



CITY PROFILE

JINJU

JULY 2019





CITY DESCRIPTION

GENERAL INFORMATION

Province: Gyeongsangnam-do
(southeast of South Korea)

Country: Republic of Korea

Area: 712.96 km²

Population: 360,000 inhabitants

Density: 473,22 inhab./km²

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Mayor: Kyoo-il Jo

Website: www.jinju.go.kr

CONTEXT

Jinju is a mid-sized Korean city with a unique cultural identity over 1300 years of history. The Nam River cuts through the city in South Gyeongsang Province (Gyeongsangnam-do, with Changwon as capital) in the southeast of South Korea, where the cities of Sancheong and Hamyang belong as well. This area is economically disadvantaged compared to the eastern part of the province, where Changwon and Gimhae are located, due to slow industrialization. Despite the industrial downturn, the western part of Gyeongsang Province, including Jinju, has successfully preserved the academic and cultural traditions of South-eastern part of the Korean peninsula and its own identity.

The city was the location of the [first](#) (1592) and [second](#) (1593) sieges of Jinju by Japanese forces during the [Imjin War](#) in 1592. More recently, as a result of being the battlefield of the Korean War in the 1950s, the historical landscape of Jinju was seriously damaged except for the Jinju Fortress. However, the city has well-preserved cultural assets in the field of crafts and folk arts and a beautiful nature scenery. The city also stands out as an educational and cultural node with a student population of over 90,000. It is home to six universities, including the [Gyeongsang National University](#) and the [International University of Korea](#) —the latter one, private, catering mostly to foreign students— and has been responsible for cultivating human resources and inheriting traditional cultures.

In recent years, the national government has supported a hub of bio-industrial technological innovation in Jinju, and the transfer of public institutions such as [LH Korea Land and Housing Corporation](#) has brought a new economic vitality. In addition, a plan to build a national aerospace industrial complex in Sacheon and Jinju has been established. However, Jinju clearly recognizes that culture is one of the four pillars for sustainable development of the city, along with society, economy and environment, so the strategy for future development is not only focused in industrialization but in fostering the original identity of Jinju as a cultural city.





JINJU'S CULTURAL PROFILE

MUNICIPAL DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE AND ARTS

In Jinju the public management of culture relies in [Jinju's Municipal Department of Culture and Arts](#), in collaboration with the regional government of Gyeongsang and the national government of South Korea. Jinju's Municipal Department of Culture and Arts includes different teams:

- **Culture and Arts** division (in charge of the promotion of Creative City designation, public libraries, religious affairs, grants and subsidies management and general cultural services).
- **Cultural Assets** division (in charge of cultural assets maintenance, Traditional Arts Centre management, intangible cultural properties management and operation, support to traditional folk arts performances —intangible cultural assets—, designation and release of cultural properties, etc.).
- **Cultural Industries** division (in charge of subsidies management for projects, operation of municipal art troupe, culture promotion management and funding, registration and promotion of cultural businesses, registration and management of venues, operation of the Traditional Art School, etc.).
- **Cultural Facilities Management** division (in charge of natural monuments management, buried cultural assets —fossils—, Lee Seongja Museum management, outdoor stage facilities and venues management).

The management of municipal cultural services is aimed at developing and promoting activities to meet the cultural rights of citizens and improve their quality of life, with special attention to education and tourism, and in collaboration with folk arts and crafts associations.

Folk arts associations, which usually train and perform at Jinju Traditional Arts Centre and Jinju Fortress, get public funding and get income from private donors and ticket sales. Their activities are part of the local educational system: scholars attend artistic performances and sometimes artists perform at schools. The art residencies at Jinju Ogwangdae Transmission House are an example of this collaboration between culture and education.

The local government of Jinju allocates 7% of the total budget to culture and arts and, besides the support of the regional and the national government, [Arts Council Korea](#) (ARKO), composed by artists and cultural professionals, supports partially international festivals organised in Jinju.

CULTURAL STRATEGY

The city of Jinju recognizes the importance of sustainable urban development, so municipality and civil society have been collaborating in designing the “**Creative City Jinju Promotion Plan**” to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Jinju is endeavouring to establish a new city model to be recognized as a creative city by preserving local cultural identity, fostering creative industries based on traditional



folk arts and crafts, and seeking cultural diversity, social inclusion and respect for the environment. Thus, Jinju aims at becoming “a city of creativity that embraces history and culture, and cultivates future industries” by promoting a Creative City plan capable to solve the socioeconomic challenges the city is currently facing.

The local government of Jinju is well aware that developing Jinju as an industrial city should not undermine the original cultural identity of Jinju and, moreover, industrialization alone is not the answer to sustainable development; so the Creative City Jinju Promotion Plan aims at expanding Jinju’s full potential to become a creative city considering the four pillars of sustainable development: social inclusion, economic growth, environment and culture.

SOME LOCAL CHALLENGES

Nowadays the central areas of the city are losing grounds and its core audience due the recent development of the innovative areas around the city periphery. In this regard, Jinju is looking closely at the cases of the cases of Yokohama City in Japan and Birmingham in the UK. The two cities also experienced the same phenomenon; the commercial markets around the city central areas had lost momentum due to the development and expansion of the city. In order to solve the problem, abandoned old buildings were renovated into cultural centres and fostered creative talents.

On the flip side, neither the 50,000 new inhabitants of the city's innovation hub nor the multicultural families living in rural areas are culturally integrated with the rest of citizens who have lived in Jinju for a long time. Moreover, there is an economic and cultural gap between the urban and rural areas of Jinju. Urban and rural areas have a ratio of 3:7, but this ratio is reversed in terms of population, demonstrating that many Jinju citizens still live in rural areas.

In regard to these and other challenges, the new creative city model includes diverse focus areas:

1. **Innovative City:** balance between culture and industry, cultivating creative talent.
2. **Historic cultural City:** restoration of historic heritages, urban regeneration for cultural industries, considering the role of Jinju as a cultural capital of Gyeongsangnam-do.
3. **Cohesive City:** reducing the cultural disparity between urban and rural areas, integrating the two different cultures of original settlers and newcomers.
4. **Global network hub City:** providing a platform for folk arts and crafts in [UNESCO Creative Cities Network](#), and a global hub for developing cities as well.

The preparatory process for the implementation of the Creative City Jinju Promotion Plan has included these activities so far:

- Benchmarking domestic and foreign creative cities to establish an urban-rural development model which combines some elements of industry-culture convergence, urban regeneration, and cultural city
- Promoting international exchange by organising 4 editions of the “Jinju International Conference on Creative City”
- Building a creative atmosphere and cultivating creative talents by hosting seminars and workshops on creative cities over 20 times, and strengthening the industrial-academic cooperation with local universities in the fields of crafts, folk arts and silk production, by granting scholarships and offering international exchange programs.
- Fostering capacity-building processes by surveying and listening to citizens
- Disseminating and promoting the new city model by publishing the Creative Jinju City Promotion Plan

Next steps include building a Citizens’ Creative Centre to provide opportunities for the citizens to enjoy the cultural assets and resources of Jinju and to participate in creative activities in various fields; building a Traditional Arts Performance Theatre and a Gallery of Jinju Local Products to foster creative industries; establishing the Jinju Creative Industry Promotion Agency to activate the creative industries and to supervise various supporting projects, and organising city council meetings to promote citizens’ active participation in the implementation of the Creative City Jinju Promotion Plan.

CULTURAL ASSETS

Jinju has been known for abundant traditional arts and culture. Popular arts and upper class art practices, —especially, traditional dances— are handed down from generation to generation. Jinju citizens have always cherished their traditional folk arts and the government supports them at a local, regional and national level, making significant efforts to preserve tradition while promoting modernization.

Several folk arts, some of which had disappeared due to the historical context, have been restored by citizens and registered as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Korea¹ (of *Gyeongsangnam-do*), and some have been added to the UNESCO’s Intangible Cultural

¹ Most of Jinju’s intangible art and culture [also craftsmanship] are protected by applicable Korean laws and regulations regarding cultural properties. The Korean government designates cultural heritage with conservation value as cultural “Korean Cultural Assets” to be protected and transmitted to successive generations. These items include artistic activities, anthropological heritage, folklore, methods, customs and lifestyles.



Heritage list as well. Some of them are currently being developed through diverse cultural exchanges like the “[Jinju World Folk Arts Biennale](#)”, held to strengthen international exchange in the field of folk arts and to facilitate access of folk art traditions of developing countries to the international stage.

Relevant traditional folk arts developed in Jinju are the following:

- [Jinju Ogwangdae](#) (‘masked dance performance’, designated as Gyeongsangnam-do Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2003). Once disappeared, this traditional dance was successfully re-enacted after 60 years, based on recorded scripts and masks collected by folklorists, and thanks to the initiative of citizens and community leaders.
- [Sotdaejaenginori](#) (‘traditional acrobatics’). These ancient composite art performances, which include “Sotdaetagi —climbing a “Sotdae” (‘tall pole’) and doing acrobatic movements around it with ropes— were played in Jinju by “Sotdajangipae”, a professional artist group who is the predecessor to circus troupes in Korea. Currently this folk art is being preserved and transmitted by Jinju Sotdaejaenginori Conservation Association.
- [Jinju Geommu](#) (‘sword dance’, designated Intangible Cultural Heritage of Korea in 1967). This sword dance features sophisticated movements and wrist turning with an unbending sword, and is usually performed by professional female entertainers. It is highly appreciated for its artistic value.
- [Jinju-Samcheonpo Nongak](#), (‘farmers’ music’ and performances from old Samcheonpo region in Jinju, designated as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Korea in 1966 and added to the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list in 2014). Once a form of religious recreational activity intended to ward off misfortune, this folk art, rooted in a sense of community, transformed into an elaborated entertainment show which includes a popular and impressive drum performance called “beokgunori”.

In addition to folk arts, some **traditional crafts** such as Jangdojang (ornamental knives), Duseokjang (metal hinges) and Somokjang (wooden furniture) have been developing for many years as well in Jinju, and have been designated as Gyeongsangnam-do Intangible Cultural Heritage in 1987, 2005 and 2004-2016 respectively. Currently there are different training centres and workshops in Jinju to develop these traditional crafts, and there is the willingness to include them in the “Jinju World Folk Arts (and Crafts) Biennale” soon.

Jinju is also renowned for its **silk manufacturing**, being one of the world’s top five silk-producing regions and having “[Jinju Silk](#)” as the allied brand of local silk production enterprises. The city is home to the [Korea Silk Research Institute](#), founded by the Korean government and located near the Jinju Silk Market. Furthermore, Jinju has the Silk Valley and the Silk Industry Innovation Centre. For many years, Jinju has produced 70% of the national production, and has distinguished by its silk weaving techniques, having an ideal combination of natural and human resources.

Moreover, many **famous festivals** are held in the city regularly such as the “Gaecheon Art Festival” (the first local festival in Korea), the “Jinju Namgang Yudeung Festival” (Korean global lantern festival originally affiliated to the latter one), the “Jinju Nongae Festival” (women-centred festival aimed at pacifying the spirits of civilians and soldiers who perished in wars), and the “Jinju Mask Dance & Drama Festival” (launched in 1996 to popularize and modernize traditional masked dance and developed into international festival to operate international exchanges programmes in the East Asian region). They all are relevant platforms for Jinju traditional arts and serve as a strong foundation for creative tourism.

Main cultural facilities in Jinju include Jinju Fortress, [Gyeongnam Culture and Arts Center](#) (owned and managed by the provincial government; it has the main theatre of Jinju, a 500-seats auditorium), Jinju Traditional Arts Centre (managed and supported by the local government and various associations: Jinju Samcheonpo Nongak, Jinju Geommu, Hallyangmu, Jinju Pogurakmu and Sin Gwan-yong Style Gayaeum Sanjo), Jinju Ogwangdae Transmission House, Jinju Jisu Hanok Village and Jinju National Museum, among others.

Located inside Jinju Fortress, [Jinju National Museum](#) opened in 1984 as the first national museum in *Gyeongsangnam-do* and exhibits local history and cultural heritage, focusing on the Imjin War. On the other hand, [Jinju Fortress](#) is designated as Official Historic Site of South Korea no. 118 by the [Cultural Heritage Administration of Korea](#). The reinforced stonewall has a circumference of 1,760 metres, 5-8 metres in height and contains 3 wells and springs. The fortress is well-known as a sacred place of patriotism and loyalty due to the historic significance of the Battle of Jinju in 1592, during the Imjin War. It hosts various historic remains inside, including 14 designated cultural heritages.





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