

Traditional Seoul Village Hopes Curfew Brings Back Normal Life

今回は、韓国・ソウルの伝統的な街並みが残る「北村（プクチョン）韓屋（ハノク）村」に関する話題です。歴史あるこのエリアには、観光客が数多く訪れ、写真を撮ったり路地を歩いたりしています。こうした状況の中で、地域の人々が静かな暮らしを守るため、ある新しいルールが導入されることになりました。タイトルにもある「curfew」は（門限、外出制限）という意味で、**set a curfew**（門限を設定する）や **lift the curfew**（門限を解除する）などのように使われます。観光と地域の暮らし、どちらも大切にするにはどんな工夫ができるのでしょうか？講師と話してみましょう。



1. Article

Read the following article aloud.

In South Korea's capital of Seoul, Bukchon Hanok Village's narrow winding alleyways date back hundreds of years to the Joseon Dynasty. The area has become a popular place to visit, especially after appearing in a television show about 10 years ago.

Foreign visitors and Koreans visit the neighborhood to see houses with wood columns, courtyards and tiled roofs.

The area attracted about 6 million visitors last year while the population of the area is around 6,100.

However, increasing numbers of visitors have become a problem for people who live there. They complain about noise, trash, bad behavior and invasion of privacy.

Some visitors have been caught on camera trying to enter private homes or looking inside without permission, creating conflict with locals.

Many local people have chosen to leave, leading to a 27.6 percent drop in the village's population over the past 10 years.

Village officials now want to set a [curfew](#) in the area. The curfew will limit visitors to certain areas of Bukchon from 5 p.m. to 10 a.m. local time. It will start as a trial in November and will be officially launched next March. Violators could pay fines of up to \$72.

Chung Moon-hun is the head of Jongno district. Chung said the goal is to protect the rights of local people. Chung said the curfew can be changed if necessary to make it more effective. The area where curfew hours and fines will be in effect is about 34,000 square meters. That is about the size of five soccer fields.

Kwon Young-doo owns the private Asian Cultural Art Museum in Bukchon Hanok Village. Kwon is concerned about the curfew policy aimed at preventing visitors from overrunning the area.

"Who would want to visit?" asked Kwon who moved into the historic area 18 years ago. "They'll leave with a bad impression of South Korea."

Others do not believe the policy will be effective. They note measures such as [exemptions](#) for visitors staying overnight in traditional houses called hanok. Many of these hanok are now owned by businesses after officials loosened restrictions on overnight stays.

"People come for just a day to enjoy themselves, and the noise from parties is extremely loud," said Kim Eun-mee, who lives next to a hanok. Clearing trash in front of her home has become a task she has to perform several times a day.

"It's often difficult to maintain a normal daily routine due to [disturbances](#)." She said people often make noise moving their suitcases around even in the early hours, which wakes her up.

Lee Dong-woo is head of the website BUTLER.LEE which is used to rent the hanoks. Lee said the business grew when owners who found it difficult to [modernize](#) or maintain old houses turned them over to businesses.

"These requests are driving the expansion, not because we are actively evicting current residents to operate hanok stays," Lee said. Lee oversees 17 hanok stays in Bukchon.

Visitors are divided over the curfew. Some agree locals' quality of life is important. Others are unhappy at the idea of getting fined for simply walking down a public street.

There are also questions about how the rules will be [enforced](#); how to tell visitors from locals; how to make foreigners pay a fine, and how to deal with the language barrier.

I'm Mario Ritter Jr.

Reuters reported on this story. Hai Do adapted it for VOA Learning English.

Source: Traditional Seoul Village Hopes Curfew Brings Back Normal Life

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2. Key phrases and vocabulary

First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

1. **curfew (n.)** a rule requiring you to be indoors by a specific time.

The city decided to set a 10 p.m. curfew to reduce noise in the neighborhood.

2. **exemption (n.)** permission to not follow a rule or requirement.

Local businesses were given an exemption from the curfew so they could continue operating.

3. **disturbance (n.)** a situation where there is noise or trouble.

The residents complained about the nightly disturbances caused by tourists.

4. **modernize (v.)** to make something newer or up-to-date.

The government plans to modernize traditional neighborhoods while keeping their historical charm.

5. **enforce (v.)** to make sure people follow a rule or law.

The local authorities began to enforce the curfew after receiving many noise complaints.

3. Questions

Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. What is the main problem that residents of Bukchon Hanok Village face?
2. What measures will local officials take to protect the residents?
3. Why do some people think the curfew may not be effective?
4. Have you ever been to a traditional village like Bukchon Hanok ? What was your impression?
5. Do you think Japan should also introduce curfew rules in popular tourist spots to protect local residents? Why or why not?