

Reading Material

The Korean Peninsula and International Relations in Northeast Asia

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<General Background on Korea>

Korea (/kəˈriːə/ kə-REE-ə or /kɔːˈriːə/; Korean: 한국 Hanguk [hanguːk] or 조선 Joseon [tɕosʌn] – (see etymology)) is in East Asian region that is currently divided into two separate sovereign states, North Korea and South Korea. Located on the Korean Peninsula, Korea is bordered by China to the northwest and Russia to the northeast. It is separated from Japan to the east by the Korea Strait and the Sea of Japan (East Sea), and it is separated from Taiwan to the south by the East China Sea.



The adoption of the Chinese writing system ("Hanja" in Korean) in the 2nd century BC, and Buddhism in the 4th century AD, had profound effects on the Three Kingdoms of Korea which was first united during the Silla Dynasty (57 BC - 935) under the king Munmu of Silla. The united Silla dynasty fell to Goryeo Dynasty in 935 at the end of Later Three Kingdoms of Korea era. Goryeo was a highly cultural state and created the Jikji in the 14th century, using the world's first movable metal type printing press. The Mongol invasions in the 13th century, however, greatly weakened the nation which was forced to become a tributary state. After the Mongol Empire's collapse, severe political strife followed and Goryeo was replaced by the Joseon Dynasty in 1388.

The first 200 years of Joseon were marked by relative peace and saw the creation of the Korean alphabet Hangeul by King Sejong the Great in the 14th century and the rise in influence of Confucianism in the country. During the latter part of the dynasty, however, Korea's isolationist policy earned it the Western nickname the "Hermit kingdom". By the late 19th century, the country became the object of the colonial designs of Japan. In 1910, Korea was annexed by Japan and remained a colony until the end of World War II in August 1945.

In 1945, the Soviet Union and the United States agreed on the surrender of Japanese forces in Korea and Soviet troops occupied north of the 38th parallel, while U.S. troops took surrender south of it. This decision by allied armies soon became the basis for the division of Korea by the two superpowers, exacerbated by their inability to agree on the terms of Korean independence. The two Cold War rivals then established governments sympathetic to their own ideologies, leading to Korea's current division into two political entities: North Korea and South Korea. The ensuing conflict between the two was largely a proxy war.

North Korea, officially the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, is a single-party state with a centrally planned industrial economy. South Korea, officially the Republic of Korea, is a free market, democratic, and developed country with membership in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Group of Twenty.

<History>

Prehistory and Gojoseon

Gojoseon's founding legend describes Dangun, a descendent of heaven, as establishing the kingdom in 2333 BC until the fall in 108 BC, although no evidence has been found that supports whatever facts may lie beneath this myth.

The original capital may have been at the Manchuria-Korea border, but was later moved to what is today Pyongyang, North Korea. In 108 BC, the Chinese Han Dynasty defeated Wiman Joseon and installed the Four Commanderies of Han in the area of the northwestern Korean Peninsula and part of the Liaodong Peninsula, leaving many smaller kingdoms and confederacies in the southern and eastern parts of the peninsula. By 75 BC, three of those commanderies had fallen, but the Lelang Commandery remained as a center of cultural and economic exchange with successive Chinese dynasties until 313, when it fell to Goguryeo.

Proto-Three Kingdoms

The Proto-Three Kingdoms period, sometimes called the Several States Period, is the earlier part of what is commonly called the Three Kingdoms Period, following the fall of Gojoseon but before Goguryeo, Baekje, and Silla fully developed into kingdoms.

This time period saw numerous states spring up from the former territories of Gojoseon. Buyeo arose in today's North Korea and southern Manchuria, from about the 2nd century BC to 494. Its remnants were absorbed by Goguryeo in 494, and both Goguryeo and Baekje, two of the Three Kingdoms of Korea, considered themselves its successor. Okjeo and Dongye of northern Korea were eventually absorbed into the growing Goguryeo.

Located in the southern part of the Korean Peninsula, Samhan refers to the three confederacies of Mahan, Jinhan, and Byeonhan. Mahan was the largest and consisted of 54 states. Byeonhan and Jinhan both consisted of twelve states, bringing a total of 78 states within the Samhan. These three confederacies eventually developed into Baekje, Silla, and Gaya.

Three Kingdoms

The Three Kingdoms of Korea (Goguryeo, Silla, and Baekje) dominated the peninsula and parts of Manchuria at beginning of the 1st century AD. They competed with each other both economically and militarily.

Goguryeo united Buyeo, Okjeo, Dongye and other states in the former Gojoseon territory. Goguryeo was the most dominant power; it reached its zenith in the 5th century, when region of the Gwanggaeto the Great and his son, Jangsu expanded territory into almost all of Manchuria and part of inner Mongolia, and took the Seoul region from Baekje. Gwanggaeto and Jangsu subdued Baekje and Silla during their times. After the 7th century, Goguryeo was constantly at war with the Sui and Tang dynasties of China.

Founded around modern day Seoul, the southwestern kingdom Baekje expanded far beyond Pyongyang during the peak of its powers in the 4th century. It had absorbed all of the Mahan states and subjugated most of the western Korean peninsula (including the modern provinces of Gyeonggi, Chungcheong, and Jeolla, as well as part of Hwanghae and Gangwon) to a centralised government. Baekje acquired Chinese culture and technology through contacts with the Southern Dynasties during the expansion of its territory. Historic evidence suggests that Japanese culture,

art, and language were strongly influenced by the kingdom of Baekje and Korea itself.

Although later records claim that Silla, in the southeast, was the oldest of the three kingdoms, it is now believed to have been the last kingdom to develop. By the 2nd century, Silla existed as a large state, occupying and influencing nearby city states. Silla began to gain power when it annexed the Gaya confederacy in AD 562. The Gaya confederacy was located between Baekje and Silla. The three kingdoms of Korea often warred with each other and Silla often faced pressure from Baekje and Goguryeo but at various times Silla also allied with Baekje and Goguryeo in order to gain dominance over the peninsula.

In 660, King Muyeol of Silla ordered his armies to attack Baekje. General Kim Yu-shin (Gim Yu-sin), aided by Tang forces, conquered Baekje. In 661, Silla and Tang moved on Goguryeo but were repelled. King Munmu, son of Muyeol and nephew of General Kim launched another campaign in 667 and Goguryeo fell in the following year.

Unified Silla Period

In the 5th, 6th, and 7th centuries, Silla's power gradually extended across the Korean Peninsula. Silla first annexed the adjacent Gaya confederacy. By the 660s, Silla formed an alliance with the Tang Dynasty of China to conquer Baekje and later Goguryeo. After repelling Chinese forces, Silla partially unified the Peninsula, beginning a period often called Unified Silla.

In the north, former Goguryeo General Dae Joyeong led a group of Goguryeo refugees to the Jilin area in Manchuria and founded Balhae (698 - 926) as the successor to Goguryeo. At its height, Balhae's territory extended from northern Manchuria down to the northern provinces of modern-day Korea. Balhae was destroyed by the Khitans in 926.

Unified Silla fell apart in the late 9th century, giving way to the tumultuous Later Three Kingdoms period (892-935). Goryeo unified the Later Three Kingdoms and absorbed Balhae refugees.

Goryeo

The country Goryeo was founded in 918 and replaced Silla as the ruling dynasty of Korea. ("Goryeo" is a short form of "Goguryeo" and the source of the English name "Korea".) The dynasty lasted until 1392.

During this period laws were codified, and a civil service system was introduced. Buddhism flourished, and spread throughout the peninsula. The development of celadon industry flourished in 12th and 13th century. The publication of Tripitaka Korean onto 80,000 wooden blocks and the invention of the world's first movable-metal-type printing press in 13th century attest to Goryeo's cultural achievements.

Their dynasty was threatened by Mongol invasions from the 1230s into the 1270s, but the dynastic line continued to survive until 1392 since they negotiated a treaty with the Mongols that kept its sovereign power.

In 1350s, King Gongmin was free at last to reform a Goryeo government. Gongmin had various problems that needed to be dealt with, which included the removal of pro-Mongol aristocrats and military officials, the question of land holding, and quelling the growing animosity between the Buddhists and Confucian scholars.

Joseon

In 1392, the general Yi Seong-gye established the Joseon Dynasty (1392–1910) with a largely bloodless coup. He named it the Joseon Dynasty in honor of the previous Joseon before (Gojoseon is the first Joseon. "Go", meaning "old", was added to distinguish between the two).

Joseon experienced advances in science and culture. King Sejong the Great (1418–1450) promulgated hangul, the Korean alphabet. The period saw various other cultural and technological advances as well as the dominance of neo-Confucianism over the entire peninsula. Slaves, nobi, are estimated to have accounted for about one third of the population of Joseon Korea.

Between 1592 and 1598, the Japanese invaded Korea. Toyotomi Hideyoshi ordered the forces and tried to invade the Asian continent through Korea, but was completely defeated by a Righteous army, Admiral Yi Sun-sin and assistance from Ming China. This war also saw the rise of the career of Admiral Yi Sun-sin with the "turtle ship". Japanese warriors brought back to Japan as war trophies an estimated 100,000-200,000 noses cut from Korean victims. In the 1620s and 1630s Joseon suffered invasions by the Manchu.

After invasions from Manchuria, Joseon experienced a nearly 200-year period of peace. King Yeongjo and King Jeongjo led a new renaissance of the Joseon dynasty.

However, during the last years of the Joseon Dynasty, Korea's isolationist policy earned it the

name the "Hermit Kingdom", primarily for protection against Western imperialism before it was forced to open trade beginning an era leading into Japanese colonial rule.

Korean Empire

The earliest surviving depiction of the Korean / South Korean flag was printed in a US Navy book *Flags of Maritime Nations* in July 1889.

Beginning in the 1870s, Japan began to force Korea out of the Manchu Qing Dynasty's traditional sphere of influence into its own. As a result of the Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895), the Qing Dynasty had to give up such a position according to Article 1 of the Treaty of Shimonoseki, which was concluded between China and Japan in 1895. That same year, Empress Myeongseong was assassinated by Japanese agents.

In 1897, the Joseon dynasty proclaimed the Korean Empire (1897–1910), and King Gojong became Emperor Gojong. This brief period saw the partially successful modernization of the military, economy, real property laws, education system, and various industries, influenced by the political encroachment into Korea of Russia, Japan, France, and the United States.

In 1904, the Russo-Japanese War pushed the Russians out of the fight for Korea. In Manchuria on October 26, 1909, An Jung-geun assassinated the former Resident-General of Korea, Itō Hirobumi for his role in trying to force Korea into occupation.

Japanese occupation

In 1910, an already militarily occupied Korea was a forced party to the Japan-Korea Annexation Treaty. The treaty was signed by Lee Wan-Yong, who was given the General Power of Attorney by the Emperor. However, the Emperor is said to have not actually ratified the treaty according to Yi Tae-jin. There is a long dispute whether this treaty was legal or illegal due to its signing under duress, threat of force and bribes.

Korean resistance to the brutal Japanese occupation was manifested in the nonviolent March 1st Movement of 1919, where 7,000 demonstrators were killed by Japanese police and military. The Korean liberation movement also spread to neighboring Manchuria and Siberia.

Over five million Koreans were conscripted for labor beginning in 1939, and tens of thousands of

men were forced into Japan's military. Close to 400,000 Korean laborers lost their lives due to the war. Approximately 200,000 girls and women, mostly from China and Korea, were forced into sexual slavery for the Japanese military. In 1993, Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono acknowledged the terrible injustices faced by these euphemistically named "comfort women".

During the Japanese Colonial rule, the Korean language was suppressed in an effort to eradicate Korean national identity. Koreans were forced to take Japanese surnames, known as Sōshi-kaimei. Traditional Korean culture suffered heavy losses, as numerous Korean cultural artifacts were destroyed or taken to Japan. To this day, valuable Korean artifacts can often be found in Japanese museums or among private collections. One investigation by the South Korean government identified 75,311 cultural assets that were taken from Korea, 34,369 in Japan and 17,803 in the United States. However, experts estimate that over 100,000 artifacts actually remain in Japan. Japanese officials considered returning Korean cultural properties, but to date this has not occurred. Korea and Japan still dispute the ownership of the Dok-do, located east of the Korean Peninsula.

There was a significant level of emigration to the overseas territories of the Empire of Japan during the Japanese colonial period, including Korea. By the end of World War II, there were over 850,000 Japanese settlers in Korea. After World War II, most of these overseas Japanese repatriated to Japan.

Division of Korea

With the surrender of Japan in 1945 the United Nations developed plans for a trusteeship administration, the Soviet Union administering the peninsula north of the 38th parallel and the United States administering the south. The politics of the Cold War resulted in the 1948 establishment of two separate governments, North Korea and South Korea.

The aftermath of World War II left Korea partitioned along the 38th parallel, with the north under Soviet occupation and the south under the occupation of other allied countries. Consequently, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, a Soviet-style socialist regime, was established in the north while the Republic of Korea, a Western-style republic, was established in the south. The Korean War broke out when Soviet-backed North Korea invaded South Korea, though neither side gained much territory as a result. The Korean Peninsula remains divided, the Korean Demilitarized Zone being the de facto border between the two states.

In June 1950 North Korea invaded the South, using Soviet tanks and weaponry. During the Korean War (1950–1953) millions of civilians died and the three years of fighting throughout the nation effectively destroyed most cities. Around 125,000 POWs were captured and held by the Americans and South Koreans on Geojedo (an island in the south). The war ended in an Armistice Agreement at approximately the Military Demarcation Line.

Since the 1960s, the South Korean economy has grown enormously and the economic structure was radically transformed. In 1957 South Korea had a lower per capita GDP than Ghana, and by 2008 it was 17 times as high as Ghana's.

The North Korean famine began in 1995 and peaked in 1997. According to South Korea intelligence agency, an internal report by North Korea's Public Security Ministry estimates North Korea lost 2.5 million to 3 million lives from 1995 to March 1998.

Tensions continue to this day, but the political arena is a far more complicated one. Recently America has expressed concerns over North Korea's provocation of South Korea by carrying out shelling of the island of Yeonpyeong, which itself lies on a disputed sea border between the two countries.

<Geography>

Korea is located on the Korean Peninsula in North-East Asia. To the northwest, the Amnok River (Yalu River) separates Korea from China and to the northeast; the Duman River (Tumen River) separates Korea from China and Russia. The Yellow Sea is to the west, the East China Sea and Korea Strait is to the south, and the Sea of Japan is to the east. Notable islands include Jeju Island (Jejudo), Ulleung Island (Ulleungdo), and Liancourt Rocks (Dokdo).

The southern and western parts of the peninsula have well-developed plains, while the eastern and northern parts are mountainous. The highest mountain in Korea is Mount Paektu or Paektusan (2,744 m), through which runs the border with China. The southern extension of Mount Paektu is a highland called Gaema Heights. This highland was mainly raised during the Cenozoic orogeny and partly covered by volcanic matter. To the south of Gaema Gowon, successive high mountains are located along the eastern coast of the peninsula. This mountain range is named Baekdudaegan. Some significant mountains include Mount Sobaek or Sobaeksan (1,439 m), Mount Kumgang or Kumgangsan (1,638 m), Mount Seorak or Seoraksan (1,708 m), Mount Taebaek or Taebaeksan (1,567 m), and Mount Jiri or Jirisan (1,915 m). There are several lower,

secondary mountain series whose direction is almost perpendicular to that of Baekdudaegan. They are developed along the tectonic line of Mesozoic orogeny and their directions are basically northwest.

Unlike most ancient mountains on the mainland, many important islands in Korea were formed by volcanic activity in the Cenozoic orogeny. Jeju Island, situated off the southern coast, is a large volcanic island whose main mountain Mount Halla or Hallasan (1950 m) is the highest in South Korea. Ulleung Island is a volcanic island in the Sea of Japan, whose composition is more felsic than Jeju-do. The volcanic islands tend to be younger, the more westward.

Because the mountainous region is mostly on the eastern part of the peninsula, the main rivers tend to flow westwards. Two exceptions are the southward-flowing Nakdong River (Nakdonggang) and Seomjin River (Seomjingang). Important rivers running westward include the Amnok River, the Chongchon River (Chongchongang), the Taedong River (Taedonggang), the Han River (Hangang), the Geum River (Geumgang), and the Yeongsan River (Yeongsangang). These rivers have vast flood plains and provide an ideal environment for wet-rice cultivation.

The southern and southwestern coastlines of Korea form a well-developed ria coastline, known as Dadohae-jin in Korean. Its convoluted coastline provides mild seas, and the resulting calm environment allows for safe navigation, fishing, and seaweed farming. In addition to the complex coastline, the western coast of the Korean Peninsula has an extremely high tidal amplitude (at Incheon, around the middle of the western coast. It can get as high as 9 m). Vast tidal flats have been developing on the south and west coastlines.

<Culture and arts>

In ancient Chinese texts, Korea is referred to as "Rivers and Mountains Embroidered on Silk" (금수강산, 錦繡江山) and "Eastern Nation of Decorum" (동방예의지국, 東方禮儀之國). Individuals are regarded as one year old when they are born, as Koreans reckon the pregnancy period as one year of life for infants, and age increments increase on New Year's Day rather than on the anniversary of birthdays. Thus, one born immediately before New Year's Day may only be a few days old in western reckoning, but two years old in Korea. Accordingly, a Korean person's stated age (at least among fellow Koreans) will be one or two





years more than their age according to western reckoning. However, western reckoning is sometimes applied with regard to the concept of legal age; for example, the legal age for purchasing alcohol or cigarettes in the Republic of Korea is 19, which is measured according to western reckoning.

<Literature>

Korean literature written before the end of the Joseon Dynasty is called "Classical" or "Traditional." Literature, written in Chinese characters (hanja), was established at the same time as the Chinese script arrived on the peninsula. Korean scholars were writing poetry in the classical Korean style as early as the 2nd century BC, reflecting Korean thoughts and experiences of that time. Classical Korean literature has its roots in traditional folk beliefs and folk tales of the peninsula, strongly influenced by Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism.

Modern literature is often linked with the development of hangul, which helped spread literacy from the aristocracy to the common people and women. Hangul, however, only reached a dominant position in Korean literature in the second half of the 19th century, resulting in a major growth in Korean literature. Sinsoseol, for instance, are novels written in hangul.

The Korean War led to the development of literature centered on the wounds and chaos of war. Much of the post-war literature in South Korea deals with the daily lives of ordinary people, and their struggles with national pain. The collapse of the traditional Korean value system is another common theme of the time.

<Religion>

Confucian tradition has dominated Korean thought, along with contributions by Buddhism, Taoism, and Korean Shamanism. Since the middle of the 20th century, however, Christianity has competed with Buddhism in South Korea, while religious practice has been suppressed in North Korea. Throughout Korean history and culture, regardless of separation; the influence of traditional beliefs of Korean Shamanism,



Mahayana Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism have remained an underlying religion of the Korean people as well as a vital aspect of their culture; all these traditions have coexisted peacefully for hundreds of years up to today despite strong Westernization from Christian missionary conversions in the South or the pressure from Communism's Juche government in the North.

According to 2005 statistics compiled by the South Korean government, about 46% of citizens profess to follow no particular religion. Christians account for 29.2% of the population (of which are Protestants 18.3% and Catholics 10.9%) and Buddhists 22.8%.

Islam in South Korea is practiced by about 45,000 natives (about 0.09% of the population) in addition to some 100,000 foreign workers from Muslim countries.

<Cuisine>



Korean cuisine is probably best known for kimchi, a side dish which uses a distinctive fermentation process of preserving vegetables, most commonly cabbage. Kimchi is said to relieve the pores on the skin, thereby reducing wrinkles and providing nutrients to the skin naturally. It is also healthy, as it provides necessary vitamins and nutrients. Gochujang (Korean traditional sauce made of red pepper) is also commonly used, often as pepper

(chilli) paste, earning the cuisine a reputation for being spicy.

Bulgogi (roasted marinated meat, usually beef), galbi (marinated grilled short ribs), and samgyeopsal (pork belly) are popular meat entrees. Fish is also a popular commodity, as it is the traditional meat that Koreans eat. Meals are usually accompanied by a soup or stew, such as galbitang (stewed ribs) and doenjang jjigae (fermented bean paste soup). The center of the table is filled with a shared collection of side dishes called banchan.

Other popular dishes include bibimbap which literally means "mixed rice" (rice mixed with meat, vegetables,



and red pepper paste) and naengmyeon (cold noodles).

A popular Korean dish is gimbab (also kimbap), made from steamed white rice (bap) and various other ingredients including meat and vegetables. This is rolled in gim (sheets of dried laver seaweed) and served in bite-size slices. Gimbap is often eaten during picnics or outdoor events, or as a light lunch, served with danmuji or kimchi. While an increasingly wide variety of ingredients are used in gimbap, fish (raw or cooked) is rarely used, perhaps due to gimbap's origin as a portable, packable snack, as fish could quickly spoil if not refrigerated.

Instant noodles are also a very popular snack food. Koreans also enjoy food from pojangmachas (street vendors), where one can buy tteokbokki (rice cake and fish cake with a spicy gochujang sauce), fried squid and glazed sweet potato. Soondae, a sausage made of cellophane noodles and pork blood, is widely eaten. There is also an instant noodle called "Ramyun" which is spicy for non-Koreans.

Additionally, some of other common snacks includes "Choco Pie", shrimp cracker, "bbungtigi" (fried rice cracker), and "nu lung ji" (slightly burnt rice). Nu lung ji can be eaten as it is or boiled with water to make a soup. Nu lung ji can be eaten as a snack or a dessert.

<Education>

The modern Korean school system consists of six years in elementary school, three years in middle school, and three years in high school. Students are required to go to elementary and middle school, and do not have to pay for their education, except for a small fee called a "School Operation Support Fee" that differs from school to school. The Program for International Student Assessment, coordinated by the OECD, currently ranks South Korea's science education as the third best in the world and being significantly higher than the OECD average.

Korea also ranks second on math and literature and first in problem solving. Although South Korean students often rank high on international comparative tests, the education system is sometimes criticized for its emphasis on passive learning and memorization. The Korean education system is much more strict and structured than the education systems of most Western societies. Also, high cost and dependence on non-school private institutions (Hagwon), a for-profit private institute, academy or cram-school prevalent in South Korea, is criticized as a major social problem. After students enter university, however, the situation is markedly reversed.

<Science and technology>

One of the best known artifacts of Korea's history of science and technology is Cheomseongdae, a 9.4-meter high observatory built in 634.

The earliest known surviving Korean example of woodblock printing is the Mugujeonggwang Great Dharani Sutra. It is believed to have been printed in Korea in 750-751 AD which, if correct, would make it older than the Diamond Sutra. Goryeo silk was highly regarded by Westerners and Korean pottery made with blue-green celadon was of the highest quality and sought after by even Arabian merchants. Goryeo had a bustling economy with a capital that was frequented by merchants from all over the known world.

During the Joseon period the Geobukseon (turtle Ship) was invented, which were covered by a wooden deck and iron with thorns, as well as other weapons such as the bigyeokjincheolloe cannon and the hwacha.

The Korean alphabet hangul was also invented during this time by King Sejong the Great.

<Korea Traditional Sport>

While association football remains one of the most popular sports in Korea, the martial art of taekwondo is still considered to be the national traditional sport. Baseball is also increasing in popularity.

Taekwondo

Taekwondo is the national sport of Korea and one of the country's most famous sports. According to ancient Korean history, soldiers learned taekwondo as a principal source of physical training. It combines combat techniques, self-defense, sport, exercise and in some cases meditation and philosophy. Taekwondo has become an official Olympic sport, starting as a demonstration event in 1988 and becoming an official medal event in 2000.



Hapkido

Hapkido is a Korean martial art similar to Jujutsu that employs joint locks, throws, kicks, punches and other striking attacks like attacks against pressure points. Hapkido emphasizes circular motion, non-resisting movements and control of the opponent. Practitioners seek to gain advantage through footwork and body positioning to employ leverage, avoiding the pure use of strength against strength.

Ssireum

Ssireum is a form of wrestling that has been practiced in Korea for thousands of years, with evidence discovered from the Three Kingdoms Period (57 BC to 688). Ssireum is the traditional national sport of Korea. During a match, opponents grip each other by sash belts wrapped around the waist and the thigh, attempting to throw their competitor to the sandy ground of the ring. The first opponent to touch the ground with anybody part above the knee or to lose hold of their opponent loses the round.



Ssireum competitions are traditionally held twice a year, during the Tano Festival (the 5th day of the fifth lunar month) and Chuseok (the 15th day of the 8th lunar month). Competitions are also held throughout the year as a part of festivals and other events.