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Policies for Protection and Management of Cultural Properties in Kaesong City, Trends and Changes

Introduction

Kaesong¹ City is located at the center of the Korean peninsula and surrounded by rivers and seas on three sides. By virtue of its geographic condition, Kaesong City is full of rich cultural heritage. Among them, those of the Goryeo Dynasty period outweigh those of other periods because it was the capital of Goryeo consisting of royal palaces, fortresses, Royal Ancestral Shrine, altar, temples, mausoleums, educational institutions, and cultural facilities.

However, the city burned down and the royal tombs were dug in the wake of a number of internal and external conflicts, such as the invasion of the Khitan and Mongolia and the rebellion of Lee Jagyeom. And following the change of the dynasty and the construction of the Hanyang City, the formerly splendid capital rapidly deteriorated and turned into a city of military and commerce. In addition, constant robbery and looting during the Japanese colonial era and the subsequent Korean War contributed to the dilapidation of cultural heritage in Kaesong.

Post-war recovery and an effort to establish a socialist city were concentrated on the southern part of Janamsan Mountain, located in the center of Kaesong, thereby ironically contributing to protection of cultural heritage from the Goryeo Dynasty period in the northern part. The excavation survey on the Manwoldae Palace in which I participated discovered that the building's foundation and lower parts were almost intact as they were buried underground for a long time. In addition, a collaborative survey on the Namdaemun Gate and Kaesong fortress walls with a French team also revealed their good state.

In virtue of historicity of Kaesong and various cultural properties, "Historic Monuments and Sites in Kaesong" was successfully registered as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2013.

Now, with the first achievement of registering "Complex of Goguryeo Tombs," North Korea now has the second cultural property on the World Heritage List to introduce to the international society. North Korea will continue to put effort on registering other properties on the Tentative List, and at the same time, it is also obliged to protect and manage inscribed properties according to the international standard. North Korea recently showed some changes in legal measures for the protection and management of properties, corresponding to international norms.

Process of Amending Protection and Restoration Policies

In 1946, shortly after liberation, the Interim North Korea People's Committee announced "the Decree on the Conservation of Treasures, Historic Remains, Scenic Sites, and Natural Monuments." After the Democratic People's Republic of Korean Government was formed in 1948, "a Policy on the Conservation of Tangible Cultural Properties" supplanted the Decree, and this is when the system for research, protection, and management of cultural properties was prepared. Accordingly, a "Research Committee for Tangible Cultural Properties of Chosun" (1948) and "the Institute of Archaeology affiliated with the North Korean Academy of Social Sciences" (1952) were established. After the Armistice Agreement was signed, North Korea constructed a number of buildings to reify socialist ideologies as a part of post-war reconstruction works in major cities. During this process, various artifacts and relics were excavated, so "About the Conservation and Management of Artifacts and Relics Excavated from Construction Sites" (Cabinet Order Number 92) was announced in 1954.

In the same year, Kim Il-Sung visited Kaesong and gave a brief "On Some Issues in the Development of Kaesong City," which defined Kaesong as "an old capital city with many ruins and artifacts." Also, Kaesong was set to be developed as a history and culture city, and the conservation and management plan dealing with areas grouped by district replaced the previous management system of dealing with individual ruins. This directive was reflected in the 1955 Masterplan for Restoration of Kaesong and later provided the basic

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.

guidelines for its urban development. Regarding cultural properties, this plan aimed at “preserving Chosun-style buildings and historic classical buildings and constructing new national architectures in harmony with them.” As a result, many houses with tiled roofs (*giwajip*) remaining in the Bukan-dong area were preserved as a “Conservation Area for Chosun *Giwajip*,” and new buildings were designed to be compatible with old buildings. In 1955, the Namdaemun Gate was restored, and in 1957, maintenance works for the Daeheungsanseong Fortress, Gwaneumsa Temple, and Pakyeon Falls were carried out.

In the 1960s, North Korea began to install Kim Il-Sung statues and plazas in major cities to reinforce his sole leadership system. Kaesong was no exception, so in 1968, the statue of Kim Il-Sung was erected on the Janamsam Mountain located in the center of Kaesong, and a new street called “Unification Boulevard” was newly constructed. In addition, various facilities such as plazas and theaters in accordance with the socialist ideology were built around the Unification Boulevard. Also, Kaesong underwent major changes in urban structure around this time. Main arterial roads crossing Kaesong City from south to north were formed around this Unification Boulevard. The basic axis of the city, which was originally created around the Imperial City area of Goryeo, was changed. As a result, the core areas, including Goryeo Palace, Imperial City, and Namdaega, were well preserved, being located towards the northern area of the east-west arterial road from the Goryeo Dynasty period (currently, Songdo-ro street—Namdaemun Gate—Cheongnyun-ro street). However, the southern region with concentration of several markets—such as *jeojeon* which was regarded as an area against the socialist ideology—became the target of development.

In the 1980s, North Korea began to emphasize a line of historical legitimacy originating from the Daedong-gang River culture, followed by Gojoseon, Goguryeo, and Goryeo, a movement that intended to accentuate “Chosun People First Policy.” In this process, corresponding relics and artifacts were extensively re-evaluated, and also the importance of Kaesong, the capital of Goryeo Dynasty, was highlighted. In 1985, “On Strengthening Protection and Management Projects of Cultural Relics and Artifacts” (Supreme Leader’s Order No. 35) was promulgated, and the Anhwasa Temple and the Mausoleum of King Gongmin in Kaesong were repaired. Such works continued in the 1990s, and in 1992, Kim Il-Sung visited the Mausoleum of King Wang Kon and ordered its reconstruction, ultimately forming the current state. At this

time, he added to “make the size of the tomb smaller than the Mausoleum of King Dongmyeong and larger than the Mausoleum of King Gyeonghyo (Gongmin).” The reconstruction of the Mausoleum of Tangun, the Mausoleum of King Wang Kon and the Mausoleum of King Dongmyeong were completed in 1994, finally completing the sanctification project for the Three Progenitors.

Meanwhile, in 1998, North Korea made an attempt to enter the international community as well as improve inter-Korean relations by breaking away from the previous isolation policy. This is when North Korea joined the World Heritage Convention. In 1999, the restoration project of Yeongtongsa Temple began with inter-Korean cooperation, and the Manwoldae Palace, Seonjukkyo Bridge, Mausoleum of King Gongmin, Pyochungbigak Stele, Tonggunjeong Pavilion, Tomb of Park Jiwon, Tomb of Hwangjin-i, and Soongyangseowon were newly renovated between 1999 and 2001. And with the progress of inter-Korean relations fueled by the June 15th Joint Declaration in 2000, an annual investigation has been conducted on the Shingyesa Temple in Geumgangsan Mountain from 2001. In 2004, a survey on cultural heritage in 3,305,000 m² of Kaesong Industrial Region was conducted. In 2005, a joint academic conference was held in Kaesong, hosted by the Inter-Korean Historians Association, and at this conference, the two Koreas agreed to cooperate with each other to inscribe the “Kaeseong Historic Sites” as a World Heritage Site. Accordingly, in 2007, the historic Kaesong Manwoldae joint excavation project was initiated, and despite constant twists and turns, it has been continued until these days.

Changes in Protection and Management Policies for Cultural Properties

In 2013, North Korea inscribed “Historic Monuments and Sites in Kaesong” as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Accordingly, North Korea has to submit a State of Conservation (SOC) report to the UNESCO every other year regarding its twelve serial properties. It is known that the state party submitted the SOC report in March 2015, April 2017, and February 2019 and received feedback during the World Heritage Committee.

Primary contents of the 2015 SOC report was on “the development of a monitoring system to ensure cooperation between monitoring institutions,” and

“the preparation of tourism management plan to be articulated by the National Agency for the Protection of Cultural Heritage (NAPCH).” The World Heritage Committee acknowledged that establishing monitoring agencies and strengthening their collaboration can be perceived as a positive direction for good management of properties.

The SOC report of 2017 was particularly concerned of protection for the Mausoleum of King Wang Kon and its mural paintings. It described “detachment of renders, their [mural paintings] lack of cohesion to the base as well as among themselves and separation between paint layer(s) in the shape of bubble, and inhabitation of microorganisms on mural surface,” and therefore, “the Hamhung Branch of the State Academy of Sciences undertook conservation treatments from August 22 to September 8 in 2015.” The World Heritage Committee examined the report and furthermore replied that “timely adoption and implementation of the Tourism Management Plan” are recommended.

As a result, the Tourism Management Plan was adopted in 2019. It is ensured by the legal base of relevant laws amended in 2019 and presents the first 5-year plan (2019-2023) which articulated its aims and practical strategies. Also, “the number of full-time management bodies for the World Heritage property has been increased in-situ:” such as the Management Office for Manwoldae, the Kaesong National Heritage Protection and Management Office, and the Management Office for Mausoleum of King Wang Kon. Moreover, mentioning further challenges in conservation of wooden structures and mural paintings which might adversely affect the preservation of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), the State Party insisted that “international assistance and cooperation for strengthening the base of technical and material means as well as the expertise of personnel in-situ are in need.” Regarding potential development pressure, the report remarked that convenience of dwellers living in “the old residential quarter which is situated in the buffer zone [seems to include the Conservation Area for Chosun *Giwajip*] and their inclination towards modern living style should be taken into consideration. The World Heritage Committee welcomed North Korea’s efforts to endorse and implement the Tourism Management Plan but also acknowledged that the issues concerning the conservation of wooden structures and mural paintings are of concern. It also suggested that “additional capacity-building initiatives are warranted and that additional international cooperation efforts between national institutions

and international experts could be an effective means of advancing technical competence.” Regarding the conservation of the old residential quarter of Kaesong, it recommended “to consider using the principles and tools arising from the implementation of the 2011 UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape.”

Such a SOC report on Historic Monuments and Sites in Kaesong and the World Heritage Committee’s decisions show its conservation status well. It helps to thoroughly identify and review the legal basis for conservation, conservation status and relevant issues, and management agencies.

North Korea’s cultural heritage-related laws were greatly changed around 1994. Before 1994, cultural heritage was protected and managed according to conservation decrees and regulations, premier’s orders, and cabinet orders. However, as the Cultural Relic Protection Act was enacted in 1994, North Korea began to establish its own legal system. The Cultural Relic Protection Act was based on former conservation decrees and regulations, premier’s orders, and cabinet orders, and then composed of 6 chapters and 52 articles—later revised in 1999, 2009, and 2011—and so currently composed of 6 chapters and 59 articles. The purpose of this Act, the concept of cultural heritage, and evaluation methods were specified, and a clause on punishment in case of problems in the management of cultural heritage was also included. According to this Act, a protection area for historic sites was designated along with protection measures of individual relics and artifacts, and agricultural cultivation or construction of facilities was prohibited within this area. The revision in 2011 included prohibitions such as demolition of facilities and logging as well as mandatory provisions for installing boundary marks and fences. However, this Act had limitations in that it only targeted tangible heritage and relics.

The Cultural Heritage Protection Act designated in 2012 expanded the scope of cultural heritage from tangible cultural heritage to those including intangible cultural heritage. Such a change may have been the result of North Korea’s steps of joining the 1998 World Heritage Convention and acknowledging other state parties’ cultural heritage protection and management policies. As a result of these efforts, the North Korean folk song “Arirang” was inscribed on the representative list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2014.

In 2015, the National Heritage Protection Act was adopted at a standing committee of the Supreme People’s Assembly, rendering the Cultural Heritage Protection Act invalid. The National Heritage Protection Act reflects Kim Jong-

Un's statement of 2014 that "protection projects for national cultural heritage are patriotic efforts to bring glory to our national history and tradition." It was composed of 6 chapters and 62 articles, later expanded to 73 articles in 2019. The biggest change was to newly include natural heritage as well as tangible and intangible cultural heritage. This change was a paving stone for the inscription of natural properties such as Chilbosan Mountain and Gujang Cave, and it can be also read with the intention to manage tangible, intangible cultural heritage, and natural heritage under one law.

The inscription of "Historic Monuments and Sites in Kaesong" in 2013 entailed many changes in the policies regarding cultural heritage of North Korea. Kim Jong-Un's speech in 2014 suggested globalization, scientification, and systemization of protection and management of cultural properties.

Regarding globalization, the North Korean government has initiated active exchanges with international organizations since December 2014. In 2016, a training workshop on inventorying of Intangible Cultural Heritage was held. In 2018, it received a fund of 98,000 dollars for "Community-Based Inventorying of Intangible Cultural Heritage and Elaborating Nomination Files" by the Intergovernmental Committee for Intangible Cultural Heritage and another financial assistance of 27,000 dollars to prepare nomination for the Historic Sites in Gungangsan Mountain area.

Since 2011, North Korea has initiated a research on Kaesong Fortress with the French School of the Far East (École française d'Extrême-Orient, EFEO). In 2014, an "Exhibition on Chosun-France Joint Excavation Survey for Kaesong Fortress" was held in Pyongyang and Kaesong, and exhibition catalogues were published. Archaeology training sessions are also regularly held in the EFEO branch in Siem Leap, Cambodia. It is known that the study of mausoleums of the Goryeo Dynasty was newly started in 2019 along with the study of ceramics excavated from the Namdaemun Gate site in Kaesong, and there is an exchange with Germany related to the protection of historic monuments and sites in Kaesong. For instance, the Anhwasa Temple was repaired with a German team in 2015, followed by the Gwaneumsa Temple's repair works in 2017. Since 2008, the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences of Yanbian University in China and the North Korean Institute of Archaeology jointly conducted archaeological investigations on the relics of the Balhae Kingdom, mural paintings in the mausoleums of the Goguryeo Kingdom, and tombs of Nakrang. In 2018, they also researched the World Heritage Sites in Kaesong,

commemorating the 1,100th anniversary of establishing the Goryeo Dynasty.

Meanwhile, in June 2018, the Choson National Heritage Fund was established. It seems to be a non-profit corporation similar to the national trust movement. The Fund aims to "contribute to national heritage protection projects such as discovering, ascertaining, and managing national heritage with donated historical materials, relics, materials, and funds at home and abroad, and interact and strengthen cooperation with international organizations, non-profit institutions, and other experts." Funds can also be donated by overseas Koreans including South Koreans and foreigners. In the future, it is expected that the fund will include materials and support from international organizations as well as materials obtained by cultural heritage-related exchanges with South Korea.

Although the North Korean government is making a lot of efforts for scientification of protection and management strategies, it seems that they have not produced any tangible results yet. While excavating some mausoleums of Goryeo in 2017 and 2019, North Korea claimed that "latest technologies to find the location of the mausoleums by analyzing their spatial distribution characteristics based on accumulated documentary data and spatial information identified from satellite images" were applied, but their effectiveness is in doubt.

Regarding systemization, after Kim Jong-Un's speech in 2014, an organization called the Korea National Heritage Preservation Agency was established; it appeared in the 2015 SOC report on Historic Monuments and Sites in Kaesong. This agency is an affiliated organization of the National Authority for the Protection of Cultural Heritage and in charge of managing all activities regarding monitoring the property area and the buffer zone of Historic Monuments and Sites in Kaesong and formulating the Kaesong Tourism Management Plan. The National Heritage Protection Law designated in 2015 has a provision of the Korea National Heritage Preservation Agency, confirming its elevated status. While its former institution, the Chosun Culture Protection Agency, focused on conservation works such as research, inventory, and evaluation of heritage, the Korea National Heritage Preservation Agency not only conducted conservation works but also took in charge of excavation survey. For instance, a heritage excavation team of the Korea National Heritage Preservation Agency is taking the lead in recent excavation works on the mausoleums of Goryeo in Kaesong.

Conclusion

Apart from twelve serial properties included in the Historic Monuments and Sites in Kaesong, there are still many cultural properties in Kaesong. Those inscribed on the World Heritage List are supervised by the Convention and technical evaluations, and North Korea is also protecting them thoroughly. However, other properties and artifacts may be the subject of loose management, considering current economic conditions and other circumstances of North Korea.

For instance, houses with tiled roofs (*giwajip*) within the Conservation Area for Chosun Giwajip show poor condition. Built around a century ago, their structural stability is seriously compromised. In order to save the Conservation Area for Chosun Giwajip as part of the conservation efforts of Historic Monuments and Sites in Kaesong, North Korea seems to expect international community's financial and technical assistance. Furthermore, artifacts exhibited in the Goryeo Museum are exposed to inadequate exhibition environment. Considering that they were selected for their importance to be exhibited in the Goryeo Museum, it is not necessary to mention the condition of the rest of the artifacts. Such a poor conservation status is unfortunate since each artifact is a precious heritage of Korea.

Recently, the North Korean government is making efforts to achieve globalization, scientificization, and systematization in protection and management of national cultural heritage as directed by Kim Jong-Un. The efforts for globalization will aim to strengthen ties with international researchers and organizations, while attempting to investigate North Korean cultural heritage with international funds and technology. In fact, individuals and organizations of other countries such as France, Germany, China, and Japan are promoting surveys on Korea cultural heritage. And for scientification, there is no choice but to rely on advanced equipment and technology from outside at the moment. This is mentioned in North Korea's own SOC report submitted to the UNESCO. For systematization, North Korea's domestic agencies will be reorganized to implement Kim Jong-Un's instructions more quickly, and meanwhile, it will try to comply with the international standards of protection and management.

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