

A Message from the Architect



THE HANOK
HERITAGE



Chung-il Cho,
CEO of The Hanok Heritage Company

In 1998, driven by a mission to benefit the world through technology, I founded an IT company that now operates in more than 90 countries worldwide. As a first-generation IT entrepreneur navigating global business, I have consistently reflected on two fundamental questions.

The first question was, “In which businesses can Korean companies gain a competitive edge in the global market?” Relentlessly, I worked to pioneer new fields and create new markets. In the process, I developed a firm belief that true success requires continuous challenge of building sustainable business models, exploring uncharted territories overlooked by others, and ultimately discovering and preserving what is unique to Korea.

The second question concerned the essence of the digital world. The digital realm is a virtual reflection of reality, not reality itself. After many years of working in digital spaces, I found myself longing for analog experiences. During business trips to Europe, I felt both comfort and admiration in small towns just outside major cities, where history and tradition had been carefully preserved. These experiences sparked a desire to create a physical space that feels genuinely comfortable to people.

For many, the most comfortable space is a home. For me, that home was hanok. As a Korean, I wanted to create a hanok that embodies the ultimate comfort of home. Hanok is an architectural form in which nature and humanity are inseparable, coming together as one. Every element that connects people and nature, and every step in its creation, is real and tangible. Above all, it stands as one of the most distinctive architectural forms in the world, unique to Korea.

Although I initially had limited knowledge of hanok, I was guided by a deep conviction and passion that this traditional wooden architecture surpasses any other in the world. I devoted myself to studying Korea's traditional construction techniques and aesthetics, and in doing so, encountered challenges that needed to be addressed. Hanok, a cultural heritage passed down through generations and enduring for a thousand years, represents an extraordinary architectural achievement, yet it had long remained stagnant without further evolution.

I wanted to build hanok properly and showcase its true appeal. Guided by the philosophy that Korea's traditional hanok should be reimagined with a forward-looking perspective, The Hanok Heritage was created.





The Hanok Heritage: The Journey of Building Hanok

As an architect, I study design and bring imagined spaces to life. In exploring the essence of architecture, I have examined how natural elements such as sunlight and wind shape space. Over twelve years, I have researched and developed construction techniques, structures, and materials, and conducted extensive testing to address the discomforts and limitations of traditional building methods.

Through this process, I discovered that challenges such as insulation, heating, soundproofing, and sound insulation are not inherent flaws of hanok itself, but rather issues rooted in construction techniques. By studying wood, carefully selecting the site, and collaborating with master craftsmen, I have continually advanced technology and innovated materials to reimagine hanok for the modern world.

Studying Wood

While hanok is built from wood, its evolution was long constrained by the challenges of timber drying. Timber suitable for hanok construction requires a natural drying period of ten years. As a result, many hanok built with insufficiently dried timber, retaining high moisture content, have suffered from structural weaknesses and performance limitations.

This extended drying period became a fundamental obstacle to large-scale hanok construction from the outset. In response, we developed a proprietary construction technique that dramatically shortens the timber-drying process from ten years to just six months. Carefully selected premium timber is dried using a microwave-based method, reducing its moisture content to an optimal maximum of 15%. This is significantly lower than the 25% moisture content permitted even in cultural heritage restorations, effectively preventing warping and deformation while addressing long-standing weaknesses of hanok, such as drafts and misaligned windows.

Through this breakthrough, we have set the long-paused evolution of hanok in motion once again.



Precise Processing of Premium Large Timbers:

We use data-driven methods to process top-quality timbers, ensuring stability and durability.



Microwave Drying Technique:

Precision processing of premium large-scale timber guided by data-driven analysis



Donghae City Timber Storage Depot:
Natural drying in progress

Finding the Site

In hanok architecture, choosing the right site is as crucial as planting a seed in fertile soil for life to take root. Guided by the question, “Where in nature should a hanok be placed?”

I traveled across Korea in search of an ideal site.

That journey eventually led me to Yeongwol, a gifted land where nature reveals itself in layered harmony, from *geungyeong*, the near view, to *joonggyeong*, the middle view, and *wongyeong*, the distant panoramic view, unfolding in all directions.

Here, a river curves gently around the land in a sweeping 300-degree arc, while overlapping mountain ranges embrace the site with a sense of shelter and serenity. True to the wisdom of our ancestors, this place embodies the principle of *baesanimsu*, with mountains at its back and water at its front.



At the center of this land lies a pine forest. We preserved it in its entirety, shaping it into a signature space where the wind flows freely. The hanok was designed around this forest, allowing guests to experience the shifting landscapes and gentle breezes of each season. From the layered mountains in the distance, reminiscent of a traditional landscape painting, to the folding-screen-like Seondol rock pillar in the middle view, and the harmonious union of the pine forest and the hanok in the near view, all three landscapes can be appreciated in a single gaze.

Only here can the harmony of near, middle, and distant views be fully experienced.





Collaborating with Master Craftsmen to Build a Sustainable Ecosystem

To build an exceptional home, skilled carpenters are essential. I sought out master craftsmen willing to study materials and construction techniques with me. In the early days, disagreements occasionally arose, and discussing the hanok designs with those who had devoted their entire lives to the craft sometimes felt like a test of will. Yet through continuous study, shared learning, and dedicated research, mutual trust was gradually built, and these relationships eventually grew into deep and enduring partnerships.

Here, master carpenters personally oversee the timber. From laying the foundation stones to placing the final roof tiles, we work side by side through every stage of construction, united by a shared spirit of craftsmanship and dedication in order to build each hanok as a true work of art.

The color of the roof tiles shaped by the firing time and temperature



The process of *chimok* (woodworking), in which logs are carved and shaped into timber, begins with marking an ink line along the center of the wood





Merging Tradition with Technology to Create Sustainable Design

Hanok architecture exists in natural harmony with its surroundings. However, traditional designs had certain limitations, including vulnerability to external noise, drafts, and cold weather. To address these challenges, we have integrated modern technologies for heating, insulation, sound insulation, and sound proofing.

To surpass the insulation and soundproofing performance of *changho*, the traditional paper windows, we developed double-glazed windows and custom hinges crafted from specialized German metal to support the weight of each frame. Transparent screens made from advanced fibers are fitted to the windows and panels, enhancing modern comfort while preserving *chagyeong*, the traditional principle of borrowed scenery and a defining element of the hanok aesthetic.

We also reinterpreted the traditional *dangolmagi*, the filler between rafters, replacing it with insulated *dangolbyeok*, a solid wall designed to improve insulation. Through these technological innovations, we have addressed many of the long-standing discomforts and limitations of traditional hanok living.



The angle and length of the eaves, designed to achieve harmonious proportions and capture natural light to the fullest





Walls made from durable materials that preserve the texture of traditional Jeonju *hanji* paper



Light-transmitting marble, revealing its naturally formed patterns and textures

In parallel, we study materials that harmonize with wood, designing interiors that complement hanok architecture. By pairing stone with timber and marble with wood, we explore new possibilities within the aesthetic of hanok. The beauty of hanok is inherently powerful, capable of overshadowing any interior design. For this reason, we minimized interior elements and concealed functional components, allowing the true essence of hanok to come forward.



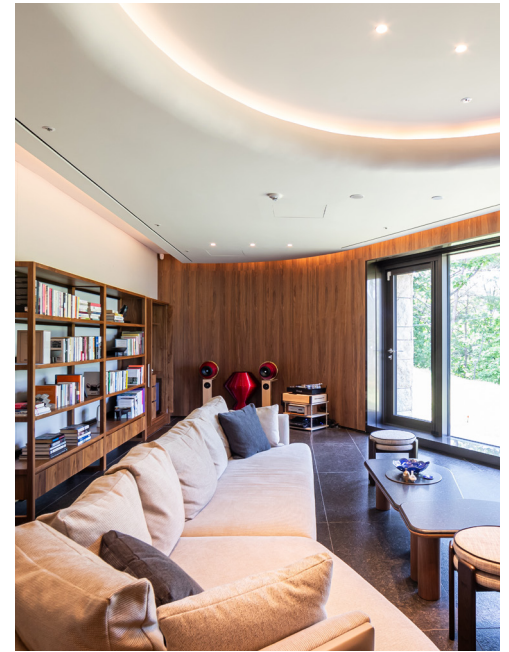
Stone, a traditional hanok material, shaped with a soft, wave-like texture

A Space of Utmost Comfort

Together with master craftsmen, I create spaces that bring comfort and inspiration to people. At The Hanok Heritage, our philosophy begins with “sky, earth, and people,” the harmony between nature and humanity. While nature forms the foundation of a space, it is people who complete it. Nature surrounds, the hanok embraces, and in that space, people live and experience. Each guest who visits The Hanok Heritage completes the vision of the space through their presence and warmth.

Within this environment, where people and nature form deep connections, I intentionally created shared spaces to bring people together in unexpected ways. While the bedrooms remain as private sanctuaries, I designed a large dining hall, an outdoor *madang* (courtyard), and a media room, which are spaces not traditionally found in a hanok, so that guests may gather, interact, and focus on one another.

I hope that, in this place where humanity connects with nature, new relationships can begin and flourish.





Humble and Warm Hospitality

At The Hanok Heritage, we aim to offer every guest an experience that feels like coming home to a place that has always been waiting to welcome them. Rather than relying on standardized service, we attend to each guest with the same attention and care a hostess would give to her own guests.

Just as the hanok embodies the essence of Korean aesthetics described in the *Samguk Sagi (History of the Three Kingdoms)*—simple yet refined, splendid without being extravagant—our hospitality is humble, warm, and heartfelt.



The comfort we strive to offer is born from the harmony of nature, space, and people. Just as the hanok draws the ever-changing natural landscape indoors through *chagyeong*, we seek to provide experiences that flow and evolve with the rhythms of nature.

At The Hanok Heritage, we invite our guests to step away from the pressures of so-called “perfect” journeys and embrace true rest, emptying and replenishing the spirit.



A New Heritage to Become a Cultural Asset for the Next Millennium

Hanok has been frozen in time for a thousand years. While we start from the traditional form of hanok, we have gone beyond the hanok of the past to establish new standards and a renewed vision, while maintaining our originality.

At The Hanok Heritage, we proudly call what we have created a “New Heritage,” innovating traditional hanok to be reborn as a living cultural legacy. Together with like-minded master craftsmen, we draw upon Korea’s traditional architectural philosophy and aesthetics, combining craftsmanship, technological innovation, and bold exploration to create spaces and experiences of the highest artistic and aesthetic value.

Beginning in Korea, we aspire to bring hanok to New York, Paris, and beyond. We seek to recreate our thousand-year-old cultural heritage with such care that they may one day be recognized as cultural treasures.

As a representative of K-Architecture, I hope that the hanok we create will stand as a global cultural asset for the next thousand years, spreading Korea’s tradition and artistic vision to every corner of the world.







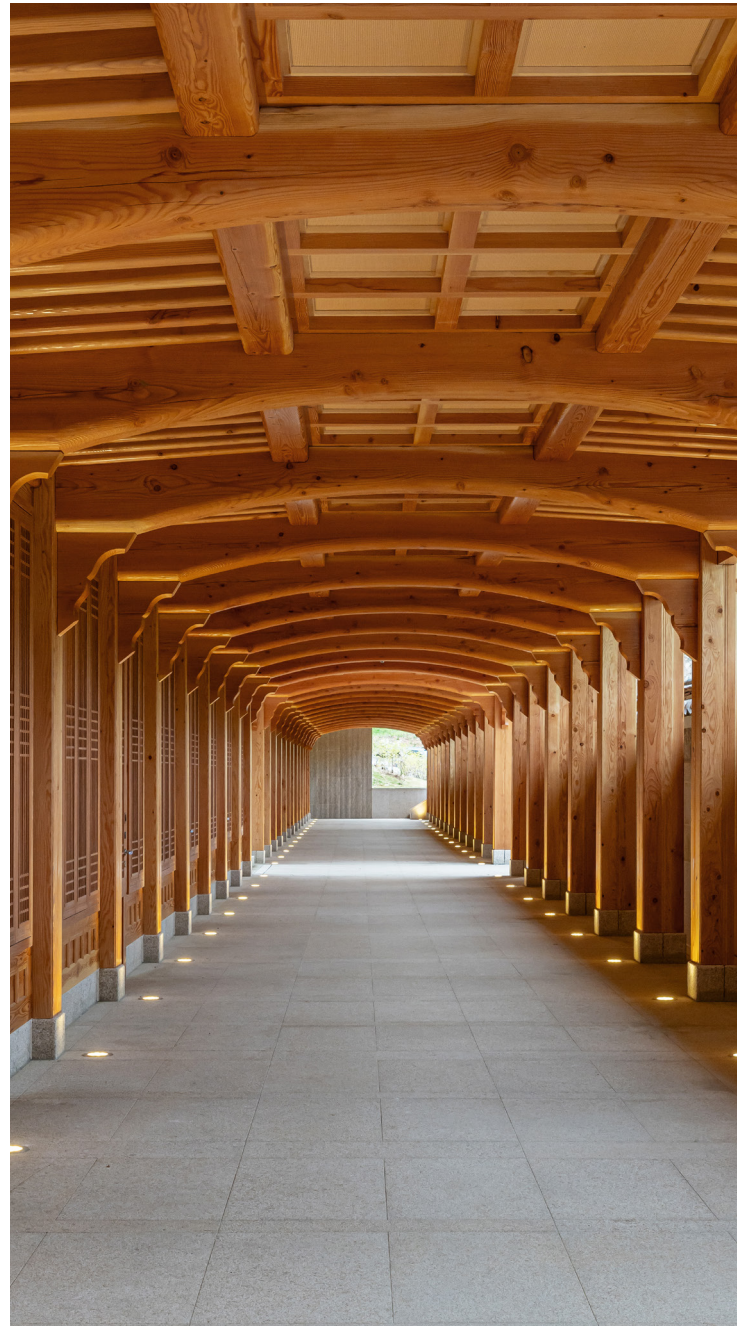














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