



Achievements in Studies of North Korean Cultural Heritage and Future Prospects

Introduction

After liberation in 1945, Korea was divided into South Korea and North Korea. Since then, North Korea is rarely known even to South Koreans, the same ethnicity. Although the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and China have embraced the path of openness, North Korea has not. None of their politics, economy, society, or culture are thoroughly revealed, and they are always mysterious and shadowy.

The same goes for the field of cultural heritage. We are always curious about North Korea, so we constantly ask questions. Are there any cultural heritage in North Korea? If so, what kind of cultural property is located where? How does North Korea classify them? Are they protected well? Would they ever want to exchange cultural heritage with South Korean cultural heritage? If the exchange of cultural heritage between the two Koreas is possible, how and when should it proceed? I have been continuing direct and indirect exchanges with North Korea to find answers to the above questions. In this article, I would like to share my research and exchange experiences on North Korean cultural heritage, analyze past achievements by the two Koreas, and suggest future directions. To this end, I first summarized my experiences and achievements until 2010 when I had wider opportunities for active exchanges in three areas of cultural heritage. After 2010, the political situation became crumbled and therefore, exchanges were not feasible, so recent researches rather focused on the in-depth study and analysis of the previously collected data. Finally, since there are still many cultural heritages scattered throughout North Korea, I will share my prospects on the future exchange opportunities in the field of cultural heritage: what to prepare, how to prepare, and how to exchange.

Inter-Korean Exchange Projects on North Korean Cultural Heritage between 2005 and 2010

The period between 2005 and 2010 was when tangible exchange performance could be achieved in the field of cultural heritage between the two Koreas. At that time, visiting North Korea was possible in virtue of the two Korea's agreement. As is well known, the cultural heritage system in North Korea was reorganized as the Cultural Artifact Protection Act was enacted in 1994. It categorized cultural heritages into two types: historical artifacts and historical relics (Park 2011; Jung 2012). Artifacts were again divided into designated cultural artifacts—national treasures and second-class national treasures—and non-designated general cultural artifacts while relics were broken down to national treasure relics and conservation-grade relics. In 2012, it was renamed the Cultural Heritage Protection Act although there was no change in the ways of classification, but intangible cultural heritage was added since the reign of Kim Jong-Un in 2015.

Among North Korean cultural heritages, I am particularly interested in three areas. First, it is a field of traditional crafts within the realm of immaterial cultural heritage. I wanted to meet masters of ceramics, embroidery, and lacquerware in North Korea and research the institutions that produce them. The second is to investigate the artifacts held in museums at different levels, those corresponding to cultural artifacts. Third, I was hoping to go for field surveys to the royal tombs of Goryeo in Kaesong¹ and those of early Joseon in North Korea.

When inter-Korean exchanges were active, I visited those sites through various routes and exchanged with them. When I could not visit in person, North Korean experts provided necessary materials, drawings, and slides. In the case of traditional crafts, I received photos of the craftsmen working on the handicrafts, and for the historic sites, I received measurement drawings and site photos of the Goryeo mausoleums. Also, I could obtain photos showing the

exterior of 13 museums located in various provinces, exhibition information, materials, and photos on their collection. I carefully scrutinized the contents of those materials, cross-checked for confirmation, and published books to introduce North Korean cultural heritage to the public.

Intangible Cultural Heritage: Traditional Craft

First, I studied traditional crafts. Even in the 1990s, there have been some exchange outcomes in the field of North Korean crafts. In 1992, the exhibition on North Korean Art was held at the Seoul Arts Center, where North Korean embroidery and ceramics were showcased. In the 1995 Gwangju Biennale and the 1999 Cheongju International Crafts Biennale, the North Korean Crafts Hall displayed ceramic works produced by the Mansudae Art Studio in Pyongyang (Kwak 2001).

However, these attempts had a limitation that it was only one-off and could not be developed further. When I went to North Korea, I visited the Pyongyang Embroidery Research Institute and met an embroidery master, and at the Mansudae Art Studio, I could have conversations with pottery craftsmen and see how they work. Thus, in 2005, works of South Korean human cultural assets and North Korean People's Artists could be exhibited at the Seokjojeon Hall of Deoksugung Palace for the 1st Interchange Exhibition of Traditional Crafts between South-North Korea² (Jang 2005). In the 2nd Interchange Exhibition of Traditional Crafts between South-North Korea in 2006, pictures of the artists' work process were exhibited at the Seoul Museum of History (Jang 2006a; Park 2006).

During the two years when we organized exhibitions on traditional craft through inter-Korean exchanges, I became more interested in North Korean modern crafts. At that time, inter-Korean exchanges were feasible, so we were able to collect a wide range of North Korean materials with the support of the Arts Council Korea. Based on accumulated data, I also published a book, *North Korean Crafts*, in 2006.³

1. For non-English words including Korean ones, the new (revised) Romanization convention established by the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism is basically used in the *Review of Korean Studies*. However, for the place or person names and cultural heritages in North Korea in this manuscript, the Romanization convention of North Korea is exceptionally adopted since it has been already worldwide known and used.

2. This exhibition was awarded the "Art of the Year" by the Arts Council Korea in 2005.

3. In this book, the modern crafts of North Korea are explained per period, and then the genre of crafts is categorized according to materials, such as pottery, embroidery, metal, wood lacquering, paper, straw, bamboo, and stone. The flow of traditional crafts in North Korea after liberation was outlined.

As such, the field of traditional crafts focuses on traditional materials and techniques, so it does not tend to reflect strong political color like paintings and sculptures. Therefore, it was possible to continuously promote inter-Korean exchanges in this field. Moreover, through inter-Korean exchanges, North Korea became interested in intangible cultural heritage, including traditional crafts, which had been underrepresented so far. Accordingly, under Kim Jong-Un's reign, the Cultural Heritage Protection Act was amended in 2012, contributing to legal protection of intangible cultural heritage (Song 2017).

Cultural Heritage: Collection of North Korea Museums

There are some articles mentioning the necessity of inter-Korean exchanges written by the heads of the Cultural Heritage Administration or the National Museum having visited museums in North Korea (Yoo 2002; Choi 2003). Later, the National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage published a book on cultural heritage held in major museums in North Korea (National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2004). However, since this book used photographs of a book already published in the Japanese version in North Korea, the photographs were not in high-resolution and their description was too brief, showing little new information.

I have visited North Korea several times since 2005 and have had opportunities to visit museums in Kaesong and Pyongyang. With these experiences, I set out study the cultural heritage in custody of North Korean museums and as a first step, published a book, *The North Korean Central History Museum in Pyongyang* (Jang 2008b).⁴ In this book, I introduced the exterior of the museum, the layout of the exhibition halls, the structure and display of the collection, together with a number of photographs of the front, side, and back of the exhibited items in about 10 exhibition halls. Such a detailed information on the exhibited artifacts was introduced to the public in South Korea for the first time. Based on my previous visits to the Joseon Art Museum and the Joseon Folk Museum, I continued to collect data on various museums and their collection in North Korea. 2019 was the 100th year since the National Museum of Korea was established in Korea, so I organized information and current status

of the History Museum upon the request to write about museums in North Korea (Jang 2009b; Park 2009). Stepping further from this opportunity, I published *Museums in North Korea* (2010) by scrutinizing detailed data on 13 museums, their history, location, exterior views, collections, their exhibitions, and structure of working staffs.⁵

Historic Sites: Royal Tombs of Goryeo and Early Joseon

As a scholar who extensively studied the Joseon royal family, I continue to delve into not only royal crafts of the Joseon Dynasty but also its royal tombs. In the meantime, I had the opportunity to visit the royal tombs of the Goryeo Dynasty, such as the Mausoleum of its first King Taejo, Mausoleum of King Kongmin, and Hyeonjeongneung of Princess Noguk in Kaesong. I gradually built my interest in the royal tombs of Goryeo and their style. The inter-Korean exchanges were active in 2008, so we were able to visit several mausoleums, including Goryeo Taejo Hyeonneung in Kaesong and King Kongmin's Hyeonjeongneung. Exchange agreements regarding the royal tombs of Goryeo and Joseon were signed with the North Korean authorities. Accordingly, it was possible to secure hundreds of measurement drawings on the royal tombs of Goryeo in Kaesong, thousands of photo slides, and copyrights related thereto. Organizing all the data would take long, so I reviewed the history of the Goryeo mausoleums, current status of individual mausoleums, drawings, and photographs in the first place, and published a book called *Royal Tombs of Goryeo* (2008).⁶

In this book, in particular, information on Jereung—the Mausoleum of Queen Sinui—and Hureung—the Mausoleum of King Jeongjong, the second king of Joseon, and Queen Jeongan—was disclosed to the public for the first time. Jereung and Hureung, located in Kaesong, among the royal tombs of the early Joseon period, were underrepresented under the shadow of other notable

5. This book was published in Japan after 5 years of translation works by researchers at Ehime University (張慶姬 著, 池貞姬, 村上和弘, 松永悦枝 譯, 『北朝鮮の博物館』, (株)同成社, 2018).

6. This book contains the field survey results on the tombs of Goguryeo, located in North Korea, as well as the tombs of Baekje, Silla, and Gaya; not only the accumulated achievements on those sites were summarized, but the data of the royal tombs of the early Joseon Dynasty was included. A revised and updated edition was published in 2013, including the results of the field survey on the royal tombs of Chinese emperors. See Jang 2013.

4. When the National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage published *The Collection of Major North Korea Museums*, it used illustrations and contents of books already published in North Korea.

royal tombs. But with the sources obtained from North Korea, a book on Hureung sugae dogam uigwe, which was already in South Korea, was published as well (Cultural Heritage Administration of Korea 2008).

Royal Tombs of the Joseon Dynasty, a collection of 40 tombs, were inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage in 2009.⁷ Two royal tombs of Joseon in Kaesong were not included here, and it was possible to grasp the relevant information when researching other Goryeo mausoleums mentioned above. Therefore, when publishing a comprehensive academic research report on the royal tombs of Joseon, Hyeonjeongneung, the Mausoleum of King Kongmin as well as the 1st Jereung and the 2nd Hureung of Joseon Dynasty could be included in the chapter on the royal tombs of the late Goryeo Dynasty and the early Joseon Dynasty period (National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2009).

Likewise, in virtue of an upsurge of interest in Kaesong, where the royal tombs of Goryeo were located, “Historic Monuments and Sites in Kaesong” was registered as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2013 (Lim 2013). In addition, interest in the royal tombs of Goryeo, located on Ganghwa Island, led to more research outcomes (Jung 2018). As discussed above, exchanges with North Korea conducted by the government agencies and organizations were mostly one-time events, but I first established a system for exchange and then concentrated on only the three areas of my interest. I created a team with South Korean and Chinese experts specialized in North Korea and signed a tripartite contract among South Korea, China, and North Korea to secure sources and constantly manage relevant contents. The biggest difference was that, rather than a one-time project, we continuously discussed exchange performance in the field of interest and regularly expanded the scope to promote further exchanges in the long-term perspective.

Achievements in Research of North Korean Cultural Heritage after 2010

As mentioned earlier, until 2010, I have been promoting public awareness on its cultural heritage through publications on three areas—traditional crafts, royal tombs of Goryeo, and cultural heritage held in museums. However, after 2010, as inter-Korean relations became unstable, it has been difficult to visit in person or obtain related sources. Instead, researchers, including me, have been trying to expand the scope of research by publishing various journal articles and dissertations based on previously obtained data.

First, in-depth research was conducted on North Korean traditional crafts’ various genre. In North Korea, traditional crafts, including ceramics, have been regarded as the fields that can improve the daily lives of the people, so they were actively promoted by the state. In order to develop the techniques of traditional crafts, duplication of products was encouraged and the outcomes were widely distributed (Jang 2017b). In the case of handicrafts, North Korea regards this field as the most advanced field of crafts. There is a study which examined this field from the perspective of women’s art and delineated the stylistic trends of artists and works by period through analyzing the historical changes of the Pyongyang Embroidery Institute (Kwon 2019). Meanwhile, the lacquer crafts, to which Japanese colonial rulers paid attention in rationalizing the colonial rule of Korea and as a possible source of utility for the arms industry, seem to have helped North Korea realize the socialistic realism by nationalizing lacquering materials and facilities (Jang 2019).

Second, the scope of research on the royal tombs of the Goryeo Dynasty period and the early Joseon Dynasty period, located in Kaesong, was expanded. As the latest data on the royal tombs of Goryeo in Kaesong were secured, there appeared an original study to find a golden ratio from the structure and arrangement of the Goryeo mausoleums through mathematical analysis (Lee, Kim, and Lee 2011). Meanwhile, another scholar conducted a comparative study on the excavation results of the Goryeo mausoleums and the drawings of the internal structure and investigated the identity of the buried (Lee 2012). At the same time, the King of Goryeo was called the emperor, unlike the previous Silla Kingdom, and used the *myoho* (title given to the king after his decease) and *neungho* (name given to the tombs); therefore, these royal tombs were compared with those of Chinese emperors for in-depth understanding of the royal tombs

7. It was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site at the 35th UNESCO World Heritage Committee held in Seville, Spain, on June 27th, 2009.

(Jang 2014). Also, based on the drawings, dimensions, and photographs of *munmuseokin* (stone statues in the shape of civil and military officials) placed in front of the mausoleums, the periodical changes of stone sculptures and their stylistic characteristics were also studied (Jang 2016).

As data on the royal tombs of the early Joseon Dynasty in Kaesong were obtained and new records and texts were found in South Korea, corresponding research became vigorous. First of all, Jereung is the Mausoleum of Queen Sinui who was a wife of King Taejo, and it was built by the third king, Taejong, even before the Mausoleum of King Taejo, Geonwonneung, was built. Jereung and Geonwonneung are the mausoleums of the early Joseon Dynasty's King and Queen; therefore, they worked as an archetype of other mausoleums built later (Jang 2009a).

Meanwhile, there is the issue of Hureung. The establishment process of Hureung—the Mausoleum of King Jeongjong (the second king of the Joseon Dynasty) and Queen Jeongan—is well recorded in the Annals of King Sejong. It has even been believed that Hureung would have served as a model for later days Joseon tombs. However, through in-depth research, it was revealed that the written records and actual measurement of the tomb were different (Kim 2013). Also, Queen Jeongan died earlier than King Jeongjong, and Hureung was constructed after the king's decease. Such a historical context was also examined in political perspectives in one study (Yoon 2017). The historical background of Hureung is similar to that of Hyeonjeongneung, the Mausoleum of King Kongmin and Princess Noguk Daejang (wife of King Kongmin). When the queen died earlier than the king, the king ordered to create the tomb of his wife and also his own tomb at the same time. This type of a tomb is called Sureung 壽陵. Another study dealt with Ssangneung, which has two separate burial mounds (one built as a Sureung), and explained that Ssangneung continued to appear until Hureung and Heonneung, the Mausoleum of the third King Taejong and Queen Jeonghee (Jang 2018). In addition, the issue on the necessity to include two royal tombs in North Korea excluded from the UNESCO World Heritage Site, *Royal Tombs of the Joseon Dynasty*, was raised (Jang 2017c).

There were more royal tombs of the early Joseon period in North Korea. Another case would be a mausoleum that enshrined the fourth grandparents of King Taejo, the first king of Joseon, located in Hamheung. Such mausoleums also drew attention, and relevant drawings and photographs held in North

Korea and text records or glass plates held in South Korea were investigated (Jang 2012, 2017a; Jeon 2014). As discussed above, researches on North Korea's cultural heritage from 2010 to the present have been evolving into in-depth research based on data collected before 2010. These research outcomes show that the inter-Korean exchange in the field of cultural heritage should be more sustainable than one-time political events; rather, it is necessary to collect and organize fundamental data such as excavated field sites, actual survey drawings, and current situation photos, focusing on fields related to history and culture that exclude political colors.

Preparation for Future Exchange Opportunities in the Field of North Korean Cultural Heritage

I will share my prospects of future exchange opportunities, focusing on the fields of my interest and previous research experience.

The first point is on craft techniques under the category of intangible cultural heritage in South Korea which corresponds to the traditional handicraft, one of the intangible national heritage of North Korea. North Korea categorizes intangible national heritage into five areas, and 45 representative items are as follows.

Table 1. Intangible National Heritage of North Korea (as of May 2017)

Category	Inventory
oral tradition and expression	Arirang, a tale of Jumong, a myth of Kyunwoo and Jiknyeo (the Altair and the Vega)
traditional art	<i>yeonbaeknongakmu</i> (a folk dance)
social customs, ceremonies, holiday events	<i>ssireum</i> , <i>taekwondo</i> , kite-flying, New Year welcoming customs, Jeongwol daeboreum (the first full moon day) and moon welcoming customs, Chuseok (Korean Thanksgiving) holidays, red bean porridge for the winter solstice, <i>gudeul</i> (<i>ondol</i>) customs, a ritual ceremony for Dangun (the founding father of Gojoseon)
knowledge and customs on nature and the universe	<i>kimchi</i> -making, <i>makgeolri</i> -making, <i>jang</i> (sauce) making, usage of <i>sansam</i> (wild ginseng), cultivation and usage of <i>Goryeo insam</i> (ginseng), moxibustion treatment, red-hot needle treatment
traditional handicraft	<i>chimajeogori</i> (Korean traditional skirt and jacket), Goryeo celadon, traditional embroidery and weaving, <i>gayageum</i> , <i>jeotdae</i> (<i>daegeum</i> , Korean flute)
total number	45

North Korean traditional handicrafts are generally similar to those of South Korea; for instance, they include techniques for *chimajeogori*, *chimseonjang* (needlework), traditional embroidery and weaving, and *gayageum* (traditional musical instrument) making. In the case of Goryeo celadon production, it is similar to our *sagijang* (pottery-making masters). When Lim Sa-jun (1927-2007), the People's Artist, was alive, a documentary film and slides were recorded. I have these sources in which Lim demonstrated the entire celadon making process with his son, Lim Gyeong-jun, from the steps of collecting ingredients to baking the celadons in a kiln. Moreover, since Kim Jong-Un reigned in 2012, North Korea has been classifying intangible cultural heritage, which had been neglected so far, as intangible cultural heritage and let them protected under the Cultural Heritage Protection Act.

Therefore, it is believed that traditional crafts among the intangible cultural heritage that are jointly passed down to North Korea and South Korea might be able to be jointly nominated as a UNESCO World Intangible Cultural Heritage as did in the cases of *kimchi* and *ssireum*.

The second point is on the cultural artifacts held in museums. In North Korea, 83 national treasures and 121 second-class national treasures have been managed under different control numbers by each of the 13 museums. While writing *Museums in North Korea*, I studied and organized as much representative artifacts in each museum as possible. However, it was not possible to deal with the entire designated cultural heritage, and after that, further efforts were made, but due to restrictions such as international sanctions, thorough study has not been accomplished.

In recent years, there is an increasing interest shown in the field of paintings, and one of the scholars studied the Joseon Art Museum located in Pyongyang, how it was established, its early collection of painting artifacts, and its exhibition display patterns (Park 2019). In addition, I have been continuously archiving materials related to the artifacts of the museums I visited before, but there was not much achievement. Therefore, I supplemented some details to the existing materials and reviewed the artifact preservation plans of the museums in North Korea (Jang 2020).

Therefore, when inter-Korean exchanges become feasible in the future, it is necessary first of all to check national or second-class national treasures held in each of the 13 museums and create "a relic registration card" for the other relics in the collection. In addition, the history of each artifact must be recorded.

In particular, in the case of buried relics, the excavation status and records of the excavated remains should be organized and published as an official record as soon as possible. This is because if the excavation was conducted long ago, the archaeological experts who participated might be very old to remember the details. For accurate understanding and investigation of artifacts, it is necessary to produce high-resolution slides or digital photos, and in the case of three-dimensional works such as ceramics and sculptures, 3D scanning may be also critical.

The third point is related to ruins located throughout North Korea. Previously, the royal tombs of Goryeo were jointly studied, and based on this, "Historic Monuments and Sites in Kaesong" were registered as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. After that, inter-Korean exchanges were not feasible, but North Korea continued research and excavations to find the tombs of Goryeo. As a result, in 2010, Inneung of the 13th King Seonjong and Heereung of the 18th King Uijong were excavated in Jangpung-gun, Hwanghaebuk-do Province;⁸ in 2016, Anneung of the 3rd king of Goryeo Dynasty and Sukneung of its 9th king Deokjong were excavated.⁹ In 2017, Yeongneung of King Sukjong—the 15th king of Goryeo—was excavated in Seonjeok-ri, Gaeseong-si;¹⁰ in 2019, Onhyereung, the tomb of Queen Wonchang—the grandmother of King Taejo Wang Kon, the 1st king of Goryeo—was excavated and promoted as a national treasure.¹¹ In 2019, Sunneung of King Hyejong, the second king of Goryeo, was reorganized.¹² Hearing the latest achievements on the royal tombs of Goryeo, we made several attempts to promote exchanges with North Korea, but it is at a standstill due to various circumstances such as the coronavirus outbreak.

Among the royal tombs, Hyeonneung of King Taejo of the Goryeo

8. Pyongyang Broadcasting Station, 7 December 2010, The Kaesong Koryo Museum and the Institute of Archeology of the Academy of Social Sciences excavated Inneung (tomb of the Goryeo Dynasty's 13th King Seonjong [1049-1094]) and Heereung (tomb of the Goryeo Dynasty's 18th King Uijong [1127-1173]) in Jangpung County, Hwanghaebuk-do Province. Based on the records of *Goryeosa* (*History of Goryeo Dynasty*) or *Junggyeongji* (*Capital of Goryeo Dynasty*), the sites were investigated; their structure, layout, flagstone, scale, and relics excavated were also studied according to historical evidences.

9. North Korean Central News Agency, 28 June 2016.

10. North Korean Central News Agency, 19 August 2017. Its location is indicated as Songnim-hyeon, east of Kaesong, in *Goryeosa* (*History of Goryeo Dynasty*), but the exact location is not indicated in *Shinjeungdonggukyeojiseungram*. However, there is a record about it in *Yeojowangreungdeungrok* (1662, King Hyeonjong's 3rd year).

11. North Korean Central News Agency, 21 July 2019.

12. North Korean Central News Agency, 23 October 2019.

Dynasty and Hyeonjeongneung of King Kongmin are representative national treasures of North Korea: National Treasure Number 179 and 123, respectively. There are a total of 193 national treasure relics registered in North Korea (Park 2017),¹³ and they are categorized into 22 types which include fortress, gate pavilion, pavilion, shrine, pagoda, tumulus, dolmen, royal tomb, stupa, Menhir, temple, *seowon*, *hyanggyo*, stele, government office, bridge, stone column and lantern, banner pillar, porcelain kiln site, and ancient relics. In South Korea, they are categorized into 5 types: general architecture, temple architecture, ancient tomb, stonework, and miscellaneous. Photographs and information on North Korean national treasures are shown in the book, *National Heritage Sites of DPRK*, published by the National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage in 2006.¹⁴

Table 2. Categorization of National Treasure Relics in North Korea¹⁵

Category (South Korean Standard)	Category (North Korean Standard)	Contents
general architecture (68)	1) fortress	1. Pyongyang Castle, 2. Anhak Palace, 8. Taesong Fortress, 187. Site of Chonghae Earthen Castle
	2) gate pavilion	3. Potongmun Gate, 4. Taedongmun Gate, 157. Chinbuk Pavilion
	3) pavilion	19. Ulmil Pavilion, 20. Chongryu Pavilion, 145. Kyongam Pavilion
	4) shrine	5. Sungin Hall, 6. Sungryong Hall
	12) <i>seowon</i> (Confucian academy)	14. Ryonggok Academy, 128. Sungyang Academy
	13) <i>hyanggyo</i> (Confucian academy)	45. Changsong Provincial School
	15) government office	109. Sonhwa Hall (Hamhung), 142. House of Kim Ung-so

13. During the 1905 Russo-Japanese War, the Pukkwon Victory Monument was taken by the Japanese military commander Ikeda Asis and relocated from Hamgyeong-do Province to Japan, and it was left unattended at Yasukuni Shrine. It was returned to South Korea on March 1, 2005, and preservation treatment was carried out by the National Museum of Korea. Then, it was delivered to North Korea on March 1, 2006, and designated as National Treasure number 193.

14. See also Park 2017 for this.

15. In the Table 2, 22 categories determined by North Korea were divided into 5 major categories first and then again into sub-categories. Therefore, two columns may not be matched well.

temple architecture (45)	11) temple	13. Pobun Hermitage of Yongmyongsa Buddhist Temple, 25. Site of Kumgangsa Buddhist Temple, 34. Anguksa Buddhist Temple, 173. Chongrangsa Buddhist Temple
ancient tomb (25)	7) dolmen	76. Noam-ri Dolmen, 183. Hwangdaesong Dolmen
	8) royal tomb	36. Tomb of King Tongmyong, 67. Anak Tomb No.3, 123. Tomb of King Kongmin, 179. Tomb of King Wang Kon
	6) tumulus	12. Group of Koguryo tombs on Mt. Taesong, 182. Hyangdan-ri Tomb
stonework (41)	5) pagoda	7. Tabo Pagoda of Pohyonsa Buddhist Temple, 186. 3-story Pagoda of Chongyangsa Buddhist Temple
	9) stupa	134. Stupa of Hwajangsa Buddhist Temple
	14) stele	85. Monument to the Venerable Jinchol of Kwangjosa Buddhist Temple, 193. Pukkwon Victory Monument
	16) bridge	159. Sonjuk Bridge, 106. Chudun-ri Rainbow Bridge
	17) stone column and lantern	59. Songdong-ri Dharani Monument
	19) stonework	102. Myogilsang Buddhist Statue, 178. Onjong-ri Buddha
20) banner pillar	147. Banner Pillars of Chunghungsa Buddhist Temple	
miscellaneous (14)	21) kiln Site	165. Wonsan-ri Celadon Kiln Site No.1
total	193	

Two of the 193 national treasures of North Korea and 20 of the 1,723 cultural assets (designated as conservation-grade) are the royal tombs of Goryeo.¹⁶ According to the resources of North Korea, there are ten categories of conservation-grade relics.

	Category	Contents
1	fortress	20. Choktu Fortress, 21. Nakrang Earthen Castle, 72. Mago Castle, 1722. Aprokgang Fortress in Posung-ri

16. Jang, Kyung-hee. 2013. *Royal Tombs of Goryeo Dynasty (2nd Edition)*. Seoul: Yemaek: 50-51.

2	gate pavilion	1. Hyonmumun, 99. East Gate of Pyokdong Castle, 523. North Gate of Taehung Fortress
3	pavilion	88. Onmu Pavilion, 90. Sokun Pavilion, 1693. Chongsok Pavilion
4	shrine	103. Hyonchung Shrine, 1674. Uiryol Shrine
5	pagoda	52. Nine-story Pagoda of Anguksa Buddhist Temple, 1383. Pagoda Site with Artifacts in Midun-ri
6	tumulus	3. Kaema Tomb, 4. Nae-ri Tomb No. 1, 1715. Tomb of General Maengkwang
7	dolmen	14. Jang-ri Dolmen, 15. Jiksong-ri Dolmen, 1718. Dolmen Groups in Ryonggok-ri
8	royal tomb	544. Groups of Seven Tombs, 545. Goreung, 1701. Yureung
9	stupa	122. Stupas of Ansimsa Buddhist Temple, 1688. Stupas of the Singwangsa Buddhist Temple
10	Menhir	37. Hutan-ri Menhir, 38. Ryulhwa-ri Menhir, 1492. Menhir in Gwangam-ri
total	1,723	

However, little research or investigation has been done on designated cultural assets scattered throughout North Korea. One of the examples is fortress. Since North Korea does not have sufficient construction materials and equipment, when building houses or cattle sheds, stones from nearby fortress walls have been used. It is difficult to repair and restore the fortress that has been damaged both naturally or artificially. The same goes for the gate pavilions, pavilions, shrines, and tombs. Any remains exposed to the external environment cannot be free from natural disasters or artificial damage. Unless their economic conditions improve, it is difficult to protect and manage them well. Moreover, it is obvious that damage of the relics exposed outside will accelerate further if inter-Korean exchanges are activated, such as the connection of the North-South railway.

Therefore, preliminary research or data archiving on such designated cultural assets exposed to the external environment has to be preceded above all: such as index survey, condition analysis, drone photography, etc. Even if it has endured hundreds to thousands of years, once damaged, it is difficult to restore it to its original state.

Conclusion

I haven't been to North Korea for nearly 10 years already. Writing this article brought back old memories of North Korea and its cultural heritages. My thoughts flashed back to the stories and experiences I shared with the people I met there, and my heart bubbled over with emotional warmth.

Whenever I visited North Korea, I was always grateful that they have protected even this much of our cultural heritages. I was able to confirm their economic troubles with my own eyes, but it was clear that the two Koreas had close ties to our affection for cultural heritage. Same as South Korea, North Korea has retained traditional skills to produce embroidery and celadon containing the soul of Korean history and ancestors; the cultural assets held in their museums were as those in our museums; the royal tombs of Goryeo were very similar to those of Joseon. Their crafts, artifacts, and relics are, after all, a shared asset of Koreans. Therefore, I will continue to study the cultural heritage of North Korea as I have been.

However, as already explained in the category of designated cultural assets, there are still many subjects and fields to be studied throughout North Korea. They are waiting for someone to tell their story with affection in their field. Once again, cultural heritage, unlike other fields, has no political color, reflecting our history and ethnic identity whether it is in the north or the south. There is nothing more suitable than the field of cultural heritage for the recovery of homogeneity between the two Koreas. I hope that more scholars from various fields will become interested in North Korea's cultural heritage to prepare for future exchange opportunities between the two Koreas.

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