

A Comparative Analysis and Utilization Policy for the Cultural Landscape of the Dasan Cultural Festival

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Abstract

Cultural landscapes hold significant value in South Korea as they represent the interplay between human activities and the natural environment. Local festivals play a crucial role in activating and showcase the unique cultural landscapes of different regions. In this regard, this study focuses on the Dasan Cultural Festival that shares the same name in Namyangju and Gangjin. By examining the festival's development plan, this study identifies certain limitations including the absence of a symbolic program and limited economic support. Through a comparative analysis and exploration of mutual exchange between the two regions involved in the festival as well as the revitalization of the cultural landscape associated with Dasan Jeong Yak-Yong, valuable insights for festival development and cultural landscape enhancement can be derived. This study expects to become a useful reference for the understanding of the potential and strategies for utilizing cultural landscapes in the context of the Dasan Cultural Festival.

Keyword : Cultural landscape, Dasan festival, Festival, Utilization Policy

1. Introduction

The concept of 'Cultural Landscape' emerged as a response to the prevailing notion that nature and culture are separate and opposing entities within the context of heritage preservation. The term was officially introduced during the 16th UNESCO World Heritage Committee in Santa Fe in 1992 [1]. Prior to this, many registered world heritage sites predominantly emphasized cultural aspects that led to criticism and the need for a more inclusive understanding of heritage. The concept of cultural landscape aimed to bridge the gap between nature and culture by recognizing heritage as a product of human activities in relation to the natural environment. A cultural landscape represents the transformation of a natural landscape through human intervention and serves as a testament to the co-evolution of human society and nature over extended periods [1]. It acknowledges the influence of the natural environment as well as socio-economic and cultural factors in shaping both humans and their surroundings. By embracing the interplay between human activities and the natural world, the concept of cultural landscape breaks away from the dichotomy between nature and culture to offer a more holistic

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perspective [2]. In South Korea, cultural landscapes play a significant role in various activities, particularly in the organization of regional festivals. These festivals breathe life into local communities by leveraging the unique qualities and characteristics of their cultural landscapes. By embracing and celebrating the cultural landscape, these festivals become a means of cultural expression, community engagement and heritage preservation [3][4].

Much research have been conducted with the focus on the regional festival and its socio-cultural significance on the community and its identity. Cho et al. examines the management strategy changes when the festival is hosted by a government [5] and An eta al. does an critical discourse with a social, political and cultural focus on the Pusan International Film Festive [6]. In addition, visitor's benefits as well as the community' ones has been explored [7] with the analysis of festival attributes and festivalgoer's behaviores [8]. In this regard, the purpose of this study is to focus on the Dasan Cultural Festival, a festival deeply rooted in the cultural landscapes of both Namyangju and Gangjin. By examining and comparing these festivals, the study aims to uncover insights for the development and enhancement of the Dasan Cultural Festival. Through this exploration, the study expects to contribute to the understanding and promotion of cultural landscapes as vital elements in the preservation and celebration of heritage.

2. Dasan Cultural Festival

The Dasan Cultural Festival is an annual event held in Namyangju, Gyeonggi-do, dedicated to honoring the legacy and teachings of Dasan Jeong Yak-Yong. The festival takes place at the Dasan Eco Park, a scenic location situated near the Dasan Ruins in Neungdae-ri, Joan-myeon, Namyangju-si. The park offers breathtaking natural landscapes and is home to significant landmarks including the birthplace of Dasan Jeong Yak-Yong and the Silhak Museum. The Dasan Cultural Festival aims to promote the ideology, education and life lessons inspired by Jeong Yak-Yong to offer a diverse range of humanities programs such as calligraphy contests, literary arts competitions, writing contests, collaborative performances, experiential activities, and exhibitions that all centered around the philosophies and thoughts of Dasan.

In similar way, there exist important sites associated with Dasan Jeong Yak-Yong including Dasan Chodang, Dasan Memorial Hall and Dasan Training Center in Gangjin-gun. Dasan Chodang is particularly renowned for its exquisite camellia flowers with addition to the scenic beauty of the surroundings. The Dasan Training Center is nestled within a picturesque natural landscape surrounded by

the Noryeong Mountains in the west and north of the region. Both Namyangju and Gangjin-gun share a common objective of organizing the Dasan Cultural Festival to commemorate the spirit of Dasan Jeong Yak-Yong and honor his contributions to Korean culture and intellectual heritage.

3. Comparison of Cultural Landscape Characteristics in Namyangju and Gangjin

3.1 Dasan Cultural Festival in Namyangju

The Dasan Cultural Festival was inaugurated in Namyangju in 1986 with the primary objective of preserving the spirit and legacy of Dasan Jeong Yak-Yong, a notable scholar from the Chosun Dynasty who was born in Namyangju. This annual festival serves as a platform for promoting traditional culture and has garnered recognition as one of the top ten festivals in Gyeonggi-do. Over the years, the festival has evolved into a representative regional event within the province [9]. As shown in [Fig. 1], diverse programs are offered to festival attendees including the Dasan Awards Ceremony, Dasan Calligraphy Competition, Literary Arts Contest, Band and Confucian Students Parade, Traditional Art Performances and Historical Play Experiences. The festival is hosted at the Dasan Eco Park which encompasses the significant Dasan Ruins.



[Fig. 1] 2016 Namyangju Dasan Cultural Festival 'Chwitadae'

Within the ruins, notable sites include Dasan Jeong Yak-Yong's tomb, birthplace, Mundosa (Shrine), Dasan Memorial Hall and Dasan Cultural Center. The birthplace known as Yeoyu-dang holds profound historical significance as the place where Dasan Jeong Yak-Yong was born and spent his childhood until the age of 15 when he married. The Dasan Memorial Hall showcases Dasan's handwritten letters, Sansudo (his ancestral shrine), and copies of his renowned administrative books such as Mokminsimseo,

Gyeongseyupyo, and Heumheumshinseo. Furthermore, the Dasan Cultural Center features a pontoon bridge designed by Dasan along with the Neunghaeng painting depicting King Jeongjo crossing the bridge to visit the grave of his father Prince Sado in Suwon. The center also boasts a collection of approximately 500 books authored by Dasan.

3.2 Dasan Cultural Festival of Gangjin

As shown in [Fig. 2], in contrast to the Dasan Cultural Festival in Namyangju, the Dasan Cultural Festival in Gangjin-gun is characterized by a more modest scale and lower levels of public interest. However, since its inauguration in 2001 with the 1st Dasan Cultural Festival, which marked the 200th anniversary of Dasan Jeong Yak-Yong's exile, the festival has been held annually under the joint management of the Gangjin Cultural Center, the Dasan Festival Promotion Committee and the Dasan Cultural Festival Committee [10]. This local festival in Gangjin aims to honor Dasan Jeong Yak-Yong by providing students with direct exposure to his Silhak and Minbon (People First) ideologies and integrating his ideas into contemporary cultural trends for the benefit of future generations. Initially centered around Dasan Chodang, the festival expanded its venues to include the Dasan Memorial Hall and Dasan Training Center. The Dasan Cultural Festival in Gangjin predominantly takes place in October and encompasses significant events such as the Dasan Memorial Festival to feature traditional ceremonies and tea ceremonies, the Dasan Golden Bell, the Dasan Thought Academic Seminar, the Dasan Concert and the Dasan Historic Site Tour. Moreover, the festival offers tasting sessions, experiences at the Dasan Institute and opportunities for participation in writing and calligraphy activities.



[Fig. 2] 2014 Gangjin Dasan Cultural Festival 'Traditional Ritual'

4. Future Directions of Dasan Festival of Namyangju

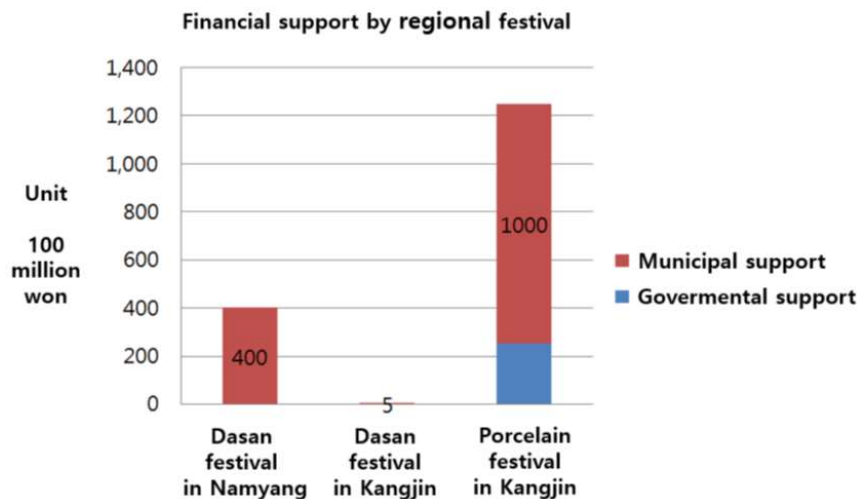
4.1 Limitation of Dasan Cultural Festival

Despite being recognized as one of the top 10 festivals in Gyeonggi-do, as shown in [Fig. 3], the Dasan Cultural Festival has experienced a notable decline in visitor numbers since 2011. Several factors have contributed to this decline including persistent instability in domestic demand, the repercussions of the Sewol ferry disaster in 2014 and a general waning interest in cultural festivals following the outbreak of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) in 2015. In addition, the festival's programs have failed to effectively capture the symbolic essence of Dasan Jeong Yak-Yong, which represents a significant limitation in maintaining its appeal and relevance. To address these challenges and enhance the overall experience of the festival, it is imperative to implement improvement measures.



[Fig. 3] Number of visitors to Namyangju Dasan Cultural Festival

Furthermore, the Dasan Cultural Festival in Gangjin faces a notable disparity in terms of public funding compared to the Gangjin Celadon Festival that is another prominent festival that receives considerable attention from Gangjin-gun [11]. As shown in [Fig. 4], until 2014, the Dasan Cultural Festival in Gangjin encountered difficulties as it had to operate without sufficient financial support from public institutions. These limitations have significantly impacted various aspects of the festival including its organization, program composition, promotion and overall revitalization efforts.



[Fig. 4] Regional Festival Summary in 2015

4.2 Collaboration and development direction between Namyangju and Gangjin

Namyangju City and Gangjin County have established a sister city relationship since 1999 and have been jointly organizing the Dasan Jeong Yak-Yong Festival. Similarly, Songpa-gu in Seoul and Yeosu City in Gyeonggi-do have maintained a sisterhood relationship since 1999, fostering various exchanges, particularly in supporting each other's cultural festivals. Yeosu City actively participates in the Hanseong Baekje Cultural Festival hosted by Songpa-gu while Songpa-gu encourages participation in the Yeosu Pottery Festival organized by Yeosu City to promote close cooperation and development.

This collaborative approach has yielded positive results. The Hanseong Baekje Cultural Festival was recognized as a promising event at the 2014 Culture and Tourism Festival and the Yeosu Ceramic Festival secured over 500 million won in government funds for the successful execution of the 2015 festival [12]. In contrast, Namyangju City and Gangjin County due to their geographical distance have not had active exchanges. However, it is worth exploring the possibility of conducting joint festival events that incorporate elements from the Dasan Cultural Festival, leveraging not only the support of the respective cities and counties but also their unique natural landscapes such as the sea and the river. Despite the geographical differences, there are valid shared characteristics that can facilitate meaningful collaboration in promoting the festivals.

The collaboration between Namyangju and Gangjin can be structured and implemented in several ways. The first step is to clearly define the objectives of combining the two festivals. It could be to

attract a larger audience, to increase cultural exchange or to promote tourism in the regions. Having a clear objective will guide the planning process. The festival's programming should include elements from both regions to ensure its truly a combined festival. This might include music, food, traditional dances, art exhibitions and other cultural expressions from both regions. In addition, the logistics of the festival such as location, timing, transportation, accommodation and safety measures should be carefully planned. Last but most important, after the festival, the committee should evaluate the event to determine if the objectives were met and to identify areas for improvement.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study understands the significance of cultural landscapes and the role of local festivals in activating and showcasing these landscapes in South Korea. With the focus on the Dasan Cultural Festival in both Namyangju and Gangjin. it identifies limitations including the absence of a symbolic program and limited economic support that hindered the festival's full potential. However, through a comparative analysis and exploration of mutual exchange between the two regions involved in the festival along with the revitalization of the cultural landscape associated with Dasan Jeong Yak-Yong, two regional festivals can be seen a possibility of collaboration with a positive results. For this, the implication should be structured and the process would require clear communication, mutual respect and a willingness to compromise between the two regions. Moving forward, the Namyangju Dasan Cultural Festival aims to enhance its significance by fostering exchange programs with Gangjin, which shares the historical site associated with Dasan.

This study has a limitation that it does not provide how the community views and interacts with the festival since the local populations play in preserving and perpetuating cultural traditions. However, it expects to contribute to the understanding of the potential and strategies for effectively utilizing cultural landscapes within the context of the Dasan Cultural Festival. The findings provide a basis for further research and practical implementation that allows for the refinement and improvement of the festival experience and the maximization of the cultural landscape's value.

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