



Outstanding Universal Values of the Korean Archipelago Getbol: Its potential for World Heritage Nomination

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The 'Korean Archipelago Getbol in southeastern Yellow Sea (KAG; Getbol means tidal flat deposits in Korean)' has developed due to the increasing accommodation space during the Holocene sea-level rise on the broad epicontinental shelf in the southeastern part of the Yellow Sea. Sedimentation and evolution show a variety of quite distinctive tidal flat patterns with intertidal and subtidal drainage systems depending upon the distribution and orientation of islands with rocky shores. It is the unique Recent sedimentary environment with ongoing coastal processes which has been formed by exceptional geological-oceanographic-climatic setting in the world. The following KAG's Outstanding Universal Values are suggested to support the WH nomination: 1) It is the only place in the world where tide-controlled sedimentation processes have produced broad tidal flats surrounding numerous rocky islands on a broad epicontinental shelf near convergent tectonic boundary. Only in the eastern part of the Yellow Sea tectonic influence produced numerous high-relief areas which became islands due to transgression on the very shallow continental shelf (<50 m) due to deglaciation after LGM. Macrotidal currents combined with waves and typhoons in this semi-closed oceanographic setting have provided unique geological and oceanographic conditions for the tidal flat formation around numerous islands. As a result, it displays the most dynamic and complicated coastal depositional system in the world. Complicated island-topography also produced the deepest tidal channels. 2) Even though the property has been constantly influenced by strong macrotidal currents combined with East Asian Monsoon climate (winter erosion and summer deposition) with occasional typhoons during summer, Getbol has maintained its stable depositional system and tidal flat sediments have been accumulated during the Late Pleistocene and Holocene. Sufficient supply of suspended load through Geumgang River provides sustainable depositional system within the property. As a result the KAG shows the thickest tidal flat sediments protected by numerous islands in the world. Numerous former islands of relatively elevated areas have been vanished and hidden due to burial by aggrading tidal flat sediments. In addition, the KAG shows a complete story of geological, ecological and conservational integrity (the wholeness and intactness). Thus, we strongly believe that the KAG has great potential to be inscribed on a World Heritage List for the criterion (viii).