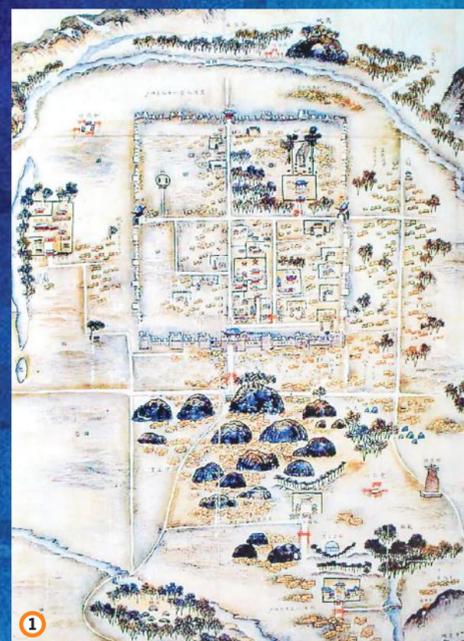


# HERITAGE MATTERS



**PROF. DR. AMAREWAR GALLA**

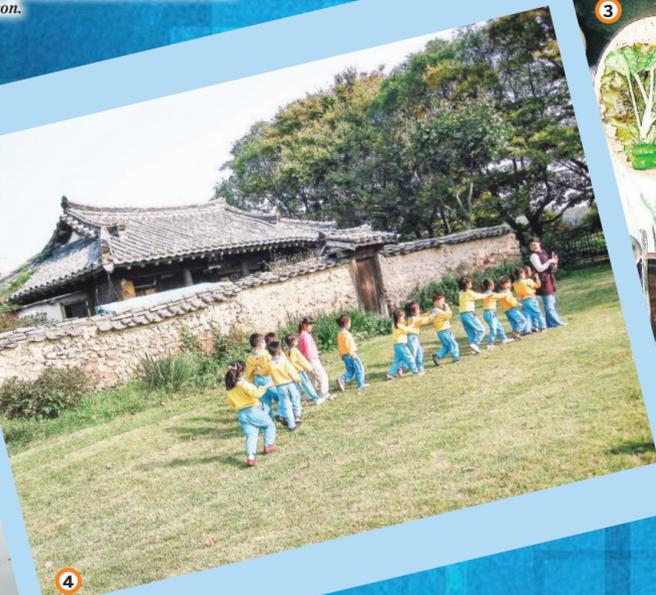
director@inclusivemuseum.org  
(Professor Dr. Amarewar Galla, an unhyphenated Indo Danish Australian, he was an adviser to the Gyeongju Municipal Authority, Republic of Korea, for the safeguarding of its Historical Cultural Landscapes)

This week the focus is on images and captions that are integrated to tell us about things that matter to Koreans, who are some of the best heritage professionals in the world

**1** Mapping the memory and researching the documentary heritage has been the strength of Korean approach to sustainable heritage development. Conservation and impact assessments by law are critical before making interventions to ensuring responsible tourism development. Here the layers of significance of heritage of Gyeongju, the former capital of Korea, is given utmost importance before any interventions are made. On 27th of November 2014, I was asked to address the Finance Committee of the Korean National Assembly. It was the final session of a long consultative process for a budget of nearly 10 billion won or about 1 billion US dollars over a ten-year period for the implementation of a masterplan for the conservation and development of the Gyeongju World Heritage sites. It was the capital of the Silla dynasty which ruled for almost a millennium. I was amazed by the deep knowledge and scholarship of the Parliamentarians who passionately care about their national and provincial heritage. It was far more than rhetoric. It is literally walking the talk. As a witness to the committee I was asked several questions. But the most important one is on restoration and constructions in the heritage area. The guarantee had to be that the Mayor of Gyeongju was extremely diligent and that any restoration will follow the Nara Recommendation of UNESCO. It was grilling. It is this kind of consciousness and informed decision making that we need in Andhra Pradesh or for that matter in India to safeguard our valuable heritage which is highly endangered from rapid urbanization, encroachments, wanton destruction, hearsay or dubious scholarship, recreational tourism and lack of basic capacity to safeguard.

**2** Gobungun Tomb Park Mounds The Tumuli Park Belt of Gyeongju Heritage Town consists of three groups of Royal Tombs. Most of the mounds are domed. They contain double wood coffins covered with gravel. Excavations have revealed rich grave goods of gold, glass, and fine ceramics. A painting of a winged horse on birch bark was found in one of the tombs. Tumuli have been one of the typical landscapes of Gyeongju since the Silla period. The goal of the urban project to create a tumuli park is to turn the tumuli and surrounding old urban centre into a car-free and eco-friendly space. The park is planned as a special reorganization of the tumuli district. The ultimate goal is the urban regeneration that is integrated with the surrounding Historic Cultural Landscapes using the UNESCO HUL Recommendation of 2011.

**3** Heritage cuisine as part of the intangible heritage of Gyeongju is well researched. Locals are proud of the diversity in their food and its preparation and presentation. The domestic economy of providing the food and the ceramic industry flourishes as scrumptious dishes are served on exquisite pottery. Koreans have a strong cultural consciousness. Can we reclaim our Andhra cuisine that is imbued with cultural traditions of our parents and grandparents? It is not all that long ago fast food have overtaken our eating habits. May be if we can foster cultural pride we could revitalize some of traditions. I often bemoan the pani puri and dum biryani in Amaravathi Heritage Town where it is hard to get decent gongura dishes. The recent attempts by AP Heritage Tourism to promote heritage cuisine festivals have come as a welcome intervention. We need a broader awareness of culture along with heritage consciousness to understand what it is to be an Andhra person.

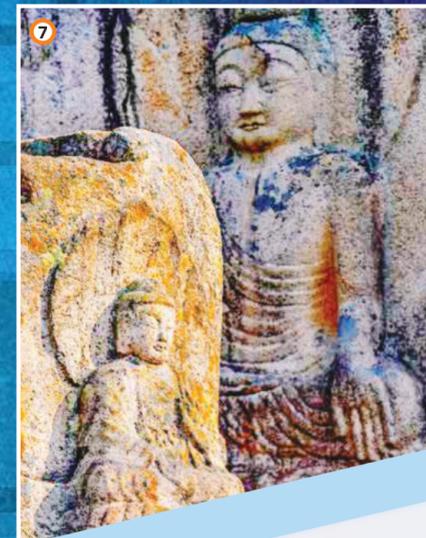


**4** In Gyeongju ancestral homes are well protected. These are tiled houses called Hanok. In use, orientation and social significance, they are very similar to Manduwaah houses in Andhra. In Gyeongju they are often available for bed and breakfast homestays and for school excursions. They are popular. Visitors want to experience as to how people stayed in the traditional houses in the old days. Traditional hospitality and food are on the offer. Ever since I moved back to Andhra from Australia, I have desperately tried to persuade people with pan tiled houses in Amaravathi not to destroy them. They are cooler with appropriate architecture for the hot summer. I have advocated that they could be sources of income in the future tourism growth. But there is a sense of inferiority complex to live in a traditional Andhra house. People are ashamed. As soon as possible they want to destroy them and build a concrete slab apartment. It is seen as progress and prestige. Then they need air conditioning. The usual flu, colds, coughs and bronchitis follow diminishing the health of people. In the past three years over a hundred pan tiled houses, mostly built in 19th and 20th centuries, have been destroyed in Amaravathi and Dharanikota. There are hardly any representative ones left. Like in Gyeongju, how nice it would have been for visitors to live in one of the traditional houses and then visit the heritage sites of Amaravathi Heritage Town to experience our heritage.



**5** Gyeongju Traditional Rope Walk is often part of open air entertainment with songs and costumes illustrating the intangible heritage of Gyeongju

**7** The Mount Namsan Belt lies to the north of the city. It covers 2,650 ha. The Buddhist monuments that have been excavated at the time of inscription on World Heritage List include the ruins of 122 temples, 53 stone statues, 64 pagodas and 16 stone lanterns. 36 individual monuments are part of the belt. It includes rock-cut reliefs or engravings, stone images, pagodas, royal tombs and groups of tombs, wells, a group of stone banner poles, the Namsan Mountain Fortress, the Poseokjeong Pavilion site and the Seochulji Pond.



**6** Cheomseongdae Observatory is a 7th century CE observatory tower located in Gyeongju, the capital of the Silla Kingdom of ancient Korea. It is the oldest surviving astronomical observatory in East Asia and is listed as no. 31 on the official list of National Treasures of Korea. According to the 13th-century CE Samguk yusa text, it is believed that it was built in the early years of the reign of Queen Seondeok (632-647 CE). She reigned just before the Silla kingdom would reach its apex and control the whole of the Korean peninsula in 668 CE. Gyeongju as the capital became a centre of culture, arts, and science with a particular flourishing in mathematics, astronomy, and astrology. Cheomseongdae is roughly translated as the 'reverently regarding the stars platform'. The granite observatory tower is nine metres tall. It was made using over 360 large stone rectangular blocks. It is a circular arrangement of 27 courses. Queen Seondeok was the 27th monarch of the Silla kingdom.

**NEXT WEEK** Heritage Matters will focus on Route 66, the mother of all roads in the USA, a heritage trail...