

## WORLD HERITAGE LIST

### Ch'angdokkung (Korea)

No 816

#### Identification

*Nomination* Ch'angdokkung Palace Compound

*Location* Seoul

*State Party* Republic of Korea

*Date* 26 July 1996

#### Justification by State Party

As a major cultural heritage, Ch'angdokkung Palace has had a great influence on the development of Korean architecture, garden and landscape planning, and related arts for many centuries.

It reflects sophisticated architectural values, harmonized with beautiful surroundings. Palaces (and Ch'angdokkung in particular) were built with the utmost care for architectural achievement, creative design, and garden landscaping, in order to demonstrate the authority of the king over the nation.

#### Criterion ii

#### Category of property

In terms of the categories of cultural property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a *group of buildings*. It should also be considered as a *cultural landscape* of the type proposed in paragraph 39(i) of the *Operational Guidelines* (1997).

#### History and Description

##### History

In the early years of the Choson Dynasty in Korea, the capital moved many times between Gaeseong and Hanyang (present-day Seoul). In obedience to the will of his father, Chongjong, the third ruler of this dynasty, T'aejong (1400-18), moved the capital back to Hanyang in 1405. Considering the existing Kyongbokkung Palace to be inauspicious, he ordered a new palace to be built, which he named Ch'angdokkung (the Palace of Illustrious Virtue).

A Bureau of Palace Construction was set up to supervise the work, which was carried out to traditional design principles. These included *chonjo hushi* ("palace in front, market behind") and *sammun samjo* ("three gates, three courts"); the three courts were the Ch'ijo (administrative court), Yonjo (royal residence court), and Oejo (official audience court). The compound was divided into two parts: the main palace buildings and the Piwon (royal secret garden). The garden was landscaped with lawns, trees, flowers, a lotus pool, and pavilions set against a wooded background.

The main buildings (throne hall, hall of government affairs, and royal residences) were completed in 1405, and other major elements were added in the succeeding seven years. Because the compound was considered to be too small, it was extended to the north-west in 1462.

In 1592, during the Japanese invasion of Korea, the Palace was burned down, along with many other important structures in Hanyang. When the seven-year war was over, Ch'angdokkung Palace was in ruins. The ruler of the period, Sonjo, initiated its reconstruction in 1607, and this work was completed in 1610, during the reign of his successor, Kwanghaegun, when it once again became the seat of government and the royal residence, a role that it was to play for 258 years. It underwent some vicissitudes during that period - during the Qing invasion of 1636, the occupation of Kanghwa Island by a French fleet in 1866, and during a US reprisal attack in 1871, principally from fires, but reconstruction was always faithful to the original design.

Some additions were made to the complex in later centuries. A villa in the style of a nobleman's house was built by King Sunjo in 1828, and a small secluded royal residence, known as Naksonjae ("Retreat of Joy and Goodness") was added by King Honjon in 1846. The last building to be added was the New Sonwonjon Shrine, which was constructed in 1921 to house the ancestral royal portraits. Originally sited beside the Injongjon (throne hall), it was moved during the Japanese occupation to a less important location in the north-east corner of the compound.

##### Description

Ch'angdokkung Palace occupies an irregular rectangle, with a total area of 57.9ha, to the north of Seoul at the foot of Mount Ungbongsan, the main geomantic guardian mountain. Because of the uneven topography of the site the buildings are not distributed according to a regular layout, as at Kyongbokkung Palace.

The main gate (one of the three prescribed by the principle of *sammun samjo*) is *Tonhwamun*. It is a two-storey structure, built in 1406 and reconstructed in 1607 after destruction by fire. It has a hipped roof with a corbelled multi-bracket eaves system, a system to be found in most of the buildings of the Palace.

The first of the three functional sectors of the palace, Ch'ijo (administrative court) is entered through the impressive single-storey *Injongmun* gate, in the same

style as Tonhwamun. It gives access to a courtyard whose dominant feature is the majestic *Injongjon* (throne hall). It was destroyed twice by fire, in 1592 and 1803. Set on a double terrace, it is a two-storey structure supported on four huge columns. The elaborate throne in the main hall is placed on a dais beneath an intricately carved ceiling screen. The roof ridge is decorated with carvings of guardian animals, such as eagles and dragons. The main stairway leading to the hall is ornamented with statues of *haet'ae* (mythical guardian animals).

To the east of the Injongjon Hall is the blue-tiled *Sonjongjon Hall*, used by the king for everyday business. It is a single-storey building in a plain but refined style. Next to it is the *Huijongdang Hall*, another modest building, which contained the king's bedchamber and sleeping quarters for his personal staff.

The *Taejojon Hall* nearby was for the use of the queen. To denote that it was the queen's bedchamber it is not furnished with a main roof ridge. It is the centre of a complex of buildings used by the queen's children and entourage. There is a garden at the rear landscaped into a series of terraces planted with flowering trees and flowers.

*Naksonjae Manor*, built in 1846, is located to the east of the king's and queen's quarters. It is an outstanding example of this type of architectural complex, which includes a small landscaped garden.

When the main Palace complex was built, the area of some 20ha to the north, on the slope of the mountain, was left in its natural woodland state, but in 1459 Sejo ordered it to be extensively landscaped, to create the *Piwon* (secret garden), for the use of the royal family and their court. When the Palace was rebuilt after its destruction during the war against the Japanese invaders in 1592-98, the garden began to be embellished with pavilions and other features.

The *Puyongji Pool* is a rectangular artificial stretch of water with a round island in the middle, symbolizing the mountain deity. It was added by King Chongjo in 1792, along with the *Puyongjong Pavilion*, a striking many-sided wooden structure in the shape of a Chinese character. Its overall appearance is that of a lotus flower, springing from the lotus pool. Other additions to the garden at this time were the *Chuhamnu Court Library* and the *Yonghwadang Pavilion*, which form part of the cluster of buildings around the pool.

The *Aeryonji Pool*, created in 1692, is also artificial. Alongside it, and partly in its waters, is the elegant *Aeryonjong Pavilion*.

To be ranked with the Naksonjae Manor as a masterpiece of Korean architecture is *Yon-gyongdang Manor*, built in 1828 by King Sunjo, where the king would periodically spend time so as to experience the life of a commoner. It consists of a main house, a guesthouse, a separate study, kitchens, and servants' quarters. It was built in natural woodland, which is conserved.

There are over 26,000 specimens of a hundred species of indigenous trees in the garden, including walnut, white oak, zelkova, plum, maple, chestnut, hornbeam, and pine. To these should be added 23,000 planted specimens of fifteen imported species, including yew, stone pine, white pine, ginkgo, and Chinese junipers.

## Management and Protection

### Legal status

Ch'angdokkung Palace is protected by several Korean laws.

It is designated as a Natural Environment Preservation Zone in conformity with Article 13 of the National Land Utilization and Management Act, according to which no alteration may be made to the topography of the site without authorization by the Ministry of Culture and Sports.

Designation as a Cultural Property Protection Zone under the terms of Article 18 of the Urban Planning Act and as an Historic Site in accordance with Articles 6 and 7 of the Cultural Property Preservation Act means that any changes to its existing state require official authorization. There is a formal protection zone of 20m around the entire site.

In addition, a number of the buildings of the complex are designated National Treasures (Injongjon Hall, Injongmun Gate, Sonjongjon Hall, Huijongdang Hall, Taejojon Hall, Old Sonwonjon Shrine, Tonhwamun Gate) or Natural Monuments (Chinese juniper tree, *Actinidia arguta* plum tree).

### Management

The site, which is owned by the Korean State, is managed by the Ch'angdokkung Palace Administration Office as a Cultural Property Preservation Zone and an Historic Site, as laid down in the Urban Planning Act and the Cultural Property Preservation Act. This body has 42 employees and there is also a 35-strong mobile repair team.

Overall supervisory responsibility rests with the Office of Cultural Properties of the Ministry of Culture and Sports. This body collaborates in this work with the Seoul Regional Construction Office of the Ministry of Construction and Transport and the Ministry of Home Affairs (through the Seoul Municipal Government).

Under the terms of the statutory protection, all restoration and repair work must be carried out by authorized specialists. The Office of Cultural Properties has a Cultural Properties Research Institute to assist in this work and to ensure that the results of research and development projects are reflected in restoration and conservation policies.

Funding for all aspects of the management and conservation of the site is provided from the national budget.

There is an on-going management and restoration policy in force.

## **Conservation and Authenticity**

### *Conservation history*

There has been an intensive programme of survey and restoration work in progress since 1964. The nomination dossier lists over thirty major projects that have been carried out during that period, and others are still in progress or scheduled for the immediate future.

### *Authenticity*

The authenticity of Ch'angdokkung Palace should be judged according to the 1994 Nara Document, which stresses the cultural diversity of approaches to restoration and conservation. When judged against the philosophy and practices now acknowledged by ICOMOS as being standard in Asia, Ch'angdokkung Palace has a high level of authenticity.

## **Evaluation**

### *Action by ICOMOS*

An ICOMOS expert mission visited Ch'angdokkung Palace in March 1997.

### *Qualities*

Ch'angdokkung Palace is a remarkable complex of architecture and gardens that has evolved over several centuries. The felicitous siting of the complex within and in response to its natural landscape is one of its most outstanding qualities. It represents the highest artistic and architectural achievements of Korea, and hence of the Asian region.

### *Comparative analysis*

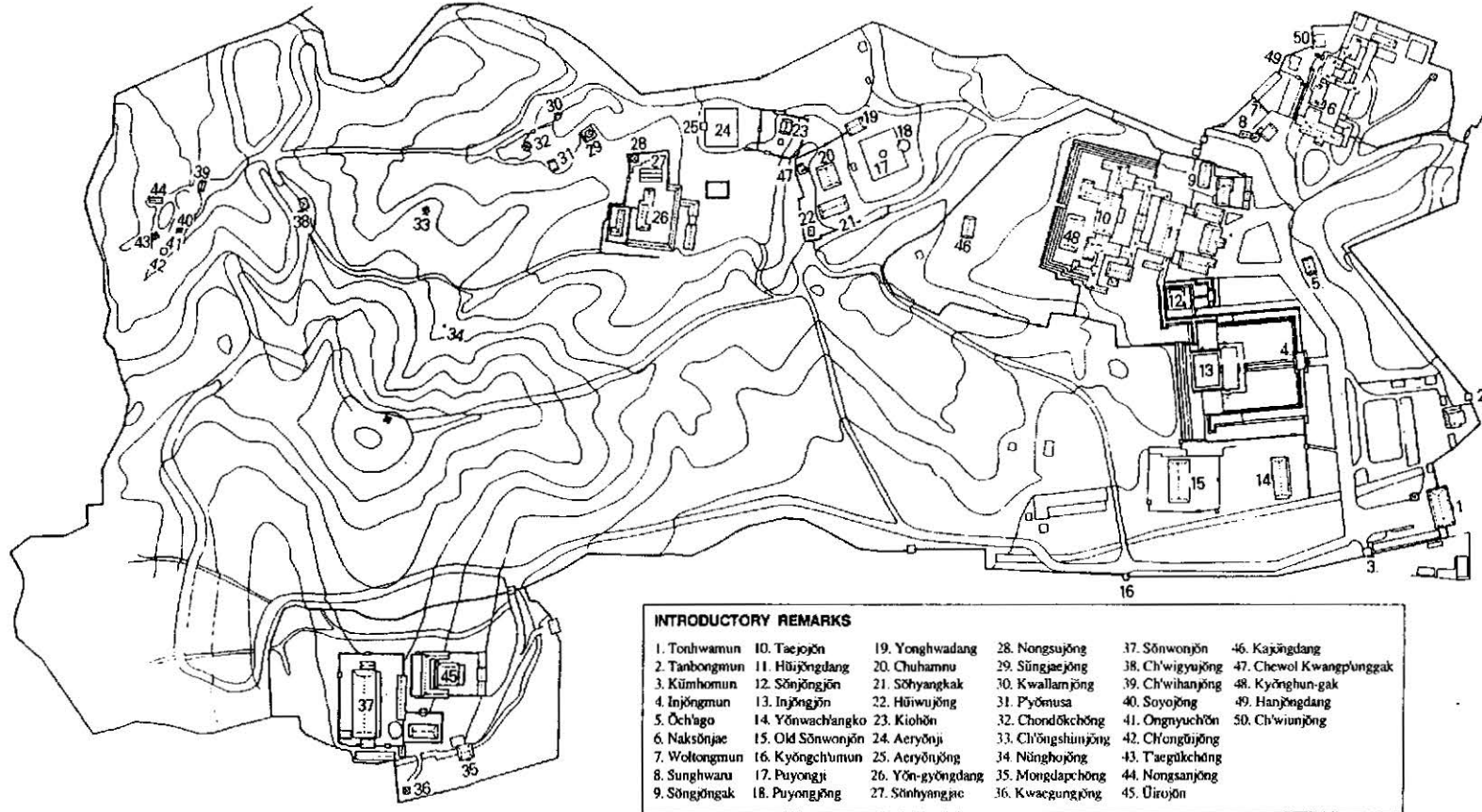
Only two comparable palace complexes exist in this region of east Asia. Both the Imperial Palace in Beijing (China) and the Gosho Palace in Nara (Japan) differ fundamentally from Ch'angdokkung, however, since they are laid out formally and symmetrically on level ground, whereas the layout of Ch'angdokkung conforms with the uneven natural topography of a mountainside.

## **Recommendation**

That this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of *criteria ii, iii, and iv*:

The Ch'angdokkung Palace Compound is an outstanding example of Far Eastern palace architecture and garden design, exceptional for the way in which the buildings are integrated into and harmonized with the natural setting, adapting to the topography and retaining indigenous tree cover.

# CH'ANGDÖKKUNG PALACE

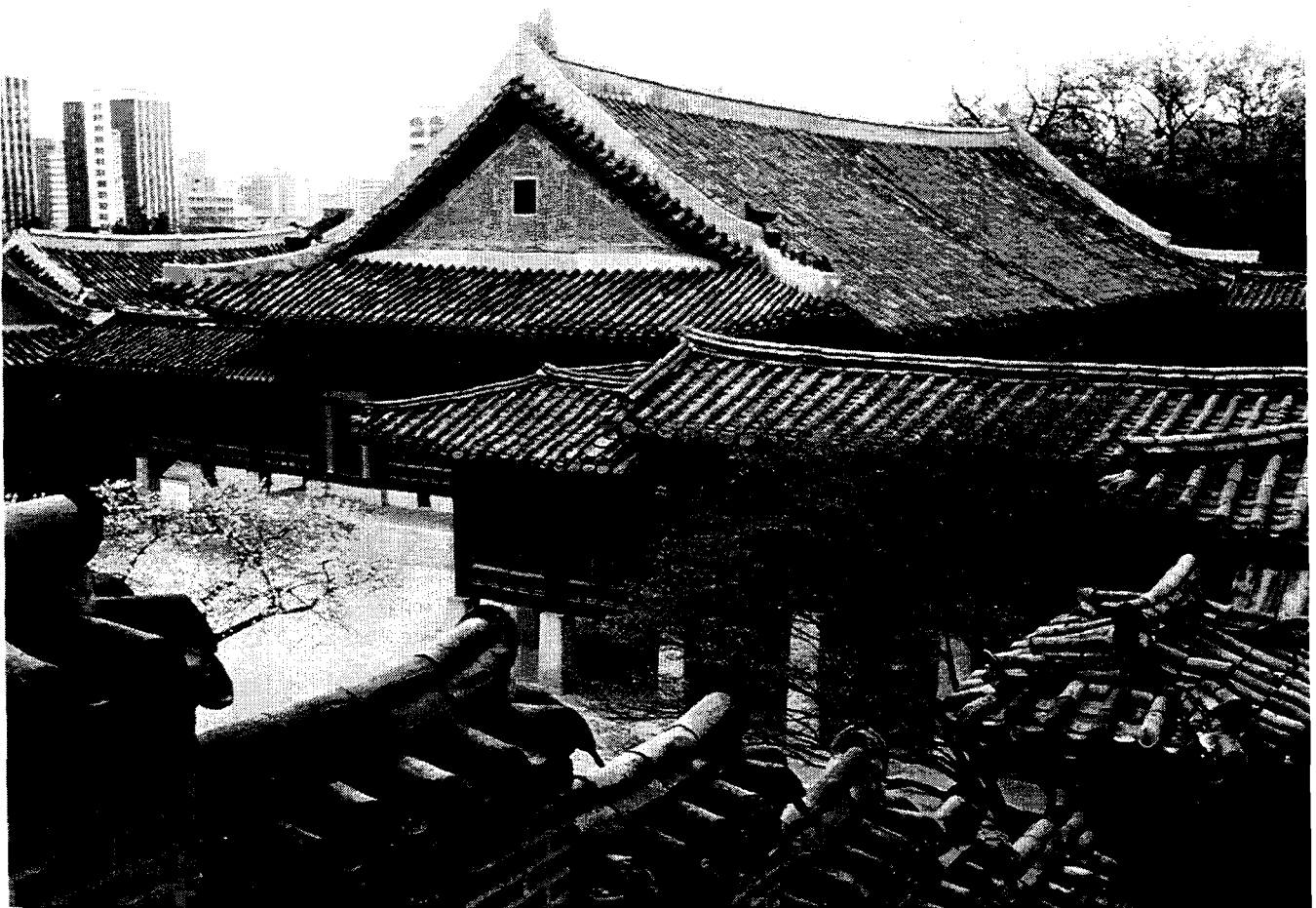


Ch'angdökkung :  
Plan indiquant la disposition du Palais /  
Map showing the layout of the Palace

3. Overall layout of Ch'angdökkung Palace compound ( II )



**Ch'angdokkung :**  
**Vue d'ensemble /**  
**Overall view**



**Ch'angdokkung :**  
**L'ensemble du hall Sonjongjon /**  
**The compound of Sonjongjon Hall**