

Module 4: Results of Bukchon Preservation Project

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Hello.

Now I'll talk about Results of Bukchon Preservation Project.

This session is unfortunately, the last session.

If we read this memoir by Goh Kun, former mayor of Seoul, we can easily understand how to execute a 'Preservation Project'.

He was appointed as the mayor of Seoul in 1988 by central government and elected again in 1998 by citizens.

During his first term 1988 to 1990,

he put regulations on development activities in Bukchon to protect this area from becoming concrete jungles.

The area was somehow preserved,

but residents were upset about administrative restrictions.

The number of Hanoks plummeted to around 800. It was a failure.

When he was the mayor of Seoul again,

he talked with residents to preserve Bukchon and provided insufficient community facilities

to encourage their initiatives.

But in this time it was not mandatory.

This bottom-up approach during his second term made Bukchon a vibrant Hanok village today.

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As Bukchon were revitalized, the city government announced in 2008 the 'Hanok Declaration' and expanded the scope and target of existing Hanok preservation policy.

The declaration widened the scope of the city's Hanok policy from Bukchon to the entire Seoul.

Insa-dong (2009), the area around the Unhyeongung Palace and Donhwamun-ro (2009), and the area west of the Gyeongbokgung Palace (2010) were designated as additional Hanok preservation areas.

These areas are eligible for the support, pursuant to the Hanok ordinance of Seoul.

At the same time, the city government turned more aggressive by creating a new Hanok village in Eunpyeong.

It is to go one step further from merely protecting the existing ones through repair and remodelling support.

Now some ward offices are taking actions to preserve Hanoks in their administrative jurisdictions.

Seongbuk-gu office was the first to adopt an ordinance on the preservation of Hanoks in Seongbuk.

It aims to protect its Hanok area that was not eligible for the city's Hanok preservation policy.

Seongbuk-gu office also runs a Hanok academy

for its residents to learn about the Hanok and experience urban life in Hanoks.

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In the 1990s, with the deregulation policy,

the number of Bukchon's Hanoks rapidly dropped from 2,000 to 800.

However, the Bukchon Preservation Project

decreased the speed of Hanoks' destruction, improved the conditions of Hanoks, too.

In this success of Bukchon preservation project, the conflict management played a key role

through conversations with each stakeholder and residents' initiatives.

In Bukchon, the rift between the city and the residents,

and the rift among the residents themselves were deepened

over the question of development or preservation.

After the government adopted the building height limits in 1977

and designated a collective landscape zone in 1983 to preserve the Hanoks in Bukchon,

the residents were outraged by the infringement of property right and strongly protested.

In 1988 some of them even organized a working committee

for nullification of the governments' restrictions in Bukchon.

When Jongno-gu office announced redevelopment plan in 1997,

conflict arose between the city government and Jongno-gu office.

In 2000, as the city government devised a framework for Bukchon project,

the protest of residents became stronger and more organized.

The city planned three sessions of briefing for residents to help them understand about the project, but two of them fell through due to the strong opposition of some residents.

The city government therefore organized separate meetings to convene the residents for and against the preservation project each.

In particular, a meeting with the mayor was hosted in order to persuade those who were against.

To minimize the residents' opposition, 'Hanok Registration Program' was adopted, too.

Based on the residents' own choice and determination, who registered a Hanok voluntarily was given financial support for repair and remodelling.

By preventing registered Hanoks from demolition and imposing the guidelines for Hanok repair and remodelling, the city endeavored to preserve the originality of Hanoks.

Also, a part of construction cost was supported for those who wanted to change their non-Hanok residence into even Hanok.

However, the Hanok registration system was not flawless.

It couldn't prevent the disappearance of non-registered Hanoks.

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The Bukchon Project, not only improved the physical environment of Hanoks but also changed residents' prejudice on Hanoks.

At the first phase of Bukchon project, there were not many NGOs' activities

to recognize the historical value in Bukchon.

Over the course of preservation project, however, more and more local residents and NGOs became interested in Hanoks of Bukchon and volunteer protection activities increased.

The success of Bukchon project showed how civil society can participate in urban designing process on its own initiative.

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As 4-year-Bukchon project completed successfully, tangible and intangible historical and cultural assets in Bukchon are well revitalized and media outlets from home and abroad are increasingly interested in the changes of Bukchon.

Bukchon is also famous as a filming location of many TV dramas and movies, too. In recognition of such positive developments, the Bukchon Project won the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Award in 2009.

It also provides many hands-on experience opportunity for its visitors through diverse programs from traditional workshops, museums and guest houses.

The number of visitors and tourists is constantly increasing as Bukchon becomes a major tourist spot of Seoul.

The international visitor survey by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism in 2012 showed that 9.1% of foreign visitors came to Bukchon.

It was the third-highest visiting rate following the COEX and the Hanok Village in Mt. Namsan.

1.2% of total visitors responded that Bukchon was their favorite place in South Korea.

The success of Bukchon preservation project elevated the area's economic value.

The real estate value has climbed up from 1,600 USD/m² in 2001, to 6,000~12,000 USD/m² by year 2014.

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Even though Bukchon preservation project contributed significantly to improving the existing Hanoks and revitalizing their cultural values, it also incurs commercialization.

Increase of Hanoks for commercial purpose undermines the unique atmosphere of residential area, Bukchon and weaken the identity of Hanoks by excessive reshaping.

The living condition is deteriorated by vehicle traffic, noise, smell, jumbled signs on alleys, etc.

And a wise solution needs to be devised for noises and safety issues incurred by the increase of visitors.

As the society becomes more interested in the value of Hanoks, their property price rises. This boosts speculation and causes gentrification.

This change hampers the community cohesion in Bukchon.

Negotiations for public purchase of Hanoks also become difficult,

as owners demand market price instead of appraised price.

Such a difference is a factor of conflict between the administration and residents.

Today I talked with you about the Bukchon's history.

Our society have many conflicts because of Development and preservation.

Today we talked about the experience in Bukchon.

Today's lecture can help to you to find out such a problem. Thank you.