

## Folkart Festival to Revive Time-Honored Tradition

By Chung Jin-young  
Staff Reporter

As the nation's biggest folk festival is scheduled to begin today in Cheju City, the celebratory mood is warming up nicely in the country's sole subtropical island. The National Folkart Festival, a state-sponsored annual fest, was first launched in 1958 in the spirit of keeping alive the country's rich cultural heritage in the field of traditional performing arts.

With regard to the format, there will be little change this year from previous years. But, to make the festival more open event, programs will be featured at the Aehyang stadium, the city's spacious public venue. Last year, they took place in a gymnasium.

Running for three days, the festival will be loaded with competitions. Twenty folkart troupes from across the country will perform cherished traditions of their home cities and provinces, including four provinces in North Korea.

Aside from official entries, six folk groups who won at the last year's event will perform throughout the festival period. Performances start every day at 10 a.m. and continue until 5 p.m. except on opening day.

The festive jubilee has been under-



The tradition of Kyejong Dulsori (sound of field), a folk music and dance native to Kyongsang province, comes alive by a troupe representing the region, which is one of 20 official entries in this year's National Folkart Festival.

way since last night with a number of events including local traditional folk music and dance performances and a round of fireworks. This morning, the celebration continues with a street parade which has performers participate along the road leading to the Aehyang stadium. There, the opening ceremony attended by dignitaries of the host city, will officially begin the

festival.

The history of the festival has been marred by a series of glitches caused by ineffective bureaucratic management and overheated regional competition, yet, the event has scored significant victory by reviving numerous local folk traditions endangered by a ruthless drive to modernize in recent decades.

About 400 kinds of time-honored folk dance and rituals were either rediscovered or saved from near extinction. Among them, 35 have been designated as national cultural treasures, including the now-widely-known Chongson Arirang, a folk song native to a county in Kangwon province.

This year, 12 newly-found ritual dances and labour songs and dances will be presented from various regions. Kwangju city for example will present a farmers' song called Yongchondeul (Field of Yongchon) sung by farmers during the rice planting season. Divided into eight parts, the song, which describes each process of the task, reflects the joy of living in harmony with nature.

The host city of Cheju will also introduce its exotic local tradition of Chonsang Nori (Chonsang's play), a unique blend of folk entertainment and shamanistic rituals, while Ulsan city will play out an old labor song called "Soeburi Nori (Blacksmith's play) savored by local blacksmiths in the old days. There will be many winners in this rather prize-generous event. 16 awards with different cash prizes will be presented in the closing ceremony. There will be two first place winners and they will be given 80 million won in cash. Call 02-3704-9530 for further information.

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## Souvenir Center for Tourists to Open in Myongdong

By Hong Sun-hee  
Staff Reporter

A shopping center opening in the heart of bustling Myongdong, downtown Seoul Friday will exclusively deal with value-added cultural objects unique to Korea.

Funded by the Culture-Tourism Ministry and run by Welcome to Korea, a civic organization purported to diversify the tourism programs and to improve the sendees in the hospi-

talities sectors, it will serve as a solid space for sales, devoid of key money and rental fees for suppliers and space for the purchase of quality souvenirs at reasonable prices.

In three stories of the former Esquire Trend building across from the Myongdong cathedral and next to the Seoul Royal Hotel, it will accommodate 75 individuals or companies producing some 1,000 items which have been screened by a jury of leading professionals in related fields. The third floor will accommodate a resting

area and a small stage for a gamut of performances - not only traditional but also trendy shows.

The exhibitors include the so-called "human culture treasures" of the government-designated intangible cultural properties, a cooperative of the ceramicists of Ichon, Kyonggi-do, Yorosi-hamkkye which makes outfits deriving from traditional Korean costume, Sookmyung Women's University Art Studio dealing with embroidery works, and art group Siuter which produces book marks and other

inexpensive souvenirs with Korean motifs.

The civic organization was initiated by a group of prominent figures featured in "Welcome to Korea," a commercial featuring President Kim Dae-jung as a salesman for Korea as a favorable tourism destination, produced right after he took office in February of last year.

A click at <http://www.souvenir.or.kr> will provide further information on the new shopping center.

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## Old Port Antwerp Shines as Low Country High Point

ANTWERP, Belgium (AP) — Cafe terraces overflow with late-night revelers, a warren of ancient streets glows with gentle yellow lamplight, Latin rhythms escape across the waterfront while the aroma of kebabs, couscous and paella tantalize the taste buds.

Antwerp on a rare warm evening is disorientating. You know you're really in an industrious North Sea port, but somehow it feels the city has drifted to the shores of the Mediterranean.

After serving for centuries as one of the great gateways to northern Europe, this city has a cosmopolitan flair that goes beyond the Italian, Spanish, Greek and Moroccan restaurants that compete with traditional Belgian eateries serving mountains of mussels with fries in the old high-gabled Flemish houses of the old town.

Antwerp's southern feel is historical. This was once a Spanish city, part of the 16th-century empire that stretched from Madrid to Manila, Mexico to Belgium. That legacy can still be found in the baroque flourishes of the city's churches and the nickname proudly borne by local citizens — sinjoren, a reminder of the aristocratic 'seniors' who once held sway here.

One thing the Spanish didn't leave behind was their weather. Although Antwerp loves to make the most of their few hot summer days, the Atlantic drizzle and the northern winds blowing chill across the Dutch polders all too frequently send them scurrying for shelter in the city's countless cozy beerhouses.

Fortunately, the city also has enough treasures to distract the visitor even when the sun is not shining.



Heart of Antwerp

This Cinderella city of Low-Country tourism is often neglected as just a workaday seaport, but it can rival Bruges for medieval charm, outshine Brussels for style and culture, and match Amsterdam for vivacious streetlife.

Antwerp's heart is the Grote Markt, a great triangular market square fronted on one side by the flamboyant renaissance town hall and flanked on the others by merchant houses from the city's golden age, their lofty

facades crowned with burnished gold-leaf statues. Looking down on it all is the lacy stonework of the 123 meter (406 feet) tower of the Onze-Lieve-Vrouwe Cathedral, a gothic masterpiece decorated inside with vast religious paintings by Rubens, the city's most famous son.

All around is a maze of cobbled streets and alleyways that lead to tree-lined plazas where locals gather to enjoy a "bolleke," — a goblet of Antwerp's famed De Koninck ale, a classic in a country that treats beer with the respect the French reserve for wine.

While the old town's ambience and architecture are an obvious draw, much of Antwerp's charm lies in secret treasures. A look into a quiet backstreet church can reveal another spectacular Rubens. An archway leads off a teeming sidewalk into renaissance courtyard where the air is filled with Mozart and cafe tables are laden with gargantuan servings of Flemish cheese or Ardennes ham.

The Meir is Antwerp's main street, an elegant pedestrian drag bustling with shoppers. Just a few meters (yards) and four centuries away is the Rubenshuis, the painter's reconstructed mansion where the cool chambers and classical garden offer a haven of peace.

In the little Mayer van den Bergh museum a very different artistic surprise awaits. Dimly lit corridors lead on to one of Europe's most disturbing art treasures — Dulle Griet, or Mad Meg. Pieter Breugel's apocalyptic vision of a crazed woman prowling a war-ravaged landscape.

## Signs of The Times

Information to all vehicles

차량통행시간  
오전 8시 이전  
오후 7시 이후  
제한속도

This sign can be seen in Yosu, Cholla-namdo, at the entrance of Odong-do. For foreigners who don't know Korean, the sign can be perplexing. "Information to all vehicles," printed in English, very effectively gets one's attention. But it would be nice if it supplies the information in English as well as in Hangul.

The winning contributor to Signs of the Times will receive two buffet dinner coupons at the Grand Hyatt in Seoul and a complimentary necktie from the Korea National Tourism Organization (KNTA). Signs of the Times is a section featuring reader-contributed photographs of erroneous travel signs and is aimed at creating a better tourism environment. Send your contribution to: Korea Times, Culture Desk, 14 Chunghak-dong, Chongno Seoul. Call 02-724-2346 for more information. — ED.

The Korea Times, KNTA, Grand Hyatt Seoul

## Cambodia Plans Millennium Festival at Angkor Wat

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP) — A celebration of the turn of the millennium will be held at Angkor Wat, the world famous temple complex in Cambodia, the government announced Monday.

Festival Angkor 2000 will bring 1,000 artists from across the country to give traditional performances at the Angkor monuments, which were built during the 9th through 13th centuries, said an official statement.

The three-day celebration, starting Dec. 30, will seek to convey the spirit of unity, national reconciliation and peace that Cambodia has begun to see after more than three decades of war and unrest, it said.

Plans call for a blessing performed by 2,000 Buddhist monks and 2,000 flying lanterns to be released at midnight on Dec. 31 to mark the passage to the new

millennium.

The event will cost the government about \$500,000 to organize, but it is short on cash and is appealing for private donors, said Sum Manith, chairman of the organizing committee.

Thong Khon, secretary of state of the tourism ministry, said an intensive publicity campaign is being launched, especially overseas, to lure foreign visitors, who represent a major source of revenue.

He said up to 30,000 people a day are expected to turn up at the festival.

Some major hotels in Siem Reap, 225 kilometers (140 miles) northwest of Cambodia, are already fully booked, he added.

With only 1,096 hotel rooms available in Siem Reap, it is possible that "guests may spill over from hotels and guesthouses to pagodas," he said.

## 'Hong Kong, Disney to Form Theme Park Company'

HONG KONG (AP) — Walt Disney Co. and the Hong Kong government are planning a jointly-held company to build a theme park in the territory, a newspaper reported Monday.

The two sides would initially have equal stakes in the new company to share the risk in the project, but the government would eventually sell its stake to private entities, the Hong Kong Economic Times reported.

No contracts have been officially signed, the Times said. The paper quoted informed sources it did not identify.

Since the government announced in

March it had been in talks with the Burbank, Calif.-based entertainment giant, both sides have been secretive about their negotiations.

The Chinese-language paper said the talks have been smooth and that the two sides have reached some key agreements concerning financial arrangements.

Officials from both sides declined comment on the report. Sunnie Lam, a spokesman for Hong Kong's Economic Services Bureau, which is in charge of the project, said there would be some kind of official announcement in October.

## Paradise Pusan Seeks Diversification

The Paradise Hotel Pusan is focusing to attract and satisfy young Japanese women with the most fashionably aesthetic facilities through the launch of a new building.

With the introduction of the new 278-room-Internet-accessible building, the hotel is eager to reach a wider range of clients in order to break away from its present image as a casino hotel.

"We made presentations extensively in Japan and China and found they knew" only Seoul. Japanese account for two-thirds of the incoming tourists to Korea and many of them are repeat visitors. Luckily, our rooms are increasingly reserved by Japanese women in their 20s and 30s, and we will collaborate with the fish market, the loess sauna and other sectors which Japanese women are eager to explore in Korea," said Jeon Tong-gyun, the hotel's sales and marketing director.

The hotel now boasts a total of 526 rooms and is the largest hotel at Haeundae beach, Pusan.

As the city of Pusan is expected to hold the Asian Games, the World Cup and to set up a large information technology complex, the hotel is furnished to meet global standards in this

regard.

The addition to Paradise has six floors underground, 18 floors on the ground level, the newest sauna facilities with an open-air spa for women, an outdoor swimming pool and exotic restaurants.

A building with a selection of internationally renowned high-class brands and boutiques will greet visitors from the year 2000, in a total area of 2,400 pyong (one pyong equals 3.3 square meters).

By the beginning of next year, the hotel also has plans to provide the newest aesthetic facilities including Korean bathing facilities that many Japanese adore, skin care massage for the whole body, Chinese medication massage and aroma massage.

Harold Thomson once again demonstrated his talent by conducting the interior design. The art pieces for the new building harmonize through the display of such paintings by Park Seo-bo, Lee U-fan, Lee Kang-so and sculptures by Kang Un-yop, and prints and paintings by Andy Warhol, Frank Stella and Roy Liechtenstein.

Celebrating the opening of the new building on Sept. 15, Paradise Hotel Pusan has invited "Les Grooms," a French musical company.

swissôtel

The hotel (02-287-8427/9) offers a special room package for Chusok on Sept. 18-26 at W99,000 and 124,000. Included in the packages are: free admission to the fitness club and swimming pool, a 50 percent discount on saunas, a late check out time, free shuttle bus service to and from the airport, downtown and the popular shopping district, Itaewon. All Chosuk Room Package guests will receive complimentary "songpyon," traditional rice cakes made especially on this holiday.

Seoul Hilton

The hotel (02-317-3362) and Ponghwa County in Kyongsang-pukko co-host "Pine Mushrooms Festival" on Sept. 15-26. During the period, the hotel will set up a Korean folk cottage at its lobby and sell pine mushrooms to foreign and domestic patrons at reasonable prices.

On the first day there will be opening ceremony, and photo shooting session.

HYATT

Aomi Japanese Restaurant (051-746-8477) is offering Korean beef specials as a seasonal dish during September.

Hotel Lobby

Guests can enjoy set menus including "Sukiyaki" and "Shabushabu" specials.

The set menus include Japanese delicacies, seasonal appetizers, three kinds of sashimi and boiled dish, with rice, soup, pickles and fruit, at W60,000.

THE SHILLA

The Shilla Seoul has been granted Best Hotel by "99 Korean Consumers' Satisfaction Award" in the service category. Seventeen categories were voted by Korean consumers through the Internet, answering cards and ARS (telephone survey).

GRAND HYATT SEOUL

The hotel (02-799-8167) offers gift sets with a selection of cakes, liquors, wines and delicacies from Deli. Lovely wicker hampers are prepared featuring a variety of liquors, wines, cheeses, teas, sausages and hams, arranged in a beautiful gift set at W80,000-100,000.

NOVOTEL

"Petit Chou" Delicatessen (02-382-6121) offers Chusok Hampers featuring Korean traditional wine, fruits compote, selection of teas and so many more for Chusok, time for sharing, on Sept. 15-26, at W50,000 and 75,000.

HOTEL LOTTE

The French restaurant Schoenbrunn offers "Autumn of Goumets" through Sept. 22. Set menus are especially prepared to satisfy the palates of the most demanding epicures, "Parisian" at W74,000 and "Lyonnais" at W64,000. For reservation, call 02-759-7560.

THE RITZ CARLTON

Caravali Bakery Shop offers the Chusok hamper consisted of some delica-

cies such as fine cheese and jam, caviar, home-made sausage, premium coffee, Italian vinegar and oil with pasta, wine and champagne, candy, chocolate cookies and fruit, at W80,000 per basket. For further info, call 02-3451-8278.

RENAISSANCE

SEOUL HOTEL

The hotel (02-2222-8500) offers "Chusok Package" for local residents of Korea. The package includes a deluxe room accommodation, 10 percent discount on restaurant, free meals for kids accompanying parents at Universal Buffet, free use of indoor swimming pool, health club, aerobic room and shuttle bus to Itaewon on Sept. 22-27 at W100,000 for two persons.

HOTEL

INTER-CONTINENTAL

Japanese restaurant Miyama (02-559-7623) reopened through complete renovation under a new name "Hakone" on Sept. 13. Located on the first floor, the 120-seat restaurant feature a separate Sushi Counter and Teppanyaki Counter. Three new private dining rooms are also available for dinners and events, to offer a complete Japanese dining experience.