

A Research on Creating Samnamgil Trail

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Abstract. Samnamgil trail is an old passage that originated from the Chosun Dynasty. This road connected Hanyang to Haenam within the state of Jeollanam-do and Samrye, Jeollabuk-do to Tongyoung, Kyungsang-do. Research regarding Samnamgil trail started in 2011. The section of the trail in Kyunggi-do opened completely in 2013, which allowed many people to experience walking on the trail to this day. This has been made possible through the collaborative efforts of the academic leaders, a civil walking organization, local government and a business. Samnamgil trail was developed with a lower cost than other walking trails, passes through densely populated urban areas and possesses a rich history.

Keywords: Samnamgil trail, old passage, alternative walking road

1 Introduction

There is a strong passion for walking in Korean society. In the past, mountain hiking was the most popular pastime among Koreans since Korea has a lot of mountains. Recently, the trend has shifted to more Koreans walking for leisure. In addition to improving health, Koreans view long walks as therapeutic relief from their hectic lives. Also, it is a time for self-reflection since leisurely walks allow individuals to engage in deep thought¹.

As more people walk for pleasure, the Korean central government and local governments create more trails for walking. As of May 2013, there are 595 walking trails with individual names and the total length is 10,767 km. There are 1,689 unit course names for walking trail travel².

Samnamgil Trail encompasses the paths from Hanyang, the capital city where the King of the Yi Dynasty lived to Samnam provinces such as: Chungcheong-do, Jeolla-do and Kyungsang-do. Samnamgil Trail is a name for the road that starts from Dongjakjin (Dongjaknaru), located in the south of Hanyang to Kwacheon and Suwon in Kyunggi-do and Chungcheongnam-do to Samrye, Jeollabuk-do to Haenam, Jeollanam-do and also for the road that starts from Samrye, Jeollabuk-do to Tongyoung, Kyungsang-do to the east.

1 Ginkab Kang, Value of Old Roads in Kyunggi, Kyunggi Shinmoon. 2013. 12. 20.

2 Daehoon Chung, "Suggestions for the rational creation of Walking Trails", Value of Old Roads in terms of Cultural Contents and Ways to utilize the Walking Trails Seminar presentation Source Book, p.61, Kyunggi Cultural Foundation & Academic Association of Global Cultural Contents, 2013.

During 2013, a Kyunggi-do section of Samnamgil, which is 90km long from Kwacheon to Pyeongtaek, was developed and people are now walking on that part of the trail. The researcher participated in the creation of this Kyunggi-do section of Samnamgil. In this research paper contains the principal agent, the procedure and the multiple facets of creating Samnamgil Trail

2 Changes to Roads during Modern times from Old Roads

The major network of roads during the Chosun Dynasty was centered in Hanyang, the capital city where the King resided and the roads spread out to all parts of the country. The number of major roads during the Chosun Dynasty changed at times; in the beginning there were 6 major roads then increased to 9 and then 10.

According to "Doroko (Study of Roads)," a history and geography book written by Kyung Joon Shin in 1770, there were 6 major roads: Euiju-ro, Kyungheung-ro, Pyunghae-ro, Dongrae-ro, Jeju-ro and Kanghwa-ro. Jeju-gil starts from Dongjak-jin (Dongjak-naru), connects to Kwacheon and Suwon in Kyunggi-do, Chungcheongnam-do, Samrye, Jeollabuk-do, Haenam, Jeollanam-do by land route and from Haenam to Jeju by Sea Route.

Since then, in Jung Ho Kim's "Daedong Jiji," 10 major roads were introduced. One of the roads was Tongyoungbyul-ro (Special Road). Tongyoungbyul-ro is a road that starts from Samrye, Jeollabuk-do, which is located in the middle of Jeju-gil (Road from Hanyang to Jeju), stretched to the east to Jeonju and Namwon in Jeollabuk-do and Jinju, Kyungsangnam-do to Tongyoung. Samnamgil is 578 km long, which is the combination of the land route from Hanyang to Haenam, Jeju-gil and Tongyoungbyul-ro.

The major roads during the Chosun Dynasty connected Hanyang to local government offices and military bases and were used by people to commute and transport supplies. And also the roads were used for the king's tour of inspection of the country and visit of hot spring for the cure.

In Korean history, the first roads for vehicles were made during the Russo-Japanese War in the early 20th century, when Russia and Japan fought against each other in Korea. The Japanese army needed roads for vehicles to transport cannons during the war. As a result, they forced Daehanjekuk (Korean Empire) to create new roads.

Modern roads were created after Korea was liberated in 1945 from Japanese colonialism. Since then, national roads, local roads, city roads and county roads were built in significant amounts. During the 1970s, the number of cars increased as the economy expanded. As highways were built, the new roads supported more transportation than railroads. Therefore, new roads were built and many roads were covered. By the first half of 1990s, 97.8% of national roads, 73.1% of local roads, 55.6% of city and county roads were covered. The reason why roads were extended and covered was because there were more vehicles on the roads and roads carried more transportation than before. Roads built during the industrialization were more for vehicles than for walking and as a result, roads were built mainly for vehicles and the number of sidewalks was decreased. As a result, the major roads including

national roads, local roads, and city and county roads were very uncomfortable for people to walk on and even dangerous.

3 The Procedure of Creating Samnamgil and the Principal

The procedure of creating Samnamgil can be done in three big stages³.

3.1 First stage - Researching Samnamgil, Kyunggi-do in 2011

The public service of creating Samnamgil started in 2011. In 2011, Kyunggi Cultural Foundation researched the possibility of restoring Samnamgil in Suwon, Hwasung, Osan city in Southern Kyunggi-do. The first thing to do was to historically research the old Samnamgil route, which was done based upon "Jungbomunhunbigo", "Daedong Jiji", "Doroko" and old maps such as, "Haedongjido" and "Daedongyujido." The changes in Samnamgil were traced utilizing the land registration map made in 1912 and the aerial photographs that were taken periodically since the liberation. I was able to grasp the general Samnamgil route through consultation with local historians. However, Samnamgil has been distorted because of new roads being built and existing roads being altered after the liberation. It was difficult to restore Samnamgil in Suwon and Hwasung, Osan section and national section after accurately researching it historically. There were sections where the roads were too narrow with no sidewalk deeming it too dangerous to walk.

The purpose of restoring Samnamgil was to let people walk the trail again. Upon investigating the surrounding roads, mountain roads, village roads and field roads which were not too far away from the original Samnamgil, we found an alternative walking trail where people can walk easily and comfortably.

The first stage was to research the Samnamgil Suwon, Hwasung, Osan historically based on historical documents. Historically documented Samnamgil was based on the original old road, but a part of the section was connected to the alternative road. The result of restoring Samnamgil based upon historical documents was published in January 2012 as a report called, "The Research of Development and Utilization of Historical and Cultural Trail in Southern Kyunggi-do."⁴

3.2 Second Stage: Opening of Samnamgil Suwon, Hwasung, Osan section in 2012

After we found the old road, the problem of the difficulty of walking was solved when a special organization dedicated to walking tours called, "Beautiful Walking Tour" participated in the restoring of Samnamgil.

3 Ginkab Kang, "Studies on restoring old roads in Kyunggi-do", Value of Old Roads in terms of Cultural Contents and Ways to utilize the Walking Trails Seminar presentation Source Book, pp.31-32, Kyunggi Cultural Foundation & Academic Association of Global Cultural Contents, 2013.

4 Ginkab Kang and Daehun Jung, et al, Study on development and utilization of historical and cultural trails in the south Kyunggi-do, Kyunggi-do, 2013.

This organization built Samnamgil Jeollanam-do section independently with support from Kolon without any help from the local government. "Beautiful Walking Tour" felt that the roads should be attractive enough for people to walk on. They replaced the difficult section of the Samnamgil with the "alternative-walking trail." In 2012, Kyunggi-do Suwon, Hwasung, Osan section of Samnamgil became open to the public after it was restored with original old roads and alternative walking trail.

In this stage, the restoration and creation of Samnamgil was made possible with Kyunggi Cultural Foundation's research, local government support, "Beautiful Walking Tour's on-site survey and operations and Kolon's support.

3.3 Third Stage: Opening of Samnamgil Kwacheon, Anyang, Pyeongtaek section in 2013

In 2013 the work was done for the survey and research and opening of Samnamgil Kwacheon, Anyang and Pyeongtaek section. This is the rest of the section after 2012's Samnamgil creation. In this stage, local historians participated in the beginning of the creation. As a result, the research results about the old roads and the on-site survey results were reflected. Therefore, they were able to restore this section of Samnamgil more accurately than the second stage. However, there were many sections where it was too dangerous for people to walk. Either there was no sidewalk or the sidewalk was too narrow. Therefore, we had to find an alternative road and present it. It was inevitable for the safety of walking travelers, but some researchers raised the issue that the alternative trail damaged the original old roads. Within the Samnamgil research team, some researchers had the opinion that the original roads should be proposed as Samnamgil trail even though it is not comfortable to walk on.

4 Characteristics of Samnamgil Kyunggi-do Section

Samnamgil has a few distinctive characteristics different from walking trails in other regions.

First, it didn't take a lot of money to create the roads. The creation of Samnamgil didn't require any road site or public works, but the existing roads were used and just the signage "Samnamgil" was posted. Therefore, the cost for creating the trail was only for research and survey and making the signs and installing them. Compared to Seoul city that spent 100 billion won to build 2.1 km of Sungkwakgil (Castle road), it was less than 1 billion won to build 90km of Samnamgil from 2011 to 2013.

Second, Samnamgil has history since it was created based on the old roads. Samnamgil was the road where Jung Do Jun laid the foundation of political reform when he was exiled to Najoo, and where Silhak scholar Jung Yak Yong walked on when he was exiled to Kangjin. It was the road where Admiral Lee Sun Shin walked on to serve in a war as a commoner, and where Lee Mong Ryong, the main character of the fiction novel, Chun Hyang Jun, went to save his lover, Chun Hyang as a secret royal investigator. It was the road where scholars from all across the country walked

up and down to take the state exams and where the merchants from all across the country walked to trade⁵.

Third, Samnamgil penetrates the densely populated areas. Two typical walking trails, Jeju Olegil and Jirisan Supgil (Forest trail) are far away from densely populated areas. So, to walk on these trails, you have to travel far from home. However, Samnamgil penetrates the heart of the city so that city people can easily use it.

Fourth, Samnamgil starts from Hanyang and connects to Kyunggi-do, Chungcheongnam-do, Jeonlabuk-do, Jeollanam-do and finally to Jeju Island. At present, Kyunggi-do and Jeollanam-do section has been opened, and Jeollabuk-do section will be opened soon. Once Chungcheongnam-do section is connected, this road will be a historic road that connects the country from north to south⁶.

5 Conclusion

Samnamgil was created between 2011 and 2013 based on extensive historical research. Samnamgil is one of the old roads from Chosun Dynasty. Newly prepared Samnamgil, open to the public in the form of original old roads and alternative walking trail that was prepared for walking travelers to walk safely and comfortably, are being used by many walking travelers.

Samnamgil was created through collaboration among local governments, historians, a civil walking tour organization and a corporation and it was created with a much lower budget compared to other walking trails in other regions. It penetrates densely populated areas and therefore many people can easily walk on it without traveling far from home. It has historical significance and when all the sections of Samnamgil are restored, it will be the longest walking trail that crosses the country, connecting Seoul, Kyunggi-do, Chungcheongnam-do, Jeolla-do and Kyungsangnam-do.

But, there are several problems with Samnamgil. In restoring the original old roads, preparing the alternative-walking trail for walkers raised the problem of historical accuracy. Besides, there's a problem with maintaining the restored walking trails and since many sections pass through the center of the city, these walking trails are less pleasant than other ecological walking trails.

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