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KOREAN HERITAGE

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CONTENTS

FEATURE STORY

Humanities Lectures Explore the Future of Korean Intangible Heritage

The Lectures in Humanities program at the National Intangible Heritage Center invites both intangible heritage transmitters and professionals from other areas to share their stories with an audience as they explore their intersections with intangible heritage.

Text by An Kyung-hee, Research and Archiving Division, National Intangible Heritage Center
Photos by ShutterStock, Clipartkorea

The National Intangible Heritage Center is a branch of the Cultural Heritage Administration that specializes in safeguarding intangible Korean heritage. The National Intangible Heritage Center is dedicated to bringing intangible heritage into the everyday lives of contemporary Koreans by organizing exhibitions, performances, and experience programs while supporting intangible heritage practitioners in their transmission efforts. Within the grounds of the center, which is located in Jeonju City, Jeollabuk-do Province, there is a range of facilities to help it serve its many functions. One of them is the *Chaengmaru*, or "Book Space." The *Chaengmaru* has an array of books on intangible heritage, including some for children, and a variety of audiovisual materials, all available to the public. Anyone can visit the space to refer to the materials on offer or just to take a rest in a cozy environment.

The poster for this year's lecture series

Besides providing access to books and a place for refreshment, the *Chaengmaru* operates an active outreach program known as "Lectures in Humanities." This program invites intangible heritage transmitters and professionals from other areas to share their stories with an audience and explore their intersections with intangible heritage. The lectures are designed to make intangible heritage more familiar to contemporary Koreans and lead them to develop an interest in traditional performance and craftwork.

Five lectures—including one special lecture—were prepared for this year with invited professionals from diverse areas, including popular culture, travel, traditional music, and traditional craft. The umbrella theme for this year's lectures is "Stories of the Future of Intangible Heritage," a timely subject for the center as it envisions the years to come while celebrating the 10th anniversary of its opening.

The first lecturer was the famed performer Nam Hyun-joon. This dancer known for his popping style gave a talk exploring the connections between intangible heritage and the Korean Wave. During his lecture session entitled "The Significance of Intangible Heritage for K-Content," Nam Hyun-joon showed how a popular dance form like popping can

Chaengmaru
A multi-functioning cultural space open to the local community and visitors from the outside

Nam Hyun-joon | He is a dancer, dance trainer, and singer. His main interest is the dance form known as popping. He also teaches at a university and operates a personal YouTube channel.

be harmoniously combined with a traditional Korean music through a performance and stories. His novel approach to fusing contemporary dance with traditional music inspired a passionate reaction from the audience. His perspective on integrating popular culture with tradition suggested the possibility of new art forms being created in the future.

The second speaker for the lecture program was the traveler and author Jeong Tae-gyeom. As a person who has crisscrossed the world and experienced a wide range of cultural traditions, Jeong titled his talk "The Future of Korean Intangible Heritage Discovered Outside Korea." His lecture focused on the transmission of intangible heritage in Bhutan and Tibet. He highlighted differences in the way intangible heritage is transmitted in these two geographically nearby areas—one relying on the social process of transmission without artificial intervention and the other gradually moving toward the sterile institutionalization of intangible heritage as a stage performance. His lecture provided food for thought at a time when we are attempting to forge a future for our intangible heritage.

The third installment in this year's lecture series was a talk by the French *pansori* performer Laure Mafo. She shared her stories in a lecture session titled "Aesthetics of *Pansori*

Jeong Tae-gyeom | Starting out as a journalist specializing in Buddhism, he become a traveler and author. He contributes articles and photos to tourist magazines and other publication outlets. This prolific travel writer also appears on TV shows.

from a Foreigner's Perspective." Laure talked about how she fell in love with *pansori* epic chant and her process of leaving behind her life in France and coming all the way to South Korea to learn about this Korean form of musical storytelling. Her stories of overcoming the opposition of her mother after a good performance, her tireless efforts at properly pronouncing *pansori* lyrics, and her wishes and plans for the future all resonated deeply with the audience. She gave her talk in Korean despite still being a learner. No lack of Korean proficiency was apparent in the *pansori* performance she offered after the talk, however. The lyrics she sang in the performance appeared to be delivered by a skilled native-Korean performer, demonstrating to the audience just how much effort she put into honing her skills. The audience was moved by both her stories and performance, and rewarded her with great bouts of applause.

Next up in the year's regular schedule of lectures is Gang Mun-jong, who will offer a talk in October on the theme of "Stories of Intangible Heritage from History." Gang speaks often on TV while teaching at Jeju National University. His primary interest is historical

social relations viewed from the perspective of making a living. He thinks that people's careers are the most effective medium for expressing the self in society, and tries to explore people's lives through their occupations. For his lecture, Gang is expected to talk about occupations in Joseon society and their relations to intangible heritage.

In addition, there is a special lecture scheduled for September this year. Unlike the other four lectures, this one goes out to meet its audience from schools and social groups without an easy access to intangible heritage. This year's special lecture combines a talk with an experience session and will be led by the artisan Park Yun-hwan, who specializes in the Ganghwado Island craft tradition of *hwamunseok*, or rush-weaving. As someone dedicated to the dissemination of the rush-weaving tradition at home and abroad, Park will explore the distinctive aesthetics of *hwamunseok* and the importance of traditional craft as a reservoir for culture and heritage. Lecture attendees will have time to make small objects such as coasters by weaving rushes in the traditional method.

This lecture series organized by the National Intangible Heritage Center is open to all. It has been designed to share diverse elements of Korean intangible heritage with a wider public. The center will continue its efforts to carve out more opportunities to explore the present and future of intangible heritage.

Laure Mafo | This French citizen fell in love with *pansori* epic chant the first time she saw a performance (by Min Hye-seong) at the Korean Cultural Center in France. She took *pansori* classes offered by the Korean Cultural Center and, since 2017, has been living in South Korea to pursue her dream of becoming a *pansori* master.

SPECIAL

Joseon Royal Wrapping Cloths and the Art of Packaging

The royal household of the Joseon Dynasty used special materials, colors, and techniques to elaborately package certain items. Coming in diverse sizes and patterns, the most widely used form of packaging was the wrapping cloth, or *bojagi* in Korean.

Text by Park Su-hee, National Palace Museum of Korea
Photos by National Palace Museum of Korea

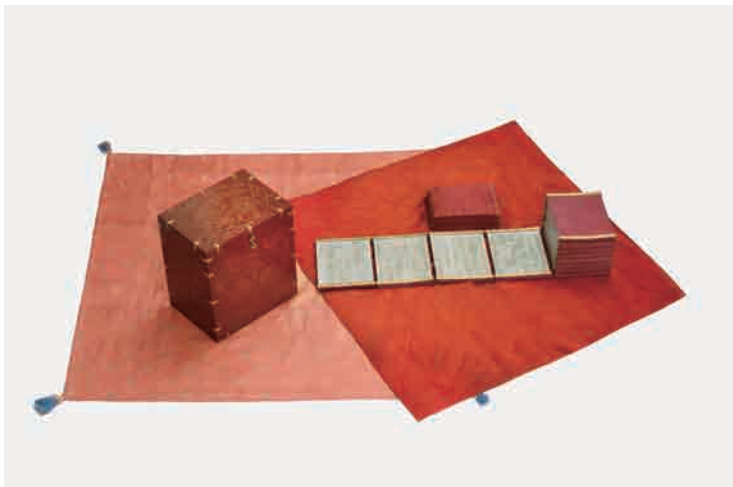
People use special packaging when they hope to express courtesy in a gift, preserve precious belongings, improve the ease of transporting materials, or just to add aesthetic appeal. Packaging is sometimes considered equally as important as the contents they surround, particularly when luxury brands are involved. The symbolic importance of packaging and related materials is not a modern phenomenon, but a time-honored human tradition.

Accessories for the wife of Prince Imperial Yeong, the last crown prince of the Joseon Dynasty, and the packaging used to encase them

The Joseon Dynasty era (1392–1910) provides many good examples of a careful emphasis on packaging. In this strictly hierarchical society, status had to be reflected not only in the items people used, but in their presentation. The royal household of the Joseon Dynasty used special materials, colors, and techniques for eloquently packaging different items. In this Neo-Confucian state that regarded abiding by ritual to be the very foundation of society, packaging items for use in ceremonies was imbued with great significance. It was often treated as a ritual unto itself and was performed with extreme care. Many of the packaging materials used by the Joseon royal household have survived to the present.

The most widely used form of package for the royal family was the wrapping cloth, or *bojagi* in Korean. A *bojagi* was fundamentally a rectangular piece of cloth, but it could be made with a range of fabrics and in different sizes according to its purpose. The conventional use of *bojagi* for packaging in the royal household was to enclose an item in

Wrapping cloths and other kinds of packaging used at the investiture ceremony for Queen Jeongsun, the second consort of King Yeongjo (r. 1724–76)



Left Packaging for a ceremony to endow an honorific name to King Yeongjo
Right A cloth used to wrap an *eobo* ceremonial seal

one of these wrapping cloths and then put it in a box. This package would then be wrapped and boxed two or three more times depending on the occasion. This is one of the reasons for the abundance of royal packaging materials remaining today.

The lion's share of the wrapping cloth collection at the National Palace Museum of Korea was used to wrap *eobo*, *eochaek*, and *gyomyeong*, which are ceremonial seals, books, and edicts produced for specific occasions. *Eobo* refers to seals crafted for high-ranking members of the royal family such as the king and crown prince and their wives on the occasion of their investiture, wedding, or the ceremony of endowing an honorific name (known as a *jonho*). An *eochaek* is a ceremonial book that accompanies the *eobo* seal. Made with jade or bamboo, these ceremonial books describe in writing the meaning of the occasion and the moral virtues of the individual involved. On the occasion of an investiture, a royal edict known as a *gyomyeong* was issued in the form of a silk-based hand-held scroll to serve as a letter of appointment. These royal items with great ceremonial significance were packaged with attentive care and strict rigor. A ceremonial seal was wrapped in a cloth and encased in an inner box, which was in turn enclosed in an additional wrapping cloth and placed in an outer box. An *eochaek* book or *gyomyeong* edict was wrapped in a cloth, placed in a box, and then surrounded again with another wrapping cloth.

The royal edict to invest Queen Heongyeong as the crown princess of Prince Sado, the second son of King Yeongjo

This ritual process of packaging royal objects was known as *bonggwa*. Wrapping cloths used in this *bonggwa* rite were generally made from silk in shades of red or purple. These silk cloths could be plain or decorated with peony or cloud designs. A navy tassel with a gold head was attached at the four corners of many of these ceremonial cloths to highlight the authority and dignity of the royal household.

Besides ceremonial objects, wrapping cloths were also adopted for enclosing accessories worn by female members of the royal family in everyday life and on special occasions. Decorative hairpins, headpieces, rings, and the *norigae* pendants hung from a woman's shirt or skirt were wrapped in a cloth and encased in a box. Wrapping cloths for this purpose mostly came in splendid colors and with diverse decorative motifs. They were typically made by sewing together two pieces of cloth. A piece of lace was attached to one corner of the cloth to help with the wrapping.

A wrapping cloth used at the wedding ceremony for Princess Myeongan, the third daughter of King Hyeonjong

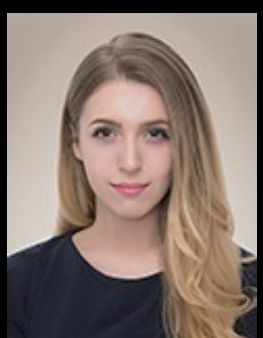
Royal weddings required a great many wrapping cloths to accommodate the abundance of items to be wrapped. The earliest surviving example of a royal wrapping cloth with precise information on its user is one used at the wedding ceremony for Princess Myeongan, the third daughter of King Hyeonjong (r. 1659–74). It is a double-layered wrapping cloth made from a black silk piece decorated with cloud designs and lined with silk in a diluted blue color. An 18th-century compilation on state weddings entitled *Gukhon jeongnye* includes records on wrapping cloths for packaging silver vessels. An example of this kind of wrapping cloth is held at the National Palace Museum: It is a double-layered wrapping cloth crafted by joining purple silk and blue cotton with a piece of lace in the center of the outer layer. Also included in the museum's collection of wrapping cloths are examples lavishly decorated with phoenix designs that are believed to have been used at a royal wedding.

Many of the everyday and ceremonial items used by the Joseon-era royal household were enclosed in wrapping cloths before being stored, transferred to another location, or offered as a gift. These wrapping cloths represented the attentive care their users directed toward the people on the receiving end of the package and to the objects wrapped inside.

A wrapping cloth for packaging silver vessels

HERITAGE REDISCOVERED

On Novelty and Nostalgia: Reflections on a Decade in Korea



Megan Taylor

Megan Taylor is an Assistant Professor of Interpretation & Translation Studies at Chung-Ang University in Seoul. She also works as a freelance Korean-English translator and editor specializing in the translation of Korean cultural content.

She obtained a Master's Degree in Interpretation & Translation Studies at Chung-Ang University, and a Bachelor's Degree in Film Studies (with a concentration in Screenwriting) from Yale University in the United States.

Photos by Megan Taylor, Clipartkorea

* This article was originally provided in English.

It was a clear spring day when I first touched down in Korea back in 2012. Lugging my suitcases through the maze of Sinchon's backstreets while a deluge of lights, colors and sounds sluiced over me felt like toppling down the rabbit hole. In this curious Wonderland I now found myself in, *Hangul* (한글, the Korean alphabet) swirled in my vision and the blaring soundtrack of K-pop hits poured out from storefronts. I asked myself then, as disoriented as I was fascinated, just how had I gotten to this place so far from home?

Hanok (traditional Korean house) with fans strung in the window

As an outsider looking in, Korea seemed to me a pendulum swinging between two tail ends but rarely reaching stasis. In restaurants, soups weren't just hot – they were served still boiling. Salarymen worked well past sunset then crooned ballads at the local *noraebang* (노래방, karaoke bar) with their colleagues till sunrise. Even the weather seemed to skew toward extremes, as getting caught in a summer *sonagi* (소나기, sudden rain shower) meant hurriedly ducking for cover, only for torrential rain to give way to sunny skies again not ten minutes later.

Back then, life in Seoul brought with it the thrill of the unexpected. And much was to be unexpected, given that the knowledge I possessed about Korea had been limited to what I'd obtained by scouring online blogs and forums. Offline, however, I had heard little mention of Korea during my daily life in the States, and the picture I was able to paint of the country prior to my arrival was a rough sketch at best.

I arrived in Korea over a decade ago, in the bygone epoch before PSY's "Gangnam Style" had ever hit the airwaves and before groundbreaking works like *Parasite* and *Squid*

National flags, including the flag of Korea, waving over Insadong

Traditional Korean masks

Game had become household names. At the time, the residents of my sleepy hometown in the U.S. would have been hard-pressed to locate South Korea on a map, and common knowledge of the country largely consisted of our shared history fighting as allies in the Korean War.

With Europe being the popular choice amongst American students considering a semester abroad, I still remember the puzzled expressions I would receive whenever I told strangers that I was leaving to study in Seoul. Inevitably, they would ask in turn, *"Why Korea?"*

That was the climate of a decade ago, at least in my neck of suburban America. Imagine my surprise when, upon a trip back home to the States several years later, I found kimchi being sold in my local grocery store and BTS playing on the radio.

A seismic shift had taken place in my absence, and Korean food, culture and content were now being not only recognized, but widely embraced. Gone were the puzzled expressions when I mentioned that I lived in Korea. Gone was the questioning "why" and in its place was an enthusiastic, *"Wow, Korea!"*

Gyeongbokgung Palace at dusk

It struck me then, as it still does today, that the soft power afforded by a nation's cultural content is truly a force to be reckoned with. And Korea wields its soft power with a deftness that most countries would struggle to replicate. Through its cultural content, Korea managed to extend its reach far beyond its borders, embedding its culture and stories into the lives of people around the globe. This sea change was brought about in record time through the tides of the Korean Wave, and I was honored to play witness to the shift.

What I find more exciting still is that in the wake of the Korean Wave, global citizens are forming an interest not only in Korean pop culture, but are delving into Korea's traditional cultural assets as well. Traditional Korean artforms including music, poetry, dance, and more – cultural heritage that had once felt at arm's length for international audiences – are enjoying a period of Renaissance owed to the weaving of these traditions into modern media, making them not only more accessible to international audiences, but trendy even.

Popular artists of the times are drawing upon Korea's older cultural assets to inspire their recent works. Agust D, for instance, released his single "Daechwita (대취타)" and sparked a subsequent surge in international interest in the traditional Korean processional music of the same name; meanwhile, bands like Leenalchi (이날치) are incorporating the vocal

Lanterns above the Cheonggyecheon Stream at night

stylizations of *pansori* (판소리, Korean musical storytelling) in songs like, "Tiger is Coming (범 내려온다)."

These modern gateways to historical culture are attracting audiences from diverse backgrounds and welcoming them into the folds of Korea's rich cultural tapestry. In this way, we can hear the echoes of Korea's past ringing proudly in its present – and the resulting blend of modernity and tradition is helping to preserve the country's legacy while Korea pens the next chapter of its future.

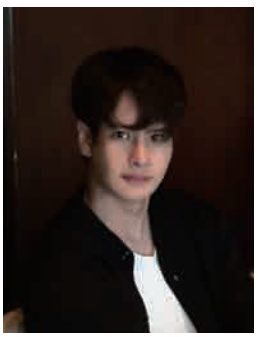
As my years in Korea stretch longer and a new decade unfolds before me, it becomes increasingly difficult to untangle the threads of my own identity; Korea and its culture have become woven into the very fabric of my being. To live as an expat is to live a life of odd contradictions. Korea is not my home, not by birth nor by blood, and yet it feels like home. Likewise, Korea's successes are not my own, and yet I cannot help but feel a surge of pride as I watch Korea develop into the cultural powerhouse it has rapidly become.

Nowadays, my life in Korea isn't quite as technicolor as it once seemed. The customs that once registered as novel are now steeped in nostalgia. Where the fascination has fallen away, in its place, a heartfelt fondness has taken root – for this land's culture, its traditions, and its people. Perhaps throughout my years in Korea, I have discovered the true meaning of *jeong* (정, affection).

Where is the representative place of Korea?

Text by Nowk Choe
Photos by Nowk Choe, Cultural Heritage Administration, Domus Korea, Jang Hwal Lim, Gunhee Kim, Chemin Hong

2024 Gucci Cruise fashion show held at Gyeongbokgung.



Nowk Choe

Nowk Choe is an architect, curator, and writer who has curated and designed multiple exhibitions, including a recent one titled "Cities in the Room." He was selected as an emerging curator for 2023 by the Seoul Museum of Art. Specializing in cultural heritage and *hanok*, he contributes to various media outlets, serving as a columnist for *The Seoul Shinmun* and a board member for Architecture Criticism. His book, "Club Arena" (Eidos, 2019), explores the Seoul metropolis and ephemeral culture based on the city's nightclubs and has been designated as a permanent preservation material by the National Central Library of Korea.

Photographed by Chemin Hong

The recent Gucci fashion show held at Gyeongbokgung Palace drew enormous public attention for its unusual juxtaposition of an international luxury brand with a historic Korean space. Choe Nowk, who was among the audience at the Gucci fashion show in central Seoul, shares his personal experience of this event as well as his thoughts on Korean tradition and the country's historical sites. Choe trained as an architect, but he is also an author. His book *Club Arena* explores ephemerality in contemporary culture, but he is currently writing about a Confucian scholar from the Joseon era (1392–1910). Choe works extensively in contemporary art as well. *The Korean Heritage* publication team interviewed him in early August.

KH With the growing international interest in Korean culture, luxury brands have been hosting high-profile events here, including the recent Gucci fashion show at Gyeongbokgung Palace. Could you share your thoughts on this?

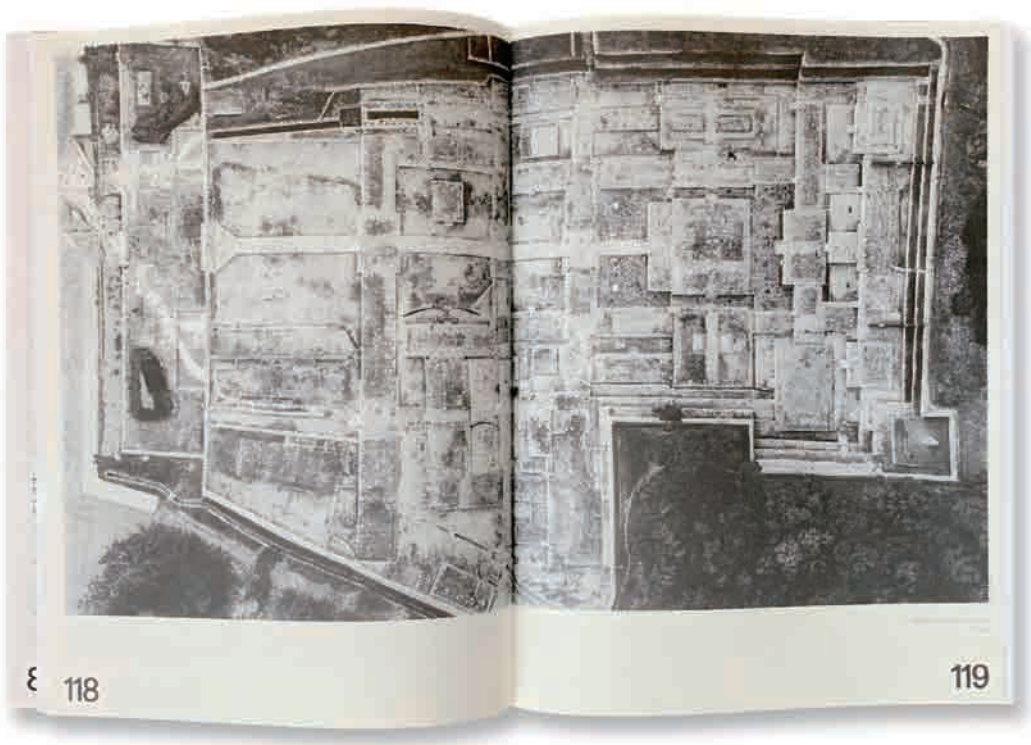
Nowk Gucci and Louis Vuitton held official fashion shows in Seoul in the first half of this year. This was phenomenal in itself since fashion shows in South Korea have all been spin-off events. As suggested by the name of the Gucci event, "Cruise 2024 Fashion Show," luxury brands generally seek an attractive tourist destination as a location for their runways. Louis Vuitton installed a runway on Jamsugyo Bridge, an urban structure from the 1970s that symbolizes the country's development. Gucci's Gyeongbokgung Palace site is overflowing with historical importance as the main royal residence of the Joseon Dynasty. These two locations have previously been perceived respectively as an everyday passageway and a preserved slice of the

past. I think that these fashion events contributed to shedding a new light on their aesthetic value.

KH Are there any other historic places in the country that stand out to you?

Nowk I love places like Soswaewon Garden in Damyang County in Jeollanam-do Province, Byeongsan Neo-Confucian Academy in Andong City, or Buseoksa Temple in Yeongju City, both in Gyeongsangbuk-do Province. When you select a site for a fashion show, you need to consider the logistics of the location, such as is it large enough to seat, say, around 1,000 people, and is it close enough to a city like Seoul with the required accommodation and international transportation. This may be why Gucci and Louis Vuitton would not choose any of these locations. All of these places are really worth a visit, though. Even those who have no understanding of their historical significance are captivated once they see them.

The Okgokmun gate of Soswaewon, a representative garden of Korea, does not interrupt or alter the flow of water, connecting the inside and outside of the wall.



Hoeamsa Temple's Ground.

KH Could you say more about these beautiful sites in South Korea?

Nowk The Korean edition of the magazine *Domus* is a good place to start. The twelve issues of *Domus Korea* introduce historic and scenic spots around South Korea in English. What's particularly interesting about this magazine is that each issue focuses on a significant concept from Korean aesthetics, such as *teo* (ground), *bibim* (mixture), and *jiphap* (collective). The magazine spotlights tourist attractions in Korea that demonstrate the concept featured in each issue, but also it introduces Western structures from the original *Domus* that reflect the Korean idea. It is exactly the opposite of the way we have been perceiving beauty: So far, we have tended to use Western aesthetics to interpret the beauty of Korean structures. However, there have been people who passionately studied Korean aesthetics, even when their efforts were not taken seriously. I am deeply grateful to these preceding generations of researchers. I believe that it is the duty of my generation to refer to their work and build upon it.

KH It was impressive how you referred to traditional Korean architecture when curating a contemporary art exhibition.

Nowk What people feel is difficult about traditional Korean culture is its focus on the unseen. This concentration on invisible qualities seems incompatible with the current cultural dominance of materialism and visuality. Contemporary art is considered to be at the forefront of visual culture, but it still values theoretical and intellectual elements. I delved into this similarity between Korean tradition and contemporary artistic practice in my master's thesis at the Royal College of Art in London. I compared the pedestal from contemporary art and the concept of *teo* (ground) in Korean architecture. By drawing on studies of minimalist art, in which the pedestal is imagined as the "expanded field," I explored the abstraction of space in Korean architecture. In *Cities in the Room*, a contemporary art exhibition I recently curated, I hoped to suggest the interior of a room not as a private place, but as a space in which individuals are conscious of others and connected to them. For this, I expressed a room simply by marking out a floor and not installing walls. This floor-only room served as a "pedestal" upon which artistic expressions such as video and paintings were placed, set apart from other spaces in the exhibition hall.

KH Do you also have experience with traditional architecture? It is good that younger people are showing an increasing interest in tradition these days, but it could be that their taste for tradition is just a fad.

Nowk I lived in a traditional Korean house, or *hanok*, as a child. I always complained about being in a different environment than my friends. It was among the reasons why I pursued something new [contrary to tradition]. It is ironic that now I am talking about tradition while working in contemporary art. I know what you are talking about. I recently visited a *hanok* lodging and found the place decorated with objects traditionally associated with a place for the dead [according to *pungsu* geomantic principles]. I have nothing against the trend of appreciating tradition from a visual or decorative perspective. Without a proper understanding of tradition, however, it will hard for this current movement to become entrenched in the culture. If it isn't, it becomes—as the art critic and philosopher Boris Groys says in his book *On the New*—nothing but a novelty that will be replaced by another novelty. As

The lower section of Mandaeru in Byeongsan Seowon, a representative Neo-Confucian academy in Korea.

someone with the experience of living in the discomfort imposed by tradition [as a child], I have strived to appreciate tradition beyond providing an object of temporary consumption to understand its fundamentals and acquire expertise. As part of this effort, I worked for three years at an institution specializing in traditional architecture and measuring historic buildings.

KH Measuring historic buildings seems to be somewhat far from the contemporary art field where you are working now.

Nowk Making measurements is an essential preparation for repairing an old building. To carry out a repair at a heritage site, you also have to study historical documents to collect information on its traditional state and work in constant consultation with experts. These rigorous procedures enable us to maintain historic spaces in an authentic form while, at the same time, helping them to appeal to contemporary visitors. This process is critical since preliminary data and other important information has not yet been developed for many heritage sites. Heritage preservation will pose a growing social issue in South Korea. The minimum age for a building to be considered for inclusion on a heritage list is approximately 50 years.

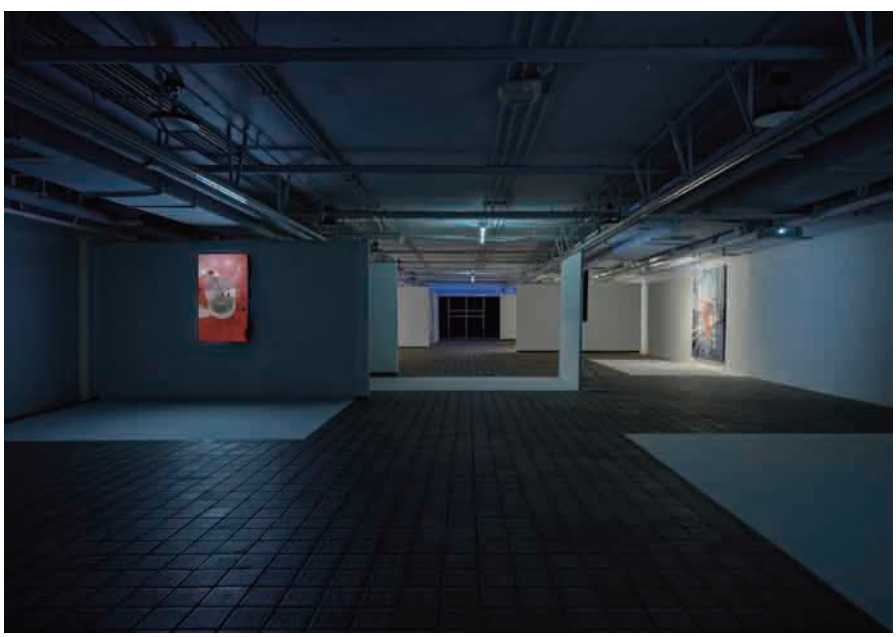
Byeokgoljae constructed around the 4th century and known as the oldest reservoir in Korea, is currently under research by Nowk, a cultural heritage architect.

As many of the cities in South Korea were developed in the 1970s and 80s, the number of buildings eligible for listing is expected to expand exponentially.

If the overriding principle guiding our conservation efforts continues to be preserving all that is old, we need to have social discussions on the definition of preservation for the future. Preservation is a relatively new concept in the West as well. Social debate over the matter only commenced after the French Revolution eradicated the existing social order in the 18th century and the waning phase of the Victorian era challenged traditional practices in the 19th century. Similar social momentum can be found in South Korea in the aftermath of the Korean War and the following industrialization period. Preservation is about coming to terms with modernity.

KH Regarding your books, your first, *Club Arena*, and the book you are to publish abot a Joseon scholar (entitled *Jaha Sinwi*) seem to deal with two different themes.

Nowk Both books address Korean culture. Anything about a Joseon-era scholar is about Korean culture for sure. The first book, *Club Arena*, is based on my interest in Seoul as a metropolitan city. As I said at the *Clubs and the Metropolis* workshop held at the Seoul Museum of Art, a nightclub is a form of architecture reflecting the city in which it is located. This architectural form eloquently attests to the distinctive features of an individual city. In the exhibition I recently curated as a Rising Curator selected by the Seoul Museum of Art, my focus was also on defining Seoul as a metropolitan city. There is another feature that the two books share: A nightclub is a cultural complex where many different forms of culture such as music, fashion, and architecture come together and blend. Likewise, a Joseon-era Confucian scholar can be described as a Renaissance man who pursued many artistic practices such as poetry, painting, calligraphy, collecting, and music. I have found qualities of modernity in both of the themes that transcend place and time. Although the two books respectively deal with recent and traditional culture, they are the same to me as they both explore a modernity unbound by time.



Left *Cities in the Room* at Seoul Museum of Art, curated and designed by Nowk Choe.
Right *The Long Now* at d/p, curated and designed by Nowk Choe.

Seoraksan National Park

Text by Cultural Heritage Administration
Photos by Clipartkorea

Seoraksan Mountain

Located in Gangwon-do Province, Mt. Seoraksan is the third highest mountain in South Korea. It is part of the chain of mountain peaks running the length of the Korean Peninsula. The name *seorak*, or "snowy mountain," is derived from how often its highest peak, Daecheongbong, is covered in snow. Rising 1,708 meters above sea level, Daecheongbong Peak first collects snow around Chuseok (the Korean Thanksgiving Day), and it often only melts deep into the next year. Running north from Daecheongbong, the mountain peaks toward the sea and the land are respectively known as Outer and Inner Seoraksan. The line of mountain peaks dividing the "outer" and "inner" portions of the area is known as the Gongnyong Range, or "Dinosaur Range." The areas to the north and south of Daecheongbong are accordingly called North Seoraksan and South Seoraksan, with a chain of ridges linking two peaks known as Hwachaebong and Gwittaegicheongbong running in between. Mt. Seoraksan is renowned for scenic views such as breathtaking rock formations, deep valleys, and picturesque waterfalls. Seoraksan National Park was established in 1970, the fifth such park in South Korea, after obtaining Natural Monument status in 1965. The natural significance of this rocky mountain was internationally recognized as well with its entry onto the UNESCO list of Biosphere Reserves in 1982.

Ulsanbawi Rock at sunrise

Ulsanbawi Rock
This towering granite formation is composed of six peaks. At its top are five potholes. Along with the astonishing vista from its summit, Ulsanbawi Rock is also renowned for its fierce winds. This explains why it has been traditionally known as Cheonhusan, or "Mountain of Heavens' Cries."

Gongnyong Ridge
This main ridge of Mt. Seoraksan divides the sea-facing Outer Seoraksan from Inner Seoraksan, which is oriented inland. It offers a breathtaking vista of many of the scenic sites of Mt. Seoraksan as well as a good view of the sea off the east coast of the Korean Peninsula. Gongnyong Ridge, literally meaning "Dinosaur Ridge," was given its name for its resemblance to a dynamically climbing dinosaur.

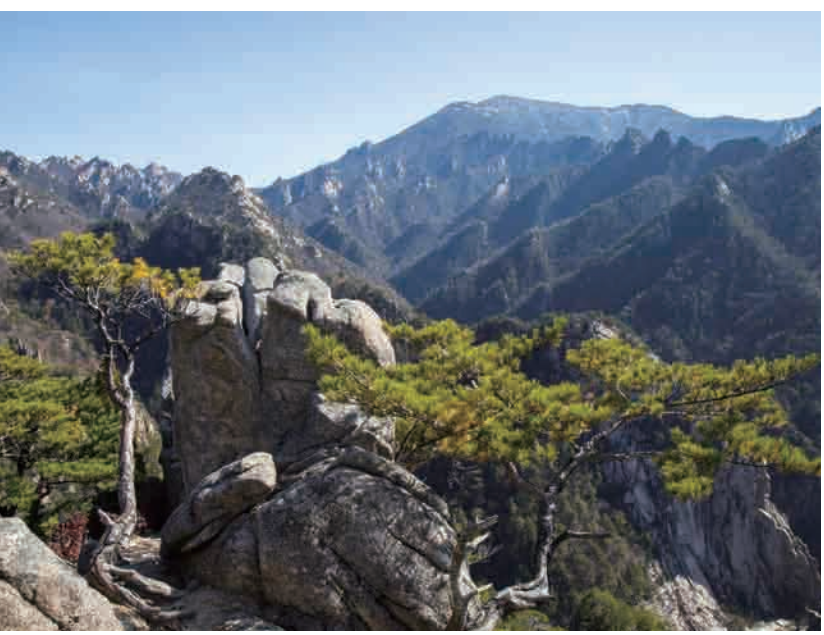
Top Cheonbuldonggyegok Valley
Cheonbuldonggyegok Valley starts from Biseondae Flat Rock and run seven kilometers upward toward Daecheongbong Peak. This area is known for its gorgeous landscape.

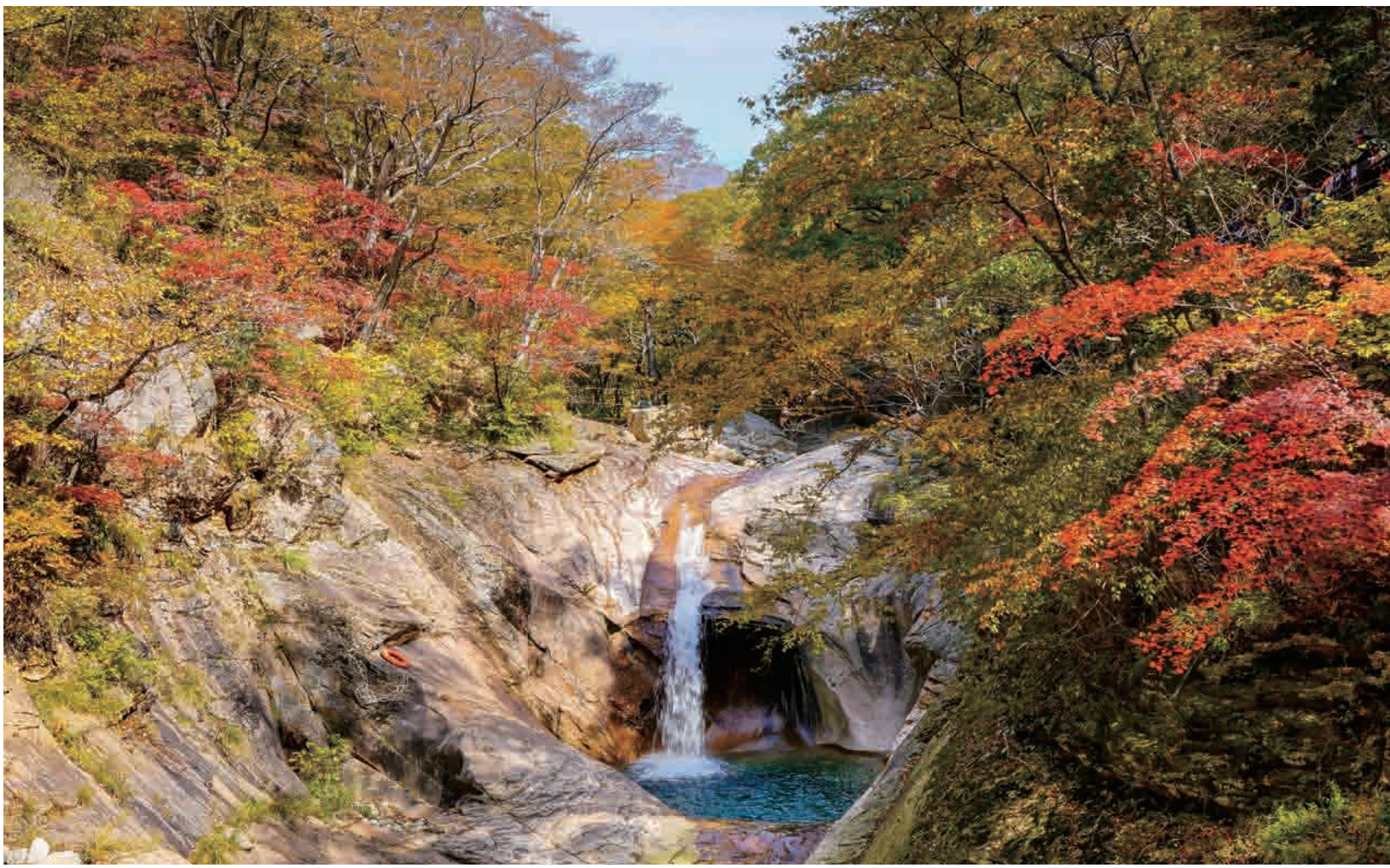
Left Mangyeongdae Cliff
This peak rising 922.2 meters above sea level is a good place for hikers to enjoy a panoramic view of astonishing scenery. It is located in front of Oseam Hermitage.

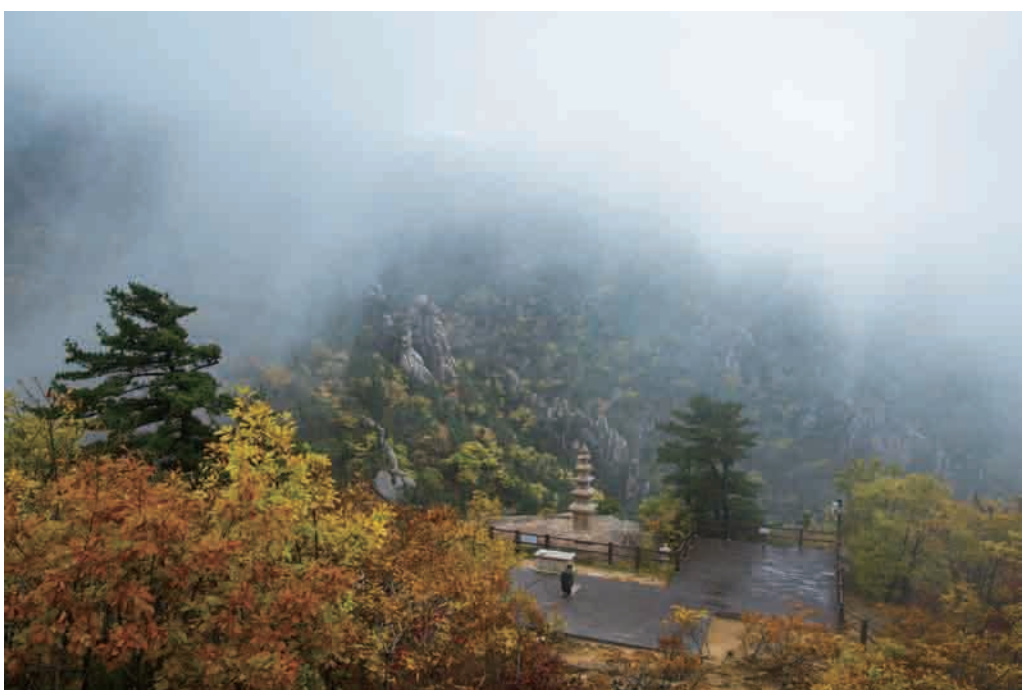
Right Yongajangseong (Fortress of Dragon Teeth)
Approximately 20 jagged rock spires comprise Yongajangseong, or "Fortress of Dragon Teeth."

Top Yongsopokpo Falls
Located in Jujeongol Valley, it is part of a popular trekking course on Mt. Seoraksan

Bottom Jujeongol Valley
The various rock formations and waterfalls around this area amplify the beauty of Jujeongol Valley.







Top Baekdamgyegok Valley
This valley stretches approximately eight kilometers. At one end is Baekdamsa, a Buddhist temple constructed during the Silla period.

Bottom Five-story Stone Pagoda at Bongjeongam Hermitage
Bongjeongam Hermitage is located 11 meters up from Baekdamsa Temple at an elevation of 1,244 meters. At this hermitage is a five-story stone pagoda enshrining relics of Shakyamuni Buddha. It is designated a Treasure at the national level.

Top The stone marking the summit of Daecheongbong
This marking stone stands at the top of Daecheongbong, 1,708 meters above sea level. It is said that the stone was erected in 1985 by trekkers. The name Daecheongbong was inscribed in red paint, presumably for greater visibility.

Bottom Gwittaegicheongbong Peak at sunset
The term gwittaegi means "ears." The name refers to how the winds on this peak are strong enough to freeze off one's ears.

Daemokjang Carpenters Safeguard Traditional Korean Architecture

A *daemokjang*, literally "great carpenter," took charge of the overall process of constructing a building from levelling the ground and dressing the logs to determining the design and assembling the elements needed to complete the structure.

Text by Jang Hun-duk, Department of Heritage Conservation and Preservation,
Korea National University of Cultural Heritage
Photos by Jang Hun-duk, Clipartkorea, Cultural Heritage Administration

A lead carpenter supervises construction in the painting by the 18th-century artist Kim Hong-do.

Top, Center The location of the base of a nine-story wooden pagoda at the former site of Hwangnyongsa Temple in Gyeongju, the capital of Silla

Bottom An element from a stone pagoda found at the former site of Hwangnyongsa Temple

Traditional Korean architecture centers around wooden structures. The same is true for the architectural traditions of neighboring countries such as China and Japan. Wooden architecture on the Korean Peninsula traces its origins all the way back to the pit houses of the Neolithic period. With the emergence of ancient states such as Goguryeo, Baekje, and Silla, city walls and royal residences began to appear in Korea. Wooden architecture on the Korean Peninsula underwent significant technological development with the introduction of Buddhism and the succeeding boom in the construction of temples and pagodas across the territory.

The lead carpenter for a construction project was traditionally known as a *daemokjang*, literally "great carpenter." This position was in charge of the entire process of constructing a building from levelling the ground and dressing the logs to determining the design and assembling all the elements to complete the structure. It is recorded that Queen Seondeok (r. 632–647), the 27th ruler of the Silla Kingdom, invited a carpenter known as Abiji from the neighboring Baekje Kingdom to build a towering wooden pagoda approximately 80 meters high at Hwangnyongsa Temple in Silla's capital. Inscriptions newly discovered at historic buildings at royal residences, Buddhist temples, and Neo-Confucian academies during the process of dissembling them for repair invariably record the name of the lead carpenter responsible for their construction.

Traditionally, the lead carpenter personally procured the logs needed to produce important elements of a wooden structures, such as columns and crossbeams.

The skilled accommodations made for the naturally warped crossbeams sometimes found at historical *hanok* ("Korean houses") demonstrate the resourcefulness and expertise of carpenters of the past. When a column was erected on a stone base in a traditional wooden building, the underside of the column had to be carved to reflect the irregularities in the base stone's surface. Columns were dressed into a rectangular or circular cross-section. Circular columns would be tapered toward the top or given a convex curve at around one-third up from the bottom. The columns were topped by splendid bracket systems. All of these steps were executed without metal fasteners. Since their elements are connected through traditional jointing methods, old buildings on the Korean Peninsula can be dissembled and reassembled for repairs today. Rafters would be arranged in a fan shape at the protruding corners of the eaves, a characteristic that distinguishes them from Chinese and Japanese traditions. The slightly curved ridge of the roof of an old Korean building highlights the country's traditional aesthetics.

Traditional carpenters around the country have been making continuous efforts to keep this integral aspect of Korean culture alive in the present. This *daemokjang* tradition was registered on the domestic heritage list in 1982 and entered onto the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2010.

Construction of *hanok* ("Korean houses") remains robust in the present.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1 An array of planes used by a lead carpenter to dress logs for wooden elements for a traditional Korean building
2 A log being cut using a traditional saw
3 Crossbeams are being prepared here for jointing with other elements. Traditional Korean architecture does not use metal fasteners.
4 Purlins being assembled to support the roof of a building
5 Columns being erected on a stone foundation
6 Brackets being made on top of columns


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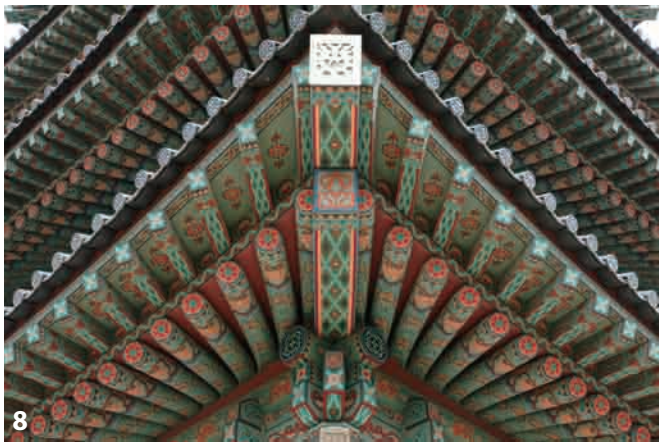
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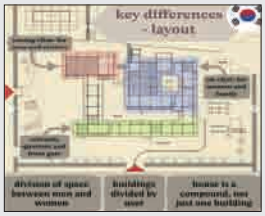
7 Rafters being assembled at the protruding corners of the eaves
8 The wooden elements of a traditional Korean building are often painted.
9 A wooden pagoda at Baekje Cultural Land

‘Cultural Heritage Ambassadors’ Awarded for Their Awareness-raising Activities

Inauguration ceremony at the National Palace Museum of Korea on June 26

Awards ceremony at Korea House on August 28



Left A short news article comparing traditional Vietnamese music and the *pansori* epic chant of Korea

Right Materials examining disparities in housing culture (layout, material, etc.) between the United States and Korea

Nine foreign residents of South Korea received an award in recognition of their contributions to improving the public understanding of Korean heritage in their home countries and promoting their native traditions among Korean people. They were among the 24 members of the second group of International Cultural Heritage Ambassadors, an awareness-raising program operated by the Cultural Heritage Administration in collaboration with the Voluntary Agency Network of Korea (VANK). The 24-member second class of International Cultural Heritage Ambassadors was launched on June 26 this year for a two-month term, and nine of them were awarded for their performance as cultural ambassadors on August 28.

Over their two-month term, the cultural ambassadors produced materials highlighting similarities and differences between Korean cultural heritage and the traditions of their native countries and disseminated them on social media. They made presentations on their efforts at the awards ceremony.

The award-winning cultural ambassadors were mostly studying in South Korea after initially having discovered the country through South Korean popular culture, such as music or TV dramas. Living in the country as students, they broadened the scope of their interest in Korean culture to include the country’s history and traditional culture. At the awards ceremony, they all noted how their experience as cultural ambassadors had provided an invaluable opportunity to appreciate the potential of cultural heritage as a medium for transnational communication.

The Cultural Heritage Administration is planning to continue its efforts to ensure that these International Cultural Heritage Ambassadors maintain an interest in Korean heritage and provide an ongoing cultural bridge between South Korea and their home countries.

Jikji, the Oldest Surviving Document Printed with Movable Metal Type

Jikji, the abbreviated title of the Korean Buddhist document *Baegun hwasang chorok buljo jikji simche yojeol* (Anthology of Great Buddhist Priests' Zen Teachings), presents the fundamentals of Zen Buddhism as compiled by Monk Baegun in 1372. It was printed with metal type by his students Seokchan and Daldam under the auspices of a Buddhist nun named Myodeok in 1377 at Heungdeoksa Temple in Cheongju City.

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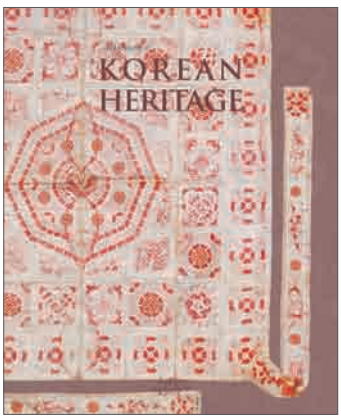

On the Cover

Many of the everyday and ceremonial items used by the royal household during the Joseon era were carefully enclosed in *bojagi* before being stored away, transferred to another location, or offered as a gift. These wrapping cloths represented the devotion of their users toward both the people on the receiving end of the package and to the objects wrapped inside.

Cultural Heritage Administration