

**The Archives of
Saemaul Undong (New Community Movement)
(Republic of Korea)**

2012-61

1. Summary

The Archives of Saemaul Undong (literally, New Community Movement or New Village Movement) includes presidential speeches, government papers, village documents, letters, manuals, photographs and video clips related to Saemaul Undong conducted from 1970 to 1979 in the Republic of Korea.

South Korea today is a benchmarking model for many developing countries and is the only country in the world that has achieved rapid economic growth and democratization in the wake of colonial rule and war. Saemaul Undong marked the first step in this remarkable journey. During 1970–1979, Korea’s average farm household income jumped from \$825 to \$4,602, setting a milestone in poverty reduction. The spirit of “Diligence, Self-help and Cooperation” spread widely among the rural population. The movement laid the foundation for Korea to grow into a major economy from one of the world’s poorest countries. The experience of the Korean people in this process is a valuable asset for humankind.

Between 1970 and 2011, some 53,000 public officials and village leaders from 129 nations visited Korea to learn about Saemaul Undong. Archival materials included in this nomination have been used to inform programs emulating the movement in 157 villages in 18 countries.

2. Nominator

2-1 Name of nominator (person or organization)

Korea Saemaul Undong Center

2-2 Relationship to the nominated documentary heritage

The owner and managing organization of the nominated archives

2-3 Contact person(s) (to provide information on nomination)

LIM Jong-wan, Team Manager, Korea Saemaul Undong Center

2-4 Contact details

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3. Identity and description of the documentary heritage

3-1 Name and identification details of the items being nominated

Archives of Saemaul Undong

- 1) Documentary materials produced by the Office of the President
- 2) Documentary materials produced by central and local administrative agencies
- 3) Documentary materials on Saemaul Undong from individual villages
- 4) Documentary materials on success stories of Saemaul leaders and their letters
- 5) Letters from citizens, organizations and business corporations, and donation certificates
- 6) Documentary materials produced by Saemaul Undong Training Institute

3-2 Catalogue or registration details

The contents of the document are as described below:

(1) Documentary materials produced by the Office of the President

The presidential office set up a separate section responsible for Saemaul Undong, where documents were produced from 1970 to 1979. The documents include handwritten manuscripts and speeches of the late President Park Chung Hee, in which he explained the vision, purpose and spirit of the movement prospectuses providing general plans and their implementation processes, and reports, bearing late President Park's signature. These documents clearly show late President Park's firm resolve to pursue the development of rural villages and the overall implementation procedures of the movement. A total of 288 documents are preserved at the National Archives of Korea and the Local Government Officials Development Institute (LOGODI).

(2) Documentary materials produced by central and local administrative agencies

In compliance with related laws and support measures enacted by the central government, local administrative offices produced documents necessary for implementation of the movement within their respective roles and spheres of responsibility. These documents show the government organizations, their functions and roles in the process of conducting the movement. In particular, the Ministry of Public Information and the National Film Production Center produced films and photographic albums for public relations and education in support of implementation of the movement. These visual materials show people who participated in the movement and document the physical transformation of rural villages. The National Archives of Korea keeps 14,199 documentary items in this category.

(3) Documentary materials on Saemaul Undong from individual villages

Individual villages also produced documents related to Saemaul Undong. These include village regulations, minutes of community meetings, prospectuses, worksheets, budget reports, and result reports, many of them handwritten, and preserved as archival material. The community meeting minutes record in detail the dates and times of meetings, project names, agenda of discussions, problems and countermeasures, and work results. They offer glimpses into how the movement was conducted in each village. Korea Saemaul Undong Center keeps 750 such documents.

(4) Documentary materials on success stories of Saemaul leaders and their letters

Success stories of Saemaul leaders vividly relate how Saemaul leaders overcame hardships to lead the movement to success. Their stories spread to other villages and established success models. Letters of Saemaul leaders to the president of Saemaul Undong Training Institute reveal the difficulties they faced and how they resolved their problems thanks to advice from the president of the institute. Korea Saemaul Undong Center keeps 4,042 documents in this category.

(5) Letters from citizens, organizations and business corporations, and donation certificates

Many citizens, organizations and business corporations sent letters, cash donations and goods to the Office of the President and other government agencies to contribute to the movement, conveying wishes that the movement would help the nation overcome poverty. The presidential office replied to each letter, contributing to active communication between the government and the public while the movement was underway. The National Archives of Korea keeps 160 documents in this category.

(6) Documentary materials produced by Saemaul Undong Training Institute

Saemaul Undong Training Institute was the primary agency responsible for education of Saemaul leaders and production of training materials. Training at this institute emphasized the spirit of diligence, self-help and cooperation through group discussion, field trips and farm skills training. Documentary materials in this category include textbook manuscripts, soundslide presentations on success stories, tape recordings of lectures, lists of training course participants, activity records, group discussion charts, and verbal testimonials from the 1970s. The institute keeps 2,645 items of these materials.

3-3 Visual documentation

The National Archives of Korea and Korea Saemaul Undong Center have continued to digitize papers, manuscripts, meeting minutes, photographs and audiovisual clips to ensure their proper preservation. They have created a digital database for public access to these resources.

3-4 History/provenance

The Archives of Saemaul Undong consists of documentary materials produced between 1970 and 1979, including late President Park Chung Hee's instruction at a conference of provincial mayors and governors, held on April 22, 1970, to launch a grassroots community development to modernize rural villages and improve the livelihoods of rural populations.

The documentary materials were produced by the Office of the President, central and local administrative agencies, leaders and residents of villages, and Saemaul Undong Training Institute. Materials produced by government organizations are housed at the National Archives of Korea, and those produced by the Saemaul Undong Training Institute are kept at Korea Saemaul Undong Center in Seoul.

Korea Saemaul Undong Center, founded in 1980 through private initiative, has collected materials from individuals and village offices that are prone to damage or loss. In 2011, the documentary materials related to Saemaul Undong in the possession of Korean Saemaul Undong Center were named a "state-designated documentary asset" and placed under special management and preservation by the government.

3-5 Bibliography

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- Han Do-hyun. 2011. "The Experience of Saemaul Leaders during the Saemaul Movement in the 1970s: Focusing on the Lives of the Male Leaders." Paper presented in the conference *History as Social Process: Unconventional Historiographies of Korea*. Leiden University, The Netherlands.
- Perry, Elizabeth J. 2011. "From Mass Campaigns to Managed Campaigns: 'Constructing a New Socialist Countryside.'" In *Mao's Invisible Hand: The Political Foundations of Adaptive Governance in China*. Sebastian Heilmann and Elizabeth J. Perry (eds). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. 30-61.
- Looney, Kristen E. 2012. "The Rural Developmental State: Modernization Campaigns and Peasant Politics in China, Taiwan and South Korea." Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Government,

Harvard University.

4. Legal Information

4-1 Owner of the documentary heritage (name and contact details)

- 1) Government of the Republic of Korea
Daejeon Government Complex Building 2
189 Cheongsa-ro, Seo-gu, Daejeon 302-701 Republic of Korea
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4-2 Custodian of the documentary heritage (name and contact details if different from the owner)

- 1) Government of the Republic of Korea (National Archives of Korea)
- 2) Korea Saemaul Undong Center
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Email president@saemaul.com

4-3 Legal status

All legal and administrative responsibilities for the preservation of the Archives of Saemaul Undong belong to the owners and custodians listed above.

4-4 Accessibility

The Archives of Saemaul Undong can be accessed by Koreans and non-Koreans alike through the websites of the abovementioned institutions.

Both institutions are giving utmost attention to the scientific preservation and management of these documentary materials. For easier access to the resources, they have continued digitization of the materials and improved search systems so the materials can be easily utilized by everyone through the Internet.

4-5 Copyright status

The copyright of the Archives of Saemaul Undong belongs to the government of the Republic of Korea and Korea Saemaul Undong Center. They will jointly assume all copyright-related responsibilities pertaining to the Archives' inscription on the UNESCO Memory of the World Register.

5. Assessment against the selection criteria

5-1 Authenticity

The Archives of Saemaul Undong bears witness to a crucial phase in Korea's modernization, elucidating how the Korean government and people successfully cooperated to achieve economic transformation and poverty reduction, improvement of living conditions, scientific farming, spiritual revolution, leadership development, and increase in women's social participation. Related documentary materials produced by central and local government offices are wholly preserved at the National Archives of Korea, while those produced by Saemaul Undong Training Institute and local Saemaul leaders and villagers have been collected by Korea Saemaul Undong Center to be preserved together. These are all original materials and primary sources that show how the movement was planned and carried out and how it transformed rural villages in Korea.

5-2 World significance

Saemaul Undong is an example of successful collaboration between the public and private sectors through an organic connection of enthusiastic participation of farmers and government support. Through the movement the Republic of Korea achieved poverty reduction in rural areas, scientific farming, improvement in women's status and modernization of rural villages in a short time. The movement was undertaken through democratic procedures; regular meetings were convened with the participation of the entire village, thereby advancing democracy in local villages. In particular, a woman leader was elected through a democratic process in each of some 34,000 villages across the country, which encouraged women's social participation and contributed to the leadership development of women. Saemaul Undong is drawing attention from the international community as a successful case in which rural problems were comprehensively resolved to accelerate national development. The movement laid the foundation for Korea to grow into a major economy from one of the world's poorest countries, a remarkable achievement in human history.

Documentary materials of Saemaul Undong have been useful resources for international development agencies, and governments and people of developing nations seeking to overcome hunger, eradicate poverty, modernize rural areas and enhance women's status. The rural development model provided by these documentary materials is recognized as an effective way to help eliminate poverty and offer overseas development assistance.

The United Nations World Food Program (UNWFP) in May 2011 signed a memorandum of understanding with the Korean government to undertake the "Saemaul Project: Food for New Village" in Rwanda and Nepal. The UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) conducted Saemaul pilot projects in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, beginning in 2001. The UN World Tourism Organization ST-EP Foundation since 2009 has been building Korean-style "Millennium Villages" in Tanzania and Uganda as part of a program to reduce extreme poverty. The Korean government and Korea Saemaul Undong Center are also adopting Saemaul Undong as a model for international development aid. Korea Saemaul Undong Center is currently carrying out rural development projects in many Asian and African countries. Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), a public entity providing official aid overseas through grants and technical cooperation, has designated Saemaul model villages in Cambodia and Rwanda, where it is undertaking projects to improve living conditions and increase incomes.

Documentary materials of Saemaul Undong have been exhibited in history museums and public exhibition halls throughout Korea, and reproduced in books, video clips and various publications. These materials have proven very useful for international education and exchange. Since the 1970s, some 53,000 persons from 129 countries have visited Korea to participate in Saemaul training courses and as of 2010, 157 Saemaul projects have been undertaken in 18 countries.

5-3 Comparative criteria

1. Time

The Archives of Saemaul Undong consists of historical records of the modernization process of rural villages that took place from 1970 to 1979. These documentary materials contain success stories of rural development, in which the farming population in South Korea built prosperous villages during a period of similar efforts in low income countries to pursue regional development and eradicate poverty through communal cooperation during the 1960s and 70s.

2. Place

The Archives of Saemaul Undong contains documentary materials on a nationwide movement in South Korea, in which some 34,000 villages throughout the country were mobilized to overcome poverty that resulted from the penetration of global capitalism colonial rule, internecine armed conflict and prolonged confrontation with North Korea, the first "oil

shock” of 1973, and chronic food shortages.

3. People

The Archives of Saemaul Undong contain a wealth of materials documenting heartening stories of success by rural villagers in overcoming poverty and hardship as well as the enthusiasm and dedication of a national leader and public officials. The poor and uneducated farmers in Korean rural villages improved their lot through undaunted efforts to learn scientific farming to improve their incomes as well as their living conditions. Numerous farmers volunteered to share their success stories with other farmers, and help train students, interested citizens and public officials. Many women and other marginalized people previously excluded from decision-making at home and in their villages became leaders or active participants in the movement. Of particular note, late President Park repeatedly expressed his firm determination to overcome poverty in his speeches and handwritten personal notes on official documents collected in the Archives. The self-sacrificing endeavors of public officials and agricultural cooperative extension agents who worked alongside farmers are also described in various reports.

4. Subject and theme

(1) Income Increase and Scientific Farming

The Archives of Saemaul Undong contain documentary materials on the modernization of rural Korea, tracing how the farming households adopted scientific farming and increased their incomes through cooperation, village road improvements, redistribution, reparceling and reshaping of arable land, introduction of farm machinery and spread of new agricultural technology.

(2) Attitudinal Change and Spiritual Revolution

The Archives of Saemaul Undong contain documentary materials on attitudinal change and spurring a spiritual revolution in Korean rural communities, where the residents were educated to break away from dependency and fatalism to have faith in themselves and to embrace challenge. The movement would never have succeeded without an attitudinal change among farmers, women and Saemaul leaders.

(3) Participatory Community Development

The Archives of Saemaul Undong contain documentary materials on village development achieved through the spontaneous participation of villagers. The movement succeeded and has continued to evolve into a movement for community development owing to active grassroots participation.

(4) Women’s Social Participation and Enhancement of Status

Women in rural villages emerged from traditional marginalization through active participation in Saemaul Undong. They came to have a bigger voice and voted at village meetings, from which they had traditionally been excluded. Many women were elected as Saemaul leaders, contributing to the broader social participation of women and improvement of their status.

(5) Form and style

The Archives of Saemaul Undong contain a rich collection of papers, audio tapes, photographs, film and video reel tapes, manuscripts, and other materials in various forms.

(6) Social/spiritual/community significance:

The Archives of Saemaul Undong contain historical records of villages striving for their development. The movement led rural development in South Korea propelled by the socio-economic aspirations and voluntary participation of farmers to be united by a common vision encapsulated in the slogan “Let’s live better!” Korea’s rural society aspired to build prosperous villages — to achieve affluence for more than just individuals and families.

6. Contextual information

6-1 Rarity

The Archives of Saemaul Undong comprise records on comprehensive rural development, which were produced by actual participants and officials implementing the rural development movement, including the president, various government agencies, educational institutions, Saemaul leaders and villagers. In the Archives are a considerable number of original handwritten documents, such as texts of presidential speeches, administrative papers with the president's signature, meeting minutes recorded by farmers, manuscripts by Saemaul leaders, and letters from citizens. These materials provide insight into the implementation procedures of the campaign and offer diverse perspectives on factors in its success. These would be useful reference resources for policymakers, researchers and local leaders pursuing community development. There is no comparable body of reference materials on the subject in the world. It would be a grave loss to the international community seeking rural development and modernization if these materials are damaged or lost.

6-2 Integrity

The National Archives of Korea and Korea Saemaul Undong Center have collected and preserved pertinent documentary materials in their original condition. The National Archives of Korea keeps materials produced by state organizations including the presidential office and various administrative agencies as well as original manuscripts handwritten by late President Park Chung Hee. Korea Saemaul Undong Center keeps materials produced by Saemaul Undong Training Institute for training of Saemaul leaders as well as records on successful cases from across the country.