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UNESCO Memory of the World Regional Committee for Asia and the Pacific  
(MOWCAP)

### Nomination form

Memory of the World Asia Pacific Regional Register (revised January 2022)

**(Nominations must be received by 15 June 2022 for consideration for inscription in 2022)**

Office Use Only	
ID code:	Item or collection short title:
Institution / Owner:	Country or countries

### Introduction

Information on the Memory of the World Asia Pacific Regional Programme can be found at [www.mowcapunesco.org](http://www.mowcapunesco.org)

This form should be completed to nominate documentary heritage to the Memory of the World Asia Pacific Regional Register. It sets out the range of information needed. Nominations should be expressed in clear concise language, A maximum of about twenty A4 pages is usually sufficient.

Before you start filling in the nomination form you need to read the Memory of the World Asia Pacific Regional Register Process document available on the MOWCAP website ([www.mowcapunesco.org](http://www.mowcapunesco.org)).

Completed nomination forms must be submitted to the MOWCAP Secretary-General through the relevant National Commission/s (which are representatives of UNESCO

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Member States) or with a letter of support from the relevant National Commission/s or in the absence of a National Commission, the relevant government body in charge of relations with UNESCO, involving, if one exists, the relevant National MoW Committee. The completed form should be sent by email to [MOWCAPinfo@gmail.com](mailto:MOWCAPinfo@gmail.com). The Secretary General will confirm receipt of nominations by email.

Contact the Secretary-General at [MOWCAPinfo@gmail.com](mailto:MOWCAPinfo@gmail.com) if you need to provide large files such as those for moving images.

No material will be returned. All nomination documents will be retained as part of the MOWCAP Archive.

There is a [contact form](#) on the website which should be used if you have any questions. **Please make sure to keep a copy of your nomination form for your records and in case the MOWCAP Secretary-General needs to contact you.**

**Note 1:** The title and a short description of all nomination forms accepted for assessment will be put on the MOWCAP website prior to a decision being made about whether or not they will be inscribed on the register. The MOWCAP Secretary-General will provide copies of admissible nomination forms on request.

**Note 2:** If inscribed, the nomination form will be posted on the MOWCAP website with the personal details of expert referees removed.

**Note 3:** Please carefully read Section D of the [Memory of the World Asia Pacific Regional Register Process](#) document on Admissibility before starting to fill in the form.

Kim Kwibae  
Chair, MOWCAP

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Memory of the World Asia Pacific Regional Register Nomination Form

**1 Title of Documentary Heritage Item or Collection (max 10 words)**

*Naebang-gasa: Song of the Inner Chambers*

**2 Summary (max 200 words)**

*Naebang-gasa* is a representative female literary genre of Korea. The nominated item is a collection of 347 *naebang-gasa* works created, recited, and recorded by Korean women from 1794 to the late 1960s. Those works were produced in diverse formats including individual single-leaf documents, scrolls, and a codex.

The nominated item serves as rare evidence showing that women engaged in an independent activity from the 18th to mid-20th centuries in East Asia. Women could independently express their own thoughts through *naebang-gasa* despite the dominance of patriarchy across East Asia at the time. Among the thoughts delivered through the nominated item include ideas women had about historic events that East Asia underwent in the 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

In addition, the nominated item demonstrates the process in which a new writing system is established as the official script of a social group. *Naebang-gasa* works were all written in the Korean alphabet, or *Hangeul*, a writing system coming with clearly stated ideas behind its creation. The nominated item testifies to the birth of a new literary genre fully reflecting specific characteristics of the Korean language. The nominated item contributes to understanding how a new writing system is utilized before obtaining the status of official script.

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### 3 Nominator/s Contact details

#### 3.1 Name of nominator/s (person/s or organisation/s)

Korean Studies Institute (KSI)  
National Hangeul Museum (NHM)

#### 3.2 Relationship to the nominated documentary heritage

Korean Studies Institute: KSI is custodian of 221 pieces of the documentary heritage being nominated. KSI is a research institute for the conservation, management, and research of the documentary heritage owned by private collectors.

National Hangeul Museum: NHM is a national museum and holds 126 pieces of the documentary heritage being nominated in its collection.

#### 3.3 Contact person/s

Chong Jong-Sup, President of KSI  
Hwang Jun-Seok, Director of NHM

#### 3.4 Contact details

Name Lee Sang-ho (KSI)	Address KSI, 1997, Toegye-ro, Andong-si, Gyeongsangbuk-do
Telephone 054)851-0790	Email sookbi@koreastudy.or.kr
Name Seo Ju-yeon (NHM)	Address NHM, 139, Seobinggo-ro, Yongsan-gu, Seoul
Telephone 02)2124-6326	Email sohgy721@korea.kr

### 4 Declaration of Authority

I certify that I/we have the authority to nominate the documentary heritage described in this document to the Asia Pacific Regional Memory of the World Register. All nominators must sign here. (A signed support letter from the nominators' National Commissions is required when the nomination is from two or more Member States. See Section J in the Process document for more details)

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Name  -Chong Jong-Sup, -Hwang Jun-Seok	Position  - President of the Korean Studies Institute (KSI) -Director of National Hangeul Museum(NHM)
Address  -KSI, 1997, Toegye-ro, Andong-si, Gyeongsangbuk-do - NHM, 139, Seobinggo-ro, Yongsan-gu, Seoul	Email  sookbi@koreastudy.or.kr sohjy721@korea.kr

Signature/s of nominator/s...




## 5 Legal Information

### 5.1 Owner/s of the documentary heritage (name and contact details)

Details of the owners are submitted as an appendix (Appendix 1. List of *naebang-gasa* owners)

Name	Address
Telephone	Email

### 5.2 Custodian/s of the documentary heritage (name and contact details if different from the owner/s)

Name Korean Studies Institute (KSI)	Address KSI, 1997, Toegye-ro, Andong-si, Gyeongsangbuk-do
Telephone 054-851-0790	Email sookbi@koreastudy.or.kr

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Name National Hangeul Museum (NHM)	Address NHM, 139, Seobinggo-ro, Yongsan-gu, Seoul
Telephone 02-2124-6326	Email sohgy@korea.kr

Please note: Written permission for nomination of this item from the Owners and/or Custodian/s if different from the nominator **must be attached** to this Nomination Form.

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### 5.3 Legal status

Among the collection being nominated, legal and administrative responsibilities for 221 pieces of *naebang-gasa* under KSI custodianship lie with KSI. The authority for preservation and management of these documents is vested in KSI by the owners, and the KSI submits this nomination by its authority delegated thereto over management and research and discovering of value of heritage. (Appendix 2: Written permission to Use the Document Heritage by the Custodial Institution)

Among the collection being nominated, legal and administrative responsibilities for 126 pieces of *naebang-gasa* in the collection of NHM lie with NHM. NHM has full ownership rights to these documents.

### 5.4 Accessibility

All of the 347 works of the nominated item are original manuscripts, and access to the works by the general public is subject to heavy restrictions to prevent damage to the works according to management criteria of the institute that manages them. However, when requested by researchers for research needs, the originals are made available to them in conditions where their preservability is secured to the maximum. To provide the general public with information on the nominated item, publications with photos of original manuscripts and text explaining their values are made available to the general public. (Appendix 3: Covers of *naebang-gasa* publications)

KSI and NHM established their own *naebang-gasa* archives to make the 347 works accessible in English and Korean. The archives are accessible at the following websites:

- Korean website: <https://naebang-gasa.ugyo.net/kr/index.do>
- English website: <https://naebang-gasa.ugyo.net/en/index.do>

All of the works in the nomination are of *hanji* (traditional Korean paper). They are in the form of individual documents, scrolls as long as 10 to 20 meters, and an extensive codex. Because only experts can handle them properly, KSI and NHM made the nominated item available online and through duplicated materials, and they hold exhibitions about the works at museums. Thus, researchers have ready access to the works, and the general public can appreciate the values of the works.

### 5.5 Copyright status

Management and collection of the nominated item are the responsibility of KSI and NHM, and they hold the appertaining copyrights.

## 6 Details of the Nominated Documentary Heritage

### 6.1 Exact title of the documentary heritage

**Title:** *Naebang-gasa: Song of the Inner Chambers*

Nominating institutions: KSI (221 pieces)/ NHM (126 pieces)

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## 6.2 Type of documentary heritage

The nominated documentary heritage is a collection of original manuscripts recorded on *hanji* (traditional Korean paper) in the form of individual documents, scrolls, and a codex.

## 6.3 Catalogue or registration details

347 pieces in the collection and management of KSI or NHM

- 221 pieces vested in KSI by 69 family clans and depositors to KSI
- 126 pieces in the collection of NHM

Detailed information on the 347 pieces is submitted as an appendix (Appendix 4. List of Songs included in the nominated item. The 347 works can be categorized as below.

Category	Content	Number of works included	Date of production	
			18–19c	20c
Gyenyega (Song for Educating Women)	Songs instructing women about social rules	45	17	28
Gihaengga (Travel Song)	Songs about travel and the emotions felt through the journey	35	10	25
Sachinga (Song of Missing Parents)	Songs where a woman who has left her hometown for marriage or for other reasons misses her parents back home	52	12	40
Hwajeonga (Floral Rice Cake Song)	Songs to express feelings of happiness and excitement during a spring picnic, where women entertain themselves with various activities such as the <i>yutnori</i> game and floral rice cake-making	76	10	66
Hoegoga (Song of Reflection)	Songs where an old woman reflects on her life with a sense of resentment and self-compassion	47	8	39
Songchukga (Song of Celebration)	Songs to celebrate the sixtieth or seventieth birthday of a parent while praying for his/her longevity and the family's health and prosperity	34	7	27
Others	Male-created works that are copied out by hand by women; works from other genres of song that are re-created into <i>naebang-gasa</i> by women	58	16	42
<b>Total</b>		<b>347</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>267</b>

## 6.4 Images of the documentary heritage.

Digital images of the documentary heritage are attached to this nomination form.



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(Appendix 5. 4 photographs of original manuscripts of *naebang-gasa*)

### 6.5 History/Origin/Background/Provenance

The 347 *naebang-gasa* works comprising the nominated item are songs written from 1794 to the late 1960s, spanning the late period of the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1910) and several decades after the fall of the dynasty. The earliest example of *naebang-gasa* included in the nomination is *Ssangbyeokga* (1794). In the 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries, East Asia was at a historical turning point amid the rapid change throughout the world. Through the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, Korea remained a very patriarchal conservative society. The country began to undergo radical changes from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century through the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century: a break from tradition caused by the forced opening of ports and pursuit of enlightenment, the loss of sovereignty and 35 years of colonial rule, and national liberation in 1945 and the subsequent occurrence of civil war known as the Korean War. All these changes, brought about under the influence of imperialism, took place in a short period of time in Korea. Their effects continued to be in force until the late 1960s, right before Korea started to pursue industrialization and develop democracy. Despite such historic reforms and change, the patriarchal, feudalist mentality that ruled East Asia in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries remained at the heart of Korean culture until the end of the 1960s. Korean women in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century to the 1960s endured under both the patriarchy and dramatic historical reforms. The nominated item represents the voices of women who lived through this period.

The first *naebang-gasa* pieces were composed in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, and they became established as a genre of literature in the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Confucianism and patriarchy dominated society in Korea like in other countries in East Asia. During the Joseon Dynasty, it was difficult even for upper-class women to pursue education and participate in public life. Unlike men, very few were allowed to learn to read or write. The official writing system of Joseon was Chinese characters, the writing and reading of which were almost monopolized by men.

Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, most *naebang-gasa* works were composed in Gyeongsangbuk-do province, a place with very conservative Confucian traditions that placed great focus on self-cultivation. The network of local community was based on ties among men who studied at the same schools and ties between families forged through marriages. The role of women, regardless of their social class, was limited to raising children and carrying on the family name by giving birth. Until the 18<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, women in Gyeongsangbuk-do had virtually no rights to engage in any activities outside of homemaking and raising children. Women were socially isolated, and their situation remained almost entirely unchanged until the country began to pursue industrialization and democratization in the late 1960s. *Naebang-gasa* was created as a literary genre by women and for women during this period and was virtually women's only means of expression.

*Naebang-gasa* was born as a means to educate women in Confucian ideology. *Naebang-gasa* was written in the Korean alphabet, which was much easier to learn than Chinese characters, and was gradually recognized for having facilitated Neo-Confucian social

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reform. It was for that reason that women's collective creation of *naebang-gasa* was permitted. Many of early *naebang-gasa* works were of the *gyenyeoga* type, that is, songs to educate women.

If songs of the *gyenyeoga* type triggered creation of *naebang-gasa*, women later expanded its scope into a wide range of subjects through which they could better express their voices about their status in society. This was a manifestation of the passion of female authors to participate in literature, which had been the exclusive province of men, and their determination to become recognized as the equals of men. Because the Korean alphabet was relatively easy to learn, the language helped female authors involved in writing *naebang-gasa*. In turn, their activities made them aware of their passion and determination. Women gained self-consciousness and awareness that they, too, were human beings equally deserving of respect as men. *Naebang-gasa* reflected women's position in society more and more, and the subjects of *naebang-gasa* expanded to laments and reminiscences about living as a woman, the pride of a woman's clan, and a woman's new experiences by travelling. Songs that lamented their fate, in particular, expressed women's critical views on the social order. It can be said that *naebang-gasa* is a record of women's views towards the male-dominated society of East Asia and efforts of women to overcome the gender inequality.

In the earlier half of 20<sup>th</sup> century, Korea underwent rapid social changes. In addition to being autobiographical, works of *naebang-gasa* composed during this period increasingly addressed the awareness of women towards society. It expresses women's own views on enlightenment, critique of imperialism, lamentation over the hard realities of life in Korea, and longing for independence. The harsh reality of wives having to shoulder burdens as the single heads of household when husbands left home to join the independence movement, the hardships that wives had to endure while living in exile, women missing relatives and friends who left home for exile, the harshness of colonial rule, and the like were communicated in the most direct, heart-felt way in the lyrics. The writing also expressed the determination of female authors to preserve and uphold tradition, while sharing critical views over women who accepted rapid westernization and abandoned tradition. Some *naebang-gasa* pieces were commentaries on the rules and precepts about the right way for women to live and longing for personal independence. As vehicles of the voices of women who went through hard times along with men, *naebang-gasa* recorded women's own historical views and their determination to face the challenges of their time.

Because *naebang-gasa* was created mostly by women in the part of Korea with distinctly strong conservative traditions, they could not necessarily put their own names to their works and engage independently in creating and enjoying them. This explains why *naebang-gasa* was developed as a group activity for women. Women wrote *naebang-gasa* in trochaic tetrameter, which was easy to recite and enabled many more women to participate. At the same time, women gradually made the content of *naebang-gasa* complete through recitation of the lyrics and through the twisting of the original meaning intrinsic to the transcription process. The twists in meanings expressed in

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diverse transcribed copies evidence the determination of female authors to creative writing to address the problems of the day from a new perspective. Unlike a literary work created by individual writers, *naebang-gasa* is a community-based collective activity, created by a group of women together and enjoyed through recitation and transcribing. This made *naebang-gasa* a truly unique literary genre.

*Naebang-gasa* documents were originally held by individual female creators. These documents were preserved as part of familial documentary heritage. The acceleration of urbanization and industrialization from the 1970s, however, gradually made it difficult to maintain these documents in individual households. In response to this, institutionalized efforts were launched in the 2000s by the Korean Studies Institute and the National Hangeul Museum to preserve these important documents. *Naebang-gasa* documents were donated or entrusted to these institutions, which are equipped with professional knowledge and scientific equipment for the preservation of documentary heritage. These documents handed over to these institutions through donations or entrustments form the current nomination.

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**6.7 Names, qualifications and contact details of experts**

Provide the details of three to six independent experts on the values and provenance of the documentary heritage who may be contacted by MOWCAP for further information on your nomination. Note that the Register Sub Committee (RSC) may also contact other experts.

The names and contact details of your referees will not be publicly disclosed by MOWCAP nor disclosed without their permission to any third party.

Name  ██████████	Qualifications  Professor ██████████ Uiduk University	██████████ Uiduk University ██████████ ██████████ ██████████ ██████████
Name  ██████████	Qualifications  Professor, Dpt. Of Korean Language and Literature,	██████████ Kyungpook Nat'l Universi ██████████ ██████████ ██████████ ██████████

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	Kyungpook Nat'l University	
Name [Redacted]	Qualifications Professor, Dpt. Of Korean Language and Literature, Changwon Nat'l University	Address: Changwon Nat'l University, [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted]

I certify that the above named experts have given their written permission for their names and contact details to be used in connection with this nomination to the Memory of the World Asia Pacific Regional Register.

Signature

Full name (Please PRINT)

Chong Jong-sup, Hwang Joon-suk

Date: June 15, 2022

**7 Authenticity and Integrity**

**7.1 Authenticity and Integrity**

The nominated *naebang-gasa* consists of 221 works under the custodianship of KSI and 126 works in the collection of NHM. They were created and transcribed from 1794 to the late 1960s. Due to the means by which works of *naebang-gasa* were created—recitation, transcription, and twisting of meanings—the authorship and time of writing of many works are difficult to determine. A large number of new works of *naebang-gasa* have been created since the 1990s. Even if these later *naebang-gasa* works are recognized on their own merits, it is difficult to determine their authenticity. The nominated item only includes those *naebang-gasa* works that were produced before the late 1960s. Their date of creation has been confirmed based on the history of holding families, records written on the works, or through academic research.

Since documents prove the value of *naebang-gasa* as documentary heritage, the nominated item is of great significance in that it represents the value of all *naebang-gasa*

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works, including those that could not be included in the nomination.

The nominated documents are outcomes of cultural activities by women as a group, and they are of diverse forms, such as single-leaf documents, scrolls, and a codex, and exhibit individual differences in size within each form. The formal uniqueness of each of the 347 documents attests to its authenticity. Depending on the length of the songs and the number of songs to be shared with other women, choices were made regarding the form and size. The nominated item consists of all original transcriptions done by women themselves with a brush. Although the nomination includes many works with similar content that came into being in the reproduction process of recitation and transcription, this is also an important characteristic that reveals the value of *naebang-gasa*.



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## 8 Primary criteria: Regional Significance

### 8.1 Historical Significance

The nominated item is **a proof of women’s collective activities in patriarchal East Asian society** in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Most societies in premodern East Asia were patriarchal, and it was difficult for women to make their voices heard. Under such circumstances, some Korean women wanted to be equal to men in the realm of writing, which led to creation of *naebang-gasa*, a form of literature written in the Korean alphabet, *Hangeul*, which could be learned in a relatively short time. Korean women told and shared their stories through this women’s literary genre, expressing their feelings and thoughts in *Hangeul*, a writing system then used almost exclusively by women. Women created and enjoyed *naebang-gasa* along with other women through citation and transcription, and in this process *naebang-gasa* was established as an independent activity of women as a social group, despite the fact that the larger culture was very male-dominated. This is why *naebang-gasa* can serve as proof of women’s independence that existed in the male-dominated cultures of East Asian countries. Although not as powerful or revolutionary as women’s rights movements that emerged in the 19<sup>th</sup> -20<sup>th</sup> centuries with the West at the center, *naebang-gasa* explicitly shows that women engaged in their own independent group activities in East Asia at the time.

*Naebang-gasa* is documentary heritage that recorded **women’s social awareness during the global turning point** experienced by East Asian countries in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As Korea was one of the last countries to open its ports to imperial powers, it suffered dramatic change in a very short period. It suffered imposition of enlightenment thinking, destruction of tradition, loss of sovereignty, and the Korean War in the span of several decades. Women during this time expressed their own worries and thoughts about the times and society via *naebang-gasa*. In their own way, they expressed thoughts on imperialism and the people’s desire to regain their sovereignty, the hardships women endured in exile, the historical obligations they took on as women, and their sufferings after sending their men off to fight in the independence movement. *Naebang-gasa* shows the social awareness of women who lived in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, an age of tumultuous change.

Besides, the nominated item is a record that **shows how *Hangeul* developed as an official writing system to express the Korean language**. Through the nominated item, we can see how the new alphabet proliferated and ultimately became the official alphabet. *Hangeul* was created in 1443 and originally called *Hunminjeongeum* (“proper sound to instruct the people”). This writing system comes with clear ideas behind its creation, which can be found in a historical record called *Hunminjeongeum Haerye*. This document detailing principles of *Hangeul* was included in UNESCO’s Memory of the World Register in 1997 in recognition of its global significance. Certainly, the process by which this writing system became the official writing system that meets diverse purposes of society is equally as important as its creation. *Hangeul* remained secondary to Chinese characters, which were the official writing system of Joseon, for almost 500 years after its creation. *Hangeul* during this time was mainly used to

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transcribe the pronunciations of foreign words or for transcription of scriptures, adaptation of Chinese novels, and creation of Korean novels for people who could not read Chinese characters. *Naebang-gasa* offered a space for authors to freely experimented with the usage of *Hangeul* and ultimately became a literary genre that could only be expressed in *Hangeul* while respecting its linguistic characteristics. *Hangeul* eventually became the official writing system through four phases: recording of pronunciation; translation; adaptation and creation of existing genres such as novels; and creation of literature that can be expressed only with *Hangeul*. *Naebang-gasa* was created during the last phase. As discussed thus far, *naebang-gasa* is representative documentary heritage that can show how *Hangeul* developed as the official writing system of a society.

### **8.2 Form and Style Significance**

The nominated item includes diverse forms of documents from single-leaf documents to long scrolls and a codex. Many of these scrolls are longer than 10 meters, and one exceeds 20 meters.

The nominated item has significant value from the aesthetic viewpoint of *Hangeul* font style. *Naebang-gasa* was continually transcribed in the process of repeating recitation, dictation, and transcribing. Transcribing was in effect a means of training in handwriting. Seen from the history of calligraphy, it was also a process by which diverse font styles of *Hangeul* were developed. The nominated item shows font styles of the people at large, which were unlike the *gungseo* font style that maidens of honour used in the royal court. Diverse *Hangeul* font styles including a seal script and cursive script have been found in *naebang-gasa* works. Included in the documents of the nominated item are a number of works that epitomize Korean font aesthetics. Because *Hangeul* was not recognized as an official writing system until centuries after it was created, the possibilities for it to develop diverse font aesthetics were necessarily rather limited. It was not until the creation and transcription of *naebang-gasa* that *Hangeul* font aesthetics developed substantially.

### **8.3 Social Community or Spiritual Significance**

The nominated item is literature created by groups of women in an East Asian patriarchal society. The item testifies to women's group activity in a patriarchal environment. This means that women had some latitude to pursue their own activities without influence by men, through which women collectively began to speak up. This is to say that women established their roles themselves and held a collective consciousness. This attests to emerging signs of progress in gender equality in East Asia.

The nominated item shows that some women in the 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in Korea had the ability to read and write in their own alphabet. Through *naebang-gasa*, women learn to write their ideas and educated each other in how to read others' thoughts. Such efforts cleared the way for women to broaden the scope of their collective activities afterwards and at the same time facilitated their communications with other women and expansion of their social awareness.

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## 9 Regional Significance: Comparative criteria

### 9.1 Uniqueness or Rarity

*Naebang-gasa* can be compared with the *1893 Women's Suffrage Petition of New Zealand*, which was a landmark in the emancipation of women in Western society and which was registered on the list of UNESCO Memory of the World in 1997. The *1893 Women's Suffrage Petition*, an example of women winning right to the vote through petition for the first time in the world, led to the emancipation of women from their legal and social subjugation to males. This is a shining example of the progressive women's movement as women won the right to vote by making demands to and struggling against men. Meanwhile, *naebang-gasa* is the result of efforts of East Asian women, who were subordinated to men in every respect not to mention the legal and social domains, in their struggle to be independent of men, at least in their everyday living and the cultural domain. Although *naebang-gasa* could not lead direct historical reform as did the *1893 Women's Suffrage Petition of New Zealand*, it can be said that *naebang-gasa* was an important step toward securing women's self-esteem in that it engendered community activities for women and helped develop the self-awareness of women independently from men in a society that was far more patriarchal than Western society.

*Naebang-gasa* can be compared to *gasa*, a form of poetry composed using *Hangeul* (Korean alphabet) by the literati and commoners during the Joseon Korea. Strictly speaking, *naebang-gasa* belongs to the *gasa* literary genre and refers to those *gasa* works created by women. Both *naebang-gasa* and *gasa* used *Hangeul* and followed the rhythms of the Korean language. According to academic research, *naebang-gasa* comprises more than 70% of all surviving *gasa* works. *Gasa* clearly played an important role in developing *Hangeul* and establishing it as the official writing system.

Except *naebang-gasa*, other *gasa* were written by male authors. These male-written *gasa* poems included clear information on the identity of their authors and were published as anthologies of single writers. In contrast, authors of *naebang-gasa* remained anonymous. Male authors created *gasa* works as independent creators to sing about their personal lives and the natural environment surrounding them. And they opted to use *Hangeul* as a supplement to Chinese characters when they found it difficult to express the rhythms of *gasa* lyrics in Chinese characters. By comparison, *naebang-gasa* was written only in *Hangeul* and was increasingly developed in a way that was appropriate for *Hangeul*, while expressing revealing women's own social awareness and their voices. More importantly, compared with the *gasa* works created by individual male authors, *naebang-gasa* encouraged women to write and enjoy cultural activities, and through these activities women created their own culture.

## 10 Gender

The nominated item is documentary heritage done collectively by women. It is not individual records by specific women. It is a result of women as a group creating and

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enjoying literature in the very patriarchal society of the 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries. In a society where women were not even recognized as independent individuals, women recorded their thoughts and lives and formed solidarity in the name of all women, based on which they confirmed their identity as women. Such activities enabled women to think independently about the identity of women and their roles in a male-dominated society. In this respect, *naebang-gasa* can be evaluated as having made contributions to improving gender equality in Korean society.

Female authors of *naebang-gasa* revealed the suppressiveness and inequality of society built by men through joint lamentation and made special private memories into parts of collective memory. Even while experiencing tumultuous change, such as the rapid change in society, loss of sovereignty, and exile, women looked at the world through the unique perspective of family and female community and sang songs. Through these songs, women defined their lives by themselves and manifested their own thoughts and opinions. In some songs, women shared women's roles and mission voluntarily as members of a society and a nation. In this respect, *naebang-gasa* is direct proof of efforts by East Asian women toward gender equality.

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## 11 Statement of Significance

The nominated item is literature through which women expressed their thoughts and lives in *Hangeul* in 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century East Asian patriarchal society. The documentary heritage being nominated is a result of collective creation by females who aspired to express themselves with subjectivity in a male-dominated society. It is also literature that manifests women's awareness towards the dramatic, epochal changes that were occurring in 20<sup>th</sup> century East Asia. Despite the dearth of reporting on these aspects, the nominated item testifies that women did spontaneously engage in their own activities in the 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries in East Asia, even in the face of the heavy restrictions imposed upon them in their day-to-day living.

The nominated item is a literary genre recorded in *Hangeul*, a writing system that stated the thinking behind its creation. The nominated item, written in *Hangeul*, testifies to the birth of a new literary genre fully reflecting specific characteristics of the Korean language. Accordingly, through the nominated item, we can trace the stages of use that the Korean alphabet, invented in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century, underwent before becoming the official writing system of all society.

The nominated item shows both how much effort was made at the time in East Asia to improve gender equality and how challenging the task was. It can be seen as going against the argument that East Asia was completely dominated by men, while offering testimony to the reality of an Asian society where independent women's activities were only possible through *naebang-gasa*. The nominated heritage, on the one hand, shows women's endeavors toward a more equal society. Meanwhile, it also highlights the patriarchal control under which women had to live their lives. In this aspect, the nominated item differs from the *1893 Women's Suffrage Petition of New Zealand*, which attests to social change.

The nominated item is also testimony to one of the many phases of the global movement toward gender equality, providing evidence from 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century East Asia. Under the circumstances where women were not yet recognized as individuals in their own right, women taught each other to read and write through collective literary activities and recorded their voices in the form of documents. Where there was a need to hand down their works, women transcribed and recorded their creations together, and when necessary, these women created new songs. The nominated item was created through this distinctive way of collective creation.

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## 12 Risk Assessment

### 12.1 Condition

The works of *naebang-gasa* included in the nomination are all original records written on *hanji* (traditional Korean paper) with a brush with no copies. Those that were altered or damaged even slightly were excluded from the nomination. Therefore, the integrity of the textual content of the nominated item is inviolate. Although some of the documents included in the nomination had suffered some damage and required restoration work at conservation institutions, their content was completely confirmable.

The nominated item is comprised of only those documents vested in KSI or housed in the collection of NHM, in consideration of the needs for the optimal preservation of *hanji* by experts in conservation treatment. The interior and exterior of the repository of KSI and NHS are monitored by a 24-hour surveillance system and the documents are duly protected in temperature- and humidity-controlled facilities. Automatic fire detection/suppression systems linked to the central surveillance center of KSI are active 24 hours a day. (Appendixes 6 : Storage and management of KSI and NHS). The physical preservation of the nominated item is, therefore, optimal.

### 12.2 Threat/Risk

The nominated item comprises of documents either vested in KSI for high-priority preservation and research or stored in the collection of NHM. Materials vested in and owned by either institution are kept safe in the depositories after completion of conservation treatment according to the principle of strict preservation of paper type carriers. (See Section 12.1 above about Conditions.) Accordingly, the nominated item is completely safe.

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### 13 Preservation and Access Management Plan

#### Management Plan

Are there management plans to preserve and provide access to the nominated documentary heritage?

YES

KSI stores the nominated documents in accordance with materials management rules for preservation of paper-type materials. The nominated item is stored in a depository optimized for preservation of paper-type materials after conservation treatment. The documents are systematically managed by curators exclusively dedicated to the nominated item and the person in charge of preservation of documentary heritage.

NHM stores the nominated works in its collection in a depository after conservation treatment according to the artifacts management manual. Artifacts management experts comply with guidelines for improvement of conservation treatment and integrity of these paper-type materials. The KSI and NHM depositories for paper type materials are maintained at constant temperature and humidity that are proper for preservation of such materials and have established an optimized environment for preservation of paper type materials.

To increase the accessibility of *naebang-gasa* being nominated, KSI participated in the 'Women in History' online exhibition hosted by the UNESCO Bangkok Office in 2021. The exhibition was arranged to honor women for their achievements to promote women's rights all across the world. Except for *naebang-gasa*, all of the documentary heritage presented at the exhibition were listed on either the Memory of the World International Register or the Regional Register. Despite being only in the process of registration, *naebang-gasa* was widely recognized in the exhibition for its value. This exhibition can be seen online.

(<http://mowherstory.org/items/show/17>)

KSI hosted a variety of programs such as workshops and symposiums to share the value of the nominated item with the general public. The results of such programs were included in the archive to increase access to the nominated item.

(<https://naebang-gasa.ugyo.net/kr/index.do>)

(Appendix 7. Photos of symposium on *naebang-gasa*, collection of materials and cover of the catalogue)

NHM has organized a variety of exhibitions to disseminate the value of *naebang-gasa* and increase access to the works by the general public. The Museum presented the special exhibition *Naebang Gasa: Women's Voices Heard from Lyrics* from December 23, 2021 to April 10, 2022. The materials for the exhibition were later digitized to be freely available to all online. The Museum plans to arrange travelling exhibitions nationwide in association with local museums. KSI and NHM plan to produce the results of the

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exhibition as transferable exhibits and present travelling exhibitions at educational institutions and public places.

View 3D exhibition of *naebang-gasa*:

<https://my.matterport.com/models/uWF3hxZTSHy?section=media>

#### 14 Consultation with Stakeholders

The nominated item comprises documents owned by individual family clans, the management of which were vested in KSI, and documents owned by NHM. Through consultations with the owners in the process of being vested with the documents, rights to discover, research, and use the documents being nominated were transferred to KSI. Nomination of the documents for 2022 was in compliance with the agreement KSI formed with the owners of the documents.

The works of the nominated item in the collection of NHM are documents donated to NHM and owned by NHM. Consultations with KSI on the nomination and proceedings of joint programs were carried out. The two institutions agreed in consultation that they would make the nomination for the MOWCAP jointly.

#### 15 Other Information to Support the Nomination

The nominated item has been established as a literary genre for women through collective recitation and transcription by women, which is why efforts to carry on the tradition of recitation and transcription of the nominated item continue to this day. Particularly, to practice the tradition of creating *naebang-gasa*, the Andong Preservation Society for Naebang-gasa was organized in 1997 in the Andong region in Gyeongsangbuk-do Province. The Society currently has 350 members, and it has engaged in creation and recitation activities by hosting the Naebang-gasa Chanting Contest.

KSI is a public organization established to preserve and use documentary heritage in private collections. As of February 2022, KSI houses 590,000 pieces of documentary heritage. KSI has been working hard to increase the value of documentary heritage and carry on the tradition of recording. In 2016, through agreement with the UNESCO Institute for Education of the UNESCO IAC, KSI signed an MOU on establishing the KMoWKC (Korean Memory of the World Knowledge Center) under KSI. The Center officially opened on June 1, 2018. Since then, the Center has steadfastly sought to increase the value of South Korea's Memory of the World items and increase access to them. KSI will make efforts to share the value of *naebang-gasa* through the KMoW KC.

NHM is a museum specialized in *Hangeul*, the Korean alphabet. The Museum was established by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism to preserve and spread the value of *Hangeul* and *Hangeul* culture. NHM duly recognizes *naebang-gasa* in terms of the



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value of *Hangeul* and *Hangeul* culture. Based on such recognition, NHM plans to carry out a variety of research activities and exhibitions. In particular, it will develop fonts to promote wider use of *Hangeul* and distribute and spread literary genres recorded in *Hangeul*.