

Memory of the World Register - Nomination Form
Republic of Korea - Hunmin Chongum (National Treasure No. 70)

Abstract

The manuscript published in the ninth lunar month of 1446, contains the promulgation by Sejong the Great, the fourth king of the Choson Dynasty (reigned 1418-1450), of the Korean alphabet of the same name, now called hangul, the development of which he completed in 1443. It also contains the Haerye, or Commentaries, later explanations and examples by scholars of the Hall of Worthies, including Chong In-J'i's So, or Postface. This edition is therefore often referred to as the Haerye Edition of Hunmin Chongun. It is kept by the Kansong Art Museum.

Identity and Location

Name of the Documentary Heritage: Hunmin Chongum (National Treasure No. 70)

Country: Republic of Korea

State, Province or Region: Seoul

Address: 97-1, Songbuk-dong, Songbuk-ku, Seoul, 136-020

Name of Institution: Kansong Art Museum

Legal Information

Owner: Chun, Sung-Woo; 97-1, Songbuk-dong, Songbuk-ku, Seoul, 136-020; Tel.: 02-762-0442

Custodian: Chun, Sung-Woo; Contact details: Refer to Owner

Legal Status:

Category of ownership: Private property

Details of legal and administrative provisions for the preservation of the documentary heritage: Cultural Properties Preservation Act - Documentary cultural properties which are invaluable historically and artistically are protected by the cultural properties preservation laws in Korea. Hunmin Chongum is designated National Treasure No. 70. Relevant particulars of the cultural properties preservation laws are as follows:

i) Purpose: The purpose of this Act is to contribute to the cultural advancement of the nation as well as to the cultural improvement of all people by preserving and utilizing cultural properties (Article 1 of the Cultural Property Preservation Act).

ii) Definition: cultural property means 1. tangible cultural property . . . of high historical and artistic value or other corresponding archaeological materials (Article 2 of the same act).

iii) Designation of Treasures and National Treasures: The Minister of Culture and Sports may designate certain important tangible cultural properties as Treasures, after deliberation by the Cultural Properties Committee. The Minister of Culture and Sports may, after deliberation by the Cultural Properties Committee,

designate as National Treasures certain Treasures which are rare and highly valuable from the human cultural point of view (Article 4 of the same act).

iv) Instructions Regarding Management Methods: The Minister of Culture and Sports may issue necessary instructions concerning the management and protection of state- designated cultural property to the owner . . . or the holder thereof (Article 14 of the same act). v) Owner's Management Duty and Manager: The owner of a state-designated cultural property shall manage and protect the cultural property concerned with the reasonable care of a good manager (Article 15 of the same act).

vi) Record Keeping: The Minister of Culture and Sports shall keep a record of important State-designated cultural properties (Article 19 of the same act).

vii) Administrative Order: The Minister of Culture and Sports may issue the following orders, when he deems it necessary for management and protection of a State-designated cultural property, an order prohibiting or restricting certain acts of the owner, holder, manager, or the managing body repairing, installing necessary facilities, removing obstacles (Article 25 of the same act).

vii) Administrative provisions: the Enforcement Decree of the Cultural Properties Protection Act prescribes the particulars necessary to enforce the Cultural Property Preservation Act.

Accessibility: The original work is not allowed to be displayed for public viewing, for its proper preservation. A photocopy alone may be put on public display.

Copyright status: This property does not fall under the definition of Item 1, Article 2 of Korea's Copyright Act. But creative materials or works of translation, alterations, dramatizations, or films made in accordance with the prescribed provisions in Article 5 and 6 of the Copyright Act are preserved as original works.

Responsible administration: Details of organization to ensure the proper management of the documentary heritage:

Organization: Office of Cultural Properties, Ministry of Culture and Sports

Address: 5-1, Chong-dong, Chung-ku, Seoul, 100-120-
Telephone: 02-318-4700- Fax: 02-319-1130

Principal Activities:

- Designation, cancellation, protection and management of cultural properties
- International exchange of cultural properties
- Diffusion and enhancement of cultural properties
- Protection and management of palaces

- Maintenance of cultural properties
- Excavation and research for conservation in cultural relics
- Scientific research for conservation of cultural properties
- Control of illegal acts in relation to cultural properties

Identification

Description: Hunmin Chongum, "Proper Sounds to Instruct the People," published in the ninth lunar month of 1446, contains the promulgation by Sejong the Great, the fourth king of the Choson Dynasty (reigned 1418-1450), of the Korean alphabet of the same name, now called han-gul, the development of which he had completed in 1443. It also contains the Haerye, or Commentaries, later explanations and examples by scholars of the Hall of Worthies, including Chong In-Ji's So, or Postface. This edition is therefore often referred to as the Haerye Edition of Hunmin Chongum. Korea had imported Chinese characters from China and achieved literacy from about the beginning of the Christian era, and by the middle of the 15th century had amassed a plethora of scholarly and literary works composed in classical written Chinese.

However, Chinese characters were for writing the Chinese language; they were not suitable for writing Korean, a language quite different from Chinese. A system of using Chinese characters to represent the Korean language, called yidu, was in use for the everyday paperwork of the bureaucracy and the citizenry, but this by no means amounted to a perfect representation of the Korean language. Therefore King Sejong, after studying Chinese prosody and the orthographies of neighbouring countries and analyzing the current state of Korean phonology, invented the 28 alphabetic letters of the Hunmin Chongum, which both allowed a perfect representation of Korean and were easy to learn.

Sejong had scholars of the Chiphyonjon, or Hall of Worthies, such as Chong In-Ji, Ch'oe Hang, Pak P'aeng-Nyon, Shin Suk-Chu, Song Sam-Mun, Kang Hui-An, Yi Kae, and Yi Sol-Lo, write commentaries on and examples of the new orthography in Chinese, and compile them with his own simple explanation of the new script in a book with the same name as the alphabet itself and his own explanation of it, Hunmin Chongum.

The first section of the complete Hunmin Chongum is the main text, written by King Sejong himself. The first part of the main text is Sejong's preface, in which he elucidates his purpose in inventing the new alphabet. He points out that, because Korean is a different language than Chinese, there are things in it that are hard to represent in Chinese characters, so that the common people cannot express their thoughts in writing. Finding this unacceptable, he has newly invented 28 letters which they can easily learn and comfortably use every day.

The second part of the main text lists the 28 letters -17 consonants and 11 vowels- of the new script with brief descriptions and examples. It then explains that the consonants can also be used in final position, that more than one

consonant can combine in initial or final position, written left to right, and more than one vowel can combine in medial position, fitting together according to shape, and that tones are marked with dots to the left of the syllable. To sum up, from Sejong's main text, we can learn the purpose of the new alphabet and how the new letters work. The Hunmin Chongum is famous as a phonemic writing system, one in which the letters of syllables happen to be written together in blocks approximately the same size and shape as the monosyllabic Chinese characters they often appear with in the so-called mixed script. (Modern hang-gul is not phonemic but morphophonemic, so that written syllables no longer exactly correspond with spoken syllables.)

The second section of Hunmin Chongum, written by the scholars of the Hall of Worthies, is composed of Haerye, the Commentaries, and Chong In-Ji's So, or Postface. The Commentaries are analyses of and notes on Sejong's main text. There are six parts: "An Explanation of the Design of the Letters," "An Explanation of the Initials," "An Explanation of the Medials," "An Explanation of the Finals," "An Explanation of the Combining of the Letters," and "Examples of the Use of the Letters."

"An Explanation of the Design of the Letters" shows how the consonants are divided into five classes modelled on five articulatory positions.

"An Explanation of the Initials" refers to the ancient Chinese rime books, or phonological treatises, which divided each syllable into its initial consonant and the remainder, the vowel and possibly a final consonant.

"An Explanation of the Medials" identifies the medials, or vowels, as the middle parts of syllables which link the initial consonants and the final consonants (if any).

"An Explanation of the Finals" states that the final consonants are connected to the initial consonants and medial vowels to make syllables.

"An Explanation of the Combining of the Letters" shows how initials, medials, and finals are combined to transcribe syllables. If a medial is round or horizontal, it is put underneath the initial, while if it is vertical it is put on the right of the initial. A final is put below the initial and the medial. There can be two or three letters in the initial position, in the medial position, or in the final position, these combinations being written from left to right. All syllables have tones, which are indicated by dots to the left of the written syllable. For the low tone, no dot is written. For the high tone, there is one dot, for the rising tone, two dots.

The so-called entering tone of Chinese is not distinct in Korean but is pronounced and marked like the low, high, or rising tone.

"Examples of the Use of the Letters" gives 94 examples of Korean words transcribed in the new letters with Chinese character glosses. The order of the

examples is initials, medials, and finals. "An Explanation of the Finals" adds four more examples of finals and "An Explanation of the Combining of the Letters" adds more examples of Korean words, phrases, and even one sentence written in the new letters, for a total of well over a hundred examples. But it has been noted that there is no duplication. From this we can see how careful the scholars who wrote Hunmin Chongum Haerye were.

Chong In-Ji's Postface to Hunmin Chongum, after saying that Chinese characters and yidu were used in Korea but could not accurately record the Korean language, and how magnificent it was that Sejong had invented 28 letters which were easy to learn and would greatly contribute in many ways, went on to say that, by order of the king, the scholars of the Hall of Worthies had written the Hunmin Chongum Haerye and that anyone who read that, without being taught by a teacher, could learn the new letters. To sum up, its contents are compliments to the king for the great creation of the new letters of the Hunmin Chongum and praise for the scholarly Commentaries.

Bibliographic details: Hunmin Chongum is a xylographic book printed from wood-blocks carved in a refined and elegant style. Scholars of the Hall of Worthies such as Chong In-Ji, Ch'oe Hang, Pak P'aeng-Nyon, Shin Suk-Chu, Song Sam-Mun, Kang Hui-An, Yi Kae and Yi Sol-Lo contributed to its compilation.

Hunmin Chongum is made of 33 leaves, printed on both sides, with one front cover and one back cover. It is 32.2 cm high and 20cm high and is bound with five saddle stitches, following the style of the traditional Korean book binding. It is larger than Chinese or Japanese books were at that time, as was usually the case with Korean books. Because of the larger size, most Korean books were bound with five saddle stitches while Chinese and Japanese books were bound with four saddle stitches.

The numbers of characters per vertical line and the number of lines per page in the first section, the main text written by Sejong the Great, are different from those in the second section, the commentaries by the scholars of the Hall of Worthies including Chong In-Ji's Postface. In the four leaves of the main text there are 11 characters in one vertical line and eight lines on the page. But in the 29 leaves of the scholars' commentaries there are 13 characters in one vertical line and eight lines on the page. This is another way of distinguishing the main text from the commentaries.

Each leaf is printed as two pages, on either side. Each page is printed within a space of 23.3cm x 16.5cm. Considering the book size there are rather large margins on the top, bottom, left, and right. We can infer that people of the time rather emphasized the aesthetic viewpoint, with blank margins like the spacious backgrounds of Eastern paintings, instead of the economic viewpoint.

On the top of and on the bottom of the fold of each leaf are black rectangles and right underneath the top rectangle and above the bottom rectangle are black fishtail markers. In between the two fishtail markers is printed the shortened title "Chongum" or the shortened title "Chongum Haerye". In between the bottom fishtail marker and the bottom rectangle is the leaf number.

The style of writing in the Korean alphabet has changed over the centuries, but in this book we see Sejong's original "font". The print in this edition is "Gothic" in the sense that all strokes have uniform thickness, as is true of Chinese seal characters. Consonants in the initial positions are composed with straight strokes or strokes turned nearly at right angles. Vowels, in the medial position, consist of the fundamental vowels. The rectangular original "font" became more cursive from the mid 15th century. This style harmonized well with the cursive Chinese characters.

Visual documentation: 6 Photographs and 6 Slides

History: This book was published in the ninth lunar month of 1446. It contains the introduction by King Sejong the Great (reigned 1418-1450) of the Korean alphabet, Hunmin Chongum (or hang-gul at present), plus Haerye or the Commentaries, including Chong In-Ji's Postface. King Sejong, feeling the need for the creation of a new writing system, led the top scholars of the Hall of Worthies in decades of intensive research towards that goal. After the completion of the development project of the new writing system in 1443 and a period of testing, Hunmin Chongum was finally proclaimed in 1446.

King Sejong's main text of Hunmin Chongum and Chong In-Ji's Postface to Hunmin Chongum were known from other books. The main text appeared translated into Korean in the foreword to Worin Sokpo, which was published in 1459. The main text and Chong In-Ji's Postface appeared in Annals of King Sejong. But until this Commentaries Edition of Hunmin Chongum was discovered in 1940, the Commentaries had not been known for a long time. Hunmin Chongum Haerye, or the Commentaries, became well known with the discovery of this book, along with the principles behind the creation of the letters and the rule that only eight letters could be used as finals. It answered many of the questions linguists around the world had asked about this alphabet.

This book was thought to have disappeared when King Yonsan-gun, in 1504, ordered the elimination of all books written in the Korean alphabet. But in 1940 a copy was found in the Andong area, North Kyongsang Province. This is still the one and only extant copy of the Commentaries Edition of Hunmin Chongum . When this book was found in 1940, the first two leaves were already corrupt. The contents were well known from Worin Sokpo and Annals of King Sejong, so the complete book could be reconstructed, but very regrettably during the reconstruction misprints occurred in this copy. However, these misprints could be corrected from Worin Sokpo and such sources. This book, which had been in the

collection of late Chon Hyong-P'il, is in the collection of Kansong Art Museum at present. On 22 May 1958, the Korean government designated this book National Treasure No. 70 for the proper management and preservation of this precious inheritance.

Bibliography:

Title Author Publisher, Year Notes

The Korean Language Reform of 1446: The Origin, Background, and Early History of the Korean Alphabet

Gari Keith Ledyard

University of California,

Berkeley, Seoul, 1965 Ph.D. dissertation

Research on Hunmin Chongum (Expanded Edition)

Kang Shin-Hang

Songgyun-gwan University

Publishing Dept., Seoul, 1990 -

A History of Korean Orthography and Linguistics

Kim Yun-Gyong

Korean Linguistics Society, Seoul, 1938 -

Koreanology Ch'oe

Hyon-Bae Chongumsa, Seoul, 1961 -

A History of Hunmin Chongum

Pang Chong-Hyn

II Songdang Bookstore, Seoul, 1949 -

A History of the Study of the Korean Language

Kim Kyong-Gyu Paegyongsa, Seoul, 1955 -

A New History of the Study of the Korean Language

Kim Yun-Gyong Uryu Munhwasa, Seoul, 1963 -

An Historical Study of Korean Orthography

Lee Ki-Mun Korean Research Institute, Seoul, 1963 -

A New History of the Korean Language

Yu Ch'ang-Gyun

Hyongsol Ch'ulp'ansa, Seoul, 1969 -

A Study of the Phonological System in Hunmin Chongum

Kim Mu-Shik Kyongbuk University, 1993,

Taegu

Ph. D., Korean

Literature, the Graduate
School of Kyongbuk
University

A Study on the Double Letter Sound System in Hunmin Chongum (the Korean Script)

Kim Kang-Baek
Chungang University, Seoul, 1982
MA, The Graduate
School of Education,
Chungang University

A Study on the Process of Dividing a Syllable into Three Parts in Hunmin Chongum

Im Yong-Gi Yonsei University, Seoul, 1991
Ph. D., Korean
Literature, the Graduate
School of Yonsei
University

Management Plan

Statement of significance:

- Hunmin Chongum, designated as National Treasure No. 70, is the only extant original copy of the Commentaries Edition, an invaluable cultural property.
- Refer to "Assessment against the Selection Criteria"

Access Policy and Procedures:

Hunmin Chongum is made of 33 leaves of Korean rice paper, printed on both sides, with one front cover and one back cover. This 32.2cm high and 20cm wide book bound with five saddle stitches following the traditional style of Korean bookbinding is rather thin. To preserve this precious original edition, various kinds of special care are needed. For the preservation of this original edition, public showing is not allowed. Any activities which can affect its current management and preservation such as photo taking shall have permission from the Minister of Culture and Sports. A photocopy is ideal for public showings.

Preservation and managerial policies to control the physical environment :

- Air quality of the depository: An automatic air conditioning system for the optimum condition of fresh air.
- Temperature of the depository: A temperature of 18^o22 is maintained.
- Humidity of the depository: A hydrostatic humidity of 40-60% is maintained.
- Lighting of the depository: Sunlight is cut off completely.
- The storage container in depository: Hunmin Chongum is kept in an airtight box of paulownia wood, which is the most adequate material to preserve Korean rice paper.

- Security of the depository: The security system has steel doors with double-lock devices.
- Building maintenance: The building is maintained in an always clean state. It is equipped with automatic halon-gas fire extinguishers.

Disaster prevention and restoration plans

Prevention of disasters:

- Installation of heat sensor and fire alarm system, and automatic extinguisher.
- Protection in case of emergency: If it is considered necessary for the protection of documentary heritage in time of war, armed conflict or similar emergency, the Minister of Culture and Sports may take necessary measure including moving to safe place, etc. with 71 of the Cultural Properties Protection Act.

Recovery plans:

- Training program to qualify specialists to produce and maintain microfilm and photocopies and to restore the original edition in accordance with Article 18 of the Cultural Property Preservation Act and Article 7 of the Enforcement Decree of the Cultural Properties Protection Act

Preservation staff:

- Number: 5
- Qualification: BA or MA in the field of History or Library Science
- Training: more than one term of training per year

Details about restoration measures to handle special facilities, restoration, and conservation:

- Reformatting: Public approach must be strictly prohibited for the systematic preservation of this invaluable original documentary heritage. The original edition must be photocopied and microfilmed to allow active academic research.
- Conservation of original edition: Hunmin Chongum is designated National Treasure No. 70 for its strict preservation.

i) A person who intends to try copying, photographing, and other activities which may affect the state of the state-designated cultural property shall obtain the permission of the Minister of Culture and Sports in accordance with Article 20 of the Cultural Properties Protection Act.

ii) The Minister of Culture and Sports shall keep a record of this State-designated cultural property in accordance with Article 19 of the same act.

iii) The Minister of Culture and Sports may have the owner, holder, manager, or managing body of this State-designated cultural property report on the present shape, management, repairs, environmental preservation situation and other necessary matters in accordance with Article 40 of the same act.

iv) The owner or the managing body of a State-designated cultural property may request the Minister of Culture and Sports for technical guidance with respect to the management or repairs of the cultural property concerned.

Assessment against the Selection Criteria

Influence: Hunmin Chongum brought the Korean people an orthographic revolution. First of all, they became able to completely transcribe the Korean language, something they had been unable to do with Chinese characters. Chinese characters were a writing system for Chinese, which was completely different from Korean in its phonological system and its grammatical structure. So, as Chong In-Ji said in his Postface to the Hunmin Chongum, writing Korean with them was just as incongruous as forcing a square handle into a round hole. Therefore Koreans, in order to write Korean in Chinese characters, had had to translate it into written Chinese, which made communication not all that easy. To overcome the difficulty of carrying on communication in written Chinese, Koreans invented yidu, a system with which government officials and common people could write words with Chinese characters in Korean word order and even represent Korean particles and endings with Chinese characters. But yidu, as a transcription using Chinese characters, could not indicate distinctively Korean sounds or reflect nuances of particles and endings. It was for this reason that Sejong invented an alphabet reflecting the phonological system of Korean, making it possible for Korean to be written down perfectly.

The second aspect of this revolution was the fact that it became possible for the people to learn and use writing with great ease. Since Chinese characters are ideographic, a character had to be learned for every concept, which was very difficult. Also, characters were difficult to use because of the complexity of their strokes. Because learning Chinese characters of this sort was very difficult for foreigners like Koreans, most of them found Chinese characters impractical and did not even think of communicating in writing. But the alphabetic letters Sejong invented were only 28 and their strokes were simple, so they were easy to learn and use.

Any Korean could learn them and communicate with them. After the creation of Hunmin Chongum, the Korean people had an alphabet in which they could perfectly transcribe their distinctive national language and their culture began to develop on a new dimension. Also, Korea's high literacy rate today is mainly due to the fact that anyone can learn its alphabet easily. In the long run this is contributing to UNESCO's movement to eradicate illiteracy. This truth was given international recognition by J. S. Gale's proclamation early on that "Sejong was a king who not only contributed to the Orient, but to the world," and that "He had done many great things, but the invention of Hangeul [that is, the new letters of the Hunmin Chongum] was the greatest of all." ("The Korean Alphabet," Transactions of the Korea Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, Vol. IV, Part 1, 1912).

Computing the publication date of this book in the solar calendar, the Korean government in 1946 set October 9 as Hang-gul Day, when every year national celebratory events are held. This book is that important to the Korean people. The fact that today the prize UNESCO gives people who have contributed to the eradication of illiteracy is called the Sejong Prize shows the influence this book has had on world culture.

Subject / Theme:

Many peoples have exerted themselves to make their own orthographies.

This is one of the major themes of world history. There is no other example of a people independently, without influence from any existing orthography, successfully creating a new orthography and adopting it as their national written language. The founder of the Yuän Dynasty, Khublai Khan, ordered that one alphabet be made for the countless languages of all the countries the Mongols had conquered and incorporated into the Mongol Empire and invited or hired linguists from all those countries to the Yuän capital, Beijing, to conduct research on the creation of the new alphabet. But the assembled scholars failed to create a new world alphabet and the Yu n were under pressure from the uprising of the Ming in the south, so the scholars went home and this far-reaching plan failed.

In Korea, as soon as Sejong ascended to the throne, he selected outstanding scholars and set up the Hall of Worthies to create a suitable new orthography for Korea. As a result of decades of research, finally the Hunmin Chongum was successfully invented. Not only was Hunmin Chongum very original but among the alphabets invented to represent the sounds of all the languages of the whole world it was the one which could most accurately represent most or almost all of them. Again, the formative principles of the letters are extremely scientific and linguistic, so that it is an alphabet which impresses the linguists and intellectuals of the whole world. Hunmin Chongum, because of its scientific organization, is easy to learn and extremely easy to use. It is already widely acknowledged that it is definitely the most scientific writing system not only, of course, compared with ideographic systems but also compared with other alphabetic systems.

This book took as its theme the creation of the new alphabet. The principles by which the alphabet was made and the shapes of the letters are original enough to meet the academic level of today's linguistics, proving the alphabet's scientific standing in an outstanding way. Since the structure and logical development of this book which explains the alphabet are perfect, as Chong In-Ji says in his Postface to Hunmin Chongum, the contents can be read and understood on one's own, without a teacher. The book is made up of the main text, which gives the purpose of the creation of the new letters and presents examples and simple explanations of them, and the Commentaries, which add detailed comments and examples.

If you read just the main text, you will know the purpose for which the new alphabet was invented and will be able to learn and use it. But if you appreciate the detailed parts about the principles on which the new alphabet was constructed, which are in the commentaries, Hunmin Chongum Haerye, namely "An Explanation of the Design of the Letters", "An Explanation of the Initials", "An Explanation of the Medials", "An Explanation of the Finals", "An Explanation of the Combining of the Letters", and "Examples of the Use of the Letters", you will recognize the value of this book.

In this way this book contributes in an outstanding way to the important theme in world history and culture of the creation of new letters and to our appreciation of the originality and scientific quality of the Korean alphabet, Hunmin Chongum.

Form & style: This book used dots for punctuation marks and tone marks. There are two kinds of punctuation mark, an empty circle in the centre of a column and an empty circle on the right side of a column. Tone marks are circles written at the four corners of a Chinese character to distinguish an exceptional meaning or tone of that character from the ordinary ones. They are a device employed in this book to aid correct understanding, one very seldom used even in China and then only for books considered of national importance. Edge-markings like those of Hunmin Chongum started to disappear from the middle of the 15th century, so this book offers precious information about the style of publishing. From 1447, the year after this book was published, when many works written in the new alphabet began to be published, most books changed from this sort of edge marking to the new style. Books of this sort are becoming extinct, but this one well displays the form and style of Korean books of the 15th century, outstanding in the world, and so it is important for research on the form and style of Korean and East Asian books of that time.

Authenticity: There is no record of publication in the book but Chong In-Ji's Postface is said to have been written in the first third of the ninth lunar month of 1446 and Annals of King Sejong records that the book was published in the ninth lunar month of 1446, so it is clear that it was published in 1446. Moreover the form and contents all support publication in the middle of the 15th century, and the book's paper and ink, together with the structure of its frame, attest to the middle of the 15th century. There is no room for suspicion regarding the authenticity of this book.

Rarity: In the history of the world there are very few successful cases of the invention of a new orthography. As for the publication of a book explaining a new orthography, not only was there no case of it before the publication of Hunmin Chongum in 1446, it goes without saying, but there has been none after it, either. This book is unique in the history of the world. The main text of this book and Chong In-Ji's Postface were handed down in Worin Sokpo and in Annals of King Sejong, but this book is the only extant copy of Sejong's main text with the notes he had the scholars of the Hall of Worthies write, which was published in 1446.

Contextual assessment In the history of the world there are very few successful cases of the invention of a new orthography. As for the publication of a book explaining a new orthography, not only was there no case of it before the publication of Hunmin Chongum in 1446, it goes without saying, but there has been none after it, either. The main text of this book and Chong In-Ji's Postface were handed down in Worin Sokpo and in Annals of King Sejong, but the only extant copy of Sejong's main text with the notes he had the scholars of the Hall of Worthies write which was published in 1446 is this Hunmin Chongum. The day this book was published and proclaimed by Sejong, October 9, is called Hang-gul Day, which is celebrated through the nation.

Nowhere else is there a day celebrating the invention of a writing system. This book is a unique example of a book commemorating the publication of a book proclaiming the invention of a writing system. It is a great task to designate Hunmin Chongum, of which there is only one in the world, as not only a national treasure of Korea but also a world cultural relic which should be preserved forever.

Consultation

Owner: & Custodian: CHUN, SUNG-WOO, Chief of Kansong Art Museum

Independent institutions and experts:

Name: Cultural Properties Committee. The Cultural Properties Committee is established in the Ministry of Culture and Sports to advise the Ministry of Culture and Sports on research and deliberation on matters concerning the preservation, management and utilization of cultural properties in accordance with Article 3 of the Cultural Property Preservation Act.

Qualification: The Ministry of Culture and Sports shall appoint as members of the committee the highest authorities of the day in this subject by the recommendation of the director of Office of Cultural Properties. The Cultural Properties Committee shall comprised up to 50 persons.

Contact details: Refer to Responsible Administration

Nominator

Name : KIM, YOUNG-SOO, Minister of Culture & Sports

Relationship to documentary heritage: Overall administrative management of this documentary cultural property

Contact person : CHOUNG, KI-YOUNG, Director of the Office of Cultural Properties

Contact details : Refer to Responsible administration

Assessment of Risk

Nature and scope of threats to the documentary heritage: There is no chance that a critical incident could threaten the protection and preservation of this documentary heritage. Hunmin Chongum is preserved in the most secure way as follows.

Environmental condition: The temperature, humidity, lighting, and air quality provide the optimum conditions for the preservation of this documentary heritage.

Item Preservation State

>Air quality maintenance Automatic air conditioning system

Temperature 18~22° C

Relative humidity 40~60 %

Lighting Stored underground to block sunlight

Control of maintenance Qualified staff members control maintenance with great care.

Physical conditions: With up-to-date security and preservation systems, the building is operated under optimum maintenance.

Refer to the present physical state in "An assessment of preservation of the documentary heritage".

Preservation budget: Finances for the protection and preservation of this applied documentary cultural property. Fund raised from Kansong Art Museum. Expenses to be borne by local government for the management, protection, and restoration of the State-designated cultural property (prescribed in Article 28 and 31 of the same act)

Prohibition of any random changes to the current condition: The prohibition of public access and restricted use of the documentary heritage will prevent any threat to its current condition.

Preservation Assessment

The authorities concerned are seeking further measures for more advanced scientific preservative methods.

Item State

Storage container Paulownia wood box, 33.8cm x 20cm x 18cm

Security Fire detector and suppresser system

Fire detection and suppress system

A heat sensor and a fire alarm, and an automatic fire extinguisher

Building maintenance Always in a clean state.

Present physical state : good

Chronology of the preservation of the documentary heritage:

- May 22, 1958: designated National Treasure No. 70
- Nov. 23, 1974: moved to and stored at the address of the owner
- Sept. 17, 1980: reissue of approval of designation as documentary cultural property, loan to the owner of one storage container 33.8cm X 20cm X 18cm made of paulownia wood

Current preservation policies in relation to nomination of this documentary cultural property:

- Various laws are enforced for its systematic preservation.
- Refer to Management plan

Person or organization responsible for preservation:

- Office of Cultural Properties, Ministry of Cultural & Sports, Republic of Korea
- Contact details: Refer to Responsible administration