

Memories of Liberation Preserved in National Parks...Honoring the Spirit and Legacy of Our Forebears

- Revisiting the historical and cultural resources related to the independence movement preserved in national parks for National Liberation Day

The Korea National Park Service (KNPS, Chairman Joo Dae-yeong), under the Ministry of Climate, Energy and Environment (MCEE), announced that, in commemoration of the 81st anniversary of National Liberation Day, it is introducing historical and cultural resources within national parks that embody the significance of the independence movement and Korea's liberation, while strengthening the foundation for preserving these resources through digital records and other initiatives.

The beautiful landscapes of Korea's national parks are imbued with traces of thousands of years of history. In some places, traces remain of people who sang of the beauty of nature from ancient times, while in others, inscriptions left by forebears who yearned for the restoration of national sovereignty and independence during the Japanese colonial period have been carved into rocks and passed down to the present day.

Notable historical and cultural resources related to the independence movement preserved within national parks include the rock inscriptions at Cheonwangbong Peak in Jirisan Mountain, the rock inscription commemorating the March 1st Movement at Baegundae Peak in Bukhansan Mountain, and Paikbum Kim Koo's handwritten inscription at Seokguram Hermitage in Bukhansan Mountain.

At Cheonwangbong Peak in Jirisan National Park, a 392-character rock inscription expressing a wish for the restoration of national sovereignty and Korea's independence remains clearly visible. At Baegundae Peak in Bukhansan Mountain, a rock inscription concerning the drafting of the Declaration of Independence and the March 1st Movement, reportedly carved by independence activist Jeong Jae-yong, conveys the determination to pass on the aspiration for independence to future generations forever.

In addition, Seokguram Hermitage in Bukhansan National Park is known to have served as a hideout for Paikbum Kim Koo before he went into exile in Shanghai. The handwritten inscription left by Kim Koo when he returned to the site after Korea's liberation is regarded today as a historical and cultural resource that reflects the history of both the independence movement and Korea's liberation.

Although national parks preserve numerous historical and cultural resources containing traces of Korea's history, their exposure to the elements makes them vulnerable to deterioration over time. To preserve these resources in their original form, the KNPS is strengthening systematic conservation and management efforts. In 2024, it created 3D digital records of the rock inscription at Cheonwangbong Peak in Jirisan Mountain, and in 2026, it is carrying out digital documentation of the March 1st Movement rock inscription at Baegundae Peak in Bukhansan Mountain.

Chairman Joo Dae-yeong said, "The historical and cultural resources preserved in our national parks are precious heritage that carries the spirit of our forebears and the memories of our people." He added, "On the occasion of National Liberation Day, we hope people will visit our national parks to enjoy their beautiful natural landscapes while reflecting on the history of independence and the significance of Korea's liberation preserved within them."