

The Utilization and Policy Frameworks for Cultural Landscape Resources in Gyeongju's East Coast

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Abstract

Gyeongju City is implementing various cultural tourism projects based on local cultural and landscape resources and is striving to create a maritime tourism base for the east coast of Gyeongju, which is rich in historical and natural resources in addition to the historic district in downtown Gyeongju. However, the east coast of Gyeongju is geographically inaccessible and there are aspects that lack interest and awareness compared to the Gyeongju Historic District. The purpose of this paper is to identify the value and importance of the east coast area of Gyeongju as a cultural landscape resource and to investigate related measures and draws suggestions for a development plan that can overcome biased development plans and geographical weaknesses. To overcome these limitations, the study underscores the value and importance of cultural landscape resources and advocates for inclusive development plans that encompass the distinct attributes of the East Coast region.

Keyword : Cultural landscape, Natural landscape, Cultural tourism business, Cultural content, Gyeongju

1. Introduction

The cultural landscape resources found along the east coast of Gyeongju City hold immense potential for tourism development and offer unique insights into the region's historical, natural and cultural heritage. As Gyeongju City seeks to maximize the utilization of these resources, it becomes crucial to critically examine the existing policy frameworks in place. This article delves into the exploration of utilization strategies and policy frameworks aimed at effectively harnessing the cultural landscape resources in Gyeongju's east coast.

Gyeongju City renowned as a historical and cultural hub attracts a significant number of visitors each year. To capitalize on its cultural wealth and diverse landscapes, Gyeongju City has implemented various cultural tourism initiatives and endeavors to establish a robust marine tourism base along the east coast. Previous studies has been conducted to identify its key characteristics and determine its competitive advantages as a city of history, culture, ecology and high technology with public servants emphasizing

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sustainable development [1] and to examine how university students' tourism motivation influenced their perceptual preference for tourism attractions in Gyeongju [2]. Some studies focus on identifying factors for repeat visits through empirical analysis [3] and find that factors such as service, traffic convenience, promotion and amusement significantly influence repeat visit intention [4]. However, despite much research to find the historical and natural riches of this area, the east coast often receives less attention and awareness compared to the bustling historic district in downtown Gyeongju City.

In this regard, the purpose of this paper is to examine the utilization strategies employed and the policy frameworks implemented to harness the immense potential of cultural landscape resources in Gyeongju's east coast. By critically analyzing the existing policies, this study aims to find the strengths and weaknesses of current approaches, identify areas for improvement and propose recommendations for more effective and sustainable utilization of these cultural assets.

Through this exploration of utilization and policy frameworks, this paper expects to become a useful reference for the broader understanding of cultural landscape management, sustainable tourism development and the preservation of Gyeongju's unique cultural heritage. The findings and recommendations presented herein can provide valuable insights for policymakers, local authorities and stakeholders involved in the planning and development of cultural tourism in Gyeongju City's east coast and similar destinations worldwide.

2. Value of Cultural Landscape Resources in Gyeongju's east coastal area

2.1 Cultural Landscape Resources in Gyeongju's east coastal area

Gyeongju situated on the southeast coast of the Korean peninsula holds great historical significance as the capital of the Silla dynasty for 992 years, from 57 B.C. until the foundation of Goryeo. This historic city boasts a total of 326 registered cultural heritages including 29 national treasures and 93 treasures. In 2000, its Historical Area was recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage site [5]. The east coastal area of Gyeongju encompasses Yangbuk-myeon, Yangnam-myeon, and Gampo-eup to cover approximately 44.5 km of coastline which accounts for 8.3% of the entire coastline of Gyeongsangbuk-do (537.0 km). This region characterized by its unique historical and geographical features as one of the former capitals during the Three Kingdoms period houses significant relics such as the Gameunsa Temple Site Three-story Stone Pagoda (National Treasure No. 112) and Yigyeondae (Historical Site No. 159) alongside the Royal Tomb of King Munmu (Historical Site No. 158) which serves as a symbol of maritime territory protection [6].



[Fig. 1] Tomb of King Munmu

These historical sites are associated with King Munmu (文武王, 661~681) and his son King Shinmun (神文王, 681~692) and are linked to the Manpasikjuk Story [7]. As shown in [Fig. 1], the Royal Tomb of King Munmu, Yigyeondae and Gameunsa Temple Site Three-story Stone Pagoda hold great cultural significance as holy sites where the sea god faith and patriotic consciousness coexist and offer a rich historical narrative that forms excellent cultural content. Telling compelling stories about the tomb and the King Munmu era can help engage tourists emotionally and intellectually. This can be achieved through well-designed interpretation boards, guided tours by knowledgeable guides, audio-visual aids and interactive experiences such as AR/VR technologies. A well-maintained website and active social media presence can provide prospective visitors with all necessary information and updates about the site. Virtual tours can also be offered for those who are unable to visit in person. The historical cultural landscape of Gyeongju's east coast holds immense potential as cultural content particularly with its underwater royal tomb [8].

In terms of natural cultural landscapes, the area showcases a stunning cluster of columnar joints extending over 1.7 km. This beautiful topographic landscape represents a popular geological attraction for tourists as shown in [Fig. 2]. Typically, columnar joints form perpendicular to the ground surface but along the Eupcheon coastline, they develop parallel or diagonally to the ground surface. Due to its unique formation and extraordinary scenery, the columnar joints in the Eupcheon coastline hold not only significant geographical importance but also serve as valuable global tourist resources [9]. Furthermore, adjacent to the Eupcheon coastline lies the mural village enhances the east coastal area of Gyeongju as a place where visitors can appreciate diverse historical, natural and cultural reproductions.



[Fig. 2] Yangnam columnar joint in Gyeongju

2.2 Current visitor status and challenges in Gyeongju's east coastal area

An examination of the visitor statistics and tourist attractions as shown in [Table 1][10] reveals that the number of tourists visiting the Gampo Complex and the east coastal area remains relatively low compared to the overall tourist influx. Several factors contribute to this limited visitor engagement.

[Table 1] Status and number of visitors of Gyeongju City in 2020.

| Tourist Site | 2020 | | | | | |
|---------------------|--|------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | Location | Designation Date | Area | Visitor | | |
| | Subtotal | Subtotal | Subtotal | Subtotal | Domestic | Foreigner |
| Total | ... | ... | ... | 8,562,470 | 8,269,200 | 293,270 |
| Bomun Complex | Gyeongju Cheongun and surrounding area | 1975.04.04 | 8,515,243 | 8,115,370 | 7,825,180 | 290,190 |
| Gyeongju Yangnam | Gyeongju Yangnam, Shindae | 1994.03.24 | 3,919,270 | 349,080 | 346,580 | 2,500 |
| Gampo Complex | Gyeongju Gampo, Najeong | 1993.12.31 | 4,019,000 | 98,020 | 97,440 | 580 |

Firstly, the prominent attention given to the Gyeongju Historic District located in the downtown area creates a concentration of tourist activity within this specific UNESCO-registered World Cultural Heritage site. As a result, the east coastal area excluded from the historic district faces limitations in attracting visitors due to the influence of UNESCO's designation. Secondly, the geographical weakness of the east

coastal area presents challenges in terms of accessibility. Located 35 kilometers away from the downtown core, the distance to the major tourist attractions in Gyeongju City may discourage tourists from venturing to the east coast. Lastly, the regional bias within the historic cultural city project of Gyeongju City further contributes to the lack of attention towards the east coastal area. While significant efforts have been made to reconstruct Woljeonggyo Bridge, construct Gyochon Hanok Village and undertake restoration and maintenance projects in the central area of Gyeongju, there is a noticeable lack of initiatives focused on the cultural heritage sites of the east coast. This exclusion from the historic cultural city project hampers promotion efforts and hinders the attraction of tourists to the area.

3. Analysis of Gyeongju City's policies on cultural landscape resources in the east coastline

As shown in [Table 2], Gyeongju City Hall has provided comprehensive information on its official website regarding the mid- and long-term development plan and major policies implemented in 2016 [11]. This study critically examines the policies and initiatives undertaken by Gyeongju City pertaining to the cultural landscape resources present on the east coastline. Specifically, the focus is on the development strategies outlined in the mid- and long-term comprehensive plan (2014-2020) aimed at establishing a marine tourism base in the eastern region.

[Table 2] Mid to long term comprehensive development plan - Creation of marine tourism base

| Description | Creation of Marine Tourism Base |
|----------------------|---|
| Development Strategy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Maintenance of historic cultural resources such as Royal Tomb of King Munmu, etc. -Creation of marine tourism base such as Gampo Tourist Complex, etc -Development of Gampo port and maintenance of coastal road/landscape -Construction of traffic network connected to downtown |
| Major Project | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Development of premium marine resorts in Gampo Tourist Complex and Oryu/Gampo Recreation Area -Grant the tourism function to Gampo port and maintain the landscape of the coastal road -Make Padosori-gil, Kkakji-gil and columnar joint as tourist resources -Build the Gampo Urban Planning Road (Jeondong-Gampo-Oryu-li) -Build the traffic network connected to central area and major areas -Maintenance of Daebon district of Gyeongju National Park (Royal tomb of King Munmu/ Gameunsa Temple Site/Yigyeongdae, etc) -Creation of the rural residential complex for employee of KHNP and related corporate attracted |

A significant policy implemented by Gyeongju City in 2016 is the King Munmu Marine Culture

Creation Project. This project sought to establish a distinct regional identity, promote the richness of marine culture and consolidate Gyeongju's position as a prominent marine cultural city. The objective of the project were achieved by reevaluating King Munmu's profound connection to the land and the maritime pioneering spirit exhibited by the Silla people. Furthermore, the project aimed to create a marine tourist hub in Northeast Asia and leverage marine culture as a valuable tourism resource [11]. The project encompassed various components as shown in [Table 3].

[Table 3] Major Policies in 2016 in Gyeongju: King Munmu the Great Marine Culture Creation Project

| Description | | Project Details |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries | Establish identity of marine culture | -Build (National) King Munmu Marine Science Center -Build King Munmu Sky Bridge & Skywalk (Dream of King Munmu) -Tower symbolizing King Munmu (Resurrection of Silla marine kingdom) |
| | Symbolize Silla's ocean story | -Build Silla Marine Historic Culture Center and operate King Munmu Ocean School -Create Manpasikjeok History Forest -Create King Munmu East Sea Bike Road (Bomun-Gampo) |
| | Create marine tourism base | -Promote the promotion of Gampo coastal port (To be implemented by Government-Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries) -Install Marina port and Cruise port -Marine leports facilities and shipbuilding |
| | Develop marine cultural contents | -Promote marine culture and arts such as King Munmu marine culture festival (local festival) and develop scenic background musical -Develop cultural contents such King Munmu CI and character |
| Linked Project | | -King Munmu sanctuary project (Cultural Heritage Administration) -New tourism engine culture support project (Make Gampo enemy's property as tourism resources and create living culture experience center, theme park of Silla tea birthplace) -Create the forest park commemorating 100th anniversary of Gampo port opening -Build Gampo marine tourist complex(private investment), attract coastal cruise industry (private investment) |

4. Discussion

Gyeongju City's acknowledgement of the significant value associated with the east coast area and its proactive promotion of related projects are viewed favorably. These endeavors have the potential to elevate the cultural landscape's worth on the East Coast and attract a greater number of tourists [12][13]. However, it is worth noting that certain elements unrelated to King Munmu's legacy such as the skywalk, Ocean School and East Sea Road have been incorporated into the project. The extensive use of the "King Munmu" title in these initiatives may convey a more commercially driven approach

rather than a focused endeavor to honor and preserve King Munmu's historical significance. The excessive use of King Munmu's name in projects that are not directly related to his life or legacy could erode the city's cultural authenticity. Tourists might view these projects as inauthentic attempts to capitalize on the King's historical significance rather than genuine efforts to preserve and promote the city's rich cultural heritage. This could potentially affect the perceived authenticity and credibility of Gyeongju City as a historic destination to discourage discerning tourists who value authentic cultural experiences.

King Munmu is known for his deep connection to the sea. Legend has it that before his death, he expressed a wish to be buried in the East Sea (Sea of Japan). His will states, "Bury me in the sea at Daewangam. As a dragon of the sea, I will defeat any enemy who invades our sea." The story of King Munmu's desire to protect his country even after death adds a unique narrative to the tourist site to provide a deeper connection for visitors [14]. With a focus on the potential of using the story of King Munmu as tourism content, marine K-Culture can be a feasible option.

In addition, transportation, infrastructure and information dissemination play significant roles in either encouraging or hindering tourism of cultural landscape resources in the east coastline. They act as facilitators for tourist access and experience and when well-implemented, can significantly boost the attractiveness and accessibility of a destination [15]. On the other hand, inadequacies in these areas can significantly hinder the potential of a destination to attract and retain tourists.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the east coastal area of Gyeongju City holds immense value in terms of its cultural landscape resources. It encompasses numerous historical sites and landmarks including Gameunsa Temple Site three-story Stone Pagoda, the Royal Tomb of King Munmu and Yigyeongdae along with renowned attractions like Girimsa Temple and Golgalsa Temple [10]. These sites contribute to the region's rich historical, natural and cultural heritage and position it as a significant focus for major tourism policies. While initiatives such as the development of a marine tourism base in the eastern region and the King Munmu marine culture creation project have the potential to enhance the cultural landscape's worth and attract visitors, there is a concern regarding the excessive utilization of the King Munmu title in projects that may not be directly related.

The purpose of this study is to underscore the necessity for a comprehensive development plan that addresses the prevailing bias towards the Gyeongju historic district as well as the geographical

limitations and the need to establish a distinct identity for the east coastal area's historical, natural and cultural landscape. By achieving a more balanced and inclusive development approach, Gyeongju City can effectively leverage the abundant resources present in the east coastal area as a hub for diverse exchanges through the East Sea and maritime territory. This approach will enable the city to showcase its exceptional cultural heritage as a representative destination for historic tourism. Furthermore, the recognition of the East Sea that this study finds expects to present an opportunity to propose a utilization plan that not only reveals the city's unique identity but also promotes sustainable growth and development.

This study can be further enriched with qualitative data such as interviews or surveys from tourists, local residents and stakeholders involved in tourism development and management. Thus, future studies could investigate other underexplored areas within the city or compare the city's approach with that of other cultural heritage sites.

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