

## Editorial Note

### The Current Status and Future Challenges of *Uigwe* Research

Kim Moon-sik  
Professor, Dankook University

*Uigwe* (royal protocols) stand out as the crowning jewel of the documentary heritage of the Joseon (朝鮮, 1392–1910) royal court. They offer a record of important events concerning both the Joseon royal family and the nation. More specifically, they document the orders issued by the king regarding certain events, the official papers exchanged among the government offices in charge of these events, the division of duties among the different government offices, the positions and names of the individuals overseeing the execution of events, the lists of participants, the kinds of supplies needed and expenses incurred, as well as the rewards bestowed upon meritorious individuals following the completion of events. The details found within *uigwe* allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of the proper execution of major events, thereby preventing national resources from being wasted or spent elsewhere in the future.

Another distinctive feature of *uigwe* is the inclusion of beautiful documentary paintings and illustrations. These documentary paintings (班次圖, *banchado*) vividly portray the kings' royal processions in their entirety, while the illustrations (圖說, *doseol*) depict the items and buildings used for royal events as well as the arrangements of the event personnel. These meticulous and colorful paintings and illustrations provide readers with a realistic representation of the events, allowing them to grasp little details concerning items and buildings that could not be understood through text alone. Accordingly, *uigwe* can be seen as comprehensive reports that offer a seamless blend of textual records and images.

The compilation of *uigwe* by the Joseon royal court dates back to the early days of the dynasty. In China, books also referred to as “*uigwe*” emerged in the Southern and Northern Dynasties period (420–589). In Korea, *uigwe* had previously been produced in the form of Buddhist and Daoist ritual manuals during the Goryeo period (高麗, 918–1392), but *uigwe* documenting the events of the state and of the Joseon royal family first appeared in the early Joseon Dynasty. The use of the term *uigwe* in book titles started with the *Gyeongbokgung joseong uigwe* (景福宮造成儀軌, Royal Protocol for the Construction of Gyeongbokgung Palace) published in 1395 (the fourth year of the reign of King Taejo). Unfortunately, all of the *uigwe* published in the early Joseon period appear to have been destroyed during the Japanese Invasions of Korea (1592–1598).

Among the surviving *uigwe*, the oldest examples are the

volumes produced in 1601 (the thirty-fourth year of the reign of King Seonjo). They include *uigwe* recording the repair of stone railings for the placenta chamber of King Sejong (世宗, r. 1418–1450) in the third lunar month of 1601 and other volumes produced for the state funeral of Queen Jain, the wife of King Seonjo (宣祖, r. 1567–1608), in the sixth lunar month of the same year. *Uigwe* continued to be published through the Korean Empire period (大韓帝國, 1897–1910) which followed the Joseon Dynasty in 1897, and even after the collapse of the Korean Empire in 1910, the *Yiwangjik* (Yi Royal Household Agency) continued to produce them. Books titled “*uigwe*” continued being published until 1942, but the final *uigwe* in a proper format is the one compiled in 1928 following the enshrinement of the memorial tablets of Emperor Sunjong (純宗, r. 1907–1910) and Empress Sunmyeonghyo at the *Jongmyo* Royal Ancestral Shrine.

In the late Joseon period, the largest number of *uigwe* were compiled during the reign of King Yeongjo (英祖, r. 1724–1776), although a wide variety of *uigwe* were also produced during the reigns of King Sukjong (肅宗, r. 1674–1720), King Sunjo (純祖, r. 1800–1834), and King Gojong (高宗, r. 1863–1907). A total of sixty-eight different types of *uigwe* were created during the Korean Empire period, reflecting the efforts to equip the nation with state rites befitting its status as an empire.

In terms of their contents, the majority of *uigwe* dealt with the state funerals of kings and queens, followed by publications and revisions of books. *Uigwe* were also produced regarding the conferring of posthumous honorific titles to royal family members in praise of their achievements, to record the details of building or repairing royal palace buildings, and for various other special purposes. In total, over 600 types of *uigwe* have survived.

*Uigwe* can be divided into handwritten and metal type print versions. The handwritten versions were produced in sets of five to nine copies, while over 100 copies could be printed using metal type. Some of the printed *uigwe* were stored at government offices, and others were distributed to the participants who took part in the relevant events. *Uigwe* were produced either to be read by the king or to be stored at the various designated institutions. Versions for the king featured elegant calligraphy, beautiful documentary paintings and illustrations, and fancy binding. Traditionally, one copy of each *uigwe* was produced for the king. However, during the Korean Empire period, there were instances

where two to four additional copies were made to be distributed among imperial family members as well. *Uigwe* copies intended for the king were housed at the *Gyujanggak* Royal Library and *Oegyujanggak* Outer Royal Library while other copies were kept at the *Uiijeongbu* (State Council), *Yejo* (Bureau of Rites), *Chunchugwan* (Bureau of State Records), and the four national history archives.

The *uigwe* of the Joseon royal court were inscribed on the UNESCO Memory of the World Register in 2007 in recognition of their archival value. In 2016, they were officially designated as national cultural heritage of South Korea. However, the *uigwe* belonging to the collection of the Bibliothèque nationale de France were excluded from inscription on the UNESCO register. All *uigwe* that had been produced through 1910 were included in the designation as national cultural heritage. Those published by the *Yiwangjik* were excluded from the cultural heritage designation since they were viewed as not following the same principles as those written during the Joseon Dynasty.

Major institutions currently holding *uigwe* from the Joseon royal court include the Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies at Seoul National University, the Jangseogak Royal Library at the Academy of Korean Studies, the National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage (NRICH), the National Palace Museum of Korea, and the National Museum of Korea.

The Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies houses 2,897 *uigwe* volumes divided into 533 types, spanning a wide range of periods from the reign of King Seonjo through the reign of King Gojong. They had originally been stored at the State Council, Bureau of Rites, Bureau of State Records, and the Odaesan, Jeongjoksan, and Taebaeksan National History Archives. The Jangseogak Royal Library holds 566 volumes of *uigwe* divided into 268 types which had originally been housed in several places, including the Jeoksangsan National History Archives, Bureau of Rites, and *Seonwonjeon* (Hall of Royal Portraits). The *uigwe* from the Jeoksangsan National History Archives make up a considerable portion of the collection. The *uigwe* currently at the Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies and the Jangseogak Royal Library were managed by the Japanese Government-General of Korea during the colonial era.

The *uigwe* managed by the Cultural Heritage Administration are being stored at the NRICH and the National Palace Museum of Korea. The NRICH holds fourteen types of *uigwe*, totaling

fifteen volumes, which were previously housed at the Jangseogak Library in Changdeokkung Palace during the Japanese colonial era along with the *uigwe* currently being stored at the Jangseogak Royal Library of the Academy of Korean Studies. The National Palace Museum of Korea holds seventy-two types of *uigwe* totaling 159 volumes. Returned from the Imperial Household Agency in Japan in 2011, the majority of these volumes were compiled during the reigns of Emperor Gojong and Emperor Sunjong and taken to the Library of the Imperial Household Agency in Japan in 1922 by the Japanese Government-General of Korea. The *uigwe* at the National Palace Museum of Korea had originally been housed alongside those currently in the Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies at the time they were taken to Japan.

The National Museum of Korea holds 294 volumes of *uigwe*, divided into 186 types, which were returned from the Bibliothèque nationale de France in 2011. Of these 294 volumes, 289 were intended for the king. Among them, twenty-nine volumes, comprising twenty-six different types, are single copies that had originally been stored at the OeGyujanggak Outer Royal Library in Ganghwado Island until they were looted by the French forces in 1866 during the French Campaign against Korea. These include *uigwe* from the reign of King Injo (仁祖, r. 1623–1649) through the reign of King Cheoljong (哲宗, r. 1849–1863), most of which were produced for the king's perusal.

Research conducted on *uigwe* until now can be divided into basic research and field-specific research.

Basic research entails cataloging and summarizing each *uigwe* volume. To this end, the Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies and the Jangseogak Royal Library published a list of *uigwe* held by each institution and summarized the content of each volume. In 1992, Dr. Park Byeong-seon published a catalogue containing a list of the *uigwe* volumes that had originally been stored at the Oegyujanggak Outer Royal Library before being taken to the Bibliothèque nationale de France. In 2003, Korean experts (including myself) inspected them in Paris and published a catalogue with explanatory notes. After these *uigwe* from the Oegyujanggak Outer Royal Library were returned to South Korea in 2011, the National Museum of Korea undertook a project aimed at producing in-depth summaries of their contents, which was completed in 2015.

Basic research also includes the translation of *uigwe* from

Literary Sinitic into modern Korean. Several institutions have participated in this translation project. The city of Suwon and the Gyeonggi Cultural Foundation translated the *Hwaseong seongyeok uigwe* (Royal Protocol for the Construction of Hwaseong Fortress) and *Wonhaeng eulmyo jeongni uigwe* (Royal Protocol Recording the Process of King Jeongjo Paying His Respects at the Tomb of His Father King Jangjo and His Return), both of which are related to the Hwaseong Fortress in Suwon. Since 1997, the Institute for the Translation of Korean Classics has been publishing *uigwe* translations. The Korea National University of Arts and the National Gugak Center have mainly translated *uigwe* regarding royal banquets and the production of musical instruments, which contain a wealth of data on music. The NRICH has translated *uigwe* managed by the Cultural Heritage Administration related to state funerals, royal tombs, and placenta chambers, while the National Palace Museum of Korea has been translating the *uigwe* in its collection as well.

In the case of field-specific research on *uigwe*, there was a slow rise in the volume of such research until 2000, followed by a sharp increase afterward. This surge can be attributed to the work of researchers who participated in the publication of *uigwe* lists and explanatory notes by the Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies and Jangseogak Royal Library from 2002 through 2006. The National Museum of Korea's completion of in-depth summaries of the *uigwe* from the Oegyujanggak Outer Royal Library in 2015 led to a large volume of research being conducted on these *uigwe*.

A considerable portion of the field-specific research consists of theses and dissertations that closely examine individual rituals, ceremonies, and events based on the *uigwe* summaries derived from basic research, allowing some researchers to further develop their work into books. There are also publications focusing on specific types of similar *uigwe* as well as collaborative works in which multiple experts from different fields conducted joint examinations of *uigwe*. Since 2012, the National Museum of Korea has been publishing a series of academic research books dedicated to the *uigwe* from the Oegyujanggak Outer Royal Library. The series started with *The Current Status and Prospects of Joseon Wangjo Uigwe*, and six volumes have been published to date.

Most researchers currently involved in the study of *uigwe* are specialists in Korean history, although others with expertise in

diverse fields such as costume history, architectural history, music history, art history, and bibliography, have also participated in *uigwe* research.

This issue of the *Journal of Korean Art and Archaeology* features five articles based on recent studies that effectively highlight the material characteristics of *uigwe*. Two of them provide a general discussion on *uigwe*, while the other three offer an analysis of the *uigwe* from the Oegyujanggak Outer Royal Library.

"History of *Uigwe* Research in the Field of Korean History" by Kim JiYoung presents the results of *uigwe* studies that have been conducted in the field of Korean history in commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the return of the Oegyujanggak Outer Royal Library *uigwe*. In her article, Kim categorizes research topics into royal weddings, royal funerals, the enshrinement of memorial tablets at the Jongmyo Royal Ancestral Shrine, the honoring, installation, and veneration of the king's birth parents, the production of royal portraits and their enshrinement in *Jinjeon* Hall, the publication of books, and the royal processions of the king, offering a summary of the results for each research topic. The article also notes a deepening of the understanding of Joseon royal culture in recent years, with emerging research shedding light on the political meaning of royal events.

"*Uigwe* Production Process during the Joseon Period" by Kim Moon-sik details the production process of *uigwe* by analyzing the *Uigwe samok* (Regulations on *Uigwe*) included in fourteen different types of *uigwe*. The article examines where *Uigwecheong* (Office for the Royal Protocols) were established and what officials served there, the items required for the production of *uigwe*, the number of *uigwe* produced, and the locations where the completed *uigwe* were distributed. Furthermore, the article explains how the appearance of volumes intended for the king changed following the establishment of Korean Empire in 1897 along with how the *Uigwecheong* went about procuring the needed supplies.

"The *Oegyujanggak Uigwe*: Progress and Current Status of Research" by Yu Sae-rom summarizes the research findings on the *Oegyujanggak uigwe* after their return from France. The article traces the history of the *Oegyujanggak uigwe*, from being initially housed on Ganghwado Island, to being looted by invading French forces, and finally being repatriated to Korea. It also provides a detailed summary of the material value and visual features of the *Oegyujanggak uigwe*. Moreover, the article

introduces the current status of research on the *Oegyujanggak uigwe* in the fields of Korean history, architectural history, art history, costume history, and music history.

“The Organization and Roles of the *Dogam* for Producing the *Uigwe* for the Appointment and Rewarding of “*Bunmu*” Meritorious Subjects in the Early Years of the Reign of King Yeongjo” by Lim Hyekyung offers an in-depth analysis of the *Bunmu nokhun dogam uigwe* (Royal Protocol for the Appointment and Rewarding of *Bunmu* Meritorious Subjects), a lone surviving copy included among the *uigwe* of the Oegyujanggak Outer Royal Library. The article introduces details on the activities of the *nokhun dogam* for appointing assistant meritorious subjects after the suppression of Yi Injwa’s Rebellion in 1728, the production of the certificates (*nokgwon*) and items bestowed upon these individuals, and the preparation of a *hoemaengje* ritual in which the king and the meritorious subjects vowed in front of the gods of heaven and earth never to betray each other. It also details the activities of the *uigwe dogam* in charge of producing *uigwe* recording the activities of the *nokhun dogam*. This article aptly demonstrates the level of elaboration and practicality aimed for by the *uigwe* records.

“The Iconography of Four Animal Paintings Found inside *Changung* Coffin Containers as Depicted in Joseon Dynasty-era *Uigwe* for Mournful Ceremonies” by Myeong Sera scrutinizes the iconography of the four animal paintings (*sasudo*) depicted in *Binjeon dogam uigwe* (Royal Protocols for the Coffin Halls) and *Salleung dogam uigwe* (Royal Protocols for the Construction of Royal Tombs). A *changung* refers to a coffin container built to temporarily store the coffin of a king or queen in the *binjeon* coffin hall within a royal palace and at the *Jeongjagak* Hall within the precincts of a royal tomb. The walls inside a *changung* bore paintings of the azure dragon (*cheongryong*), white tiger (*baekho*), red phoenix (*jujo* or *jujak*), and black tortoise (*hyeonmu*). The iconography of these four animals changed over time, such as the red phoenix which underwent a marked change before and after 1757 (the thirty-third year of the reign of King Yeongjo). The initial depiction of a mythical *bonghwang* bird incorporating elements of a three-headed falcon and three-legged crow evolved into a more realistic portrayal of red bird flying across the sky. The iconography of a white tiger differed between *uigwe* intended for the king and those to be stored in various other places. Similarly, the representation of black tortoise switched from

an image made up of the intertwined bodies of a tortoise and snake that seem to be gazing at one another to a more realistic depiction of a turtle. This article aptly demonstrates the quality of the documentary paintings included in *uigwe*.

The volume of research on *uigwe* experienced a dramatic surge around 2000 with the completion of a list cataloging all existing *uigwe* volumes and the undertaking of a project to summarize each one. The repatriation of *uigwe* volumes from France and Japan to Korea in 2011 led to a diversification of research themes and improvement in the quality of research. Future studies on *uigwe* will require connecting the *uigwe* records with extant artifacts, examining the *uigwe* records along with transcribed daily logs (*deungnok*), expanding the scope of the spatial topics of research centered around royal palaces and the Jongmyo Royal Ancestral Shrine, and exploring the state-run system for operating royal events.

As stated at the outset of this editorial note, *uigwe* can be regarded as the pinnacle of the documentary heritage of the Joseon royal court. Careful use and in-depth research on *uigwe* in the future is expected to produce greater academic and cultural outcomes.