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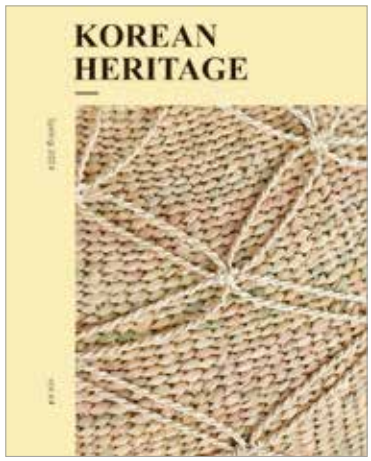

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정갈함

정갈하다: jeonggal·hada denotes being orderly, tidy, and in a physically pristine state in the dictionary. However, for Koreans, “jeonggal·hada” embodies a deeper, more abstract, and spiritual significance. It describes someone whose appearance is simple and streamlined, who is genuine in their interactions, and who communicates and asserts themselves with clarity. Describing someone as “jeonggal·hada” implies that the individual prefers a calm and serene ambiance. Moreover, they offer comfort to others through a balance of seriousness and cheerfulness, maintaining a steady emotional state.

Written by Cho Hye-young (Loewe Craft Prize, The Korea Association of Art & Design)

Cheonghwa Baekja of Joseon

Simplistic Beauty Expressed in Cobalt Blue

Jar with Plum, Bamboo, and Butterfly Design
The Trinity Gallery, Seoul_Yoo Eui-Jeong

Cheonghwa Baekja (cobalt blue underglaze white porcelain) is a type of white porcelain from Joseon. Patterns are painted with cobalt pigment on high-purity white porcelain, which is then embellished with a clear glaze before being fired. *Cheonghwa Baekja* has been undervalued and underappreciated as a cultural heritage due to the perception that it is a mere imitation of Chinese ceramics. However, when comparing the cobalt blue underglaze white porcelain vessels of Korea, China, and Japan, which all share the culture of *Cheonghwa Baekja,* they are distinctly different to the extent that they are easily distinguishable. The most noticeable feature of Korean *Cheonghwa Baekja* is the beauty of its white space. Unlike in China and Japan, the fact that there is white porcelain underneath does not detract from the artistry of the white porcelain itself while also harmoniously incorporating the unique beauty of *Cheonghwa Baekja*. Like Goryeo celadon, which is highly prized, *Cheonghwa Baekja* has developed into a unique beauty of our country, and it is worth examining its evolutionary process.

Cobalt can be found in various cultures across both the East and West, and its history is long-standing. The use of cobalt blue as a pigment dates back to the Bronze Age, and cobalt-tinted glass has also been discovered in ancient civilizations such as Egypt, Persia, and Pompeii. The name cobalt was given to

Jar with Plum and Bird Design
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF KOREA

Jar with Ten Longevity Symbols
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF KOREA

Jar with Landscape Design
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF KOREA

Plate with Sosanggang River Design
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF KOREA

the metal element in the 18th century by Swedish chemist Georg Brandt, who isolated cobalt from its ore, and it has been used ever since. This name originated from the 16th-century miners in Saxony, Germany, who called it cobalt after a mythical creature known to live in the mines, known as *Kobold*. This indicates that cobalt was actively utilized in the East and West around the same time.

The diversification of cobalt blue worldwide began in Kashan, Persia. From the 13th century and earlier, Persia produced pottery painted with blue cobalt pigment on white clay, sourcing the raw material from Kashan, a region rich in cobalt oxide. However, since they were unable to produce fine ceramics like those in East Asia, they developed tiles to cool down due to the sweltering heat. Since cobalt pigment was available in abundance in Kashan, unlike in East Asia, they mass-produced it and used it on a large scale, such as decorating the royal palaces of mosques. This would cross over to the Iberian Peninsula and become the Azulejo craft.

Furthermore, Persian cobalt blue was introduced into East Asian culture through the Ming Dynasty in China. This is inferred from the Chinese term for cobalt blue, *huihui qing,* where *hui* (回) refers to Islam in Chinese characters. The East Asian region, though not rich in cobalt pigment, had abundant kaolin and was already producing high-quality ceramics. Among these, the region of Jingdezhen in China was renowned for its high-quality kaolin from Gaoling Shan Mountain, making it a famous ceramic production area. The cobalt blue from Kashan, transported on camels to Jingdezhen, met with the high-quality porcelain made from kaolin, resulting in the creation of cobalt blue underglaze white porcelain vessels.

The kaolin from Jingdezhen is a soil evenly composed of quartz, clay, and feldspar. Quartz acts as the bone, clay as the flesh, and feldspar as the glue that binds them together, allowing for the production of high-quality porcelain. These cobalt blue underglaze white porcelain vessels began to be exported to the Middle East and then spread to the East and West through international exchanges. It became trendy in Europe, enabling China to amass a great deal of wealth.

Subsequently, in Europe, extensive efforts were made to create white porcelain, the basis for cobalt blue underglaze white porcelain vessels, even involving alchemists in the process. In the early 18th century, the Kingdom of Dresden-Saxony in Germany discovered kaolin, the secret ingredient of white porcelain. As a result, Meissen in Germany became the center of the world's ceramic industry through its golden age in the 19th century and remains so to this day. Meissen's success

Jar with Plum, Pine, and Bird Design
The Trinity Gallery, Seoul_Yoo Eui-Jeong

Pentagonal Water Dropper with Grass and Insect Design
Seoul Museum of Craft Art

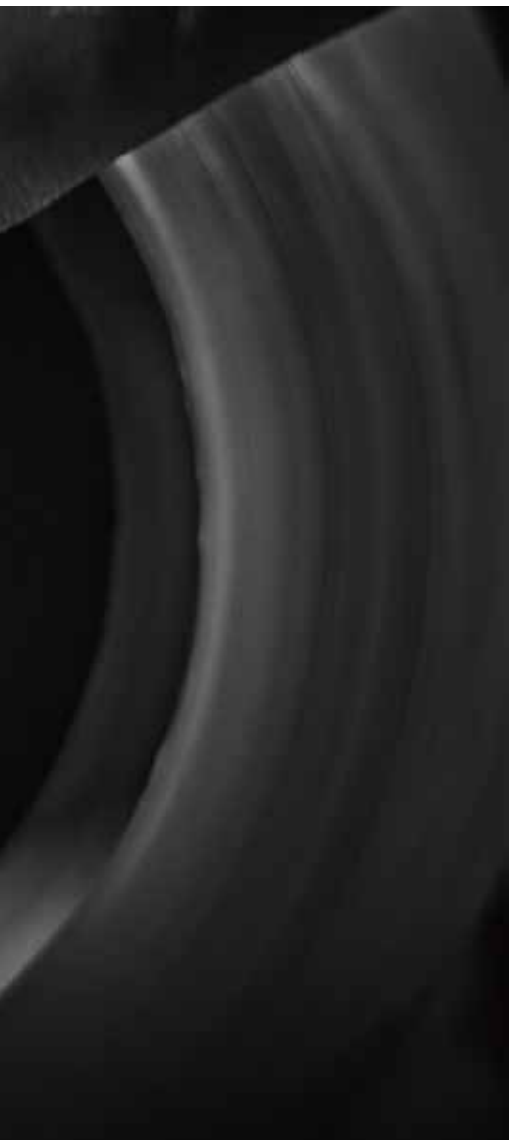
paved the way for the modern European porcelain industry and culture, influencing Delft in the Netherlands, Sevres in France, and Bone China in England.

Around the same time, the Chinese cobalt underglaze white porcelain was introduced to Joseon by importation from Ming. The product of diplomatic relations was initially enjoyed by scholars and the literati class. Gradually, Korea began producing its own *Cheonghwa Baekja*. It started by imitating the Chinese style but became more straightforward and concise over time.

Meanwhile, the culture of *Cheonghwa Baekja* was introduced to Japan by Korean potters who were taken there during the Imjin War. A notable example is Imari porcelain, which, by adding gold, displayed a different development from that of Joseon, becoming even more ornate.

However, in Joseon, cobalt pigment was an expensive import primarily consumed by the royal and scholar-official classes and was not exported overseas. Thus, *Cheonghwa Baekja* developed more intensively during this period. In terms of composition, *Cheonghwa Baekja* emphasized white space and tended to have lighter pattern lines than its Chinese counterparts.

Following the philosophy of Neo-Confucianism, it favored simplicity and clarity over ornateness, with a general emphasis on a white color scheme. Like white porcelain, it embodies the spiritual values of the era, such as neatness and simplicity. Still, its beauty is further highlighted through restrained splendor, standing out amidst the relatively ornate cobalt blue



culture of the East and West.
This uniqueness is also evident in the patterns and motifs carved into *Cheonghwa Baekja.* The culture of *wayu* (臥遊), which means to enjoy while lying down, is well represented in *Cheonghwa Baekja,* which refers to the culture of mountain water appreciation, in which Joseon's scholar-officials brought natural scenery into their homes when practical constraints prevented them from going to nature. Typical activities included viewing landscape paintings, reading travelogues of mountain excursions, and enjoying mountain-shaped objects. While *wayu* was not unique to Joseon, as evidenced by the formal characteristics of *Cheonghwa Baekja,* it tended to be somewhat light-hearted and playful, differing from the Chinese culture of *wayu*, which aimed at cultivating the spirit and mind.
White porcelain epitomizes simplicity, revealing its beauty through its form and subtle hues. However, *Cheonghwa Baekja* expresses this beauty more concretely and richly with the blue lines carved into its base.
At that time, Korean landscape paintings were primarily made into albums, folding screens, and scrolls. As the production and consumption of *Cheonghwa Baekja* became more accessible in late Joseon, they developed into landscape design. This became more popular because it could reflect various tastes, making it accessible to a wider range of people.
In addition, because of its distorted nature, unlike the form of albums and folding screens, porcelain is not flat but curved and three-dimensional, and various shapes such as circles, ridges, and linear undulating shapes are compartmentalized on its surface to separate and represent space. This concept, known as *neunghwachang* (菱花窓), embodies the longing for nature in the shape of a window, enriching the cultural heritage of *Cheonghwa Baekja.*
The long history and tradition of Korean ceramics continue to inspire young artists today. We have a rich cultural heritage that continues to expand with new ideas, embracing the spiritual values and philosophies of our ancestors. Korea's ability to create its own unique cultural heritage amidst the global expansion of cobalt blue is similar to cobalt's magnetic properties as a metallic element. Cobalt is ferromagnetic, meaning it can magnetize itself without an external magnetic field.
In other words, it has the property of generating strong force on its own. Among all the cobalt blues in the world, *Cheonghwa Baekja* has drawn its unique line. Just as in the past, Korean cobalt blue will continue to evolve into forms that carry its own identity through those living in the new era.

Written by Jang Heon-deok (Korea National University of Cultural Heritage)

Byeongsanseowon

Korean Confucian Academy, Built with a Noble Heart and Dignity

Photographed by Kim Young-moon

A *seowon* was an educational institution during the Joseon Dynasty, where scholars gathered to study Confucianism. Although they served a similar role as modern schools, they had unique characteristics that set them apart. *Seowon* served an important role in honoring esteemed scholars and conducting their ancestral rites. These Confucian rituals originated in *seowon* and have long provided spiritual outlets. Each *seowon* had a mentor-like figure who transmitted Confucian traditions through rituals and established a solid academic foundation for the *seowon*. *Seowon* were grounded in Confucianism, a philosophy that focused on human ideals and the core principles that govern the world along with deep matters of civilization. *Seowon* was built throughout the provinces during the Joseon Dynasty and actively involved themselves in Confucian studies. They also took part in diverse social and political activities.

As a result, they contributed significantly to the dissemination of Confucianism in society at large.

The first *seowon* in Korea, Baegundongseowon, was founded in 1543 by a bureaucrat in Punggi (present-day Punggi-eup, Yeongju-si, Gyeongsangbuk-do Province) as a space for holding rituals for local Confucian scholars. In 1550, King Myeongjong renamed it to Sosuseowon. He donated a wooden plaque inscribed with the new name along with lands, bonded servants, and a vast library to support and manage the *seowon*. The royal bestowal of a name upon a *seowon* was a sign of state recognition that raised its social status.

Known as *Saeakseowon* ("royally chartered Confucian Academies"), such *seowon* were offered various privileges. They served as footings for local influential figures to accumulate social and political power, helped check the central political authority, and eventually came to wield social authority by engaging in politics.

However, the indiscriminate mushrooming of these *saeakseowon* resulted in abuses of their privileges. In response, Heungseon Daewongun enacted a policy in 1871 of abolishing large numbers of *seowon*. Eventually, only forty-seven royally charted *seowon* survived, far below the peak of 679.

Korean *seowon* are imbued with the East Asian spiritual heritage of pursuing generosity and propriety based on Confucianism. They have also sustained the architectural practice of seeking harmony between spiritual ideals and nature. In recognition of this, *Seowon* was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list on July 6, 2019, at the 43rd meeting of the World Heritage Committee held in Azerbaijan. Nine *seowon* (Sosuseowon in Yeongju, Namgyeseowon in Hamyang, Oksanseowon in Gyeongju, Dosanseowon and Byeongsanseowon in Andong, Piramseowon in Jangseong, Dodongseowon in Dalseong, Museongseowon in Jeongeup, and Donamseowon in Nonsan) were

collectively designated as "*Seowon*, Korean Confucian Academies." The most beautiful among these *seowon* is Byeongsanseowon in Andong, which honors Ryu Seong-ryong (art name: Seoae). In 1614, a local authority named Jeong Gyeong-se (art name: Ubok) established Jondeoksa Shrine to honor Ryu's scholarly accomplishments and generous deeds and enshrine his ancestral tablet (a wooden tablet bearing the name of the deceased). He also renamed the shrine as Byeongsanseowon. In 1863, the shrine was designated as a royally chartered *seowon* with the king's bestowal of a wooden plaque inscribed with the name Byeongsanseowon.

Byeongsanseowon was sited in accordance with the geomantic principle of *baesanimsu*. With two mountains to the north and south, it overlooks the slowly flowing Nakdonggang River. The mountain behind the *seowon* is named Hwasan ("flower mountain") because its peaks resemble flower buds. Byeongsan, the mountain rising in front of the *seowon*, is derived from the resemblance of its natural vistas to a beautiful folding screen. The sight of Byeongsan Mountain, which faces white sands and a flowing river, brings to mind an Eastern-style painting.

I will now guide you through the architectural structures of Byeongsanseowon as if you were strolling through them. The main entrance, Bongnyemun Gate, leads to the lower part of Mandaeru Pavilion, a structure built for enjoying the surrounding views. Upon ascending a few steps, Dongjae, Seojae, and Ipgyodang Halls, which served as study halls, can be found to the left and right. A wall separated the eastern side, creating a space for managing the *seowon*. Behind it, on the hill, stood Jongdeoksa Shrine to Ryu Seong-ryong and Janggyeonggak, an annex building that housed woodblocks. In terms of its overall layout, Bongnyemun Gate and Mandaeru Pavilion served as an entry area. Ipgyodang, Dongjae, and Seojae Halls functioned as academic spaces; and Jondeoksa Shrine and Gojiksa Hall were dedicated to ancestral rites.

The name of the main entrance, "Bongnyemun," alludes to an

excerpt from the Analects, a collection of quotations from the prominent Chinese thinker Confucius. It expresses the idea of the self-discipline of a person who humbles themself and seeks out the proprieties. The Mandaeru Pavilion derives its name from a quote by the famous Tang Chinese poet Du Fu, who described the beauty of a blue cliff during the evening. The Mandaeru has a humble look as it lacks the decorative *dancheong* coloring. The natural landscape that unfolds beyond its round pillars is a beautiful work of art in itself. The vistas seen from the wooden floor of the pavilion have enriched the spirit of the Confucian students who studied and rested at the *seowon*. It is fascinating to experience Mandaeru Pavilion and the changes in the scenery of the Nakdonggang River and Byeongsan Mountain throughout the four seasons.

Ipgyodang Hall, where the Confucian students practiced their lessons, has a wooden plaque bearing the inscription 屛山書院 (Byeongsanseowon) hanging from its facade and another inside with the inscription 立教堂 (Ipgyodang). Ipgyo means to establish the teachings. It forms the central space for the *seowon*. There were three central *kan* (bays) separating the residential area of the head of *seowon* from a quasi-teachers' office on the west.

The two auxiliary rooms, each heated by a furnace, were working areas for staff for ancestral rites. In the central wooden-floored space, lists of staff assignments for various tasks for annual ancestral rites are hung. Seojae and Dongjae Halls face each other on the left and right sides of the front yard of Ipgyodang Hall. Confucian students lived here while studying. Based on the hierarchy among the students, older students lived in Dongjae Hall. A small room in Seojae Hall was used to store books. Traditional Korean buildings commonly comprise odd-numbered *kan*, but Dongjae and Seojae Halls have four *kan* with an extra *kan* between rooms. Two *maehwa* (*prunus mume*) trees were planted in front of Dongjae and Seojae Halls. They are known to endure the harsh winter and blossom first to signal the impending spring. They symbolize the nobility, dignity, and strength of a scholar's spirit that never yields to injustice.

Gojiksa, located to the east of the educational area, which includes Ipgyodang, Seojae, and Dongjae, not only served administrative purposes of the *seowon* but also managed the ancestral rites

of Springs and Falls. To fully understand Byeongsanseowon, it's important to mention the memorial services held for Ryu Seong-ryong. In traditional Korean culture, ancestral rites are performed for the four previous generations, and the spirit tablets are buried in the ground. However, for individuals who made significant contributions to the country or were highly virtuous and knowledgeable, their wooden ancestral tablets, believed to contain their souls, were not buried. Instead, the state authorized the enshrinement of these tablets at a shrine, where separate ancestral rites are held. Hence, Byeongsanseowon is a space that connects the intangible value of the spirit, focused on the culture of ancestral rites, bridging the past to the present and the future. This spirit is the result of reflecting on life as a human being, while at the same time, it is continuously created by relationships with others over generations. As there are no fixed answers to our lives, the *seowon* is a very humane space where the process of contemplating and pursuing the ideal human being is carried out. The significance and value of *seowon* as cultural heritage are priceless because our cultural heritage is passed down from the past to the future, contains the context of identity, and exerts its value by being connected beyond the physical limits of time. Why don't we look beyond the loss of bonds and humanity in modern society to the culture of *seowon*, which explored bonds and humanity across time?

Written by Lee Gyung-geun Photographed by Kim Chul-sung

Duseokjang (Metal Artisan)

Neatness Embracing the Shabbiness

Jangseok are metal fittings that are attached to wooden furniture and other household items for both functional and decorative purposes. Artisans who specialize in making these fittings are called *duseokjang* in Korean (*duseok* is another word for *jangseok*). The word *duseokjang* contains the Chinese character 荳 (*du*), which means 'bean'. It is said that the word originated from the sound of metal being hammered. In Korean, the word *kong* means bean, and 'kong-kong' is the onomatopoeia for the sound of metal being hammered. These metal fittings also have a yellowish hue that reminds one of soybeans. *Duseok* is a term for an alloy of copper and zinc, commonly known as brass.

Jangseok are beautiful on their own, however, they are not made to exist by themselves, as their beauty lies in how they shine together with other objects rather than independently. *Jangseok* is usually used as a component of wooden items. Advancements in regional joinery likely led to the development of *jangseok* in Jinju. The Jinju Folk Culture Hall is the only exhibition hall in the country dedicated to *jangseok*.

Jangseok can be placed on the corners of old wooden objects like crates and chests to conceal wear and tear and give them a fresh look. Over time, the attached *jangseok* bears the burden of use in place of the wood while imbuing a subtle beauty. Similar to mending torn clothes, *jangseok* reflects humility, the act of valuing and reusing items by fixing them when necessary. In 1980, *duseokjang* was designated an Important Intangible Cultural Property in Korea. The term refers to artisans who craft metal fittings, including door handles, hinges, and locks. The terms *jangseok* and *duseok* are not commonly used nowadays, possibly because wooden furniture is becoming less common. Even if they are used, the furniture is treated more gently than in the past, which means that repair and reinforcement are less frequent. However, the main reason is that repairing objects and continuing to use them has become increasingly rare.

In addition to the yellow brass material, *duseok* refers to the act and series of processes of creating particular uses and forms. Initially, *duseok* was made of yellow brass with a golden hue. However, towards the end of the Joseon period, craftsmen began to use a cupronickel alloy made by combining copper and nickel instead, which gave it a silver hue. At first glance, *duseok* can be mistaken for *bangjja* bronze.

However, *bangjja* is made by alloying copper and tin and has been used for household items such as tableware, as it is non-toxic.

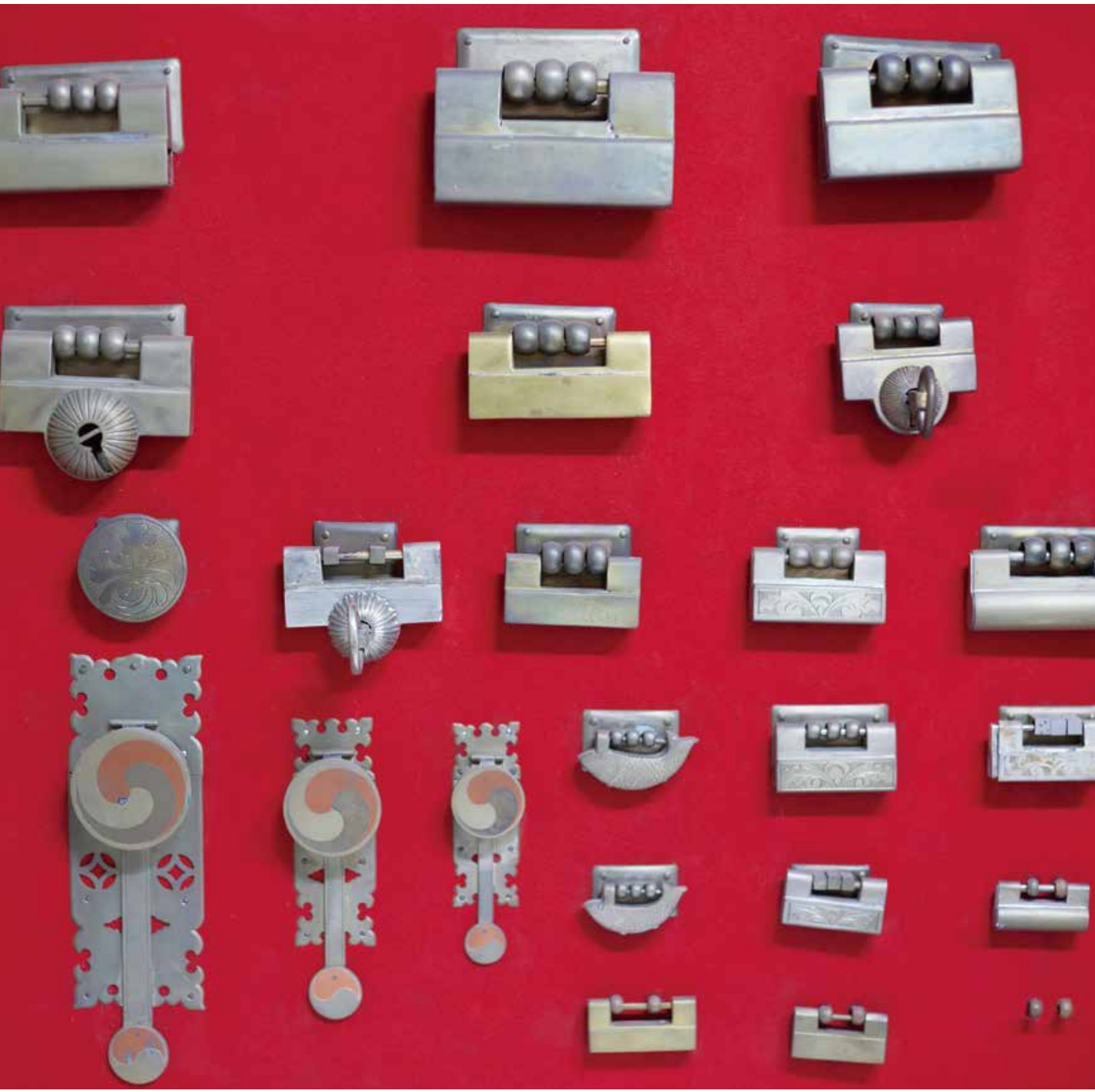
Gyeongguk daejeon, Joseon's most representative law book, states that four *duseokjang*s worked for the Gongjo (Ministry of Public Works) and Sanguiwon (Royal Clothing Office). Gongjo was the administrative organization responsible for architecture, civil engineering, and handicrafts. On the other hand, Sanguiwon managed clothing and other attires required by the royal family. The membership of *duseokjang* artisans in institutions that performed public functions for the royal family and the state suggests their significance in the society of that time. Today, there is a lower demand for *duseokjang* and a decreased interest in the profession. However, some continue to carry on the tradition and spread the value of the craft. Yang Hyeon-seung, Traditional Skills Transmitter No. 04-4, creates *duseok* with his son Yang Dong-il and long-time colleague Kim Byeong-cheol. Fifty years ago, Yang first picked up a hammer and started working with metal. After finishing middle school, he went to Gwangju, Jeollanam-do Province, with his uncle to learn the craft of *duseok*. He was the fourth child among eight siblings. His career of half a century started quite mundanely. Over time, the craft became his roots.

At some point, he figured that he would not survive if he were to break away from the roots that bound him to *duseok*. Therefore, he chose to let them grow even deeper and more dense. In a time when people were grateful just to have a job, he moved to Seoul and relied on his friend and familiar skill, *duseok*, to make a living in a cutthroat world. As the South Korean economy developed, his living conditions gradually improved. By the 1970s, he owned a workshop near Gyodong Elementary School in Insa-dong. It was customary to buy a mother-of-pearl inlaid wardrobe as a part of the wedding trousseau. Such wardrobes featured *duseok*, decorative handicrafts that were highly valued. However, *duseok* and other Korean handicrafts declined in the 1980s due to increasing mechanization, while residential patterns shifted from single-family houses to apartments. As built-in wardrobes became common, demand for traditional furniture decreased. Western-style furniture and interiors grew popular as technology improved, steadily eroding the presence of *duseok* in people's lives.

Yang Hyeon-seung is a skilled artisan who takes great pride in his craft, especially in creating excellent-quality *duseok*.

Since interest in Korean Heritage has risen, handmade *duseok* is again recognized as a valuable handmade product. However, with the integration

of machines into everyday life, it's inevitable to compare and coexist with them. Nonetheless, Yang says he enjoys his life as a *duseokjang*. Decorative patterns applied to *duseok* typically feature vine designs inspired by plant forms. While vine designs are derived from natural forms and have long been appreciated globally, they exhibit unique styles and characteristics that depend on the culture in which they are created. Korean *jangseok* often feature flowers, vines, and butterflies. While vines and leaves form the overall background, flowers, butterflies, and fish are arranged to form a stable balance. Chisels with patterns, called *munyangjeong* ("pattern chisel"), and hammers are used for creating designs. The *munyangjeong* is roughly divided into three types: *ggotjeong*, *samjajeong*, and *galmaegijeong*. Each type has more detailed designs. There are also several types of chisels categorized by their usage, such as *gullimjeong*, *gonggeumjeong*, and *bbaggomjeong*. Stencils are also available and can be traced out over iron plates. Using a broad-tipped chisel called *naljeong, duseokjang* artisans can draw original designs without relying on patterns, allowing Yang to improvise on request. Nowadays, machines can quickly produce identical designs. However, as machine-made products have become more prevalent, the slight variations that result from handcrafted metal work using hammers and chisels exude a sense of warmth through their unique and free-spirited nature. Transmitting and inheriting skills are essential for passing down heritage from one generation to another. Despite the growing appreciation for cultural heritage, many traditional skills are vanishing due to the lack of successors in our modern society, which prioritizes technology and machinery. Yang Dong-il has decided to follow in his father's footsteps and become a *duseokjang* artisan, just like his father, Yang Hyeon-seung. Although proud of his son's decision, Yang Hyeon-seung is also concerned that he may have influenced him to pursue this path. He is earnest about his craft and feels his son still has much to learn. Despite the bustling modern advancements surrounding downtown Seoul, it is hoped that the sounds of the working *duseokjang* will continue to echo through the alleyways, preserving its value and beauty for generations to come.



Written by Lee Hee-jun (Traditional market docent)

Seoul Gyeongdong Market

The Heritage Value of a Dynamically Changing Traditional Market

Gyeongdong Market is considered the central hub for cooking in Seoul. You can find any last-minute ingredients you need, even those unavailable in department stores or supermarkets. The market offers a wide range of fresh and diverse ingredients. It's a well-known place to any Seoulite who is even slightly interested in cooking. Nowadays, even tourists from overseas visit Starbucks located inside Gyeongdong Market or buy quality fruits at the green market. Gyeongdong Market, as its name suggests, is a marketplace representing the east side of Seoul. It began to take shape when residents from Gyeonggi-do and Gangwon-do started selling their local specialties. Located near Jegi-dong and Cheongnyangni, the market was always bustling with people looking to buy medicinal products as well as fresh agricultural, livestock, and fishery produce. This was possible due to the traffic network that revolved around the now-defunct Seongdong Station. Nowadays, the market is known as a general market where people visit to buy various goods, but Gyeongdong Market is primarily known for its medicinal products. Although the medicinal herb market is separately designated as the

Photographed by Kim Ki-yong (hotpickorea)

Seoul Medicine Market, it is often grouped with the Gyeongdong Market. It is home to hundreds of Korean clinics and herbalists and supplies 70% of the nation's medicinal herbs. During the Joseon Dynasty, the royal command created a centralized gathering place for herbalists, *yangnyeongsi*, to collect valuable herbal medicines. The purpose of this market was to tackle the problem of people losing their lives due to the regional unavailability of different medications in emergency situations. *Yangnyeongsi* was initially established in Daegu, Wonju, and Jeonju, respectively, in Gyeongsangbuk-do, Gangwon-do, and Jeolla-do, where medicinal herbs were mainly grown. This seasonal market was held twice a year in the spring and fall to coincide with harvesting medicinal herbs. The Seoul Medicine Market, in conjunction with the Gyeongdong Market, emerged in the 1960s, when Cheongnyangni Station and Majang-dong Intercity Bus Terminal became more accessible, drawing more people towards it. With time, herbalists from Jongno migrated to Jegi-dong, a neighborhood that welcomed more visitors. The market flourished and evolved into an herbal market. In 1995, the Seoul Metropolitan Government officially named the market 'Seoul *yangnyeongsi*.' Jegi-dong is significant for its historical significance; it was once the home of "*bojewon*," a place that

provided shelter to travelers and cared for the sick about five centuries ago. The spirit of aiding and nurturing others still lives on in the community today. Recently, Western medicine has overshadowed the prominence of Korean medicine and folk remedies. However, despite this shift, there is still a certain charm in visiting Gyeongdong Market. This market has gained attention and popularity in recent years, particularly among foreign visitors, setting it apart from its counterpart, Gwangjang Market. The most coveted item among these visitors is *insam* (ginseng), yet other things are available, such as frogs, terrapins, and freshwater shrimps, ingredients for various folk remedies. Furthermore, you can even handpick your own ingredients to create your own herbal medicine at the apothecary. Thus, making Gyeongdong Market an exceptional destination not only for shopping but also for sightseeing. Gyeongdong Market has been a hub for medicinal herbs for decades, its reputation growing as its scale and trade volume flourished. Yet, limiting its charm to a sole facet would be a disservice. The market's scenic variety has, in recent years, earned it the status of a beloved traditional market, beckoning visitors from near and far. For those fond of flowers, the Gyeongdong Market of the 1970s will always be a memorable sight. The market was a visual masterpiece, with many colorful flower shops that could rival even the ones found at the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Gangnam Express Bus Terminal today. At its prime, an astounding 123 flower shops were catering to clients from all over the country. Only two original shops, the Gyeongdong Flower Shop, and the Gaeseong Flower Shop, remain evidence of the market's rich history. Beneath the market's surface is a hidden gem: a fish market home to an impressive array of fish species from various parts of the world. It is a treasure trove that could effortlessly furnish an aquarium at the heart of the bustling city. Vendors with 40 to 50 years of experience claim that even decades-old customers would only procure essential items at a market. It's no wonder many people are unaware of the flower shop in the market or a fish market in the basement. Back above ground, the bustling Jongno Green Market is within close proximity. The prices here differ when you enter and leave, keeping you waiting at the market. Crates of fruit blanket the entire market at dawn, and the remaining produce goes on sale as the sun falls. Visitors from abroad may indulge in the unique experience of free tastings. As a traditional market docent, I highly recommend visiting the market during this hour to experience purchasing the most affordable but highest-quality fruits. During the holiday season, Gyeongdong Market is a popular destination for people who want to gift healthy medicinal products to their loved ones. Despite the current situation, many people are still looking to buy medicinal ingredients, and this year, there has been an increase in the number of people searching for wild pine mushrooms. Pine mushrooms are in high demand this year and are selling quickly, with their prices being half of what they were last year. So, if you couldn't afford natural pine mushrooms before, you can now get them reasonably priced. As Seattle boasts of the iconic Pike Place Market, London flaunts the Borough Market, Tokyo takes pride in the Tsukichi Market, and Bangkok houses the bustling Chatuchak Market - Seoul has the Gyeongdong Market. Though it may not be located near the city's "hip" spots, this market is a treasure trove of authentic delights that will leave any visitor in awe. So, if you're seeking an experience that will satiate your wanderlust and ignite your senses, visiting the Gyeongdong Market is a must.

Written by Chung Hae-kyung (Hoseo University, Professor Emeritus)

Goryeo *Hangwa*

The Roots of Korean Desserts

People around the world have recently come to enjoy the elegant and healthy traditional Korean confectionaries known as *hangwa.* These desserts are mild and soft in taste and are made using many natural ingredients. They are not overly sweet, made with honey or *jocheong* (grain syrup). What are some traditional Korean *hangwa* that have been popular since the Three Kingdoms Period (57 BCE - 668 CE) and became more widespread in the Goryeo Dynasty (918 - 1392 CE)?

Recently, Gaeseong *yakgwa* (a type of deep-fried honey cookie) has become very popular. Gaeseong *yakgwa* has been around since Goryeo. Nowadays, people contemplating desserts often imagine cakes, cookies, or chocolates, and they may even believe that Koreans did not enjoy desserts in the past. However, the traditional Korean desserts known as *hangwa* have been developed and appreciated for a long time. The *hangwa* enjoyed by Koreans amount to more than seventy types, astoundingly, including *yumilgwa, gangjeong, sanja, dasik, jeonggwa, yeotgangjeong, suksilgwa,* and *gwapyeon. Hangwa* don't spoil easily, are rich in nutrients, and have beautiful, jewel-like shapes and colors. Initially, *hangwa* was modeled after fruits. In the past, fruits were often served during ceremonies and feasts, and *hangwa* began to be made as imitations of fruit during the off-season.

Photographed by Muiyo, Yeonlihije, Kimssibooin (Korean dessert brand)

The *'gwa'* in *hangwa* stands for fruit. *Silgwa* (lit. "real fruit") refers to fruit that grows naturally on trees, and *hangwa* is made by artificially processing various ingredients. Thus, the *hangwa* that Koreans enjoy is inspired by healthy fruits.

Although *hangwa* has been around for a long time, they first blossomed during the Goryeo Dynasty. Unlike Joseon, a Confucian state, the dominant religion in the Goryeo era was Buddhism. Since Buddhist thinking prospered at the time, vegetarianism and elaborate teas flourished as well. Moreover, confectionaries to accompany tea were developed. *Yumilgwa* (*yakgwa*) and *dasik* are tea confectioneries that are still considered elaborate and delicious by today's standards. Goryeo interacted with neighboring political entities such as the Jurchens, Khitans, Song, and Yuan. Gaeseong, the capital of Goryeo, naturally became a cosmopolitan city with regular exchanges with foreign polities. During the Goryeo Period, Korean food culture peaked thanks to frequent interactions with foreign cultures. Alongside the metalware and celadon craftsmanship, a rich tapestry of food cultures was also imported, with Gaeseong as a beacon of influence.

One of Gaeseong's most famous dishes during this period, the Gaeseong *yakgwa*, has stood the test of time. Varieties of *hangwa* have already been mentioned in the literature of the Three Kingdoms Period, which preceded the Goryeo Dynasty. Afterward, the consumption of meat became restricted due to the influence of Buddhism. People were encouraged to eat little, and tea culture developed, which led to the rapid development of *hangwa.* The Goryeo Dynasty was a golden period for *hangwa*, as *dasik* (lit. "tea food") and *yumilgwa* were extensively used during Buddhist events such as banquets for the *Yeondeunghoe* (lantern lighting festival) and *Palgwanhoe* (festival of the eight vows) as well as at national and public banquets and rituals, royal processions, and weddings.

The popularity of Goryeo *hangwa* extended all the way to China. According to *Goryeosa* (The History of the Goryeo Dynasty), that King Chungnyeol served *yumilgwa* at a banquet he hosted while attending the wedding ceremony of a crown prince of the Yuan Dynasty. It is said to have gained an excellent reputation for its melt-in-your-mouth taste. For this reason, people in Yuan China called it *gaolibing* (lit. "Goryeo pastry"), after the name Goryeo. However, *yumilgwa* was a lavish food made with costly ingredients such as flour, honey, and oil, so it was mainly produced by the aristocracy or at Buddhist temples. In 1192 (the 22nd year of the reign of King Myeongjong), the King outlawed *yumilgwa* and mandated the consumption of tree fruits instead. In 1353 (the second year of the reign of King Gongmin), *yumilgwa* was banned once again. This ban highlights the popularity of *hangwa* at the time. It is also worth noting that the state took action to prohibit sweets due to the wastage of expensive ingredients, which suggests that they were considered precious goods. In particular, the subtle sweetness of *hangwa* using *jocheong* and *yeot* (hard taffy) made from grain as sweetener must have been irresistible, unlike Western desserts that use sugar. Goryeo's exquisite confectionery tradition, known as *hangwa*, originated in Gaeseong, a region with the economic resources to make sweets requiring expensive ingredients. The city's wealth allowed the *hangwa* culture to thrive, and its people enjoyed the delicious and exquisite *hangwa* just as much as Western aristocrats enjoyed their fine confectioneries.

The people of Gaeseong enjoyed numerous delicious and exquisite confectioneries that embodied the spirit of Goryeo.

Crispy Gaeseong *Yakgwa*

Yakgwa, a type of *yumilgwa*, is made by first kneading flour with sesame oil, liquor, and honey. The dough is then

shaped, fried in oil, and finally dipped in *jocheong*. This exquisite confection is made with honey, sesame oil, and syrup. The intricate flower-shaped *yakgwa,* made by pressing the mix in a mold, is called *gungjung* (lit. "court") *yakgwa*. On the other hand, the square-shaped version, characterized by visible pastry layers is called Gaeseong *yakgwa*. While *gungjung yakgwa* are hard and chewy, Gaeseong *yakgwa* is characterized by a crispy texture. The dough should be kneaded lightly since the *yakgwa* will otherwise become too hard. They should be fried slowly to heat the core while gradually puffing the dough. The fried pastry must be dipped in syrup while it is still hot enough to produce an audible sound as the syrup enters the baked good. This process results in the crispy texture that has become so popular in recent years.

Beautiful and Delicious Gaeseong *Juak*

Also known as *umegi*, Gaeseong *juak* is made by adding *makgeolli* (traditional fermented Korean rice wine) to glutinous rice flour, kneading the dough into rounds, frying them in oil, and then coating them with *jocheong*. Gaeseong *juak* is traditionally prepared upon the first harvest, and the dough is fermented with *makgeolli*. It is said that "no feast is complete without *umegi*" in Gaeseong, where it was a common sight on the tables. Today, *juak* is popular for its cute round shape, sweet flavor, and chewy texture that does not harden easily. The consistency of the dough is just right if it can be easily formed into a ball. It even looks visually appealing when a jujube slice is placed on the thumb impression in the middle.

***Dasik* Enjoyed with Tea**

Dasik have been made to accompany tea since old times. It is made primarily from honey and *jocheong* but can also contain other ingredients to create different varieties. For example, *songhwa* ("pine pollen") dasik is a yellow-colored version that uses pine pollen to give it a beautiful color and pleasant aroma. *Heugimja* ("black sesame") *dasik* is made with roasted and crushed black sesame seeds, while *seunggeomcho* ("Korean angelica") *dasik* uses powdered angelica leaves. *Nongmal* ("mung bean starch") *dasik* is made with mung bean starch and *omija* (magnolia berries) water, and *bam* (chestnut) *dasik* is made with chestnut powder. All these varieties are mixed with honey and *jocheong* and then pressed onto molds to create their distinctive shapes.

Red-Bean-Topped Gaeseong *Gyeongdan*

Gaeseong *gyeongdan* is a type of *hangwa* that originates from Gaeseong. It is known for its red bean topping, made by boiling and mashing red beans before sun-drying them. The mixture is rubbed with sesame oil 3 to 4 times

during drying. *Gyeongdan*, or rice cake balls, are made using glutinous rice flour boiled in water and then coated with the red bean mixture. They are typically served with honey or *jocheong* just before eating. Unlike other types of *gyeongdan*, Gaeseong *gyeongdan* has a unique taste and is eaten with a spoon.

Various *Yeotgangjeong* from Gaseong

Gaeseong is known for its *yeotgangjeong*, a sweet treat with a distinct ginger flavor and a generous topping of soybean powder. Perilla, black, and white sesame seeds are roasted over medium heat to prepare it. *Jocheong* is boiled with ginger and sugar until it thickens and can be stretched. The roasted seeds are then added to the mixture and mixed over medium heat. Soybean powder is sprinkled over the mold before the seed mixture is spread out, sprinkled with more soybean powder, rolled out with a rolling pin, and cut into pieces after it hardens. *Jatbaksan* is made by mixing pine nuts with honey or *jocheong*. The mixture is then spread over a flat surface to harden. *Kongyeotgangjeong* is made by double boiling stir-fried frozen soybeans (*kong*), and mixing them with *jocheong*. *Ddangkongyeotgangjeong* is a hardened mixture of roasted peanuts (*ddankong*) and *jocheong*. *Yeotgangjeong* comes in many different varieties.

Jeonggwa*, Simmered in *Jocheong

Jeonggwa is a variety of *hangwa* consisting of various *jocheong*-coated vegetables. Lotus root slices are used for *yeongeunjeonggwa*, and ginger slices are used for *saenggangjeonggwa*. These vegetable slices are simmered in a mixture of sugar water and *jocheong*. Apricot pits (*haengin*), removed of their bitter flavor and coated with *jocheong*, are used as a garnish on other *jeonggwa*. *Jorangjeonggwa*, a particular favorite in Gaeseong, is made with *jorang*, a small red fruit that grows abundantly on Songaksan Mountain in Gaeseong. To make it, the seeds of the *jorang* are removed, and the fruit is placed with sugar in a pot, which is then simmered gently over low heat. *Jeonggwa* is similar to modern gelatinous desserts, but its flavor is more complex. It has a sour taste combined with the sweetness of the sugar, resulting in a remarkable and unique taste.

Interviewee Hwang Jeong-hwa (*Jippul* craft artist)

The Versatility and Austere Beauty of *Jippul* Craft

Crafts are a reflection of the relationship, culture, and history of a region and its people. They are made from local materials by local people in a manner that aligns with their lifestyle. Some of these crafts have survived to this day, either well-preserved or accidentally unearthed and passed down to us. The objects used by kings, nobles, and scholars were of the highest quality, crafted from precious materials from all over the country, the mountains and seas, and even from abroad. They were created by skilled craftsmen, resulting in many delicate, intense, and beautiful pieces in addition to their functional use.

Unfortunately, not everyone can enjoy rare and beautiful things, just like in modern times. Throughout history, there have been certain household items that are universally popular and commonly used. These items are cherished for their simplicity, beauty, and the comfort they bring, as they represent the shared experiences of many people who have lived in a particular era.

The *jippul* craft is one of the most ancient crafts, which uses straw and grass, along with stone, wood, and earth, and has a long history with

Interviewer Kim Dae-hong (GONGYEGA director & designer) Photographed by Kim Han-gyeol

mankind. In the history of Korea, where industry and culture developed around paddy farming, people widely used it for everything from daily necessities to architecture. The primary technique of *jippul* craft is weaving, which involves the process of interweaving linear materials into planes. Although delicate, these materials are simple and require little physical effort. The product is durable and sturdy yet flexible enough to make everything from baskets to shoes to roofs. Above all, it is eco-friendly.

Hwang Jung-hwa is a young *jippul* artist currently active in Korea. *Jippul* is a craft that literally consists of weaving 'straw' and 'grass' to make household items. Hwang is impressed by the sustainability of the craft. "I am fond of straw and grass as they are humble and versatile without being showy. I find it intriguing that the leftovers from threshing can be repurposed to make practical objects for eating, wearing, and building houses. It demonstrates the harmonious relationship between humans and nature where nothing goes to waste." While *jippul* craft involves the use of 'straw' from paddy or barley farming, as well as 'grass' from herbaceous plants like rushes, *mosi* (ramie), and reeds, Hwang's focus is on the unique properties of 'straw' as a

material. “I believe that the most crucial part of my work occurs on farms,” she explains. “This is because I only collect the leftover straw from a full year’s worth of farming. Isn’t the part before more important?”

That’s why Hwang puts a lot of effort into selecting her materials, mainly the straw. Farm Woobo, where this interview took place, cultivates rice paddies near Seoul using traditional and organic farming methods. They focus on native strains of Korea, and Hwang uses different types of native rice straw for her work. In Western countries, wheat is commonly consumed as a staple food, producing wheat straw. However, wheat straw is different from rice straw. Rice straw has a complex structure with water-absorbing xylems, inner cortexes, and panicles where the grains grow, which can be selectively used for various purposes. Native rice varieties are highly adaptable to the local soil and tend to grow strong and long, with

different color variations depending on the strain. The primary reason why rice straw is suitable for roofing material is that it has low thermal conductivity, and its pores hold air, making it an excellent insulator. On the other hand, wheat straw has a simple structure and is mainly made up of hollow xylems. The differences in straw utilization can be attributed to differences in dietary culture.

The reason why Hwang Jung-hwa turned to *jippul* craft after leaving her job was due to her exposure to agriculture, despite having worked in an entirely different industry than arts and crafts. "I didn't have a specific reason for it, nor did I major in anything related to it or work in a related field. However, I found myself involved in connecting urban and rural communities through food, and that's when my interest in rural food and farming, seeds, and native rice began. I have always been fond of furniture and items made from natural materials, and I believe this interest made me fascinated with Korean baskets."

Hwang searched for the perfect baskets and met with artisans, but she found peace in a *dongumi* made of rice straw that she saw at a folk museum. The simple and rustic appearance of the *dongumi* soothed her. She began to imagine the hard work of people who gathered to collect and hand-twist leftover rice straw after the harvest season. The rice paddies near her childhood home and her parents' rice farming overlapped with the memory, and the artist naturally fell in love with the *jippul* craft.

Nowadays, it is becoming increasingly challenging to find *jippul* items that can offer a sense of solace by just looking at them. In the past, every household used to have a straw tray, but since the 1970s, the popularity of plastic products has grown significantly due to their low cost and ease of manufacturing. This, in turn, has led to a decline in the demand for straw items, resulting in fewer people making them. In fact, the loom played a central role in the Industrial Revolution. Weaving has been a part of our lives for a long time, but the weaver's role began to shift away from human hands.

Amid a global polarization of the values of fine art and practical goods, Korea is emphasizing the importance of craft. Hwang Jung-hwa, as a contemporary craftswoman, shares this sentiment. "I believe that one way to ensure something is not forgotten is to make it necessary for our current lifestyle. For example, due to the changed lifestyle, *jippul* items that were previously only used outside have now been brought indoors. As a result, we have to worry about fallouts from straws that we didn't have to worry about before. I have been thinking a lot about how to compensate for this. This is how I came up with the

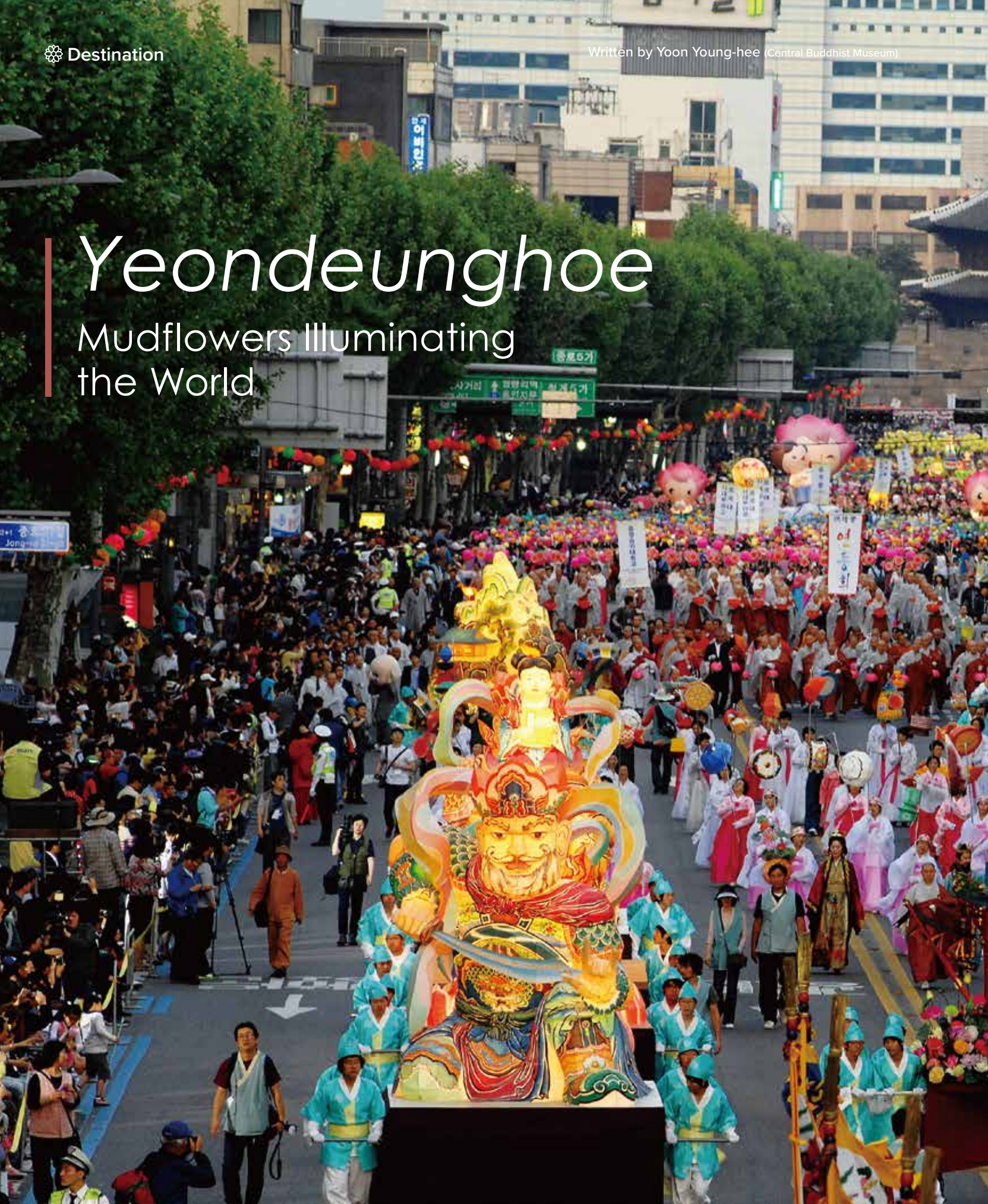
mulbyeongmangtae, which can be used as a tumbler carrier, and the *ddoari*, which can be used as pot coasters. These names are derived from archetypical *jippul* items. Although the forms may differ, I believe that if we use the same names for the items made with the same skills and for specific uses, the value of the original objects will be conveyed."

With a clear goal, the artist aimed to improve the current *jippul* craft, acknowledging its limitations. "I aspire to become someone who fully embraces the rice straw culture. My ultimate objective is to cultivate my own rice, process it, and integrate it into my daily routine, thereby making rice and rice straw culture an integral part of my lifestyle." When she expressed her desire to integrate culture into her life, the idea of rice straws, which encompass various aspects of life, seemed fitting to her. Through Hwang's story, we can perceive the artist's clear perspective of her work. We fully support the artist's wish to be remembered as a representation of culture rather than just a craft.

Written by Yoon Young-hee (Central Buddhist Museum)

Yeondeunghoe

Mudflowers Illuminating the World




Photographed by Yeondeunghoe Conservation Committee
종로5가
청량리역
흥인지문
불법주차
24시간
무인할영단속중
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50
버스전용차로 무인단속중
130m
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Yeondeunghoe is a traditional event in Korea that originated as a Buddhist cultural event. However, nowadays, it is celebrated as a festival enjoyed by people from all walks of life, regardless of religion, gender, or nationality. This festival has gained popularity due to its simple format and ability to evoke universal feelings of warmth and goodness among people.

The name of the festival, *yeondeung*, means to illuminate lanterns. This signifies the festival's central theme: bringing light into our lives. The lanterns' lighting symbolizes the hope that our minds, which may be clouded by greed and possessiveness, will be illuminated to eliminate negative thoughts and find wisdom. The purpose of *yeondeunghoe* is to wish for inner freedom, peace in the world, harmony, and coexistence. This is also reflected in the story *Poor Woman's Light Offering* in the *Damamukanidana Sutra*. By lighting the lanterns, we hope to positively impact both ourselves and others. The reason why modern lantern

processions feature two lanterns in a T-shaped structure is that each lantern represents a wish for happiness for oneself and others.

Yeondeunghoe has a history of 1,200 years and is recognized as National Intangible Cultural Heritage No. 122 and a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. It has been passed down and developed in various forms through Silla, Goryeo, Joseon, and modern times. In Silla, it was called *gandeung*, and in Goryeo, it was recognized as one of the two major holidays when Buddhism flourished, and a national event was held. A national organization called Yeondongdogam was established to light lanterns from palaces to civilian houses. In the Joseon Dynasty, it was popularized as a part of folk culture called *deunggan* or *gwandeungnori*.

Today, the *yeondeunghoe* is celebrated every year around Buddha's birthday. The event lasts two days, with preliminary activities such as lighting ceremonies and exhibitions held separately. The main event is organized over two days, following the traditional method of the Goryeo Dynasty.

On the first day of the event, various activities take place including Eoulim Madang (Buddhist Cheer Rally), Lantern Parade, and Daedong Hanmadang (Post-Parade Celebration). Eoulim Madang is a gathering of participants for the lantern procession. This event highlights the importance of the procession and the festive atmosphere while conducting the *yeondeunghoe* rituals. The participants rehearse songs and dances for the parade in advance, and the enthusiasm is high during this time. The procession follows the tradition of the Goryeo Dynasty's *yeondeunghoe*, with a leading group at

the front and around 60 participating groups following behind. After the procession, the Daedong Hanmadang takes place at the Jonggak intersection, where all the participants gather under falling flower petals, which symbolize good fortune, to play games like *ganggangsulae*. On the second day, there are traditional cultural performances and a final celebration. The festival has over 100 booths where visitors can experience traditional Korean culture and watch folk performances and yard plays. The festival concludes with the final performance.

The *yeondeunghoe* festival involves various organizations and participants who work together to create it. Within these organizations, small communities called *yeondeunggongbang* ("lantern workshops") design and showcase a diverse range of lanterns every year. Such voluntary and small-scale participation in creative activities is a defining characteristic of the modern lantern festival.

Yeondeunghoe has a rich history rooted in the Buddhist tradition. It originated from the act of lighting lanterns during Buddha's lifetime, but over time, it has evolved beyond the religious boundaries of Buddhism and become a part of universal culture. This event symbolizes inclusiveness and promotes the values of caring, harmony, and equality across various boundaries. These are the universal values of *yeondeunghoe* as a cultural heritage of humanity. In fact, these events have been a source of inspiration and strength in our lives, allowing us to share joy during happy times and overcome difficulties during hardships.

The festival has evolved into an event that aims to spread warmth and selflessness throughout its long history because it fulfills an essential human need. As a significant cultural heritage of Korea, the festival will be expanded to showcase its excellence to the world and promote harmony among people globally. I hope that the simple act of lighting lanterns will accumulate and lead to a peaceful and happy life for all humankind.