

Comparative Analysis of Policy Approaches in Preserving Baekje Historic Site and Gyeongju Historic Site

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Abstract

South Korea boasts a rich tapestry of UNESCO-recognized cultural landscapes, including the Gyeongju and Baekje Historic Sites. Registered in 2000 and 2015 respectively, these sites are renowned for their significant cultural value but require distinct preservation efforts. This paper seeks to undertake a comparative and analytical examination of the policies implemented in these two UNESCO-listed historic areas, specifically aiming to identify areas of complementarity within the policies of the Baekje Historic Site, which was listed later. The findings shows that despite an overarching framework under the Historic City Preservation Act, local laws and regulations were nuanced and tailored to reflect regional specificities. The study highlights the potential for future policy developments to be more responsive to the distinct needs of each site and suggests a harmonized yet adaptable policy framework under the Historic City Preservation Act.

Keywords: Gyeongju, Baekje, cultural landscape, historic site, The Historic City Preservation Act

1. Introduction

As a wealth of cultural landscapes, South Korea prides itself on its numerous locations that have been celebrated both as historic cities and cultural landscapes. Out of these, four locales - Gyeongju, Buyeo, Gongju, and Iksan - hold a significant position owing to their legal recognition as historic cities. These sites have been lauded for their extraordinary cultural value and consequently have been recognized by UNESCO, earning prestigious inclusion in its list of world heritage sites as the Gyeongju Historic Site and the Baekje Historic Site, respectively.

In the year 2000, the Gyeongju Historic Site was officially registered as a cultural heritage by UNESCO, followed by the inclusion of the Baekje Historic Site in 2015. While both sites share the common characteristic of being recognized as historic sites, the Baekje Historic Site, having received recognition at a later stage, may possess areas that require additional attention in comparison to the Gyeongju Historic Site. Motivated by this consideration, the purpose of this study is to undertake a comprehensive policy comparison between these two historic sites with a specific focus on identifying

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areas where the Baekje Historic Site can be complemented and enhanced to further its preservation and conservation endeavors.

2. Historic Site

2.1 Gyeongju Historic Site

The Gyeongju Historic Site, acknowledged and inscribed as a World Heritage Site in December 2000, encompasses remarkably well-preserved Buddhist ruins and remnants of the Royal Capital, serving as tangible remnants that encapsulate the rich historical and cultural legacy of Gyeongju, the renowned city of the Shilla Millennium (B.C 57-A.D 935). The Gyeongju Historic Site stands as an extensive historical district, comprising a diverse array of heritage sites that collectively offer a comprehensive glimpse into the history and culture of the illustrious Silla dynasty. As shown in [Table 1], the site is thoughtfully divided into five distinct areas, each characterized by the nature and significance of the ruins they house. In particular, the Namsan site, often referred to as a treasure trove of Buddhist art, encompasses the Millennium Dynasty and Najeong, a site of utmost importance in the founding legend of Silla. Poseokjeong, another significant location within this area, symbolizes the eventual decline and demise of the Silla dynasty. Furthermore, the Namsan site contains prominent structures such as Mireukgok, a seated stone Buddha, Bori, a standing stone Buddha, and Chilbul Temple, all of which contribute to the historical grandeur of the region [1].

The Wolseong site, once the location of the Silla royal palace, beckons visitors to explore Gyerim, the birthplace of Alji Kim, the progenitor of the Silla's Kim dynasty. Within this area, notable features include Anapji Pond, a noteworthy creation from the unified Silla period, as well as Cheomseongdae, the oldest astronomical facility in the Eastern world. Meanwhile, the Daereungwon site is home to the burial mounds of Silla royalty, encompassing the Hwangnam-ri Tombs, Nodong-ri Tombs, and Noseo-ri Tombs, each classified based on their specific geographical locations. The Hwangryongsa site embodies the remains of the Hwangryong Temple and the Bunhwang Temple, both of which held immense cultural and religious significance during the Silla era. Despite the destruction of the Hwangryong Temple during the Mongol invasion, meticulous excavations have allowed valuable insights into its former grandeur to be gleaned. The excavation of more than 40,000 artifacts from this site serves as a precious and abundant resource for scholarly study of the Silla Era. Lastly, the mountain fortress site showcases the Myeonghwal Fortress, believed to have been constructed prior to 400 A.D., playing a pivotal role in shaping fortification techniques in Silla that were subsequently transmitted to Japan.

[Table 1] Status of Gyeongju historic site

Area	Relics at Gyeongju historic site			
	National treasure	Treasure	Historic Sites	Region
Namsan Site	-	Maeyorae seated Buddha of Yongjang Temple, Danggan Jiju of Namgan Temple, Mae stone Buddha of Chilbul Temple	Naemul King Tomb of Silla, Poseokjeong in Gyeongju, Seochul Pond of Namsan Castle	Mae Stone Buddha of Bori Temple, Seokjogamsil Namsan-dong, Gyeongju, Seokjeong of Namgan Temple Site
Wolseong Site	Cheomseongdae	-	Gyerim, Wolseong, Donggung and Wolji, etc	-
Daereungwon Site	-	-	Michu King Tomb of Silla, Hwangnam-ri Tombs of Gyeongju, Oreung of Silla, etc.	-
Hwangyongsa Temple Site	Bunhwang Temple Stone Pagoda	-	Hwangyong Temple Site	-
Mountain fortress Site	-	-	Myunghwal Mountain Fortress	-

2.2 Baekje Historic Site

In the year 2015, during the 39th World Heritage Committee held in Bonn, Germany, the official registration of the Baekje Historic Site as a World Heritage site was proclaimed. This inclusion marked the 12th World Heritage Site in Korea and has exerted a profound influence on the cities of Gongju, Buyeo, and Iksan, transforming them into highly sought-after tourist destinations that attract both domestic and international visitors as shown in [Fig. 1][2].

The designated Baekje Historic Sites, duly recognized as World Heritage sites, encompass a diverse array of heritage locations that trace their origins back to the late Baekje period (475-660 AD) and are intricately associated with the ancient capitals of Baekje during the Three Kingdoms period. As shown in [Table 2], a total of eight sites have received this prestigious designation, with six of them situated within the region of Chungcheongnam-do. These sites include Gongsanseong Fortress, Gongsan-ri Tombs, Gwanbuk-ri, and Busosanseong Fortress, Buyeo Jeongnimsaji, Buyeo Naseong, and Neungsan-ri tombs.



[Fig. 1] World Heritage Baekje Historic Site Gongsanseong

[Table 2] Baekje Historic Site status

Era	Area	Ruins at Baekje Historic Site			
		Royal castle	Temple Site	King's Tomb	Suburb castle
Woongjin era	Gongju	Gongsanseong	-	Songsan-ri tombs	-
Sabi era	Buyeo	Gwanbuk-ri ruins and Busosanseong	Jeongrim Temple Site	Neungsan-ri tombs	Naseong
	Iksan	Wanggung-ri ruins (Annex Palace)	Mireuk Temple Site	-	-

The eight distinct heritages comprising the Baekje Historic Site exhibit notable characteristics and serve diverse functions, encompassing spaces dedicated to governance, ideology, posthumous rites, and suburban fortifications. The governing space revolves around the royal castle and palace, comprising the well-preserved remains of Gongsanseong, Gwanbuk-ri, Busosanseong, and Wanggung-ri. The ideological space, represented by temples, includes Jeongnimsaji and Mireuksaji, embodying the essence of the national ideology. The tombs of the kings function as post-death spaces, maintaining the connection between past and present rulers and upholding the authority of the royal lineage, with sites such as Songsan-ri tombs and Neungsan-ri tombs falling within this category. Lastly, the suburb castle plays a defensive role, demarcating the inner and outer areas of the city, and encompasses Buyeo Naseong.

While each of these eight heritages possesses unique attributes, they collectively contribute to the harmonious and complementary aspects of the Baekje royal capital, offering a comprehensive perspective that individual relics alone cannot provide. Moreover, the cities of Gongju, Buyeo, and Iksan actively engage in the preservation of Baekje's history and spirit through annual events such as the Baekje Cultural Festival and Seodong Festival. It is in recognition of these factors that the eight heritages have been consolidated under the encompassing title of the Baekje Historic Site [3].

3. Policy Comparison

3.1 Comparison of the Historic City Preservation act

With regards to the future preservation and maintenance of the two UNESCO-listed historic sites, careful attention must be given to the laws and regulations that govern their preservation and management. In this paper, the specific legislative measures implemented for the preservation and maintenance of these distinct historic sites were studied and compared between two sites. Within the context of South Korea, the cities of Gyeongju, Buyeo, Gongju, and Iksan emerge as noteworthy historic cities, with the Gyeongju Historic Site and the Baekje Historic Site serving as unifying elements that connect these four cities. In order to ensure the safeguarding of these cities and their valuable cultural heritage, the Korean government enacted and enforced the Special Act on Historic City Preservation in 2004 and provided a legal framework for the preservation and management of historic cities. Both the Gyeongju Historic Site and the Baekje Historic Site fall under the jurisdiction of the Historic City Preservation Act [4]. As illustrated in [Table 3], the act as a general regulation provides guidelines for preserving, developing, and managing sites that have been designated as historic cities. These guidelines includes measures such as restrictions on new construction or alterations, the promotion of traditional architectural styles, efforts to maintain the historical and cultural environment, and procedures for the investigation and preservation of cultural assets.

In the case of the Baekje Historic Site, which is actually composed of several locations across multiple cities including Gyeongju, the Historic City Preservation Act would be implemented in conjunction with local regulations and the specific needs of each individual city. While the general framework of this legislation appears to be similar for both sites, a more detailed analysis of the local laws and regulations reveals certain variations among the respective cities.

[Table 3] Special Act on Historic City Preservation in South Korea

Special Act on Historic City Preservation			
Act	Special Act on Historic City Promotion and Preservation (March 5, 2004) (Revised on July 21, 2011)	Preservation project	Projects implemented based on historic city preservation plans to safeguard the historical and cultural environment of the historic city
Enacting Authority	Ministry of Culture and Tourism	Site designation	<p>-Special Preservation Site: An essential area for preserving the original historical and cultural environment of the historic city.</p> <p>-Historical and Cultural Environment Site: An area near the Special Preservation Site that requires maintenance and preservation of the historical and cultural environment of the historic city by limiting changes to the existing conditions.</p>
Background of legislation	Initiated by residents and members of the national assembly representing the historic city	Reviewing Body	<p>-Central Review Committee for Historic City Preservation and Promotion under the Administration of Cultural Heritage (Revised on July 21, 2011)</p> <p>-Consists of up to 20 members, including a chairman and two vice-chairmen</p> <p>-The chairman is the head of the Administration of Cultural Heritage, and the vice-chairmen are high-ranking public officials appointed by the Minister of Land, Infrastructure and Transport and the head of the Administration of Cultural Heritage, respectively.</p>
Objective	<p>-Efficient preservation of the historical culture and environment of the historic city</p> <p>-Transmission of traditional cultural heritage</p>	Planning	<p>-Historic City Preservation Plan</p> <p>-Preservation of the historical and cultural environment</p> <p>-Compensation for building, land, and facility maintenance</p> <p>-Ensuring financial resources for preservation projects</p>
historic city	<p>Political and cultural center of the Korean people</p> <p>Gyeongju, Buyeo, Gongju, Iksan</p> <p>Other areas designated by presidential decree</p>	Public Consultation	Incorporating residents' opinions and feedback on the preservation plan
Environment	Historic Cultural Environment: The harmonious surroundings created by the presence of relics and the natural environment	Compensation for damage	<p>Right to claim for the purchase of land and buildings within the designated area</p> <p>National burden ratio (70% / 80%)</p>

3.2 Comparison of Local Acts and Regulations

While it may pose a challenge to discern differences among cities governed by the same overarching law within the South Korean context, this study undertakes a microscopic examination of these distinctions. While the Historic City Preservation Act provides a macroscopic view, the local acts and regulations offer a micro-level perspective that is tailored to the specific circumstances and characteristics of each city [5]. These local laws and regulations are formulated and adjusted to account for the unique needs and context of each individual city. By scrutinizing these local laws and regulations, a more comprehensive understanding of each city's policies can be attained to gain detailed and meaningful comparisons.

In general, cities associated with the two historic and cultural sites possess laws and regulations that pertain to the preservation of historic cities. However, notable variations exist. For instance, Gyeongju City features a distinct section dedicated to the Silla Cultural Prosperity Act within its local laws and regulations. This dedicated segment underscores the importance of Silla culture and its prosperity within the city. Moreover, the Gyeongju City website includes a dedicated section specifically focused on Silla Cultural Prosperity, facilitating research and preservation efforts related to the rich cultural heritage of the Silla dynasty. Thus, it is apparent that research and preservation activities are consolidated under a single organization in Gyeongju City.

In contrast, three cities jointly manage a single historic site of the Baekje Historic Site. The cities of Iksan, Gongju, and Buyeo have enacted their respective local laws and regulations associated with the Historic City Preservation Act [6]. What sets this arrangement apart is the collective management of the three cities as a unified cultural heritage site. While they operate under the auspices of the Baekje World Heritage Center, they do not adhere to a single set of local laws and regulations akin to Gyeongju. Instead, the implementation of policies involves the gathering of opinions from the three cities, soliciting feedback from resident groups, and transmitting them to the Baekje Historic Site World Heritage Preservation and Management Project Group. Thus, the preservation and management of the Baekje Historic Site are carried out through this collaborative approach. This organizational structure mirrors Korea's system of separation of powers, wherein the management of the historic city operates under a unified command system similar to Gyeongju, which can expedite decision-making processes.

In the sphere of heritage management, operational efficiency and precision play critical roles. While a centralized command structure, such as the one seen at Gyeongju Historic Site, can expedite decision-making processes and thus may be likened to a sprint in terms of speed, it is essential to note

the efficacy of collaborative management as well. In the case of the Baekje Historic Site, a tripartite collaboration between three organizations offers a distinct management approach. This collaborative effort, by virtue of collective decision-making, can effectively minimize errors and redundancies, ultimately leading to a reduction in unnecessary waste. Just as elevation in terrain demands meticulous planning and execution, this collaborative approach to heritage management acknowledges the complexities of preserving cultural landscapes and embraces collective wisdom to ensure precision in the conservation efforts. Thus, despite differences in their management structures, both the Gyeongju and Baekje Historic Sites manifest unique approaches to the challenge of preserving cultural heritage.

4. Discussion

This paper revealed no significant disparities in policies between the Gyeongju Historic Site and the Baekje Historic Site. Nevertheless, when scrutinized at a microscopic level, certain divergences emerged. This divergence can be attributed to the implementation of laws that govern cities of comparable importance within the same nation. While the special law for historic city preservation exhibited no discrepancies, variations were evident in the local laws and regulations, which were tailored to reflect the distinct characteristics of each region.

Although some discrepancies were noted in the local laws and regulations, they remained constrained by a broader framework provided by a single law, lacking distinct regional characteristics. It became apparent that these local laws and regulations were formulated with minor adjustments to establish a more nuanced framework. Initially, the comparative study was initiated with the assumption that the Baekje Historic Site may have fewer policies in comparison to the Gyeongju Historic Site. However, no significant disparities were discovered. This can be attributed to the fact that both historic sites were governed under the special law for the preservation and development of historic cities. Consequently, it is anticipated that the current special law for the preservation and development of historic cities, which presently lacks explicit policy distinctions, will undergo revision to more effectively align with the local characteristics and requirements of these two historic sites.

In terms of centralized or collaborative management, future policy developments could seek to optimize these distinct strategies. For Gyeongju site, it might involve more robust feedback and participation mechanisms to ensure that the centralized authority is responsive to diverse stakeholders while for the Baekje site, future policies might focus on improving coordination between the three cities, perhaps through the creation of a unified decision-making platform or more frequent coordination

meetings. Given the role of local laws and regulations in shaping the preservation efforts at both sites, future policy developments might aim to tailor these laws more closely to the specific needs of each site.

5. Conclusion

The examination of South Korea's historic cities of Gyeongju and Baekje, both recognized by UNESCO, has underscored the importance of nuanced policy approaches in preservation and conservation endeavors. Despite their shared status, these sites exhibit unique characteristics that necessitate distinct management strategies. The Gyeongju and Baekje Historic Sites in South Korea showcase distinct preservation approaches. Gyeongju, adopting a centralized structure, emphasizes Silla culture preservation through local laws and an online portal, enabling rapid decision-making. Conversely, Baekje, co-managed by Iksan, Gongju, and Buyeo, adopts a collaborative approach. The comparative review suggested potential future policy enhancements to optimize management. For the Gyeongju site, it's about reinforcing stakeholder engagement mechanisms in the context of centralized authority. Conversely, for the Baekje site, policy focus could be aimed at improved coordination between the three cities through unified decision-making platforms and increased coordination meetings.

In addition, a broader future policy development could seek to harmonize the policies between these two sites, and potentially others, under the Historic City Preservation Act. This might involve creating a standardized yet flexible policy framework that can be adapted to the unique requirements of each historic site. Such harmonization would not only ensure a consistent approach to historic preservation across South Korea, but also provide a template that could be adapted to the specific circumstances of each site, thereby combining the advantages of both uniform and tailored approaches.

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