

Urban Regeneration Utilizing Art: A Case Study of the Samlye Art Village, Korea

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Abstract

The Samlye Art Village was one of the poorest villages in North Jeolla Province with only few attractions. Its history dated back to the colonial period in the early 20th century has many tragic stories behind. The village was originally the warehouse in which Japanese stored the plundered rice. Japanese colonists founded it in 1920 and continued to use it as rice storage. After gaining independence, Wanju-gun remodeled the village into a cultural complex. This study aims to suggest a model for urban regeneration by introducing a successful case of the Samlye Art Village.

Keywords: *The Samlye Art Village, Wanju, cultural complex, landlord-community-based development, urban regeneration*

1. Introduction

Unlike that of the past, today's urban regeneration aims to promote amenities of residents beyond economic benefits. To carry out the urban regeneration project efficiently, it is essential that locals actively participate in the project so as to maintain sustainability. In this respect, governance is important, that is, various subjects in the region get together, presiding over the plan. What is unique about the Samlye Art Village is that it was founded by landlord-community-based development. Korea has either redeveloped or rehabilitated the old centers of cities since 1970s. Most of the projects were started by the governmental bodies. In the course, conflicts between residents and constructors or between residents and their elected representatives were on the rise. Accordingly, urban regeneration has exposed the political limitation to deprive residents of settlement, neglecting quality of housing, by only focusing on maintaining physical surroundings.

After the tragic accident in Yongsan, the Korean government has undertaken a new policy by shifting to a new paradigm. In pursuing urban regeneration plans, the government synthesizes public sectors and private sectors and tries to achieve comprehensive urban regeneration plans; it is the project, creating with urban functions and resettling space through compact city as well as recreating old infrastructures in the existing cities [1]. The Samlye Art Village provides a role model for community-based urban regeneration. The aim of this study is to suggest constructive development and describing main bodies of business by introducing the village on the various perspectives. Also, through the research, we will take a look at the tourism contents that have been implemented in the village to promote local economy.

2. Theoretical Background

‘Regeneration’ is a term used to refer generally to urban transformation through the redesign, reconstruction and often re-allocation of urban land [2]. However, the term is interpreted differently when applied to the region. For example, it is evident that cities

composed of various elements have much more complex factors involving in regeneration than rural areas. In the recent times, urban policymakers have placed much greater emphasis on ensuring that the regeneration of hard infrastructure such as buildings, land and transport systems relates to improvements in, "soft infrastructure" such as training, education, various business support services and social infrastructure such as community networking, housing and health. Thus, urban regeneration is construed in the wider, multi-faceted sense [3]. The local and the central government have to balance the interests and needs of all sectors of the community without sacrificing the lawful rights of any particular group [4]. Urban regeneration is closely intertwined with place marketing. In Hollands and Vail's research, the idea of developing three elements of place: geographical location, material form, and place as meanings and values, was brought up as 'place imprinting' which is a means to encompass both the geographic and social effects of place ('place-doing'), and how it is made and re-made ('place-making') [5]. 1980s is highlighted in terms of culturally led urban development. The UK alone can provide many renowned examples such as the Sheffield Cultural Industries Quarter, dating from the late 1980s, and the Manchester Northern Quarter, dating from 1993. The most frequently referred to example is Temple Bar in Dublin, which dates as an idea from the late 1980s.

Table 1. Canter's Metaphor for Place [6]

Activity	Economic, cultural, social
Form	The relationship between buildings and spaces
Meaning	Sense of place, historical and cultural.

In Canter's view, the framework mentioned in Table.1 sets up a set of indicators which can be meant to assess the relative success of cultural quarters. An indispensable requirement for a cultural quarter is the presence of cultural activity [7].

3. Landlord-Community-Based Urban Regeneration

3.1. Present Condition

Landlord-based development is a case in which landlord community plays a leading role in local development projects, gathering investors or investing on their own, establishing a regeneration plan on their lands, and cooperating with the local government in terms of administrative policy. Samlye is a good example for urban regeneration to satisfy the above condition; its sense of place as well as infrastructures is as follows.



Figure 1. Samlye and Its Neighboring Regions

As seen in Figure 1, Samlye is populated compared to other neighboring regions. It is one of the divisions of Wanju County, that has population of 90,153 as of April 2014. A county consists of eups, administrative subdivisions. The Samlye Art Village is located in Samlye-eup, the second most populated division in Wanju County with population of 15,922 as of June, 2014. The area of the Samlye Art Village is about 11,825 m². Its goals are as follows:

- ① To develop a new model for urban regeneration and improve the quality of residents' lives
- ② To protect living culture
- ③ To create jobs in the neighborhood
- ④ To promote regional image
- ⑤ To make space of youth and contemplation
- ⑥ To adopt the sustainability of the artistic fabric
- ⑦ To ensure participation of residents and artists
- ⑧ To create a place for social integration
- ⑨ To broaden the spectrum of public art
- ⑩ To make the village as a hub place for culture and art in North Jeolla Province

Bongdong-eup, which is the most populated division, has established an industrial complex recently; it is attributed to rapid demographical change in the region. However, population is a major factor that enables a community maintain a home market, Samlye's tourism business based on art and culture is second to none in attracting visitors and boosting local economy. Samlye is a definite commercial region where there is a four-year university, an eup office, an agricultural federation, a post office, an open market and a bus terminal; there are many convenient facilities around Samlye. In addition, The National Road No. 1 and the Local Road No.799 are nearby, so Samlye has accessible traffic network. In spite of all these amenities, the decline of the inner city was indispensable just like other cities have undergone.

The Wanju County Office and landlords of Samlye agreed to revive its inner city area. The first step was to gather members who understand characteristics of the region with interests in urban regeneration; not only landlords but also experts, professors, local administrators, and politicians were included in this human resource pool. Their roles are as follows: the landlords which play a leading role in urban regeneration chose a representative who has an enthusiastic attitude. The coordinator established a partnership with the local government based on analysis on properties used for each planned site. The local administrative officer managed general affairs on approval policies and licensing regarding urban regeneration. The special committee of local council handled legal affairs and advised on related events [8].

3.2 Historical Background

In the mid-19th century, Donghak, a religious and social movement mainly led by peasants was rising all over the nation. In the midst of political turmoil in the end of Joseon Dynasty, Donghak gained more power from 1880s throughout the middle Korea where Jeolla Province is located. Despite the oppression of the royal court, Donghak had a large-scaled rally that gathered thousands of people in Samlye [9]. At that time, there was a posting station, so it was a transportation hub. Starting from the Samlye rally, reformers could line up against the corrupted Establishment. And the Donghak Peasant Movement started to spread throughout the nation like a wildfire from Samlye. In the Korean modern history, this event is very significant, symbolizing people power which is the basis of democracy. Samlye has been a traffic hub in Jeolla Province since the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1897) and so was during the Japanese colonial period. The rice and other crops exploited from the Man'gyeong rice fields had been carried to Samley Station to be

sent to Japan. The Samlye Art Village in front of the station, founded in 1920, had been a granary at that time. After gaining independence, it was owned by National Agricultural Cooperative Federation, but lost its functions as a granary after double tracking of Jeolla railway.

4. Blending of Living and Culture

The Wanju County Office started to develop the site from 2011 with the project called “Art Is Tour.” and opened the art village in June 2013. The five warehouses that were founded in 1920s and the two buildings of 1970s-80s are grouped in the site. The Samlye Art Village has a seminar room and information center, the Design Museum, the VM Art Gallery, a culture café, a book craft shop, a wood mill, and a book library. They were formed in an original state if possible. It may be a little tiny to be called a village, however, art and culture, giving it diverse colors, compares favorably to other villages [10].

Table 1. Specific information of the Samlye Art Village

Area	Lot: 11,825 sq. meters, Building: 2,495.65 sq. meters
Contents	experience facility, exhibition facility, seminar room, performance facility, restaurant
Hours	Tues-Sun 10:00-18:00



Figure 2. The VM Gallery

As seen on Figure 2, the VM Gallery embraces both media art and traditional art simultaneously by adopting the most updated media technologies. The gallery regularly holds exhibitions. What is unique about the village is that there is an old-fashioned building used for seminars and lectures. The building established during the Japanese colonial period used to be residential space for a long time. It was reconstructed, reviving authentic beauty of the exterior. Visitors can not only enjoy art but also take a rest and enjoy delicious foods at the culture cafe in the village. It is operated outside in summer, rearranging an outdoor deck as seen in Figure 3.

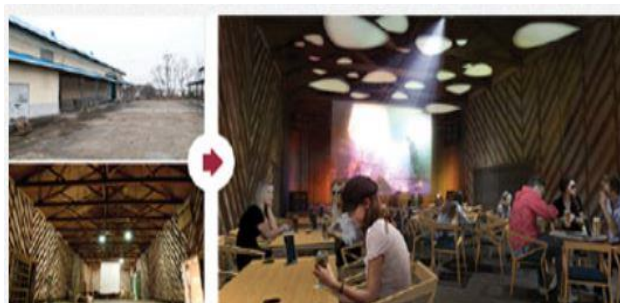


Figure 3. The Culture Cafe

The Design Museum is space for design award winners. The Korean Industrial Designer's Association holds a design competition and selects the winners' works for exhibition. Therefore, the quality of the works are relatively high. The museum operates a creative school for children called 'SAM' to nurture the youth generation. Since many Korean people live in an apartment complex, it is difficult to have carpentry experience in direct. However, the Kim Sang-rim's Wood Mill has prepared everything for the people who want to learn carpentry or have experiential pleasure. He started his wood mill at Insa-dong, the most traditional street with antique shops in Seoul in 1990, but he came to the village to exhibit and sell furniture as well as provide experiential opportunities for visitors. They can also have carpentry lessons.

Without books, it is almost impossible to talk about cultural contents. There is a book museum in the village. It classifies books into various categories thematically, chronically, and country-specifically. The old textbooks, antique books, and children's books can be found in the museum as seen in Figure 4. It aims to connect people through books and remind grown-ups of old memories.



Figure 4. The Book Museum

5. Conclusion

The Samlye Art Village embraces historical traces of Korea such as the fetters and ordeals during the colonial period, people's passion and power through Donghak Peasant Movement, and the traffic hub of the Joseon Dynasty [11]. In the present times, it put on a new sense of place in culture and art, setting a stepping-stone to blend culture, history and local revitalization.

The village facilities like the VM Art Museum, the Book Museum and the carpenter's shop and so on are operated by the artists who also actively work in other places, which makes the village more unique. This has been resulted from the efforts of Wanju's officials and citizens who dedicated to changing the village to a representative cultural place. By encouraging artists, residents, landlords, and architects to participate in the project from the beginning, in spite of the limited budget, and short construction period, it was possible to bring a remarkable success.

In terms of urban regeneration, the village has significance beyond the conventional redevelopment plan. The landlord community has established an effective partnership with the local government from the very first stage of site-planning to management of the site. The village is a place to manifest public art can be a success when it is done both for the people and by the people. From funding for the regeneration to promotion, every element composed of the village is involved in every step. On the other hand this kind of principle could allow a re-utilization and re-monumentalization of the city itself. As a result, it provides a good model for local governments and residents how culture and history can make a remarkable difference in declined city and how to revive it.

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