

A royal space for 600 years,
opens its

“PALACE GATE”

to the public

After returning to the people,
Cheong Wa Dae attracts 5 million visitors





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"The Palace Door" Opens in Jongno, Seoul, In 600 Years, 5 million people as citizens of Cheong Wa Dae

(The Cheong Wa Dae, Returning the royal garden to the public from forbidden area)

- Jongno-gu, Seoul -

Background

Seoul, the seat of the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1910), has five royal palaces: Gyeongbokgung, Changdeokgung, Changgyeonggung, Deoksugung and Gyeonghuigung. Changdeokgung among these five places is UNESCO World Heritage Site named "Changdeokgung Palace Complex". With Changdeokgung, these five royal palaces state sovereignty and regal authority as official residences of kings where they lived and governed. Among the five places, Gyeongbok Palace, the first and main palace of Joseon, was built in 1395, the fourth year of Taejo, the founding monarch.



The target site of the project, the Cheong Wa Dae, was used to be rear garden of main royal palace, Gyeongbokgung, and Seohyeonjeong Pavilion, Yeonmujang Court for martial arts training and Gwageojang Court for national civil service exams were added to the garden. Unfortunately, the grandeur of Gyeongbokgung and its rear garden was burned to the ground in 1592 during the Japanese invasion of Korea. Their ruins remained for nearly 270 years until 1865, when Prince Regent Heungseon began reconstruction in the second year of King Gojong's reign.

During Japanese colonial rule of Korea (1910-45), the Cheong Wa Dae, the rear garden of Gyeongbokgung Palace, was used to hold the Joseon Exposition from 1937-39 and later served as a park before the Japanese governor-general's official residence was built at the site. The location was later renamed Gyeongmudae.

After the Republic of Korea was officially established on Aug. 15, 1948, President Rhee Syngman and his wife moved to Gyeongmudae from their private residence Ihwajang. The name "Cheong Wa Dae" was chosen given the structure's blue-tiled roof after the inauguration of President Yun Bo-seon, the country's fourth head of state.

Problem

Considering the history of the Cheong Wa Dae and Gyeongbokgung, the site is one of the most valuable place for the history and culture of Joseon Dynasty and Republic of Korea as a capital city and heart of the capital, Seoul. The the Cheong Wa Dae is representing the dynamic change of history of the last 600 years of Korean history. It means that the Cheong Wa Dae would be an important and significant cultural resource for the Korean Public and Seoul citizen. Due to the function of the place after the end of the Japanese Colonial Era, which has been a residential area of the Presidents of Republic of Korea, however, the general public and citizen have not allowed to access the site.

With opening of the Cheong Wa Dae in 2022, the problem would be summarized as two issue; programmes and infrastructure to deliver the historic and cultural value of the Cheong Wa Dae and sustainable development for local area with transformation to tourism attraction.

Our aim

In 2002, new President Yoon decided to move his official residential place to Youngsan and opened the Cheong Wa Dae to the public, “Cheong Wa Dae: Back to the people” to enhance and improve values of the Cheong Wa Dae. It means that the Cheong Wa Dae where was the rear garden of royal place in Joseon Dynasty, residential area for the former Presidents of Republic of Korea and forbidden space for the citizen in last about 70 years, is returned to the public. With this decision, the Jongno-gu has also launched several programmes and improvement of infrastructure to promote and enhance the values for the public in corporation with national governmental bodies and other relevant governmental organization.

This project sets following aims:

- i) To recover cultural landscape and return the Cheong Wa Dae to the public in value-based approach
- ii) To develop this area as a tourism attraction with other cultural heritage resources
- iii) To contribute local development with sustainable and participatory approach

Solution

With above three aims, Jongno-gu, as a main management body, began to implement following programmes and policies since opening of the Cheong Wa Dae.

- i) Opening events of the Cheong Wa Dae

In order to commemorate this opening, Jongno-gu launched public visiting programme in day and evening time and experience programme, exhibition, and performance based on the values of the Cheong Wa Dae. It aims to promote this area for the cultural tourism attraction.

- ii) Opening the trail from the Cheong Wa Dae to Mt. Bukak

The Cheong Wa Dae was a part of royal palace, Gyeongbokgung, and it is a significant part of cultural landscape including near area. Since the Cheong Wa Dae was located in this area, the Mt. Bukak also became inaccessible area since 1960s due to the security issue for the Korean presidential residence. Now Jongno-gu has been aware of importance of cultural landscape, and has improved the accessibility for whole area.

- iii) Opening parking lots for the visitors and local public

Since the opening of the Cheong Wa Dae, the area has been become a very popular visiting spot for the public as well as tourists. Due to the increased number of visitors and a large transient population, local communities and visitors has been suffering from the lack of infrastructure such as parking space. In order to secure parking space, Jongno-gu has been strengthening cooperation with relevant governmental bodies including Presidential Security Service.

- iv) Relaxation of regulation for local development

The local communities near the the Cheong Wa Dae has been restricted for development because of the national facilities and national heritage such as the Korean presidential residence the Cheong Wa Dae and World Heritage Gyeongbokgung. With opening of the Cheong Wa Daem Jongno-gu has been prosecuting relieve deregulation for local development

- v) Enforcement of policy for sustainable development and local communities

It is expected that the area has been become one of the most popular tourism attraction in Seoul

since opening of the Cheong Wa Dae. It also possibly effects on daily life and space of the local communities by touristy. In order for sustainable development of the local area, Jongno-gu has been enforce policy to make balance between local communities and tourism.

vi) Climate Change Policy

With above programmes, Climate Change policy is a fundamental and basic strategy for implementation of the programme.



Results

In fact, this project has just begun with opening of the Cheong Wa Dae to the public in 2022. In addition, this decision for the opening was some lightning with political background. It means the programmes are still in progress and the results are coming up now. It is likely to take time for outcome of the project. Despite of short effort, however, some results have been visible. The opening programme in day and evening time in last two years is contributed to promote the value of the Cheong Wa Dae to the public and is planned to extend to the wide range of the public. For the visiting programme and individual visitors, the parking space are already secured in 2023. In the next 3years, more parking space will be secured by cooperation with relevant organization in Jong-gu. In terms of administrative regulation, Jongno-gu already achieved deregulation in the local government level, and is cooperating with regional and national governmental level. All these programmes are fundamentally aimed for the improvement of local community and enhancement of value of the Cheong Wa Dae for the general public. For this, the local communities have been actively participated in the decision-making process including public discussion, public hearing, and public briefing.

Expectation

It can be said that the local area of the Cheong Wa Dae has not been developed due to the administrative restriction for the Korean presidential residence where was a rear garden of royal palace. In 2002, opening of the Cheong Wa Dae would be an important momentum to develop the local area with cultural values where has been neglected in last 70 years. Although the number of visitors has increased and the area is becoming tourism attraction, the quality of life of local community is possibly threatened by tourism pressure. It is expected that the project provides a significant opportunity to achieve sustainable development of the local area against the threat.

In other words, this project can present an exemplary case for sustainable development between local community and tourism in urban environment in Republic of Korea and other part of world. In addition, it can show a good case to make cultural heritage to cultural resource for tourism in sustainable perspective. This are all related to improvement of liveability in urban landscape. The liveability would be beginning from the local community. In this project, the local community and heritage is not separated factors, but the heritage, the Cheong Wa Dae, is an important source and cultural capital for sustainable development for the local area and community. Many parts of this project is led by Jongno-gu, which is the local government. It is a measure for high feasibility and is help to improve communication with local community by institutional strategy.