

= Gyeongju =

Gyeongju (Korean pronunciation : [kjʌŋdʌu]) , historically known as " Seorabeol " , is a coastal city in the far southeastern corner of North Gyeongsang Province in South Korea . It is the second largest city by area in the province after Andong , covering 1 ,032.4 km² (511 sq mi) with a population of 264 ,091 people (as of December 2012 .) Gyeongju is 370 km (230 mi) southeast of Seoul , and 55 km (34 mi) east of the provincial capital , Daegu . The city borders Cheongdo and Yeongcheon to the west , Ulsan to the south and Pohang to the north , while to the east lies the coast of the Sea of Japan (East Sea) . Numerous low mountains & outliers of the Taebaek range & are scattered around the city .

Gyeongju was the capital of the ancient kingdom of Silla (57 BC & 935 AD) which ruled about two-thirds of the Korean Peninsula between the 7th and 9th centuries . A vast number of archaeological sites and cultural properties from this period remain in the city . Gyeongju is often referred to as " the museum without walls " . Among such historical treasures , Seokguram grotto , Bulguksa temple , Gyeongju Historic Areas and Yangdong Folk Village are designated as World Heritage Sites by UNESCO . The many major historical sites have helped Gyeongju become one of the most popular tourist destinations in South Korea .

The city of Gyeongju was united with the nearby rural Gyeongju County in 1995 and is now an urban & rural complex . It is similar to 53 other small- and medium-sized cities with a population under 300 ,000 people in South Korea . As well as its rich historical heritage , Gyeongju today is affected by the economic , demographic , and social trends that have shaped modern South Korean culture . Tourism remains the major economic driver , but manufacturing activities have developed due to its proximity to major industrial centers such as Ulsan and Pohang . Gyeongju is connected to the nationwide rail and highway networks , which facilitate industrial and tourist traffic .

= = History = =

The early history of Gyeongju is closely tied to that of the Silla kingdom , of which it was the capital . While being capital of Silla , Gyeongju was called Seorabeol . Gyeongju first enters non-Korean records as Saro-guk , during the Samhan period in the early Common Era . Korean records , probably based on the dynastic chronicles of Silla , record that Saro-guk was established in 57 BCE , when six small villages in the Gyeongju area united under Bak Hyeokgeose . As the kingdom expanded , it changed its name to Silla . During the Silla period , the city was called " Seorabeol " (lit . Capital) , " Gyerim " (lit . Rooster 's forest) or " Geumseong " (lit . City of Gold) .

After the unification of the peninsula up to Taedong River in 668 AD , Gyeongju became the center of Korean political and cultural life . The city was home to the Silla court and the great majority of the kingdom 's elite . Its prosperity became legendary , and was reported as far away as Persia according to the 9th century book , The Book of Roads and Kingdoms . Records of Samguk Yusa give the city 's population in its peak period as 178 ,936 households , suggesting that the total population was almost one million . Many of Gyeongju 's most famous sites date from this Unified Silla period , which ended in the late 9th century by Goryeo (918 & 1392) .

In 940 , the founder of Goryeo , King Taejo , changed the city 's name to " Gyeongju " , which literally means " Congratulatory district " . In 987 , as Goryeo adopted a system of having three additional capitals in politically important provinces outside Gaegyeong (nowadays Kaesong) , Gyeongju was designated as " Donggyeong " (" East Capital ") . However , that title was removed in 1012 , the 3rd year of King Hyeonjong , due to political rivalries at that time , though Gyeongju was later made the seat of Yeongnam Province . It had jurisdiction over a wide area , including much of east & central Yeongnam , although this area was greatly reduced in the 13th century . Under the subsequent Joseon (1392 & 1910) dynasties , Gyeongju was no longer of national importance , but remained a regional center . In 1601 , the city ceased to be the provincial capital .

Over these centuries , the city 's relics suffered numerous assaults . In the 13th century , Mongol

forces destroyed a nine @-@ story wooden pagoda at Hwangnyongsa . During the Japanese invasions of Korea , the Gyeongju area became a heated battlefield , and Japanese forces burned the wooden structures at Bulguksa . Not all damage was due to invasions , however . In the early Joseon period , a great deal of damage was done to Buddhist sculptures on Namsan by Neo @-@ Confucian radicals , who hacked arms and heads off statuary .

In the 20th century , the city had remained relatively small , no longer ranking among the major cities of Korea . During the early 20th century , many archaeological excavations were conducted , particularly inside the tombs which had remained largely intact over the centuries . A museum , the forerunner of the present @-@ day Gyeongju National Museum , was inaugurated in 1915 to exhibit the excavated artifacts .

Gyeongju emerged as a railroad junction in the later years of the Japanese Occupation , as the Donghae Nambu Line and Jungang Line were established to prepare for Second Sino @-@ Japanese War and to exploit rich resources of the eastern Korean peninsula . Following liberation in 1945 , Korea was plunged into turmoil , and Gyeongju was no exception . Returnees from abroad were numerous ; a village for them was constructed in present @-@ day Dongcheon @-@ dong . In a period marked by widespread conflict and unrest , the Gyeongju area became particularly notorious for the level of guerrilla activity in the mountains .

Although the Korean War broke out in 1950 , most of Gyeongju was spared from the fighting , and remained under South Korean control throughout the conflict . However , for a brief time in late 1950 portions of the city stood on the front lines , as North Korean forces pushed the Pusan Perimeter southward from Pohang .

In the 1970s , Korea saw substantial industrial development , much of it centered in the Yeongnam region of which Gyeongju is a part . The POSCO steel mill in neighboring Pohang commenced operations in 1973 , and the chemical manufacturing complex in Ulsan emerged in the same year . These developments helped to support the emergence of Gyeongju 's manufacturing sector .

= = Geography and climate = =

Gyeongju lies in the southeastern corner of North Gyeongsang Province , and is bounded by the metropolitan city of Ulsan on the south . Within the province , its neighbors include Pohang on the north , Cheongdo County on the southwest , and Yeongcheon on the northwest . Gyeongju is located about 50 kilometers (31 mi) north of Busan . To the east , it has no neighbor but the sea .

Most of Gyeongju lies in the Gyeongsang Basin , but a few areas of the city belong to the Pohang Basin , such as Eoil @-@ ri and Beomgok @-@ ri in Yangbuk @-@ myeon , and part of Cheonbuk @-@ myeon . The Gyeongsang Basin areas consist of Bulguksa intrusive rock penetrating layers of sedimentary rocks , mainly granite and porphyry . By contrast , the Pohang Basin areas are made up of stratum that formed in the Tertiary period of the Cenozoic era , which consist of igneous rock , aqueous rock , porphyry , sandstone , and tuff .

Low mountains are widespread throughout Gyeongju . The highest of these are the Taebaek Mountains , which run along the city 's western border . Gyeongju 's highest point , Munbok Mountain (???) , is 1 @,@ 015 meters (3 @,@ 330 ft) above sea level . This peak lies in Sannae @-@ myeon , on the border with Cheongdo . East of the Taebaek range , other western peaks such as Danseok Mountain lie within the Jusa subrange . The city 's eastern peaks , including Toham Mountain , belong to the Haean Mountains and Dongdae Mountains .

Gyeongju 's drainage patterns are shaped by these lines of mountains . The Dongdae Mountains divide a narrow foothills area on their east , and various internal river systems to the west . Most of the city 's interior is drained by the small Hyeongsan River , which flows north from Ulsan and meets the sea at Pohang Harbor . The Hyeongsan 's chief tributaries include the Bukcheon and Namcheon , which join it in Gyeongju Basin . The southwestern corner of Gyeongju , on the far side of the Taebaek range , drains into the Geumho River , which then flows into the Nakdong . A small area of the south , just west of the Dongdae range , drains into the Taehwa River , which flows into the Bay of Ulsan .

The Gyeongju coastline runs for 36 @.@ 1 kilometers (22 @.@ 4 mi) between Pohang in the

north and Ulsan in the south . There are no islands or large bays , only the small indentations made by the small streams flowing off the Dongdae ridgeline . Because of this , the city has no significant ports , though there are 12 small harbors . One such harbor in Gyeongju 's southeast corner is home to the Ulsan base of the National Maritime Police . This base is responsible for security over a wide area of South Korea 's east @-@ central coast .

= = = Climate = = =

Due to its coastal location , Gyeongju has a slightly milder and wetter climate than the more inland regions of Korea . In general , however , the city 's climate is typical of South Korea . It has hot summers and cool winters , with a monsoon season between late June and early August . As on the rest of Korea 's east coast , autumn typhoons are not uncommon . The average annual rainfall is 1 @, @ 091 millimeters (43 @. @ 0 in) , and the average annual high temperatures range from 8 @. @ 6 ? 31 @. @ 1 ° C (47 ? 88 ° F) .

Gyeongju 's historic city center lies on the banks of the Hyeongsan in Gyeongju Basin . This lowlying area has been subject to repeated flooding throughout recorded history , often as a result of typhoons . On average , chronicles report a major flood every 27 @. @ 9 years , beginning in the 1st century . Modern flood control mechanisms brought about a dramatic reduction in flooding in the later 20th century . The last major flood occurred in 1991 , when the Deokdong Lake reservoir overflowed due to Typhoon Gladys .

= = Government = =

The executive branch of the government is headed by a mayor and vice @-@ mayor . As in other South Korean cities and counties , the mayor is elected directly , while the vice @-@ mayor is appointed . As of 2010 , the mayor is Choi Yang @-@ sik , who was appointed to the position on July 1 , 2010 after winning the local election held on June 2 of the same year . He is Gyeongju 's fifth mayor to be directly elected , the sixth to preside over the city in its present form , and the 31st mayor since 1955 . Like most heads of government in the Yeongnam region , he is a member of the conservative Grand National Party .

The legislative branch consists of the Gyeongju City Council , with 21 members as of 2009 . The present City Council was formed from the merger of the old Gyeongju City Council with the Wolseong County Council in 1991 . Most subdivisions of Gyeongju elect a single member to represent them in the Council , but Angang @-@ eup is represented by two members because of its large population , and two of the representatives serve combined districts composed of two dong . Like the mayor , the council members were last elected in 2006 , except for a small number elected in more recent by @-@ elections .

The central administration is composed of a City Council committee , five departments , two subsidiary organs , a chamber (the auditor) , and six business offices . The five departments are the departments of Planning and Culture , Autonomous Administration , Industry and Environment , Construction and Public Works , and the National Enterprise Committee ; these oversee a total of 29 subdivisions . The two subsidiary organs are the Health Care Center and Agro @-@ technology Center ; these belong directly to the central administration and have a total of 4 subdivisions . In addition , there are 23 local administrative subdivisions . Each of these subdivisions has a local office with a small administrative staff . As of December 2008 , the city government employed 1 @, @ 462 people .

= = Subdivisions = =

The city is divided into 23 administrative districts : 4 eup , 8 myeon , and 11 dong . These are the standard subdivisions of cities and counties in South Korea . The dong or neighborhood units occupy the area of the city center , which was formerly occupied by Gyeongju @-@ eup . Eup are typically substantial villages , whereas myeon are more rural .

The city's boundaries and designation changed several times in the 20th century . From 1895 to 1955 , the area was known as Gyeongju @-@ gun (" Gyeongju County ") . In the first decades of the century , the city center was known as Gyeongju @-@ myeon , signifying a relatively rural rea . In 1931 , the downtown area was designated Gyeongju @-@ eup , in recognition of its increasingly urban nature . In 1955 , Gyeongju @-@ eup became Gyeongju @-@ si (" Gyeongju City ") , the same name as today , but with a much smaller area . The remainder of Gyeongju @-@ gun became " Wolseong County . " The county and city were reunited in 1995 , creating Gyeongju City as we know it today .

= = Demographics = =

When the Silla kingdom reached the peak of its development , Gyeongju was estimated to have a million residents , four times the city's population in 2008 . In recent years , Gyeongju has followed the same trends that have affected the rest of South Korea . Like the country as a whole , Gyeongju has seen its population age and the size of families shrink . For instance , the mean household size is 2 @. @ 8 people . Because this has fallen in recent years , there are more households in the city as of 2008 (105 @, @ 009) than there were in 2003 , even though the population has fallen .

Like most of South Korea's smaller cities , Gyeongju has seen a steady drop in population in recent years . From 2002 to 2008 , the city lost 16 @, @ 557 people . This is primarily due to the migration of workers seeking employment in the major South Korean cities . In 2007 , about 1 @, @ 975 more people moved away from the city each year than moved in . During the same period , births exceeded deaths by roughly 450 per year , a significant number but not enough to offset the losses due to migration .

Gyeongju has a small but growing population of non @-@ Koreans . In 2007 , there were 4 @, @ 671 foreigners living in Gyeongju . This number corresponds to 1 @. @ 73 % of the total population , more than double the figure from 2003 . The growth was largely in immigrants from other Asian countries , many of whom are employed in the automotive parts industry . Countries of origin whose numbers have risen include the Philippines , China , Taiwan , Indonesia , and Vietnam . The number of residents from Japan , the United States , and Canada fell significantly in the 2003 ? 2007 period .

= = = Dialect = = =

The city has a distinctive dialect which it shares with northern portions of Ulsan . This dialect is similar to the general Gyeongsang dialect , but retains distinctive features of its own . Some linguists have treated the distinctive characteristics of the Gyeongju dialect as vestiges of the Silla language . For instance , the contrast between the local dialect form " ??? " (sonaegi) and the standard " ??? " (sonagi , meaning " rainshower ") has been seen as reflecting the ancient phonemic character of the Silla language .

= = Culture and people = =

= = = Cultural properties = = =

Gyeongju is the main destination in South Korea for visitors interested in the cultural heritage of Silla and the architecture of the Joseon Dynasty (1392 ? 1910) . The city has 31 National Treasures , and Gyeongju National Museum houses 16 @, @ 333 artifacts . There are four broad categories of relics and historical sites : tumuli and their artifacts ; Buddhist sites and objects ; fortresses and palace sites ; and ancient architecture . Prehistoric remains including Mumun pottery have been excavated in central Gyeongju , in the Moa @-@ ri and Oya @-@ ri villages of the Cheonbuk @-@ myeon district , and in the Jukdong @-@ ri village of the Oedong @-@ eup district . Dolmens are found in several places , especially in Gangdong @-@ myeon and Moa @-@ ri .

Bronze Age relics found in Angye @-@ ri village of Gangdong @-@ myeon , Jukdong @-@ ri and Ipsil @-@ ri villages of Oedong @-@ eup and graveyards in the Joyang @-@ dong district represent the Samhan confederacy period of around the 1st century BC to the 3rd century AD .

There are 35 royal tombs and 155 tumuli in central Gyeongju , and 421 tumuli in the outskirts of the city . Silla burial mounds built after the period of the Three Kingdoms are found in central Gyeongju , including tumuli in the districts of Noseo @-@ dong , Nodong @-@ dong , Hwangnam @-@ dong , Hwango @-@ dong and Inwang @-@ dong . Western Gyeongju has the tomb of King Muyeol in Seoak @-@ dong , nearby tumuli in Chunghyo @-@ dong and the tomb of Kim Yu @-@ sin . The tombs of Queen Seondeok , King Sinmun , King Hyogong and King Sinmu are at the base of Namsan mountain while the tombs of King Heongang , King Jeonggang , King Gyeongmyeong and King Gyeongae are on the slopes of the mountain . In addition to the tombs , tumuli have been found surrounding Namsan mountain and in the western part of Geumgang mountain . Artifacts excavated from the tombs of Geumgwanchong (gold crown tomb) , Seobongchong (western phoenix tomb) , Cheonmachong (heavenly horse tomb) and northern and southern parts of Tomb No. 98 are good examples of Silla culture .

= = = Notable people = = =

Gyeongju has produced notable individuals throughout its history . As the capital of Silla , Gyeongju was a center of culture in its heyday . Notable Gyeongju residents in the Silla period included most of the kingdom 's leading figures , not only rulers but scholars such as Seol Chong and Choe Chi @-@ won , and generals like Kim Yusin , the leader of the Hwarang warriors . The city continued to contribute to traditional Korean thought in subsequent dynasties . Relatives of Choe Chi @-@ won such as Choe Eon @-@ wui and Choe Hang played an important role in establishing the structures of early Goryeo . In the Joseon period , Gyeongju joined the rest of Gyeongsang in becoming a hotbed of the conservative Sarim faction . Notable Gyeongju members of this faction included the 15th century intellectual Yi Eon @-@ jeok . He has been enshrined in the Oksan Seowon since 1572 . In modern times , the city produced writers such as Kim Dong @-@ ni and Park Mok @-@ wol , both of whom did a great deal to popularize the region 's culture , as well as Choe Jun , a wealthy businessman who established the Yeungnam University Foundation .

Some Korean family clans trace their origins to Gyeongju , often to the ruling elites of Silla . For example , the Gyeongju Kim clan claims descent from the rulers of later Silla . The Gyeongju Park and Gyeongju Seok clans trace their ancestry to Silla 's earlier ruling families . These three royal clans played a strong role in preserving the historical precincts of Gyeongju into modern times . The Gyeongju Choe and Lee clans also trace their ancestry to the Silla elites . Prominent members of the Gyeongju Lee clan include Goryeo period scholar Yi Je @-@ hyeon , and Joseon period scholars Yi Hwang and Yi Hang @-@ bok . A contemporary notable figure from the Gyeongju Lee clan is Lee Byung @-@ chull , the founder of Samsung Group . However , not all Gyeongju clans date to the Silla period ; for instance , the Gyeongju Bing clan was founded in the early Joseon Dynasty .

= = = Religion = = =

The city remains an important centre of Korean Buddhism . East of the downtown area lies Bulguksa , one of South Korea 's largest Buddhist temples ; nearby is Seokguram , a famed Buddhist shrine . Traditional prayer locations are found on mountains throughout Gyeongju . Such mountains include Namsan near the city center , Danseok @-@ san and Obong @-@ san in the west , and the low peak of Hyeong @-@ san on the Gyeongju @-@ Pohang border . Namsan in particular is often referred to as " the sacred mountain " due to the Buddhist shrines and statues which cover its slopes . In addition , Gyeongju is the birthplace of Cheondoism , an indigenous religion to Korea based on Korean shamanism , Taoism and Korean Buddhism , with elements drawn from Christianity . The religion has been evolved from Donghak (lit . East learning) disciplines established by Choe Je @-@ u . His birthplace of Yongdamjeong , located in Hyeongok

@-@ myeon , is regarded as a sacred place to followers of Cheondogyo .

= = = Cuisine = = =

The cuisine of Gyeongju is generally typical of the cuisine elsewhere in Gyeongsang province : spicy and salty . However , it has distinctive tastes according to region and several local specialties known nationwide . The most famous of these is " Gyeongju bread " or " Hwangnam bread " , a red @-@ bean pastry first baked in 1939 and now sold throughout the country . Chalboribbang , made with locally produced glutinous barley , is also a pastry with a filling of red bean paste . Local specialties with a somewhat longer pedigree include beopju , a traditional Korean liquor produced by the Gyeongju Choe in Gyo @-@ dong . The brewing skill and distill master were designated as Important Intangible Cultural Properties by South Korea government .

Other local specialties include ssambap , haejangguk , and muk . Ssambap refers to a rice dish served with vegetable leaves , various banchan (small side dishes) and condiments such as gochujang (chili pepper paste) or ssamjang (a mixture of soybean paste and gochujang) to wrap them together . Most ssambap restaurants in Gyeongju are gathered in the area of Daenuengwon or Grand Tumuli Park . Haejangguk is a kind of soup eaten as a hangover cure , and means " soup to chase a hangover " . A street dedicated to haejangguk is located near Gyeongju National Museum , where 20 haejangguk restaurants are gathered to serve the Gyeongju @-@ style haejangguk . The soup is made by boiling soybean sprout , sliced memilmuk (buckwheat starch jelly) , sour kimchi (pickled vegetables) and gulfweed in a clear broth of dried anchovy and Alaska pollack .

The east district of Gyeongju , Gampo @-@ eup town , is adjacent to the sea , so fresh seafood and jeotgal (fermented salted seafood) are abundant . There are over 240 seafood restaurants in Gampo Harbor offering various dishes made with seafood caught in the sea , such as hoe (raw fish dishes) , jeonboktang (an abalone soup) , grilled seafood and others .

= = Sports = =

As of 2007 , Gyeongju city had two stadiums , two gymnasiums , two tennis courts , one swimming pool and others as public sport facilities as well as various registered private sports venues . Many of public sport facilities are located in Hwangseong Park with an area of 1 @,@ 022 @,@ 350 m2 (11 @,@ 004 @,@ 500 sq ft) including a luxuriant pine trees forest . The site was originally the location of the artificial forest of Doksan which was established for feng shui purposes during the Silla period . It was also used as a training ground for hwarang warriors and hunting spot for Silla kings , and was reported to be King Jinpyeong 's favorite location . Since 1975 , Hwangseong Park has been designated as " city neighborhood park " and currently consists of multi @-@ purposed Gyeongju Public Stadium , Football Park with 7 football fields and one futsal field , and one gymnasium , as well as Horimjang field for gukgung or Korean traditional archery and a ssireum wrestling ring . In addition , it contains a gateball field , an inline skating rink , jogging courses , and cycling roads . The Gyeongju Public Stadium was completed in 1982 and can accommodate 20 @,@ 000 people at capacity .

Angang Field Hockey Stadium , located in the district of Angang @-@ eup , is home to Gyeongju City Hockey , which is one of four professional women 's field hockey teams in South Korea . The team was formed in 1994 , and is governed by the Sport and Youth Division of Gyeongju City . Although not an initial successful team , Gyeongju City Hockey won the first trophies both at National Division Hockey Championships and National Sports Festival in 2000 . In 2002 , Gyeongju City Hockey took a first prize and three second prizes , and in 2008 , the team won the first prize at the 51st National Division Hockey Championships .

The city plays host to two annual marathon events . The Gyeongju International Marathon , held in October , garners elite level competition while the larger Gyeongju Cherry Blossom Marathon caters more for amateur fun runners . The Cherry Blossom Marathon has been held each year in Gyeongju since 1992 , usually in April , to improve relations with Japan (a country with a long history of marathon running) . The race , mainly sponsored by Gyeongju city and the district , attracted 13

@, @ 600 participants in 2009 including about 1 @, @ 600 foreigners .

= = Economy = =

The economy of Gyeongju is more diverse than the city 's image as a tourist haven would suggest . Although tourism is important to the economy , most residents work in other fields . Over 27 @, @ 000 are employed in manufacturing compared to roughly 13 @, @ 500 in the hospitality industry . The number involved in tourism has remained constant over recent years , while the manufacturing sector added about 6 @, @ 000 jobs from 1999 to 2003 . The manufacturing sector is closely tied to nearby cities , utilizing Gyeongju 's transit links with Ulsan , Pohang , and Daegu . As in Ulsan and Daegu the automotive parts industry plays an important role . Of the 1 @, @ 221 businesses incorporated in Gyeongju almost a third are involved in auto @-@ parts manufacture .

Fishing takes place in coastal towns , especially in Gampo @-@ eup in the city 's northeast , with 436 registered fishing craft in the city . Fishing industry in Gyeongju is generally in a declined status due to relatively inconvenient transport conditions and lacks of subordinate facilities . Much of the catch from these boats goes direct from the harbor to Gyeongju 's many seafood restaurants . Mainly , sauries , anchovies , rays are harvested and a small number of abalone and wakame farming takes place . Local specialties include myeolchijeot (fermented anchovy) , abalone , wakame , and squid .

Agriculture is still important , particularly in the outlying regions of Gyeongju . According to the 2006 statistical yearbook of Gyeongju , rice fields occupy an area of 169 @. @ 57 km² (65 @. @ 47 sq mi) , which is 70 % of the total cultivated acreage of 24 @, @ 359 km² (9 @, @ 405 sq mi) . The remaining 74 @. @ 02 km² (28 @. @ 58 sq mi) consists of fields under other crops and farmsteads . Crop production is centered in the fertile river basins near the Hyeongsan River . The main crops are rice , barley , beans and corn . Vegetables such as daikon and napa cabbage and fruits are also important crops . Apples are mainly produced in the districts of Geoncheon @-@ eup , Gangdong @-@ myeon and Cheonbuk @-@ myeon and Korean pear are cultivated in Geoncheon @-@ eup and Angang @-@ eup . The city plays a leading role in the domestic production of beef and mushrooms . Button mushrooms harvested in Geoncheon @-@ eup are canned and exported . The cultivated acreage and the number of households engaging in agriculture is however declining .

A small amount of quarrying activity takes place in the city , with 46 active mines and quarries in Gyeongju . Most are engaged in the extraction of kaolin , fluorspar and Agalmatolite and Kaolin is exported .

As the capital of Silla , commerce and trading in Gyeongju developed early on . Samguk Sagi has records on the establishment of Gyeongdosi (capital area market) in March , 490 during King Soji 's reign , and Dongsi (East Market) in 509 , during King Jijeung 's reign . In the 1830s , Gyeongju had five @-@ day markets which remained very active until the late 1920s . Due to its size Gyeongju Bunaegang (Gyeongju village market) was referred to as one of the two leading markets in the Yeongnam area , along with Daegu Bunaegang . Transportation developed in the late period of the Japanese occupation , as the Jungang Line and the Daegu Line and the connecting route between Pohang and the northwestern part of Japan were set up , leading to increasing population and developing commerce . After the 1960s , traditional periodic markets gradually transformed into regular markets as the city was flourishing . In periodic markets , agricultural and marine products , industrial products , living necessities , wild edible greens , herbs , and cattle are mainly traded . As of 2006 , Gyeongju had eight regular markets , nine periodic markets and the Gyeongju department store . Traditional periodic markets declined and have become token affairs these days .

= = = Tourism = = =

Gyeongju is a major tourist destination for South Koreans as well as foreign visitors . It boasts the 1000 years of Silla heritage with vast number of ancient ruins and archaeological sites found throughout the city , which help to attract 6 million visiting tourists including 750 @, @ 000 foreigners per year . The city government has parlayed its historic status into a basis for other tourism @-@

related developments such as conferences , festivals , and resorts .

Many Silla sites are located in Gyeongju National Park such as the Royal Tomb Complex , the Cheomseongdae observatory that is one of the oldest surviving astronomical observatories in East Asia , the Anapji royal pond garden , and the Gyerim forest . Gyeongju National Museum hosts many important artifacts and national treasures that have been excavated from sites within the city and surrounding areas .

Much of Gyeongju 's heritage are related to the Silla kingdom 's patronage of Buddhism . The grotto of Seokguram and the temple of Bulguksa were the first Korean sites to be included on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1995 . In addition , the ruins of the old Hwangnyongsa temple , said to have been Korean 's largest , are preserved on the slopes of Toham Mountain . Various Silla @-@ era stone carvings of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are found on mountainsides throughout the city , particularly on Namsan .

A significant portion of Gyeongju 's tourist traffic is due to the city 's promotion of itself as a site for various festivals , conferences , and competitions . Every year since 1962 , the Silla cultural festival has been held in October to celebrate and honour the dynasty 's history and culture . It is one of the major festivals of Korea . It features athletic events , folk games , music , dance , literary contests and Buddhist religious ceremonies . Other festivals include the Cherry Blossom Marathon in April , the Korean Traditional Liquor and Cake festival in March , and memorial ceremonies for the founders of the Silla Dynasty and General Kim Yu @-@ sin .

There were 15 hotels including Hilton Hotel , Gyeongju Chosun Hotel , and 276 lodging facilities , and 2 @,@ 817 restaurants in Gyeongju in 2006 .

= = Media = =

Gyeongju has two main local newspapers ; the Gyeongju Sinmun and the Seorabeol Sinmun . Both are weekly newspapers providing news via online as well and their headquarters are located in the neighborhood of Dongcheon @-@ dong . The Gyeongju Sinmun was founded in 1989 and provides various news and critics on anything concerning Gyeongju . Its online newspaper , Digital Gyeongju Sinmun opened in December , 2000 to provide live local news out of the limit as a weekly newspaper and to establish mutual information exchanges from Gyeongju locals . In 2001 , Gyeongju Sinmun started to present Gyeongju Citizen Awards to people who try to develop the local industry and economy , culture and education , and welfare service . Since 2003 , the Wolseong Nuclear Power Plant headquarter co @-@ hosts the awards with Gyeongju Sinmun .

The Seorabeol Sinmun was established in 1993 , however , from November 15 , 2000 to November 10 , 2005 , its publication was stopped for financial difficulties after the 1997 Asian economic crisis had left a strong impact on the nationwide economy . Since 2006 , Seorabeol Sinmun presents Serabeol Awards to people having devoured to develop Gyeongju .

Several major feature films have been filmed in the city , including Kick the Moon , On the Occasion of Remembering the Turning Gate , Taegukgi , Chwhiwaseon and others . In 2009 , the filming of the Queen Seondeok , a popular MBC TV series took place in a studio at Silla Millennium Park located in Bomun Lake Resort .

= = Education = =

Gyeongju is strongly associated with the education tradition of Hwarangdo (" Way of the Flower of Young Men ") which was established and flourished during the Silla period . It is a military and philosophical code that offered the basis of training to Hwarang , a military cadet of youths from the aristocratic class . The training equally emphasized practicing academic and martial arts based on Buddhism and patriotism . A number of Silla 's greatest generals and military leaders such as Kim Yu @-@ sin were Hwarang who played a central role in Silla unification of the Korean peninsula . As Silla was integrated into the next ruling dynasty , Goryeo , the system declined and was officially disbanded in the Joseon dynasty . However , the spirit and discipline were revived in the second half of the 20th century as a form of Korean martial arts with the same name .

Formal education has a longer history in Gyeongju than anywhere else in South Korea . The Gukhak , or national academy , was established here in 682 , at the beginning of the Unified Silla period . Its curriculum focused on the Confucian classics for local officials . After the fall of Silla in the 10th century , the Gukhak closed . However , due to Gyeongju 's role as a provincial center under the Goryeo and early Joseon dynasties , the city was home to state @-@ sponsored provincial schools (hyanggyo) under both dynasties such as Gyeongju Hyanggyo . During the later Joseon dynasty there were several seowon , or private Confucian academies , were set up in the city such as Oksan Seowon and Seoak Seowon .

The education system of Gyeongju is the same as elsewhere in the country . Schooling begins with preschools ; there are 65 in the city . This is followed by six years in elementary schools ; Gyeongju has 46 . Subsequently students pass through three years of middle school . There are 19 middle schools in Gyeongju . High school education , which lasts for three years , is not compulsory , but most students attend and graduate from high school . Gyeongju is home to 21 high schools , of which 11 provide specialized technical training . At each of these levels , there is a mix of public and private institutions . All are overseen by the Gyeongju bureau of North Gyeongsang 's Provincial Office of Education . Gyeongju is home to a school for the mentally disabled , which provides education to students from preschool to adult age .

Gyeongju is home to four institutions of tertiary education . Sorabol College is a technical college in the district of Chunghyo @-@ dong that offers majors specializing in tourism , leisure , health care and cosmetic treatments .

Each of Gyeongju 's three universities reflects the city 's unique role . Dongguk and Uiduk universities are Buddhist institutions , reflecting that religion 's link to the city . Gyeongju University , formerly Korea Tourism University , is strongly focused on tourism , reflecting its importance in the region .

= = Infrastructure = =

= = = Healthcare = = =

According to the 2008 yearbook of Gyeongju , the total number of medical institutions was 224 with 3 @, @ 345 beds , including two general hospitals , thirteen hospitals , 109 clinics , five nursing homes , forty two dental hospitals , two Korean traditional medicine hospitals and 50 Korean traditional medicine clinics . There are also twenty eight medical institutions related to Gyeongju Health Center affiliated to the Gyeongju City government .

The two general hospitals are associated with two major universities in Gyeongju and nearby Daegu . One is the Dongguk University Gyeongju Hospital , located in the district of Seokjang @-@ dong , which is affiliated with Dongguk University Medical School and Center . The Gyeongju Hospital was opened in a seven @-@ story building in 1991 to provide Gyeongju locals with a quality medical service and train medical specialists in the region . After various renovations the hospital currently has 24 departments including a radiation oncology center and 438 beds . It is also assigned as a teaching and learning hospital and in partnership with Dongguk University Oriental Hospital . The other general hospital is a branch of Keimyung University , Dongsan Medical Hospital in Daegu . It is the successor of Gyeongju Christianity Hospital founded in 1962 , and was reborn as the current general hospital in 1991 . The Gyeongju Dongsan Hospital is located in the district of Seobu @-@ dong and has 12 departments in a three @-@ story building .

= = = Utilities = = =

Water supply and sewage disposal are municipal services which are respectively handled by the Water Supply Office and Water Quality and Environment Office . Water comes from the Hyeongsan River , the multi @-@ purpose Deokdong Dam and several streams . The city is divided into seven water districts , with eight filtration plants and seven sewage treatment plants . One of the sewage

treatment plants , Angang Sewage Disposal Plant began operating in April 2005 by the co @-@ investment of the Government of North Gyeongsang and Gyeongju City with a fund of 44 @, @ 300 @, @ 000 @, @ 000 won to install facilities to prevent the pollution of the Hyeongsan River , which is a main water source for Gyeongju and Pohang residents . The plant is located on a spacious site with 39 @, @ 000 m2 (420 @, @ 000 sq ft) in Homyeong @-@ ri , Gangdong @-@ myeon in Gyeongju where nature friendly facilities provide recreational venues for the locals . Through 56 @. @ 1 km (34 @. @ 9 mi) of sewer pipes and 14 pumping stations , the plant has a capacity of 18 @, @ 000 tonnes of domestic sewage per day that comes from Angang @-@ eup , and Gangdong @-@ myeon . The facilities have high @-@ powered disposal equipment developed by related industrial companies to maintain the discharged water at the first or second degree in quality , so that it is used as river maintenance flow and agricultural water in case a drought occurs .

The city had managed its own recycling service , but privatized it since July 1 , 2009 .

Other utilities are provided by private entities or South Korean government @-@ owned companies . Seorabeol City Gas , an affiliate of GS Group , provides gas to the Gyeongju residents , while , electrical power is supplied by the public enterprises , Korea Hydro & Nuclear Power via the Wolseong Nuclear Power Plant . The plant is known for the only nuclear power plant operating PHWRs (Pressurized Heavy Water Reactor) in South Korea and supplies about 5 % of South Korea 's electricity . The owner , Korea Hydro & Nuclear Power began to build the Wolseong 1 in the districts of Yangnam @-@ myeon , Yangbuk @-@ myeon and Gampo @-@ eup in 1976 . Since 1983 , the power plant has been providing commercial service and operating with the PHWRs that has a capacity of 678 @, @ 000 kW . As the construction of each Wolseong 2 , 3 and 4 with a capacity of 70 @, @ 000 kW were completed respectively in 1997 , 1998 and 1999 , Wolseong Nuclear Power plant site has been successfully operating the four PHWRs plants . New project , Sinwolseong No. 1 and No. 2 are currently under construction which is estimated to be completed until 2011 ? 12 .

= = = Transportation = = =

The city lies at the junction of two minor lines operated by the Korean National Railroad . The Jungang Line runs from Seoul to Gyeongju and carries trains from the Daegu Line , which originates in Dongdaegu . In Gyeongju , the Jungang line connects to the Donghae Nambu Line which runs between Pohang and Busan . The Gyeongbu Expressway , which runs from Seoul to Busan , passes through Gyeongju , and Provincial highway 68 , aided by the South Korean government , connects Seochon in the South Chungcheong province to Gyeongju . Additionally national highways such as Route 4 , 7 , 14 , 20 , 28 , 31 , and 35 crisscross the city . Since the city is a popular tourist destination , nonstop bus services are available from most major cities in South Korea .

High @-@ speed rail does not serve central Gyeongju , but the KTX Gyeongbu Line stops at the nearby Singyeongju Station , in Geoncheon @-@ eup , west of Gyeongju 's city center .

= = Sister cities = =

Iksan , North Jeolla , South Korea (1998)

Nara , Nara , Japan (1970)

Obama , Fukui , Japan (1977)

Pompeii , Campania , Italy (1985)

Versailles , Île @-@ de @-@ France , France (1987)

Xi 'an , Shaanxi , China (1994)

Hu? , Th?a Thiên ? Hu? , Vietnam (2007)