

# Archives of the National Debt Redemption Movement Nomination for the Memory of the World Register



Commemorative Association of the National Debt Redemption Movement  
Committee for Inscription on the UNESCO Memory of the World Register

## Nomination Form

### International Memory of the World Register

#### Archives of the National Debt Redemption Movement

##### 1.0 Summary

- The Archives of the National Debt Redemption Movement is a documentary heritage chronicling the entire process and history of a nationwide campaign undertaken by the Korean public from 1907 to 1910, to help their government pay back a huge debt owed to Japan and thereby save their country from colonization.
- At the outset of the 20th century, Japan forcibly pressured the Korean Empire, its protectorate, to accept massive financial, monetary and infrastructure overhauls at Korea's expense, financed by loans amounting to 13 million won, which was equivalent to its yearly budget. It was part of the Japanese blueprint for colonizing Korea. The Korean government was unable to pay, and the country was driven to the brink of losing its sovereignty.
- As a sense of crisis spread, the Korean public responded spontaneously, organizing a movement to raise funds to help repay the debt. Men stopped smoking and drinking to save the money they would have spent on tobacco and drinks; women sold their jewelry and accessories such as rings and hairpins; poor commoners made straw shoes and gathered firewood to sell and donate the money to the cause; students and children saved their allowances and tips from running errands; female entertainers called *gisaeng* enthusiastically helped in the fundraising. Patriotic fervor spread across all social classes; even beggars and thieves made donations. The Korean people as one participated in an unprecedented nationwide drive to fulfill a civic duty: by struggling to repay the national debt they were thereby safeguarding their nation's sovereignty.
- Nine decades later, in 1997, when the Asian financial crisis hit their country, the Korean people spontaneously rose to the occasion with a campaign to collect gold to give to the government to save their nation from imminent default on external debts. The nationwide "gold gathering movement," which in many ways resembled the movement to repay government debt in the early 20th century, significantly contributed to Korea's early recovery from the devastating aftermath of the regional economic crisis.
- The Archives of the National Debt Redemption Movement highlights a hardwired sense of civic responsibility that fuels movements by the Korean people to overcome national crises. The 1907 movement failed due largely to Japan's intervention, but its spirit and mobilizing successes live on, well documented to learn from. This documentary heritage of the Korean people's efforts to help their government repay its external debt a century ago could very well inspire a viable alternative in coping with crises arising from accumulated sovereign debts faced by the world's economies nowadays, particularly in Latin America, East Asia and Europe. For this reason, this documentary heritage is deemed worthy of international attention.

## 2.0 Nominator

### 2.1 Name of nominator

Cultural Heritage Administration of Republic of Korea

### 2.2 Relationship to the nominated documentary heritage

Government office of the Republic of Korea in charge of managing all cultural heritage

### 2.3 Contact person(s)

Nam Sang-bum

World Heritage Division

Cultural Heritage Administration of Republic of Korea

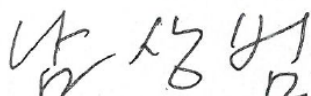
### 2.4 Contact details

Name	Nam Sangbum
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### 2.5 Declaration of authority

I certify that I have the authority to nominate the documentary heritage described in this document to the International Memory of the World Register.

**Signature**



**Full name** Nam Sang-bum

**institution(s)** Cultural Heritage Administration of Korea

Date 27.05. 2016.

### 3.0 Identity and description of the documentary heritage

#### 3.1 Name and identification details of the items being nominated

- Name: Archives of the National Debt Redemption Movement
- Identification details: The Archives of the National Debt Redemption Movement covers all aspects of a significant campaign conducted by the Korean public shortly before Japan's colonization of Korea. The campaign began on the initiative of Seo Sang-don and other members of Daegu Gwangmunhoe, a literary club affiliated with Gwangmunsa, a publishing company based in Daegu, then a county of Gyeongsang Province. On January 29, 1907, at a meeting of the club expanded and renamed Daedong Gwangmunhoe (Great East Literary Association), they proposed a public campaign to raise funds to pay back the government's debt amounting to 13 million won. They specifically suggested that smokers quit smoking to save 20 *jeon* (100 *jeon* equaled 1 won) a month, or 60 *jeon* in three months; with the participation of 20 million Koreans, they expected the total amount of contributions to reach 12 million won. They said the 1 million won gap could be met with donations by rich individuals, ranging from 100 won to 1,000 won. On February 21 of the same year, the Daegu County Council organized an association for smoking cessation, called Danyeonhoe, and hosted a rally of county residents at a pavilion named Bukhujeong, located in front of Seomun Market, where the declaration of the movement was read for the first time. It was the first document written to explain the motivating spirit of the campaign and announce its launching. It was distributed across the country and revised to localize the contents in different regions. Twelve of these documents are included in the nominated documentary heritage.
- The campaign became widely known throughout the country owing to influential press coverage, especially by the *Daehan Maeil Sinbo* (*Korea Daily News*) and the *Hwangseong Sinmun* (*Capital Gazette*), two major newspapers published in Seoul. The Research Institute of Korean Studies keeps copies of most of these news stories and other press documents, totaling 2,264 items. They can be easily browsed at a digital database.
- The campaign developed into a grassroots movement of national scale, with the participation of the entire people regardless of social class and economic status, livelihood, age and gender. The nominated documentary heritage comprises rosters of campaign participants' names and amounts of donations, papers describing the organization of fundraising groups, and correspondence exchanged between different regions, revealing detailed procedures of the campaign. The nominated heritage includes 75 items of these types.
- Eight months after the movement began, the Japanese Residency-General in Korea embarked on legal proceedings against Ernest T. Bethell, the English publisher and co-founder of *Daehan Maeil Sinbo* which staunchly supported the movement. To deter the movement from expanding further and fanning nationalist sentiment, Japan spread allegations that Yang Gi-tak, editor-in-chief and co-founder of the newspaper and a leader of the debt repayment campaign, embezzled 30,000 won from donations. Both were later proven innocent and released, but the movement was significantly weakened. The money that had been raised came close to 200,000 won; part of it was absorbed into various institutions or confiscated by the Japanese government. Some of the funds left with private organizations

were later spent on establishing modern schools of various types. Documentary sources pertaining to the final phase of the movement comprise documents of the Japanese residency-general, records of court trials of Yang Gi-tak, and relevant materials produced by the Documentation Association of National Debt Redemption Movement.

### 3.2 Catalogue and registration details

▪ Composition of the nominated heritage: The heritage consists of a total of 2,475 documents that are classified into four categories as shown below. For details, please refer to *Appendix 1: Catalogue of the Archives of the National Debt Redemption Movement*.

- 1) Handwritten documents pertinent to the background and beginning of the movement
- 2) Handwritten documents pertinent to the expansion of reach and influence of the movement
- 3) Documents of the Japanese government (Residency-General in Korea) related to the movement
- 4) Mass media materials including newspaper and magazine articles reporting on the movement

▪ Nominated documents by category

- 1) Handwritten documents pertinent to the background and beginning of the movement

◇ Types of materials: Manifestos and declarations

◇ Number of materials: 12 items (Material Nos. 1–12)

◇ Contents of materials: These documents explain the goals and objectives of the campaign with the aim of appealing for broad public participation. The contents describe the dire straits of the nation and urge the people “to fulfill their civic duty by helping to repay sovereign debts of 13 million won through a donation campaign, by saving money from smoking, groceries and jewelry, thereby saving the country from crisis.” These documents are handwritten originals, brush and ink on mulberry paper, written in Chinese characters or in a mixture of Hangeul [Korean script] and Chinese characters.

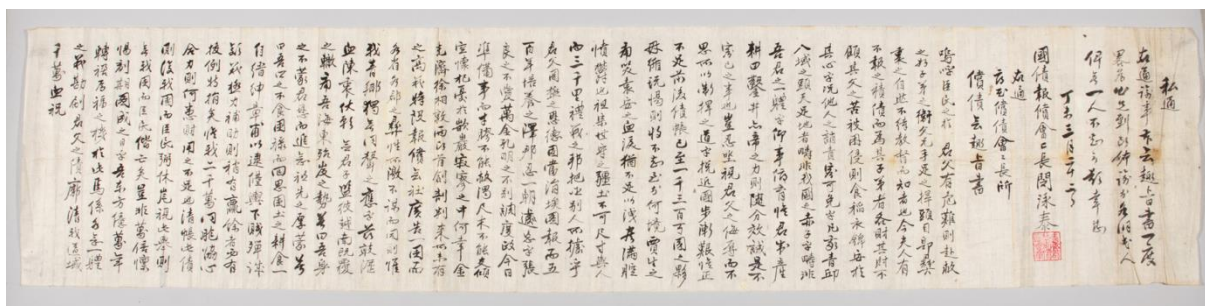


Photo 1. Declaration of the National Debt Redemption and Repayment Association

2) Handwritten documents pertinent to the expansion of reach and influence of the movement

◇ Types of materials: Circulars and notices exchanged between different regions to announce the start of the campaign; regulations and procedures for offices gathering donations; rosters of donors; and donation receipts

◇ Number of materials: 77 items (Material Nos. 13–89)

◇ Contents of materials: The circulars and notices were exchanged between different regions or between organizers of the campaign within a region to encourage the participation of local residents. Along with these routine documents, operational regulations of donation-gathering offices, correspondence between individuals and organizations, lists of participants in different regions, rosters of donors and donation receipts are crucial evidence of well-organized procedures of the campaign — details explaining how it expanded into a movement that caught on and spread across the country. Handwritten original documents have been preserved intact.



Photo 2. Ledgers of donors and donation amounts

3) Documents of the Japanese government (Residency-General in Korea) related to the movement

◇ Types of materials: Official documents and

◇ Number of materials: 122 items (Material Nos. 90–211)

◇ Contents of materials: Reports received by the Japanese residency-general from concerned organizations with regard to the state of the movement and directives conveying Japan's countermeasures. They reveal Japan's schemes to thwart the movement and actions taken to that end. With all of the original papers destroyed at the time of Japan's withdrawal, these resources are available in microfilm or dry plate glass negatives.

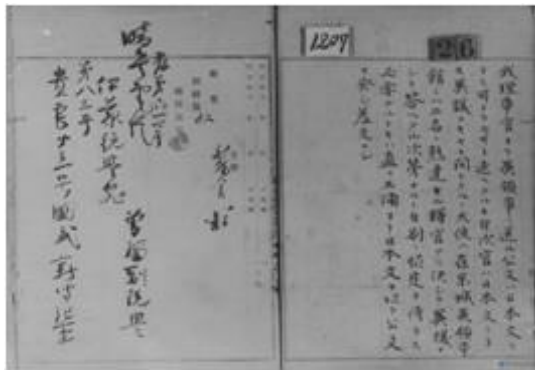


Photo 3. Documents of the Japanese Residency-General in Korea

4) Mass media materials including newspaper and magazine articles reporting on the movement

◇ Types of materials: Manifestos, declarations, lists of donors, editorials, news stories and advertisements carried by newspapers and magazines

◇ Number of materials: 2,264 items (Material Nos. 212–2475)

◇ Contents of materials: Reportage on the movement published in the early 1900s by seven newspapers in and outside of Korea, including the *Daehan Maeil Sinbo* (*Korea Daily News*) and the *Hwangseong Sinmun* (*Capital Gazette*), and three magazines, including the *Monthly Journal of the Korean Self-Strengthening Society* (*Daehan Jaganghoe Wolbo*). Included in this category are newspaper and magazine articles about the campaign promoting appeals for the public's participation, editorials, advertisements, news stories and inspirational features on individuals and regions, stories of events organized to drum up participation, lists of donors and what they gave. These resources are available in the original publications, in microfilm or dry plate glass negatives.



Photo 4. Copies of the *Daehan Maeil Sinbo* (*Korea Daily News*)

### 3.3 Visual Documentation

- Photographs of the Archives of the National Debt Redemption Movement (CD)
- Videos related to the Archives of the National Debt Redemption Movement (VTR)
  - EBS Docu Prime “Another Independence Movement,” Episode 2: “All Equally Honorable Heroes” (August 11, 2015)
  - NHK Special Series “Japan and the Korean Peninsula,” Episode 1: “The Road to the Annexation of Korea: Ito Hirobumi and An Jung-geun” (April 18, 2010)
  - Compilation of Daegu MBC’s live coverage of the gold gathering campaign in 1998, titled “Another Movement for National Debt Redemption, Parts I & II” (March 20, 1998)

Please refer to *Appendix 2: Photographs and Videos for the Archives of the National Debt Redemption Movement*

### 3.4 History/Provenance

- The Archives of the National Debt Redemption Movement is a collection of documentary resources pertaining to a massive spontaneous public campaign in early 20th century Korea. The collection was the result of a project to put together the documentary heritage related to the movement so it could be nominated for UNESCO’s Memory of the World Register. The project was carried out in agreement with 11 institutions and three individuals. Components of the nominated heritage have been collected and managed by 11 public institutions or in the possession of two private owner-custodians.
- **History and background of the nominated heritage in the care of each institution and individual stakeholder**

(1) The Korean Financial History Museum, a public institution, opened a hall exclusively dedicated to the National Debt Redemption Movement in November 2011, to exhibit the concerned documentary resources in its collection. They include declarations; circulars and notices; advertisements; official papers and correspondence of local campaign offices at Masan and Changwon, both in South Gyeongsang Province; and donation receipts. These are all handwritten original documents.

(2) The National Institute of Korean History, a state institution, keeps documentary resources relating to the movement that had been in the possession of the Japanese residency-general. After 1910 when Korea was annexed by Japan, the archives division of the Japanese government-general took over documents of the residency-general — originals and photographs taken using dry plate glass negatives — and kept them during the colonial period, but the original documents were burned shortly after Japan’s defeat in World War II. About 100 boxes of dry plate glass negatives were then transferred to the library of the Central Council, an agency under the colonial government, by Shin Seok-ho, a Korean historian who served at the Korean History Compilation Committee. These resources were later moved to the National History Hall, predecessor of the National Institute of Korean History. The institute currently keeps dry plate glass negatives of 121 documents relating to the National Debt Redemption Movement which had been possessed by the Japanese residency-general. They are mostly reports that the residency-general exchanged with concerned organizations to keep track of the movement and court proceedings on embezzlement cases filed about the money raised, as well as directives conveying Japan’s measures to counter the movement.



(3) The National Archives of Korea is a state institution established in August 1968 for the collection, management, preservation and perusal of government documents classified for permanent and semi-permanent preservation. The four documents pertaining to the National Debt Redemption Movement housed here respectively concern the funds raised through donation gathering by the movement's headquarters; gathering of donations by the headquarters during May 1907; a meeting about the movement convened by a Japanese official named Miyagawa; and local representatives attending a meeting held at the movement headquarters. The National Archives of Korea manages documentary resources left by the Japanese government-general, regarding them as valuable state documents and useful evidence for investigating Korean independence movements and Japan's colonial rule as well as verifying the identity and property of individuals and organizations.

(4) The Independence Hall of Korea, also a state institution, collects and manages documentary resources pertaining to the National Debt Redemption Movement as part of its activities to research the history of Korean independence struggles during the colonial period, and maintain, preserve and exhibit related historical resources. It keeps three documents concerning the debt repayment movement: the declaration of the movement in Yonggung-myeon (township) in North Gyeongsang Province; a document of the Federation of the National Debt Redemption Movement; and regulations of the Association for Investigation and Accounting of the Funds for National Debt Redemption. The declaration from Yonggung, written by a local scholar surnamed Jeong, has similar content to an announcement of donation gathering in the township carried by the *Daehan Maeil Sinbo* on the front page of its May 14, 1907 issue. It is assumed that the announcement on the newspaper was based on the declaration. The document of the Federation of the National Debt Redemption Movement delineates the purpose of the federation and its operational regulations in five articles. The Association for Investigation and Accounting of Funds for National Debt Redemption was created for management of the funds raised through the campaign.

(5) The National Palace Museum of Korea is a state institution devoted to the history and cultural legacy of the royal household of the Joseon Dynasty (1392–1910), which was proclaimed the Korean Empire in 1907. The museum keeps 639 articles of the *Daehan Maeil Sinbo* about the National Debt Redemption Movement, published between February 21 and June 9, 1907. The museum collects and manages old issues of the newspaper, regarding them as important historical resources for understanding the everyday reality of Korean society during the Korean Empire (1907–1910). It has applied for designation of the newspaper as a state cultural property.

(6) The Advanced Center for Korean Studies is a state institution specializing in the maintenance and preservation of Korea's traditional documentary heritage. It is the custodian and manager of 52 documents related to the National Debt Redemption Movement, including letters exchanged between Lee Du-hun (1856–1918, pen name Hongwa), an independence movement leader and Confucian scholar in Goryeong County, North Gyeongsang Province, and organizations for the movement. Other documents housed here include lists of donors and donation receipts from different villages in the county. These documents became known when they were entrusted with the center in 2013 by Lee Jin-hwan, grandson of Lee Du-hun and former county governor of Goryeong, along with some 10,000 old documents that had been handed down in the family, to make them available for research and use by future generations.

(7) The Commemorative Association of the National Debt Redemption Movement is a private organization dedicated to the study and transmission of the spirit of the movement and preserve and manage related heritage. The association established the National Debt Redemption Movement Memorial Hall in 2011. The Daegu Bank purchased many materials related to the movement from Goh Chang-seok, a collector of historical documents, and donated them to the association. They were

verified as original documents by members of the Cultural Heritage Committee, and are currently housed at the memorial hall. The association owns 22 documents related to the movement, including an announcement of donation gathering by a local branch of the movement, a book accompanying a roster of donations by those who quit smoking in compliance with the spirit of the movement, and donation receipts.

(8) The Research Institute of Korean Studies was founded in 1954 with assistance from The Asia Foundation and the Korea–America Foundation, both based in the United States, for the purpose of promoting research in the humanities and social sciences. The institute has collected a large number of valuable materials for Korean studies. It keeps a copy of the monthly newsletter of the Academic Society of Western Fellows, *Seowoo (Western Fellows)*, and 780 newspaper articles about the National Debt Redemption Movement carried by the *Hwangseong Sinmun (Capital Gazette)*, *Daehan Maeil Sinbo (Korea Daily News)* and *Maeil Sinbo (Daily News)*. The Academic Society of Western Fellows was organized on October 26, 1906, mostly of young intellectuals from the western provinces of Pyeongan and Hwanghae. The copy of its monthly newsletter in the collection of this research institute, edition number 6, was published on May 1, 1907. Bannered “The Issue of Repaying Sovereign Debt,” it contains a series of articles including “Korean Students in Tokyo Allied to Stop Smoking” and “Let’s Stop Drinking and Redeem.” Of the 780 newspaper articles held by the institute, 616 pieces are from the *Hwangseong Sinmun* and 160 are from the *Daehan Maeil Sinbo*.

(9) Documentary heritage pertaining to the National Debt Redemption Movement in the collection of university libraries:

– Seoul National University Library holds a book titled *Yeonseol Daehae (Compendium of Speeches)* and 452 newspaper articles related to the movement. *Yeonseol Daehae* is a collection of speeches compiled by Lee Ho-jin and published in September 1909. It contains a speech delivered by Kim Gwang-je, president of Gwangmunsa Publishing Co., at the meeting in Daegu where the movement to repay national debt was proposed. Among the newspaper articles are 54 items from the Japanese-language daily *Keijo Shimpo (Gyeongseong Sinbo, or Capital News)*, which was inaugurated on November 3, 1907; 33 items from the *Daehan Minbo (Korean People’s Newspaper)*, inaugurated by the Korea Association on June 2, 1909; 29 items from the *Gongnip Sinbo (The United Korean)*, newsletter of the United Korean Association based in San Francisco, U.S.A., inaugurated on November 22, 1905; and 337 items from the *Daehan Maeil Sinbo (Korea Daily News)*. The Seoul National University Library, which opened at the time of the university’s founding in 1946, has acquired these documentary resources relating to the movement in the course of collecting publications from inside and outside of the country.

– Korea University Library holds most of the documentary resources inherited from Posong College, predecessor of the university, in its Valuable Archives. Among these resources is the second issue of the newsletter of the Association of Overseas Korean Students, published on April 2, 1907, which contains an article about the grassroots movement to repay the national debt, headlined, “The First Call from the People.” The association was organized in Tokyo in September 1906.

– Yonsei University Research Information Service holds microfilm reproductions of 378 articles related to the movement, carried by *Mansebo (Independence News)*. This daily newspaper was inaugurated in 1906 by Son Byeong-hui, an independence fighter and leader of the homegrown religion Chondogyo (Religion of the Heavenly Way), and continued to be published until June 29, 1907. The articles here were published between February and June 1907. Yonsei University established the Audio Visual Center in 1958 and carried out microfilming projects of old documents on a yearly basis in order to protect them from damage while encouraging active use of their content for research. Microfilming of *Mansebo* was undertaken in 1963.

(10) Two individuals, Lee Jin-hwan and Kim Han-sik, have contributed to the collection. Lee Jin-hwan entrusted 52 items of documentary heritage related to the movement in his family collection to the care of the Advanced Center for Korean Studies. Kim Han-sik contributed one item from his family heirlooms — a donation receipt issued to his ancestor Kim Yun-ran. The receipt, dated February 21, 1907, was issued by the Daegu County Council to Kim Yun-ran, one of the initial organizers of the movement, for a donation amounting to 100 won.

### 3.5 Bibliography

▪ A total of 36 books and 91 essays and academic theses were used as reference in the course of preparing the nomination of the Archives of the National Debt Redemption Movement. Of these, 12 major academic publications are listed below. For the complete list of references, please see *Appendix 3: Bibliography for the Archives of the National Debt Redemption Movement*.

#### ◇ Major academic publications

Bae, Byeong-du. “Korea’s Debt to Japan and the National Debt Redemption Movement at the Outset of the 20th Century.” *Chosen Mondai Kenkyu (Studies in Korean Issues)*. Korean Issues Research Association. (June 1960)

Cho, Hang-rae. *History of the National Debt Redemption Movement*. Asia Cultural Publishing Co. (2007)

Chong, Jin-seok. “National Debt Redemption Movement and the Role of the Press.” *Journal of Studies on Korean National Movement*, Vol. 8. Association for the Historical Studies on Korean National Movement. (1993)

Han, Young-woo. “Media Activities and Redemption of the National Debt Movement.” *A Review of Korean History*, Vol. 3. Kyongsawon. (2010)

Kim, Sang-gi. “Ideology and Procedures of the National Debt Redemption Movement in the Late Joseon Dynasty.” *Studies in Chungcheong Culture*, Vol. 10. Research Institute for Chungcheong Culture, Chungnam National University. (2011)

Kim, Yeong-ho. “Structural Problems of Foreign Loans in the Late Joseon Dynasty.” *Collected Treatises Commemorating the 60th Birthday of Dr. Yu Dong-won*. Jeongeum Publishing Co. (1985)

Ogawara, Hiroshi. “Japan’s Korea Protection Policy and the British Consular Jurisdiction in Korea—Surrounding the Trial of Yang Gi-tak.” *Bungaku Kenkyu Ronshu (Collected Treatises on Studies in Literature)*, No. 13. (September 2000)

Park, Yong-ok. “Background of the National Debt Redemption Movement and Women’s Participation.” *Journal of Studies on Korean National Movement*, Vol. 8. Association for the Studies on Korean National Movement. (1993)

Shin, Yong-ha. *Imperial Japan’s Economic Aggression and the National Debt Redemption Movement*. Asia Cultural Publishing Co. (1994)

Taguchi, Yozo. "Concerning the National Debt Redemption Movement in the Late Yi Period." *Chosen Gakuho (Journal of the Academic Association of Koreanology in Japan)*. (July 1988)

Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National\\_Debt\\_Repayment\\_Movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Debt_Repayment_Movement). Retrieved on 26.05.2016.

Yun, Dal-se. "Bethell, the Founder of the *Daehan Maeil Sinbo*, and Kobe—A Journalist who Resisted the Colonization of Korea." *Korea in the Modern Era and Hyogo*. A publication of the Association for the Studies of Hyogo–Korea Relations. Akashi Shoten Publishers. (December 2003)

**3.6 Names, qualifications and contact details of up to three independent people or organizations with expert knowledge about the value and provenance of the documentary heritage**

1. Pankaj N. Mohan/ Nalanda University, Rajgir, Bihar(India)/  
E-mail) [pankaj@nalandauniv.com](mailto:pankaj@nalandauniv.com) [pankajmohan@gmail.com](mailto:pankajmohan@gmail.com) Mobile) 91-7091054712
2. Chun Taecksoo / Professor, Academy of Korean Studies / Mobile) 82-10-3002-4327
3. Kim, Young-ho / Professor, Academy of Korean Studies / Mobile) 82-10-8856-7711

## **4.0 Legal information**

### **4.1 Owners of the documentary heritage (names and contact details)**

1) Korean Financial History Museum

Tel: 82-2-738-6806

Address: 61-1 Taepyeong-ro 1-ga, Jung-gu, Seoul

Fax: 82-2-737-5690

Email: [thoth29@shinhan.com](mailto:thoth29@shinhan.com)

2) National Institute of Korean History

Tel: 82-2-500-8282

Address: 86 Gyoyukwon-ro, Gwacheon, Gyeonggi Province

Fax: 82-2-503-8802

Email: [chae@moe.go.kr](mailto:chae@moe.go.kr)

3) National Archives of Korea

Tel: 82-41-481-6300

Address: 189 Cheongsa-ro, Seo-gu, Daejeon

Fax: 82-41-472-3906

Email: [jeeny99@korea.kr](mailto:jeeny99@korea.kr)

4) Independence Hall of Korea

Tel: 82-41-560-0114

Address: 95 Sambang-ro, Mokcheon-eup, Dongnam-gu, Cheonan, South Chungcheong Province

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Email: [wslu4321@hanmail.net](mailto:wslu4321@hanmail.net)

5) National Palace Museum of Korea

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Fax: 82-2-734-0775

Email: [brsmile@korea.kr](mailto:brsmile@korea.kr)

6) Commemorative Association of the National Debt Redemption Movement

Tel: 82-53-745-6753

Address: 670 Gukchaebosang-ro, Jung-gu, Daegu

Fax: 82-53-746-6753

Email: [master@gukchae.com](mailto:master@gukchae.com)

7) Research Institute of Korean Studies

Tel: 82-2-737-1731

Address: 136 Tongil-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul

Fax: 82-2-737-1739

Email: [riks091@naver.com](mailto:riks091@naver.com)

8) Seoul National University Library

Tel: 82-2-880-8001

Address: 1 Gwanak-ro, Gwanak-gu, Seoul

Fax: 82-2-872-1797

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9) Korea University Library

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Address: 145 Anam-ro, Seongbuk-gu, Seoul

Fax: 82-2-929-7051

Email: [refer@korea.ac.kr](mailto:refer@korea.ac.kr)

10) Yonsei University Research Information Service

Tel: 82-2-2123-6313

Address: 50 Yonsei-ro, Seodaemun-gu, Seoul

Fax: 82-2-2123-8685

Email: [kwankyu0717@koreastudy.or.kr](mailto:kwankyu0717@koreastudy.or.kr)

11) National Museum of Korean Contemporary History

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Email: [mks455@korea.kr](mailto:mks455@korea.kr)

12) Lee Jin-hwan

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Fax: 82-54-955-9200

Email: [junho881@hanmail.net](mailto:junho881@hanmail.net)

13) Kim Han-sik

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Fax: 82-53-746-6753

Email: [master@gukchae.com](mailto:master@gukchae.com)

14) Jo won-kyeong

Tel: 82-10-2804-4803

Address: 145, Dori-ri, Hayang-eup, Gyeongsan-si, Gyeongsangbuk-do

Email: [xairos57@hanmail.net](mailto:xairos57@hanmail.net)

#### **4.2 Custodian of the documentary heritage (name and contact details if different from the owner)**

Advanced Center for Korean Studies

Tel: 82-54-851-0700

Address: 1997 Toegye-ro, Dosan-myeon, Andong, North Gyeongsang Province

Fax: 82-54-851-0779

Email: [istopia@koreastudy.or.kr](mailto:istopia@koreastudy.or.kr)

#### **4.3 Legal status**

Legal and administrative responsibility for the maintenance and preservation of the Archives of the National Debt Redemption Movement lie entirely with the owners and custodians of the nominated heritage. They are listed below:

1) Korean Financial History Museum

Tel: 82-2-738-6806

Address: 61-1 Taepyeong-ro 1-ga, Jung-gu, Seoul

Representative:

Email: [thoth29@shinhan.com](mailto:thoth29@shinhan.com)

2) National Institute of Korean History

Tel: 82-2-500-8282

Address: 86 Gyoyukwon-ro, Gwacheon, Gyeonggi Province

Representative: Kim Jung-bae

Email: [chae@moe.go.kr](mailto:chae@moe.go.kr)

3) National Archives of Korea

Tel: 82-41-481-6300

Address: 189 Cheongsa-ro, Seo-gu, Daejeon

Representative: Lee Sang-jin

Email: [jeeny99@korea.kr](mailto:jeeny99@korea.kr)

4) Independence Hall of Korea

Tel: 82-41-560-0114

Address: 95 Sambang-ro, Mokcheon-eup, Dongnam-gu, Cheonan, South Chungcheong Province

Representative: Yun Ju-gyeong

Email: [wslu4321@hanmail.net](mailto:wslu4321@hanmail.net)

5) National Palace Museum of Korea

Tel: 82-2-3701-7500

Address: 12 Hyoja-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul

Representative: Choe Jong-deok

Email: [brsmile@korea.kr](mailto:brsmile@korea.kr)

6) Commemorative Association of the National Debt Redemption Movement  
Tel: 82-53-745-6753  
Address: 670 Gukchaebosang-ro, Jung-gu, Daegu  
Representative: Shin Dong-hak  
Email: [master@gukchae.com](mailto:master@gukchae.com)

7) Research Institute of Korean Studies  
Tel: 82-2-737-1731  
Address: 136 Tongil-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul  
Representative: Kim Sang-won  
Email: [riks091@naver.com](mailto:riks091@naver.com)

8) Seoul National University Library  
Tel: 82-2-880-8001  
Address: 1 Gwanak-ro, Gwanak-gu, Seoul  
Representative: Hong Seong-geol  
Email: [verdios@snu.ac.kr](mailto:verdios@snu.ac.kr)

9) Korea University Library  
Tel: 82-2-3290-1492  
Address: 145 Anam-ro, Seongbuk-gu, Seoul  
Representative: Kim Seong-cheol  
Email: [refer@korea.ac.kr](mailto:refer@korea.ac.kr)

10) Yonsei University Research Information Service  
Tel: 82-2-2123-6313  
Address: 50 Yonsei-ro, Seodaemun-gu, Seoul  
Representative: Lee Jeong-u  
Email: [kwankyu0717@koreastudy.or.kr](mailto:kwankyu0717@koreastudy.or.kr)

11) National Museum of Korean Contemporary History  
Tel: 82-2-3703-9303  
Address: 198 Sejong-daero, Jongno-gu, Seoul  
Fax: 82-23703-9216  
Email: [mks455@korea.kr](mailto:mks455@korea.kr)

12) Lee Jin-hwan  
Tel: 82-10-9270-0606  
Address: 117 Wangneung-ro, Daegaya-eup, Goryeong County, North Gyeongsang Province  
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13) Kim Han-sik  
Tel: 82-10-3055-8239  
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14) Jo won-kyeong  
Tel: 82-10-2804-4803  
Address: 145, Dori-ri, Hayang-eup, Gyeongsan-si, Gyeongsangbuk-do  
Email: [xairos57@hanmail.net](mailto:xairos57@hanmail.net)

#### **4.4 Accessibility**

- The original copies of the documentary resources comprising the Archives of the National Debt Redemption Movement are collected in 13 separate repositories and preserved under the care of their owners or custodians.
- Most of the originals are kept in optimal storage conditions at public institutions and have been digitized. Each institution operates a website where the digitized resources can be easily browsed.
- Documentary resources that are in private possession are preserved by an individual owner or a clan library.
- The Commemorative Association of the National Debt Redemption Movement offers easy access to digital resources of the nominated archives through its website (<http://www.gukchae.com>), where the resources can be searched and perused. The association also keeps a well organized and managed collection of copies of all relevant resources that anyone can easily peruse.
- If the nominated heritage is inscribed on UNESCO's Memory of the World Register, an integrated search system will be built to improve access to the concerned resources so that they can be conveniently used by researchers and others. To provide easy access to the heritage for people around the world, the Daegu Metropolitan Government plans to open an English-language website for the heritage, have the documents translated into English and employ guides who speak English and Japanese. In conjunction with these plans, there is also a move to construct a new home for the archives.

#### **4.5 Copyright status**

All rights concerning the utilization of resources comprising the Archives of the National Debt Redemption Movement in keeping with its inscription on UNESCO's Memory of the World Register rest with the owners of concerned resources. The owners of the resources also hold rights concerning their use apart from the inscription.

## **5.0 Assessment against the selection criteria**

### **5.1 Authenticity**

- The nominated heritage is a collection of documentary resources that provide an immersive chronicle of a nationwide voluntary campaign started by Korean citizens in 1907 to help their government repay massive sovereign debts by giving up some personal luxuries and possessions and donating the savings. The spontaneous effort grew into a movement to save Korea's sovereignty as imperial powers were committing economic aggression against Asia in the early 20th century. This documentary heritage consists of original materials in the possession of state, government and private institutions and individual citizens who are descendants of participants in the movement.
- It is particularly noteworthy that this heritage comprises handwritten documents produced by private citizens and original pieces of newspapers and magazine clippings. These press materials and the relevant handwritten documents make up paired sources serving as self-verifying historical evidence. For example, the full contents of campaign declarations issued in different regions were carried by newspapers within a few days, and the lists of donors and amounts of donations were sent to newspaper companies to be fully published.
- Reportage on the campaign was extensive and enthusiastic, contributing significantly in gaining sympathy from the people and spreading the movement throughout the country. The press coverage highlighted emotional scenes at donation events in villages across the country, which effectively encouraged public participation. At the same time, the press coverage also exposed problems that arose in the course of the campaign with unbiased reporting.
- This is the only known documentary heritage of its kind in the world, comprising a collection of records about a spontaneous movement initiated by private citizens to repay sovereign debt and the role of the popular press, which maintained accuracy and fairness in covering the movement in defiance of colonial oppression.

### **5.2 World significance**

- ◆ The Archives of the National Debt Redemption Movement is a historical resource bearing global significance; while it is a nation's documentary heritage, it is relevant as well to others as evidence of how a sense of civic responsibility was awakened and harnessed to safeguard economic sovereignty in the process of modernization in East Asia.
- Imperial powers often proffered loans as a means of aggression to colonize weak countries. There had been movements conducted by some people in China (1909–1910) and Mexico (1938) to pay their sovereign debts in order to protect their country from foreign aggression. But the 1907 movement in Korea was the first in world history wherein the entire public participated in unique ways over a relatively long period.
- ◆ The Archives of the National Debt Redemption Movement spotlights an outstanding sense of civic responsibility demonstrated by people of all classes joining efforts to save their nation in crisis. The spirit is kept alive today to spearhead social responsibility campaigns in the 21st century.

- The sense of civic responsibility of the Korean people manifested in the National Debt Redemption Movement came alive in a nationwide drive to collect gold to ward off a national default in the wake of the Asian financial crisis of 1997. Hence the campaign was called a second national debt redemption movement.

- The movements by Koreans to pay back foreign debt underscored civic duties and obligations, rather than rights, of the people and at the same time emphasized the shared responsibility of creditors and debtors. Thus framed, the two movements have left valuable legacies to tap into, such as in raising awareness of social responsibility in investment and consumption among economic actors. Furthermore, the movements share ideas and perspectives with global initiatives for new economic and social orders, such as the Tobin tax, which proposed a tax on foreign exchange transactions for regulation of speculative capital; the Jubilee 2000, which called for the cancellation of Third World debt by the year 2000; and the Sustainable Development Goals, a UN initiative adopted in 2015, which advocates financial and technical assistance to developing countries, among other programs for sustainable development.

- ◆ The National Debt Redemption Movement was a movement by the entire spectrum of Korean society in pursuit, ultimately, of peaceful coexistence with their nation's creditor; by redeeming the sovereign debt in the face of financial aggression by an imperial power, it aimed to achieve mutually beneficial and peaceful coexistence of nations through a nonviolent campaign defined by peaceful methods such as abstinence, frugality and sharing.

- The movement is comparable to Mahatma Ghandi's nonviolent resistance against British rule in India through *Ahimsa* (compassion) and *Swadeshi* (self-sufficiency through boycotting British products). Both movements sought peace. But the Korean movement employed a more proactive strategy to overcome imperial aggression by repaying the national debt with people's donations and thereby attain mutually beneficial coexistence and peace in the region.

- ◆ During his visit to Korea in 1998, Michel Camdessus, then managing director of the International Monetary Fund, expressed respect for the Korean people when he witnessed their movement to gather gold to help pay their country's external debts. World Bank governor Jim Yong Kim, in a press interview in 2012, said the gold gathering movement by the Korean people was an example of solidarity to cope with national crisis.

- The spirit of the National Debt Redemption Movement of 1907 was revived nine decades later as the nation reeled from economic disaster in the Asian financial crisis of 1997. Images of the overwhelming response by the Korean public giving their government their gold jewelry, coins, birthday tokens, ornaments and family heirlooms, became an enduring symbol of that time of crisis. In this context, the Archives of the National Debt Redemption Movement deserves attention and reinterpretation in discussing solutions to the sovereign debt crises faced by the world's economies today.

## **5.3 Comparative criteria**

### **1) Time**

- The National Debt Redemption Movement took place in the early 20th century when imperial powers competed for colonies. The nominated archives of the movement contain detailed records of events which transpired when imperial aggression met with resistance by the peace-loving public of a colony.
- Around the time the movement began, Korea faced extreme economic difficulties with its national capital dwindling while Japan took over its underground resources development rights, pressed for monetary reform and offered low-interest loans to Japanese merchants and investors as the Korean government was compelled to sign large sovereign loans from Tokyo since 1905 under meticulous colonization schemes.
- By that time, Korea had already ceded much of its sovereign rights to Japan following the signing of the Protectorate Treaty in 1905. The National Debt Redemption Movement was triggered as nationalist intellectuals and entrepreneurs with a growing awareness of crisis allied with commoners who were suffering in poverty.
- This movement sets itself apart from armed struggles in most colonies. It is a peaceful resistance movement against colonial aggression, which unfolded as a nationwide donation campaign through personal sacrifice for the cause: abstinence from smoking and drinking, reduction of consumption and disposal of jewelry.

### **2) Place**

- The National Debt Redemption Movement began in the present-day city of Daegu, in January 1907, and spread quickly throughout Korea. According to tallies compiled from newspaper articles, there were 15 donation gathering offices in Gyeongsang Province; 5 in Gyeonggi Province; 3 in Gangwon Province; 11 in Chungcheong Province; 17 in Jeolla Province; 8 in Hwanghae Province; 9 in Hamgyeong Province; and 15 in Pyeongan Province.
- Most regions (318 counties) across Korea participated in the movement. It is assumed that some 400,000 people, about 20–25 percent of all households, made donations.

### **3) People**

- The National Debt Redemption Movement was proposed by intellectuals who were engaged in patriotic nationalist movement and merchants experiencing a decline in national commerce, but expanded quickly across the country due to enthusiastic grassroots participation.
- As soon as they heard the news about the movement, people in all regions of the country responded by taking the lead in making donations through the local autonomous councils or community associations. Although Korea was still a Confucian-oriented society with remnants of class division, it can be said the movement quickly grew into a nationwide public campaign. Its appeal across traditional social divisions is inclusive, as reflected in campaign manifestos and declarations issued

throughout the country: “In loving one’s country, there can’t be distinction between men and women, old and young, or high and low.”

- The press reports noted that participation in the campaign ran across all age groups and social lines. Among the donors were numerous children and students. There are also many touching articles about beggars, butchers, woodcutters and vegetable vendors who found ways to pitch in. The campaign was energized by participation by not only members of the powerful *yangban* class but also people from all strata of society: intellectuals, businessmen and smallholder landowners who constituted a new mainstream; housewives and female entertainers who had largely been historically marginalized; and tenants, neighborhood merchants and butchers. It may be said the movement for sovereign debt repayment in 1907 showed features characterizing the early phase of civic movement.
- The press coverage of women’s participation, particularly of many entertainers and widows, was vigorous and influential. The campaign began as a male-centered drive to stop smoking, but in just two days a group of women in the Daegu region formed an organization of their own, declaring, “There is no distinction between men and women in loving one’s country,” and started by donating the jewelry they were wearing. Women throughout the country responded in various ways, such as saving money from their budgets for rice and groceries, and cutting and selling their hair. This may be seen as the first stirrings for a women’s mass movement in Korea, which deserves attention considering that the first feminist movement in the United States started in 1908. It should be noted that this early women’s movement in Korea advocated civic responsibility, whereas the feminist movement began in the United States and Europe to demand women’s rights to equality in labor and suffrage.
- The Archives of the National Debt Redemption Movement shows in relative detail how modern citizenship emerged in Korea by overcoming class discrimination in ways very different from the West.

#### **4) Subject and theme**

##### **(1) Civic responsibility**

- The motivating spirit of the National Debt Redemption Movement was the people’s sense of personal as well as collective responsibility — that it was citizens’ civic duty — to protect their country from foreign aggression.
- The significance of this historic mass movement cannot be overstated: although Koreans as a people still remained socially stratified, the poor and those identified among the lower classes emerged at the forefront of the effort to save their nation. By participating in the campaign to repay the national debt they sacrificed what little they had, and inspired many more across social lines to join the movement.
- In view of this, the Archives of the National Debt Redemption Movement is historical evidence that the sense of civic responsibility that is sought and nurtured by global civil society of the 21st century was internalized and vibrant in the early 20th century. This movement is an important historical precedent of recent social responsibility campaigns initiated by UN and global civil society.
- The spirit of civic responsibility expressed in the National Debt Redemption Movement is distinct from civil rights as generally understood in Western societies. The movement exemplified the behavioral norm of the general public based on a sense of personal civic responsibility. They voluntarily shouldered the obligation to save their nation from crisis, even though there was no need

for them to take responsibility for their government's foreign loans forcibly imposed for imperialist motives, or caused by reckless, corrupt governance by the ruling class.

- In this sense, the Archives of the National Debt Redemption Movement is considered to represent the first exemplary manifestation of an Asian sense of civic responsibility, a trove of artifacts from a defining moment at the dawn of the modern era in Korea.

## (2) Nationwide public donation campaign

- The core method of the National Debt Redemption Movement was donation gathering. It was a grassroots movement in which commoners participated by contributing their savings or earnings from quitting smoking, disposing of rings on their fingers, and cutting grocery spending — rather than rich noblemen making large donations.

- A diversity of communities joined the movement with great enthusiasm as it grew into a nationwide public campaign. The Archives of the National Debt Redemption Movement contains detailed records of the movement's development and lists concerning activities of villages, clans, social gatherings, schools and workplaces.

- The nominated heritage is a unique and outstanding collection of historical resources, unparalleled in the world, which describe the entire process of a nationwide public donation campaign.

## 5) Form and style

- The Archives of the National Debt Redemption Movement contains documents written personally by citizens who participated in the movement. Manifestos, declarations, circulars, notices, and rosters of donors in book form typify the documentation style of the masses at the time.

- Mass media materials include detailed reporting throughout the entire process of the movement, which, paired with handwritten materials produced by citizens and local organizations, constitute self-confirming evidence of historical facts.

- Handwritten documents, mass media materials and papers of the Japanese residency-general are preserved in the form of originals, glass negatives or microfilm, and have been digitized as well, facilitating open access for everyone through search systems.

## 6) Social/Spiritual/Community significance

- The National Debt Redemption Movement provides a model of accountability in a new financial order to help resolve the problems due to foreign debt and loans faced by the world's economies in the 21st century. The movement was aimed at fulfilling the debtor's obligation, which was voluntarily assumed by the Korean people to repay sovereign debt. At the same time, the movement also brought up the creditor's responsibility by accusing Japan of forcibly pressing high-interest loans on a needy state for malign purposes.

- The movement carries historical significance as an attempt to resolve problems deriving from external debt on the premise that both creditor and debtor were responsible, whereas in most financial crises which erupted in diverse forms in later years, including the Asian financial crisis of 1997, blame was put on debtors only. In the wake of the recent financial crisis in Greece there is now global

recognition that it would be practically impossible to find a solution without acknowledging the responsibility of both the debtor and the creditor. This solution proposed in the Korean people's debt repayment movement in the early 20th century remains valid a century later.

- The Daegu Round Global Forum, convened in October 1999, brought to light the spirit of this movement in discussing the need to create a new global financial order, receiving international attention.
- Therefore, the nominated heritage is important source material worthy of continual retroactive analysis and reinterpretation as documentary evidence of a significant historical event in exploring a new global financial order for the 21st century.

## **6 Contextual information**

### **6.1 Rarity**

▪ The Archives of the National Debt Redemption Movement meets the requirements for Rarity in the following two aspects:

1) The National Debt Redemption Movement is a valuable movement with no parallel in world history wherein the general public conducted donation campaigns to raise funds to help repay bad debt incurred by the state. The nominated heritage clearly shows the whole process of the movement from its background to operation and conclusion.

2) At the outset of the 20th century, when transportation and communications had yet to be developed, the popular press acutely captured the spirit of the time in devoting attentive coverage of the campaign, the people, places and events through the whole process of the movement, making decisive contributions to quickly spreading the movement throughout the country.

▪ The media role to support this movement represents the first press campaign in Korea; nowhere else in the world at that time had journalism joined hands with a grassroots donation campaign to repay bad foreign debt.

### **6.2 Integrity**

▪ The Archives of the National Debt Redemption Movement is deemed to meet the requirements of Integrity for two major reasons:

1) This is a collection of documentary resources pertaining to the National Debt Redemption Movement compiled at state level, comprising materials that have been preserved at state institutions and university libraries as well as those collected by the Commemorative Association of the National Debt Redemption Movement over more than 20 years. It is believed the collection includes most extant documentary sources regarding the movement in Korea.

2) With the judgment that a considerable portion of the enormous amounts of documentary resources existing in Korea was destroyed during the Japanese colonial rule (1910–1945) and the Korean War (1950–1953), the nominated heritage is believed to contain most of the extant resources relating to the movement.

▪ In spite of the concerns noted above, the extant resources are regarded as sufficient to provide a most faithful picture of the movement.



## **7.0 Consultation with stakeholders**

### **7.1 Provide details of consultation about this nomination with the stakeholders in its significance and preservation.**

- Committee for Inscription of the Archives of the National Debt Redemption Movement on the UNESCO Memory of the World Register
- This committee is composed of representatives from various relevant sectors, including local governments, educational circles, mass media and civil society, facilitating active cooperation with concerned regional communities and professional groups.
- Campaign to invite public participation: For details of the campaign, please see *Appendix 4: National Signature Gathering Campaign*.
- Signatures of citizens supporting the nomination have been gathered through a nationwide campaign.
- Lectures have been offered for students and citizens to increase their understanding of the movement.

### **7.2 Cooperation with institutions holding the heritage**

- Letters of agreement have been exchanged with institutions which hold resources that are part of the nominated heritage.
- For details, please see *Appendix 5: Letters of Agreement to Inscription of the Archives of the National Debt Redemption Movement on the UNESCO Memory of the World Register*.

## **8.0 Assessment of risk**

- The resources comprising the Archives of the National Debt Redemption Movement are stored in stable repositories with anti-theft systems under careful maintenance and preservation at the National Archives of Korea, the Commemorative Association of the National Debt Redemption Movement and other public institutions. Apart from natural disasters, there is little risk of damage or theft.
- Storage facilities at all these institutions are equipped with up-to-date temperature and humidity control devices maintaining optimal conditions to prevent decay or deformation of stored heritage.
- To ensure the perfect preservation of the heritage, all relevant institutions monitor its state of preservation on a regular basis.

## **9.0 Preservation and access management plan**

### **9.1 Is there a management plan in existence for this documentary heritage?**

YES

### **9.2 Daegu Metropolitan City's management plan for the nominated documentary heritage**

○,<sup>1</sup> Daegu Metropolitan City plans to build a dedicated facility for the Archives of the National Debt Redemption Movement for storage and exhibition of the nominated heritage to improve its management and access. The facility will provide experience and education programs for citizens.

· Because the nominated heritage is owned and managed by multiple institutions and individuals, copies of resources except those in the possession of the existing memorial hall will be produced for their utilization.

· All resources will be digitized for easy access from anywhere.

· Because resources in this heritage are archaic texts written over a century ago, they will be translated into modern Korean and also into English at the same time, to make them accessible to people around the world as well as Koreans.

· A variety of catalogues and guidebooks will be produced to enhance the public's understanding of the heritage.

· For details of these plans, please refer to *Appendix 6: Daegu Metropolitan City's Plan for Construction of the New Home for the Archives of the National Debt Redemption Movement*.

○,<sup>2</sup> Daegu Metropolitan City plans to enact an ordinance to support the systematic management and research of the Archives of the National Debt Redemption Movement, education of citizens in the spirit of the movement, and dissemination of the movement's legacies throughout society.

## 10.0 Any other information

- The National Debt Redemption Movement was a nationwide movement of the Korean people, but with a sense of responsibility and pride that it began in their city, the citizens of Daegu have carried out diverse activities to commemorate the movement, with financial and administrative support from the metropolitan government.

- Academic Conferences (since 1993)

- Please see *Appendix 7: Academic Conferences on the National Debt Redemption Movement*.

- Creation of a commemorative park and a namesake street (1998)

- Awarding of the Seo Sang-don Prize (since 1999)

- Establishment of the National Debt Redemption Movement Memorial Hall (2011)

- If the nominated heritage is inscribed on UNESCO's Memory of the World Register, the Daegu Metropolitan City will establish a comprehensive plan for its utilization and support the plan's implementation at local and international levels.

(Local level)

- Construction of a new dedicated facility and home for the Archives of the National Debt Redemption Movement and the enactment of an ordinance for its operation.

- Designation of Daegu Citizens' Week commemorating the week when the movement began in 1907 (February 21–28).

(International level)

- Hosting an academic conference for modernization of the spirit of the movement.

- Promoting educational and cultural exchange projects between nations to support Third World economic independence.

- Promoting an inter-Korean joint investigation project to look for documentary resources pertaining to the movement in North Korea.

- If the nominated heritage is inscribed on UNESCO's Memory of the World Register, the Commemorative Association of the National Debt Redemption Movement will make all possible efforts to successfully undertake the abovementioned projects in order to contribute to the International Memory of the World Program.

<Appendices>

Appendix 1: Catalogue of the Archives of the National Debt Redemption Movement

Appendix 2: Photographs of the Archives of the National Debt Redemption Movement

Appendix 3: Bibliography for the Archives of the National Debt Redemption Movement

Appendix 4: National Signature Gathering Campaign

Appendix 5: Letters of Agreement to Inscription of the Archives of the National Debt Redemption Movement on the UNESCO Memory of the World Register

Appendix 6: Daegu Metropolitan City's Plan for Construction of the New Home for the Archives of the National Debt Redemption Movement

Appendix 7: Academic Conferences on the National Debt Redemption Movement