

A Plan to Revitalize Tourism of Seoul's Modern Cultural Heritage through Storytelling

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I . Introduction

The area inside the original city walls of Seoul contains the history of Seoul's modern culture and played an important part in establishing Seoul's unique authenticity and identity. However, the level of awareness and utilization of Seoul's modern cultural heritage is very low. To resolve this situation, this study 1) accumulated references by making a database of Seoul's modern cultural heritage, 2) researched literature and case studies on storytelling for tourism revitalization, and 3) concluded as to how storytelling techniques could be used to revitalize awareness and utilization of modern cultural heritage inside Seoul's original four city walls. The modern cultural heritage studied was defined as that within current Jung-gu and Jongro-gu (the area inside the original city walls). Based on material from the Cultural Heritage Administration of Korea and the city of Seoul, a total of 74 modern cultural heritage (45 in Jongro-gu, 29 in Jung-gu) were found for research.

II . The Current State of Modern Cultural Heritage inside Seoul's City Walls

Modern cultural heritage includes all aspects of the era between the beginning of Korea's modernization (roughly 1876) to 50 years before today, including among others the spheres of humanities, society, geography, and environment. Most modern cultural heritage cannot be internally changed and have limited utilization in other ways than originally intended. 63.5% of Seoul's modern cultural heritage is privately owned, and 41.9% (31 items) are non-public, making it difficult to make them into proper tourist capital. Most tourism resources are distributed following the pattern of capital, being focused in the Bukchon and Insadong area, the Jeong-dong area, and the Bukchang/Namdaemun/Myeongdong area. Tourist attractions inside the original Seoul city walls are rarely utilized, being only partially introduced as part of Seoul's city tour program.

III. Storytelling of Tourism Destinations

‘Storytelling’ is a combination of “story” and “telling.” Here, “story” means a plot, and “telling” refers to the method of communication appropriate for a particular medium. Storytelling techniques are used in a variety of fields, and is being recognized not only as a way to maximize consumers’ experience but also as an effective method of behavioral change.

Storytelling in tourism must be understood as a meaning system created in concert between the story surrounding a particular tourist attraction, and the tourist. It is important to use ‘interaction’ between the tourist and a particular attraction to bring to the surface an aspect valued by both sides. This study proposes that tourism storytelling be developed through the next five steps: 1) finding stories about tourist attractions, 2) selecting the main goal of storytelling, 3) developing a main theme, 4) selecting media, and 5) realizing the plan.

IV. Revitalizing Tourism of Seoul’s Modern Cultural Heritage Through Storytelling

1. Step-by-Step Strategy for Storytelling of Seoul’s Modern Cultural Heritage

- Step 1: Discovery of stories surrounding cultural heritage inside the Seoul city walls: after making a database of the modern cultural heritage inside the Seoul city walls and categorizing them, use the information to find stories and themes that could be used to improve tourism in the area.
 - Facilities related to modern technology and industry,
 - Changes in modern architecture
 - Education facilities and changes in education
 - Portraits of modern personalities (political, cultural, artistic)
 - History of the Korean interim government and modern Korean history,
 - Religious facilities,
 - Socio-cultural facilities
- Step 2: selection of a goal for storytelling of modern cultural heritage: studying the goals of modern cultural heritage storytelling from the perspective of maximization of tourists’ experience, heritage protection, expansion of advertisement, and safe tourism.
- Step 3: development of a theme for modern cultural heritage storytelling: division of stories found in step 1 between three districts (Bukchon, Jeong-dong, Namchon).

- Step 4: Planning the media for delivering stories about modern cultural heritage inside city walls: proposal of possible media outlets for storytelling.

2. Expanding Storytelling about Modern Cultural Heritage Inside Seoul City Walls

Changing perceptions about modern cultural heritage: the following was proposed as solutions to bring new meaning to the Bukchon, Jeong-dong, and Namchon areas.

- Expansion and development of tour routes focusing on the Jeong-dong, Bukchon and Insadong, and Namchon areas.
- Increased utilization of modern cultural heritage through virtual reality and video: creation of virtual tours and documentaries
- Building of museums on modern culture and history of modern life
- Changing perceptions about modern culture and creation of educational materials
- Reenactment of Wongudan and 3/1 protests

V. Conclusion and Policy Suggestions

In order to change perceptions of modern cultural heritage, it is necessary to give new meaning to the Bukchon, Jeong-dong, and Namchon areas, making them an opportunity to introduce “Seoul culture” through modern cultural heritage. The utilization of these heritage must be increased using stories and storytelling media with the help of specialists. The possibilities of the heritage must be carefully studied to develop diverse tourism routes and to select appropriate storytelling media.

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