

Donghwatu

by

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Hwatu is a board game and folk game deeply embedded in the daily lives of Koreans. However, the design of Hwatu, which Koreans love, is influenced by Japanese culture and has a historical background. I designed 48 new Hwatu cards as my senior project to address this issue.

Hwatu is a Korean folk card consisting of 48 cards. Many Koreans know Hwatu as a traditional Korean game, but this is different regarding historical facts. Hwatu was developed in Japan during the Japanese colonial era, introduced into Korea, and became popular after 1970. The Japanese colonial era was a dark period in Korea, so there was much effort to eliminate the culture of that time. Ironically, Hwatu is a Japanese game that came over during the Japanese colonial era. Most Koreans have enjoyed it for a long time but do not know about it. I also thought that Hwatu was a traditional Korean game, and I learned about Hwatu while researching it for this project. If you look at the design style of the flowers on the Hwatu, you can see the Japanese style of painting. The intense red color on the card means Japan's national color. But in Japan, they don't even know about the existence of Hwatu, which is gradually being forgotten without being played in Japan, where it originated. Meanwhile, in Korea, there is a perception that Hwatu is a traditional Korean card game. Nevertheless, most Koreans do not know and do not even care. Since Hwatu is still a card game that Koreans like and enjoy, what if it was a more Korean and representative design of Korea instead of the design of cards that include Japanese culture? That is what started with the idea of my senior project, "Donghwatu."



Donghwatu
48 cards of donghwatu (top), package (bottom left),
manual (bottom right). May 2023

The name “Donghwatu” combines Donghwa, which means folk tale in Korean, and the card name Hwatu. Hwatu has been widely used in gambling due to the nature of card games. It was a card game that adults enjoyed more than children, and if children had Hwatu, they looked at it with a bad eye. To solve this problem, traditional folk tales were used for card design.

Hwatu consists of 48 cards with four cards per type, so Donghwatu contains 12 traditional folk tales. Traditional folktales consist of Pasqueflower Stroy, the Lumpy Old Man, The Fairy and the Woodcutter, Kongjwi and Patjwi, The Green Frog, The Hare’s Liver, The King with Donkey Ears, Heungbu and Nolbu, The Tale of Sim Chong, Mr. Moon and Miss Sun, The Goblin’s Hat, and Emillejong Bell. Also, the meaning of the name Hwatu is the fight of flowers. So the illustrations of the existing Hwatu are also composed of flowers. In order to maintain the identity of the existing Hwatu, the fairy tale also includes flowers that match each story or appear directly in the story.

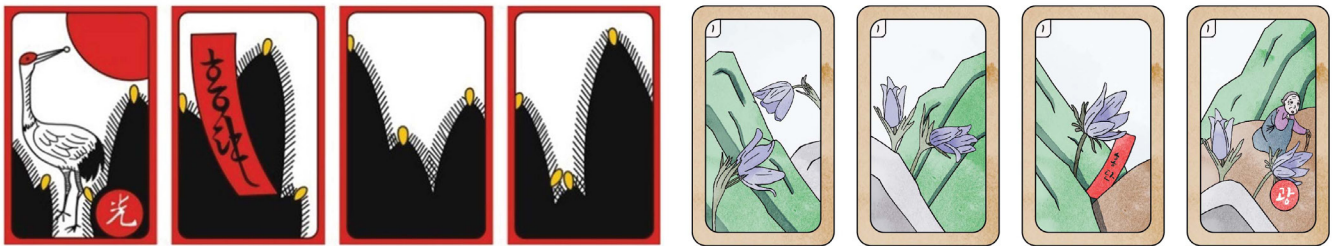
The size of the Donghwatu is 32 mm x 54 mm and 1 mm thick, which is very small and very thin. The cards are small and thin, so it is tough to pick them up when playing on a regular ground, desk, or flat place, so people usually play with a blanket on the floor. Blankets are unknown exactly why, but green blankets, such as military blankets, have long been used for Hwatu.



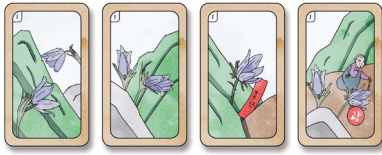
Trump card (left) 62 mm x 100 mm, Donghwatu (right) 32 mm x 54 mm. May 2023

Overall, everything contains Korean culture. The illustration also uses watercolor textures to give the feeling of an oriental painting. On the back of the card is the national flower Hibiscus, which symbolizes Korea, and in the background, mountains and clouds that seem to have been painted with a brush are used as patterns. The color of the card used the color of traditional Korean paper called “Hanji.” The card’s color was relatively bright for visibility because it usually played Hwatu on a dark green blanket, but darker than the color of the hand.

Two big problems had to be solved while making “Donghwatu.” One is that the overall design changes compared to the traditional Hwatu, so it can be confusing when people play card games. As there are 12 types of Hwatu, each type of card represents each month, and using this, we put the number of the month represented by each type of card in the upper left corner of the card so that people can recognize the same type of card when they play Hwatu. In addition, the design that symbolizes Ribbon and Gwang cards from the existing Hwatu was brought as it is and used to reduce the sense of heterogeneity as much as possible compared to the current cards. The second problem is that putting the whole story on a small card is virtually impossible. Therefore, only symbolic scenes from folk tales were used, and when four cards were opened, the cards’ illustrations were designed to appear as one scene.



January cards of the existing Hwatu (left), January cards of Donghwatu (right). It has the same “Ribbon” and “Gwang” as the existing hwatu, but the overall design differs. Mar 2023



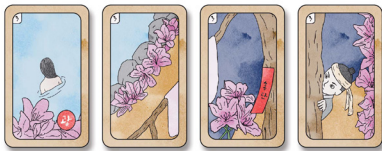
Donghwatu's January card, Pasqueflower, Pasqueflower story. Mar 2023

As I wrote earlier, the meaning of the word Hwatu is a fight between flowers, so the card must include flowers. January's cards, which include the story of a Pasqueflower, have a Pasqueflower drawn like the title of a folk tale. Also, the January card consists of a ribbon card in the shape of a red band with the word "Hongdan" written on it and a Gwang card written as "Gwang" in a red circle.



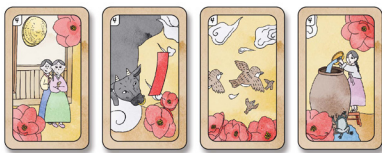
Donghwatu's February card, The Lumpy old man, Byeonsan windflower. Mar 2023

February's card, which contains the story of the Lumpy old man, depicts Byeonsan windflowers blooming in winter. February's card also includes a red-banded ribbon card that can make a red-banded hat and copper foil was drawn for a new card that can make a "godori."



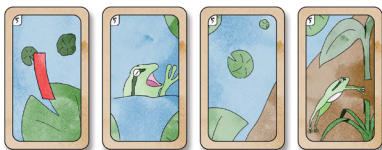
Donghwatu's March card, Fairy and a Woodcutter, Azalea flower. Mar 2023

March is a card that tells the story of a fairy and a woodcutter, including a Gwang card and a Hongdan ribbon card. Azalea flowers that bloom in March are chosen for representation flowers.



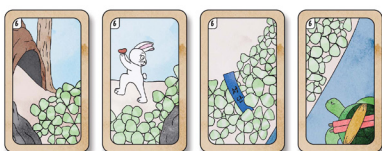
Donghwatu's April card, Kongji Patzzi, Camellia flower . Mar 2023

The April card, which depicts the story of Kongji Patzzi, drew a blank ribbon card to make a "chodan" and a sparrow appearing in the story for the bird card included in the "godari" and drew camellia flowers blooming in April.



Donghwatu's May card, The Green Frog, Lotus leaf . Mar 2023

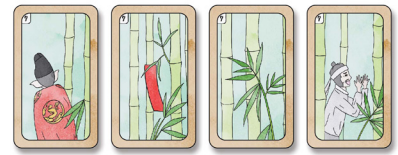
Since May is the end of spring and the beginning of summer, I chose the story of a green frog set in summer. A special card is a ribbon card that can make "chodan," The representative plant is the lotus leaf in the story.



Donghwatu's June card, The Hare's Liver, Shamrock . Mar 2023

June tells the story of The Hare's Liver and includes a blue ribbon card to make a "Cheongdan." The Hare's Liver is the story of a turtle who wants a rabbit's liver, and the shamrock (rabbit grass in Korean), which is related to the rabbit, has been selected as the flower.

July is a card about a traditional fairy tale called The King with Donkey Ears. Special cards include a red ribbon card that allows making a “chodan.” As the bamboo forest appears as the background of the main scene in the story, bamboo is drawn for the plants on the card.



Donghwatu's July card, The King with Donkey Ears, Bamboo. Mar 2023

The August cards contain traditional folk tales called Heungbu and Nolbu and have “Gwang” cards. The gourd flower related to the gourd in the story was chosen as the flower of the card.



Donghwatu's August card, Heungbu and Nolbu, Gourd flower. Mar 2023

September's card tells the story of The Tale of Sim Chong and includes a blue ribbon card to make a “Cheongdan.” In the story's last scene, Sim Chong appears on a lotus flower, so I chose the lotus flower as the flower of the card.



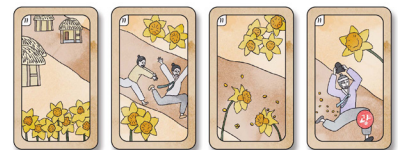
Donghwatu's September card, Tale of Sim Chong, Lotus flower. Mar 2023

October's card tells the story of Mr. Moon and Miss Sun and includes a blue ribbon card to make a “Cheongdan.” Considering that the background of traditional fairy tales is autumn, ginkgo leaves were drawn as plants of cards.



Donghwatu's October card, Mr. Moon and Miss Sun, Ginkgo leaves. Mar 2023

The November card tells the story of The Goblin's Hat and has a “Gwang” card. Daffodils appear in the story, and they bloom in November, so I chose them as the flower of the card.



Donghwatu's November card, The Goblin's Hat, Daffodils. Mar 2023

December tells the story of Emilejong and has a ribbon card and a “Gwang” card to make a “chodan.” I chose a chrysanthemum flower that is used to commemorate the death of a child.



Donghwatu's December card, The story of Emilejong, chrysanthemum flower. Mar 2023

Donghwatu's card was made by overlapping two 350g white core papers and finished with varnish. The card is light, but it has a harder texture also, so there is no inconvenience in playing. The package box used 300g art paper and was finished with a laminate. A manual is included in the package, and on the front, the game is described how to play and the game terminology. Therefore, it made it easy for first-time players to play. The storyline of each folk tale is written on the back of the manual so that people can understand what the illustration means.

During the project, there were a lot of changes in ideas, and it was an opportunity to see my shortcomings. It wasn't easy to redesign 48 cards, but as a result, I created a Hwatu with a different design from the Hwatu with a deep gambling image, which is more familiar and children can enjoy. For a long time, the card containing Japanese culture has been a traditional Korean card, and I am proud that the old Hwatu has been newly made into a Korean design. There will be a new design of Hwatu in the future, but I hope many Koreans will learn about the historical facts about Hwatu.



Manual front
It shows all 48 cards and explains how to play the game and special cards. Apr 2023.



Manual back
It contains 12 traditional folk tales story briefly. Apr 2023.

Works Cited

“History of Hwatu.” 한국민속대백과사전 , National Folk Museum of Korea,
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