Encyclopedia of Korean Culture

CHO, Dong-il*

1. Purpose of Publication

The Encyclopedia of Korean Culture has been published. As stated in the preface ("This encyclopedia is published to provide a foundation for the creation of a new ethnic culture by gathering together and organizing the cultural heritage and achievements of the Korean people."), this work is a complete compilation from today’s perspective of all areas of the rich Korean culture. The publishing of this encyclopedia not only has significance for Korean cultural history, but is arguably a notable event in world history.

Volumes 1 through 25 make up the encyclopedia proper, with articles listed in alphabetical order. Volume 26 is a chronology and guide, and Volume 27 is an index for the entire encyclopedia. Each volume contains approximately 920 pages, and the total number of pages is 24,748. There are around 65,000 articles, and over 40,000 illustrations. In order to ensure accuracy and to make clear where the responsibility for the information lies, every article’s author is named, and the source of every illustration is given. From now on, for general readers and domestic and foreign Korean studies scholars alike, it has become impossible to say that one knows about Korea without having used this encyclopedia.

The Academy of Korean studies, with the support of the Korean government,

* Professor of Korean Literature, Seoul National University
has organized the project, which has included the efforts of an editorial committee made up of over 300 specialists from various fields, as well as over 3,800 writers. It may be said that practically the entire academic world has been mobilized. The project has taken twelve years to complete, from 1980 until 1991. The initial draft was finished in 1988, and the entire encyclopedia was published in 1992 after inspection and revision. The outstanding quality of the illustrations, editing, paper, printing, and bookbinding, not to mention the content of the articles, is a testament to the high level of Korean publishing skill. It is on par with the finest encyclopedias in the world, and bears particular value as an encyclopedia of specifically Korean culture, and not one of world culture in general.

However, the state of research of Korean culture is still far from satisfactory, and as this project has been boldly carried out with no precedent anywhere in the world, some trial and error was unavoidable, and there are more than a few defects. The issuers have freely admitted this fact in the Preface, and have promised to continually issue "supplements", and "revised and enlarged editions". I personally hope that we may pour our efforts into the follow-up work, and be able to issue a much improved revised edition. Therefore, in this review, it is my intention to not only assess the work carried out to this point and outline the contents and method of description, but also to point out the problems as I see them and to offer suggestions for further research and revision. It may be said that as a person deeply involved in the project, I am not qualified to write a review of it, but the encyclopedia is the result of discussion among persons involved, and in the future even more heated discussion will be necessary for supplementation and revision. Moreover, it is impossible to think of anyone qualified to write a review who is not among the over 300 editorial committee members or the over 3,800 writers involved in the project.

Up till now, the encyclopedias of various countries of the world have consisted of facts pertaining to that country added onto articles of a general nature. The making of a 27 volume encyclopedia dealing with only one country's culture is without precedent. There is a reason why this unusual task has been carried out in Korea. In Korea, there is a sufficiently rich cultural heritage to fill an encyclopedia. However, it has not been well organized or researched, and is not well known to the general public. The issuing of this cultural encyclopedia is a landmark measure designed to address this state of affairs.

There was debate from the beginning as to whether or not it was wise to embark on the compilation of a cultural encyclopedia with the state of research and investigation as insufficient as it was. There was considerable logic to the view that finding and gathering written sources, preparing, publishing and indexing them was
a task that should be undertaken first. The suggestion that the Korean language
dictionary should first be made more detailed and substantial also was a good one.
However, a cultural encyclopedia can be said to create broad interest in Korean
culture, to elevate its status, and to stimulate further research, and was a necessary
project carried out at a proper time. We have now begun the work that must be
continued through the generations by our descendants, so even this trial and error is
of great value.

It is immediately crucial for us to read this encyclopedia and use it to gain a
new understanding of Korean culture, discover topics to be researched, and find
directions for new creation. By looking at this encyclopedia, one can tell which
areas of research are well developed and which are particularly weak, and they
serve as reference and stimulation for one another. It is possible to recover the
overall picture of Korean studies, which has become blurred researchers in each
separate field carried on detailed studies in their own area independently. Thus has
been created the opportunity to examine research directions and methods, while
illuminating the entire picture and discovering what work needs to be done in each
field.

2. Historical Significance

In Korea, the compilation of national culture has been carried out as a national
project on several occasions, and the results have been great. The first case of this
was the creation of national histories in Koguryo, Paekche, and Silla. In the Koryo
Period, these histories were reorganized, and Samguksa was written and revised into
Samguk sagi. In the Choson Dynasty, the compilation of national culture was
expanded in many directions. The history of the preceding dynasty was recorded in
Koryoja, and Tongguk t'onggam, a complete history, was also written. Other good
eamples are Tongmunsong, a historical collection of literary works; Tongguk yoji-
sangnam, a geographical book; and Ah'ak kwebom, a book of music. Chip'yongjon, a
sort of national research institute, served to gather necessary sources and develop
scholars to lead this kind of project. In the Late Choson Period, the efforts of
previous eras were supplemented, and new writings were added. Among these, the
work which was originally called Tongguk munhon pigo, and later completed as
Ch'angbo munhon pigo, deserves particular attention. This book, which surveyed
books and documents across a broad range of topics, is the predecessor of what we
today call an encyclopedia.

When Korea emerged from Japanese colonial rule and the Republic of Korea
was established, the project of compiling and publishing national culture that had been carried out during the Chosŏn Dynasty should have been continued on a larger scale from a new perspective, but it was not. The Korean War and ensuing political chaos were one factor, but also we Koreans were too eager to import Western culture and did not consider our own culture to be precious, and moreover placed economic development ahead of cultural concerns. Then in the late 1970s, change began, as a reflection on and concern for the chaos and mistakes of the past grew, and we realized that a new appreciation for our national culture should be the basis for self-reliant awakening. There was demand that the government establish a large-scale research institute and take the lead in this effort, and so the Academy of Korean Studies was established.

However, it is an undeniable fact that domestic and foreign circumstances were not yet ready, and the Academy of Korean Studies could not satisfactorily carry out its role of leading national cultural research. This is not to say, though, that the academy could be reduced to the level of merely handing out research funds and dash the remaining hopes of the academic world. In order for the Republic of Korea to surpass the level of the Chosŏn Dynasty and the Academy of Korean Studies to be the Chip'yonjon of today, it was necessary to take on the massive fundamental project of compiling and publishing national culture—a project that individual scholars, no matter how hard they worked, could not possibly complete—and pass on the benefits there of to all. Among the projects thus planned and undertake, perhaps the most noteworthy are the 85-volume Anthology of Korean Oral Literature and the 27-volume Encyclopedia of Korean Culture.

There have been several encyclopedias published in Korea before the Encyclopedia of Korean Culture. To take as example only works of traditional periods encyclopedia in nature, Yi Su-gwang’s Chibong yusŏl, Yi Ik’s Sŏnghsaesŏl, Yi Kyu-gyŏng’s Oju yŏnmun changjon san’go, etc., all published before Ch'ungbo munhŏn pigo, may be mentioned. Oju yŏnmun changjon san’go consists of 60 volumes in the old system, and contains the knowledge up to the early 19th century that the author considered most important selected, written, and commented upon from his own viewpoint. Thus each article is labeled “pyŏn'jangsŏl”, or ‘logical demonstration of proof’. Ch'ungbo munhŏn pigo, which was compiled as a government project, published several times, repeatedly supplemented, and published in a 250-volume final version in 1908, did no more than simply gather and organize materials and facts, and is a good contrast to Oju yŏnmun changjon san’go. It may be said that each provides a model of one of the two basic kinds of encyclopedia.
However, recently published encyclopedias have failed to connect with this tradition, and have merely taken the contents of various Western world encyclopedias and their Japanese editions, adding a little information about Korea as well. In the various encyclopedias, from Hāgwonsa’s 1958 six-volume Large Encyclopedia to the Tong-A Color World Encyclopedia published in 30 volumes in 1984, there is a noticeable enrichment of content, but little change in the basic format. There are several other world encyclopedias of this type currently being made, of which the Korean edition of Encyclopedia Britannica is one. Encyclopedias have also been issued in North Korea, and are essentially world encyclopedias with much information pertaining to North Korea.

World encyclopedia was first made in 18th century France by enlightenment thinkers. And after a basic format was established by Encyclopedia Britannica, world encyclopedias published almost competitively in various countries, largely rehashing the contents of previous encyclopedias, while reflecting changing times and different viewpoints with minor revisions and additions. Competition was focused on improving the quality of editing and printing. There was less and less reason for encyclopedias to be the result of academic research, and publishers and editors, rather than scholars, took the lead in creating encyclopedias for the masses that would become best sellers. In this respect, Japan was a great success and an influence on Korea. In publishing world encyclopedias, Korea could not help referring particularly much to the Japanese example. However, in Korea the scale of the publishing industry was smaller than in Japan, and the market was smaller, so a commercial product on the level of Japan’s could not be produced.

With the creation of the Encyclopedia of Korean Culture, however, this precedent has been overturned at one fell swoop. As an encyclopedia of national culture could not rely on previous world encyclopedias, everything had to be planned completely anew and every manuscript entirely rewritten. We were forced to break completely from the less than honorable tradition of transplanting Western culture via Japan. We had to follow the ability and knowledge that led to the creation of Oju yŏnmun changjŏn san’go and Chūngho munkŏn pigo, utilize all the recent accomplishments in research of Korean culture in planning the project, and call upon all related scholars and experts to write articles. The reason that even the smallest articles have their authors specified is that all of the information is new. One of the greatest aspects of this encyclopedia is its originality, and the fact that it has made encyclopedias the coalescence of academic research. As the budget provided by the government was not insufficient, and there was no pressure to make a profit through sales, we did not consider how successful the encyclopedia would
be as a commercial product for the masses, and were free to pour our efforts into making sure it contained all the information necessary for understanding our national culture.

Therefore this project is a good example of a successful cultural project supported by the government. It is also significant for having shown to the world that a developing nation can accomplish speedy cultural development in spite of less than ideal social conditions. The publishing of an encyclopedia supported by a government is not without numerous precedent in socialist nations, but this encyclopedia has an important difference. The encyclopedias issued in socialist countries, including those of North Korea, have also been world encyclopedias, revising and supplementing only material directly related to creation of ideology. The *Encyclopedia of Korean Culture*, on the other hand, is not only new in content, but is not bound by an ideological agenda. The government merely financed the project, and did not involve itself with its progress. All matters regarding the contents and principles of compilation were decided directly by the experts on the editorial committee. The absence of interference from publishing companies is different from the general trend of encyclopedias in the First World, and the fact that the government provided financial support without imposing ideological constraints differs from the efforts of the Second World. Thus it may be said that a worthy example has been set for cultural project in the Third World.

It is inappropriate to continue to differentiate between world encyclopedias and encyclopedias of national culture. Eventually we should make a proper world encyclopedia, and for that aim we must begin with an encyclopedia of national culture. World encyclopedias up till now, in the First and Second World alike, have been written from the biased view that the West is the center of the universe. The cultures of the various countries and numerous peoples of the Third World have been pushed aside or ignored altogether. *Encyclopedia* compilation cannot be made what it should be by such methods as those used in the Korean translation of *Encyclopedia Britannica*, in which, for the purpose of selling well in Korea, many articles regarding Korea are being added to the original. As Korea becomes a greater consumer market, there is increasing danger that self-reliance as a creator of culture will be further damaged. For this reason it is necessary to further reappraise our national culture, make it known to the world, and work to recognize the complete and true nature of world culture through diverse cultural exchanges.

To overcome Euro-centricism and create a balanced world encyclopedia, it is first necessary to make encyclopedias of national culture in all the countries of the Third World. A world encyclopedia, in the true sense of the word, must be
restructured taking into consideration the results of these national encyclopedias. For example, just as Korean culture should be treated fully and accurately in the world encyclopedias of Vietnam, Iran, and Nigeria, so should the culture of these countries be treated no less significance or accuracy than Western culture. It is my belief that the Encyclopedia of Korean Culture can perform an epoch-making role in this kind of grand change in world cultural history.

3. Range of Articles

In order to make an encyclopedia of Korean culture, it was first necessary to define what Korean culture is, and to decide on its extent and range. After much discussion and heated debate, we reached a conclusion and published it in a small booklet which was handed out to the writers. At the beginning of the booklet, we defined Korean culture as “the heritage of the Korean people, inside and outside our borders, throughout our long history, of building a lifestyle and forming a society in conjunction with nature, developing language and thought, and creating art, as well as the modern forms thereof.” We appended several clauses to elucidate the fine points of this definition and prevent confusion, and included a summary at the beginning of each volume.

“The Korean people” is defined as “that group of people who share the blood line and historical experience of today’s Koreans, who speak the same language, and for whom other cultural aspects are basically the same.” We decided to include both people who have emigrated from Korea and those who have immigrated here, based on one side of their dual identity. We decided to regard the results of translation, interpretation, research, and recreation of the culture of peoples other than the Korean people as Korean culture, and to deal with it in detail. We decided to include the traces of human habitation in Korean territory in Korean history. We also agreed to explain cultural activities such as research, utilization, and interpretation of nature in conjunction with nature itself. As culture is a heritage and the forms thereof, we decided to perceive it through concrete evidence, and not to propound abstract ideas. In the area of modern culture, we decided to emphasize its connections with traditional culture.

In order to divide Korean culture thus defined into categories, we created the “Classification Table of Korean Culture”. We divided Korean culture into “Overall Culture”, “External Culture”, and “Internal Culture”, and further divided each of these categories into three subcategories to create Primary Headings 1 through 9. The Primary Headings were then divided into Secondary Headings 11 through 96,
and these into Tertiary Headings 111 through 963.

The nine Primary Headings are as follows:

Overall Culture
1. The Korean People
2. Territory
3. History

External Culture
4. Relationship with Nature
5. Lifestyle
6. Society

Internal Culture
7. Thought
8. Language and Communication
9. Art

The Secondary Headings are as follows:

1. The Korean People
11. Formation of the Korean People
12. Members of the Korean People
13. Characteristics of Korean Culture
14. Preservation of Korean Culture

2. Territory
21. Natural Environment
22. Human Environment
23. Geographical Regions
24. Transportation
25. Place Names, Geographical Writings, and Maps

3. History
31. Prehistoric Period
32. Early Nations Period
33. Three Kingdoms Period
34. North and South Kingdoms Period
35. Koryŏ Period
36. Chosŏn Period
37. Pre-modern Period
38. Modern Period

4. Relationship with Nature
41. Relationship with Things of Nature
42. Natural Science
43. Technology
44. Public Health
45. Physical Fitness

5. Lifestyle
   51. Industry
   52. Clothing and Fashion
   53. Food
   54. Housing

6. Society
   61. Politics
   62. Foreign Relations
   63. Law
   64. Economy
   65. Social Relationships
   66. Folk Culture
   67. Education

7. Thought
   71. Academic Accomplishments
   72. Ideology
   73. Folk Beliefs
   74. Buddhism
   75. Confucianism
   76. Taoism
   77. Native Religions
   78. Christianity and Other Foreign Religions Introduced Since the Pre-modern Period

8. Language and Communication
   81. Language
   82. Writing Systems
   83. Records, Signs, and Public Information
   84. Communication
   85. Press and Publishing
   86. Printing
   87. Books

9. Art
91. Literature
92. Visual Arts
93. Music
94. Dance
95. Drama
96. Movies

The Tertiary Headings are far too numerous to list here in entirety. Additional explanations showing the correlations of the categories and dispelling concern about overlap make them even more troublesome. For the sake of understanding, I will give an example a few of the Tertiary Headings, and also demonstrate the means of cross-reference.

22. Human Environment (Population→123)
   221. Villages
   222. Cities
   223. Living Space
   224. Industrial Complexes
   225. National Land Development

33. Three Kingdoms Period
   331. Koguryo
   332. Paechu
   333. Silla
   334. Kaya

52. Clothing and Fashion
   521. Clothing
   522. Accessories
   523. Handicraft
   524. Hairstyles
   525. Skin Care
   526. Clothing and Fashion Traditions

66. Folk Culture (Folk Beliefs→73, Folk Art→9)
   661. Public Ceremonies (national and Social Events including National and Traditional Holidays, and Descriptions and Depictions Thereof)
   662. New Years Celebrations
   663. Folk Games (Sporting Event→451)
   664. Rites of Passage

77. Native Religions
771 Ch’ŏndo-gyo
772. Taegong-gyo
773 Chŏngsan-gyo
774. Won Buddhism
775. Other Native Religions
91. Literature
911. Oral Literature
912. Literature in Classical Chinese (munjo→872)
913. Classical Poetry
914. Classical Prose
915. Pre-modern and Modern Poetry
916. Pre-modern and Modern Novels
917. Pre-modern and Modern Drama (Performance of Plays→95)
918. Pre-modern and Modern Criticism

4. Selection of Headings

The significance that the above chart can have in the actual work is to insure that no subject that should be dealt with is passed over. In the fulfillment of this role, one can say that the chart has proven effective. I believe that there is no heading on the chart that has not been dealt with. However, it is necessary to examine how the categories delineated on the chart and the headings actually selected are related to one another.

It is impossible to provide a simple solution to the problem of whether the chosen categories should be used as headings in the encyclopedia. Some of the Primary Headings were dealt with in Long Articles. Primary Heading 1 is looked at from many angles in a 13.5 page article entitled “The Korean People”. Primary Heading 2, “Territory”, is dealt with over the space of 75 pages. Primary Heading 3, “History”, however, is much too broad to be considered in a single article, and therefore was divided into the separate Long Articles “321 Old Chosŏn”, “331 Koguryŏ”, “35 Koryŏ Period”, “36 Chosŏn Period”, and “383 Republic of Korea”. In the names of the actual articles, the “Koryŏ Period” was called “Koryŏ”, and the “Chosŏn Period” simply “Chosŏn”. Even when thus divided, these articles turned out to be significantly longer than others in the encyclopedia.

“4 Relationship with Nature” and “5 Lifestyle” were too inclusive to be dealt with in a single article, and so were divided. Let’s look at the Secondary Headings of “5 Lifestyle”. “51 Industry” and “53 Food” were each given a Long Article of 11
3 and 11.2 pages, respectively. The Long Article entitled “Domiciles (Chut'aek)”, corresponding to Secondary Heading 54, covers 25.4 pages. One can say that it is so long that it creates an imbalance with the articles of neighboring categories. Another problem is that the larger notion of “Housing”(Chu-saenghwal or Chugö), including customs of choosing and using places to live, was not dealt with.

The treatment of “52 Clothing Lifestyle (Ui-saenghwal)” was not simple. There is no article covering the whole area of “52 Clothing Lifestyle”, and even “521 Clothing (Uiibok)” was not treated as a single article. Instead, nine pages were devoted to “Material (Otgam)”. “Clothes (Ot)” which is a more important topic than “Material”, was completely left out. I believe that the classification category should be called “521 Clothes (Ot)”, “Clothes (Ot)” should be chosen as a Long Article, and the information on “Material” should be included in “Cloth”. “522 Accessories (Changshin’gu)” is covered in an article of the same name eight pages long, and I believe that this treatment is appropriate. The article corresponding to “523 Handicraft (Suye)”, is a 7.5 page one entitled “Embroidery (Chasu)” “Handicraft” is a broader concept than “Embroidery”, but no great harm was done in treating it in this way. “Embroidery (Chasu)” is the older terminology, and is not inappropriate as the article name. However, it would have been even better had an explanation been given of the relationship of the two terms “Suye” and “Chasu”, and the reasons for choosing one over the other.

The two articles corresponding to the classification category “524 Hairdressing and Beauty” are called “Hairstyles (Möri Moyang)” and “Cosmetics (Hwajang)”. Here, too, there is a problem concerning the scope of the concepts involved. In this case, the article names are more appropriate than that of the category. I recommend that the category name be changed to “524 Hairstyles and Cosmetics”, to provide unity. “525 Skin Care” is not a separate article, but is a concept including such things as “Laundry” and “Ironing”. This is an appropriate treatment. The category “526 Clothing Lifestyle Customs” was covered in an 18 page Long Article called “Dress and Ornaments (Pokshik)”. The decision to use emphasize traditional culture by using the more conventional term in the name of the article was a good one.

After close investigation of “52 Clothing Lifestyle” as a sample, I would say that in general there is an appropriate relationship between the categories and the selection of articles, but in some cases there is considerable discrepancy. Therefore it is necessary to give more detailed attention to the categories treated and the terminology used. I believe that a similar result would be obtained even from a different sample. In the process of revision and enlargement, it will be necessary to go over everything once again and eliminate this kind of minor error.
In “72 Ideology”, however, there are more problems. The area of “Ideology” is an abstract form of thought, and is particularly difficult to divide into subcategories, but even so the discrepancy between category names and selection of articles is too severe. It is understandable that “72 Ideology” would not be covered in a single article. After all, the material that would have to be dealt with is too great and too vague. Thus it is perhaps only natural that the category should have been narrowed to “Philosophy” and dealt with in a Long Article. However, “Philosophy” is also one of the “711 Sciences of the Humanities”, so it would be a good idea to include a clarification of the relationship between “Ideology” and “Philosophy” in the explanation of the classification categories.

A reading of the article “Philosophy” reveals that the basic principle of dealing with Korean culture has been violated, and instead that Western philosophy is introduced at length, and the article tells no more than the introduction of Western philosophy to Korea. It seems the writer was under the misconception that he was to write a history of Western philosophy, or else falsely concluded that there was no philosophy in Korea before the advent of Western philosophy, based on the usage of the term “Ch’ŏrhak” as a translation for a Western word. This article should be replaced in the very first supplementary edition with a comprehensive history of Korean philosophy, from ancient times to modern. The seven page article on “Sung’ Confucianism (Sŏngni-hak)” is well written. This should actually come under the heading of “Philosophy”. By contrast to “Philosophy”, “Religion” is not treated as a single all-encompassing category, but includes everything from “73 Folk Beliefs” to “78 Christianity and Other Foreign Religions Introduced Since the Pre-modern Period”, and is thoroughly dealt with in a 12.2. page well-written article.

5. General Survey Articles

Looking at the long, general survey articles each covering one historical period in “3 History”, the 29.6 page “Koryŏ” is written consistently, by a single writer. The 51.3 page “Chosŏn” is divided into two periods before and after 1864, each treated in an article by a different writer. This is because the former was considered “36 Chosŏn Period” and the latter “37 Pre-modern Period”. However, in the article itself there is no explanation that it was divided in this way. The historical position of the Chosŏn Period should have been discussed, the division into historical periods explained, and the basis for dividing the period between two writers made clear in the introductory remarks. The 43.1 page “Republic of Korea” was not covered chronologically, but divided according to areas including politics, economics,
society, and culture. Each area was then further divided, each section being written by a different writer. Thus this article is not in balance with the general survey articles up through “Chosön,” and there is much duplication of the material in the sections “Politics”, “Economics”, and “Society”. For the reader to be able to gain a consistent understanding of the flow of history from reading the general survey articles in order, these articles must maintain a consistent narrative style showing the larger picture of historical change and development.

Another Long Article giving a general survey of the Modern Period is the 32 page “North Korea”, and there are many inconsistencies with the article “Republic of Korea”. I will not raise issue with the fact that even in the “Classification Table of Korean Culture” the name “Democratic People’s Republic of Korea” is not used, but I cannot overlook the difference in the narrative styles of “Republic of Korea” and “North Korea”. The attitude of “Republic of Korea” is one of overall analysis, whereas “North Korea” deals mainly with isolated facts. This seems at first like an appropriate choice, but the reason for it lies in the fact that information about the Republic of Korea is dealt with in detail in many other articles, but information regarding North Korea was all gathered into this one article. The effect is something like a summary of a small encyclopedia on North Korea. In expanded and revised editions it will be necessary to treat facts regarding both North and South according to the same principles.

In addition to the article “Republic of Korea”, there is another article entitled “Korea”, which at 66 pages is too long compared to the other articles. The article is a compilation of all sorts of facts regarding Korea throughout history. There are sections including “General Remarks”, “Location and Territory”, “Natural Environment”, “Human Environment”, “History” and “Culture”. As it is an article that is itself not anywhere on the “Classification Table of Korean Culture”, but rather generally covers all the categories on it, and is in fact a sort of summary of the entire Encyclopedia of Korean Culture, one wonders if such an article is really necessary. The material covered is virtually the same as that is “The Korean People”, but the fact that the writers and narrative style are different makes it seem to include unique areas.

In the individual articles there is some information that is not adequately treated so the number of individual articles should be increased to make up for this. On the “Classification Table of Korean Culture”, there is a category called “13 Characteristics of Korean Culture”, which is divided into “131 Ethnic Culture Theory” and “132 Individual Characteristics”. Individual characteristics were dealt with in several articles, but overall characteristics were not made into an article. We
should consider organizing recent theories on Korean cultural characteristics in an article called "Characteristics of Korean Culture" or "Theory of Cultural Characteristics" to take the place of "Korea".

The General Survey Articles include those outlining a particular historical period and those introducing a particular geographical region. Special articles have been included under the heading "2 Territory" dealing in detail with the provinces ("do") and counties ("gun") of Korea. However, there is discrepancy in the narrative style of these two kinds of articles. For example, the article "Kangwon-do" is 9.7 pages, and a single writer has written with consistency on the topics "General", "History", "Natural Environment", "Human Environment", "Industry", "Transportation", "Local Development", and "Culture & Tourism". "Chŏngsŏn-gun", on the other hand, is 10.2 pages long, and seven writers participated in the article, dividing it initially into "General", "Natural Environment", "History", "Historical Sites & Relics", "Education & Culture", "Folk Customs", "Folk Tales & Folk Songs", "Industry & Transportation", "Tourism", and "Towns", and then into even further subdivisions.

It is appropriate that the articles on counties should be longer and more detailed than those on provinces, and that the material should be covered by several different writers from different angles. It is proper that whereas articles on provinces need only general information, the articles on counties should introduce local culture in detail. If provinces were covered in detail from different angles, they would become so long as to be cumbersome. Counties are more important, both for the preservation and for the understanding of local culture. It is also appropriate that towns were not given separate articles, but were included in the articles on counties, as the towns are not unique enough to be considered outside the context of the county in which they lie.

Even so, having the articles on provinces written by a single person, and the ones on counties divided up between several writers is going too far in both directions. It seems to me that it would be more appropriate if the articles on provinces were done by around three writers, and the ones on counties by around five. This is not to suggest that the length of the county articles should be decreased. In the old books on local geography (Ŭpchi), there were always sections on the famous people of the area, and even a section called "Cheyŏng" introducing poems about the region. Following this tradition, short biographies of local historical figures, as well as literary and artistic works written in or about the region would make these articles even more interesting.

For instance, in "Chŏngsŏn-gun" there is explanation of Chŏngsŏn Arari, but it
is too short. The article on Kangjin-gun mentions Chŏng Yag-yong in the introduction of the historical site “Tasan Ch’odang”, but there is not enough room to print the poem “T’umjin Farmers’ Song” that he wrote about the farmers’ life while in exile there. In Yongbyŏn-gun the absence of a section introducing the scenery and legends regarding Yaksan Tongdae, and of an overview of how it has been treated in literary works up to and including Kim So-wol’s “Chindallaek-kot” leave the article incomplete. I think that the writers of these county articles should strive not for consistency, but to emphasize and make known the interesting and unusual facts about each region.

An even bigger problem with the articles on provinces and counties is the very rough treatment given to the current conditions in locales that today are included in North Korea. Northern Kangwon-do and northern counties like Yongbyŏn-gun are described the way they were before 1945, making for a serious imbalance with the articles on the provinces and counties of the South. In future supplementary work, it will be necessary to make full use of Northern materials, and if possible to employ writers from over there, to make the contents more complete. Now that an era of reconciliation and cultural exchange has begun, it is possible to cover the culture of both North and South. In the revised editions, we must make active use of these conditions, and accomplish cultural “reunification”.

6. Long Articles

There are many different kinds of Long Articles. Some deal with mountains and rivers such as Paekdu-san and Han-gang, which have particularly deep connections with Korean history and lifestyle, and to which have been attributed profound meaning. Others cover seasons such as “Spring” and “Summer”, or living things such as “Pine” and “Cow”, examining them from different angles. Topics such as “the Confucian Scholar”, “Reading”, “Kohyang (Hometown)”, “Games”, “Laughter”, and “Pok (Blessing)” were treated at length because they are considered to encapsulate the characteristics of Korean culture. Among these topics, some should be looked at from different angles by several different writers, while others should be written on uniformly by a single writer.

In the 31.6 page “Han-gang”, the various subtopics of “General”, “River Basin & Natural Features”, “History & Cultural Historical Sites”, “Han-gang in Literature and Art”, “Resources & Utilization”, and “Present State & Outlook” were each covered by a different specialist. “River Basin & Natural Features” was divided into “Geology & Topography”, “Climate”, and “Ecology”, each by a different writer,
“History” and “Cultural Historical Sites” were dealt with separately, as were “Han-gang in Literature” and “Han-gang in Art”. Thus all aspects of the river came to light, and it is possible to find out in detail what significance the Han-gang has in Korean culture and history.

As “Spring” is a natural season, it does not at first seem like a necessary topic to cover, but the 8.5 page article explains accurately from several different angles what significance the Korean spring has for Koreans, and thus gives an excellent picture of one aspect of Korean culture. “Climate”, “Plants & Animals”, “Lunar New Year’s Customs”, and “Spring in Works of Art” were each covered by an expert scholar in the field, and the last of these, also the longest, was further divided into literature, music, and the visual arts, giving many examples from each.

The 16.3 page article on pine trees was written by a single writer, but explains not only the tree itself, but also its use in everyday life and its significance in artistic creation. It demonstrates persuasively with several examples that the pine is the tree that best symbolizes the Korean spirit. This kind of article shows clearly Korean’s attitude towards nature.

It is only natural that the 16.2 page article on “The Confucian Scholar” be written by a single person. After all, this topic is one that demands uniform understanding rather than a multi-angled explanation of the facts. The article begins by discussing the concept of the Confucian scholar, proceeds to examine the history of the Confucian scholar up to the Chosŏn Period, then, after examining the life, activities, and mental world of the typical Chosŏn Period Confucian scholar, critiques the new enlightenment of the scholars from the sirhak Period to the Japanese occupation, and concludes by discussing the modern significance of the scholarly spirit. One may say that the article proves the soundness of the view that the scholarly spirit is one of the most valuable of traditional Korean spirits, and calls for the progressive continuation of the scholarly spirit. However, the author took pains to give an objective narration based on facts, rather than merely arguing for his own opinion.

A related article is the 5.2 page article on “Reading”, for a Confucian scholar can be defined as ‘someone who reads’. The article “Reading” does not merely explain the meaning of the word. The author focused on setting forth, based on facts, the significance that books and the activity of reading holds in Korean culture, and outlined reading methods and postures, spirit and effectiveness, as well as examining changes in reading through history. It is a good example of an article that looks at today’s situation from of continuation of traditional culture.

It is difficult to write objectively on such a topic as “Kohyang (Hometown).” If
one were to be true to the facts, this is not an article to be included in an encyclopedia. However, as Koreans' special fondness towards their hometowns occupies an important part of the secret, inner culture of Korea, it must not be omitted. In order to gain an in-depth understanding of ethnic culture, it is necessary to transcend the narrow customary positivist view of history, and penetrate to the secret inner areas. If one is to follow the precedent of Oju yŏnmun changjŏn san'go of considering overall evaluation and analysis to be precious, rather than be satisfied with the recording of facts as in Ch'angbo munhŏn pigo, than one has no choice but to attempt a 'logical demonstration of proof regarding "Kohyang". Due to the lack of academic research on this topic, however, the difficulty arose of having to use a temporary measure. An inspection of the 163 page article reveals that, while it can by no means be called satisfactory, it grasps fairly persuasively the process by which thoughts and feelings towards the hometown were formed and have changed, as well as providing a tolerable analysis of the important factors making up a "hometown". It also shows the seriousness and immediacy of the pain experienced by those who have been separated from their hometowns due to the north-south division of the country following the Korean War.

7. Conceptual Articles

In the regular-length articles (as opposed to the Long Articles), it was possible to write mainly based on the facts, especially in the case of place, people, historical sites, and books whose identity is clear and uncontested. Although the repeated listing of similar facts in the same way may be a little dry, it is a trustworthy reference for the verification of facts. In order to keep the articles on famous persons from getting too long, the subjects were chosen according to specified degrees of importance, but the encyclopedia functions as a good biographical dictionary. The effort expended to introduce every last old written work of every kind, including literary collections (munjip) and Korean language novels, is noteworthy. However, the selection of articles on concepts and thoughts can hardly be called properly done, and it is doubtful whether the writing method and contents are appropriate. As this point is particularly troublesome, it is necessary to examine it separately

The special eight-page article on "Maŭm (‘mind, heart’)") includes a brief introduction, and the subtopics "Maŭm in Everyday Language", "Buddhism and Maŭm", "Confucianism and Maŭm", and "Conclusion". The article examines in detail how consciousness of the Maŭm developed, in conjunction with the historical
development of Korean thought, making pointed use of a wide variety of materials. It explains the relationship of the closely intertwined concepts of "māum-chari", "māum-kyŏl", and "māum-ssi", and proceeds to examine the process of historical change of the center of debate from Sŏngjŏng to Ch'ŏn-gi (Natural Mind Given by Heaven) to the Māum of the Common People, as connected to overall changes in cultural consciousness. It is a good example of an article clarifying outstandingly well a characteristic of Korean culture via an abstract concept. However, the articles which had to be divided into sub-topics are for the most part significantly flawed, leaning towards introducing concepts of Chinese origin, and showing no desire to analyze the characteristics of Korean thought along with cultural aspects.

There is no article on Sŏngjŏng, only one on Sŏngjŏng-ron, and this takes up only 0.7 pages, most of which is devoted to explanations of Chinese origin. There is no attempt to clarify how debate regarding Sŏngjŏng developed in Korean philosophical history, or what its significance is. There is a separate 0.3 page article by a different author on "The Nature and Function of Sŏngjŏng", but this too mainly introduces a debate that took place in China. It is my view that an extremely important issue has been dealt with too lightly and in an inappropriate way, and that the unnecessary division has rendered both articles empty of content.

Sadan ch'iljŏng, an area under the heading of Sŏng-ron, is explained in relative detail, divided into "Introduction", "Zhu Xi's Theory", "Yi Hwang's Theory", "Yi I's Theory", and "Significance in the History of Thought" over 1.6 pages. The conclusion that the thought types of Yi Hwang's idealism and Yi I's realism were formed in the debate over Sadan-ch'iljŏng is appropriate for generalizing the understanding of philosophical history. However, the article on Inshm doshm soh, which is closely related to this, is long at 1.7 pages, includes no subtitles, deals with the Chinese origins in more detail than the Korean debate, adds the author's interpretation involving Western philosophy, and concludes with the argument that we need to develop the "contemplative mind" (tosum) even in this age of scientific advancement. The author neglected his duty to record the facts regarding the debate over Inshm doshm, skipped over the work of investigating what significance philosophical debate had on the thought and culture of the time, and hastened to deliver his own modern evaluation.

The fact that related articles differ so much in length, organization, and content is a problem. However, they have common the fact that they introduce briefly only theories at the stage of Yi Hwang and Yi I, failing to even mention the new progress in philosophical history achieved in the Late Chosŏn Period. A possible excuse for this might be that such topics in Late Chosŏn thought such as the debate over
whether humans and animals are of the same nature (Inmulsong Tongiron) are treated in separate articles, but even so the early and late stages of Sŏngjong-ron should have been covered comprehensively. The connection of issues and the historical development of thought should have been made clearer in individual articles as well. In the future, we will have to accept and use such terminology as Lim Sŏng-ju's "Creative Drive" (Saengi) and Ch'oe Han-qi's "Changing, Moving Energy" (Unhwaajigi), introduced along with new developments in philosophical thought, and we must also discuss the cultural implications thereof.

The Conceptual Articles vital to understanding the cultural phenomena surrounding philosophy cannot be said to be well chosen or written either. None of the concepts "Chŏng", "Injŏng", or the word implying the lack of these "Muyŏng", even more important in literature, are treated in an article, and thus an important aspect of attitude an interpersonal relationships has been overlooked. "Ch'ŏn'gi" ('Natural Mind Given by Heaven'), which is the central concept necessary to understand the changes in literary thought in the Late Chosŏn Period, and which was considered vital in the discussion of Malam, was also not taken as an independent article. Because of this, it is difficult to evaluate the changes in the understanding of humanity that took place in the Late Chosŏn Period not only from a philosophical, but also from a literary viewpoint.

The fact that "Divinities" (Shinmyŏng) was considered an important concept regarding attitude and was given a relatively long article is good in itself, even though it creates an imbalance with other articles. This is a very difficult concept to grasp while sticking to a mere recording of facts, so the writer's task must not have been an easy one. However, what he set forth is his own opinion, based on a rather unusual point of view. In addition, the use of geometrical graphs for explanation is too different from the other articles.

8. The Task of Organizing the Terminology of Korean Culture

Articles regarding thought are by nature difficult to set in order neatly, and this difficulty is compounded by the lack of satisfactory research in these areas. The lesson we should learn is that Korean Studies should not settle complacently for positivistic study based on the investigation of facts, but should strive to elucidate the thought patterns of the Korean people. For this purpose it is necessary to concentrate our efforts on philosophy, and to take the comprehensive view of philosophical thought as a part of wider cultural phenomena. We must strive to organize even the smallest technical terms, grasping soundly their origin, meaning,
and historical change. The people in the "Preface" not to set forth abstract concepts, but to recognize culture through concrete evidence, based on the view that culture is a heritage and its modern forms, was a measure based on the conditions of the time, and will have to be formally revised next time.

We must set to work on building the necessary foundation for making the *Encyclopedia of Korean Culture* an equally valuable 'Dictionary of Korean Cultural Terminology'. It is now time to bring back to life the view that a complete listing of all old written works should precede the making of a cultural encyclopedia. To the results of that work, we should add the accomplishments of recent research, issue terminology dictionaries for the various fields individually, and then bring everything together again. Because this work has not been done yet, even dictionaries of the Korean language do not accurately show the accumulation of Korean culture. A plan has been announced to make a large Korean language dictionary, but it is dubious how much terminology reflecting the growth of thought will be sought out and satisfactorily defined. It is likely that traces of the development of new thought by the redefinition of Sino-Korean words by scholars writing in classical Chinese will be considered to be outside the scope of a Korean language dictionary, and therefore continue to be ignored.

It is important that we break from the incorrect conventions of the past, and accomplish both an overall plan and the detailed work of creating an organic connection between Korean dictionary and encyclopedia, using a 'Dictionary of Korean Cultural Terminology' as the means to reach this goal. It will be necessary for the Academy of Korean Studies to take a leading role in this kind of research. Today our field must continue more widely the tradition of Korean culture, and continue even more fruitful labor for the sake domestically of raising national consciousness, and internationally of making a positive contribution to the understanding of the universality of world culture, transcending the idea of Western supremacy. The Academy of Korean studies should now once again prove that it is the Mecca of Korean studies, make double use of the advantageous conditions under which it has produced the *Encyclopedia of Korean Culture* not for the sake of profit but as an academic endeavor, and put forth a truly outstanding revised edition. For this purpose it will be necessary to pursue the research work and the compilation work in close connection with one another.

(Translated by David Baxter, Seoul National University)
GLOSSARY

Akhak kwebŏm 樂學軌範
Cheyŏng 題詠
Chibong yusŏl 芝峰類説
Chip’yŏnjŏn 集賢殿
Ch’oe Han-gi 催漢綺
Chŏng Yag-yong 丁若鏞
Ch’ŏngbo munkŏn bigo 增補文獻備考
Inmulsong tongi-rong 人物性 同異論
Inshim doshim-sŏl 人心道心説
Kim So-wol 金素月
Koryŏsa 高麗史
Lim Sŏng-ju 任聖周
Oju yŏnmun jangjŏn san’go 五州衍文長箋散稿
pyŏnjŏng sŏl 辨證説
sadan ch’iljŏng 四端七情
Samguk sagi 三國史記
Sirhak 實學
Sŏngho saesŏl 星湖僑説
Tasan Ch’odang 茶山草堂
Tongguk t’onggam 東國通鑑
Tonggukyŏji sŏngnam 東國輿地勝覽
Tongguk munhŏn bigo 東國文獻備考
Tongmunson 東文選
Uplchi 邑誌
Yi Ik 李翼
Yi Kyu-gyŏng 李圭景
Yi Su-gwang 李曙光
Yi Hwang 李漢
Yi 一 李珥