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A STUDY ON THE APPLICATION OF HISTORICAL
AND CULTURAL ATTRACTIONS FOR REGIONAL
REVITALIZATION: FOCUSING ON
'GOCHANGEUP FORTRESS CULTURAL
EXPERIENCE DISTRICT'

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A Study on the Application of Historical and Cultural Attractions for Regional Revitalization

- Focusing on 'Gochangup Fortress Cultural Experience District'

Synopsis:

This study examines the application of historical and cultural attractions for regional revitalization. This study focused on 'Gochangup Fortress Cultural Experience District' of Gochang-gun in Republic of Korea.

A Study on the Application of Historical and Cultural Attractions for Regional Revitalization

- Focusing on 'Gochang-eup Fortress Cultural Experience District' -

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1. Research Background and Purpose

There has been an active discussion on a plan to revitalize a region using its historical and cultural resources. This is a reflection of the fact that the awareness on diversity and regional culture is becoming important as the society changes from modernism to a post-modernism and the system has changed to a centralized rule to a decentralized rule. Also, it shows the change of global paradigm to solve regional issues due to the degeneration of industrial structure and cities.

South Korea experienced rapid industrialization and urbanization with severely widening gap among regions, which caused the imbalance. As the local government system was discussed and implemented, local government devised regional self-sufficiency and established a plan for development highlighting the regional characteristics. Among them, the local government chose the revitalization plan using the region's historical and cultural resources as an important strategy. Moreover, after the central government's '10-year Cultural Development Plan' in the 1990s, "The Revitalization of Regional Culture and the Equal Distribution of Cultural Welfare" were presented as the main tasks in the sectional long-term plans, bringing more strength to local government. However, this has spread like a trend, distorting historical resources into commercial 'Cultural goods' without an enough understanding of the region by losing its uniqueness. Cultural attractions adopted the economic mechanisms of production, distribution, and consumption, added by strategies to attract visitors, which neglected the individual stories of region.

A region's indiscriminate development of tourism has caused 'tourism gentrification', i.e. 'Tourification'. The focus has been not on the understanding of the region's history and culture, but rather on how to attract many more tourists to create the region's economic value. Such concerns have made the understanding of the region, instilling pride into local resident, and a sense of community to be pushed away from the order of priority. In the end, the development of region full of attractive tourism elements instead of the region's unique charms turned into losing locality with lack of differences from others. Especially, the evaluation has consisted mainly of economic creation effects and quantitative evaluation, which led to the loss of locality.

As a criticism and introspection, this study aims to make suggestions regarding regional revitalization for visitors through the region's historical and cultural attractions, as well as for local community. First, an enough understanding of a region's history and culture must be considered. Second, regional revitalization must prioritize not only the political evaluation of attracting people but also the local residents' cultural pride and the revitalization of local community. Third, investment for hardware is important, but what fills the hardware must be the region's story, which must also be conveyed to both outside people visiting the region as well as all local residents living in the region. For this, the study aims to analyze the case of 'Gochang-eup Fortress Cultural Experience District' in Gochang-gun, Jeollabuk-do.

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Gochang-gun created ‘Gochangeup Fortress Cultural Experience District’. The street contributed to the revitalization of the region as a cultural space for visitors to understand the regional culture through tourist attractions, information center, and accommodations, as well as a space considering the cultural convenience of local residents. Through the case of this space that considers both local residents and visitors, this paper intends to examine a regional revitalization plan by properly using historical and cultural attractions.

2. Regional Revitalization Plan using a Region’s Historical and Cultural Attractions

It is important to preserve a region’s history and culture because history can be understood better by retaining and preserving place-ness, space-ness, and materiality, along with a written history. ¹ It can be considered by two perspectives. The first is local community, and the other principal is visitors. Focusing only on one principal strictly will confine it to the extreme limits of traditional preservation or commercial development. Confining extremely to the limits of traditional preservation will lead to excluding or not accommodating outsider or falling into a cultural elitist thought; inclining only to commercial development will kick out the existing local community from their living spaces, by indiscriminately creating entertainment, dining, and accommodation spaces only for visitors, rather than considering residents. ² Thus, a region’s plan to use its historical and cultural resources shall be developed for both principals. Also, historical and cultural preservation becomes the best asset to perpetuate the regional culture. Through that, the local community will be instilled with more pride in their region; such internal solidarity can improve the region’s brand through a strong and unique proxy experience for visitors. This is soon connected to the competitiveness of a region’s historical and cultural attractions. Meanwhile, this was also regarded as regional tourism competitiveness.

For the development of tourism, a local community’s participation and initiative are becoming more important. It means that tourism using a region’s historical and cultural attractions or the participation of a local community in revitalization is important, which reflects that tourism development is sustainable when these are possible. ³ Therefore, locality and a local community must be prioritized from a long-term perspective. It is important to effectively use outside and inside attractions while strengthening local identity. Also, these used story attractions are based on the region, must be a common memory that local residents can share, and an unforgettable proxy experience for outside people. ⁴ For the regional revitalization using historical and cultural attractions, it will be difficult to achieve sustainable development without the understanding of local residents and concerns for locality. Even if it is possible, development for both local community and visitors will be difficult. For a region’s historical and cultural attractions to be closely connected to sociocultural, economic and environmental directions, revitalization using them led by the participation of local community must be made.

3. Gochangeup Fortress Cultural Experience District in Gochang-gun, Jeollabuk-do

Gochang-gun started rearranging the surrounding areas of Gochangeup Fortress in the center of Gochang as a street without cars, and relocated the department in charge of its

¹ Kiho Kim, Urban Regeneration Tasks through Historical and Cultural Preservation, *Stories of Urban Regeneration using History and Culture*, , Compiled by Urban Regeneration Project Group, Hanul Academy, 2012, p.7

² Libby Porter, Kate Shaw; Translated by Jaehyeon Park, *Whose Urban Renaissance? : An International Comparison of Urban Regenerations Strategies*, Korea Research Institute for Human Settlements Urban Regeneration Support Center, 2015, pp.370~372

³ Korea Culture and Tourism Institute, *Seminar on Sustainable Tourism Development Forum*, 2014, p.15

⁴ Gapdoo Lee, Cultural Tourism Industry for the Revitalization of Regional Economy, *Journal of Regional Development Planning*, 2000, Vol.-No.3, pp.175~176

cultural tourism to this space; by doing so it sought to create the region's core historical and cultural attractions and achieve regional revitalization. Gochang attempted at revitalization by making its core historical and cultural space more accessible to visitors and tourists for their accommodations, tourism, and experiences, and for local residents to be closer with the region's historical and cultural attractions. To allow them to use other cultural convenience facilities, Gochang also attempted to turn the area into a cultural space with various facilities such as agricultural and stockbreeding product market, a *Hanok* experience village, culture center, environment ecological park, outdoor performance hall, etc. Especially, Gochang Gochang Fortress, which held the region's largest festival 'Gochang Moyang Fortress Festival' (Gochang fortress is called also Moyang fortress), needed a space for events and performances due to the increase of severe safety problems during the festival. To quench the cultural thirst of local residents who were vulnerable to cultural art performances and exhibitions, the region also needed cultural convenience facilities for exhibitions and performances; thus, the region's attempt is evaluated as appropriate for its objective demand and needs. Built in the most central space of the region, this street was planned for visitors to explore the tourism information office and Gochang Pansori Museum, the region's representative cultural asset. Furthermore, when an outdoor performance hall was created here, Gochang Moyang Fortress Festival could accommodate many more local residents in a safe space. It was selected as a 'night-traveling' business site by the Cultural Heritage Administration in 2017, becoming a stage for local residents to decorating the construction of Moyang Fortress in an operetta form. The performance hall is filled by local residents during the non-festival period, although the number is relatively small. This shows that the space is naturally drawing local residents into the region's core historical and cultural place for them to understand and accept the culture of their region, as well as to strengthen their pride and a sense of community. The space also enabled the local residents and visitors to experience the history and culture of Gochang, by creating traditional street and integrating with storytelling. Also, Gochang setup a plan to develop and change the space into an experience and stay-type space, by combining contents such as *Hanok* experience village, pottery experience hall, old traditional street, etc. into the convenience facilities for the region's tourists. Gochang aimed to revitalize its economy and increase the county residents' income with a revitalization plan for local residents and to attract more tourists into this space. This space implies that Gochang-gun will enable its local residents to use cultural convenience facilities by closely accessing the regional culture, while securing an opportunity of regional revitalization using its historical and cultural attractions through stay-type tourism and experience-type tourism contents. Detailed cases of using the region's historical and cultural attractions will be examined in the following chapter.

4. A Case of Gochang Gochang Fortress Cultural Experience District using Regional Historical and Cultural Attractions

As examined previously, the surrounding of Gochang Gochang Fortress Cultural Experience District is the core historical and cultural street of Gochang that has steadily build the hardware infrastructure which symbolizes Gochang, a historical and cultural city. However, the direction of the development that is more important than this is that Gochang is filling up this space with the story attractions it has. Hardware-centered regional development is short-term and creates hideous structures once it loses purpose and meaning, which have been confirmed through previous researches in Korea and abroad. Filling this hardware with the region's unique story attractions with local residents and presenting special experiences to the visitors is being paid attention as sustainable and proper directions of the regional revitalization. A typical case example of the space use is that it contributes to regional revitalization as the main space of 'Gochang Moyang Fortress Festival', which was

originated from Gochang Fortress, another name of Moyang Fortress. This native-rock fortress was wisely built by the residents of Jeolla Province to defend themselves from Japanese invasions, and is chosen as one of the fortresses that has preserved its original form the best in Korea. The festival started to inherit the spirit of Gochang Fortress, designate September 9th on which the festival begins as the 'Day of Residents', and to instill the harmony and pride of the local residents. During the festival, the 'Dapseong Play' is carried out by local residents and tourists. It is the hundreds-year long tradition. They walk along the fortress with palm-sized stone on head wishing longevity and making a wish. However, since the festival is carried out in a small historical and cultural space, awareness of issues on accident risks and safety management have been consistently raised. The risk of facing safety accidents was high because of a huge crowd trying to leave from the small fortress gate, after additional events inside the fortress was over. However, after Gochang Fortress Cultural Experience District was created, the outdoor performance hall and ecological park was greatly helpful for expanding the festival space. It also drew huge attention and responses from the local residents and visitors with traditional performances that adapted the region's creative historical stories in an outdoor performance hall having the wide fortress in the background during the festival. In addition, this space instilled cultural pride to local residents and strengthened a sense of community as a space where the region's historical and cultural attractions are created. This year, The Cultural Heritage Administration carried out the 'Night-Traveling Pieces of Cultural Heritage' project using historical and cultural attractions of regions. By choosing 18 regions in Korea, the program supported contents to appreciate and experience the night scenes of the regions' historical and cultural space. Gochang-gun was also chosen as one of them to carry out 'Night-Traveling with the scent of Deep-rooted History and Culture'. The most noteworthy program carried out in the night-traveling of Gochang Fortress Cultural Experience District was 'Mirror of Origin', an operetta that recreated the construction of Gochang Fortress with the participation of 400 local residents. It dramatically reproduced historical stories related to the construction of Gochang Fortress, and especially well-expressed the joy, anger, sorrow, and pleasure of life experienced by the local residents throughout the construction in the main stage of the actual history. The performance delivered the importance of the restoration of a community sense for living in the region, by imbuing cultural pride to the outside visitors as well as local residents. Moreover, other stages attempted at 'Story Street Busking', which reproduced the various stories passed down in Gochang and newly-created stories through storytellers.

As examined above, this research would like to emphasize that a region's revitalization plan using its historical and cultural attractions must aim for the development prioritizing the participation of the regional stories and local community.

5. Conclusions

Since culture is place-binding, it can be defined as a phenomenon of a region, a place where human relationships are formed. ⁵ A region's culture in which such phenomenon arises must not overlook the community within the region, and its cultural attractions has replaced the roles of coal, steel, or gold of the past as the sources of a city in modern society. ⁶ Also, with unlimited creativity, a region is developed into a more attractive and competitive place that cannot be experienced in other regions. Culture that is added with history is an asset that a region has preserved by local residents who have led their lives in the space for a long time. Thus, a region's revitalization plan using its historical and cultural attractions cannot achieve sustainable development without the understanding and participation of people living in the

⁵ SeunghoYoo, *Cultural City*, Gasse.Academy, 2014, p.23

⁶ Chales Landry, *Lineages of Creative City, Creativity and the City*, Netherlands Architecture Institute, 2005, p.8

region. As clarified in Chapter 1, many regions have attempted at regional revitalization plans using each of their own historical and cultural attractions, but they have been met by criticisms and limits that the plans focused on creating large theme parks and tourism-led development. The development direction to attract visitors from a short-term point of view has also excluded the main principals that live in the region as well. As a result, a region has degenerated into an idle, unused space not gathered by people except the peak season or a city's horrid objects. The application of historical and cultural attractions for regional revitalization must seek to develop the region as a sustainable space that can be used by a local community. One cannot know the region's entire historical and cultural attractions because one lives in the region; rather, outside people who have collected information through investigations or web-search may have deeper understanding of the region. Thus, local residents must put in efforts to understand and continue to preserve them with pride in their regional historical and cultural attractions.

Through the case example of Gochang-gun, this study examined the current status and usage cases of facilities for the local community and outside visitors in the region's core asset space. If Gochang-gun had also lacked space for local residents and focused only on creating tourist sites, people would have gathered to the space only during the peak season. However, it is the region's huge asset that it has chosen this space as the region's core cultural asset and developed it with a balance of hardware and software through consistent efforts. However, as mentioned in this study, the support by the central government cannot be neglected to complement the region's limitations, because the budget of the local government is not sufficient enough and much part of it is difficult to be allocated as budget for cultural attractions. Thus, the central government's support is indispensable in the utilization plan of a region's historical and cultural attractions, and a region's competitiveness is soon connected to a country's competitiveness. As examined in the case of Gochang-gun for numerous fine historical and cultural attractions in South Korea, the nation's competitiveness comes from the regional competitiveness when regional revitalization is contemplated as development for the understanding of the region as well as both of its residents and visitors. Ultimately, regional revitalization will lead to national development.

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