

Identification

<i>Nomination</i>	Chongmyo Shrine
<i>Location</i>	Seoul
<i>State Party</i>	Republic of Korea
<i>Date</i>	21 October 1994

Justification by State Party

As a major cultural heritage, Chongmyo has had a great influence on the development of Korean architecture, gardening, landscaping, and related arts for many centuries.

Although it is a shrine rather than an ordinary structure, it reflects many of the universal values of architecture still in use today and as such it is the focus of research for many architects. Chongmyo's outstanding architectural value has led many scholars to call it the "Parthenon of Asia." Its outstanding features are the following:

- 1 *Symmetrical non-symmetry* Chongmyo Chongjon appears to be symmetrical, but closer examination shows it to be asymmetrical. The annex buildings are located symmetrically on either side of the shrine, but the eastern wall is open and the western one closed. In addition, Kongshindang and Ch'ilsadang, which face Chongjon, differ in size as well as in architectural style. This is also true of Yongnyongjon, the general symmetrical appearance of which is broken by the non-symmetry of its auxiliary buildings. This is one of the most important features of Chongmyo, and a unique feature of Korea's traditional architecture.
- 2 *Correspondence of function and shape* Chongmyo is relatively long and its horizontal lines are emphasized. The walls and roof tend to emphasize this horizontality. Its walls are open; these open corridors (*t'oekan*) served to protect worshippers from the elements. They also provide a layer between the interior and exterior of the building, separating the base from the roof and thus permitting a formal emphasis on the horizontal lines of the roof instead of the vertical lines of the walls. It also acted as a natural connection to the broad *wealth* platform in front of the building.

The roofs of Chongjon and Yongnyongjon are divided into three sections, with the central sections higher than those flanking them; this modular coordination was intended to bring building function down to "human scale." In traditional Korean architecture, structure, functional composition, and spatial arrangements are generally in correspondence with one another, thus creating a vital, living space: Chongmyo is one of the most outstanding examples of this feature.

- 3 *Outstanding spatial arrangement* The broad inner court platforms (*woltae*) of Chongjon and Yongnyongjon are composed of very simple elements: the rough-textured slabs of granite, a simple "divine pathway" (*shinro*) covered with dark grey stones, various platforms and foundations, and the long wall surrounding the buildings. The broad *woltae* is empty, apart from the symbolic *shinro* used by the king and a rectangular platform. These two elements are tiny compared with the space that surrounds them, yet they dominate the entire space. Extraneous elements that might spoil the serenity of the sacred place are excluded, thus enhancing the dignity and solemnity of the shrine.

Criterion ii

Chongmyo is an altar enshrining the spirit tablets of the former kings and queens of the Choson Kingdom and the site for royal ancestral worship rituals. It was built to repay the blessings of the Choson ancestors and to convey the kingdom's ruling ideology to the general public. In Confucian society it was customary for the king to build a royal ancestral shrine and a shrine for state deities (*sajikdan*) whenever a new kingdom was founded. The royal ancestral worship rituals were first performed by the royal family to pass down the spirit of loyalty and filial piety, the ruling ideology of Confucianism. This tradition continued for five hundred years, throughout the history of the Choson Kingdom, and since its collapse this rich vein of tradition has been carried on by the Coalition of the Chonju Yi Clan (*Chonju Yissi Taedong Chongyakwon*). The Chongmyo Shrines and its rites constitute a global cultural heritage by virtue of their unprecedented and consistent representation of the distinct ideology of a given era, the Confucianism of the five-hundred-year rule of the Choson Kingdom.

Criterion vi

History and Description

History

Chongmyo is the royal ancestral shrine of the Choson dynasty (1392-1910). T'aejo, founder of the Choson Kingdom, transferred the seat of government to Hanyang (today's Seoul) in August 1394 and ordered Ch'oe Won, his director of government administration, to start building Chongmyo in December the same year. It was completed ten months later and named T'aemyo. The spirit tablets of four generations of T'aejo's ancestors were moved there from Kaesong.

During the first year of the reign of Sejong (1419) an auxiliary building, Yongnyongjon, was built to the west of T'aemyo to receive the spirit tablet of the second Choson king, Chongjong. Four shrine chambers were added to this structure in 1547 because of shortage of space.

All the buildings were destroyed by fire in May 1592, during the Hideyoshi invasions. King Sonjo took the Chongmyo tablets with him when he fled before the Japanese, but the ancestral shrine was destroyed. Restoration was completed in 1608, on his return to his capital.

More rooms were added to Yongnyongjon in 1667 and to Chongjon in 1778 and again in 1836, bringing the total of rooms in the former to eight and the latter to nineteen. Subsequent additions have brought them to 16 and 35 rooms respectively.

Chongmyo Cherye, the memorial services conducted each year at Chongjon, also constitute a heritage of great antiquity and significance in terms of intangible culture. They incorporate music, song, and dance, and owe their origins to court music imported from China by King T'aejo at the end of the 14th century.

Description

Chongmyo and its grounds occupy a 19.4 ha oval site. The buildings are situated in valleys and surrounded by low hills, artificial additions created to reinforce the balance of natural elements on the site as defined in traditional geomancy.

Chongmyo is composed of three sets of buildings centred on Hyangdaech'ong (a single-storey building for storing utensils used in the rituals), Chongjon (the main shrine), and Yongnyongjon (the Hall of Eternal Peace, an auxiliary shrine) respectively. The main features are as follows:

- *Ch'angyopmun* (the main gate) is built of thick wooden planks and measures 3 *kan* long by 2 *kan* long (the *kan* is a traditional unit of measurement of the space between two pillars, equivalent to c 1.8 m).

The building has two side wings flanking the main chamber, which measures 4 *kan* long by 3 *kan* wide. The two wings differ in size: the east wing is 6 *kan* long by 3 *kan* wide and the west wing 5 *kan* long by 3 *kan* wide. The *t'oekan* in front is open, as at Chongjon, and separated from the inner chambers by a wooden door. Wooden brackets at the tops of the round pillars support the eaves of the gabled roof.

The tablets of four generations of King T'aejo's ancestors and also of some later kings not deemed worthy of being lodged in Chongjo, 34 in all, are to be found here.

Management and Protection

Legal status

The Chongmyo complex is State property. It was designated Historical Relic No 125 in January 1963 and a Cultural Property Protection Zone in September 1973, under the provisions of Articles 6 and 7 respectively of the Cultural Property Preservation Law. Article 20 imposes restrictions on changes on the current state of the site.

It is also a Natural Environment Preservation Zone under Article 13 of the Law of National Land Use Management and a Cultural Property Preservation Zone under Article 18 of the Urban Planning Law.

Management

The responsible national agency is the Office of Cultural Properties of the Ministry of Culture and Sports. Also associated with the preservation and management of the site under the various protective ordinances are the Ministry of Construction (Seoul Regional Construction and Management Office), the Ministry of Home Affairs (Seoul City), and the private Coalition of the Chonju Yi Clan.

The general public is only allowed to view the exterior of Chongjon; access to the interior is prohibited. The Chongmyo Office of the Office of Cultural Properties, with 23 employees, oversees the preservation and management of the site for the state. The services of a mobile repair team of 35 is available to carry out repair and conservation work. All the costs of the Chongmyo Office are covered in the general National budget. The revenue from entrance fees is available for conservation and restoration projects. The Office of Cultural Properties has established a Cultural Properties Research Institute to ensure that the results of in-depth academic research and experiments are reflected in policies aimed at the preservation of cultural property.

Current management projects include a programme for restoration of the peripheral roads, part of which has already been completed.

Conservation and Authenticity

Conservation history

The general condition of the buildings is good. Urgent restoration work is needed (and being put in hand) for the restoration of the eaves of the Chaeshil and the Chonsach'ong warehouse, and there is deterioration over two sections of the boundary wall. The following projects have been successfully completed in the past three decades:

- 1962: Restoration of the outer wall of 395 m of the Chongmyo outer wall.
- 1964: Restoration of the relics exhibition hall.
- 1990: Dismantling and restoration of rafters of Chongjon.

- *Mangmyoru* is a wooden structure with a tiled roof where the king waited briefly before the ancestral rituals began.
- *Kongmingdang* is the shrine to the Koryo King Kongmin built by the Choson King T'aejo, containing a portrait of the king and his favourite horse.
- *Hyangdaech'ong*, the storage building for ritual utensils, is a wooden structure with a gabled roof, built without eaves support brackets. It measures 9.5 *kan* long by 1.5 *kan* long (168 m² in area).
- *Chaeshil*, consisting of a main hall and two wings, is the building where participants waited for the rites to take place.
- *Chongmyo Chongjon* is surrounded by rectangular walls with gates to the south, east, and west. The rectangular inner court platform (*woltae*) is floored with rough granite slabs. A path runs from the main gate to the stone base of the main hall. Three sets of steps ascend the front of the stone base and there are smaller sets of steps at the far ends on either side.

Chongjon itself is a wooden structure 19 *kan* long, 3 *kan* wide, and 3 *kan* along both the left and the right flanking chambers, making a total surface area of 1270 m². The two wings jut out into the *woltae*. It is divided into several rooms, with the open *t'oekan* in front and the nineteen inner shrine rooms (*shinshil*), separated by wooden doors. The shrine rooms are divided into cubicles, for the 49 spirit tablets lodged there, and antechambers, which are in turn separated by screens. The front wall is open to the *t'oekan*, the side and back walls being closed off by walls. The gabled roof is supported by simple wooden brackets.

The main entrance is reserved for the spirits and no one is allowed to pass through it. The east gate is used by the king and the west gate by the musical performers. Since they serve different purposes the gates differ in size.
- *Ch'ilsadang* houses seven deities, including the gods of palace gates, kitchens, roads, halls and rooms, entrances and exits, and those who die of epidemic diseases. It measures 3 *kan* long by 1 *kan* wide (25.8 m²). In the front wall there is a wooden door and a row of slatted windows; the other three are made of brick.
- *Kongshindang* houses the spirit tablets of 83 loyal subjects of the Choson kings.
- *Chonsach'ong* is the building where the ritual utensils and offerings used in the rites are prepared. The main chamber measures 7 *kan* long by 2 *kan* wide; its floor is covered with plain square tiles and there are large wooden doors open to the front and back of the building. Beside the building is a row of rooms heated by means of a traditional *ondol* underfloor heating system.
- *Subokbang* is the ground-keeper's residence, to the north of the east gate. Alongside it is a square platform on which food to be offered during the rituals is examined.
- *Akkongchong* is a very simple wooden building of 98.4 m² which serves as a waiting and rehearsal area for musicians performing in the rituals.
- *Yongnyongjon* is the building in which the spirit tablets of kings who were not recognized as being *sesuil* (worthy of being honoured indefinitely for their outstanding achievements) were lodged when they were removed after a set time from Chongjon. It is situated in a rectangular compound entered by three gates (south, east, west). It is built on a rectangular platform (*woltae*), paved with thin slabs of granite (as at Chongjon).

- 1991-92: Restoration of Chongjon roof tiles.
- 1992: Dismantling and restoration of Hyangdaech'ong rafters.
- 1993: restoration of the outer wall at Chongmyo.
- 1995: Restoration of the patrol route around Chongmyo.

Authenticity

The authenticity of site and use are complete. As with most buildings within the wooden architecture tradition of East Asia, these buildings have undergone a number of restorations involving dismantling and reconstruction. There has, however, been scrupulous respect for materials and techniques, which makes them authentic in this respect.

Evaluation

Action by ICOMOS

An ICOMOS expert mission visited the property in February 1995.

Qualities

This is a remarkable architectural complex, assembled over the long centuries of the Choson dynasty and representing the highest artistic and architectural achievements of this region.

Comparative analysis

There are other examples of Confucian royal ancestral shrines in East Asia, but Chongmyo can claim to be unique on a number of accounts. It is the earliest to have survived relatively intact. It also houses the spirit tablets of many more members of the royal house than any other. The system was originally conceived as covering only seven generations, increasing to nine during the Ming period: hence the nine rooms at Taimiao in China. Chongmyo is unique with its nineteen rooms spanning the whole period from the late 14th to the early 20th century.

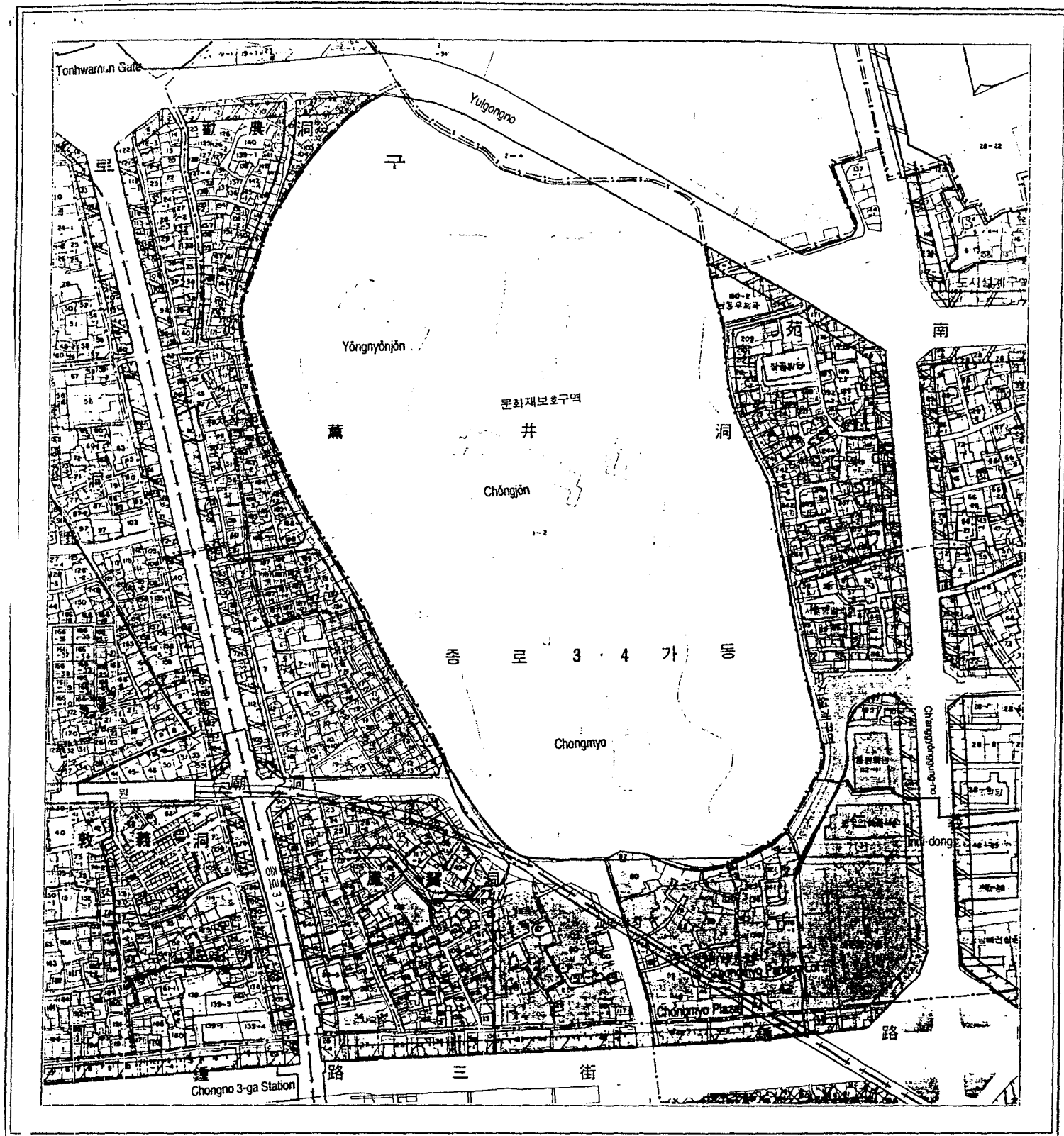
ICOMOS recommendations for future action

The Chongmyo complex is surrounded by an adequate buffer zone. Beyond that, however, there is considerable modern urbanization. ICOMOS would like assurances that there will be no authorization of the construction of high-rise buildings in these neighbouring areas that will adversely affect the sight-lines within the proposed World Heritage site.

Recommendation

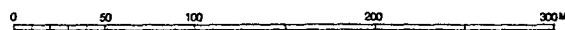
That this site be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of **criterion iv**:

The Chongmyo shrine is an outstanding example of the Confucian royal ancestral shrine, which has survived relatively intact since the 16th century, the importance of which is enhanced by the persistence there of an important element of the intangible cultural heritage in the form of traditional ritual practices and forms.



Map: Basic Planning Map of Seoul (Scale 1: 3,000)

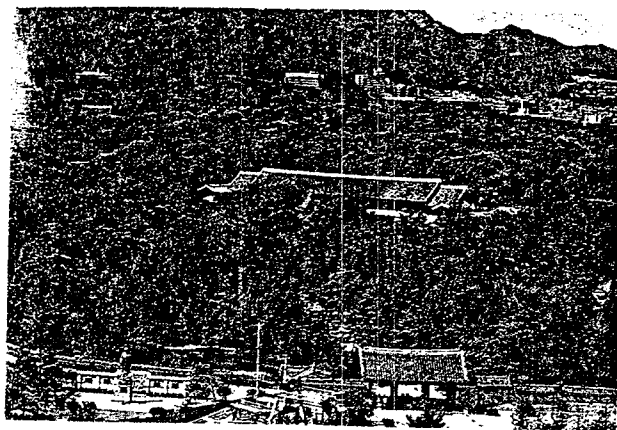
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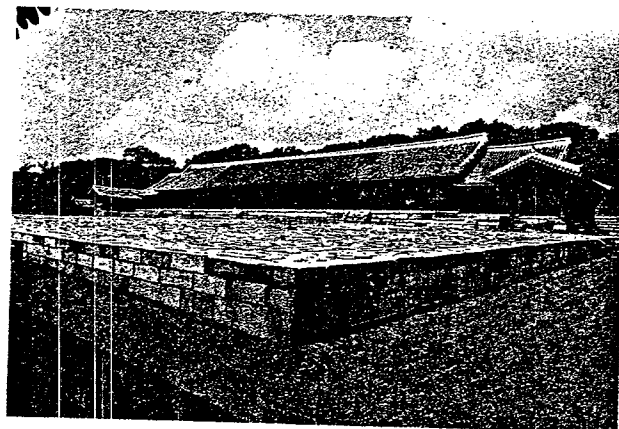
Urban Planning Legend

	Residential Area		Green Belt Area		Maximum		Distribution Facilities
	Semi-residential Area		Historic Site Area		Minimum		Amusement Park
	Exclusive Residential Area		Green space		Flight Control District		School Land
	Commercial Area		Landscaping District		Open Space District		Projected Railroad or Subway
	Semi-industrial Area		Scenic District		Apartments		Canal
	Natural Green Area		Collective Beautification district		Inner City Redevelopment District		
	Manufacturing Green Area		Fire Prevention District		Residential Improvement District		
					Specific Block Adjustment District		

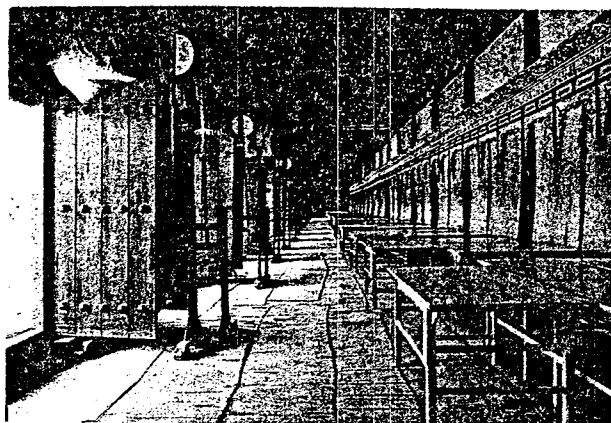
Chongmyo : plan montrant le monument et ses environs /
Map showing the monument and its surroundings



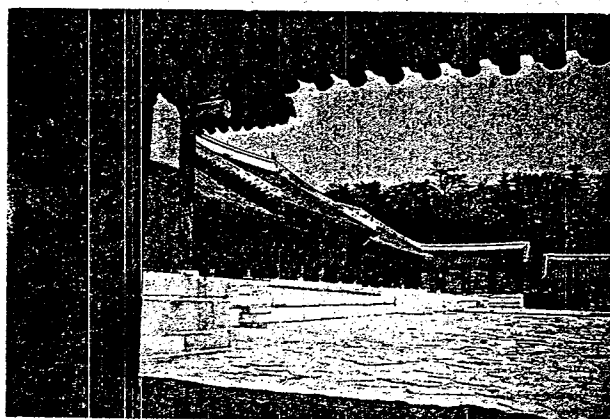
Chongmyo : porte principale de Chongmyo et Chongjon /
The main gate of Chongmyo and Chongjon



Chongmyo : Chongjon et les woltae qui l'entourent /
Chongjon and its surrounding woltae



Chongmyo : l'entrée aux salles du sanctuaire de Chongjon /
The entrance to the shrine rooms in Chongjon



Chongmyo : Yongnyongjon vu de la porte ouest /
Yongnyongjon from the west gate

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Chongmyo is an altar enshrining the spirit tablets of the former kings and queens of the Choson Kingdom and the site for royal ancestral worship rituals. It was built to repay the blessings of the Choson ancestors and to convey the kingdom's ruling ideology to the general public. In Confucian society it was customary for the king to build a royal ancestral shrine and a shrine for state deities (*sajikdan*) whenever a new kingdom was founded. The royal ancestral worship rituals were first performed by the royal family to pass down the spirit of loyalty and

filial piety, the ruling ideology of Confucianism. This tradition continued for five hundred years, throughout the history of the Choson Kingdom, and since its collapse this rich vein of tradition has been carried on by the Coalition of the Chonju Yi Clan (*Chonju Yissi Taedong Chongyakwon*). The Chongmyo Shrines and its rites constitute a global cultural heritage by virtue of their unprecedented and consistent representation of the distinct ideology of a given era, the Confucianism of the five-hundred-year rule of the Choson Kingdom.

Criterion vi

Category of property

In terms of the categories of property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this property constitutes a *group of buildings*.

History and Description

History

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Description

Chongmyo and its grounds occupy a 19.4 ha oval site. The buildings are situated in valleys and surrounded by low hills, artificial additions created to reinforce the balance of natural elements on the site as defined in traditional geomancy.

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ICOMOS recommendations for future action

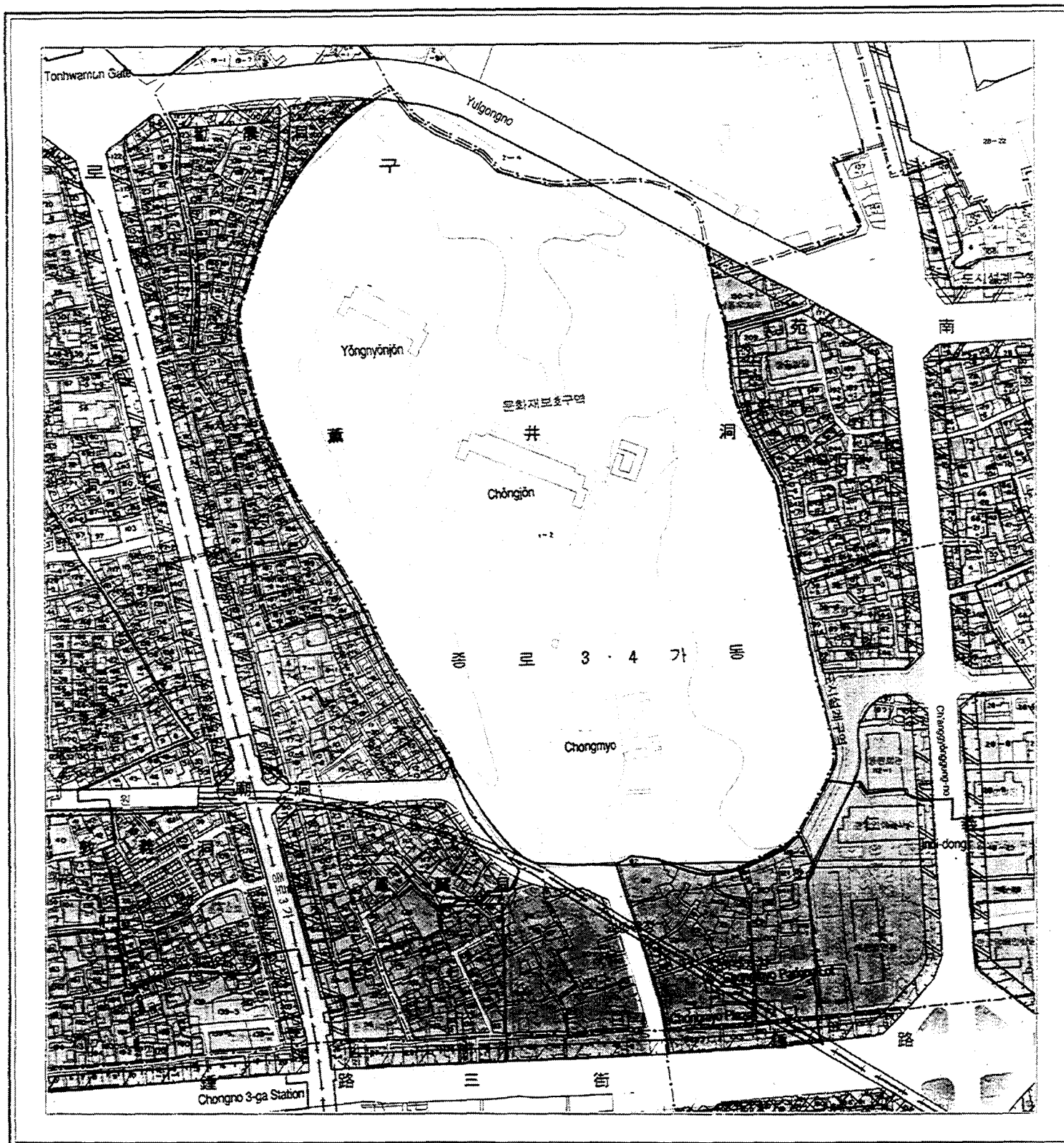
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Recommendation

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ICOMOS, September 1995



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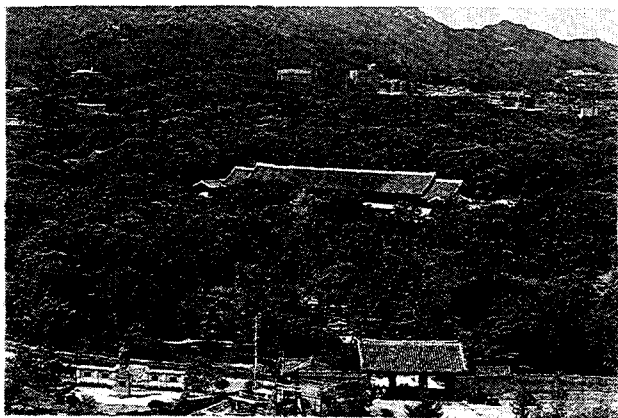
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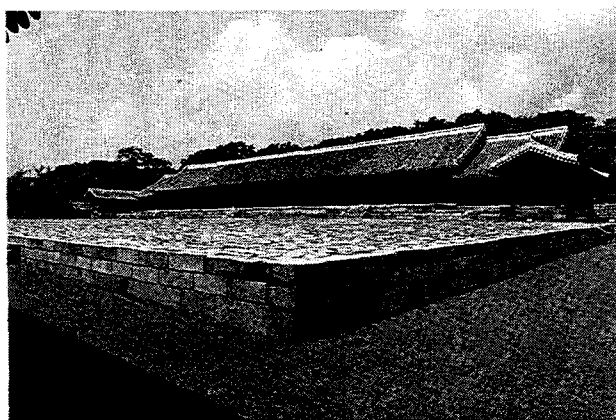
Urban Planning Legend

	Residential Area		Green Belt Area		Maximum		Flight Control District		Distribution Facilities
	Semi-residential Area		Historic Site Area		Minimum		Open Space District		Amusement Park
	Exclusive Residential Area		Green space		Scenic District		Apartments		School Land
	Commercial Area		Landscaping District		Inner City Redevelopment District		Residential Improvement District		Projected Railroad or Subway
	Semi-industrial Area		Scenic District		Specific Block Adjustment District				Canal
	Natural Green Area		Collective Beautification district						
	Manufacturing Green Area		Fire Prevention District						

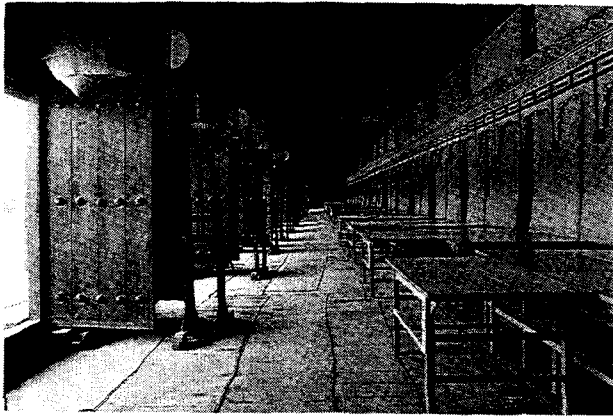
Chongmyo : plan montrant le monument et ses environs /
Map showing the monument and its surroundings



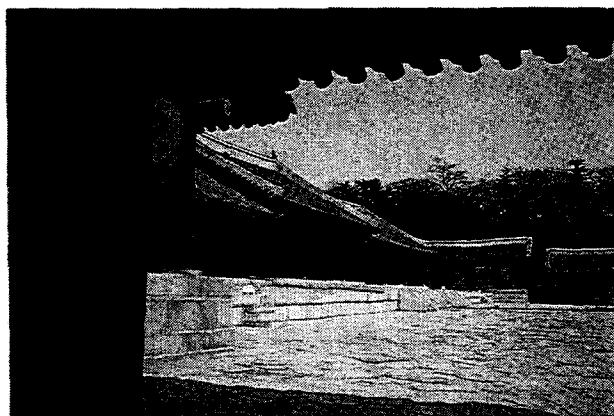
Chongmyo : porte principale de Chongmyo et Chongjon /
The main gate of Chongmyo and Chongjon



Chongmyo : Chongjon et les woltae qui l'entourent /
Chongjon and its surrounding woltae



Chongmyo : l'entrée aux salles du sanctuaire de Chongjon /
The entrance to the shrine rooms in Chongjon



Chongmyo : Yongnyongjon vu de la porte ouest /
Yongnyongjon from the west gate