

= Heritage preservation in South Korea =

The heritage preservation system of South Korea is a multi @-@ level program aiming to preserve and cultivate Korean cultural heritage . The program is administered by the Cultural Heritage Administration (CHA ; ????? ????? , Daehan Minguk Munhwa Jaecheong) , and the legal framework is provided by the Cultural Heritage Protection Act of 1962 , last updated in 2012 . The program started in 1962 and has gradually been extended and upgraded since then .

The CHA classifies cultural heritage into five major categories (state @-@ designated heritage , city and province @-@ designated heritage , cultural heritage material , registered cultural heritage , undesignated cultural heritage) and these are divided further into subcategories . Besides tangible cultural heritage , South Korea aims to preserve its intangible cultural heritage as well , including folk customs , music , dance and handicraft . The program also includes " living national treasures " ? people who possess the knowledge and skills important to pass down intangible cultural heritage to new generations . South Korea has founded several educational centers throughout the country and established a university , specifically dedicated to heritage preservation .

Some of the heritage properties of South Korea has been inscribed into various UNESCO lists . As of 2014 , the country has nine cultural and one natural World Heritage Sites , with 15 added to the provisional list ; and there are 17 items registered as UNESCO intangible cultural heritage .

Although the program is considered successful by both the public and experts , there are unresolved issues regarding the system and particularly the selection method of " living national treasure " holders .

= = The Cultural Heritage Administration = =

The program is administered by the Cultural Heritage Administration (CHA ; ????? ????? , Daehan Minguk Munhwa Jaecheong) , the predecessor of which was founded in 1945 by the American military government of Korea . It first belonged to the Ministry of Education , then to the Ministry of Culture . Between 1999 and 2004 it functioned as an independent agency . The CHA administers the National Palace Museum of Korea as well as various ' palace offices ' and ' shrine offices ' . It is also responsible for the Royal Tombs of the Joseon Dynasty , which are part of the UNESCO World Heritage .

The CHA established Korea National University of Cultural Heritage in 2000 , which specifically educates professionals for heritage preservation . Since 1999 the South Korean government founded 27 educational centers for cultivating intangible cultural heritage . The administrator of CHA is Byeon Youngseop , professor of history at Korea University . The annual budget of the administration was 615 billion won in 2012 .

The legal framework for the heritage program is provided by the Cultural Heritage Protection Act of 1962 (??????? , Munhwajae Bohobeop) , last updated in 2012 .

= = History = =

The legal framework of cultural heritage preservation is based on the number 961 Law of 1962 (??????? Munhwajae Bohobeop) , which in turn is based on the similar Japanese act of 1950 . The Korean act is broader in scope , also extending to folklore . The act was amended in 1970 not only to include people (?????? , ingan munhwajae , " human cultural heritage ") but also to support them financially .

At the beginning of the program , after the Korean War , the CHA had little means to operate . Go Sangnyeol (???) , the administrator of CHA between 1961 and 1968 set out to search for intangible cultural properties on the basis of a series of articles written by Yae Yonghae (???) for Hankook Ilbo , as the reporter spent years in exploring the country and interviewing old masters of handicraft . The first items to be inscribed on the intangible heritage list were thus taken from Yae 's articles . Others were added based on the opinions of researchers and also included winners of the annual folk tradition competitions . The recommendation of local administrations was also sought .

Korea introduced a unique system in the 1970s to preserve folk traditions (including handicraft , arts , folk songs , folk dances , theatre , traditional food preparation techniques , etc .) . This was triggered by a movement called New Community , aiming to modernize life in the countryside . In an attempt to get rid of old superstitions , the movement advocated cutting down the old Zelkova trees often found at village entrances , as they were believed to be ' protectors ' of the village according to tradition . In 1971 , the songs of the haenyo , or " sea women " of Jeju Island were declared provincial intangible cultural properties .

Major stakeholders of the intangible heritage program are " living national treasures " or officially called " holders " (??? boyuja) , people who possess knowledge or skills essential for preserving Korean culture . Some of these ' holders ' obtained significant national exposure or fame , for example Han Bongnyeo (???) , a holder for the Korean royal court cuisine who supervises the authentic presentation of Joseon Dynasty food in historical movies and television series .

The UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage took place in 2003 and South Korea joined the program a year later . In 2005 China declared some 1200 properties as intangible cultural heritage , with 16 items belonging to the Korean minority of the country , including the traditional wedding ceremony , Arirang (a folk song) and nolltwigi (a traditional seesaw game) . The CHA decided that they also had to broaden the scope of intangible heritage to properties that do not have any designated ' holders ' , like kimchi , hangul or Goryeo ginseng .

The CHA plans to open its World Intangible Heritage Complex in Jeonju , which will also function as a national centre . The complex will have an area of 59 @, @ 930 square metres (645 @, @ 100 sq ft) and is being constructed from 66 million USD .

= = Classification = =

As of July 2013 South Korea has 411 active National Treasures , 2317 Treasures , 485 Historic Sites , 104 Scenic Sites . It also classified 459 Natural Monuments , 134 Intangible Cultural Heritage items , 1062 Folklore Cultural Heritage properties and 549 Cultural Heritage of Early Modern Times . In 2012 there were 180 active " living national treasures " , out of 570 registered , the rest retired mainly due to health conditions .

= = = State @-@ designated heritage = = =

= = = Province- or city @-@ designated heritage = = =

= = = Other classification = = =

Cultural heritage material

Cultural heritage rendered important from a regional point of view but not classified by cities or provinces .

Registered cultural heritage

Early modern buildings built between the end of the 19th century and the 1940s , in need of preservation due to their condition .

Unregistered cultural heritage

Classified into two categories :

General Movable Cultural Heritage , Article 76 , Cultural Heritage Protection Act : ancient books , documents , wood blocks , sculptures , paintings , handicraft , archaeological findings that have not been classified by the state or a city / province but in need of protection for their historical and artistic values and the export of which are forbidden .

Buried Cultural Heritage , Article 43 , Cultural Heritage Protection Act : properties buried under ground or in the sea .

= = UNESCO heritage = =

Relations with UNESCO are coordinated through the Korean National Commission for UNESCO since 1954 .

= = = World Heritage = = =

South Korea joined the UNESCO World Heritage program in 1988 . There are nine cultural and one natural world heritage sites in South Korea as of 2013 , with 15 additional items on the provisional list . World heritage sites include the Pulguksa temple complex and the Changdeokgung palace , and the provisional list includes sites like the ancient mountain fortresses in Central Korea .

= = = Intangible cultural heritage = = =

As of 2014 , there are 17 South Korean items inscribed as UNESCO intangible cultural heritage :

= = = Memory of the World = = =

As of 2013 there are 11 South Korean items inscribed into the Memory of the World Register :

= = Criticism = =

The cultural heritage program of South Korea is generally considered a success both by academics and the public , however , a few issues remain to be addressed . One of them is the selection process of the " holders " , as the prestige and state support of the position creates high competition between folk artists to be selected . According to Choi Sung @-@ ja , a member of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Subcommittee , the intangible cultural heritage program should not be tied exclusively to the existence of " holders " , and a less subjective selection process should be introduced . Since 2009 the CHA changed its selection process by involving academic professionals to introduce a more objective evaluation system of " holders " .

Changes in society also brought challenges to the program . For example , in the 1990s Christian groups started to question the need to classify shamanistic rituals as cultural heritage . Patriarchal lifestyle , where the man is the main provider of the family and women stay at home , also influenced " holders " , as housewives started to pick up the preservation of folk traditions also in areas that were previously dominated by men . The government resisted appointing female holders for such predominantly male traditions but was gradually forced to acknowledge them when there were no male practitioners at all , or where the women were significantly more talented than the men .

According to Roald Maliangkay of The Australian National University , the program faces challenges from the Korean Wave , as well . As Korean culture is becoming more popular worldwide , due to the influence of television series and K @-@ pop , South Korea started to use its culture as a means of soft power , involving its cultural heritage , too . Maliangkay thinks that

" ... a society ? s image abroad is not shaped entirely by cultural activities . It is , instead , shaped by the combined total of what people abroad see and hear , and what they know about aspects they consider important , whether those are positive or not . [...] Even a society that cares greatly for its people and its heritage may not have a very positive image abroad , and vice versa . South Korea cannot control what people abroad will come to understand about its society and culture either .