invasions of 1592–98. The woldae at Gwanghwamun Gate consequently lost its function of connecting the monarch with his subjects. The ruins of Gyeongbokgung had been restored in 1868 in the fifth year of the reign of King Gojong. At the time, the woldae at the front gate was reconstructed as a platform 29.7 meters wide and 48.7 meters long with a seven-meter royal passage in its median.

The story of the Gwanghwamun woldae faced further twists, however. One of the streetcar lines established by Imperial Japan after its annexation of Korea in 1910 split to the east and west at Gwanghwamun, severely damaging the gate's raised platform. The remains of the woldae were buried entirely in the 1960s when an east-west road for motorized traffic was constructed over the colonial-era rail route in front of the gate. This long-buried platform has recently been reconstructed. Launched in September 2022 under the leadership of the Korea Heritage Service, the reconstruction project was completed in October 2023. Original stone elements excavated from the site were reused for the reconstruction to the greatest possible extent.

The woldae project was a capstone for the Gwanghwamun reconstruction project that began in 2006, completing the restoration of the central axis of the palace. With the reconstruction of the woldae, the excavated sites of two Joseon-era offices, the State Council (Uijeongbu) and

the Three Military Offices (Samgunbu) located to either side of the platform, have now been made accessible to each other on foot.

To the north of the woldae is the name plaque of the gate, bearing the characters gwang-hwa-mun, with *gwanghwa* (光化) meaning "illuminating the nation with the king's virtue." Beyond it can be seen successive layers of traditional Korean royal buildings. When looking toward the south of the woldae, Gwanghwamun Square and the modern thoroughfare known as Sejong-daero are bracketed by high-rise buildings. This neighborhood in central Seoul where tradition coexists alongside modernity was long a space for communication between the king and his subjects during the Joseon Dynasty. The reconstruction of its woldae will hopefully bring back the spirit of dialogue and unity to today's Korean politics, illuminating Korean society through greater virtue.

Gwanghwamun Gate and its woldae are shown in the background of the painting *New Year's Shopping*, 1921, by the Scottish artist Elizabeth Keith (photo credit: National Folk Museum of Korea)

A Century of Evolution of Korean Food

From Korean-style Feasts of the Joseon royal court to Today's Global K-Food

Text by Joo Young-ha, Professor in Folklife Studies at the Graduate School of Korean Studies of the Academy of Korean Studies

Photography by National Folk Museum of Korea, Shutterstock, Clipartkorea

If we could go back in time 100 years to the early decades of the 20th century, we would see a Korea that lagged far behind the West in terms of industrialization and modernization. Korean food, however, could not be considered backward in the least. Through the five centuries of the Joseon Dynasty (1392–1910), Koreans had made the most of the seasonal ingredients they could harvest from their local environment and used them to develop a rich and diverse culinary culture. The Joseon royal court was treating its party guests to a selected sequence of foods and drinks similar to a Western full-course banquet—centuries before such traditions emerged in Europe in the 19th century. Dishes served at royal feasts featured sophisticated cooking techniques and delicate flavors, and the events overflowed with stately formality and dignity. Everyday meals for the Joseon royal family were structured around traditional medical practices for preventing disease. Starting in the 17th century, many royal culinary traditions spread to the aristocracy and commoners as well.

Left
A table with traditional Korean snacks (photo credit: Korea House)

Right
Jeomsim ("lunch") by the 18th-century genre painter Kim Hong-do (photo credit: National Museum of Korea)

Emergence of Commercial Restaurants

The culinary traditions of the Joseon era underwent a transformation with the annexation of Korea by Imperial Japan in 1910. In the early 20th century, many city dwellers in Western Europe, North America, and Japan were enjoying the fruits of industrialization in their diets, with an abundance of mass-produced foods available for the table. In contrast, their Korean counterparts were sticking with traditional home-made meals of rice, soup, and *banchan* (side dishes). Unlike their ancestors, however, they had the option to eat out at commercial restaurants as well. Koreans in such cities as Seoul, Busan, Pyeongyang, Incheon, and Daegu were able to go out to the Korean, Chinese, and Japanese restaurants that began springing up in big cities in the early 20th century. Koreans enjoyed a variety of traditional dishes at restaurants, including *seolleongtang* (ox bone soup), *bibimbap* (rice mixed with vegetables and beef), *bulgogi* (grilled marinated beef), *pyeonsu* (rectangle-shaped dumplings), and *naengmyeon* (chilled buckwheat noodles). Chinese-run restaurants in Korea also gained great popularity. In the 1920s, urban families in Korea picked up the practice of making *japchae* for festive occasions by mixing glass noodles with stir-fried julienned vegetables and meat and then seasoning it with traditional soy sauce.

Korea was liberated with the surrender of Imperial Japan to the Allied Forces on August 15, 1945. However, the southern half of the Korean Peninsula was subjected to a temporary U.S. military occupation. Facing severe rice shortages, the United States Army Military Government in Korea banned the use of rice for anything other than consumption as a

A traditional Korean meal composed of rice, soup, and side dishes

staple food. The main culprits perceived by the U.S. occupation government as responsible for the shortages were *tteok* (rice cakes) and the traditional rice brew known as *makgeolli*. The regulations banning the production of these culturally important foods were met with understandably vehement opposition from the public and ultimately failed to come into force.

The establishment of an independent government in South Korea on August 15, 1948 was followed quickly by the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950. This three-year conflict spanning the peninsula had a devastating impact on the Korean diet. Even during the war, however, Koreans maintained the annual *kimchi*-making practice of *kimjang* wherever they could. Families who were able to remain in their homes carried on the tradition of making large quantities of kimchi in November or December, at the start of winter. They kept this kimchi in earthen jars buried underground and sustained themselves for the next four or five months. It is reported that some of the U.N. soldiers dispatched to Korea were taken by surprise seeing Koreans taking food from out of the ground. This practice of burying kimchi jars to regulate temperature continued until the early 2000s when refrigerators specifically designed to store kimchi became widespread. In spring, Korean households with an excess of kimchi from the last year's kimjang would commonly share it with their neighbors.

1
Japchae is made by stir-frying glass noodles and vegetables and seasoning it with soy sauce

2
Koreans make large quantities of kimchi in early winter to last until spring

3
Korean food offering a fine-dining experience (photo credit: Korea House)

Stacks of Tteok as a Festive Food

Korean society was rapidly changing under a governmental development policy that was introduced in the mid-1960s. Farmers moved to cities where they found work as paid laborers. With people concentrating in the cities, a new form of urban dwelling emerged where three generations of a family shared a small home. These urban migrants brought with them the culinary practices they learned in the countryside. For one, they held feasts at home to celebrate such important life events as one-year birthdays, wedding parties, and sixtieth birthdays. When a celebratory meal was being planned, relatives and neighbors chipped in by bringing over dishes or lending a helping hand in the kitchen. Arguably the most important ingredient for these celebratory feasts was tteok. Rice was brought to a neighborhood mill and ground into powder. Male members of the family would pound rice dough with a wood mallet in the small courtyard of the house to make *injeolmi* (a form of chewy rice cake), while women would prepare *baekseolgi* by steaming rice powder. These rice cakes were stacked as high as 30 to 50 centimeters on a platter as a reflection of the jubilant spirit of the event.

Tteok, or rice cakes, are an essential at a Korean festive meal

Birth of New Dishes

As a way to navigate the issue of rice shortages, the South Korean government introduced a regulation in 1966 requiring breweries to make makgeolli not from rice, but from wheat flour, large quantities of which were being provided by the United States in aid. The only available makgeolli soon became wheat flour-based types, which fueled the gradual decline in the popularity of this traditional beverage. With subsequent improvements in rice production, this regulation was lifted in 1977 and rice was again allowed in the making of makgeolli. However, most working-class people had already developed a strong taste for a diluted form of *soju*, a cheap alcoholic beverage with a higher alcohol content than makgeolli. However, makgeolli maintained its relevance within the traditional Korean diet, and experienced a resurgence in recent decades. From the start of the 2010s, experiments across the country sought to revive and reinterpret the rice-based makgeolli from before the 1960s. Now, the many types of this traditional milky rice brew are being made that appeal to different demographics within Korean society.

The mid-1980s saw a mushrooming of restaurants specializing in new forms of Korean food. They began serving what are now well-known Korean dishes such as *bossam* (boiled pork accompanied by kimchi), *samgyeopsal* (grilled pork belly), *chimaek* (a pairing of fried chicken and beer), *gimbap* (seaweed rice rolls), and *tteokbokki* (rice cakes simmered in red chili paste

1
Gul bossam, a pork dish served with kimchi and sometimes fresh oysters

2
Newly developed variants of the traditional Korean beverage makgeolli are drawing attention in today's South Korea

3
Soju, along with the milky rice beer makgeolli, is a beloved traditional alcoholic drink in South Korea


1


2


3

sauce), garnering great popularity. These newly invented dishes represented a dietary trend that began around the democratic transition of Korean society in 1987 toward rediscovering, reinterpreting, and reinventing traditional Korean cuisine.

Korean Food for the World

In a travel diary published after an 1884 journey through the southern portions of Korea, the U.S. navy officer George Clayton Foulk shared his experience of eating *goldongmyeon* (buckwheat noodles mixed with vegetables and seasoned with traditional soy sauce) during a visit to Jeonju. He considered the dish to be delicious, comparing it to Italian vermicelli. This 19th-century anecdote was an early hint at the international appeal of traditional Korean food.

The evolution of Korean food over the past 100 years mirrors the tumultuous modern history of South Korea, which is filled with stories of colonial rule, civil war, breakneck economic development, democratization, and globalization. Classic Korean dishes narrowly averted extinction, underwent a variety of adaptations, and embraced new interpretations across the ups and downs of modern history to eventually become established as a distinctive culinary tradition with a strong global appeal. It seems a certainty that Korean food will sustain this process of evolution well into the future.

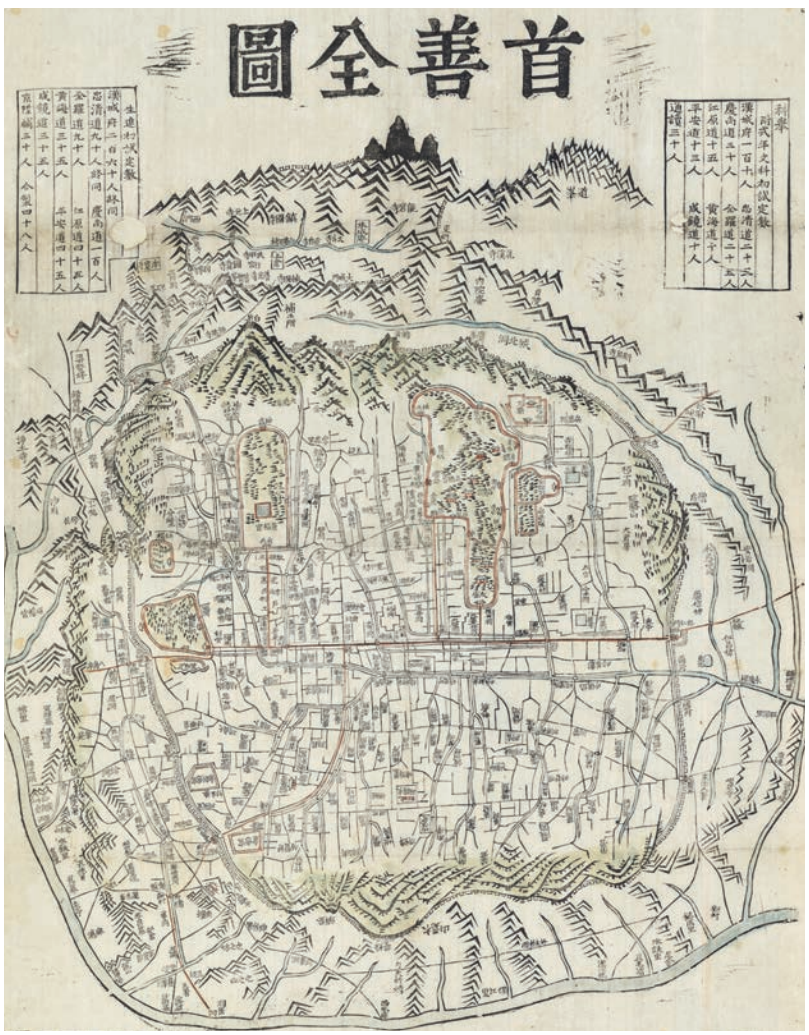
Korean food is evolving as it absorbs influences from other culinary traditions

Preparations Underway to Nominate ‘Capital Fortifications of Hanyang’ for the World Heritage List

Text by Kim Young-soo, Research Professor at the Institute of Seoul Studies of University of Seoul
Photography by Seoul Metropolitan Government, Kim Young-soo

Panoramic view of Baekaksan Mountain section

In collaboration with the pertinent local governments in Seoul, Gyeonggi-do Province, and Goyang City, the Korea Heritage Service is preparing a nomination for inscription on UNESCO's World Heritage List of three fortresses built for the fortification of Hanyang (the former name of Seoul, which was built to serve as the capital of the Joseon Dynasty (1392–1910)). This cultural property encompassing three areas protected by fortress walls known respectively as Hanyangdoseong, Bukhansanseong, and Tangchundaeseong Fortresses has been named "Capital Fortifications of Hanyang." UNESCO World Heritage is a designation given to properties that have been evaluated as having extraordinary significance for all humanity (referred to as 'Outstanding Universal Value' in UNESCO's classification) and therefore merit collective protection efforts by all humanity. For a site to be nominated for inscription on the World Heritage List, it should be considered to show the potential to



Suseonjeondo
(photo credit: Seoul Museum of History)

demonstrate this Outstanding Universal Value, satisfy the conditions for authenticity and integrity, and be equipped with a sufficient management and conservation system. Sites seeking inscription must go through a range of domestic and international steps before they are entered onto the World Heritage List.

Procedural Steps for World Heritage Inscription

In South Korea, the domestic side of the World Heritage inscription process is executed in accordance with the Korea Heritage Service's Rules on Nominations for World Heritage Inscription. According to these regulations, a site meeting the above-mentioned requirements is first deliberated by the World Heritage Sub-committee of the Cultural Heritage Committee, an advisory group to the Korea Heritage Service, and then enters the Tentative List of South Korea. Sites on South Korea's Tentative List are examined to be selected as Priority Candidates, the domestic qualification required for the submission to the World Heritage Centre of a request for a preparatory examination known as a Preliminary Assessment. Priority Candidates undergo further domestic procedures to earn first Prospective Nominee and then Nominee status. Eventually, a nomination dossier is submitted to the World Heritage Centre. After the submission of a nomination dossier, the site is subjected to the international World Heritage inscription process based on evaluations performed by advisory bodies to the World Heritage Committee (including the International Council on Monuments and Sites and the International Union for Conservation of Nature).

Among the steps that need to be completed before inscription on the World Heritage List, Preliminary Assessment was introduced internationally in 2021 aiming to improve the inscription process. Preliminary Assessment is being implemented on a voluntary basis from 2023, but it will then become mandatory for all sites to be examined by the World Heritage Committee from 2028. This additional step in the World Heritage inscription process is intended to enhance the quality of nomination dossiers and strengthen communication with the submitting countries. Preliminary Assessment is intended to help the submitting country provide organized information as relates to the description and significance of a nominated site and to reduce the waste of resources on ill-prepared nominations. Through Preliminary Assessment, a World Heritage nomination gains an opportunity to receive a systematic preparatory review and enhance its chances of successful inscription.

View of Namsan Mountain

A Preparatory Review of 'Capital Fortifications of Hanyang'

The Capital Fortifications of Hanyang were chosen as a Priority Candidate in December 2022. In January 2023, the Tentative List of South Korea was updated to reflect adjustments to the name and composition of the property. The Capital Fortifications of Hanyang became a Prospective Nominee in April 2023 and a request for a Preliminary Assessment was sent to the World Heritage Centre in September of the same year. Its Preliminary Assessment was carried out by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) over the following 12 months. After this year-long review involving a desk review, requests for additional information, and video conferences, ICOMOS released a report on the results of its Preliminary Assessment in October of 2024. ICOMOS determined that the Capital Fortifications of Hanyang have the potential to justify its Outstanding Universal Value and meet the conditions of authenticity and integrity while suggesting recommendations on the need for additional comparative analysis and enhancements to its conservation and management system. In cooperation with the pertinent local governments, the Korea Heritage Service is planning to reflect the results of this Preliminary Assessment in the subsequent steps, including selecting a Nominee and preparing a nomination dossier.

Characteristics and Significance

The three fortresses constituting the Capital Fortifications of Hanyang—Hanyangdoseong, Bukhansanseong, and Tangchundaeseong—are found in two different administrative jurisdictions, namely Seoul and Gyeonggi-do Province's Goyang City. Hanyangdoseong was constructed to provide a wall encircling the perimeter of the city (then known as Hanyang), while Bukhansanseong provided an area where evacuees could take emergency shelter. The final element, Tangchundaeseong, provided another wall linking the wall around the capital with that of the emergency shelter area. Hanyangdoseong was built around what is now north-central Seoul. It is fundamentally a series of walls meandering between four mountains surrounding a basin to the north of the Hangang River (Baegaksan Mountain to the north, Naksan Mountain to the east, Mongmyeoksan Mountain to the south, and Inwangsan Mountain to the west). These large-scale capital walls run a total of 18.6 kilometers across diverse topographical features such as mountainous stretches, hilly areas, and flat land. Some sections were demolished or partly damaged due to events such as road construction, but overall they maintain their authentic state well. Bukhansanseong was constructed along the ridges of Bukhansan Mountain at the northern edge of Seoul to provide an area for people to take shelter. This 11.6-kilometer-long fortress wall straddling the jurisdictions of Seoul and Goyang City remains in good condition across all its sections. The walls of Tangchundaeseong, which links the walls of Hanyangdoseong to those of Bukhansanseong, falls entirely within the borders of Seoul. This 7.5-kilometer-long barrier, including sections composed of natural rock formations, remains in an intact state.

Panoramic view of Inwangsan Mountain section

Citizens making pilgrimages to Seoul City Wall

The Capital Fortifications of Hanyang are fundamentally the defensive system for the capital of the Joseon Dynasty. When the 14th-century capital walls were supplemented with two more fortified areas in the 18th century, respectively providing an area for sheltering in times of war and a protected passage between the two, the overall property became essentially one grand structure in the form of connected beads. The respective functions assigned to the three fortified areas and their overall form was intended to offer more effective defense and allow the evacuation of Hanyang. Fortresses intended to provide shelter to key populations in pre-modern East Asia were mostly constructed far away from the walls of the city they served. This left people and their property vulnerable to attack as they made their way to shelter in times of emergency. The Capital Fortifications of Hanyang were specifically designed to protect people along the evacuation route through its connecting fortress walls. It also had the capacity to store large stocks of food and weaponry in its shelter area. The Capital Fortifications of Hanyang allowed the evacuation of large numbers of people to a safe location while supporting preparations for prolonged periods of conflict. Another important aspect of the Capital Fortifications of Hanyang should be noted: The property demonstrates characteristic features of one of the prevalent East Asian fortification types (known in Korean as a *pogok*-style fortress, essentially fortress walls encircling a valley), while also inheriting

major characteristics of capital fortifications from earlier periods on the Korean Peninsula. While preserving tradition, the Capital Fortifications of Hanyang also demonstrate the creative birth of a new form of capital fortifications integrating three different components, namely a capital fortress, fortified shelter area, and a connecting fortified passageway. In addition, the Capital Fortifications of Hanyang offer an excellent manifestation of the uses of topographic features shared by fortifications across the Korean Peninsula. Walls for the Capital Fortifications of Hanyang were constructed along mountain ridges, making the most of natural features in a given environment such as bedrock, valleys, and differing altitudes. The way in which the property took advantage of the surrounding topography showcases Korean fortress construction.

As shown above, the Capital Fortifications of Hanyang manifest Korean fortress construction traditions, particularly its history of capital fortifications. At the same time, the property is set apart from other city fortifications in East Asia in its form, purpose, and system of operation. The Capital Fortifications of Hanyang offer exceptional testimony to the completion of a creative form of capital fortifications in 18th-century Korea.

Cultural Festival in Naksan Mountain

Hopes Raised for Inscription

Properties inscribed on the World Heritage List must be assets with a significance that goes beyond the limits of their location and era and that consequently merit concerted protective efforts by all humanity. World Heritage sites should be transmitted to future generations to ensure that they can appreciate them as well. For this purpose, their Outstanding Universal Value must be protected. For this property here, efforts at protecting its cultural and historic significance need to be accompanied by systematic research. In addition, it is also essential to ensure engagement with the appreciation and conservation of the property by a diverse range of stakeholders, including heritage managers, local residents, and experts. It is hoped that the efforts made so far and those to come in the near future in various areas of the conservation and management of the Capital Fortifications of Hanyang property will translate into the property's successful entry onto the World Heritage List.

Ox horn Veneer Provides a Painting Surface in Hwagak

Lee Jae-man, Master of Hwagak

Text by Lee Chi-heon, Transmission Support Department of the Korea Heritage Agency
Photography by Seo Heon-gang, heritage photographer; copyright held by the Korea Heritage Agency

Ox horn Painting and Woodwork

There is a time-honored handcraft in Korea known as *hwagak* in which ox horns are ground into sheets so thin they become translucent. Their back sides are painted to allow colored motifs to show through to the surface, and then the sheets are glued into a wooden frame. This ox horn inlay traces its origins to a similar tradition using tortoise shells in Tang Dynasty China (618–907). This craft was transmitted to the Korean Peninsula during the Unified Silla (668–935) era when Korea was one of China's major trade partners, and persisted through the Goryeo period (918–1392) and into the Joseon Dynasty (1392–1910). As tortoise shells became difficult to source, using ox horns in their place gained popularity in the 18th century. There are no surviving examples of ox horn inlay from before this time, which seems at least partly attributable to the vulnerability of the material to humidity. Still, the starting date of hwagak is estimated to be before the 18th century. Great credit for the continued transmission of this traditional craft should go to Eum Il-cheon, who dedicated his life to working with both tortoise shells and ox horns following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather. Eum began to concentrate on hwagak in the early 1920s by studying both the theoretical and practical aspects of the craft. He remained active in the field until his final days in the early 1970s. Eum's skills were handed down to Lee Jae-man, who is now carrying the responsibility for transmitting the hwagak tradition as the state-recognized holder of this National Intangible Cultural Heritage.

A hwagak box

A close-up view of the hwagak box

1
Lee Jae-man with an ox horn, the key ingredient of hwagak

2
Designs are drawn in ink on a tracing paper

3
Motifs drawn onto ox horn sheets are colored

4
The work has been completed

Hwagak Skills and Tools

The crafting of hwagak consists of four phases: conditioning and shaping ox horns and bones; crafting the wood frame to decorate; painting on the reverse side of the ox-horn sheets, gluing them to the wood frame and lacquering the undecorated surface areas of the frame; and producing the metal hinges, handles, and other fittings. Besides ox horn, ox bones are used to fill in the gaps between the horn sheets glued to the surface. Other materials needed for hwagak include a colorful array of pigments to paint the horn sheets, traditional glue made from the swim bladders of fish to attach them to the surface, lacquer for the remaining surface, and a polish to smooth it. Traditional tools used in hwagak include a *teultop* (frame saw), *siltop* (scroll saw), *gyeseontop* (marking saw), *gwagi* (wood plane), *galgikal* (smoothing knife), *jogakdo* (carving chisel), *gawi* (scissors), *pyeongjul* (flat file), *beoljul* (half-round file), *geumhwan* (metal ring), *indu* (soldering iron), *darimi* (iron), *apchakgi* (press), *nureumsoepan* (pressing board), *nureumshoe* (metal weight), *hwangsaejipge* (long-nosed pliers), *ppulbangmangiteul* (horn mallet frame), *pungno* (forge), *seoksoe* (grill), *punggu* (bellows), and *jakdu* (lever cutter).

Lee Jae-man

Lee Jae-man was born in 1953 to Lee Geum-dal and Jeong Gyeong-hui, two artisans specializing respectively in carpentry and embroidery. Lee's grandfather was also an artisan, dedicating his career to traditional painting of architectural elements (*dancheong*). He spent his childhood in the Seongsu neighborhood of Seoul alongside his three older brothers and older sister. A little over a year after his birth, Lee suffered an unfortunate accident when he burned his hands on a brazier. He ended up losing one or two joints on most of his fingers due to a lack of medical treatment. However, this physical challenge did not prevent his artistic talent from blossoming. Lee excelled in painting and earned several prizes in national contests as an elementary school student. He lost his father at the age of three and was raised under the sole care of his mother. At age 16, a friend introduced him to Eum Il-cheon during a chance visit to Eum's workshop. He was soon accepted as Eum's apprentice. It was the starting point of his lifelong passion for ox horn inlaying.

Lee had to remain in school while learning hwagak at Eum's workshop. Life was not easy for Lee, particularly at such a tender age. He did not actually develop an immediate fascination by working with ox horn. For the first one and a half years, he was often sidetracked by drawing

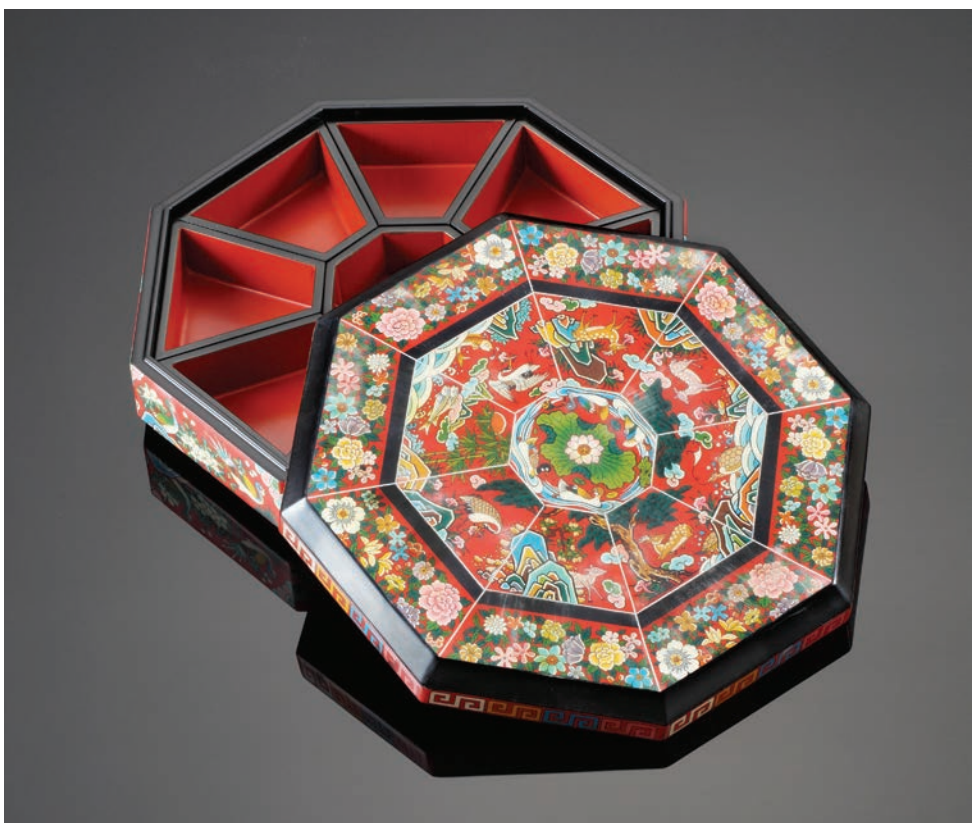
cartoon strips and painting theater signboards. This wandering period actually taught him the value of hwagak. The more Lee spent his time and energy on other activities, the stronger he felt about the importance of inlaid ox horn. Soon, Lee embraced hwagak as his calling and dedicated himself to the teachings of his mentor Eum Il-cheon. Tragically, Eum suffered paralysis in his arms and legs after a fire in his workshop and had to close it in the early 1970s. After the closure of Eum's workshop, Lee began to work on his own.

In 1971, he began cooperating with the researcher Jeong Myeong-ho, who had frequented Eum's workshop, to help expand the theoretical understanding of hwagak. Following Jeong's request, Lee produced craftworks at Jeong's house to support his studies. In 1984, Lee took on a leadership role in the hwagak segment of the National Intangible Cultural Heritage Transmission Center, a government-sponsored institution consisting of multiple workshops specializing in different state-designated traditional performances and crafts. He also served as a lecturer in hwagak at the Traditional Korean Craft School, an educational institution operated by the Korea Heritage Agency. While passionately conducting these activities for the transmission of hwagak, Lee has never lost sight of advancing his own art. He has crafted a prolific array of works, many of which have won prizes at diverse traditional craft contests, including at the Korea Traditional Craft Festival.

Traditional Craftworks as Everyday Objects

In 1996 hwagak was designated National Intangible Cultural Heritage, with Lee Jae-man as the recognized primary holder of the skill. Granted this responsibility for transmitting hwagak, Lee Jae-man has been proactive in making use of ox horn inlaying to develop cultural products and innovative everyday items. This shows his strong interest in bringing traditional craft deeper into people's lives. Returning traditional craftworks to their former status as objects for everyday use seems like an ideal means to help them survive and thrive far into the future.

A foldable mirror
decorated with hwagak



A hwagak gujeolpan
(nine-section plate)

Beyond Seoul: The Hidden Treasures of Korea's Traditional Markets

Text by Izabela Sikorska, Student of Visual Communication Design, Graduate School of Hongik University

Photography by Izabela Sikorska, Lee Seung-yong, Shutterstock, Clipartkorea

Traditional Korean markets popular among domestic visitors and international tourists

Jeontong sijang, or traditional markets as they are commonly known to many international visitors, have long been a central part of Korean culture. These busy gathering places, filled with the chatter of locals and tourists alike, entice all with the scents of freshly prepared dishes served straight from the counters lining the alleyways. For many, a visit to Seoul would be incomplete without grabbing a quick snack at Gwangjang Market or enjoying dinner at Namdaemun Market. Similarly in Busan, Gukje ("international") Market is just as indispensable for those looking to experience the city's vibrant food culture.

Yet, what often goes unnoticed are their counterparts which lie just beyond the city limits. Away from the lively markets of Korean metropolises are the many villages and towns of the countryside, where recipes passed through generations as well as regional specialties await discovery. What many may not realize is that Jeontong sijang are not confined to major cities; they thrive across Korea. In the countryside, they often operate on specific days of the month or, like *oiljjang*, open every five days. Even on their off days, it's not uncommon to find a few vendors nearby still serving snacks or lunch to locals, keeping the market as the center of community life.

Rural traditional markets offer a unique blend of history and modernity, featuring everything from classic dishes to more contemporary treats. *Jeon*, a crispy, savory pancake made with various combinations of green onions, seafood, kimchi, and more, is a staple nationwide. Similarly, *eomuk*, a fishcake especially enjoyed during winter, is served steaming hot with savory broth poured into a paper cup, making it a popular remedy for the season's chills. Another unbeatable winter treat is *hotteok*, a griddled, yeast-leavened dough with brown sugar filling, often loaded with sunflower, sesame and pumpkin seeds. at the height of summer, Naengmyeon becomes the dish of choice. The chilled buckwheat noodles served in an icy broth or mixed with a spicy sauce are a refreshing antidote to Korea's humidity.

1. Namdaemun Market, the most visited traditional market in South Korea
2. *Pajeon* made with seafood, green onions, etc. with makgeolli
3. Eomuk
4. Hotteok
5. Naengmyeon, buckwheat noodles served in a chilled meat broth

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Various types of tteok

Dishes like these can be found across the whole country, and are available in both big cities and small towns. What makes the smaller countryside markets stand out, however, are the regional specialties that define them. Each market has its own signature flavor, shaped by local ingredients and culinary traditions. These are the places where *tteok* (rice cakes) is softer, squid is plumper, and crabs are sweeter, each bite a reminder that some flavors simply belong to their land.

One doesn't have to look far to stumble upon a rewarding meal. Icheon, in Gyeonggi-do Province, lies 50km away from Seoul but offers specialties unlike those available in the capital. It is primarily known for its rice production, making it the perfect place to enjoy *tteokguk*, made with fresh grains. Typically cooked with beef or ox bone stock and paired with thinly sliced oval-shaped *garae-tteok*, tteokguk is a hearty and comforting dish. Other rice-based delicacies include *baekseolgi*, a soft and lightly sweet steamed rice cake and *jeolpyeon*, a beautifully patterned tteok. Whether enjoyed as a simple steamed treat or part of a festive dish, tteok in Icheon is a must-try.

Seafood defines coastal markets, each reflecting the distinct character of its surrounding waters. Sokcho, located on the east coast, is renowned for its fresh squid and pollock, both of which play a central role in the region's cuisine. Market stalls here overflow with the day's catches prepared in a multitude of ways. A standout dish is *ojingeo sundae*, squid stuffed with glass noodles, vegetables, and pork, then steamed or grilled. Another local staple is dried pollock soup, a mild yet nourishing dish.

Further west, Taean, situated along the West Sea, is best known for its blue crabs, harvested from shallow coastal waters. Markets here sell them live or prepared in dishes that highlight their naturally sweet flavor. *Ganjang gejang*, a dish of soy sauce-marinated raw crab, is a best-seller. For those seeking something heartier, Taean offers *kkotge jjigae*, a robust crab stew with vegetables, and a rich, spicy broth.

Beyond crabs, Taean's markets offer freshly harvested shellfish, including clams, scallops, and oysters. Many vendors grill them on the spot, serving them with melted butter, cheese, or spicy sauces. However, seafood isn't the only specialty here, as Taean is also one of Korea's largest peanut-producing regions. The local peanuts are smaller than imported ones but far more fragrant and flavorful, making them a key ingredient in regional treats. *Ttangkong gangjeong*, crispy peanut snacks coated in sweet syrup, are a popular market find, as is peanut *makgeolli*, infused with Taean peanuts that create a nutty, slightly creamy twist.

Ojingeo sundae, a dish made by stuffing a whole squid with glass noodles, vegetables, and pork

Shellfish for sale at a fish market

Inland, Cheongsong offers an entirely different marketplace experience. Unlike its urban counterparts, Cheongsong's traditional markets move at a slower pace. Known for its delicious apples and pure mineral water, this quiet region is a sharp contrast to the bustling seafood markets along the coast. The cool climate and mineral-rich soil of Cheongsong produce some of Korea's most famous and tasty apples. Lauded for their natural sweetness, they are used to make many market specialties, from fresh apple tea simmered with cinnamon and

honey, through a variety of jeon and jjigae, all the way to apple-infused makgeolli, where their tartness enhances the smoothness of the beverage.

Beyond its famed apples, Cheongsong is also celebrated for its high-quality *hanwoo* beef. Unlike mass-produced alternatives, Cheongsong's hanwoo is leaner yet richer in flavor, making it highly prized in traditional dishes. A standout market dish is *hanwoo sogalbi jjim*, braised beef short ribs slow-cooked in a savoury soy-based sauce.

Markets like those in Icheon, Taean, and Cheongsong with their deep ties to local traditions and cooking methods, are spaces where culinary heritage is conserved. Here recipes are allowed to evolve while staying rooted in tradition. Every dish, from a steaming bowl of tteokguk to a freshly steamed crab, carries with it the essence of its surroundings, shaped by the seasons and the people who have perfected their craft over decades.

For those who seek a deeper connection to Korean food culture, these markets offer an experience that is both authentic and unforgettable. A reminder that the heart of Korean cuisine beats strongest in the hands of those who continue to honor its past while feeding its future.

Hanwoo sogalbi jjim, or braised short ribs, is popular among international tourists

Seasonal Vistas

Spring Arrives on the Getbol

Text by Moon Kyong-O, consultant & advisor for UNESCO Natural Programmes

Photography by World Heritage Promotion Team of Korean Tidal Flats, Shutterstock, Clipartkorea

With ocean on three sides, South Korea is naturally home to extensive *getbol*, Korean tidal flats, created by the action of waves and the ebb and flow of water. These intermediary zones between the land and sea are fully exposed only twice a day.

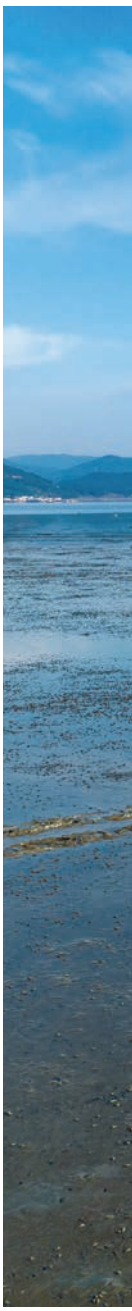
As demonstrated by the prehistoric shell middens found across the Korean Peninsula, getbol have long been an indispensable source of food for local residents. These "marine farms" provide benefits far beyond simply feeding people, however. They play a role in purifying pollutants streaming from the land and moderate the impact of incoming typhoons and tsunamis by absorbing their energy. Getbol have recently gained attention as a storehouse of "blue carbon" due to their ability to sequester large amounts of carbon dioxide.

More than anything else, getbol in Korea are a treasure trove of biodiversity. They provide a home to around 2,000 different plant and animal species. The huge number of species calling getbol home includes some listed on the IUCN's Red List of Threatened Species and others endemic to the Korean environment.

The extensive bountiful environment provided by getbol offers an ideal place to rest and feed for massive numbers of migratory birds. Birds making their 15,000-kilometer annual journey between Siberia/Alaska and Australia/New Zealand often stop on Korean tidal flats to rest and gain nutrition. For many of them, these flats are their only stopover along the entire vast journey.

The value of getbol in Korea was recognized as relevant to all humanity with its inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2021.

Sunset on Sagiseom Island, Wau Tidal Flat, Suncheon City



People harvesting shellfish at getbol

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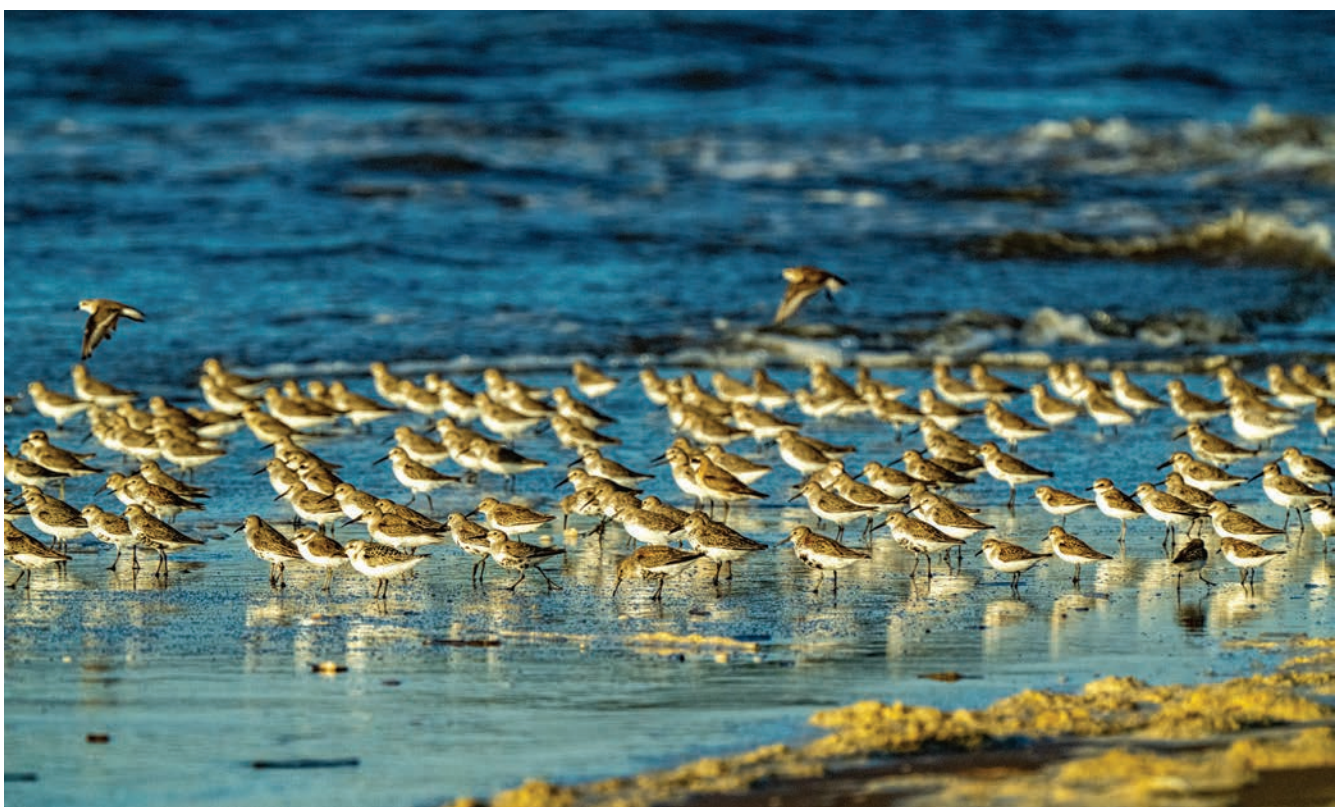
1. A group of Bar-tailed godwit and Eurasian oystercatcher
2. Flying eatern curlews
3. Migratory birds by the stream



Nature's harmonious getbol

Korea's Jang Making Recognized by UNESCO

The tradition of jang making in the Republic of Korea has been inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity on December 3, 2024. This marks Korea's 23rd entry on the list, emphasizing the cultural and communal importance of jang – fermented sauces such as *doenjang* (soybean paste), *ganjang* (soy sauce), and *gochujang* (red chili paste).

Jang making is unique for its reliance on natural fermentation processes, which vary according to regional climates and environments, resulting in diverse flavors and techniques. It is not only a culinary tradition but also a reflection of sustainable living practices, where local ingredients and methods are prioritized. The practice fosters intergenerational bonds, as knowledge is passed down within families and communities, often accompanied by ceremonies and collective activities that promote social harmony.

UNESCO highlighted jang making for its contributions to sustainable agricultural practices, environmental awareness, and its role in strengthening community identity. The nomination process involved collaboration among community members, scholars, and cultural organizations, ensuring wide participation.

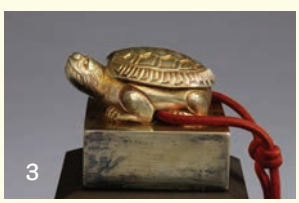
The Korea Heritage Service plans to promote awareness and understanding of jang making through educational initiatives, digital platforms, and global partnerships. By preserving and celebrating this intangible heritage, Korea continues to showcase its rich cultural legacy to the world.

Returned Cultural Heritage: 2025 Commemorative Stamps Highlight Restored Cultural Heritage

As part of the collaboration between the Korea Heritage Service and Korea Post, four significant examples of Korea's restored cultural heritage, symbolizing independence and identity, are featured in the newly released 2025 commemorative stamp series.

The collection includes:

- Korean Legation in Washington, D.C.: Purchased with funds from Emperor Gojong's treasury, this building served as Korea's diplomatic mission from 1889 to 1905 and was a symbol of resistance during the colonial era. Recently recognized as a National Historic Site in the U.S.



1. Korean Legation in Washington, D.C
2. Cheogam's Wooden Printing Block
3. Imperial Seal of Emperor Gojong
4. Documents Related to Righteous Army Movements

- Cheogam's Wooden Printing Block: Belonging to scholar Kim Dohwa, who opposed Japanese rule, this block was repatriated in 2019 with the support of Riot Games.
- Imperial Seal of Emperor Gojong: Used in secret communications against colonial forces, it exemplifies Korea's sovereignty. It was returned in 2009 and designated a National Treasure.
- Documents Related to Righteous Army Movements: These scrolls vividly portray resistance efforts against Japan and were retrieved in 2024.

This stamp issuance celebrates the 80th anniversary of Korea's liberation while spotlighting the importance of repatriating cultural heritage scattered globally. Over 544,000 stamps are available at local post offices and online.

The Korea Heritage Service, committed to heritage preservation, continues efforts to recover and share the stories of lost treasures, ensuring their historical and cultural significance resonates with the public.

Korea Heritage Service

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