

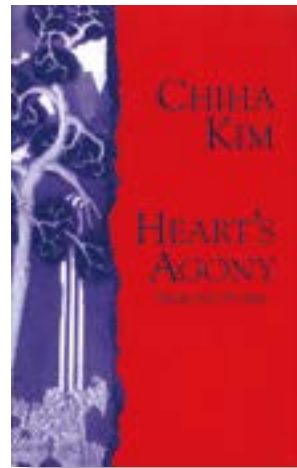


Burning Even Brighter in Darkness

KIM CHI-HA A Poet of Resistance and Life

In the 1960s and 1970s, poet and playwright Kim Chi-ha put his eloquence to work in vehement resistance against the military dictatorship. Today, he is leading the way in the “life movement.” Here is a brief look at his life and poetry.

by Im Sang-beom / translations by Kim Won-jung



The 1960s and 1970s were an age of light and dark for Korea. Korea was a world of light for those who were excited about the country's rapid industrialization and economic growth; it was a world of darkness for those who were oppressed and frustrated under the ironfisted military dictatorship. Countless intellectuals plunged themselves into arduous resistance against the darkness, and poet Kim Chi-ha was one of them. He was a symbol of the resistance against the dictatorship. His poetry was perceived as a threat to the very foundation of the government, and it was indeed more powerful and scathing than any other weapon that could be leveled against it.

WITH A BURNING THIRST

Kim's poem *With A Burning Thirst*, published in 1975, is a monumental work singing of the people's yearning for democracy in the mid-1970s, when the oppression of the military government was at its height in the wake of the so-called “October Yushin” in 1972, an anti-democratic amendment to the Korean Constitution. The first stanza of the poem poetically describes the dire reality as the narrator could write “democracy”—what then seemed a forlorn hope—only secretly in a back alley at dawn. This stanza is smeared with bloodstains.

WITH A BURNING THIRST

by Kim Chi-ha

Translated by Gwon Seon-geun

In the back alley at daybreak
I write your name, O Democracy
My mind has forgotten you for too long
And my legs far too long have strayed
from you.
But with a slender remembrance of
My heart's burning thirst,
Secretly I write your name

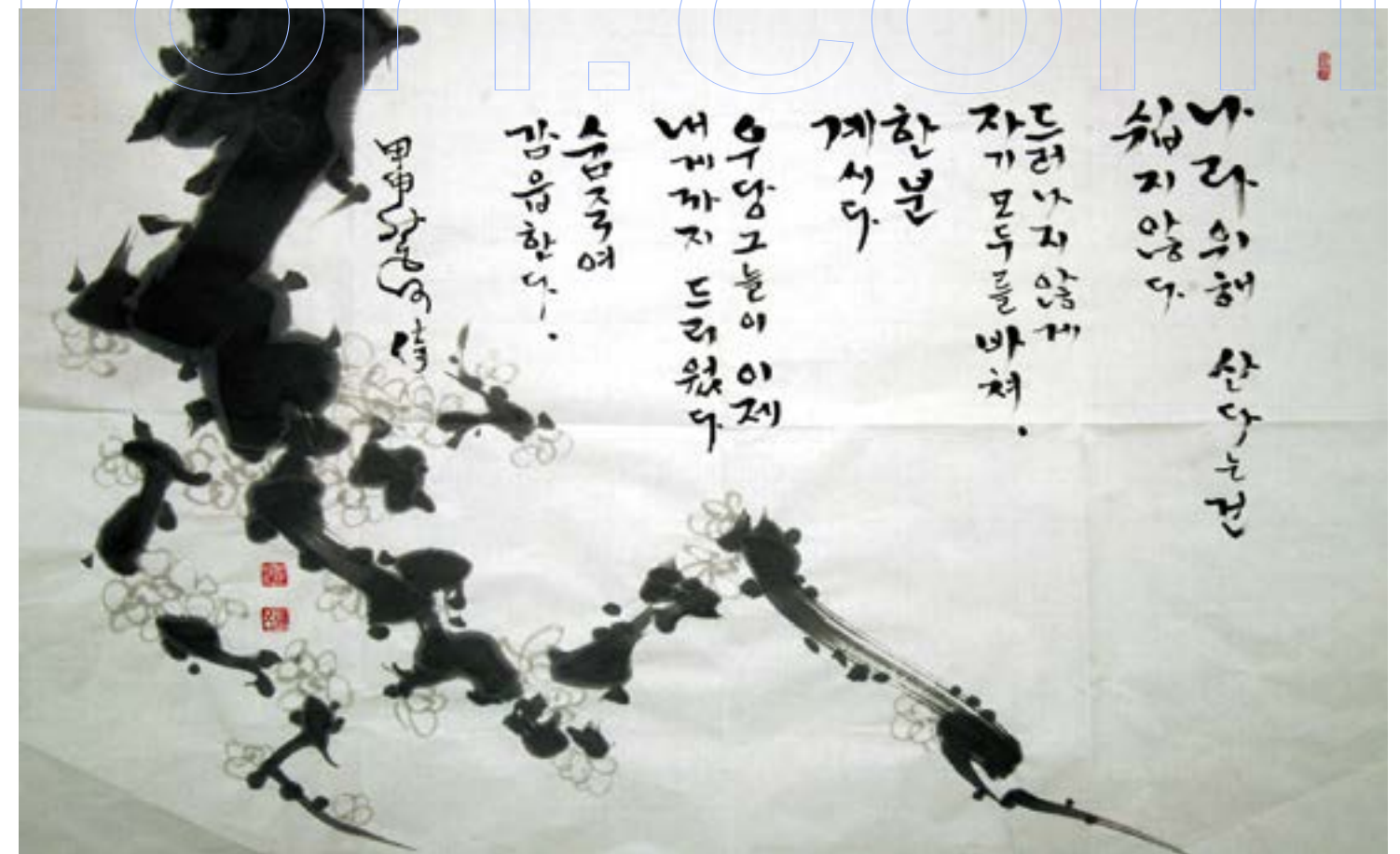
Somewhere in the back alley before
dawn
The rush of footsteps, urgent whistles,
and pounding,
Someone's groan, wail, lament
find their way into my heart,

Engraving themselves there.
For your name's sake,
For the solitary splendor of your name,
On a wooden board with white chalk
I write awkwardly with shaking hand,
trembling heart
And raging indignation
The agony of living
The memory of green freedom reviving
And the blood-stained faces of
returning friends
Who've been taken by the police

I write your name secretly
In tears, subduing the crying
With a burning thirst
With a burning thirst
Long live Democracy!

The first part of the second stanza sharply reveals the terrors and pains of the age by invoking many different sounds such as footsteps and voices of lament. There is no clear explanation of what is happening, but amid those sounds, the reader's imagination conjures up vivid images of its own. In the latter part of the second stanza, the narrator, stricken with anger and grief, writes on a wooden board. In the third stanza, it is revealed that he has written with soundless sobs, “Long live democracy,” more powerfully witnessing the political reality of the day than any writer could hope to do in prose.

Kim Chi-ha wrote a poem to commemorate the independence activist, Lee Hee-young.



LIFE IS A RAY OF HOPE

His poem *Life* marks a transition in his philosophy and poetry. Kim states “life is a ray of hope” in the poem. However frustrating the situation, life doesn’t weaken. The scene of a woman crying with her child in her arms is so sad, beautiful, and noble. Only life begets life; no living thing can live without depending on other living things. In life, human beings and all other things in this universe become one. The realization of that unity, boundless respect for life, and desperate efforts to protect life cast a ray of hope that pierces the darkness of reality.

LIFE

by Kim Chi-ha

Translated by Gwon Seon-geun

Life is
A ray of hope.
My life depends on it
As I stand here at the edge of
An abyss.

I cannot go back
Or forward.

This is the final stop for me.
I can neither soar
Nor fall

A mother cries
And embraces her child.
The sorrow of life
Breeds a ray of hope.

Kim combined Donghak and Christianity to formulate his own philosophy of life.

“I’m talking about building a new world where fighting is unnecessary, as all of us ultimately return to the fundamental world of life,” says the poet. “While in prison, I studied Donghak, an academic movement from the late Joseon Dynasty. Its basic philosophy is *innaecheon*, which means humans are Heaven and to serve the people is to serve Heaven. Donghak upheld equality and humanitarianism, transcending class barriers. I added Jesus to it.”

Kim explains that the purpose of his poetry changed from resistance to directing attention to the inner world because of his revelations about life while in prison. He combined Donghak and Christianity to formulate his own philosophy of life. He founded the Yullyeo Society in 1998 to promote this philosophy on life and humanity and a new type of national culture.

ABOUT POET KIM CHI-HA

Kim Chi-ha entered the Seoul National University Department of Aesthetics in 1959 and participated in the April 19 Revolution (which overthrew the Syngman Rhee government) in 1960. Later, he became a student activist as a South Korean representative in an association of South and North Korean students pursuing national unification. He had to go into hiding, working at sea ports and in mines, because he was put on the most wanted list after the May 16 Coup d’État in 1961.

He returned to school in February 1963 and began to write combative poems the next year. He had five poems published through the poetry magazine *Poets* in November 1969, taking his first step as a resistance poet. In 1970, he published *Five Bandits* in the May issue of the literary magazine *Sasanggye*. The poem satirized the corruption and decadency of the nation’s leaders through the rhythms of *pansori* (a genre of traditional Korean music), making him an icon of resistance overnight.

Kim was completely freed from the shackles of dictatorship in 1984: he was pardoned and his works were no longer officially labeled “seditious.” By this time, he jumped into the life movement based on his philosophy of life. The shift was not motivated by any change in society but by his own realizations. During his more than seven years in prison, Kim suffered nearly to the point of insanity, but he saw the strong power of life in a clump of grass that had taken root in a crack in a concrete wall. From that moment, his fight became about establishing a culture of life-giving against all cultures of killing. He believes that all the problems of humanity—political

oppression, social inequality, materialism, and environmental pollution—are byproducts of building a culture of killing. In order to heal the culture of killing and make the world humane, he asserts a culture of life-giving—a culture that is rooted in principles of life and respect for life. He discovered many ideas about life in Donghak, an academic movement that thrived during the closing years of the Joseon Dynasty.

This philosophical transition is readily apparent in his poetry. His poems of the 1970s were full of the vigorous spirit of resistance, but in the 1990s he began writing calm, succinct, contemplative poetry that reveals his inner world. The poetry anthology *Ilsan Sicheop* is a good example.

Kim received the Lotus Prize for Literature in 1975 from the Afro-Asian Writers’ Association, when he was still in prison. In 1981, he received the Bruno Kreisky Award for Services to Human Rights from the Bruno Kreisky Foundation for Human Rights and the Great Poet Award from Poetry International. His publications include the poetry anthology *Kkotgwa Geuneul* (lit. *Flowers and Shades*) as well as essay anthologies *Saengmyeong* (lit. *Life*), *Yullyeoran Mueosinga* (lit. *About Yullyeo*), *Yegame Chan Sup Geuneul* (lit. *Shades of the Woods Full of Presentiment*), and *Yet Gayaeseo Ttuiuneun Gyeoul Pyeonji* (lit. *A Winter Letter from Old State of Gaya*).



Kim argues that society must create a new type of culture based on respect for life and principles of life.

ABOUT THE TRANSLATOR
KIM WON-JUNG

Kim Won-jung is a professor of English Language and Literature at Sungkyunkwan University. He has translated a variety of Korean poems and prose into English. His translated works include eight books of poetry by Kim Chi-ha, Jeong Hyeon-jong, Hwang Ji-woo, and other Korean poets.

A Doctor for Instruments

YU JE-SE

Musicians’ instruments are their alter egos. When such virtuosos as violinist Kyung-wha Chung and cellist Myung-wha Chung are ill, they must go to the doctor, but when their instruments are out of order, they go to Meister Yu Je-se.

by Yang In-sil / photographs by Moon Duk-gwan

ANECDOTE 1

Yu worked for a construction company. One day, he met a friend in a music store. That was the first time in his entire life he’d ever seen a violin in person. It produced a sound that seemed to be of Heaven above. He was so shocked and overwhelmed that he was left speechless for some time.

Afterwards, the melodies played through his mind again and again, and he badgered his friend to introduce him to an expert maker of violins. He said that he also wanted to make one with his own hands. He was introduced to an expert craftsman, and the next day he went to his workshop with a block of wood. Over the next three years, he did an apprenticeship at the workshop every weekend until he finally made a violin by his own hands.

ANECDOTE 2

Violinist Kyung-wha Chung was on a nationwide concert tour of Korea when she found something wrong with her violin. She asked around for a professional repairer of musical instruments and heard about Yu. Chung’s presence was so imposing, and her extremely detailed demands aroused anxiety. After closely watching him restore her other self, she relaxed and flashed a bright smile. She politely expressed her gratitude with the kind of respect and dignity that only a virtuoso

accords another virtuoso. From that moment, Yu was considered a “doctor” who restores the instruments of violinist Kyung-wha Chung and cellist Myung-wha Chung.

PASSION OVERCOMES LIMITS

When exquisite, nearly priceless instruments pass through Yu’s hands, they become even more exquisite. Already full of violins, cellos, and other stringed instruments commissioned for repairs, he finds few moments of rest because of frequent phone calls and visits from musicians.

Yu did not study music in college. Some years after being struck with fascination for the violin, he went to Germany in 1990, already 34 years of age. Rather than taking a regular course on instrument repair, he went to a renowned luthier (a craftsman of stringed instruments) and studied under him until returning home in 1993. Yet, he hadn’t originally planned to train abroad.

“I was confident I could be a good luthier,” recalls Yu, “but, one day a client who had an expensive violin asked about my education. Upon hearing my answer, he took back his violin and left. I couldn’t sleep that night. The next day I made up my mind to go to Germany. My son was four years old, and I couldn’t speak a word in German. Before becoming a luthier, I worked for a good company, and the people





around me did their best out of the goodness of their hearts to discourage me from quitting my job. They only had the best of intentions for me and genuinely thought that learning how to make “fiddles” (their word for it) was ridiculous. This time, too, people tried the same thing, but nothing could change my resolve.”

Studying abroad was never even remotely a fairy tale experience. Yu could not say that everything went well even if he faced a challenge with the greatest passion and persistence. Communication was always difficult, his family was far away in Korea, and learning was a slow process. He smoked and drank quite a lot. His diary was soaked in tears. He packed up and unpacked several times. One day, he felt himself becoming a nervous wreck, bit his finger, and wrote a pledge to himself in blood. It was the genuine start of a true fight against himself. Then, he realized that the client who had hurt his pride,

causing him to go to Germany to study, was his other teacher in life.

After one year in Germany, Yu could hear and speak German fairly well. His handling of instruments had improved remarkably. His teacher recognized his great progress and started to pay him a salary. He even entrusted Yu with the key to the workshop. When Yu was about to return home, his teacher gave him a wooden worktable made in 1859 as a gift. To this day, Yu cuts and trims materials and tunes strings on this very worktable.

Koreans commonly make a huge issue out of educational background, which prevented him from gaining due recognition. During his struggles, one of his former colleagues extended a helping hand. When one colleague let him use his house as a workshop, Yu’s eyes brimmed with tears. He named the workshop “Yu Je-se String Music Workshop.” The first violin he made in the workshop was dedicated to his

colleague’s daughter, and she went abroad with the violin to study music. He later took charge of the stringed instruments for the Daegwallyeong International Music Festival, which is the most prestigious classical music festival in Korea.

FATHER TO SON

There had only been a few people who professionally made and repaired stringed instruments in Korea. Clients were as rare, and they generally used cheap materials. Yu decided to use only the best quality materials. (To this day, he travels the world to find better materials.) Clients were at first half in disbelief, but he soon made a name for himself. Musicians who had their instruments repaired abroad started to knock on his door instead.

Yu doesn’t work every single day. Conditions need to be just right. Instruments are very sensitive to humidity and temperature, so he constantly monitors the weather. If he is ill at ease, he does not take up his knife, because he believes that his mood and mind permeate into the instrument. Every instrument commissioned leaves a meticulous record as he writes down all the details from the moment it enters his workshop until he gives it back to its owner. His work requires a high degree of concentration and artistry, and every instrument feels like

his own child. Yu became the great luthier he is today, even in the face of so many obstacles, in large part because of his diligent hands, sensitive ears, and unwavering tenacity.

His son studied business management in college, but his heart moved toward musical instruments as he watched his father give new life to old instruments. Yu’s son is now in Italy studying and training hard to follow in his father’s footsteps. Yu looks forward to working together with his son some day.

“The reason why instruments Guadagnini made more than three centuries ago and Stradivariuses made more than 250 years ago are still highly appreciated,” explains Yu, “is because they have been maintained by good hands. The older an instrument, the deeper its sound; the more experienced a luthier, the more exquisite his hands. I won’t put down instruments from my hands until I die. I hope someday I will make a truly superb instrument with my name and see a performer play it.”

Yu Je-se has another dream. He wants to buy a plot of land in Hoengseong, Gangwon-do and build a small concert hall where he will display instruments he has made or collected, allowing children to study music and music lovers to gather together, play instruments, and share good times.

1 Violins await repairs by the luthier.

2 Yu repairs old violins through intricate and delicate work and transform them into instruments of Heaven.



An Ancient Hero of Unification

GENERAL KIM YU-SIN

Over 1,000 years ago, the three kingdoms of Silla, Goguryeo, and Baekje were in a continual state of war, each trying to expand its territory on the Korean Peninsula and beyond. General Kim Yu-sin of Silla finally brought lasting peace by conquering Goguryeo and Baekje with his outstanding strategy and military prowess. Let's trace the footsteps of this great general of Silla. *by Im Sang-beom / photographs with courtesy of Tongiljeon*



Kim Yu-sin (595-673) was a military leader and politician of Silla who achieved great feats in conquering Baekje and Goguryeo—the two other major kingdoms of Korea's Three Kingdoms period (57-668)—and unifying the Korean nation under the banner of Unified Silla. He was not a member of the royal family of Silla, but he was so admired that he was posthumously granted the honorary title of King Heungmu the Great. Yu-sin was a grandson of the last king of the Gaya confederacy, but became an aristocrat of Silla when his grandfather yielded to them.

Not much is known about Yu-sin's childhood before his teenage years except an episode in *Samguksagi* (*History of the Three Kingdoms of Silla, Goguryeo, and Baekje*, 1145): Yu-sin had reportedly been in his mother's womb for 20 months. As a teenager, he joined the Hwarang (lit. Flower Boys), an elite group of specially educated and trained boys. He was such an excellent swordsman that he became the Hwarang leader. He travelled across the kingdom with his followers to train both his mind and body.

A GALLANT WARRIOR

Even at the height of the ongoing conflicts among Silla, Goguryeo, and Baekje, Yu-sin hesitated to venture out onto the battlefield because he was of Gaya descent, not Silla. It was only when he was 35 years old that he followed his father into battle against Goguryeo forces,



where he achieved a remarkable feat. When the two sides first clashed, the Silla troops lost their fighting spirit, but Yu-sin charged into the enemy camp and came back with the head of the Goguryeo commander, winning the battle for Silla.

By that time, Yu-sin had met Kim Chun-chu, who was perhaps the most important person in his life. Chun-chu later ascended the throne as the 29th king of Silla and founded Unified Silla. The two became very close political partners as well as relatives through two marriages between their families.

Their mutual trust and friendship were very strong. When Chun-chu lost his daughter and her husband in a battle against Baekje, he went to Goguryeo to ask for military support. Goguryeo detained him rather than sending troops to help Silla. Yu-sin organized a special unit to rescue him. At this news, Goguryeo set Chun-chu free in order to prevent the outbreak of a major war with Silla.



The founding of Unified Silla was virtually sealed when Chun-chu, known for his extraordinary diplomatic finesse, and Yu-sin, a gallant and sagacious warrior, joined hands.

POSTHUMOUSLY ENTHRONED

Yu-sin won victory after victory in a long series of battles against Baekje, Goguryeo, and the Tang Dynasty in China. When his men were exhausted, he took off his upper garment, mounted his horse, and led from the vanguard. In one of his more innovative actions, he harnessed drums and drumsticks to a herd of cows to be released in the event of a surprise attack to throw the enemy into confusion by the sound.

Yu-sin was devoted to the royal family and adamantly upheld the reputation of his family. When his son returned alive from a defeat at the hands of Tang forces, he requested the king to have his son beheaded. His son had to live alone in hiding for the rest of his life. In a sense, he was a pitiable hero who had to seek recognition because he was not from Silla but Gaya. However, his unwavering determination and feats as a military leader were so extraordinary that nearly all Koreans readily recall Kim Yu-sin when they think about Unified Silla.

1 General Kim Yu-sin paved the way for Silla to unify the Three Kingdoms.
2, 3 The tomb of General Kim and the statues of the Twelve Zodiac Animals at Gyeongju, Gyeongsangbuk-do

A WALK THROUGH SEOUL PLAZA

Seoul Plaza bore witness to nearly all of the upheavals along Korea's turbulent road to liberation and modernization during the last century. Today, it is the city's favorite location for cultural events and a quiet place to read. A tour of the city would not be complete without a walk through Seoul Plaza. *by Chung Da-young / photographs by Lee Jae-hui*

www.polttron.com

If you are walking around downtown Seoul, you will almost certainly pass through Seoul Plaza. Located in the heart of the city, the Seoul Plaza is at the crossroads to all areas of old Seoul – Sejong-daero road will lead to Gyeongbokgung Palace, to the north is Cheonggyecheon Stream, and Myeong-dong and Namdaemun are a short walk away. The Plaza has witnessed many history-changing events in Korea for more than a hundred years.

1 Desks are available all around the library for studying and reading.
2 The library is spacious and full of light for the convenience of visitors.
3 The five-meter high bookcase is a popular feature of the library.



AT THE HEART OF SEOUL'S MODERNIZATION

Seoul Plaza first took shape in 1897 when King Gojong returned to Deoksugung Palace after the 1895 assassination of Queen Min. A wide

road was laid between Gyeongbokgung Palace and the main gate of Deoksugung Palace and a modern plaza was constructed in front of Deoksugung Palace. The plaza was situated in a central location near the Central Government Complex in Gwanghwamun, the Parliament Building (now used as the Seoul Metropolitan Council), and the Seoul Museum of Art building in Jeong-dong, which was once the Supreme Court of Korea. It soon became the center stage for the nation's liberation movement from Japanese occupation including, most notably, the March 1st Independence Movement in 1919. The square was later an important location for the pro-democracy movement in the 1960s and rallies throughout Korea's modern history.



Seoul Plaza came under the global spotlight during the 2002 FIFA World Cup when 80,000 people dressed in red shirts gathered there to cheer on the Korean national team. The mass of supporters clad in red, known as the Red Devils, cheered in a highly organized cadence of shouting and clapping in front of jumbo screens.

After the World Cup, the Seoul Metropolitan Government rebuilt the square to provide a better city environment and a green area for Seoulites. In 2004, the traffic lanes that cut across the square and the wide road that ran directly past the old City Hall were removed to make way for a vast green. The Floor Water Fountain was built at the west corner of the plaza. The fountain, a circle of water holes bored into in the sidewalk with 48 floor lights, is an attractive feature of the plaza in the warmer months.

Seoul Government hosts many cultural events throughout the year on Seoul Plaza including the popular Hi! Seoul Festival and various performances. This past October, the Korean pop star PSY held a free concert at the plaza as promised earlier to thank his fans for kick-starting the success of his viral hit song “Gangnam Style.” The singer had earlier vowed to perform topless if his song topped the U.S. chart, and he kept his promise despite remaining at No. 2 on the Billboard Hot 100 for a second week. The concert reached its peak when the singer sang his hit song and more than 100,000 fans did the famous “horse dance” with the singer. According to the Seoul Metropolitan Police, this was the largest crowd in Seoul Plaza since the 2002 FIFA World Cup. The city government supported the event by providing the square grounds and diverting traffic within a three-block radius.

Towards the winter festive season, the plaza transforms into a public ice skating rink for Seoulites and foreign visitors alike. The grass is temporarily removed from the square and an ice skating rink is built over the grounds. Ice skates can be rented at a reasonable rate of KRW 1,000 (USD 0.93) for one hour, and lockers

and helmets for young children are available free of charge. The skating rink was first installed in 2004, and it has since become a popular dating site for young couples and a special treat for children with their parents.

NEW LIBRARY, NEW CITY HALL

New attractions of Seoul Plaza are the old City Hall, which reopened as the Seoul Metropolitan Library, and the new City Hall building right behind it. The old City Hall was built in 1926, during the Japanese Colonial Period.

After liberation in 1945, it served as a local government building, and for more than 60 years it served as the government building for the Seoul Metropolitan Government. The government city decided to build a new city hall to house the expanding government offices and staff, and remodel the old City Hall as a public library.

After four years of construction, the government moved into the new building in September of last year, and Seoul Metropolitan Library opened its doors to the public. The library restored the main marble staircase and halls of the old City Hall, symbolizing the historical heritage of Seoul.

The library has a collection of over 200,000 volumes and 20 computers to view 4,200 DVDs and audio books. Visitors are free to walk into the library to read books, catch up with current affairs, or just take a break from walking. The third floor displays the most iconic features of the library where visitors can see the restored and remodeled old Mayor's Office, reception room, and meeting room.



Ice skating in the middle of downtown Seoul is sure to be an unforgettable memory for many foreign visitors.

INFORMATION
How to get there City Hall Subway Station, Line 1 or 2, Exit 5

Skating Rink
Open: Dec 14, 2012 to Feb 3, 2013 / 10 AM to 10 PM
Skate Rental Fee: KRW 1,000 per pair of ice skates, 30percent discount for group reservation of 20 persons or more.
Website: www.seoulskate.or.kr/eng.php

Seoul Metropolitan Library
Open: 9 AM to 9 PM (weekdays), 9 AM to 6 PM (weekends)
Website: lib.seoul.go.kr/www/html/en/main.jsp

A Stage for Dancing Birds

Geumgang Estuary

Geumgang Estuary in Gunsan is an excellent spot to observe baikal teals. They appear to dance in groups when they take to the sky. The city of Gunsan flourished during the Japanese colonial period, and vestiges of that time remain here and there.

by Lee Jeong-eun / photographs by Moon Duk-gwan

www.pdftron.com



1

When the sun sinks below the horizon behind Geumgang Estuary and the sky glows in shades of wine, a long island in the river comes alive. Did you read that correctly? What seemed to be a mere island a moment before is a colony of migrant birds. These birds hunt together and soar high into the sky every day around sunrise and sunset. When the leader takes off, hundreds of thousands follow, blocking out the sky with their numbers and making for a spectacular, surreal scene of continuously shifting shapes. People think of their impromptu movements romantically as “group dancing,” but in fact the birds are jockeying with one another to be as close to the

1 Numerous migratory birds from Siberia return to the Geumgang Estuary every winter.
2 Gunsan was the fastest growing city in Korea in the early 20th century.



2

center of the flock as possible, where it is safer.

The Korean Peninsula greets numerous migratory birds from Siberia every winter. Geumgang Estuary is an especially important destination for those winged visitors with its shallow waters, gentle currents, and vast farms nearby that afford excellent spots for resting and hunting. Some 90 percent of the world’s baikal teals come to this very estuary every year to spend the winter.

The teals rest all day long in the river, and when the sun sets, they fly over Mt. Manghaesan to the Gimje Plains in search of food, coming back at dawn.

They can be seen from a number of bird observatories, the best of which is Napo Sipjatteul Bird Observatory.

A CITY OF HISTORY

Visitors to Gunsan are strongly recommended to see the Geumgang River. Gunsan was the fastest growing city in Korea in the early 20th century, serving as the port of choice for the Japanese for shipping out their plunder of Korea’s bounty, be that rice, minerals, or other resources. The Japanese built a port and railways, and Japanese culture firmly took root across the entire city where about half the 16,000 residents were Japanese. The customs house,



3



4



5

temple, and residences from the period remain. Especially famous are Dongguksa Temple, a two-story wooden house built by a Japanese named Hirose dubbed “Hirose’s House,” and the railway village in Gyeongam-dong.

If you visit Gunsan with children, don’t miss the Jinpo Maritime Theme Park in the inner harbor. The park was built in commemoration of Jinpodaechoep (Great Battle of Jinpo), a major Korean triumph against Japanese infiltrators in the Geumgang Estuary in August 1380, the sixth year of the reign of King U of the Goryeo Dynasty. General Choe Mu-seon, who was also a scientist and inventor, led Korean forces to victory using cannons of his own invention charged with a powerful form of gunpowder. On display in the park are retired military vehicles used by the Korean Army, Navy, and Air Force.

Dongguksa is a typical Japanese temple surrounded by a lush bamboo forest. All the parts of the temple including the main buildings, toilets, and bath are connected by a corridor, revealing some of the salient features of Japanese architecture.

The reed field in the village of Sinseong is not part of Gunsan but of Seocheon. Still, it is near the bird observatories and is one of the four most important reed fields in Korea. Seen

from the 1.2-kilometer embankment, the fields spread unbroken all the way to the Geumgang River and the hills of Gunsan far off in the distance.

When you get your first hunger pangs during your visit, you may want to try a bun stuffed with adzuki bean paste at Yiseongdang, Korea’s oldest Western-style bakery, which was founded in 1909 and run by Japanese owners before liberation in 1945. Every day, the bakery sells about 1,000 rice buns stuffed with adzuki bean paste. It also offers vegetable buns and croquettes stuffed with curry and glass noodles.

3, 4 Vestiges of the Japanese colonial period remain all over the city.

5 The Japanese chose Gunsan for shipping out their plunder of rice and resources from Korea, building a port and railways.

TRAVEL INFORMATION

what to eat

Jjamppong at Bokseongnu

Dozens of people can regularly be seen lined up in front of Bokseongnu eagerly waiting for a bowl of Gunsan-style *jjamppong*, a big bowl of noodles filled to the brim with soup containing lots of seafood such as cockles and clams and topped with softly pan-fried pork as a garnish.



how to get there

Car It takes about two hours from Seoul to Seocheon Interchange via Seohaean Expressway.

Train It takes around three hours from Yongsan Station to Janghang Station.

Bus It takes roughly one hour from Seoul to Janghang.



Swim Your Dream in Jeju The Seogwipo Penguin Swimming Festival

Courageous people gather together on Jeju to swim in the cold winter waters to make a wish for the New Year. This is the 14th Seogwipo Penguin Swimming Festival. *by Lee Jeong-eun*

The so-called “polar bear swimmers” take a plunge into the cold waters in Vancouver and New York City on New Year’s Day. At Haeundae Beach in Busan and Jungmun Saekdal Beach on Jeju Island, the “penguin swimmers” venture into the sea to ring in the New Year with hope in their hearts. This year marks the 14th Seogwipo Penguin Swimming Festival. Extreme swimming enthusiasts will bring excitement to Jungmun Saekdal Beach by fearlessly plunging into the winter waters

on January 5, 2013. The theme of the festival this year is “A Power Start for 2013,” which encourages putting the last year behind and planning for a brighter new year.

The festival features lots of exciting things to see and do in addition to the swimming competition. Participants will send up balloons with their wishes for the New Year, ring the “Bell of Promise,” bury a time capsule containing their New Year’s resolutions, compete in the “Penguin Wrestling King”

contest, search for “gifts of fortune” buried in the sand, and enjoy a celebratory performance by a brass band. These other events will start at 9:30 a.m. and the swimming contest begins at 11:00 a.m.

The “penguin” swimmers will warm up by doing aerobics with professional aerobics practitioners, and then jump into the water at the sound of a Korean traditional gong called *jing*.

How many will turn out on the beach to swim this winter? Every year, beautiful Jungmun Saekdal Beach has seen 500 to 800 people take the penguin plunge, with more than 2,000 visitors enjoying the other events. The penguin swimmers are of all ages. Children usually have fun paddling their feet in the water, and some group participants give shouts of joy and excitement or play a mock cavalry battle in the water to show off their health and youth. Yet, the water is so cold that even the heartiest of them have to get out after about half an hour.

This extraordinary winter event attracts locals and foreign visitors alike. Catherine Rusk, a Canadian English teacher at a middle school on Jeju, mustered up the courage to become a penguin swimmer in January 2012. She recalls that it was indeed cold, but she had so much fun that the cold was bearable enough.

One of the most delightful moments for penguin swimmers may be when they pick up a “ball of fortune” while swimming. The organizers of the festival scatter balls of fortune in the sea beforehand, and getting your hand on one of the balls means that you can stay at a hotel in the Jungmun tourist district, have a meal at the ICC Jeju (International Convention Center), or play golf at the Jungmun Golf Club free of charge.

The finale of the festival is eating traditional specialties of Jeju—*momguk* (a thick pork and seaweed soup), *dombegogi* (broiled sliced pork), and other wonderful dishes, all prepared by villagers nearby. This warms the bodies and hearts of the “penguins” after their jaunt in the winter sea.



JEJUDO AS UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE

Being Korea’s largest island, Jeju is a fascinating tourist destination. It is off the southern coast of the Korean Peninsula. Marado, the nation’s southernmost island, is only eight kilometers off Jeju. Jeju is

home to Mt. Hallasan, which rises from the center of the island and is inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, along with the lava tubes that run all over the island. These and other unique features make Jeju breathtakingly beautiful wherever you go.

Still, Jungmun, where the Penguin Swimming Festival takes place, is definitely one of Jeju’s best tourist destinations, famous for the Yeomiji Botanical Garden, the tiered Cheonjeyeon Waterfalls, and the Jungmun-Daepo Columnar Joints. The area has excellent accommodations and leisure facilities including hotels, condominiums, golf courses, windsurfing areas, and shopping centers. This is, needless to say, an extremely popular area for tourists.



1 The Seogwipo Penguin Swimming Festival is held to put the last year behind and plan for a brighter new year.
2 Around 2,000 to 3,000 people visit the festival every year.