

# Locality, History and Culture in Urban Regeneration:

2015 International Conference on Emerging Issues Concerning  
East Asian Urban Regeneration

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The International Conference “Locality, History and Culture in Urban Regeneration” sponsored by the University of Seoul and SSK Research Group on Glocal Culture and Regional Development was held at the University of Seoul on 29-31 October 2015. The conference seeks to bring together East Asian scholars and experts who investigate the contemporary issues that arise from urban regeneration. The aim of the conference is to generate new ideas and discourse that can contribute to efforts aimed at improving the prevailing urban conditions of East Asian cities.

The reception dinner in the evening of October 29th was one year since our last meeting in Tongli Town of the Jiangsu Province in China. And so this convivial event also served as a reunion of the specialists of urban studies who attended our previous conferences. This was the 6th major conference since our 2010 symposium featuring Asian urban cultures, held at Rikkyo University. This time it was our Korean colleagues, chiefly from the University of Seoul, and other nearby Universities, such as Sungshin Women’s University and Konkuk University, who hosted the scholars from China and Japan.

On the second day, two sessions were held at Law School Building, Room 623, University of Seoul. After the Registration and Luncheon, the conference commenced with Welcoming Address by Professor Wonho JANG (University of Seoul), who is a Director of the SSK Research Group on Glocal Culture and Regional Development. The papers delivered at the first session “Multiple Paths to Urban Regeneration,” with Professor Yun-Suk LEE (University of Seoul) as chairperson, were as follows:

- (1) “The Regional Industrial Ecosystem of Seongsu Hand-made Shoe Makers: Implications for Economic-cultural Regeneration.” presented by Kee-Born NAHM (University of Seoul), with discussant, Tetsuo MIZUKAMI (Rikkyo University);
- (2) “The Cultural Construction of Urban Uniqueness: Regeneration of the Traditional Consumption City Kanazawa.” was presented by Yasushi MATSUMOTO (Dean of the

College of Sociology, Rikkyo University). For this paper, Wonho JANG acted as discussant; and

(3) “The State on the Street: Visible Hands in Creative City-Making in Shanghai.” presented by Xiaohua ZHONG (Tongji University), Yifei LI (University of Wisconsin-Madison), and Weijue ZHU (Tongji University). The discussant was Dong-Kyun IM (University of Seoul).

After the coffee break, the second session, “Reconstructing the Cultural Fabric of Urban Life in East Asia” was held. Professor Juyeon KIM (University of Seoul) presided. The papers were as follows:

(4) “Comparative Medical Pluralism in East Asia.” presented by Jae-Mahn SHIM (University of Seoul). For this paper, Xiaohua ZHONG (Tongji University) acted as discussant;

(5) “Calling for Social and Organic Urban Space of Everyday Life.” presented by Hai YU (Fudan University) with Yongjin HONG (University of Seoul) as discussant.; and

(6) “Urban Renewal Project and Cultural Heritage: A Case of Toshima City.” presented by Tetsuo Mizukami (Rikkyo University), with Wonho LEE (Sungshin Women’s University) as discussant.



Conference in University of Seoul

The Conference concluded with a closing address by Professor Byung Min LEE (Konkuk University). All papers were valuable in providing information regarding urban regeneration

and thus the provoking full and lively discussions from the floor. All the participants and over 20 postgraduate students got together at the farewell dinner, exchanging ideas for how contemporary East-Asian urban studies should proceed.

The following day, the 31st October, the entire membership of the conference visited the Sewoon Sangga district as a fieldwork exercise. The area is a notable urban regeneration project, and our visit included an exploration of the Sewoon Arcade site. It has initially been designed as a block mixing both commercial and residential zones one kilometer in length, and now has been transformed by its own urban regeneration through the development of various thriving cultural industries.



View from the roof floor of the Sewood Mega Complex building looking over the conglomeration of small retail and parts shops, mainly relating to the electric appliances.

Next year in 2016, our seventh major conference is planned to be held at Rikkyo University, Tokyo. This was the site for the first of our series of international conference. Rikkyo University and the University of Seoul have developed a range of co-operative programs: academic and research collaboration and also student exchanges. Indeed, the College of Sociology, Rikkyo University and College of Urban Science, University of Seoul concluded an official agreement in 2007 between the Colleges for student exchanges, and the program started from March 2008. With these programs flourishing, we also expect further development for the academic and educational exchanges between the two Universities, together with Tongji University and Fudan University from China.

