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KOREAN HERITAGE

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Heritage Site

Two Historic Objects of Korean Origin Returned Home

Repatriated cultural items are helping renew public attention on Korean heritage and are improving the understanding of our culture and history.

Text by Choi Su-min, Research Department of the Overseas Korean Cultural Heritage Foundation
Photos by Overseas Korean Cultural Heritage Foundation, National Palace Museum Of Korea



As of the latest tally, 229,655 Korean cultural properties have been confirmed to be housed outside the national boundaries. These artifacts of Korean origin range from everyday items for commoners to royal possessions and religious relics. The social and political circumstances under which they were removed from Korea also vary.

The Overseas Korean Cultural Heritage Foundation was launched in 2012 with a mission of identifying, studying, repatriating, and disseminating the significance of these Korean artifacts dispersed across the globe. To fulfill these responsibilities, the first thing we do is ascertain what types of Korean cultural properties are held by what institutions in which countries. Based on this primary information, two courses of action can be taken depending on the context in which a given item left Korea. Items that were legally purchased, donated, exported, or gifted can be deployed locally for the purpose of elevating global appreciation of Korean culture. Support can be provided to restore or carry out conservation treatment on such items and display them in local institutions. For other items removed illicitly from Korea or with a high potential for academic and/or social value in Korea, efforts are made to repatriate them.



Lacquered Box with Inlaid Mother-of-Pearl Chrysanthemum and Scroll Design

With the rising awareness of Korean culture in other countries, greater numbers of artifacts around the world are being identified as of Korean origin. When new information becomes available, staff members from the foundation promptly pursue follow-up measures. After extensive efforts, we have succeeded in repatriating two valuable Korean cultural properties this year. The two items, respectively from the Goryeo (918–1392) and Joseon (1392–1910) eras, have recently been exhibited to the Korean public.

One of these items is a lacquered box with chrysanthemum and scroll patterns inlaid with mother-of-pearl. It measures 33 x 18.5 x 19.4 centimeters and is now held by the National Palace Museum of Korea. It was put on public view this September. It demonstrates the apogee of Goryeo-era mother-of-pearl lacquerware. Great adroitness is required to cut mother-of-pearl into tiny pieces and glue them to a surface to create a desired motif. A finished mother-of-pearl lacquerware item also requires great skill in woodworking, lacquering, and ironworking. This complex process of creating lacquerware adorned with mother-of-pearl demands considerable dexterity and is considered an excellent showcase for both the breadth and depth of Korean craft.



Lacquered Box with Inlaid Mother-of-Pearl Chrysanthemum and Scroll Design



Lacquered Box with Inlaid Mother-of-Pearl Chrysanthemum and Scroll Design

Mother-of-pearl lacquerware, celadon, and Buddhist painting are considered the three definitive art forms of the Goryeo period. *Xuanhe fengshi gaoli tujing*, a book written by the 12th-century Chinese envoy Xu Jing about the people and culture of Korea at the time, recounts, “Mother-of-pearl lacquerware is extremely delicate and highly valuable.” The Korean history *Goryeosa* (History of Goryeo), published early in the Joseon era, mentions mother-of-pearl lacquerware products among the gifts sent to Song China and the Great Liao. These records indicate that Korean lacquerware pieces decorated in mother-of-pearl were also popular outside Korea. Only about 20 examples of this classic form of Goryeo art have survived, however, and only three of them remain in South Korea. This makes it difficult to develop a deeper understanding of this Goryeo art form and publicize its significance. The rarity of gaining access to Goryeo-era mother-of-pearl lacquerware compounds the meaning of this lacquerware artifact.

This lacquered box decorated with mother-of-pearl inlay is estimated to date from the 13th century. It features a systematic arrangement of patterns based on chrysanthemums, peonies, and serial dots, all popular motifs for mother-of-pearl lacquerware during the



Lacquered Box with Inlaid Mother-of-Pearl Chrysanthemum and Scroll Design

This elaborate lacquerware item from the Goryeo era was produced using 45,000 pieces of mother-of-pearl.

Goryeo era. A detailed scientific examination of the box estimated that approximately 45,000 pieces of mother-of-pearl were used to complete the piece. A curve of wire was placed around the chrysanthemum flowers to express vines. The lines encircling the floral patterns were made of two wires twisted together, a feature characteristic of Goryeo lacquerware. The mother-of-pearl used in this box still maintains its rainbow colors and brilliant gloss, and the metal components remain in good condition as well. This returned Goryeo artifact is expected to boost both academic studies and public awareness of mother-of-pearl lacquerware.

The other repatriated cultural property is a copy of a Joseon-era map of Korea known as *Daedongyeojido* (The Great Map of the East Land; now held at the National Palace Museum of Korea). This cartographic representation of the country consists of 23 folding sections measuring 30 x 20 centimeters each. When combined, the entire map spans 6.7x 4 meters. It was first displayed to the public this March. *Daedongyeojido* was produced by the Joseon geographer and cartographer Kim Jeong-ho (c. 1804–66). It was first printed in 1861 and a second edition was released three years later in 1864. The map was printed with woodblocks to allow mass production and widespread dissemination. The range of symbols applied provided cartographic information in an easy-to-understand manner. The map divided Korea latitudinally at intervals of 120 *li* (approximately 47 kilometers) and translated each layer into a booklet with an accordion fold, making it portable and allowing quick access to specific regional information. Celebrated as a product of traditional Korean studies of cartography and geography, *Daedongyeojido* is widely known in contemporary Korea.

Among the copies printed in 1861 and 1864, approximately 20 are found in South Korea. Together with those held overseas, 38 copies are known to have survived. All copies of *Daedongyeojido* are not perfectly identical, however. Some have parts that were painted, and the colors of the symbols can differ. The copy of *Daedongyeojido* repatriated this year is from the 1864 edition. However, it is unique in that this print was expanded with handwritten geographic information from another map of Korea known as *Dongyeodo*.

Dongyeodo is a colored hand-made map of Korea, which is believed to have served as the basis for the woodblock-printed *Daedongyeojido*. The original map also records the theories and methodologies used for its creation along with a wide range of geographic information and more than 18,000 place names. It is assumed that the place names and other information added to the blank spaces along the edges of *Dongyeodo* could not be fully expressed in a woodblock version. For this reason, *Daedongyeojido* copies do not include the same level of information as *Dongyeodo*. The repatriated copy, however, diverges from this conventional understanding of the relationship between the two maps. It shows a harmonious combination of *Daedongyeojido* and *Dongyeodo* in which the information from the latter was added by hand to a woodblock print of *Daedongyeojido*. As in *Dongyeodo*, this copy has a separate list of place names indexed from the respective booklets. The discussion regarding



Daedongyeojido

the purpose and importance of making a map of Korea that is featured in *Dongyeodo* is also transcribed in the margins of this copy of *Daedongyeojido*. This new version is expected to stimulate the study of how the applications of Kim Jeong-ho's woodblock-printed map of Korea changed over time.

After the initial public viewing of the map in March, the National Palace Museum of Korea, which gained custody of the map, held a special exhibition to commemorate the return of this important Korean cultural heritage item. The exhibition entitled *The Returned Daedongyeojido: Re-encountering Our Land* was held at the National Palace Museum of Korea from May 16 to July 2. It was a rare occasion to see a copy of this grand-scale map fully unfolded. Visitors could gain a true overall sense of its scale and the volume of information presented. A digital screen installed beside the map allowed visitors to examine parts of the map in detail, including checking the old names of their hometowns and learning about cartographic practices of the Joseon era. The exhibition was well received by the public as an excellent opportunity to deepen their understanding of how Koreans of the time perceived the geography of their nation and translated it into a cartographic representation.



Daedongyeojido

The return of Korean cultural properties to their home means something beyond just changing their physical locations. Repatriated cultural items encourage the public to renew their attention on the aspects of Korean heritage that may have fallen outside their main focus and to develop a better understanding of the cultural and historical significance of these Korean artifacts. There remain many cultural items of Korean origin that have not been properly identified or are mistakenly attributed to other cultures. The Overseas Korean Cultural Heritage Foundation will continue to crisscross the globe in search of hidden Korean cultural treasures and will work to utilize them appropriately depending on their individual contexts. With these tireless endeavors by the foundation, there will soon be more Korean cultural properties to be brought home to tell their exciting stories about the history and culture of Korea. 🌐



Daedongyeojido

This copy of *Daedongyeojido* printed in 1864 using woodblocks also displays handwritten geographic information from another map of Korea known as *Dongyeodo*. It provides a harmonious combination of two maps of Korea from the late Joseon period.

SPECIAL

Fascinating Stories Told by Earthenware from Goryeo Shipwrecks

Earthenware found alongside written records in Goryeo shipwrecks provides a rich source of information with a great potential for advancing academic research.

Text by Shin Jong-kuk, Exhibition and Education Division of the
National Research Institute of Maritime Cultural Heritage
Photos by Exhibition and Education Division of the National Research
Institute of Maritime Cultural Heritage





Earthenware vessels from Mado Shipwreck No. 3

Pottery making in Korea dates back 10,000 years all the way to the Neolithic Period. Earthenware was the dominant form of ceramics through the Unified Silla era (668–935). Afterwards, more technologically advanced forms of ceramics were introduced into Korea—first celadon during the Goryeo Dynasty (918–1392) and then white porcelain in the Joseon era (1392–1910). As these vitrified forms of ceramics gained in popularity, earthenware fell out of fashion and was disregarded as a cheap, everyday product. These vessels with their iron-rich clays and darkish colors received little attention from modern researchers as well.

Large volumes of ceramic vessels dating to the Goryeo and Joseon eras have been excavated from the seas off Korea. With countless hard-fired celadon and white porcelain items with decorative designs being discovered in their original form, it was difficult to look past these valuable objects and focus on the relatively small number of greyish and blackish earthenware vessels, mostly recovered in a broken state. It was common practice for earthenware shards to be tucked away in the corners of storage rooms without conservation treatment or even appropriate record-keeping.



A mokgan strip from Mado Shipwreck No. 1

Goryeo Earthenware as a Vessel for Local Specialties

A change in these practices was finally spurred on July 31, 2009 when the team excavating a shipwreck in the waters around Mado Island in Taean-gun County (known as Mado Shipwreck No. 1) found an earthenware jar with a fragmented body but intact rim. In front of the jar was a delicately shaped bamboo strip known as a *mokgan*. *Mokgan* strips made from bamboo or wood served as shipping labels during the Joseon period. This one clearly read, “A jar of fermented mackerel is sent to the household of a Nangjung [a title in the eighth rank in the 18-rank hierarchy of the Joseon bureaucracy] with the surname Choi.” The significance of this jar and its accompanying bamboo strip was not fully understood at the time of discovery. Upon further research, this find revealed evidence that transformed the conventional understanding of earthenware found in shipwrecks as simply utilitarian items for the crew. The jar and bamboo strip excavated from Mado Shipwreck No. 1 brought to light the fact that earthenware was also used for containers when transporting local specialties to other parts of the country.

Pottery found alongside written records is an invaluable source of information with great potential for academic research. Another example was excavated from the same shipwreck. A few weeks after the first discovery, a *mokgan* strip with more than half of its body lost was found stuck in the seabed in front of two earthenware jars. On this fragment of the shipping label is written “Two jars each containing five *mal* [a Joseon-era unit of volume] of food are sent to the household of Yun Gi-hwa in Kaesong.” Each jar has a capacity of approximately 18 liters. Given that one *mal* equals 3.4 liters, the five *mal* mentioned, or 17 liters, is roughly the amount that could be contained in each jar with a small headspace remaining. Although the damaged *mokgan* strip did not indicate the kinds of food being sent, the jars respectively produced shrimp and crab



The front and back of a *mokgan* strip

shells, complementing the information provided on the label. Given all the evidence—the location where the strip was found, its content, and the food residues in the jars—it is certain that these two earthenware jars were being used to pack fermented shrimp and crab to send to a person named Yun Gi-hwa living in Kaesong in present-day North Korea.

Besides Mado Shipwreck No.1, additional shipwrecks were excavated in the waters around Mado Island in 2010 and 2011. They are known as Mado Shipwrecks No. 2 and No. 3. Two and 20 *mokgan* shipping labels describing local specialties were respectively found from Mado No. 2 and Mado No. 3.



An earthenware jar from Mado Shipwreck No. 1

Mado No. 3 Transports Ingredients for a Royal Feast

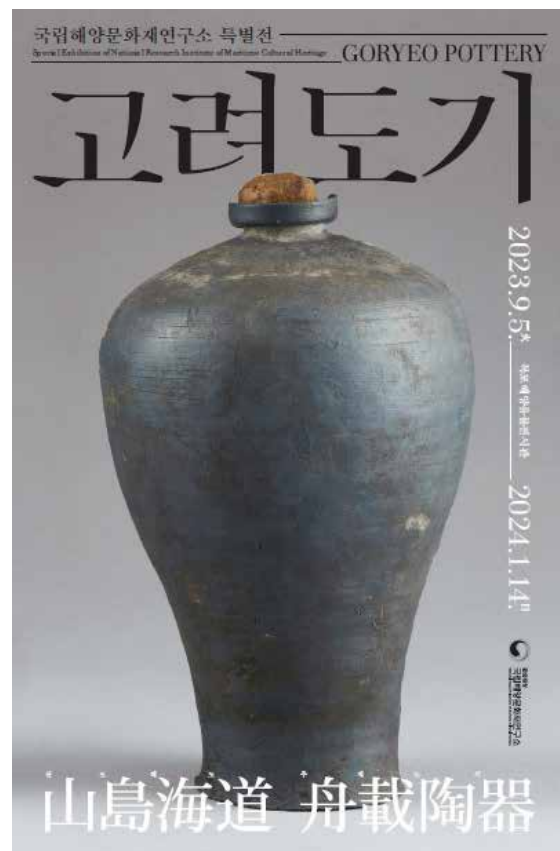
The three Mado shipwrecks were all grain transports with their primary cargo space filled with a range of cereals. However, the *mokgan* shipping labels discovered from the sites tell a somewhat different story about Mado No. 3. As with Mado No. 1 and No. 2, most of the labels concern grain (47 out of the 53 found with Mado No. 1 and 28 out of the 32 from Mado No. 2). In the case of Mado No. 3, however, 20 out of the 29 labels found—approximately 70 percent—mention non-grain local foods. Only five refer to grain. The number of earthenware vessels excavated from Mado No. 3 is the greatest among the three with 45 in total.

The range of foodstuffs aboard Mado No. 3 is diverse. While the local foods transported by Mado No. 1 and Mado No. 2 were mostly everyday types of seafood, those in Mado No. 3 were high-end specialty items from both the land and the sea, such as fresh abalone, fermented mussels, fermented abalone, dried shark meat, fish oil, dried mussels, pheasants, and dried dog meat. These foods were packed in different containers for transportation: fresh abalone and fermented seafood in earthenware jars; dried shark meat and dried dog meat in bamboo boxes; and dried mussels in bags made of rice straw (similar to the bags used for grain). Large quantities of specialty foods were carried aboard Mado No. 3. According to the shipping labels, at least six jars of fresh abalone are estimated to have been onboard. It is indicated that one jar contained 100 abalone. According to this, it is estimated that approximately 600 abalone would have been loaded on Mado No. 3 (no shells were discovered inside the jars, so it is presumed that abalone meat had been separated from the shells prior to shipment). There were ten jars of fermented mussels and fermented abalone, four jars of fish oil, two rice-straw bags of dried mussels, one box of dried shark meat, one box of dried dog meat, and three pheasants. In addition, the contents of two jars could not be identified because their labels were broken.

Another aspect of this specialty food cargo that merits attention is the recipients. A total of five jars of fresh abalone and fermented mussels were addressed to Kim Jun, who was among the most powerful figures in the Goryeo government from 1258 to 1268. Another jar of fresh abalone was sent to a Sirang (a title in the seventh rank) with the surname Kim, who is presumed to be one of Kim Jun's three sons. Other recipients are related to Kim

bestowed a leather belt on Yi Ta.” It seems that Kim Jun provided local specialties for royal feasts using ships like Mado No. 3. Mado No. 3 encountered violent waves and sunk in the waters off of Mado Island on its way to Ganghwado Island, but it seems that the specialty foods aboard the ship would have become ingredients in a birthday feast for the king if they had arrived safely at their destination.

Earthenware vessels from shipwrecks tell much richer and more interesting stories when they are discovered together with shipping labels. Many cultural items from the past are left silent and still buried under the ground or in the deep waters. It is our duty to awaken them and allow them to speak about the lives of Koreans of the past. The National Research Institute of Maritime Cultural Heritage is holding a special exhibition on Goryeo earthenware, including these examples from shipwrecks, from September 5, 2023 to January 14, 2024. It is an excellent opportunity to hear the intriguing stories told by these humble relics from the Goryeo era. 🌐



Poster for an ongoing special exhibition on Goryeo earthenware

HERITAGE REDISCOVERED

Minhwa Folk Painting Inspires Contemporary Design

The *minhwa* folk painting tradition of depicting collections of books and other objects provides a stylistic and thematic inspiration for contemporary art and design.

Text by Cho Hae-young, Professor in Communications Design at Konkuk University
Photos by Cho Hae-young, Gyeonggi Provincial Museum



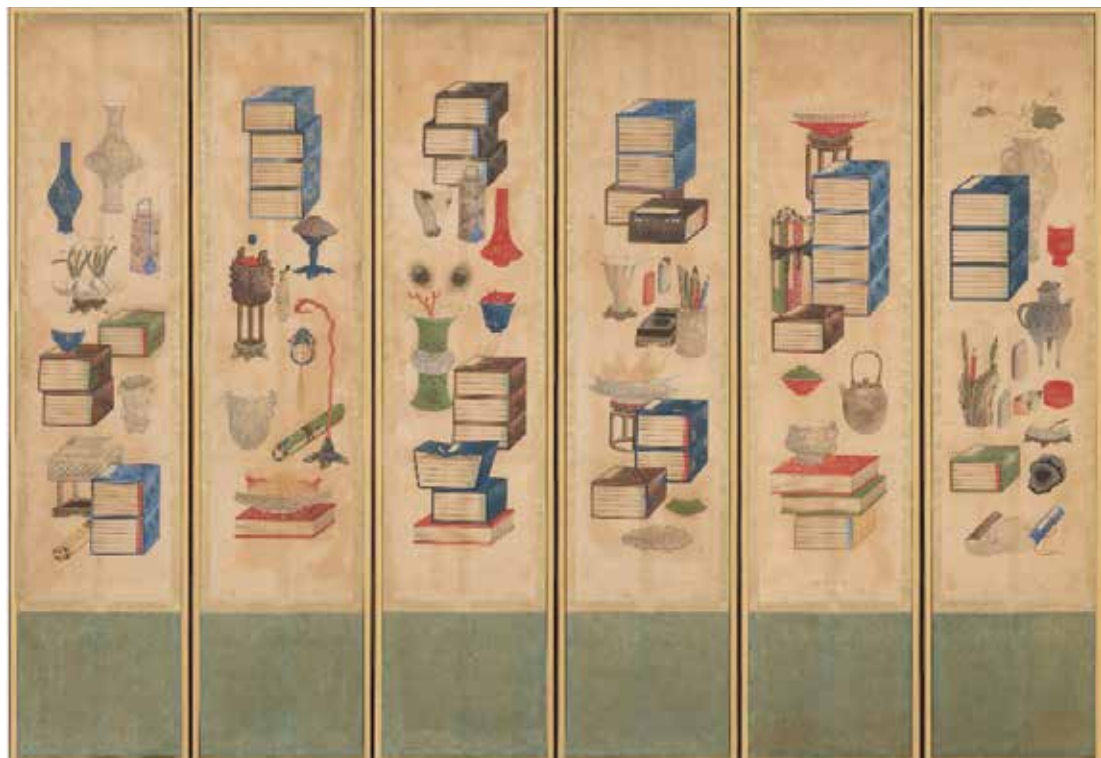
A *chaekgado* by the Joseon-era artist Jang Han-jong portrays a rectangular bookcase with its shelves stacked with books and other scholarly items all painted in a three-dimensional manner.



A drawing of a Korean house from Elizabeth Keith's *Old Korea*, a travelogue about Korea based on her visit to the country in 1919

Minhwa, literally “people’s painting,” refers to paintings appreciated by the common people during the Joseon Dynasty (1392–1910). In the strictly hierarchical society of the time, different subjects and styles of painting were produced depending on the social class of the intended audience. Artists working within the royal court produced paintings for appreciation by kings and other members of the royal family. The literati class generally preferred landscape paintings. The commoner class enjoyed *minhwa* paintings, a type of art that could engage anyone regardless of their social status, literacy, or gender. *Minhwa* paintings were not just a pleasure to the eye: They were everyday representations of religious messages calling for luck and happiness. These symbolic expressions of prayers decorated the walls, doors, and columns of traditional Korean houses. A drawing of a Korean house from Elizabeth Keith’s *Old Korea*, a travelogue about Korea based on her visit to the country in 1919, shows how traditional Korean households displayed *minhwa* as decorative items. This classic form of *minhwa* could present a range of subjects including human figures, animals, plants, landscape, and still objects.

Among the many sub-genres of *minhwa*, *chaekgado*, a genre representing a scholar's accouterments, has recently been gaining renewed attention. These depictions of books and other scholarly objects initially emerged with support from King Jeongjo (r. 1776–1800) as a political mechanism delivering the monarch's ideological preferences. It is recorded that in 1791 King Jeongjo broke with the longtime tradition of placing a painting of the sun the moon and five peaks (known as *irworobongdo*) behind the throne and instead replaced it with a *chaekgado*. For example, the *chaekgado* created by the royal artist Jang Han-jong (1768–1815) demonstrates the value King Jeongjo placed on reading books and seeking knowledge. Mounted on a folding screen, Jang's painting portrays a rectangular bookcase with each shelf showing stacks of books and other scholarly objects represented in a three-dimensional way. Curtains are expressed around the bookcase using *trompe l'oeil* techniques. This pursuit of making a viewer perceive painted objects as three-dimensional developed as a sub-genre of still-life painting in Europe in the 17th century. These highly realistic techniques are believed to have entered Korea via China. This also shows us how King Jeongjo's pursuit of innovation and novelty also played out in art. After taking form under



A *chaekgado* by the Joseon-era artist Lee Hyeong-rok



A *minhwa* work featuring Chinese characters alongside scholars' accouterments

the king's initiative, this style of painting gradually spread across the upper classes of Joseon Korea. Through the process of social dissemination, books and other scholarly motifs came to be represented alongside with other objects such as imports from China and exotic fruit.

Chaekgado reflects the Chinese trend of displaying valuable objects in a cabinet during the Qing Dynasty. The upper classes of Korea expressed their openness toward and admiration of new worlds through *chaekgado*. This desire for novelty was closely associated with other social phenomena of the day, such as the rising urbanism, developing capital economy, and flourishing culture. At the beginning of the 19th century, this genre of representing books and other objects gained popularity among the commoners and entered the realm of *minhwa*. Paintings of a scholar's accouterments as a form of *minhwa* became known under the name *chaekgeori*, and changes were introduced to the previous style. The bookshelf, which had served as a frame for the composition, was dropped and perspective was eliminated. A work created by the 19th-century painter Lee Hyeong-rok (1808–1872) demonstrates this evolution. Scholarly objects are represented alongside imported Chinese bronzes and porcelain. It shows how an emerging class of people with personal wealth were turning toward conspicuous spending and practical attitudes toward money.



Paintings of a scholar's accouterments added more objects and even Chinese characters into their motifs through the 19th and 20th centuries, transforming into a form of creative image-based art calling for happiness and luck. These lucky images were translated into paintings, folding screens, and embroidery and were popular across traditional Korean society. As with the European artistic tradition of still-life painting, this Korean folk tradition expressed strong desires for material abundance while providing an aesthetic boost of color and texture.



A *minhwa* painting representing images calling for happiness and luck



The contemporary artist Hong Kyoung-tack is strongly influenced by the Joseon-era art of representing books and objects

This *minhwa* tradition of painting books and other objects provides the present with a stylistic and thematic inspiration for contemporary art and design. Repeated images of stacks of books with an assemblage of objects are used to express modern aspirations to own things. Displayed as part of the 2019 Milan Design Week, the exhibition *Monochrome Monologue* was curated by the art director Jung Kuho based on his inspiration from this Joseon genre. The event was acclaimed as a creative modern reinterpretation of traditional culture. The work of the contemporary artist Hong Kyoung-tack also reflects a strong influence of the Joseon-era art of representing books and objects. By repeating three-dimensional representations of books, he expresses the contemporary aesthetics and aspirations that can be found in Joseon scholars' personal libraries. The artist Chae Byeong-rok creates graphic design and posters following in the footsteps of this Joseon-era art tradition. He adopts not only the subjects and styles from the *minhwa* tradition, but also the religious aspect as a medium for praying for luck and well-being. He is particularly noted



for his digital images that show modern interpretations of the five traditional Korean colors (*obangsaek*) together with written information. These works have been described as creatively combining the nation's cultural identity with modern requirements for delivering information. Jung, Hong, and Chae all draw on the images of *minhwa* paintings representing aspirations for knowledge and newness, add their artistic interpretations, and turn them into contemporary art. Their works embody the distinctive penchant for both learning and novelty that was traditionally valued in Korean society. 🌐



Top A work created by the art director Jung Kuho inspired by Joseon-era paintings of a scholar's accouterments

Bottom The designer Chae Byongrok creates graphic designs and posters incorporating diverse aspects of the *minhwa* tradition.

Digital Heritage Narrative In the GLAM Institutions of Korea



Chen Wu-Wei, M.E.A., Ph.D.

Chen Wu-Wei is the faculty of the School of Arts and Science at New York University (Shanghai campus) and an affiliated member with the Center for Global Asia (CGA) and the Shanghai Key Laboratory for Urban Design and Urban Science (LOUD). He is the co-author of *Digital Cultural Heritage* published by Springer, moderator of SIGGRAPH Asia workshops, Chair of ISDH2023 in Daejeon, and an editorial board member of *Computer System Networking and Telecommunications*. Prof. Chen focuses on the digital heritage imaging of caves and niches in the Asia-Pacific region (e.g., petroglyphs, reliefs, and statues in the Namsan Mountain of Gyeongju), and collaborates with colleagues of the NYU Abu-Dhabi. Currently, he works on the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of Central Java. Research site: www.bodyasechoes.com/dha

As a practitioner of Chinese calligraphy, Chen continually practices the Wei Bei script and further explores Islamic and Hindu calligraphy.

Image courtesy | © Cultural Heritage Administration of Korea



GLAM, an acronym for Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Museums, assists in disseminating the cultural heritage narrative to the general public through exhibitions, restorations, categorizations, and heritagizations. In the 21st Century, GLAM institutions carry further expectations to integrate the digital content into the narrative of heritage content in the digital era. Immersive spaces, interactive installations, Extended Reality (XR) experiences, terminal devices access, are among the various channels to demonstrate the immense potential of digital heritage content applications. Throughout the digital narrative deployed in the GLAM institutions of Korea, we experience the knowledge, memory, and aesthetics of national heritage beyond dimensions and time.



Interactive Media Wall, National Palace Museum of Korea

Museums As Digital Narrative

Learned knowledge from the excavations and field research needs a landing site for various needs – storage, categorization, conservation, and dissemination. Museums established next to the sites are the common practices to meet the above needs. Nowadays, sites and artifact digitizations become the standard operation procedure to document and back up the data. The challenges of the pandemic also accelerate the digitization of the museum contents under the demands of remote access. The digital assets naturally become integral parts of the museum's contents for safeguarding and narrative. Contemporary museums are bound to be equipped as multifunctional sites and become the digital narrative to offer services to the general public, academia and governmental institutions.

Digital Library for Cultural Heritage

Deployments of digital access for the cultural heritage contents are ubiquitous in the GLAM institutions of Korea: Digital Library of the National Palace Museum of Korea, Immersive Galleries of the National Museum of Korea, XR experience of Mireuksaji site virtual restorations, to name a few. The digital corridor of the Sharing Room in the National Palace Museum of Korea serves as the route for digital heritage content experiences.



Documentary of Textile Conservation Process, National Palace Museum of Korea

Interactive Media Wall (see Top Left photo), and VR/AR Experience Zones (see Bottom photo) are along the corridor to provide spectators with immersive experiences of the cultural contents. Large-scale video installations (see Top Right photo) are applied to the other halls to demonstrate the conservation process of the royal textiles.



Left VR Experience Zone, National Palace Museum of Korea

Right VR/AR Experience Zone, National Palace Museum of Korea



Left Vivid Moments with Masterpieces, National Museum of Korea

Right AR/HMD field experience of Mireuksaji site, Iksan National Museum

Immersive Digital Gallery

To integrate the immersive experiences onsite and in the virtual realm, the stone pagoda collections of the National Museum of Korea and the temple site virtual representation of the Iksan National Museum are among the good practices of preserving the historical memories through virtual visualizations. The Ten-Story Stone\ Pagoda of the Gyeongcheonsaji and the two stone pagodas of the Mireuksaji site represent the primitive and fusion styles of the architectural structures of Korea (Goryeo and Baekje style) and the influences of Buddhism (Amitābha and Maitreya belief). The digital narrative of AR and HMD applied to the Mireuksaji site (see Right photo) enables the re-imagination of the history onsite/outdoors, while the touch screen (see Left photo) interactively demonstrates delicate details of the relics in the National Museum of Korea.

Archive, Conservation and Restoration

NRICH (National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage) of the Cultural Heritage Administration carries the multi-facet missions for the conservation and safeguarding of the cultural memories. Digital Heritage Team is among the various research divisions such as Archaeology, Artistic Heritage, Architectural Heritage, Natural Heritage, Conservation

Science, Restoration Technology, and Disaster Prevention. Under the spectrums of NRICH's research directions, digital heritage practice and studies collaborate and connect the dots with cross-disciplinary studies to serve as the integration hub for the learned knowledge of cultural heritage.

Exhibition v.s. Meditation

Situated at the heart of the Capitol area, the National Museum of Korea in Seoul provides an alternative way for the crowds in the metropolitan city to find immediate tranquility at their fingertips. The permanent exhibition of the Pensive Bodhisattva statues (see Bottom photo) applies minimalistic interior design and time-based media to present the National Treasures in the museum space. The pensive posture of the two gilt-bronze statues dated from the late sixth and early seventh century is a familiar representation among the Buddhist deities in East Asia and China, yet the transformation of the surroundings from the main hall of the monastery to the contemporary gallery space echoes the needs of the residents in the fast-paced megacity - meditation for the peace of mind. To fulfill the needs, the French-



Two Pensive Bodhisattva Statues, National Museum of Korea



A Room of Quiet Contemplation, Jean-Julien Pous

based artist Jean-Julien Pous employs moving images and sound design to orchestrate the spatiotemporal relationship in the gallery (see Top photo). The installation transcends the spirituality of the religious site into the exhibition space, and resonates with religious wisdom through the design language. The video installation and the sound design deployed at the corridor next to the main gallery smartly use the partition to prevent the interference of meditators/spectators next-door. The circulating route around the two deities also creates the onsite experience of the monastery.

Accessible and Inclusive Design

Besides the high-tech elements deployed in the GLAM institutions, concepts for the care of disability and the various age groups also get discovered in printed materials, presentations, interior structures, and visiting routes. The brail system integrated with the printed elements in the cards, leaflets, and brochures of the National Museum of Korea reveals the accessibility design for the disability groups. For minors, children, and infants, specific sections such as the children's museum also become integral parts of the whole design in the exhibition space. The National Palace Museum of Korea applies the accessibility to the

interactive mural (see photo 1) and touch screens for adolescents, children, and disabled groups.

Interactivity, height and easy access blend into the digital narrative seamlessly. Animation, illustration, and cartoon character design based on cultural heritage content also attract youngsters for learning and entertainment.

Sustainability As Heritagization

The life cycle of sites and artifacts is irreversible, and digital heritage techniques assist in safeguarding and disseminating the cultural memories along the road. Through digitization, virtual restoration, extended reality narrative and interactive storytelling, the collective assets of mankind are sustained in the digital domain and inherited by the future generations. 🌐



1



2



3



4

- 1 Interactive Media Wall, National Palace Museum of Korea
- 2 Vivid Moments with Masterpieces, National Palace Museum of Korea
- 3 Multi-sided Video Experience Zone, National Palace Museum of Korea
- 4 Vivid Moments with Masterpieces, National Palace Museum of Korea

NATURAL BEAUTY OF KOREA

Taebaeksan Mountain

Text by Cultural Heritage Administration
Photos by Clipartkorea



Mt. Taebaeksan became a provincial-level public park in 1989 before becoming South Korea's 22nd national park in 2016. It spans 70,052 square kilometers. There are ancient alters to the heavens on 1,560-meter Yeongbong Peak, to the north and east of which can be found Janggunbong Peak and Munsubong Peak respectively rising 1,567 meters and 1,517 meters. Busoebong Peak (1,546 meters) is located between Yeongbong and Munsubong Peaks. The highest peak on Mt. Taebaeksan is Mt. Hambaeksan which is at 1,572 meters. Along with these alters for the heavens, Mt. Taebaeksan boasts an array of precious cultural and natural heritage. This includes Geomnyongso Pond, the source of the Hangang River, Manhangjae Pass, a wildflower habitat sprawling from Geumdaebong Peak to Mt. Daedeoksan, a habitat of spreading yews around Janggunbong Peak, and Baekcheon Stream, the world's southernmost habitat for lenok (Manchurian trout). Manggyeongsa Temple, located at an elevation of 1,470 meters, is the highest Buddhist temple in South Korea. The area is home to an archive housing the Joseon-era *Annals of the Joseon Dynasty*. The mountains wear a coat of royal azalea blooms from late spring to early summer and rest under a covering of snow in winter.



The Baekdudaegan Mountain Range in snow as seen from Janggunbong Peak



The Baekdudaegan Mountain Range in snow as seen from Janggunbong Peak



Trekking Mt. Taebaeksan in winter offers an opportunity to appreciate the beauty of snow-covered trees and plants.





Top Trekking Mt. Taebaeksan in winter offers an opportunity to appreciate the beauty of snow-covered trees and plants.

Bottom Mt. Taebaeksan enjoys a reputation for beautiful winter treks.

Top The stone marking the top of Yeongbong Peak in the foreground and the altars for heaven in the background

Bottom Sagillyeong Pass leading to the summit of Mt. Taebaeksan

NATURAL BEAUTY OF KOREA

Top Mt. Taebaeksan provides a habitat for spreading yews, a tree known for its longevity.

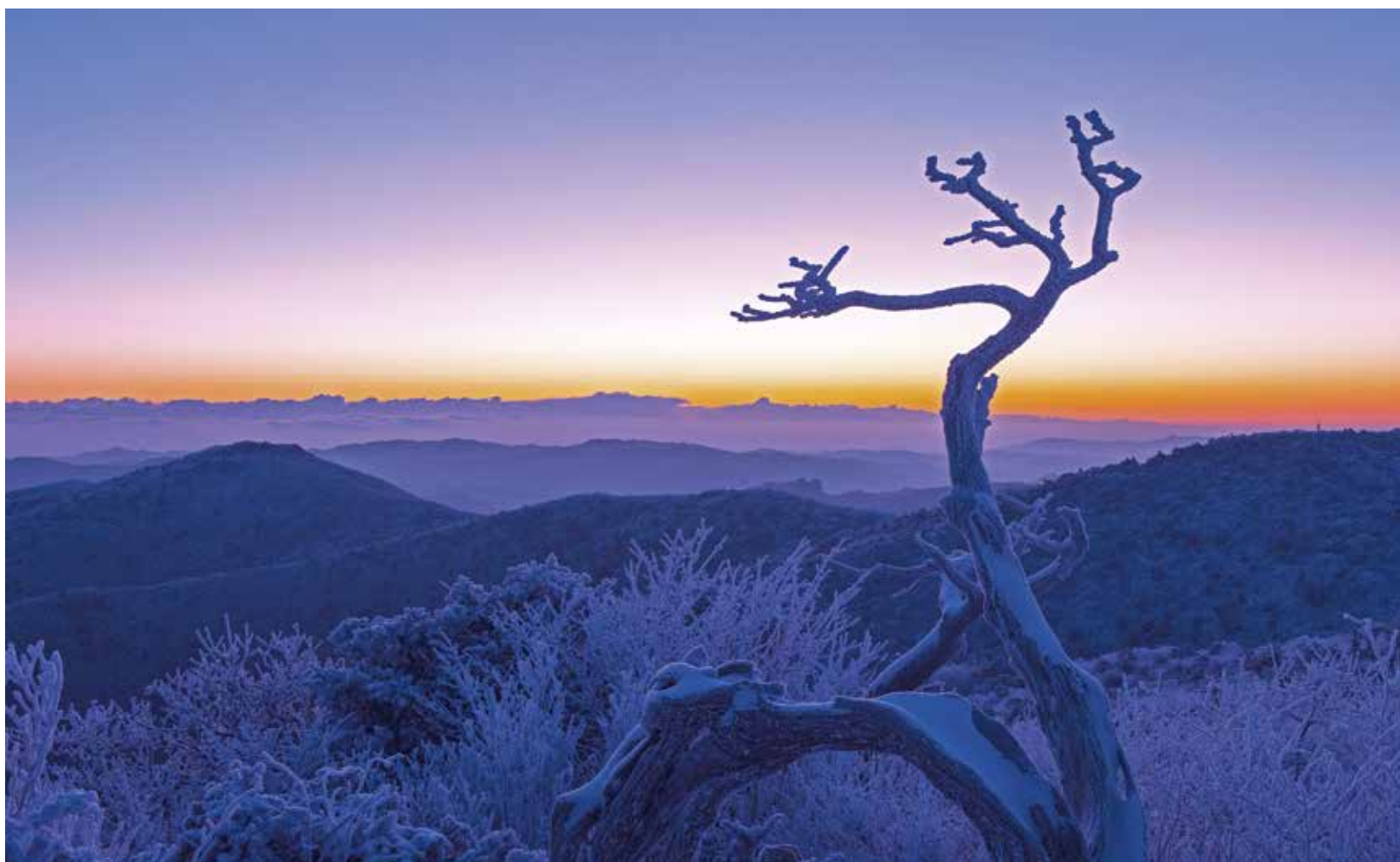
Left Janggunbong Peak in snow

Right The altars to the heavens where rites dating back to the start of the Silla period are being observed in the present on National Foundation Day.

Top The spreading yew habitat at dawn

Bottom Plants growing through snow in early spring





Works of Traditional Artisanry on Display

The 2023 Exhibition of Heritage Restoration Skills showcases the talents and skills of heritage restoration specialists on the front lines of safeguarding the country's cultural heritage.

Text by Kim Ji-sang, Korea Cultural Properties Artisans Association
Photos by Korea Cultural Properties Artisans Association

While trees at Gyeongbokgung Palace were showing new colors in the early autumn days of mid-October, heritage restoration specialists were busy moving items into this principal royal residence of the Joseon Dynasty (1392–1910). They were setting out products of their years of dedication to their craft for display at the Exhibition of Heritage Restoration Skills. Held from October 13 to 19 in the area in front of Heungnyemun Gate at Gyeongbokgung Palace, this year marked the 18th annual version of the event. This showcase for the talents and skills of heritage restoration specialists is organized by the Korea Cultural Properties Artisans Association, a national group for professionals who carry out the maintenance, conservation, and restoration of heritage buildings and sites.

The Korea Cultural Properties Artisans Association was founded in 1988 by drawing upon the accomplishments of artisans of the past. Today, it provides a reliable and robust support system for heritage restoration specialists currently working in the field. The roughly 12,000 members of the association are on the front lines of safeguarding the country's cultural heritage and are leading the efforts to preserve heritage assets listed at the national and local levels. These efforts are performed by hand with little help from machinery. The work is largely about patience and self-reflection.

This year's event featured works from 16 of the 24 recognized heritage repair skill areas, including carpentry, painting, gilding, and lacquering. It was a rare chance for members of the public to gain such an up-close appreciation of the works of masters of these traditional skills.



A copy of the portrait of King Taejo housed at Gyeonggijeon Shrine

Visitors did not hold back their compliments as they expressed their admiration for the items displaying the talents of these masters. The top prize at the event was awarded to a reproduction of the floral wall of Jagyeongjeon Hall at Gyeongbokgung Palace which exhibited traditional plastering skills. Other highlights included a royal peony painting, the flamboyant but dignified design of which added to the vibrancy of the event; a replication of a royal seal of King Taejo, the founder of the Joseon Dynasty, displayed alongside the king's portrait; and a lavishly decorated small table with openings in its legs that demonstrated how traditional lacquering can harmonize with contemporary elements.

The exhibition inside the palace coincided with a real-time performance of traditional crafting in the area in front of Gwanghwamun, the main gate of Gyeongbokgung. Experts in diverse traditional skills displayed the knowledge and experience they had accumulated in their field, demonstrating to audiences how they practiced their trades. People looked on in awe as carpenters skillfully wielded their adzes to turn a log into a tapering wooden column for traditional architecture. Traditional furniture makers showed their great dexterity as they manipulated the wood pieces required to craft their works—cutting them, planing their surfaces, and piecing them together. The high-pitched tones of chiseling stone seemed to fit the crispness of the autumn weather. Gilders manifested incredible dexterity as they coated evil-chasing masks with gold sheets. Visitors greatly appreciated this valuable chance to see so many experts performing the diverse skills required in their crafts.



Left Traditional furniture-makers demonstrating their skills
Right People trying their hands at traditional crafts



A small hexagonal table with cloud-shaped openings in the legs

Besides these two main events, a public experience program was held on the sidelines with masters of various traditional skills participating as instructors. Experts in traditional painting, copying paintings, and furniture-making helped participants paint lotus flowers on a rafter, color peony drawings based on motifs from traditional painting, and flatten the surface of wood with a plane. Participants were nearly as serious about their efforts as the professionals were about their trades. This program allowing people to try their hands at traditional skills with guidance from experts was enormously popular. The traditional backdrop of the program, Gwanghwamun Gate, enhanced the feel of authenticity for the experience. People waited in long lines to be part of the program. So many people hoped to participate that supplies ran out before the line did.

Tradition is a legacy of the past, a manifestation of our collective memory, and an outcome of what we value today. It is our duty to history and an integral part of our collective identity to take good care of cultural heritage, pass it down to future generations, and disseminate it widely at home and abroad. Safeguarding tradition is nurturing both the present and the future. Losing cultural heritage means simultaneously losing our past and future. We should appreciate the key role that heritage restoration specialists play in preserving and safeguarding our precious cultural heritage. ●

Gaya Tumuli, Designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site

The Gaya Tumuli, a collection of ancient burial sites reflecting the Gaya civilization on the Korean Peninsula, has been added to the UNESCO World Heritage List, making it South Korea's 16th World Heritage Site. The decision was made during the 45th session of the World Heritage Committee in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on September 17, 2023.



Left Yugok-ri and Durak-ri Tumuli (© World Heritage Nomination Office for Gaya Tumuli)

Right Gyo-dong and Songhyeon-dong Tumuli (© World Heritage Nomination Office for Gaya Tumuli)



45th Session of the World Heritage Committee

The seven cemeteries exemplify a unique ancient East Asian civilization that coexisted with its neighbors while maintaining a distinct political system. They represent significant evidence of Gaya's cultural heritage and offer a glimpse into the burial practices of Korea's ancient civilization.

The nomination was submitted to UNESCO in January 2021, and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) recommended the Gaya Tumuli's inscription during on-site missions in May 2023. The World Heritage Committee made some recommendations for the site, including acquiring privately owned land plots within the seven cemeteries, mitigating the impact of intrusive elements, and involving local communities in the decision-making processes.

The Cultural Heritage Administration is committed to preserving the value of the Gaya Tumuli as a World Heritage Site. It will collaborate with local governments to contribute to the development of the local community. 🌐



June 25th, 1907

The secret emissaries, Lee Jun, Lee Sang-sol, and Lee Wi-jong,
arrived at Hague, Netherland.

Their mission: to spread the illegality of the Japan-Korea Treaty
to the world by attending Hague Conventions!

Due to the interruption of Japan, they couldn't enter the convention.
Nevertheless, they were able to appeal the situation of Korea
to many world leaders and presses.

**Hague secret emissaries' earnest dream for
the independence of Korea continues
to the 21st century.**



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On the Cover

The peony-patterned lacquerware box on the cover, an important piece of Korean heritage returned home this year, demonstrates the apogee of Goryeo-era mother-of-pearl lacquerware. Lacquerware adorned with mother-of-pearl are considered an excellent showcase for both the breadth and depth of Korean craft.