

성명	Janet Flora Hilts
과제명	Misleading promotions of Insa-dong on websites
주제	Tourism in Seoul
	Official tourism sites, http://m.visitseoul.net/ , http://english.visitkorea.or.kr/ , and http://english.jongno.go.kr/ , tend not to represent Insa-dong accurately, which can lead to misunderstandings or mistrust of official tourist sites by tourists who read them.

Although some aspects of the Insa-dong pages on these sites are reasonable, the texts exaggerative and overemphasise the ‘traditional’ aspect of the area. Some examples: “One of Seoul’s most visited places among foreign travelers, Insa-dong is often regarded as a living museum in which modern and tradition coexist in a harmonious manner.”

(<http://english.jongno.go.kr/English.do?menuId=6031&menuNo=6031>); “ There are traditional performances and exhibits as well. Insa-dong is especially popular with foreign tourists. This is where they can experience and see traditional Korean culture firsthand, and also purchase pieces of fine art. On the street, you can eat Korean taffy and traditional pajeon (Korean pancake), and see many foreigners lost in all the joyous festivities of the street.”

(http://english.visitkorea.or.kr/enu/SI/SI_EN_3_1_1_1.jsp?cid=264354); “Nowhere exudes more local and traditional charm than Insa-dong, a quaint neighbourhood in the centre of Seoul that transports visitors back to a time when women wore hanbok and men rode horses. With its wooden tea houses, boutique galleries and street vendors selling traditional snacks, a stroll through Insadong is mandatory for all visitors” (http://m.visitseoul.net/en/m/article/article.do?_method=view&art_id=506).

Anyone who has visited Insa-dong recently might take issue with it being called “a living museum” or where one can “experience and see traditional Korean culture firsthand” or a place “that transports visitors back to a time when women wore hanbok and men rode horses.” Insa-dong has some traditional aspects—some great traditionally-inspired craftspeople's wares from jewellery to handbags to pottery are sold, some hanok are still standing in the side alleys, there are some ‘traditional’ tea rooms, and so on. The issue with the websites is overstatement. Where can one experience traditional culture first hand? I have been to Insadong many times and have not seen many traditional culture hands-on experience events, besides drinking tea or watching snacks being made. Certainly, I never felt transported back to the Joseon era (although I always do at some other sites in Korea, e.g.

선교장). With concrete buildings, coffee shops, cosmetic shops and souvenir shops (as well as super

art galleries exhibiting contemporary art) just as present as more 'traditional' features, the quotes above seem misleading. This does not mean Insa-dong is bad because it is not that traditional or authentic. The problem is overemphasising of the 'traditional' in how it is described and marketed to foreign tourists.

If one reads reviews on <http://www.tripadvisor.com/>, the positive reviews emphasise shopping, whereas the poorer reviews emphasis disappointment or confusion at the area not being authentic, traditional, or very interesting except for buying souvenirs. Perhaps the disappointment comes from expectations formed from reading exaggerated tourism promotions, such as in the sites I mention above.

Some examples of some very recent reviews with some critiques: "Good to see however expected more. There were too many tourist target souvenir shops and kids running around everywhere. They did have nice spots to relax and eat." "Trashy junk...gotta do it. Don't expect much...but it is a nice stroll through the trinket shops and hawkers. Cafés and coffee shops abound...look down the side alleys for some awesome food options for quite cheap." "Attractive, inauthentic, and overpriced. I really struggled with how to rate this place. There are so many things I love about it, and other things that are very "meh" about it... Bottom line: It's attractive but in a very inauthentic way. It seems kind of like going to Epcot [part of Walt Disney World in Florida, USA] where everything is made to mirror a certain culture, yet doesn't quite feel like you're actually there. Most of the visitors are tourists, and most of the shopkeepers will converse with you in English. Is it a must see? Yes. Is it a place you'll want to visit often? Probably not." Taken from:

http://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g294197-d592506-Reviews-Inсадong-Seoul.html

개선방안

It would be better if Insa-dong were described more authentically on official tourist sites. Exaggeration can backfire, especially when written in English, and special care needs to be taken not to do this on English websites. To do this, but not have the place sound terrible or dull (which Insa-dong isn't), it is important to find out what foreign tourists like and dislike about the area before trying to market or introduce it to other tourists. This is because what many Koreans think foreign tourists like and dislike and what foreign tourists actually like and dislike is often different. There are various ways to do this, surveys and so on. Since I'm not in marketing, I am not familiar the best ways. The key point is, it seems that if English speaking foreign tourists, or foreign residents, were to have played a significant role helping to draft the texts, the exaggerations would not likely have been published.

외국사례

N/a