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KOREA NOVEMBER 2014



Korea's Martial Arts

Strengthening the body and spirit

Dancer **Lee Mae-bang** | Travel **Mt. Namsan**

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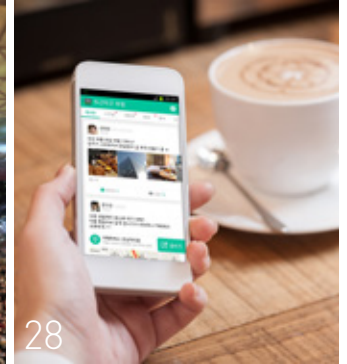
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Get Your Kicks in Korea

Korean martial arts have trained body and spirit for centuries

Written by Andrew Salmon



It was the surprise hit of the 2012 London Olympics.

At the sold-out Excel Arena in east London, combatants circled one another and then unleashed a furious attack and counterattack. Feet encased in electronic sensors thwacked into body armor and head guards. High technology fused with high kicks and the results flashed up on electronic scoreboards. The crowd roared.

This was the new look of taekwondo. Global media outlets were electrified.

By shortening rounds and reducing the size of mats, the sport's governing body had made the action more intense. Rewarding the crowd-pleasing high kicks with higher points had made the bouts more spectacular. On the judging front, electronic scoring and video replay systems obviated human error.

By the time the smoke had cleared, 96,000 people had watched four days of Olympic matches. Taekwondo had ended with one of the widest national medal distributions of the games, demonstrating its economic and democratic credentials: unlike many other sports, it requires no courts, bats, balls or nets, just the human body.



Taekwondo is the best-known Korean martial art, as well as being the most widely used Korean word internationally. However, it is only the tip of the iceberg. The national martial arts scene encompasses styles ranging from folk combat games to Buddhist temple martial arts, from resurrected 16th century battlefield techniques to styles custom-designed for modern commandos. It also begs the following question: whence Korean martial arts?

Histories Bloody and Obscure

Like all pre-modern societies, early Korean tribes adopted weapons for hunting and fighting and systemized techniques so that their use could be taught throughout each community. As history moved forward, kingdoms rose and fell, and in these centuries of strife, warrior classes became responsible for further developing martial arts.

Unfortunately, we have few details about the specifics. A martial art known as *subak* is referenced

in some historical sources, and martial arts are pictured in Goguryeo (37 BC–AD 668) tombs. Much attention has been given to the Hwarang, a teenage youth corps of the Silla Kingdom, but there are still questions surrounding their martial role. What is certain, however, is that Koreans, influenced by the Mongols, adopted the composite bow and became formidable mounted archers. Tigers and leopards roamed the peninsula at the time, and mounted archers brought down this dangerous game—excellent training for war. Even Joseon (1392–1910), Korea’s last royal dynasty, offers minimal documentation of martial arts.

Regardless of the reason for the dearth of information, it is evident that a tradition of hand-to-hand combat has had a place in Korean history for a long period of time. These arts and their practitioners were put to their most severe test in 1592 when samurai-led armies stormed through the peninsula, ravaging, plundering and killing. Still, this harrowing experience brought on changes in Korea that had positive impacts on future conflicts.

Firstly, it forced the nation to upgrade its weapons. While most illustrations from the Imjin War (1592–1598), or the “War of the Water Dragon,” show the bow as the key native weapon, Koreans also wielded some highly innovative weaponry for their time. These included fléchette bombs, similar to modern hand grenades, rocket-propelled arrow launchers, which are comparable to today’s multiple launch rocket systems, and armored turtle ships—the first in history.

Secondly, Korea’s oldest martial arts manual, “The Muyedobotongji,” dates back to this dark time. Originating in a Chinese manual written by Ming Dynasty general Qi Jiguang and intended for both unarmed and armed troop training, the manuscript, which details then-advanced military technologies, was brought to Korea by Joseon’s Ming Chinese allies. This proto-manuscript was expanded upon by royal order in the 18th century, and included Japanese, Korean and Chinese martial arts.

The hard-won combat lessons of the 1590s were eventually forgotten, for by late Joseon martial arts were in decline. As society began to conform to a stricter, more hierarchal structure, the gentry began

to express disdain for physical culture in favor of intellectual pursuits. One exception was archery, or *gundo*, a requirement in military exams, and two unarmed fighting systems that still existed: wrestling, or *ssireum*, and foot-fighting, or *taekkyeon*.

Ssireum is a stand-up grappling system. A thick belt is worn around the waist and the aim is to throw or maneuver the opponent to the ground. *Taekkyeon*, by contrast, is a more graceful, dance-like martial art based on kicks and sweeps. Although there was no weapons training, it offered self-defense, physical conditioning and sportive applications. Two pre-modern visual representations of *taekkyeon* survive: one is a watercolor from 1846 portraying *taekkyeon* fighters and *ssireum* wrestlers competing before spectators; the other is a late 19th century photograph showing two children practicing *taekkyeon*. During the Japanese colonial era (1910–1945), *taekkyeon* almost died out.

Japan exported multiple martial arts to its colony, namely kendo (*geomdo* in Korean) and judo (*yudo*), as well as the then-obscure Okinawan martial art of karate (*gongsudo*). When the colonial period ended in 1945, these fighting techniques were widely practiced in metropolitan areas, with judo particularly favored by the police. *Ssireum* and *gungdo*, which had representative associations, also gained a following. The only other traces of native martial arts were the one remaining *taekkyeon* master, Song Duk-ki, and the “Muyedobotongji” manuscript.

Taekwondo: Korea’s First Cultural Export

In the 1950s, however, a new martial art appeared. After the Korean War (1950–1953), Korea was divided, devastated and demoralized, but President Park Chung-hee, who took power in 1961, would rejuvenate his nation. Park is best remembered for the “economic miracle,” but his remit also included recovering national self-respect. To instill discipline and toughness, martial arts were promoted heartily. It was during this time that taekwondo first originated, evolving among nine schools (*guan*) of kick-punch martial arts that were active in the 1940s and 50s. After Park took power, martial arts training became a requirement for those wishing to join national associations. As the *guan* unified their



1. Taekwondo fighter Kim Tae-hun kicks Brazilian fighter Guilherme Alves in the finals of the men’s 58 kg at the 2014 World Taekwondo Grand Prix Series. © Yonhap News

2. “Daekwaedo,” a painting by Joseon artist Yu Suk depicting a *ssireum* match © Seoul National University Museum

3. Members of the Society for the Preservation of Muye 24-ki, a marital art based on the Joseon Dynasty martial arts text “The Muyedobotongji,” put their skills on display during the Suwon Hwaseong Cultural Festival. © Yonhap News

organization and curricula, the name *taekwondo*, meaning the “way of foot and fist,” was chosen for the newly emerging martial art. The name was officially adopted in 1955. It was taught in the army, and in civilian martial art studios known as *dojang*, or “halls of the way.”

Techniques were refined over time. Unlike karate, which involved a non-contact regimen—due to unfounded fears that blows could kill—Koreans donned body armor and sparred full-contact. The top weapons among fighters were kicks. What is it that makes Korean martial arts so leg-centric? Kicks had been the core technique of *taekkyeon*. Moreover, Korea is a mountainous peninsula, and Koreans customarily sit on the floor—two factors that could possibly contribute to strong, supple legs. Or perhaps it reflects the view of some practitioners that kicks are a stronger fighting technique than punches. Whatever the reason, taekwondo’s key differentiator from Japan’s karate and China’s kung fu is its emphasis on and wide range of leg techniques. Taekwondo’s kicks were developed further by adding leaps and spins that not only granted extra range and power, but required greater skill to carry out.

A handful of Korean émigré masters had been teaching the art in the United States since the 1950s, but taekwondo’s first real international exposure came—appropriately for a martial art—in the martial context of war. Korean soldiers in Vietnam practiced and taught the art and there it caught the attention of American GIs who took it up and eventually taught taekwondo upon returning home. Meanwhile, the Seoul-based World Taekwondo Federation (WTF) was busily promoting taekwondo internationally as Korea’s national art. The first world championships were held in Seoul in 1971.

The sport’s popularity spread like wildfire. Taekwondo debuted as a demonstration sport at the 1988 Seoul Olympics and became a program sport in Sydney in 2000. Unfortunately, however, it was also racked by scandals and allegations of referee bias. As a result, the WTF instituted reforms, which came to fruition in London. Its Olympic future in 2016 and 2020 has been assured.



Today, taekwondo schools are in every Korean neighborhood, usually populated by local children. The art continues to be taught to the military, and various institutes and universities teach it to both locals and eager aficionados visiting from overseas. Research on the effects of the sport is rooted in athletic science, rather than the quasi-philosophical concepts like internal energy, or *qi*, and spirit, or *shen*, that mystify Chinese martial arts. Globally, there are some 80 million practitioners in 206 nations. The WTF even manages a Taekwondo Peace Corps that dispatches instructors to developing nations.

More Than Taekwondo: Korea’s Martial Universe

While taekwondo, generously backed by the government since the 1960s, is Korea’s most visible martial art, it is by no means the only one.

After taekwondo, the Korean fighting art with the most prominent international exposure is hapkido, meaning “the way of coordinated energy.” Its founding master was Choi Yong-sool, who had studied *aikijutsu*, a practice



that specialized in joint locks and pressure point strikes, in Japan. He continued teaching the art upon returning home in 1946, and Choi’s Korean students mixed his material with judo throws and their native kicks to create hapkido. The result is a martial art with one of the widest curricula in the world. While taekwondo is essentially a contact sport, hapkido offers self-defense par excellence.

With its broad technical repertoire, hapkido has spawned multiple offshoots. One is special forces martial arts, known as *tukong musul*. It borrows from taekwondo, kung fu and boxing, and teaches lethal techniques with bare hands, knives and shovels. A sophisticated sub-style of hapkido is *hoejeon musul*, which adds circular footwork to every technique. Hapkido also provides the technical foundation for some Korean martial arts propagated in the United States, whose masters claim lineages dating back to a secret master or

ancient warrior band. Such claims, however, are dubious.

Tangsudo, or “the way of the Tang Dynasty hand,” is a technique that combines Japanese karate, Chinese kung fu and aspects of “The Muyedobotongji” with the native high kicks. It is particularly popular in the United States.

Korea’s way of the sword, *haedong geomdo* is a sword art created in the 1980s. Offering graceful blade forms and test-cutting of materials such as bamboo stands, it is popular among entertainers. More recently, a competitive format using plastic swords has gained some momentum.

Other systems are more esoteric, such the Zen martial art known as *seonmudo*, which is practiced in certain Buddhist temples. Its long, graceful movements require extraordinary balance and flexibility, and it offers meditative and breathing regimens, analogous to Indian yoga and Chinese

1. Taekwondo is put on display during a flash mob event to mark Korea’s Liberation Day at New York City’s Times Square. © Yonhap News

2. Members of the international taekwondo community © Taekwondo Promotion Foundation

3. A horseback archer takes aim at a target at the 7th World Horseback Archery Championship held in Sokcho in 2011. © Yonhap News

4. Practitioners of *seonmudo* put on a show at an event to mark Buddha’s Birthday in front of Jogyesa Temple. © Yonhap News



qigong. Golgusa Temple, near Gyeongju, offers live-in training. *Wonhwado*, by contrast, is a martial art associated with the Unification Church. Deceptively simple, its basic movements are based on hand circles.

Just as Korean arts have been exported to other countries, international martial arts—from boxing and kickboxing to Russian *systema* and Japanese jiu-jitsu—have been imported to Korea. Various syntheses are underway, partially propelled by the explosive popularity of Mixed Martial Arts (MMA). This level of public interest suggests that hybrid arts will likely appear at an accelerated pace.

Back from the Brink: The Taekkyeon Resurrection

The above, however, are modern developments. What of traditional martial arts?

The old wrestling system, *ssireum*, remains active—almost all Korean men have learned some of its moves at some point—but its league has, sadly, lost popularity with TV broadcasters in recent years. Archery is still popular enough to warrant various practice ranges, and the skills of both shooting and bow making live on, having stayed popular among the social elite, such as politicians and business leaders. Moreover, Korean Olympic archers have dominated the sport since the 1980s.

The most remarkable development in the Korean martial arts scene in recent history has been the renaissance of *taekkyeon*. Song Duk-ki, who brought the art into the modern world, saw it begin to return to prominence as a national cultural property in 1983, but died in 1987, aged 94. Fortunately Song had passed his art on to a handful of students, who drove it forward in his place. In the 1990s, *taekkyeon* underwent a rebirth, partly on the back of the folk *minjok* movement, especially on campuses. Today, it is practiced nationwide, with regular competitions and festivals. There are probably more *taekkyeon* practitioners in 21st century South Korea than there were in the Joseon era. In 2011, *taekkyeon* was registered as a practice of Intangible Cultural Heritage with UNESCO.

Like other very old martial arts, such as Brazil's capoeira and Indonesia's *pencak silat*, *taekkyeon* incorporates dance elements. The art's footwork is similar to Korean traditional dance steps and these stepping movements—often carried out to music—teach rhythm, crucial for any fighter. *Taekkyeon*'s combination of kicks and sweeps are effective, and its relaxed, non-ballistic delivery makes it more suitable for older practitioners than taekwondo or hapkido. Many taekwondo practitioners have been examining *taekkyeon* as a way to better

understand the original art, incorporating elements into their own practice. *Taekkyeon* practitioners, by contrast, have begun adding taekwondo's flamboyant kicks into their routines.

Martial Arts and Entertainment

One way that Asian martial arts have managed to spread worldwide is popular culture. Unlike Japan, with its samurai cinema, or Hong Kong, with its kung fu theater, Korean martial arts cannot boast their own exclusive film genre. In spite of this, they have still left their mark on world cinema.

Taekwondo and hapkido masters active in Hong Kong played roles in the kung fu epics of the 1970s and 80s. Taekwondo master Lee Hwang-jang and hapkido master Hwang In-shik were “super kickers” who appeared in a string of martial arts epics, facing off against the likes of Jackie Chan. In the process, Korean kicks were added to kung fu's hand techniques. Most Hong Kong action movie choreography now features this fusion, although the layperson just calls it “kung fu.” It would take

an all-American boy to bring Korean footwork its greatest fame on screen.

The most memorable duel in martial cinema takes place in Rome's Colosseum at the climax of 1972's “Way of the Dragon.” Superstar Bruce Lee chose a real-life champion to fight him in that scene, someone who had first learned *tangsudo* as a member of the air force at Osan in Korea before returning home and dominating the U.S. karate tournament circuit. His name? Chuck Norris. Though Lee killed him on screen, in real life Norris would become, after Lee's death, one of the central figures in martial arts film lore. His name has become a byword for toughness, and Norris now heads a U.S.-based charitable organization focusing on martial arts.

Martial arts have also jump-started a series of live shows that center around playful yet artful movements. In 1997, “Nanta,” a zany, “Stomp”-like non-verbal performance, took Korea and, subsequently the world, by storm. “Nanta” features physical comedy and rhythms from the



1. *Taekkyeon* practitioners practicing their kicks
2. A *taekkyeon* team from Chungju performs in front Seoul's Sungnyemun Gate.
© Yonhap News



Where to See Martial Arts Live

The sleepy city of Chungju is home to a specially built training facility dedicated to *taekkyeon*, as well as being the site of the world's largest display of martial arts: the Chungju World Martial Arts Festival.

Taking place each autumn, the festival invites teams of martial artists from around the world not to fight each other but to showcase their abilities. The sort of skills put on display range from Zulu stick fighting and Senegalese wrestling to Estonian broadsword combat and Bruneian kris play. Of course, the full gamut of Korean styles is also demonstrated. Entry is free. Information is provided on the Korea Tourism Organization website.

Although Chungju is probably the best place on earth to see a wide range of martial arts performed at the same event, the festival only takes place once

a year. Fortunately, there are several Korean historical sites—Mt. Namsan's fortress walls and the medieval palaces in Seoul, as well as the Hwaseong Fortress in Suwon—that feature regular martial arts demonstrations on public holidays.

These displays of historical martial arts stem from the aforementioned 18th century book “The Muyedobotongji.” While no masters of the material in that manual have survived into the modern age, modern-era martial artists have carried out in-depth studies of the work and recreated its techniques. In a parallel development, European historical

enthusiasts have studied Medieval and Renaissance combat manuals to resurrect lost martial arts. Such research and researchers provide rich sources for the action-packed historical dramas that populate Korean film and television.

Seen live and up close, they make for a cracking display.





Taekwondo entertainment troupe K-Tigers turn martial arts into quite the show. © K-Tigers

art of traditional percussion, *samullori*. In the show's footsteps came "Jump," with a storyline that was as light-hearted as it was simple: inept burglars enter the house of a dysfunctional family of quarrelling martial artists. The show blended taekwondo, *taekkyeon*, kung fu and acrobatics with physical comedy. It was a hit in Seoul theaters and international festivals, and garnered rave reviews in international media. Other similar shows have followed.

The Future

Korean martial arts are now studied by an unprecedented volume of practitioners, with numbers that dwarf those from the era of duels and battles, warriors and bandits. Have they reached their zenith, or will their popularity increase even further? To answer this, it is worth examining the benefits they offer beyond the obvious ones of sporting glory and a general proficiency at self-defense.

Martial arts such as taekwondo provide an almost perfect type of exercise. Rather than focusing on singular attributes, they demand the full range: agility, flexibility, stamina and strength. The benefits also extend beyond the physical. Korean

martial arts borrow from the religious and social systems that have influenced the nation's social fabric: from Taoism comes the compulsion to operate within natural principles; from Buddhism comes self-control; from Confucianism comes manners and respect. When facing an opponent in sparring or in competition, that most critical of human characteristics—courage—is demanded and, over time, refined.

Given all this, it is unsurprising that taekwondo is featured in educational curricula in Korea, the U.S. and other nations.

Traditionally, martial training was not about art, it was about functionality. While today's practitioner is unlikely to do battle with a wild animal or a marauding samurai, he or she is vulnerable to other threats: the physical lethargy, mental stresses and spiritual ennui that afflict humans in industrial and post-industrial societies worldwide. Martial art training offers a solution to this insidious troika.

Ergo, for Korean martial arts—arts that rose from near-extinction to minor subculture before soaring to global popularity in a few short decades—the best may be yet to come.

No Mere Bloodsport

Kyulyun Taekyun Association President Do Ki-hyun says Korean martial arts are about fun, not violence

Interview by Robert Koehler



INTERVIEW

“Japanese martial arts are serious. Chinese martial arts are mysterious, but Korean martial arts are fun.” So explains Do Ki-hyun, a grand master and president of the Kyulyun Taekyun Association, which has worked to recreate and promote *gyeollyeon taekkyeon*, a martial art practiced between villages during the Joseon era. Although he started practicing by chance, Do is now one of the sport's top authorities, promoting it both locally and overseas.

Recreating the Atmosphere

Reviving the martial art, which almost disappeared during the Japanese occupation, was not easy. The most difficult thing, says Do, was recreating the original atmosphere. “Because of the colonial era, many Koreans teach martial arts from a Japanese perspective,” he says. He points to the aggressiveness of Korea's other martial arts that mirror the deadliness of Okinawan karate. “Korean martial arts are natural. There's *pungnyu*,” he says, referring to the elegance of Korea's traditional music and dance. In fact, *taekkyeon* matches are accompanied by rural percussion, and the movements follow a three-beat pattern, much like Korean folk songs such as “Arirang.”

Part of recreating the traditional atmosphere of the sport involved breaking students' killer instincts. “When two villages held a match, the object wasn't to kill the other side, but to have a sort of festival,” Do says. For instance, all it took for one athlete to win was to knock his opponent down or kick him once in the face. “You could keep fighting, but emotions ran high,” explains Do. “In the UFC, you can fight on the ground, but our fight is over once you hit the ground. Matches between villages were friendly. If one of the fighters got hurt, it could cause problems between the villages.”

A Common Man's Sport

Do might have made *taekkyeon* merely a personal hobby had it not been for the three years he spent as an exchange student in the U.S. Americans were enthralled with the unique movements of *taekkyeon*, quite different from other martial arts. “*Taekkyeon* can be seen as a form of dance,” he says. Seeing the response the sport got overseas, Do decided to make a career of it.

One thing that makes *taekkyeon* fascinating, says Do, is that it was practiced mostly by the common folk. “Japanese martial arts were tied to the samurai, while Chinese martial arts were tied to schools like the Shaolin monastery, but *taekkyeon* was practiced by commoners.” Martial arts academies were outlawed in Joseon, driving the combat arts of the Goryeo era to the common folk, who made them spectator sports.”

To promote the sport, the Kyulyun Taekyun Association hosts a national tournament, the Taekkyeon Battle, in Seoul's Insa-dong district, with preliminaries in June and the finals in October. Matches are held every Saturday afternoon. See www.tkbattle.com for more details.

Dancing King

Lifelong dancer and cultural heritage holder
Lee Mae-bang's path of unwavering dedication

Written by Felix Im
Photographed by Shin Guk-beom



Born in 1927, Lee Mae-bang has seen many changes in Korean performing arts, but his dedication to dance has stayed resolute. He was only 6 years old when he began studying Korea's dance forms during the height of the Japanese occupation (1910–1945). His passion endured during the Korean War (1950–53), and although the nation was divided into two, his singular devotion remained intact. Lee stuck to the old-school ways even as the nation jet-propelled itself through the rapid industrialization of the 60s and 70s. As the Korean Wave produced superstars, teen idols and dynamic choreography, Lee continued to perfect his art of somber, elegant movements, filled with subtle expressions of powerful emotion.

Being Different

Lee, the youngest of five siblings, would often wear his older sisters' clothing as a toddler and dance in front of the mirror. He got his official start at an academy for *gisaeng*, or female artisan

entertainers, being the first and only male to be accepted into the school. The headmaster made such an exception because she was charmed by Lee's grace. In addition to dance, Lee was also trained in pansori, the art of musical and vocal narrative. As he grew up and developed his skills, Lee's fellow dancers showered him with adoration. His classmates, however, ridiculed him and questioned his masculinity.

"In dance, there is no man or woman, only yin and yang," Lee says. "All dances have both elements, although some have more of one or the other."

The person who most severely opposed Lee's passion, however, was his own father, who routinely disciplined him both verbally and physically. Like all natural-born artists, however, Lee never relented.

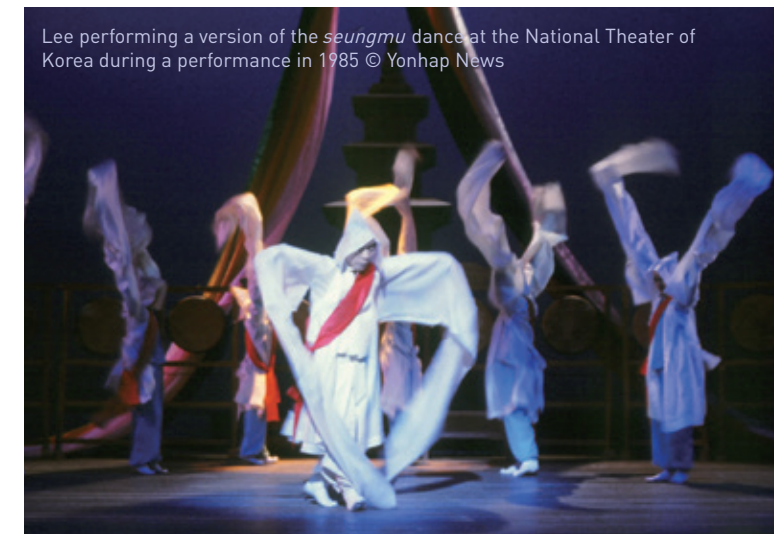
"My father was very conservative, and hated anything that had to do with shamanism, which a lot of people correlated with traditional dance," Lee recalls.

When he was in the first grade, Lee's family moved to Manchuria, where he met Chinese actor Mei Lanfang, pronounced "Mae Ran-bang" in Korean. Lee was so inspired by Mei's performances and demeanor that he later changed his

name to resemble Mei's. After returning to Korea, Lee spent his adolescence traveling back and forth between his southwestern hometown, Mokpo, and Gwangju, where some of the best instructors were. His first official performance was in Mokpo in 1947, after which his name quickly became a fixture among the traditional dance community. During the Korean War, he continued dancing by joining an official arts association under the military. He then opened up a small studio in Gunsan, and later opened studios in Busan, Mokpo and Seoul.

Staying Focused

Consistent performances and impeccable technique eventually enabled Lee to earn national recognition. In 1976, the Arts Council Korea sponsored a performance that he had directed and choreographed himself—a first for Lee. He has since been invited to countless performances at home and abroad, and was awarded the French Medal for Arts



Lee performing a version of the *seungmu* dance at the National Theater of Korea during a performance in 1985 © Yonhap News

and Culture in 1988.

"Sometimes, after receiving such great responses from audiences abroad, I'd wonder why Koreans didn't appreciate their own art more," Lee confesses. "After Japanese rule and the war, there was this effort to almost stamp it out in favor of modernization."

Fortunately, there's new hope, as new generations have started to value art forms that were once considered backward, although he says many who call themselves dancers these days are unqualified.

"Increased interest in dance is good, but now you have imitators who don't have the proper technique," he explains.

Lee is now the official holder of two important intangible cultural properties: *seungmu*, a dance that's commonly believed to have originated as part of Buddhist ceremonies, and *salpuri*, a shamanistic dance meant to purify the soul. In his 87th year and too weak to perform due to surgery for stomach cancer, he made a brief appearance during a concert held in his honor this past August in Seoul.

"My life has followed a single, straight path. I've never deviated."

Differing Views

Artist Choe U-ram doesn't subscribe to one interpretation

Written by Max Kim
Photographed by Lee Hyang-ah



Installation artist Choe U Ram's latest work is a star, a giant glowing orb made from 152 salvaged car headlights studded onto a metal frame, lit up from the inside by a network of electric panels working in unison to rapidly flip through preset light sequences. The ethereal soundtrack from the gallery speakers isn't music, per se. It's the sound of the earth rotating, its magnetic fields captured by NASA spacecrafts and converted into sound waves.

The piece, titled "URC-1," in accordance with official naming conventions for stars, has been said by some to stand as a grand reminder of life, nature and human dependence on the earth's natural energies. Yet while that may be the official interpretation in the Seoul Museum brochure, Choe isn't one to prescribe a single authoritative meaning to his own piece.

Precious Junk

"Art is different from communicating a thought through verbal language," says Choe. "A big part of it is the intuitive feeling that comes from an image, and that element isn't always easy to translate into words. The meaning of art doesn't belong to the artist, nor is it trapped in the piece. I think it's somewhere between the piece and the viewer."

In order to obtain the headlights used in "URC-1," Choe teamed up with sponsor Hyundai Motors, who offered Choe access to their junkyards. During the collection stage of the project, Choe regularly visited the Hyundai Motors Research Center scrap yard, where he would dig through the discarded prototypes that had undergone testing to find the lights he wanted. The experience, he says, ignited an artistic obsession with cars and car parts.

"There are so many meaningful elements behind a car, political as well as historical ones," says Choe. "Beginning with their origin as a horseless carriage, cars once represented comfort and luxury, symbolizing the social status of wealthy nobles, before they became associated with the masses. Now, they are connected to ideas about safety or energy, so there are a lot of ideas here to work with here."

Choe, who hopes his collaborative relationship with Hyundai will continue to support future projects using car parts, says the hours spent at the scrap yard left him with a head full of inspiring impressions.

"What was especially fascinating for me was how strikingly similar the process of scrapping a car was with butchering an animal," says Choe. "They're dragged in, chopped up, gutted and drained, the whole process reminiscent of an animal being slaughtered and exsanguinated."



"Opertus Lunula Umbra (Hidden Shadow of Moon)" on display at the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea, in Seoul

A Personal Experience

One of Choe's primary missions as an artist has been to take machines that have become garbage and resurrect them as animatronic figures. In a way, says Choe, cars (and other machines) become living things—an extension of the body—when they are lived in and used by humans.

"I was very attached to a car I used to drive," says Choe. "We had been through a lot together, and maybe it's because I anthropomorphize things more than most people, but when I had to throw it away, I was oddly sentimental. I washed it before scrapping it, and left a goodbye letter inside."

Because Choe's own relationship with his art and subject material is made meaningful by the unique experiences and memories that precede them, that is how he wants people to approach his work.

"Works of art speak differently to everyone, and the same piece that makes sad people happy can also make happy people sad," says Choe. "I sense that it can be hard for a lot of people to appreciate modern art, because they're too attached to preconceptions about meaning, but it's all about the psychological relationship between the subjective viewer and the piece. That might be all there really is to art."

Downtown Sentinel

Mt. Namsan is more than just a tourist destination—it's a symbol of Seoul itself

Written by Robert Koehler

Few major cities can match Seoul in the number of mountains located within their limits. As Korean architect once said, “Seoul doesn’t need architectural landmarks because its mountains serve as its landmarks.”

Of these natural landmarks, it is Mt. Namsan that is the most recognized and most beloved. For centuries, the graceful peak has been an eye-catching backdrop to the city of Seoul, beautifying the skyline like a silk folding screen. In the days of Joseon (1392–1910), soldiers patrolled the fortress wall that ran along its ridges while aristocrats sought pleasure and relaxation in its scenic valleys. Today, the mountain, crowned by the iconic N Seoul Tower, is one of the city’s most popular tourist destinations due to its majesty and accessibility—not to mention its great views. Mt. Namsan’s slopes are also home to a great deal of history and culture, including monuments to some of modern Korea’s greatest heroes.

Valley of the Blue Crane

Not far from Chungmuro Station is Namsangol Hanok Village, a collection of historic Korean homes in a scenic valley on the northern slope of Mt. Namsan. During the Joseon era, the valley was called Cheonghagdong, or Valley of the Blue Crane, because it was said that mythical blue cranes would fly here to enjoy its cool, refreshing forests. Aristocrats built villas and pavilions here so that they could take in the natural splendor in style.

The homes you see today, however, were moved here in 1989 to save them from the urban redeveloper's wrecking ball. There are five homes in all representing both the aristocratic and commoner styles from Joseon, as well as beautiful ponds and gardens that accentuate the serenity of the valley. In addition to offering the Seoul Namsan Gugakdang, one of Seoul's best traditional music venues, you can also find the site of a time capsule buried in 1994 to celebrate Seoul's 600th anniversary. It will be reopened in 2394.

Next to Namsangol Hanok Village is Korea House, an arts venue opened in 1981 to give international visitors a taste of traditional Korea. There's a theater where performances of traditional music and dance are held, an impressive restaurant specializing in palace cuisine and a very good souvenir shop selling traditional crafts. Korea House has also organized hands-on arts programs and frequently hosts traditional weddings.

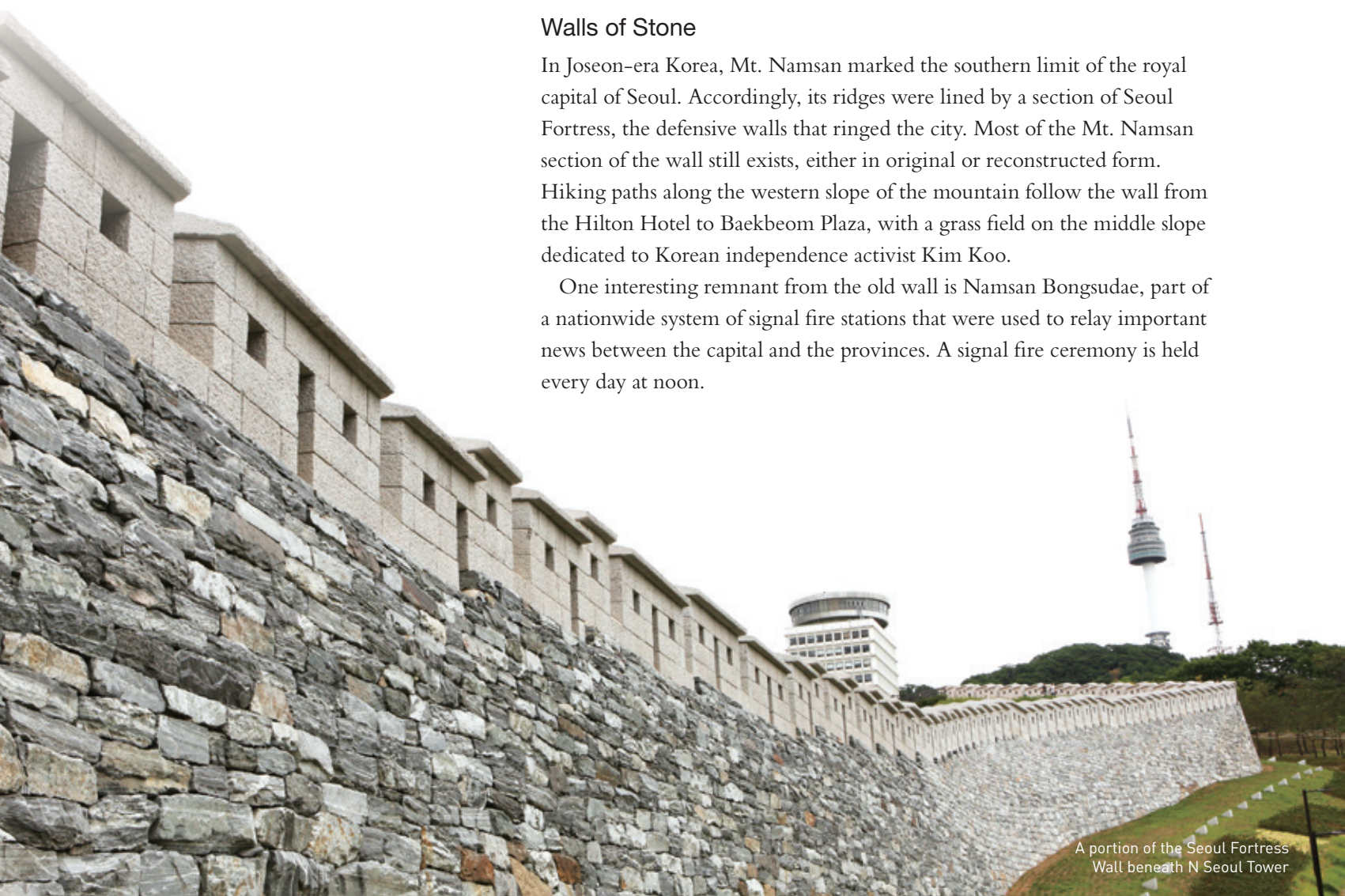


A view of Namsangol Hanok Village, an area of traditional houses (above)
Two Korean traditional music masters perform *gagok*, a form of lyrical poetry, at Korea House. © Yonhap News

Walls of Stone

In Joseon-era Korea, Mt. Namsan marked the southern limit of the royal capital of Seoul. Accordingly, its ridges were lined by a section of Seoul Fortress, the defensive walls that ringed the city. Most of the Mt. Namsan section of the wall still exists, either in original or reconstructed form. Hiking paths along the western slope of the mountain follow the wall from the Hilton Hotel to Baekbeom Plaza, with a grass field on the middle slope dedicated to Korean independence activist Kim Koo.

One interesting remnant from the old wall is Namsan Bongsudae, part of a nationwide system of signal fire stations that were used to relay important news between the capital and the provinces. A signal fire ceremony is held every day at noon.



A portion of the Seoul Fortress Wall beneath N Seoul Tower

Architectural Tribute to a Patriot

Also on the western slope of the mountain is Ahn Jung-geun Memorial Museum, dedicated to the independence activist who is most famous for assassinating, in 1909, the former Japanese prime minister and resident-general of Korea Ito Hirobumi, one of the masterminds behind Japan's eventual colonization of Korea. The memorial museum, designed by the wife-and-husband team of Kim Sun-hyun and Lim Yeong-hwan, is structurally stunning, and contains a very impressive statue of Ahn as well as fascinating displays about his life and philosophy.

Seoul's Iconic Tower

Perhaps Seoul's best-known architectural landmark, N Seoul Tower is also one of Korea's most popular tourist destinations. Visitors flock here to take in the spectacular views over the city and, increasingly, to hang so-called "love locks" on the fences that surround the tower. There are now so many locks up here that it's a wonder the mountain hasn't sunk beneath their weight.

N Seoul Tower was originally built in 1969 as a communications tower. It was opened to the public in 1980. Called N Seoul Tower since 2005, the tower holds an expansive observatory deck—the tower's main draw—as well as a revolving luxury restaurant and several more affordable dining options. The men's restroom offers perhaps the most spectacular views of any restroom in the world.

Below the tower are several cafés and restaurants.



Visitors take the cable car to N Seoul Tower. © KTO



What to Eat



Right below N Seoul Tower's observation deck is the N Grill, a very plush French/Italian revolving eatery with great food, couple seating and jaw-dropping views of the city. If you've got the cash, it's well worth the splurge.

More frugal diners may want to check out some of the restaurants that specialize in Japanese-style pork cutlets, or *dankkaseu*. Most of these can be found near the lower cable car station.

Where to Stay

Mt. Namsan is in the heart of Seoul, where you'll find the best range of accommodation in the city. Two high-end hotels on Mt. Namsan itself are the Millennium Seoul Hilton and Grand Hyatt Seoul.

Getting There

The most scenic way to get to the top of Mt. Namsan is via the cable car. The lower terminal is a short walk from Exit 3 of Myeong-dong Station, Line 4.

There are plenty of buses that go the top as well. The most convenient to find is the one you can catch in front of the Daehan Theater near Chungmuro Station, Line 4.

The mountain is crisscrossed with hiking paths, too. The trailheads are not hard to locate—just walk towards the mountain and it won't be long before you see one.





Ssireum Lives On

Despite challenges from other sports, Korean traditional wrestling continues to thrive

Written by Robert Koehler

Four Korean *ssireum* wrestlers performed on Switzerland's Gornergrat ridge, directly in front of the iconic peak of the Matterhorn, as part of the Swiss Alpine wrestling festival from Sept. 12–14. Demonstrating the essence of their sport before Swiss spectators, the wrestlers received a warm welcome from the fans.

Spectators were even offered 1,000 euros if they could hold out against a *ssireum* wrestler for more than five seconds.

Three took the challenge. Not one succeeded.

The trip to Switzerland was a highlight for a sport that has had its ups and downs in recent decades. *Ssireum*, or Korean traditional wrestling, used to be one of the most popular sports in the country. Competition from other sports, however, has eaten away at both its talent pool and fan base.

In spite of these hurdles, the sport continues on, as a younger generation tests its mettle in the ring.

Sport of the Masses

Nobody's quite sure when the sport of *ssireum* began, but evidence suggests that Koreans have been practicing it—or something like it, at least—since ancient times. To be sure, similar sports have been practiced in nearby countries like Mongolia and Japan for centuries. Wall paintings found in Goguryeo tombs in Manchuria, for example, depict athletes engaging in a wrestling match very similar to *ssireum*. The 14th century Goryeo ruler King Chunghye was, according to historical documents, such a big fan of *ssireum* that he ordered soldiers to wrestle one another during a banquet.

The sport really took off during Joseon times, however. During this time, *ssireum* became a veritable staple of Korean village life. The Dano holiday, celebrated on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month, was marked by village *ssireum*



tournaments, but tournaments were held at other times, too, including the third day of the third lunar month, the eighth day of the eighth fourth lunar month and Buddhist All Souls' Day. One of the most iconic folk paintings of the Joseon era, Kim Hong-do's "Sangbak," is a graphic, 18th-century depiction of a village *ssireum* match. These events were accompanied by music and much merriment, and victorious athletes were typically given a bull as a prize, which was not only an incredibly valuable source of power in pre-modern Korea's agricultural society but also a symbol of strength.

The popularity of the sport continued through the 20th century. In the 21st century, however, *ssireum* has had to compete with other contact sports for its spectators at matches. Falling popularity has led some *ssireum* athletes, most notably the giant former champion Choi Hong-man, to seek greener pastures in other sports such as mixed martial arts.

Strength and Technique

While *ssireum* is ultimately a test of strength, the sport is designed in such a way that the chance of injury is very low. Wrestlers square off in a circular, sand-filled ring and, in contrast with the Japanese wrestling sport of sumo, the athletes are not allowed to strike one another. Instead, *ssireum* athletes grab a belt that wraps around the waist and thigh of the opponent, with the goal of forcing any part of the opponent's body above the knee to the ground. Brute muscular strength is important, of course, but so is taking advantage of an opponent's movements to get them off-balance.

While many of Korea's top athletes now take their skills to other more popular (and more lucrative) sports, others stick with tradition. Kim Min-seong, wrestling for Gumi City Hall, scored a victory in the Presidential Ssireum Tournament held in Iksan, Jeollabuk-do, in August.



1. Competitors in the 80 kg division at the Dano Jangsa Ssireum Competition at Cheongyang Stadium in Chungcheongnam-do © Yonhap News

2. Wrestler Hwang Gyu-hyeon holds up his trophy during the 2009 Cheonha Jangsa Ssireum Festival © Yonhap News

3. *Ssireum* legend Lee Man-ki proves victorious at the 1988 Cheonha Jangsa Ssireum Competition. © Yonhap News

4. Korean *ssireum* wrestlers battle it out on Gornergrat Mountain above Zermatt, Switzerland, in September. © Yonhap News

Hitting the Big Screen

Cinematic convergence at the Busan International Film Festival

Written by Paola Belle Eborá

Contribution to Reel Development

By 1999, Korea saw its first locally made box-office hit, “Shiri,” which went on to become the highest-grossing film in the country with 6.5 million viewers, surpassing then top-grossing Hollywood film “Titanic.” The market share of the local film industry has shown a positive, upward expansion since then and by 2006, Korean films already made up 60 percent of the local film market—approximately 163 million viewers, according to the Korean Film Council. This development was a stark contrast to the 20 percent share that had been seen during the early 90s. Along with this growth was the further reach of Korean films, which were increasingly in demand in neighboring countries, such as China and Japan.

The BIFF’s contribution to this boom can be seen in the way that it has fostered a collaborative atmosphere that has allowed more filmmakers to explore their creativity. Aspiring Korean filmmakers now know that they have the support of the local



3

It would be hard to talk about Busan without mentioning the Busan International Film Festival (BIFF). As the largest annual film festival in Asia, the event does more than just attract the biggest and brightest personalities of the local film industry. The 10-day spectacle draws film enthusiasts from all over the world to Korea’s largest port city.

Since its establishment in 1996, the BIFF has helped elevate the Korean film industry to its current status in the global film industry—one where local films have displaced Hollywood blockbusters in terms of dominant share of the domestic market.

By providing a platform from which new films and directors could launch themselves into the spotlight, BIFF has revived the Korean film industry to such an extent that by the late '90s, the industry began to bounce back from the market pressure brought on by the Hollywood films that once dominated local screens.

industry, which is essential to getting projects off the ground. As a result, the BIFF has become an integral part of Korea’s film industry, as it provides an avenue for local films that were trying to break through onto the global market.

Having screened a modest 173 films from 31 countries in its first run, this year’s BIFF, held from Oct. 2 to 11, screened a total of 314 films from 79 countries, a demonstration of how much the festival has grown in its 19 years. It has also attracted audience sizes in the hundreds of thousands, with the highest record so far being 221,002 attendees in 2012. With such demand growing every year, in 2006, the BIFF opened the Busan Cinema Center, a 30,000-square-meter space that houses state-of-the-art facilities, which has since become the main venue for the annual event.

The BIFF has also sparked a greater interest in Korean film in general, with the Puchon International Fantastic Film Festival (PiFAN) and the Jeonju International Film Festival (JIFF) gaining momentum every year.

Beyond the Silver Screen

Aside from screening films from up-and-coming directors, the BIFF also holds a number of events meant to encourage communication between directors, actors and the audience, contributing to a more holistic understanding of film within the community.

The foundation of the BIFF is also significant because it has not only helped the local movie industry, but Asian cinema as a whole, actively encouraging and supporting the development of screen projects across the region.

Two years after its establishment, the BIFF launched the Asian Project Market (APM), formerly known as the Pusan Promotion Plan (PPP), which helped connect new directors to various

funding sources. In 2006, the APM evolved into the Asian Film Market, where filmmakers and producers had the chance to meet possible co-collaborators. The Asian Cinema Fund (established in 2007), on the other hand, supports independent film production companies by providing the funding to develop a more stable production environment.

The BIFF has also taken a recent step toward further enriching the quality of future film products by giving its annual Asian Film Academy a home at one of the BIFF’s former venues, the Suyeong Bay Yachting Center. Set to open in 2015, the BIFF will continue to invite young Asian filmmaking students to take part in the Film Leaders Incubator project wherein they will be mentored by veteran filmmakers.

Aside from offering various types of funding, the BIFF also facilitates the Busan Cinema Forum, an international conference for film industry professionals that started in 2011.

Alexine Sanchez, a foreign student in Busan who attended this year’s festival, commented, “I think the BIFF is good at bridging and exposing Eastern and Western cultures in terms of the style of films.

I think it shows that Korea is at the center, or is becoming the center, of films in Asia.”

Indeed, with the role that the BIFF has played thus far, the event has positioned itself as a force in the film industry that contributes to the improvement of cinema as art.



4. Participants at the Asian Film Market © BIFF

5. Director Bong Joon-ho, also a judge for the New Currents Award, answers questions during a press conference. © Yonhap News

6. Hungarian director Bela Tarr © Yonhap News



5



6



1. The opening ceremony © Yonhap News 2. A performance held at the BIFF Village in Busan © Yonhap News

3. Actress Kim Soo-hyun steps onto the red carpet. © Yonhap News

A Meeting of Creative Minds

Korea hosts the global gathering for key policy makers in the ICT field

Written by Daye Kim



The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Plenipotentiary Conference, the largest meeting of policy makers from the information and communication technology (ICT) sector, was held between Oct. 20 and Nov. 17 in Busan.

More than 190 member countries of the ITU, a United Nations agency that allocates global radio spectrum and satellite orbits and develops technical standards, meet every four years and develop policies that address the evolving ICT environment.

Korea is the second Asian country to host this event after Japan held it in 1994. According to the ITU, the 2014 conference, also known as the PP-14, attracted about 3,000 participants, including about 130 government ministers and CEOs from more than 160 countries. It was the

largest international event Korea has hosted since President Park Geun-hye's inauguration.

Connecting to the Future

The issues discussed at the PP-14 included finding new ways to ensure people have access to, find uses for and are benefitting from ICT; accelerating broadband rollout, forging greater international cooperation on ICT-related matters; and broadening membership and stakeholder participation.

The member countries also discussed specific goals and targets under the ITU's vision for 2020, dubbed "Connect 2020." The four key goals of Connect 2020 are "growth" in the use of ICT, "inclusiveness" to bridge the digital divide, "sustainability" by managing challenges from ICT development, and "innovation and partnership."

In addition, the plenipotentiaries agreed to the union's strategic and financial plans for the next four years and elect five top executives: the secretary-general, deputy secretary-general, director of radiocommunication, director of telecommunication standardization and director of telecommunication development bureau. Lee Chae-sup, researcher at the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology, was elected on Oct. 24 to direct telecommunication standardization. He is the first Korean to serve as one of the ITU's five top executives. Lee said in a press conference after his election, "I hope my

Inspiring the Creative Economy

During the ITU conference, the international ITC community discussed two recommendations made by Korea that were closely linked to the "creative economy," the Park Geun-hye administration's economic paradigm. The government defined creative economy as integrating creative ideas from diverse sectors into ICT to create new businesses, industries and jobs.

One recommendation is "Harnessing the benefits of convergence through the utilization of ICT applications," emphasizing the use of ICT in non-ICT sectors for economic development and



1. ITU Secretary-General Hamadoun Toure speaks at the ITU's first meeting this past Oct. 20 in Busan. © Yonhap News

2. Min Won-ki, the chairman designate of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2014, leads the conference's first meeting on opening day, this past Oct. 20, in the Busan Exhibition and Convention Center. © Yonhap News

3. President Park Geun-hye (center) attends the World IT Show while listening to KT Chairman Hwang Chang-gyu's (right) explanation. © Yonhap News

election provides a channel for domestic businesses to grow globally and make agenda in the ICT field." The secretary-general elect is Houlin Zhao from China, the current deputy secretary-general.

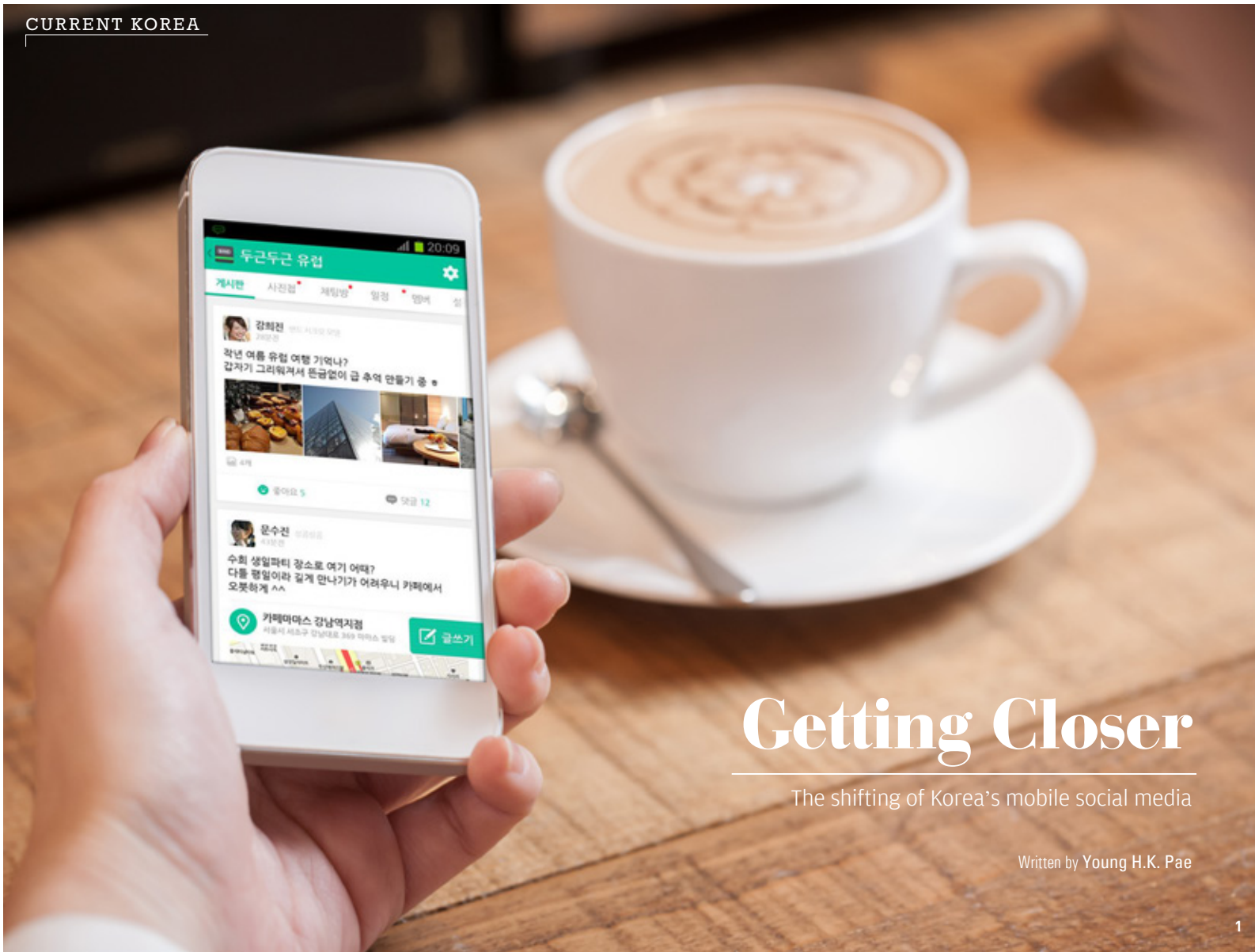
As the host and chair country of the PP-14, Korea helped draw significant agreements on these issues and hopes that succeeding in doing so will improve Korea's role in shaping international ICT policies and its diplomatic relations.

"We estimate the event's economic impacts—from the increase in production, tourism and exports because of the improved national brand—at around KRW 710 billion (USD 660 million)," Min Won-ki, the chairman designate of the PP-14, said in a monthly publication by the Ministry Science, ICT and Future Planning.

job creation. The other is "Facilitating Internet of Things (IoT) to prepare for a globally connected world," which highlights the role of ITU in setting up the infrastructure and regulations to vitalize the IoT, or the network of devices accessed through the Internet.

The two issues had been discussed at the Asia-Pacific countries' final preparatory meeting for the PP-14 held in August in Bangkok, and were included in the Asia Pacific Telecommunity Common Proposal.

Korea became an ITU member state in 1952 and joined the ITU council in 1989. Based in Geneva, Switzerland, the ITU was formed in 1865, and will celebrate its 150th anniversary next year.



Getting Closer

The shifting of Korea's mobile social media

Written by Young H.K. Pae

The current population of South Korea is close to 50 million, and smartphone owners make up 74 percent of that. Among Koreans in their 20s, smartphone ownership stands at 98 percent.

What are the most used apps on your smartphone? They are probably social networking services (SNS) apps, such as Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. Up until last year, Koreans tended to use more open types of foreign SNS, such as Facebook and Twitter, which allow users to communicate with friends on an international level, or even with people they've never met.

However, these days, trends in user preference

have shifted toward more closed types of local SNS, such as Kakao Story or Naver's Band.

These are now used more commonly than the more open types mentioned above. Launched in November 2011, the first of this closed type of SNS was Between by VCNC, a mobile start-up. The app was created for use between only two people, usually couples. This was its main attraction: only two close people could transmit and receive pictures and messages in real time.

The Cautiously Social Network

This closed type of SNS has come into its own, gaining favor by letting users be selective in their interactions, thus avoiding acquaintances



1. Closed social networks such as Naver's Band are gaining popularity.
2. People use more exclusive SNS apps to arrange gatherings and events, such as this group of volunteers from Korean Air. © Yonhap News

or unknown "friends" or "followers" from the web.

According to Nielsen Research, Kakao Story's market share of Monthly Active Users (MAU) was 41.1 percent in June 2014, which placed it as the leading SNS service in Korea. Naver's social network, Band, showed the second highest market share with 28.7 percent. Facebook came in with a 22.5 percent share, while Twitter's showing was at 4.2 percent. In the domestic mobile SNS market, Kakao Story and Band had made their way to the top.

This is a significant change from the end of last year. Band's market share, which was at 9.9 percent in January 2013, had increased to 23.1 percent by October, surpassing Facebook's 22.7 percent. Kakao Story has led the mobile SNS service market by steadily occupying over 40 percent since the beginning of 2013. By contrast, Facebook's market presence stagnated, but has held onto around 22 percent of the market since the end of 2013. Twitter's share has fallen from last year's 7 percent to 4.

Accumulatively, Kakao Story and Band acquired around 50 percent of the market by January 2013, continuing to rise to over 70 percent by June 2014.

Behind the growth of these domestic SNS networks was a substantial increase in smartphone users in their 30s, 40s and 50s. According to a survey conducted by Digieco, a Korea Telecom (KT) research

group, involving 800 smartphone users, the higher percentage of users in their 30s helped give Kakao Story its top spot. Users in their 40s pushed Band into second place. This migration to more closed networks contrasted with the behavior of younger generations, who predominantly used Facebook. Digieco went on to explain that users in their 40s users liked closed networks because they only wanted to share information, complaints and ideas with close friends and old schoolmates.

Texting Housewives and New Horizons

Kakao Story proved to be the most popular network for full-time housewives between the ages of 30 and 50, whom the report labeled as "communication windows." The results of a Korea Information Society Development Institute (KISDI) survey of 1,233 housewives in their 30s, 40s and 50s showed that 76.8 percent of them used Kakao Story, while Facebook and Twitter garnered a mere 9 percent and 7 percent, respectively.

In the meantime, Band has recently launched services in 10 new languages including English, Japanese and Mandarin. In a sign of the growth of international trade, Band reported that a German language version will be launched later this year.





1. Italian President Giorgio Napolitano (right) welcomes President Park Geun-hye (left) at the Quirinale Presidential Palace on Oct. 17. © Yonhap News
 2. President Park speaks at the Italy-Korea Business Forum, at the Palazzo Clerici in Milano, on Oct. 15. © Yonhap News

Coming Together to Solve Global Issues

President Park calls for greater international cooperation at 10th ASEM in Italy

Courtesy of Korea.net's Yoon Sojung, Wi Tack-whan and Sohn JiAe



President Park Geun-hye made an official visit to Italy on from Oct. 14 to 17. During her visit, she attended the 10th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in Milan, held a summit with Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi and President Giorgio Napolitano and met with Pope Francis.

Tackling Global Issues

During the ASEM, held on Oct. 15 and 16 in Milan, President Park addressed the second session on Oct. 16 and spoke about cooperation between Europe and Asia on resolving a number of pressing global issues.

“Three weeks ago at the UN General Assembly, world leaders discussed ways to respond to global challenges, such as climate change, ISIS, poverty, development and the Ebola epidemic. We all agreed that such global issues cannot be solved by one nation or one area alone,” said the president.

“To better respond to the Ebola epidemic, Korea has provided humanitarian support and will dispatch medical staff to the disease-affected area. We will also host a high-level meeting of the Global Health Security Agenda next year,” she said.

Building a Closer Eurasia

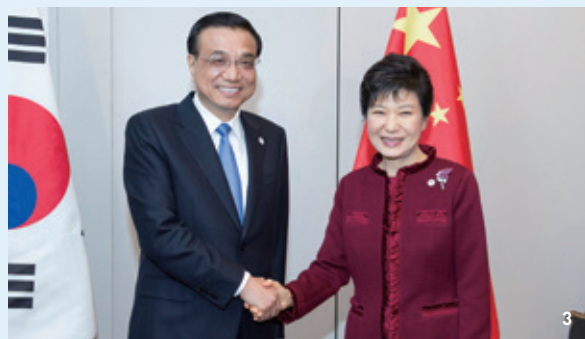
With regard to Asia-Europe cooperation, Park explained, “Asia and Europe have been actively cooperating in three areas: politics, economics, and society and culture. However, cooperation is weak in some areas where we need to make more efforts.” To strengthen connectivity between the two continents, she proposed three measures: upgrading physical connectivity, establishing digitalized connectivity and building more connectivity in culture and education.

“The Silk Road and sea routes that opened the Age of Exploration enabled the development of ties between the East and the West. In order to upgrade the physical connectivity between our two continents, we need to establish a comprehensive logistics network using railroads, roads, aviation, marine transport and the North Pole route, which will be open in the future,” said the president. She also proposed holding a symposium on developing a comprehensive logistics network across Eurasia where experts from Asia and Europe would gather to discuss ways to establish multiple logistics networks.

When reviewing the issue of digitalized connectivity, Park proposed an expansion of the Trans-Eurasia Information Network (TEIN), a project led by Korea, in order to share more information and knowledge and display creativity between research centers and education institutions across all of Asia and Europe.

As Park explained, “If both continents promote connectivity in the cultural sphere and in education, if we open our hearts and build trust, it will solidify the foundation for peace on Earth,” emphasizing connectivity in the cultural sphere and in education.

The president noted that the ultimate goal of the Korean government’s Eurasia Initiative is to “make Europe and Asia one continent, a continent of creativity and peace. ... In order to connect the West and the East, we need to connect a missing part: North Korea. Asia and Europe need to make stronger efforts so that North Korea can open its closed doors and head down the path of true change.”



come true, connectivity between Asia and Europe would finally be complete.”

Korea Joins Fight against Ebola

Meanwhile, the Korean government said it would finalize the details of dispatching medical staff to Ebola-affected regions, in cooperation with related government organizations, such as the ministries of foreign affairs, national defense and health and welfare. Considering the urgency of the Ebola epidemic, the government said it would send medical experts to the region as soon as possible.

The government also confirmed that it provided USD 600,000 through the WHO and UNICEF in the earlier stages of the Ebola crisis, adding that the government has been actively participating in the international community’s response to the Ebola crisis by committing to pledge an additional USD 5 million to the cause at a recent high-level meeting at the UN General Assembly.

On the sidelines of the ASEM event, Park held summits with Chinese premier Li Keqiang, French President François Hollande and Danish Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt.

Closer Korea–Italy Ties

Speaking to a group of Italian executives on Oct. 15, President Park emphasized the need to extend economic cooperation between the Korean and Italian economies.

President Park pointed out that, “Korea and Italy have a lot in common. Both are peninsular

1. President Park holds a summit conference with Danish Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt on Oct. 16. © Yonhap News
2. President Park shakes hands with French President François Hollande on Oct. 16 © Yonhap News
3. President Park shaking hands with Chinese Premier Li Keqiang on Oct. 16 © Yonhap News
4. President Park offering her applause at ASEM’s opening ceremony on Oct. 16 © Yonhap News

United Korea to Complete Interregional Connectivity

In a discussion of the Korean Peninsula, Park said, “Pyongyang needs to give up its nuclear weapons program and open its closed doors in order to make the lives of the North Korean people better. This would lead to the firm implantation of peace on the Korean Peninsula. A reunified Korean Peninsula would be a strong connecting link that completes the connectivity between Asia and Europe ... I used to dream of traveling from Busan, in the southern part of Korea, to Milan in Europe, via North Korea and crossing the Eurasian landmass by train. If my dream could

countries. The two became world-leading trading countries, despite a lack of natural resources, and both share great potential in bilateral economic cooperation.”

Park mentioned the gelato ice cream that Audrey Hepburn ate in the movie “Roman Holiday” (1953), saying that it acted as a symbol of economic cooperation between Korea and Italy. “Gelato, which has a long history, has recently penetrated world markets through Korea’s global network,” said the president.

“One of the strengths of the Italian economy is its family-based companies, which succeed for hundreds of years. If we can combine Italy’s brand power and Korea’s strengths in manufacturing and IT, through industrial and technological cooperation, the creativity of both countries could become stronger. This would be further realized in products which would penetrate the world market.”

Praying for Peace

President Park met with Pope Francis in Vatican City on Oct. 17, the last day of her visit to Italy, after attending ASEM in Milan.

The meeting came in return for the pope’s visit to Korea in August, the first papal trip to the Asian country in a quarter of a century.

During the talks, Park said that she hoped to someday receive the pope on a reunified Korean

Peninsula. To this, the pontiff replied, “Let us pray for a peaceful reunification of the divided Korean Peninsula and for peace across Northeast Asia.”

The Korean leader listened to opinions from the pope on the World Bishops’ Conference being held at the Vatican, which focused on international issues such as the recent Ebola outbreak in West Africa and global poverty, as well as on the importance of family. She also expressed her heartfelt gratitude for the pope’s dedication to peace and to the reconciliation of the world.

Meeting with Italian President, Prime Minister

President Park Geun-hye met with Italian president Giorgio Napolitano in the afternoon of Oct. 17. At their meeting, they had in-depth discussions on a variety of issues, including each country’s reform policies, ways to expand substantive cooperation in trade and investment, future collaboration to promote a creative economy and the current state of affairs on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia.

President Park met with Prime Minister Matteo Renzi in the evening. During their dinner meeting, President Park noted the significance of her official visit to Italy on the occasion of the 130th anniversary of diplomatic ties. The two leaders had extensive discussions on ways to promote substantive cooperation as well as regional issues and bilateral collaboration in the international arena.

President Park and Prime Minister Renzi reached an agreement to establish a creative economy partnership between Korea and Italy, the latter being known worldwide as the cradle of the Renaissance and a fashion and arts powerhouse. Highlighting the progress in bilateral relations that are marking their 130th anniversary, the two countries adopted a joint press statement addressing the vision for bilateral relations in the coming years, particularly their determination to cooperate on such sectors as the creative economy, science and technology, and national defense, in addition to enhancing both cultural and people-to-people exchanges.



Ushering in a Period of Change

Korea's financial pledge to combating climate change sets an example for other nations

Written by Daye Kim

On Sept. 23, President Park Geun-hye vowed to contribute up to USD 100 million (KRW 107 billion) to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) at the United Nations (UN) Climate Summit 2014 in New York.

The next day, the president stressed the need for action against climate change and reiterated Korea's support for the Incheon-based GCF at the 69th Session of the UN General Assembly.

"As the host country of the GCF and the Green Growth Global Institute (GGGI), Korea is committed to supporting international efforts to strengthen developing countries' mitigation and adaptation capacities," said President Park. "Korea views the climate challenge not as a burden, but as an opportunity to unleash new value, markets and jobs through technological innovation. We are nurturing

new energy industries, and we hope to share the fruits of our efforts with developing countries."

President Park's pledge comes at a time when the GCF is seeking contributors for its initial capitalization now that the structure and principles governing the fund have been agreed upon. Operations are scheduled to start by the beginning of 2015. Korea's commitment of up to USD 100 million includes the USD 40 million the country has already promised to provide to the fund, and USD 9 million that will be spent on operating the GCF's headquarters in Korea.

"We expect the USD 100 million that President Park pledged to contribute to assist with the GCF's initial fund mobilization and the establishment of its basis of operation, as well as encourage other countries' contribution to the GCF," said Cheong Wa Dae in a press release.

Green Climate Fund

The GCF is a multilateral fund that was established at the 2010 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Cancun, Mexico. At the conference, the international community agreed on targets for cutting greenhouse gas emissions and keeping the global average temperature rise to within two degrees Celsius of the pre-industrial level by the end of this century. Designated as the operating body of the convention's financial mechanism, the fund will provide grants and loans for programs and projects to help developing countries build low-emission and climate-resilient economies.

In October 2012, the board of the GCF chose the west coast city of Songdo, in Incheon, as the host city for the fund. Five other nations—Germany, Mexico, Namibia, Poland and Switzerland—had also expressed interest in hosting the GCF. The opening ceremony of the fund's headquarters was held at the G-Tower in Songdo on Dec. 4, 2013.

With regard to the fund's goals, the project is currently in the initial resource mobilization phase. Those interested in contributing to the GCF have met twice thus far—this past July in Oslo, Norway, and in September in Bonn, Germany—and discussed financial terms and policies for future contributions. In July, Germany made a significant commitment of EUR 750 million (about USD 1 billion, more than KRW 1 trillion) to the GCF, which is the largest offer yet.

The first formal GCF Pledging Conference in which contributors would announce their initial contribution to the fund, is going to take place in November.

Korea's Policy on Climate Change

President Park's new economic paradigm of promoting the creative industries to serve Korea's goal of achieving low-emission growth, with technology being the key means.

"Driven by a new paradigm, Korea is seeking a

creative economy. Nurturing new energy industries to deal with climate change is a key part of this initiative," the president said in her speech at the UN climate summit.

The president listed a string of examples that epitomize her ideas, such as energy storage systems, smart grid technologies, carbon capture and storage, zero-energy buildings and eco-friendly towns. She also added that in 2015, Korea will become the first Asian country to implement a nationwide Emissions Trading Scheme that will create a market for controlling pollution by making firms buy and sell emission permits.

At the UN General Assembly, the president vowed to submit the country's plan next year to support the post-2020 climate regime, and urged that an agreement be reached on it by the 2015 Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC in Paris.

"The early capitalization of the GCF is vital to the launch of a new climate regime next year, so we look forward to your contributions to the fund," she said.



1. The GCF's headquarters in Songdo, Incheon © Yonhap News

2. President Park shakes hands with Hela Cheikhrouhou, GCF's executive director, during the official opening ceremony of GCF's headquarters. © Yonhap News

3. President Park offers her keynote address at the UN's 69th General Assembly on Sep. 24. © Yonhap News

More Than Just Old Stuff

The Cultural Heritage Administration looks to make cultural properties more exciting

Written by Felix Im

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Korea is a land of rich cultural heritage. Joseon (1392–1910) alone boasted 500 years of cultural productivity: exquisite craftsmanship and artwork, a native alphabet, ergonomic yet aesthetically balanced architecture, a spirit of scholarship and much more. Yet many Koreans are still unaware of the breadth and accessibility of their country's cultural properties, even if well-researched sites are close by, leaving historic buildings, recovered ruins, restored temples and other valuable resources left untapped. To prevent such cultural wealth from going to waste, the Cultural Heritage Administration (CHA) has launched its Bringing Cultural Heritage Alive project, taking on the mission of stimulating public interest.

Officially founded in 1961, the CHA is the governmental body charged with preserving, restoring and promoting cultural properties. Some of the country's more famous sites include major palaces, such as Gyeongbokgung Palace and Changdeokgung Palace, but there are plenty of other hidden treasures that would otherwise go ignored if not for the CHA's efforts.

As part of this new project, the CHA is going to great lengths to make cultural

properties more accessible. One of their programs takes visitors through the grounds of ancient royal temples. Another introduces patrons to the burial sites of Joseon kings. A new program in Seoul allows residents to discover the story of the city's early modernization through important buildings and monuments, as does a similar offering in Busan. One of its more recent endeavors is the widespread establishment of *seowon* schools—Confucian academies during the Joseon era—where students can learn about the depth and impact of Korea's Confucian roots. Programs usually involve games for children, as well as traditional performances and crafts. Whether it's making paper lanterns or practicing traditional archery, organizers have made a multitude of activities available for young visitors.

According to Rha Sun-hwa, the CHA's chief administrator, "The reason why such properties and experiences are important is they allow us to rediscover who we are as Koreans, and what our culture is among the world's, something that will be critical in establishing our identity as we move forward in a global society."



1. Spectators enjoy a gugak performance, part of the CHA's new project to enliven culture. © CHA

2. Visitors experience a traditional tea ceremony. © CHA

3. A traditional folk performance in Hamyang, Gyeongsangnam-do © Yonhap News

Let the People Know

Chief Administrator of the Cultural Heritage Administration Rha Sun-hwa explains her game plan

Written by Felix Im and Colin A. Mouat



Despite the profound significance of a country's relics, artifacts, historic sites and restored buildings, these cultural properties cannot hold much meaning if the public doesn't know they exist. In response to this issue, the Cultural Heritage Administration (CHA) has set out to improve public awareness of such resources, as well as educate people about their importance. To get a better idea of the Bringing Cultural Heritage Alive project, KOREA sat down with the CHA's chief administrator, Rha Sun-hwa.

What is the main purpose of CHA's new project?

Rha Sun-hwa: We want to help people see Korea's cultural properties in a new light. Every relic has meaning beyond its material form: cultural meaning, historical meaning and even artistic significance. You can't just restore a building or designate a historic site and consider it done. You have to let people know it's there and why they should go see it.

Why are such efforts necessary?

Even though there's been a great effort to restore cultural properties—old ruins, historically important buildings and such—people are often unaware that they even exist, even if something's right near their house. It's our job, then, to let them know of such properties, as well as explain why they're worth seeing.

You talked about the non-material value that every relic holds. Could you explain what you mean by that?

For example, behind every artifact, every ruin, every building, there's a hidden story: the history of its makings and development; the values and philosophy that went into its making; the stories of the lives of the people who made or used it or were affected by it. There's so much that isn't immediately obvious. We want to tell people those stories, to give seemingly irrelevant objects or places deeper meaning.

What sorts of activities are offered to engage visitors?

One great example is the *seowon* effort, one of the project's major phases. Students can come and learn about the roots of our Confucian heritage, about the values and discipline that went into the making of a noble scholar, artist or poet. Compared to Buddhist temples, the *seowon* tradition is extremely underrepresented as a cultural property, and we plan to make it a much more available experience throughout 2015.

What has been the public response so far?

Much better than expected, actually. We started in 2008 with only a couple of projects, and now we have 105 nationwide. In 2013 we had 229,000 participants. Since we started, every year has attracted 30 percent more people than the previous year, so we have high hopes for the future.

A Lifetime of Achievement

Ryoo Ryong, expert in nanoporous materials, establishes foothold in developing high-efficiency industrial catalyst

Written by Sohn Tae-soo

In its special December 2011 issue that trumpeted the “Breakthrough of the Year,” *Science*, a prestigious, internationally recognized scientific journal from the U.S., announced the ten most significant scientific research breakthroughs made that year. Ryoo Ryong, a chemistry professor at the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST), was designated as one of the scientists of note.

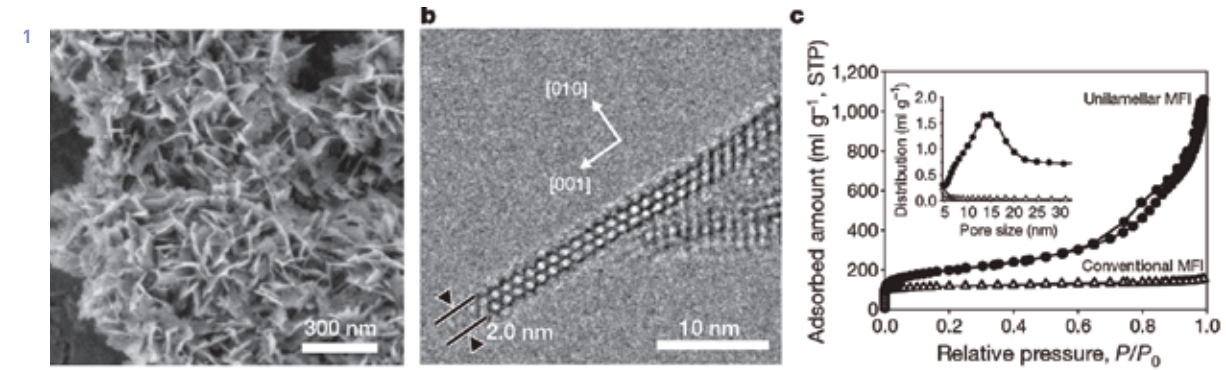
More recently, in September this year, the Intellectual Property & Science business of Thomson Reuters announced its 2014 Citation Laureates, a list of candidates who are most likely to win the Nobel Prize in several fields including physics, chemistry and medicine. Ryoo was nominated for the 2014 Thomson Reuters Citation Laureates in Chemistry, becoming the first Korean scientist who has made the list.

A Pioneer

During the past decade, Prof. Ryoo has been highly acknowledged internationally for his research on the development of the synthetic version of zeolites, a family of porous minerals that is widely used in major industrial sectors. Working with his team of scientists at the KAIST, Ryoo has developed a highly efficient nanoporous industrial catalyst that can exert considerable influence on the chemical and oil-refining sectors.

The term zeolites refers to crystallized microporous minerals made from silica and aluminum and are largely employed in the chemical industry, but are also frequently used as commercial absorbents and water purifiers as well as in nuclear reprocessing.

Ryoo found that one problem with traditional zeolite synthesis is that the small size of the pores—less than 1 nanometer in diameter (a nanometer



1. Ryoo's research results that were published in "Nature," Vol. 461, Sep. 10, 2009

2. Ryoo presents a zeolite model at his office.
© Yonhap News

is one-billionth of a meter)—makes it difficult for substrates to diffuse along the crystal structure of the zeolite, resulting in slower chemical reaction and making the zeolite a less efficient catalyst. One way to do this is to reduce the thickness of the zeolite crystal, thereby decreasing the lengths of the diffusion paths. One exciting discovery was that when the zeolite is used to transform methanol into gasoline, the catalytic longevity is greatly increased.

Cataclysmic Proportions

Ryoo reported his scientific results in an article titled “Directing Zeolite Structures into Hierarchically Nanoporous Architectures” in the July 11, 2011, issue of *Science*.

“Crystalline mesoporous molecular sieves have long been sought as solid acid catalysts for organic reactions involving large molecules. We synthesized a series of mesoporous molecular sieves that possess crystalline microporous walls with zeolite-like frameworks, extending the application of zeolites to the mesoporous range of 2 to 50 nanometers,” Ryoo said. “The molecular sieves are highly active as catalysts for various acid-catalyzed reactions of bulky molecular substrates, compared with conventional zeolites and ordered mesoporous amorphous materials.”

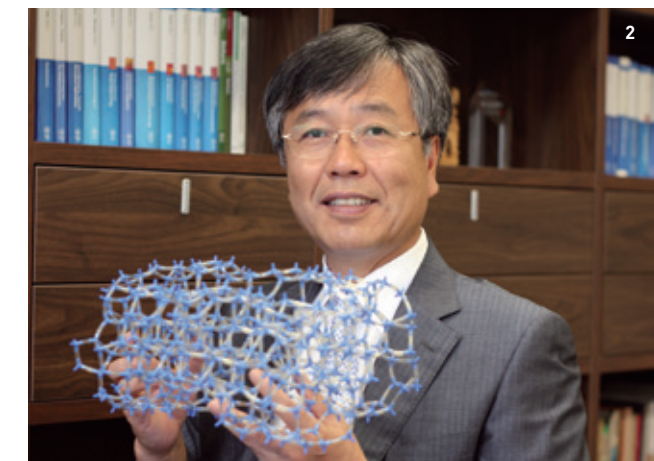
Ryoo said the ability to have both micro- and meso-sized pores is key to the faster reaction speed that has been an integral part of raising efficiency. All arranged in a regular honeycomb pattern, the solid zeolite compound developed in the laboratory has a reaction speed 5 to 10 times faster than that of conventional materials. Because the new zeolite

developed by Ryoo and his team is made up of different sized pores, the material can be used as a catalyst compared with existing materials that are unable to act as a changing agent.

Around the world, more than 3 million tons of zeolites are produced each year, and they are used for refining 7 billion barrels of petroleum and other chemical materials annually.

Some of Ryoo's noted reports in the prestigious overseas journals have included “Ordered nanoporous arrays of carbon supporting high dispersions of platinum nanoparticles” (*Nature*, 2001), and “Stable single-unit-cell nanosheets of zeolite MFI as active and long-lived catalysts” (*Nature*, 2009).

He has received numerous awards for his work over the past decade, including an Academic Award from the Korean Chemical Society (2002), a Grand Academic Award from KAIST (2002), a Top Scientist Award from the Korean government (2005), and a Creative Knowledge Awards by MOEST.





Members of the Hanbit unit perform emergency procedures on a patient in South Sudan. © Yonhap News.

Keeping the Peace

Korean peacekeeping troops bring stability and development to South Sudan

Written by Bae Ji-sook

In the faraway African country of South Sudan, about 280 Koreans have been devoted to the peacekeeping and reconstruction of the war-torn country.

Shouldered with the special mission of protecting about 15,000 refugees in the region and reviving the local economic infrastructure to create better living conditions, members of the Hanbit unit from the Korean army have no small task. Their peacekeeping efforts have not been in vain, however, as the contingent has been hailed by locals as friends of the community since they were first stationed in the town of Bor, about 170 kilometers north of Juba, the capital, in March 2013.

Offering Thanks

In September, the mayor of the Bor Municipal Council, Nhial Majak, sent a letter of gratitude to President Park Geun-hye

for the troops' contribution to the reconstruction of South Sudan. Established in 2011, South Sudan is the youngest country in Africa, though it still receives international aid through the UN due to the lingering aftermath of civil war.

In the seven-page handwritten letter, Majak stated that the Korean troops have provided a "tremendous amount of support to the local community."

He praised the Hanbit unit as "a symbol of hope," and said the peacekeeping troops, which include specialists from a variety of fields like medicine and engineering, have successfully completed the Nile River Embankment Project.

"It prevents flooding from the Nile River and, mostly, it instills a sense of stability in the people, allowing the community to pursue greater feats for their development," he said in the letter released by the Ministry of National Defense.

The mayor expressed hope for strengthened relations between the two nations and said that his people aim to become "as recognized globally as Korea currently is."

"The troops have successfully settled in the region, adapting themselves to the new environment and differences," an insider at the defense ministry said. "They have been working day and night—without weekends—after understanding the gravity of their mission. The letter was a huge encouragement to everyone."

Nile River Embankment Project

In August, the completion ceremony of the Nile River Embankment Project was held with local government officials, UN representatives, local residents and others.

The river has been the key lifeline for more than 200,000 residents in the Bor area, but the chronic flooding that occurs during the rainy season between April and November makes evacuation necessary.

"The establishment of the embankment means that people will be able to build solid and permanent lodgings here. People who have been indifferent to cultivation are now



A soldier from the Hanbit unit offers candy to children. (above) © Yonhap News
A member of the Hanbit unit's taekwondo team teaches children Korea's art of self-defense. © Yonhap News

expressing willingness to better their lives by seeking to farm," said John Kong Nyuon, governor of South Sudan's Jonglei state.

The project was carried out after the troops facilitated the construction of a temporary station, including a security system, in the wetlands. They were then assigned to repair the runway at Bor Airport. In addition, the unit has expanded refugee shelters and restrooms and created a water supply facility.

Members of the contingent have made efforts to get closer to the locals by holding football, taekwondo and music classes for children. They have also entertained the refugees with non-verbal performances of "Nanta" and of the percussion art *samullori*.

"Even during the civil conflicts that took place between December 2013 and early February this year, the troops did not halt their mission," a defense official said.

"It was very impressive to see how swiftly the refugee camp environment has changed since the Koreans have arrived here," an official of International Organization for Migration was quoted as saying in local media. "International non-governmental organizations respect the Korean troops for their passion and achievements," he added.

The Hanbit unit has now kicked off the construction of a 116-kilometer road between Bor and Juba.

"We want the people of South Sudan to believe that they can do anything if we can do it," a member of the Hanbit unit was quoted as saying to Yonhap News earlier this year.



Troops of the Hanbit unit salute during a farewell ceremony in Incheon before heading off to South Sudan. © Yonhap News



章威公 徐熙先生

Seo Hui

A master diplomat who prevented a full-scale war while establishing trade ties

Written by Felix Im

As the Goryeo Kingdom (918–1392) sprouted up on the Korean Peninsula during the early 10th century, a vast empire was quickly taking control of northeastern China, an area that now encompasses Mongolia, much of Manchuria and even parts of North Korea and Russia. Composed of the Khitan peoples, who are likely of mixed Chinese and Mongolian descent, the Liao Dynasty (907–1125), also known as the Khitan Empire, reached its height around 938, becoming a threat to both mainland China’s Song Dynasty (960–1279) as well as to Goryeo. Upset that Goryeo had become trade partners with the Song but not with their own people, the Khitans demanded that Goryeo open its borders, sending a team of diplomats to convince them, as well as around 50 camels. Perceiving the offer as a threat, King Taejo, Goryeo’s founder, killed all 50 camels in an act of defiance. Seo Hui (942–998) was born in the same year as King Taejo’s demonstrative slaughter, a time when diplomatic prowess was in great need.

Touchy Empires

At age 18, Seo Hui passed his civil service examination, beginning his career in government early. Intelligent and prudent, he quickly climbed the ranks and was sent as a diplomat to the Song in 972, where he managed to re-establish Song–Goryeo relations that had been severed over a decade earlier. In fact, the Song emperor was so moved by Seo’s mannerisms and tact that he sent additional gifts to King Gwangjong of Goryeo (r. 949–975). This achievement alone was enough to solidify Seo’s reputation as a skilled diplomat and charismatic speaker.

The Khitans, on the other hand, were not pleased. Not only had Goryeo repeatedly refused their offers and demands but the Khitans had still not forgotten King Taejo’s insult from years earlier. After several empty threats, the Khitans finally approached Goryeo’s borders with a force that claimed to be 800,000 strong. This act was not to be taken lightly, for the Song Dynasty had already failed in their attempts to retake ancient lands from the Khitans. The situation was dire, leaving Goryeo’s leader with two options: surrender or try to appease the Khitan emperor with parcels of Goryeo’s western territory. Fortunately, Seo had other ideas. He persuaded his king to send him to talk to the Khitan general, Xiao Sunning. Seo’s first attempt at negotiation, however, was not a success.

Still, Seo was convinced that the Khitans didn’t want war. He instinctively knew that their continual threats indicated hesitation. Just as the king was ready to evacuate Goryeo’s western lands to offer them to the Khitans, Seo convinced him to abstain from responding, engage in a single battle and then continue negotiations shortly thereafter. When Goryeo sent no response, General Xiao and his troops invaded their territory, near the Cheongcheongang River, but Goryeo’s forces pushed them back. A leading theory is that the Khitans, being a nomadic society from the Mongolian plains, couldn’t adapt to Goryeo’s mountains. After his initial defeat, General Xiao stopped marching, though he continued to send empty threats, demanding unconditional surrender. That’s when Seo made his second visit.

A Slick Truce

The general was more responsive this time around. His main complaint was that Goryeo traded with the Song Dynasty but not with the Khitan Empire. Seo calmly explained that the territory between Khitan and Goryeo lands was occupied by the Jurchens, who later became the Manchus, whom Goryeo had left alone in order to avoid offending the Khitans. Should his majesty, the Khitan emperor, permit Goryeo troops to dispel the Jurchens, Seo explained, establishing relations between the two empires shouldn’t be a problem. In return for Goryeo’s efforts in defeating the Jurchens and opening up a trade route, Seo demanded that any land acquired in the process fall under Goryeo territory. An agreement was made; war on a massive scale had been averted. Just as Seo had guessed, as soon as the Khitan emperor heard that Goryeo was ready to establish ties he ordered General Xiao to withdraw his troops. After the agreement was made, Seo personally led many of the battalions that expelled the Jurchens from Goryeo’s western territories. Although Seo was richly rewarded and promoted to an even higher rank, he fell ill in 996 and passed away two years later. He is remembered today as one of the greatest diplomats in Korean history.



• The Six Fortress Cities Gained by Seo Hui



A picture of Seo negotiating with General Xiao © The War Memorial of Korea



Seo's tomb in Yeosu, Gyeonggi-do © Yonhap News



The Replacement Drivers

Getting home after a night of fun is never a problem in Korea

Written by Aaron Martinson
Illustrated by Kim Yoon-myong

My experiences with the designated driver services in Korea have been safe, effective, financially viable and actually kind of fun at times.

When I was first told about the option to have a driver take me and my car home by a driver for hire, I felt uncomfortable. I thought that it sounded too good to be true, that there must be a catch. Now, however I am perfectly comfortable with the service, and unless something changes for the worse, I will always be a fan of the driving program known in Korean as *daerijunjeon*, which literally means “replacement driver.”

First Time for Everything

My first experience using the replacement driver service was in Incheon after a wedding. I had attended a wedding of a friend, and weddings often involve liberal amounts of alcohol and celebration. I had heard about the service before, but never had a real reason to use it. This time, though, a lack of other options made me willing to try it. Although I was probably still legally capable of driving, I felt that it was a better choice to use a driver instead of risking a possible problem, which could result in financial burden or, in my case, a complication with my work visa.

I had a friend call because they did not offer English service. He told me that the driver would arrive within 15 minutes, and he did. The driver arrived promptly, took me to my apartment complex and parked safely in my lot. After becoming familiar with this service I started noticing flyers on the streets advertising driver businesses near bar districts, which I thought was a great idea.

When I moved to Seoul from Incheon I noticed that the designated driver service wasn't as common in my community, but I needed and felt comfortable using it, so I sought it out. I found the process in Seoul to be very similar.

Better than Cabs

My most recent experience with a replacement driver was when I needed to travel with my car and a friend to the opposite side of the city after a couple of beers. This time, I was able to order the driver on my own with my broken Korean, and the driver promptly arrived at our location. When he

started driving, the driver explained that we were not only his first customers of the day but that we were his first customers ever. He had just started a new job, and this honestly made me a little nervous at first. After a few minutes, however, I realized that he was more cautious than most taxi drivers.

Prices for the service vary according to distance, and whether or not you cross into another district, but generally speaking, the service comes out to only a little more than a cab fare. Considering that a normal taxi would have cost me around KRW 15,000, and that the driver service was only 20,000, it was 5,000 won well spent. After using this service multiple times, I can only hope that more countries and cities implement this great idea.

I've been told that this service is subsidized by local governments, which means that if you're living in Korea, you are already paying for replacement drivers in one way or another. Anyone who owns a car in Korea should find out how to use this tremendously practical and useful way to get home after a night on the town.

The Sounds of Korea

Gugak expert Hilary Finchum-Sung explains the importance of traditional music

Written by Max Kim
Photographed by Park Sang-guk



The first time Tennessee native Dr. Hilary Finchum-Sung encountered gugak, or Korean traditional music, the only learning materials she had at her disposal were three CDs from the local bookstore and a small amount of literature on the subject. Having sought them out at a mentor's recommendation, Finchum-Sung remembers being captivated by the music's "earthy, rustic sound quality."

"The sound was very grinding, almost," she says, recalling her first impressions of gugak. "The textures, as well as the tone color of the instruments—[it was] jarring at times, but mellow at others."

Decades later, having turned this initial moment of fascination into a full-time career, Finchum-Sung is now a professor at Seoul National University's department of Korean music, and a nationally renowned champion of and researcher into gugak.

Finchum-Sung's current reputation as a gugak specialist, however, is only a small part of her eclectic musical background. Having been trained as a violinist before pursuing gugak, Finchum-Sung has a uniquely privileged perspective on Korean traditional instrumentation, capable of observing it from the outside, as well as from within.

"You can't really recreate the sound of your voice with a violin," she says. "But if you've played the *haegeum*, the *ajaeng* or the *piri*, all those sound waves, partials and harmonics that are part of your speaking voice are also being exposed on your instrument. I just loved that."

Music's Many Benefits

Alongside her research into gugak and ethnomusicology, Finchum-Sung also maintains a continuing preoccupation with one of her long-standing interests, musical therapy, often in tandem with her current work. Although musical therapy is still a relatively new and developing field in Korea, and the possible roles of gugak instruments have not yet been fully explored, Finchum-Sung says that in certain cases, gugak instruments have a great deal of untapped therapeutic

potential.

"I think learning a gugak instrument would be very important for someone who has problems moving and needs to gain muscle strength," she says. "In order to play the *geomungo*, for example, you need to fine tune the muscles in your hand. It's a very tactile activity that requires strength and the development of muscle."

Finchum-Sung points out, however, that one major obstacle in incorporating gugak instruments into musical therapy sessions is their relative inaccessibility. With the exception of the *sogo*, a traditional handheld drum, most gugak instruments

are handmade by specialized shops and thus fairly expensive, making it difficult for amateur musicians to attempt learning them. The resulting lack of public exposure, according to Finchum-Sung, is part of the reason why gugak seems to hold such paltry interest to the average Korean, and younger generations in particular.



The Real Korean Wave

"K-Pop is the soundscape of Korea, while gugak has become a foreign voice," she says. "I think one of the main reasons that there is this general, society-wide disinterest in gugak is because of the education system. People aren't exposed to it enough in elementary school."

Although Korean schools formally include gugak as part of the music education curriculum, Finchum-Sung says that a more focused and better-funded effort is necessary in order to break the deep-seated notions that gugak is hard or isn't fun.

"I think there needs to be more of an effort put into developing instrumentation that not only draws on gugak instrumentation but also allows every child at school to have hands-on work with an instrument," she says.

Even in the face of these challenges, however, Finchum-Sung says that gugak's public profile is on the rise, due in no small part to the Hallyu trend in other parts of Asia.

"It's starting to turn around," she says. "I think recognition outside of Korea is becoming very significant, and I think it works. People see that gugak is popular in New York or Germany, and it definitely has a domestic effect."

The Tale of Chunhyang

True love conquers all in this folklore classic

Written by Felix Im
Illustrated by Shim Soo-keun

The Chunhyangjeon is one of Korea's most iconic stories. Although its author and date of composition are unknown, it most likely originated as a work of pansori, a form of musical storytelling involving song and percussion, and was later adapted into prose during the reign of either King Sukjong (r. 1674–1720) or King Yeongjo (r. 1724–1776). The classic love story has since been rendered into several films, plays and other dramatic forms. Multiple versions exist, but they all adhere to the same basic plot.

True Love and the Social Ladder

There once was a *gisaeng*, or female musician/entertainer, named Wolmae, who lived in Namwon, Jeollabuk-do. The *gisaeng* class, although usually refined and cultured, were viewed with contempt by the noble and upper classes. Wolmae, eager to escape her low status, worked her way into the heart of a civil minister, who eventually took her as his second wife. Wolmae then gave birth to a daughter whom she named Chunhyang, meaning “scent of spring.”

Some 16 years later, Yi Mong-ryong, the son of the district magistrate, was out for a walk, taking in the spring

beauty, when he spotted a girl on a swing. She was the loveliest sight he'd ever beheld. Desperate to meet the lovely woman, Mong-ryong sent his servant to arrange a meeting with her. Although reluctant at first, Chunhyang agreed to meet her suitor at Gwanghallu Pavilion, a popular leisure spot. Although Chunhyang remained aloof, Mong-ryong was wholly smitten. He instantly decided he wanted to marry her, and went to Wolmae to ask for permission. Aware that marrying into a prestigious family could lead to a better life,

Wolmae gave her full approval. Constricting traditions, however, prevented Mong-ryong from wedding until he passed the civil service exam. Fortunately, however, Chunhyang eventually saw the sincerity of Mong-ryong's passion and fell in love with him. For a sweet, short while, the two lived a happy, peaceful existence while Mong-ryong studied for his exam.

Then one day, Mong-ryong's father brought misfortune to the loving couple by getting promoted to a position in Seoul, requiring him and his family to relocate. Because Chunhyang was the daughter of a *gisaeng*, Mong-ryong's father made it very clear that they couldn't risk their family honor by taking her with them. Soaked in tears, Mong-ryong and Chunhyang embraced each other and said their goodbyes, promising to remain true until their reunion. Mong-ryong vowed to pass his exams, earn a respectable title and come back to marry Chunhyang with honor.

Eradicating Injustice

Upon leaving, Mong-ryong's father was soon replaced by a new magistrate, Byeon Hak-do, who was greedy and licentious. He ignored his duties and exploited the local population to feed his private appetites. After witnessing Chunhyang's beauty, he demanded that she sleep with him, but she adamantly refused, declaring she had only one true love. Infuriated, Hak-do tortured her and threw her in prison. After a few months, just as Chunhyang was on the verge of death, Mong-ryong returned, with a respectful title as he had promised. Before ousting Hak-do and freeing several political prisoners, he disguised himself as a homeless man and approached Chunhyang to see how she'd treat him. She was polite and kind, but made it very clear that she had only one true love. When Mong-ryong finally revealed himself, the two lovers kissed and embraced each other, rejoicing in their reunion.

After righting the wrongs of Hak-do, Mong-ryong made Chunhyang his official bride and took her with him to Seoul, where the king rewarded Mong-ryong's accomplishments with a promotion. They lived happily ever after.

A Complex Love Story

Although it's tempting to view Chunhyangjeon as a simple love story, it has several deeper themes worth exploring, including social mobility amid a Confucian class system, punishment of the corrupt, humanity's earnest desire for untainted, everlasting love, and feminine resistance to male lechery. As it was a “bestseller” in its day, Chunhyangjeon can be seen as the literary projection of desires among the Joseon people for social and political change: a love story with hidden themes of subversion. A true classic, indeed.



Chodang Sundubu

Written by Shin Yesol

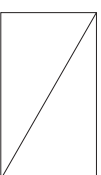
Although you can now enjoy *chodang sundubu* anywhere in Korea, this favorite tofu dish is closely associated with the east coast town of Gangneung. It's said that the 16th century scholar official Heo Yeop invented the dish, which consists of soft tofu prepared in seawater, when he returned to his hometown of Gangneung after he left government service. Today, there is an entire neighborhood in Gangneung filled with restaurants serving this specialty.

Chodang sundubu is characterized by a light, aromatic flavor with a simple, clean aftertaste. Making the dish requires a great deal of time and effort, with many hours of stirring. If you're in Gangneung, it's best to get this dish early in the morning, when the tofu is the freshest.

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I'll See You in Front of the School

01 밍밍, 오늘 약속 기억하고 있어?
Mingming, oneul yaksok gieokago isseo?

Mingming, do you remember our plans today?

02 아, 오늘 저녁이야?
약속 장소를 못 들었어.
*a, oneul jeonyeogiya?
yaksok jangsoreul mot deureosseo.*

Ah, that's tonight?
I don't know where we're meeting.

03 오늘 저녁 7시야.
학교 앞에서 우선 만나.
*oneul jeonyeok ilgopsiya.
hagyo apeseo useon manna.*

It's tonight at seven.
Just meet me in front of the school.

04 알았어. 그럼 이따가 봐.
arasseo. geureom ittaga boa.

All right. I'll see you later then.



-어, 아, 여 / (이)야

The intimate style is a speech mood used for someone who is of equal or lower status. When it comes to the intimate style there are formal and informal speech levels. The final ending of the intimate style is to put '-어/아/여' at the end of a verb-stem, which means that '요' is deleted from the informal polite style of '-어요/아요/여요.' This form could also be used to a person of higher status of she/he is close to the speaker.

Let's Practice

롯데월드 <i>Lotte World</i> Lotte World	잠실역, 놀이공원 <i>Jamsillyeok, norigong-won</i> Jamsil Station, amusement park
세종문화회관 <i>Sejongmunhwahoe-gwan</i> Sejong Center for the Performing Arts	광화문, 극장 <i>Gwanghwamun, geukjang</i> Gwanghwamun, theater
N서울타워 <i>Nseoul tower</i> N Seoul Tower	남산, 전망대 <i>Namsan, jeonmangdae</i> Mt. Namsan, observatory

Exercises

가: 민수야, 우리 약속 장소가 어디야?
Minsuya, uri yaksok jangsoga eodiya?
Minsu, where did we agree to meet?

나: 롯데월드야.
Lotte world-ya.
At Lotte World.

가: 롯데월드가 어디야?
Lotte world-ga eodiya?
Where's Lotte World?

나: 잠실역 근처에 놀이공원이야.
jamsillyeok geuncheo-e norigongwoniya.
It's near Jamsil Station.
It's an amusement park.



	지금 뭐해요? <i>jigeum mwohaeyo</i> What are you doing?	지금 뭐해? <i>jigeum mwobae</i> What are you doing?
가다 <i>gada</i> to go	집에 가요 <i>jibe gayo</i> I'm going home.	집에 가 <i>jibe ga</i> I'm going home.
먹다 <i>meokda</i> to eat	빵을 먹어요 <i>ppang-eul meogeoyo</i> I'm eating bread.	빵을 먹어 <i>ppang-eul meogeo</i> I'm eating bread.
일하다 <i>ilhada</i> to work	일해요 <i>ilhaeyo</i> I'm working	일해 <i>ilhae</i> I'm working

'이야/야' is used for '이에요/예요' after noun.

Q	이게 뭐야? <i>ige mwoya?</i> What's this?	
A	책 <i>chaek</i> book	이건 책이야. <i>igeon chaegyia.</i> This is a book.
	사과 <i>sagwa</i> apple	이건 사과야. <i>igeon sagwaya.</i> This is an apple.