

Sanju-si, Gyeongsangbuk-do, Korea (with a population of 105,607) / Number one spot with clean environment & a city of a bike in Korea

Introduction

Sangju is a city with a long history and rich cultural heritage so that it was appointed as a capital city in an ancient country 1,500 years ago due to its location and its large field of land. Now the city is located in the center of South Korea and can be reached within 2 hours from anywhere in the country by using the well-established transportation system. The city is also proud of its greatest beauty of nature which is the Nakdong River and Baegdudaegan. It is also noticed as one of the most eco-friendly cities in Korea and a leading city of green environment through a wide use of bikes. In addition, the appointment of the rice paddy wetland to a reserve by the government and the recognition of Sangju as a slow city by Cittaslow (Slow Cities) International Network verify that the city is developing to a better place to live. To make a better hometown, both 110,000 residents and 600,000 people who left the city for various reasons are striving together to make the city a better place balancing between nature and human as well as between developing and preserving.

1. Improvement of natural and artificial landscape

Sangju is the city from which the name of the Nakdong River was originated and has preserved the natural environment including the Gyeongchundae, the most beautiful spot alongside the Nakdong River. The city has also been striving in its own effort to protect from the shortage of water and flood by holding an event of "Make the Nakdong River Live" and to secure the diversity of living things by establishing the National Institute of Biological Resources of the Nakdong River and the National Center of the Future of Agricultural Life. Also, the city opened an ecologic park in the forest of the Baekdudaegan to maintain the systemic management of the forest resources as well as for the educational purposes. Moreover, in order to preserve Gonggeumji, one of the four reservoirs from the Three Han States in the ancient period, the city is currently trying to register to the Ramsar Convention based on the recent appointment of the wetland around the reservoir to a reserve by the Korean government. The city of Sangju keeps making its effort to broaden the park area per capita (35m), which is already the largest in Korea, and to continue to create spaces for diverse cultural events and resting areas.



[<Bird's eye view of Gyeongcheondae and National Nakdong River Biological Resource Institute>](#)

2. Art, culture and heritage

Many historic artifacts from the Paleolithic Age to the Iron Age were found in Sangju, which are the important materials to study the lifestyles of ancient people. The artifacts are currently displayed in the Museum of Sangju, being great educational materials. Every year, the city holds reproduction events of Governor's Inaugural Parade and exercising medical treatment at Jonaewon, the medical clinic established in 1599. The city also held annual events of a folk song competition and an agricultural product festival to create more unique atmosphere of the city.

3. Best Practices of Environment

The city contributed to minimizing environmental pollution by establishing a state-of-the-art incineration plant for

municipal waste, provided with the first civil fund in 1998. It is the first incineration plant with a ceiling so that it can be kept from leachate. In cooperation with the city of Mungyeong, the city of Sangju utilized the sewage wastewater to create a water park with flowing water for all seasons for the purpose of less expenditure and cleaner water. Sangju, in which the bicycle was first introduced in 1910, has now 2.5 bicycles per household making the total number of bicycles in Sangju 85 thousand. It is the highest rated city in bicycle ownership in the world, and the city with the longest bike history in Korea. The Korean government appointed Sangju as the best green city in 2009.



<Bike Festival Parade>

4. Community participation and its empowerment

The city opened a volunteer center to promote volunteering activities and is now running various kinds of program. 13,000 people, which is 12% of the total population of the city, is now participating in volunteering activities and a volunteer exhibition is also held annually. Moreover, to satisfy the diverse cultural desires of people, the city provides active assistance to cultural organizations run by its residents and also holds various kinds of cultural events to promote the unity of the residents. The city has also been contributing to cultivating young generations for future development of the city and to establishing educational system for lifetime learning.

5. Sound life style

To make a city where every resident can be safe and happy, the city of Sangju is making more effort to establish a solid infrastructure for safety. The particular programs run by the city government are as follows: Adaptation assistance to multi-cultural families; assistance programs to the disabled, women, and seniors; youth programs and other resident-friendly programs. Those programs are to help build up a sharing and healthy society in the city. For more active and healthy city, the city improved the medical clinic facility. Various sporting events and activities are also held to promote strengthening health and physical strength of the citizens through an athletic class and an athletic facility available to everyone. In addition, the city built a city park applied an healthy design concept and finally enacted an ordinance of prohibiting smoking to make cleaner parks in 2009. Under the ordinance, the Namsan Park and the Children Park were appointed as non-smoking parks.

6. Strategic Plan

To make a city where everyone is happy, Sangju set a vision called 'The Cleanest Well-Being City in the World' through professional consulting and a discussion with citizens. The city made four objectives including 'a clean city of the Nakdong River and Baegdudaegan and the action plans, which is currently running together by residents, civil organizations, and the city government.

Recently, more than two thousand of people have moved to Sangju for the past a few years. The number of the people is the largest among the cities where people moved back to countryside, which shows that Sangju is one of the best places to live. The city of Sangju will continue to strive for the development with its unique history and cultural heritage to make every resident happy for his/her city and to make the city where everyone's dream come true. The city will also continue to challenge to be the best city in the world in cooperation with all the residents.