

2011 Modularization of Korea's Development Experience:
**The Successful Cases of the Korea's
Saemaul Undong
(New Community Movement)**

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MINISTRY OF
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
AND SECURITY

 **Korea Saemaulundong Center**

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Preface

The study of Korea's economic and social transformation offers a unique opportunity to better understand the factors that drive development. Within one generation, Korea had transformed itself from a poor agrarian society to a modern industrial nation, a feat never seen before. What makes Korea's experience so unique is that its rapid economic development was relatively broad-based, meaning that the fruits of Korea's rapid growth were shared by many. The challenge of course is unlocking the secrets behind Korea's rapid and broad-based development, which can offer invaluable insights and lessons and knowledge that can be shared with the rest of the international community.

Recognizing this, the Korean Ministry of Strategy and Finance (MOSF) and the Korea Development Institute (KDI) launched the Knowledge Sharing Program (KSP) in 2004 to share Korea's development experience and to assist its developing country partners. The body of work presented in this volume is part of a greater initiative launched in 2007 to systematically research and document Korea's development experience and to deliver standardized content as case studies. The goal of this undertaking is to offer a deeper and wider understanding of Korea's development experience with the hope that Korea's past can offer lessons for developing countries in search of sustainable and broad-based development. This is a continuation of a multi-year undertaking to study and document Korea's development experience, and it builds on the 20 case studies completed in 2010. Here, we present 40 new studies that explore various development-oriented themes such as industrialization, energy, human capital development, government administration, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), agricultural development, land development and environment.

In presenting these new studies, I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all those involved in this great undertaking. It was through their hard work and commitment that made this possible. Foremost, I would like to thank the Ministry of Strategy and Finance for their encouragement and full support of this project. I especially would like to thank the KSP Executive Committee, composed of related ministries/departments, and the various Korean research institutes, for their involvement and the invaluable role they played in bringing this project together. I would also like to thank all the former public officials and senior practitioners for lending their time and keen insights and expertise in preparation of the case studies.

Indeed, the successful completion of the case studies was made possible by the dedication of the researchers from the public sector and academia involved in conducting the studies, which I believe will go a long way in advancing knowledge on not only Korea's own development but also development in general. Lastly, I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Joon-Kyung Kim for his stewardship of this enterprise, and to his team including Professor Jin Park at the KDI School of Public Policy and Management, for their hard work and dedication in successfully managing and completing this project.

As always, the views and opinions expressed by the authors in the body of work presented here do not necessary represent those of KDI School of Public Policy and Management.

May 2012

Oh-Seok Hyun

President

KDI School of Public Policy and Management



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Summary

Korea's successful rural modernization campaign is well-known as Saemaul Undong or New Community Movement. Nation-wide surveys have repeatedly shown that most Koreans consider with pride that this rural modernization campaign is the most successful event in modern Korean history. Saemaul Undong is a successful model of poverty eradication, attitudinal change (mental revolution), and rural modernization. It was a driving force of rural modernization and economic growth in Korea in the 1970s. The success of Saemaul Undong greatly contributed to the development of rural areas and inspired the Korean people to aspire for greater affluence in future.

The Saemaul Undong began as a modest rural program in the winter of 1970-71. The government provided each village with some constructional materials such as 335 sacks of cement. With this supply, the villagers mobilized their community resources for community development. This initial program achieved a conspicuous success and became a prototype of the Saemaul Method, as a combination of the government support and villagers' self-help. Villagers contributed to the development by contributing their labor and privately owned lands for free.

Based on this initial success, the government and villagers extended the Saemaul Method to introduce many diverse projects. The Saemaul Method employed innovative Compound Projects. Compound Projects differed from the initial Saemaul Method in three ways: 1) larger government support and more focus on income generation, 2) villagers' participation that allowed payment for their labor 3) encouragement to save a half of the villagers' labor income for the village fund, to be used for the village's joint investment.

1. Developmentalism at the Village

The Saemaul Undong involves an attitudinal change, spurring a spiritual revolution in Korean rural communities, where the residents were educated to break away from dependency and fatalism to have faith in them and embrace challenge. This attitudinal change or spiritual revolution was quite different from political campaigns which happened in many developing countries; the ultimate goal of this spiritual revolution was an attitudinal change to improve living conditions of villagers themselves, not for community or country itself. This attitudinal change was closely related to the campaign of villagers' income growth. In this drive for a better life, the government and village leaders worked together and emphasized development. Since they set the income growth and efficiency as the ultimate goals, their attitude could be called "developmentalism." This developmentalism was not foreign to Korean policy makers and villages because the Korean government always emphasized development since the 1960s. This developmentalism originated in urban areas transformed traditional subsistence agriculture into commercial agriculture. In addition, each village was changed into a business unit, as shown in the contract between village development committee and the local government for modest scale public works. The government used this community business when it implemented welfare finance during the Saemaul Undong. Thus, villagers were not sacrificed for developmental policy, but greatly benefited from this spiritual revolution of developmentalism.

2. Grassroots Leaders for Village Development

Although the strong policy support of the government and the determination of President Park Chung Hee were important for the success of the Saemaul Undong, the dedication of all the leaders of the nationwide villages were central to the success of the Saemaul Undong. Village leaders materialized the spirit of developmentalism in the villages. Without the belief and efforts of the village leaders who had a strong faith in the movement, the Saemaul Undong might have ended up being just an empty slogan. The rapid increase in rural household income in the 1970s can be seen as miraculous, just like the general economic growth of the Korean economy, and the role that the leaders played cannot be emphasized enough. The Saemaul village leaders were resolutely committed to the village work and were dedicated to the village even though they were not paid for their service. These were the people who brought success to the Rural Saemaul Undong in the 1970s. Although a great many of these leaders had, before the advent of the Saemaul Undong, previously developed 'better-living' campaigns within their respective villages, as the Saemaul Undong steadily moved forward, these people undoubtedly took their leadership to the next level. In the 1970s, there was an unbelievable number of Saemaul leaders, with a male and female leader in each village, and over 35,000 villages altogether. The government worked to connect these individuals so as to ensure that the Saemaul Undong did not devolve into a collection of isolated village improvements, but into a national movement diffused on the breath of a 'national wind.'

3. Empowerment of Women's Leadership

Saemaul Undong also empowered women in rural areas by increasing women's active participation and giving them the opportunity to be a community leader. In each village, one female leader and one male leader were selected and educated as Saemaul leaders. This allowed women to develop their leadership skills and opened many new opportunities. Female leaders were selected from village women's associations. The women's association at the village played a very active role in savings movement, anti-gambling campaign, and temperance movement during the Saemaul Undong. Those campaigns were essential parts of the spiritual revolution in the countryside and contributed to the spread of the spirit of Saemaul Undong. In addition, many women leaders became pioneers in introducing innovative methods for income increase in the villages. Since the introduction of the Saemaul Undong, women's participation in the general assembly of the village was greatly encouraged and became widespread over time. These activities contributed to the improvement of the status of women in rural Korea.

4. Compound Project

This method is peculiar in the sense that the village takes contracts with the government, acting as a company. In the past, of course, such contracts were usually taken by private companies. The government trusted the business capacity of the villagers and gave them contracts, so that the profits could be taken directly by the villagers. In compound project, (1) villagers take the contract for small scale construction works below the costs of KRW 3,000,000 and finish the project; (2) out of the wages for villagers half of it is distributed among the villagers, and the other half is saved as the village fund; (3) this village fund is reinvested to other village-level projects, and in this way the villagers' income as well as the village fund grow. The villagers choose the next project at the village meeting, and reinvest the fund that they created from the previous projects. The repetition of this process is collectively called "compound project." The aim of this repeated investment is to increase the revenue of the villagers and the village fund, so that someday the village fund would exceed that of the fund given by the government. This method of business is impossible to accomplish if the village representative or the Saemaul Leader lacks management and planning skills. Thus, the most important aspect of the Saemaul Undong is the upbringing of villages as business units.

5. Virtuous Cycle of Saemaul Circle for Sustainable Movement

The Saemaul Undong was not a one-time event. With its initial success of 1970 and 1971, the Saemaul Undong grew locally and nationally. This sustainability came from the virtuous cycle of Saemaul Circle. In the early period of 1970 and 1971, the government provided

each village with construction materials. This became a great stimulus for the awakening of the villagers and helped villagers work together for community projects. Villagers made some modest, yet visible success with this government support. The experiences of success based on self-help reinforced further success and more active participation. In Korea's Saemaul Undong, the targets and goals at the village or hamlet level were specific and immediately relevant to the enhancement of the quality of life of farmers so that involved farmers could tangibly feel their success. With the Saemaul Undong, cash cropping increased; Farmers started to grow profitable products such as mushrooms, fruits, tobacco, etc. During the 1970s Saemaul Undongs, these crops were called income-crops. By growing crops in greenhouses, villagers could sell fresh vegetables during the winter and by raising cows, pigs and chickens; all of which contributed to their income rise. Pepper and ginseng farming were also very popular as commercial farming. Leaders and villagers began with modest projects and moved onto bigger projects, with success. During the process of this development, villagers or village leaders produced many grassroots innovations which resulted in the increase of villagers' income. This material incentive was a very important factor for the participation of villagers. This was a foundation for the sustainability of the virtuous cycle of the Saemaul Circle.

6. Lessons

Partnership and cooperative governance are the key factors that contributed to the success of the Saemaul Undong. Many third world countries mobilized people for the development of the country or asked people's sacrifice for the country or community. The relationship between the government and farmers were one-sided. In contrast, the central and local governments were very supportive of local leadership during the Saemaul Undong. This supportive relationship led to overcoming possible bureaucracy and communication problems in the government-supported campaign.

Even the President invited village leaders to the cabinet meetings once in every month. The selected leaders explained their success stories to the cabinet members. Humble farmers invited to the cabinet meeting became national as well as local heroes in their hometown. When they returned to their hometown from the Blue House, they worked harder for the campaign or the Saemaul Undong. This strong attention from the top leadership of the country shaped the attitude of the central and local governments towards the campaign. Village leaders now could write to the important officials of the local and central governments about the challenges the local leaders faced. Voices of farmers and local leaders should be given a due care, which was a unique feature in Korea's development experience.

In addition, the government provided farmers and local communities with civic and organizational skills. Training centers played pivotal roles in helping farmers with civic skills. Civic skills were very helpful and essential for community movements. They learned how to organize meetings, how to form village consensus, and how to set feasible goals, etc.

In the Saemaul Undong, capacity of farmers and communities were much enhanced. The enhancement of villagers' capacity and leadership development are very important in community development. Business capacity and social capability are all very important. With their capacity improvement, they learned to solve the challenges they faced in the village. For solving them, they developed cooperation among villagers and beyond the villages. At the village level, diverse associations and meetings were introduced to enhance villagers' participation. Village meetings were revitalized. They kept minutes of the meetings. Village meetings were very vibrant and active. In addition to formal village meetings, village leaders organized many informal meeting (drinking and luncheon or dinner meetings) to get 'consensus.' Village democracy was actively practiced. We cannot deny that the local government agencies were involved in the formal meetings, sometimes leading to oppressive atmosphere. However, local initiative and village democracy cannot be underestimated even though the village democracy was different from Tocqueville's American democracy. Diaries and records of the Saemaul Undong written by village leaders show that not the pressure of the government agencies but the tireless persuasion by the village leaders were the keys to getting the final agreement from the opponents in the movement.

In community development studies, scholars and practitioners tend to praise the role of local community. There is no doubt that the local initiative is important. However, community failure must be avoided. In the Saemaul Undong, many diverse measures were introduced to prevent community failure. The government provided technical services such as design, inspection, and on-site advice. The government also introduced monthly or annual review of village records and village business. And at the village level, transparency and democracy are important for preventing community failure.

2011 Modularization of Korea's Development Experience
The Successful Cases of the Korea's Saemaul Undong
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Introduction

Korea's successful rural modernization campaign has been well-known as Saemaul Undong or New Community Movement. Repeated nation-wide surveys have shown that most Koreans consider with pride this rural modernization campaign as the most successful event in the modern Korean history. The Saemaul Undong involves attitudinal change 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 embrace challenge. This attitudinal change or spiritual revolution was quite different from political campaigns; the ultimate goal of this spiritual revolution was attitudinal change to improve living conditions of villagers themselves, not for community or country itself. In this drive for a better life, the government and village leaders worked together and emphasized development. Since they set the income increase and efficiency as the ultimate goal, their attitude could be called "developmentalism." This developmentalism was not foreign to Korean policy makers and villages because the Korean government always emphasized development since the 1960s.

Developmentalism during the Saemaul Undong came from the urban origin. Rural developmentalism was advertised under the leadership or initiative of urban industry and export. The advocate of the Saemaul Undong, President Park Chung Hee, clearly said that rural Korea could develop without the help of urban industry.

"Then the question arises in which direction our economy should be developed in the future. The only answer is industry. We have no other alternative but to build an industrial economy in our country. But even an industrial country cannot afford to neglect the farming or rural communities. Far from it.....Viewed in this way, agriculture and industry are inseparable."¹

¹ Park Chung Hee. 1979. Saemaul: Korea's New Community Movement. Seoul: The Secretariat for the President, the Republic of Korea. P.129.

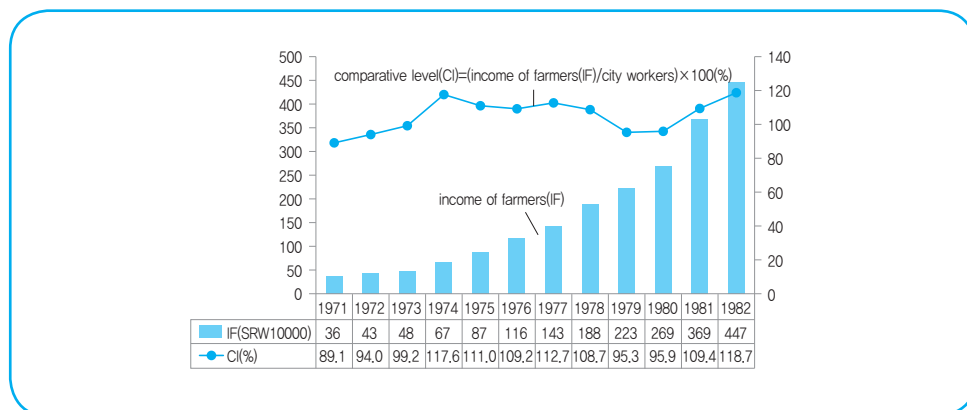
Students of rural development studies tend to overemphasize the rural aspect of the Saemaul Undong. The success of the Saemaul Undong could be almost impossible without Korea's industrialization and urbanization. Within this framework of urban industrial development, the Saemaul Undong emphasized the material improvement of rural people.

I believe that the past failures of similar movements were because they were misdirected. Unless such movements are somehow linked to higher earnings for farmers, farmers soon lose interests....The Saemaul Undong should be at the same time a spiritual reform movement and an action program to boost the income level of farmers.²

All we know that the Saemual Movement emphasized the spiritual or mental revolution. This mental revolution is closely related with the material welfare of farmers. The ideological revolution in the Saemaul Undong is not a religious one, but a development-oriented one. The above speech clearly shows that the Saemaul Undong is linked to higher earnings for farmers. The aim was not for political mobilization or religious revolution, but for better lives in terms of economy. For better economic lives, the government was ready to give a certain amount of subsidy and ask villagers to work together for finding solutions for the improvement of the quality of their life.

People responded actively to the suggestion of the government. Leaders at the village welcomed the call of the government and transformed their village for the purpose of the improvement of villagers' income. According to statistics,³ the rural household income in Korea grew rapidly throughout the 1970s. For example, rural household income in 1976 was 3.25 times larger than that of 1971. The rural household income of 1981 was again 10.35 times bigger than 1971. This rapid increase in rural household income can be seen

Figure 1-1 | Rural Income Increase during the Saemaul Undong, 1970s



Source: Sang-In Jun 2010: 75

2 Park Chung Hee. 1979. Saemual: Korea's New Community Movement. Seoul: The Secretariat for the President, the Republic of Korea. pp.146-147.

3 Korea National Statics Office, 1992, Korea's Course Seen Through Statistics

as a miracle just like the general economic growth of the Korean economy. Thus it is not surprising that in the 21st century many countries such as China and Vietnam want to learn about the Saemaul Undong through which Korea overcame its poverty in the past.⁴ The strong support policy of the government, the strong will of President Park Chung Hee, and the dedication of all the leaders of the villages nationwide was at the heart of the success of the movement. The role that those leaders played cannot be emphasized enough.

It cannot be forgotten that there are still many active dedicated Saemaul leaders in contemporary Korea, which is a lasting impact of the Saemaul Undong in our nation. Mr. Kim Gwon-chan, quoted below, is an example of the many village leaders in the Saemaul Undong period.

I have lived in this village for 33 years and have taken parts in a lot of volunteer activities. This made my life worthwhile. In each summer I would carry a sprayer on my back and sterilize the sewers of our village. The kids call me ‘the sterilizer man.’ Until my son died last year I used to serve as the Chairman of the Saemaul Leaders’ Association and gave students scholarships with the money I saved from my activity expenses.” (Kim Gwonchan, 56, The ChosunIlbo 2010.1.11)

Mr. Kim regards the village work as if it were his own. He is dedicated to the village even though he does not have great wealth, and only graduated from high school. Mr. Kim does not belong to a privileged social class in Korea. However, he is completely devoted to the development of his region. These are the people who brought success to the Rural Saemaul Undong in the 1970s. They practiced the policies of the developmental state in the village. Whenever the government suggested a new innovative project, they were not hesitant to accept the proposal if it could give benefits to villagers. Compound Project, Saemaul Method, and other Saemaul projects were welcomed by village leaders. More than that, like engineers and CEOs, they actively participated in diverse innovation. Although their contribution to the income increase was very clear, their grassroots innovations are not well listed and acknowledged. Their innovation efforts made the Saemaul Circle or Virtuous cycle of Saemaul circle work. For the spread of the experience of Korea’s Saemaul Undong, the experience of village leaders are important and concrete lessons. Village leaders are the embodiment of the history of the impressive success of the Saemaul Undong. By reading their history, we can understand the workings of the inclusive growth for all villagers and grassroots innovations in the Saemaul Undong. They sacrificed their private lives to engage all villagers and worked hard not to alienate poor neighbors. To do comprehensive development of their village, they used to find a new innovative way.

4 Jin Hwan Park (2005), Public Speech, “Korea’s economic modernization under President Park” at 4th Breakfast Lecture of the President Park Commemoration Project. December 7, 2005. http://www.516.co.kr/vod/vodth_lis.asp/

2011 Modularization of Korea's Development Experience
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Chapter 2

Developmentalism at the Village

Developmentalism at the Village

The Saemaul Undong of the 1970s accomplished much success over ten years, however, the fact that such a movement was pursued as long as for 10 years is quite remarkable in itself. The Saemaul Undong was never a simple rural development program. Rather, it was an application of the social development model of Korea's 1960s Korea to rural development program. As it is not possible to explain the economic development of Korea simply with economic policies or the efforts of entrepreneurs, we try to explain this with concepts such as the developmental state or developmentalist state. Developmental state or developmentalist state are the concepts that Chalmers Johnson developed from the Japanese experiences of economic growth, in which the state, unlike the cases of the western countries, deeply involved in the economic development program and played a leading role (Johnson 1982). Notable features of the developmental state or developmentalist state include well qualified government officials, a government that is relatively free from political conflicts and a growth oriented administration. In addition to these, the Korean developmentalist state possessed another unique characteristic – strong leadership of the head of state. Not only did the head of state exercise strong leadership, but setting 'economic growth' and 'efficiency'⁵ as the ultimate goals can also be seen as unique characteristics of the Korean developmental state. Furthermore, in supporting businesses the government gave unequal supports depending on the performances of each business, and this point was seen as a very positive aspect of the Korean economic development (Amsden 1989). Evans saw the close relationship between the government and businesses as a uniqueness in the Korean model (Evans 1995).

⁵ Regarding President Park's leadership style and decisiveness that emphasized 'efficiency' instead of equity in implementing policies, refer to the public speech of Park Jin Hwan (2005).

Even though it is said that the Saemaul Undong emphasizes the farmers' spirit, the movement is far from agrarianism in its accurate sense. Traditional agrarianism is based on the ideals of sa-nong-gong-sang (that farmers are higher than artisans and traders in social hierarchy), criticism of modern urban civilization and modern commercial and industrial civilization. The Saemaul Undong is a modernization movement that went with urban industry, which meant to develop agricultural sector and industrial sector together (nong-gongbyeongjin). In this sense, the Saemaul Undong of the 1970s can be regarded as a part of the policy of developmentalism, rather than an agrarian movement. Without the developmental state or the development oriented state, it is hard to imagine that a movement like the Saemaul Undong would have been successful. The emphasis on economic development and efficiency by the Korean developmental model were vital characteristics of the Saemaul Undong. If we consider the Saemaul Undong from the perspective of the economic development of Korea, leaders of the Saemaul Undong can be seen as managers in charge of medium-sized businesses called villages, and these villages as companies had differing levels of government supports based on their competitiveness and achievements. However, in contrast to an urban business, the village as a company was operated through cooperation among the villagers and its subunits were individual families. In this sense, it can be said that this village "business" was a kind of cooperative business. The idea that a village can be portrayed as a business might be awkward especially if we consider the catchwords such as diligence, self-reliance, and cooperation. However, I argue that the success of the Saemaul Undong of the 1970s cannot be understood without considering the business-like characters of the villages. As the chaebol companies received governmental supports depending on their achievements in exportation and management, so the villages as a cooperative business entity.

Saemaul leaders at the village took responsibility of operating the village as a business. To operate this company of village, village leaders should be more than best farmers who have advanced technology and diligence. By early 1970s, best farmers could be considered as leaders of agriculture. But during the Saemaul Undong, CEO of village business became the leader of the village company. These saemaul leaders became leaders or frontiers of broad development policy; they learned not only agricultural technology but social skills such as how to manage conflicts, how to lead meetings, and how to develop community development plans. Not a small number of Saemaul leaders learned these abilities while they were in the military service. In the early stage of Korea's modernization, the military sector was a school for modernity where most Korean men experienced modern and organized life. Because of the Korean War, the military sector in Korea rapidly increased and became most modernized one compared to other sectors. During their military service, most Korean men learned practical technology, planning, organizing, can-do spirit, and leadership. Civil engineering technology and organizational skills they acquired during their military service helped Saemaul leaders to become good business leaders of village as a business organization (Park Jin Hwan 2005).

From a typical case, we may find that business leadership was emphasized in the village during the Saemaul Undong. It is the case of a Saemaul leader in Chungju, Se Young Lee. On June 26, 1975, he was forced to resign from the village head because he did not do his military service. He entered the Saemaul Leadership Training Institute in September 1973, which means that he is one of the earliest trained Saemaul leaders. What is interesting is that although there were the village heads and the Saemaul leader, Mr. Lee himself was privileged to enter the institute for training and he played a very important role in the Saemaul Undong in his village (Lee Se Young 2203:376). Thus, his leadership in business planning and implementation was more important than the titles of village head or Saemaul leader.

If we look at the education and training programs of the Saemaul Undong Training Institutes, it is composed of promotion of the Saemaul spirit, national security and economy, Saemaul projects, successful cases, small group discussion, and field trips. These were all to help the trainees to plan, develop, and manage the corporate called a ‘village’ directly and indirectly. As a result those who have been through the training programs recognize the direction of the Saemaul Undong project. More specifically, they came to have a ‘clear direction towards future projects’ and realized that there were ‘so many things that can be done.’ Although the moral education included the study of the goals of the Yushin regime (1972-1979), the general emphases were on the entrepreneurial spirit with active and progressive attitude, the spirit of self-reliance, and the spiritual basis of modernization.⁶

The lectures on Saemaul projects, successful cases study, and field trips were aimed at educating the village leaders as if they were CEO’s of a company, and villages were companies. Thus, the CEO’s of each village “company” were given practical education on how to overcome difficulties in the field. This was the core of the education at the Training Institutes.

The likening of a village to a company in the Saemaul Undong is also seen not only in the contents of the education of the Training Institutes, but also in the actual contents of the Saemaul projects. A good example of this is that the Village Development Committee or the “Village Representative” has contracts with the government for their village projects. The role of the Village Development Committee or the village representative in this case was like that of the traditional construction contractors. In other words, the villages had contracts with the government for projects as if they were private companies and such was a widely spread practice during the Saemaul Undong period. This, along with the Training Institute’s education for leaders to act as CEOs, strengthened the business character of the Saemaul Undong. In order to sign the government contract for construction the “CEO’s” need to have qualities as a competent entrepreneur. The ability to mobilize workers, accounting knowledge, business planning capacity, and management skills were vital for success. These new skills demanded for the village leaders, however, had not been required for traditional village heads or farmers. The Saemaul project required farmers, especially

⁶ Jin Hwan Park (2005: 154-156).

Saemaul Leaders and village heads (Representative of the Village Development Committee), to have these new business skills. “Business contract” was quite popular method in the Saemaul Undong. But most studies on the Saeamul Movement ignore the importance of this method. This method of business contract is much better than the prototype of Saemaul Method which gives only construction materials to villages. In this method of business contract, villagers earn their labor income and leaders charge operation cost when they execute the contracted business.

There are records of the Saemaul Leaders of the 1970s, through which we can see the concrete examples of the Saemaul projects and how they were run. One of the records kept at the Resource Room of the Saemaul Central Training Institute are the files of Saemaul Leader, Mr. Lim Gwang-muk. In Mr. Lim’s file is a project called ‘compound project’. This was the project started with the Presidential Grant of KRW 1,200,000 that was given to self-reliant villages.⁷ With the income generated from this project, they launched a new project. That was the ‘compound project.’ This compound project is an advanced method of the Saemaul Undong and also widely utilized in the Saemaul Undong. The method of compound project is studied only by Kim Jongho.

According to Kim Jongho’s article, this method of business was a “public financial management system that was developed on the basis of the administrative experiences which went through the enormous mental and material changes and reforms in the process of running the Saemaul Undong (Kim Jongho 1973: 41).” This “is not a result of imitating the examples of other countries, nor is it a result of academic theorizing.” It was purely “a business management system and financial support system that we ourselves chose for our own needs, reflecting the real necessities based on the experiences of the Saemaul Undong” (Kim Jongho 1973: 43). The “compound project” in the Lim’s file was: (1) villagers take the contract for small scale construction works below the costs of KRW 3,000,000 and finish the project; (2) out of the wages for villagers half of it is distributed among the villagers, and the other half is saved as the village fund; (3) this village fund is reinvested to other village-level projects and in this way the villagers’ income as well as the village fund grow (Kim Jongho 1973: 42). This method is peculiar in the sense that the village takes the contracts as a company. In the past, of course, such contracts were usually taken by private companies.

There were limits with the projects which relied on unpaid volunteer work and free supply of materials, and in the past such works were given to private contractors. As the government wanted to increase rural household income, it is nothing strange that such a government trusted the business capacity of the villagers and gave them contracts so that the profits could be taken directly by the villagers (Kim Jongho 1973: 45-46).

⁷ It is recorded that the fund was received on September 20, 1974. “Cashbook” in Leader Lim Gwang-muk I (SaemaulUndong Central Training Institute Archive material).mimeo.

The villagers chose the next project at the village meeting, and reinvested the fund that they created from the previous projects. Repetition of this process led to the “compound project.” The aim of this repeated investment is to increase the revenue of the villagers and the village fund, so that someday the village fund would exceed that of the fund given by the government (Kim Jongho 1973: 46).

This method of business is impossible to accomplish if the village representative or the Saemaul Leader lacks management and planning skills. The author believes that most important aspect of the Saemaul Undong is the upbrining of villages as business units. Village values such as diligence and cooperation might have been there as a rural tradition. However, the introduction of developmentalism and its training based on self-reliance was a new phenomenon that began with the Saemaul Undong.

The traditional notion that “one’s profit-making can be a loss of other people” or the “image of a limited good (Foster 1967; Acheson 1972)”⁸ was changed to a positive sum, and the 35,000 villages nationwide became in essence small enterprises and they began to improve their lives through profit-making. Of course, even in this new practice, the uniqueness of the Saemaul Undong based on the cooperative bodies of villages was kept intact. Vietnamese and Chinese officials confess that the biggest difficulty they face in their rural development policy is lack of cooperation among the villagers. It is ironic that cooperation is difficult to be achieved in communist countries whereas in Korea, a democratic, individualist and capitalist country, cooperation was successfully implemented. In order to understand this irony it is important to understand why and for whom the cooperation takes place. The cooperation of villagers in Korea’s Saemaul Undong was directly connected with the income of villagers and to the development of the village as a whole. The profit that the village made as a business management body was returned to the villagers. As Jongho Kim recommended that the “compound project” should distribute its profits differently among villagers according to their contributions, the Saemaul Undong of Korea did not always demand the lofty sacrifices of villagers. From this very point, the author argues that the characteristics of the Saemaul spirit were entrepreneurship and developmentalism. In this sense, the Saemaul Undong is fundamentally different from the other movements of the socialist countries. Pursuit of profit-making and development is also different from a traditional agrarian populist policy. The fact that the Saemaul Undong did not take the road of populism in the face of the gap between the urban and rural areas was a big fortune that helped development of rural Korea.

More details on Compound project will be given in chapter 4 of this paper.

⁸ “If Good exists in limited amounts which cannot be expanded, and if the system is closed, it follows that an individual or a family can improve a position only at the expense of others. Hence an apparent relative improvement in someone’s position with respect to any Good is viewed as a threat to the entire community.” Foster (1965) (Potter, Diaz, and Foster eds., 1967, p.305).

2011 Modularization of Korea's Development Experience
The Successful Cases of the Korea's Saemaul Undong
(New Community Movement)

Chapter 3

Grassroots Leaders at the Village

1. From Technological Leaders to CEOs
2. Visionaries and Trailblazers
3. Empowering Women
4. Finding and Training of Village Leaders: The Saemaul Leader Training Institute
5. The Strengthening of Pride through Rituals: The National Convention of Saemaul Leaders
6. Protection from Political Conflict
7. Inspiration and Support from the Top Leader, President Park

Grassroots Leaders at the Village

If chaebols and entrepreneurs were the engines behind the Korean developmentalist state, then the engines of the Saemaul Undong were its leaders. Saemaul Undong leaders in villages were like the CEOs of the enterprises. This is because, as stated earlier, one of the core characteristics of the Saemaul Undong was turning the villages into business firms. As the Korean economy was led by military elites who were in the frontline of modernization and entrepreneurs were trained in the process with the supports from the state, the workers of the modernization of rural areas were also trained and raised by the Saemaul Undong in the 1970s. There certainly were some rich farmers in villages before the 1960s, but most rural CEOs were raised extensively in the 1970s.

In order to get the message across, giving people an exemplary model in the leader is the more effective than having a governmental slogan. Likewise, the emphasis on village leaders by the Saemaul Undong from early stage proved to be an excellent strategy. Without the belief and effort of the leaders who had faith in the movement, the Saemaul Undong might have ended up being just a slogan. There were many movements to develop rural areas in developing countries after the World War II, but the Saemaul Undong has been the only one that lasted more than 40 years and has been appreciated both domestically and internationally. The leaders of the Saemaul Undong became missionaries of the cause, spreading the message to other villagers, as well as learning new experiences. The spirit of the Saemaul leaders can be clearly seen throughout the movement. Rather than leaving things to fate, they became more proactive and pro-development. The followers and participants of the Saemaul Undong call this “Mentality Reform Movement” or “Spiritual Movement.”⁹

⁹ In my interview with the Vice Director of the SaemaulUndong Central Training Institute, Jeong Gap-jin (retired in June 2008) repeatedly stressed that an important characteristics of the SaemaulUndong was that it was a spiritual movement. He mentioned that he emphasize this when he teaches foreigners about the SaemaulUndong. He is retired from the training institute in 2008. Currently, he is director, Institute of the History of Saeamul Unong.

1. From Technological Leaders to CEOs

As the Saemaul Undong was introduced, the role of the leaders was not only to be the best skilled but also effectively manage the village business. As a CEO of a company needs various capacities such as personnel management, financial management, and business planning, those organizational skills were required for the village leader, albeit at a smaller scale in the village.

Even though there were village meetings and democratic debates before the Saemaul Undong, the Saemaul Undong required leaders to act as CEOs to administer business targets, conflicts, new areas for business, and help villagers actively participate in going about business. Different from the CEOs of companies who have resources such as increase of wages or promotions in the management of their companies, the Saemaul leaders did not have resources to give out wages, promotions or incentives; thus it was vital that they acted as a model to other villagers. However simply being a model villager was not enough to guarantee the success of the Saemaul Undong. Not only did the leaders act to support the villagers, they were also required to work towards increasing the villagers' profits and give them reasonable targets to meet. They had to know how to implement developmentalism in the village. Without these practical skills the leaders could not effectively spearhead the Saemaul Undong. Evidence of these can be found in the records left during the movement. During the Saemaul Undong of the 1970s each individual village was required to have accurate records of their activities. The documents that Village Offices were required to keep for the evaluation of their Saemaul projects included: (1) all the signboards of the Village Office; (2) notices; (3) bulletin boards; (4) notice boards; (5) minutes of meetings; and (6) other records. The sub-county and county offices inspected these records regularly in the past,¹⁰ but it is a pity that most of these documents have been destroyed after certain dates. Only a few collections from some villages are kept in the history archive of the Korea Saemaul Undong Center.

Among the remaining individual records is the Mr. Lim Gwang-muk's records, who was a famous Saemaul leader in a village in Dangjin County, Chungcheong Nam-do, and his File No. 1 "The 1974 Project with the First Presidential Grant" is about the business project carried out with the Presidential Grant. It is about just one project but it is 160 pages long.¹¹ It shows us how the KRW 1,200,000 Presidential Grant was used efficiently in a village level. The file "1974 the First Presidential Grant Project" contains: (1) bank book; (2) general description of the village¹² and the list of assets of the village; (3) business plan; (4) cashbook; (5) records of materials received; (6) spending documents; (7) quotations; (8) wages records; (9) minutes of 1974-1975; (10) Saemaul rules and regulations; (11)

¹⁰ According to Lee Se-yeong's records, the County Budget Officer, Town Mayor, and Town Secretary came for the Saemaul inspection.

¹¹ This project analysis is quoted directly from Han Do-Hyun (2006)

¹² According to the records, 93 households were in the village, and 85 of them were in farming sector and 8 households were in non-farming sector. The population of the village was 612 (301 men and 311 women).

photo album; (12) records of work progress; (13) workers' records; (14) the Animal Stream Maintenance plan. As the project was carried out with the Presidential Grant when President Park had an unprecedented strong leadership, it seems natural that the villagers had tried very hard to make the project as efficient as possible without any waste of money or corruption. However, it is also evident from the records that the capacity of village leaders as CEOs of a village business grew successfully. These records show the ethos of village leaders and villagers which emphasize developmentalism; the villagers and village leaders use all the Presidential funds for developing the village with their own independent business plan and management.

The second part of the Volume 1 of Mr. Lim Gwang-muk is the documents on welfare finance (1973), which is 55 pages in length. The document is titled "The Guiding Principles for Managing Works of Welfare Finance: This is how you manage welfare finance," which was created by the Dang County. Mr. Lim used this document as reference in carrying out his Saemaul project. This document worked as an easy guide for Saemaul leaders and village heads on how to effectively manage finances based on the type of business they were doing. The document says that welfare finance is an epoch-making new method of finance management which combines the income of villagers and the increase of welfare.

In the first part of this document, there is a two-page message of President Park cited from his speech of June 20, 1972. The two-page message emphasizes why the Saemaul Undong succinctly introduces the new method of welfare finance. According to the message,¹³ the essence of the welfare finance is to empower villagers and village leaders to sign contracts with the sub-county or county office for certain size of government projects so that villagers get more benefits from the projects. Before the introduction of this method of welfare finance, a local companies sign contracts with sub-county or county office for certain government projects in the local area and then hire villagers as workers. In contrast to this previous method, the new way of welfare finance enables villagers to be subjects and beneficiaries of the projects. In other words, although the government provides all the costs of the government projects, the projects are operated as a community business. In the message, the President says that if the government signs contracts with the village for certain civil engineering projects, waste of government budget and corruption in the projects can be prevented. He trusted the village rather than private companies in terms of business operation.¹⁴

Another remarkable result of the Saemaul program is the fact that even the same kind of work is done more efficiently and with far better results if carried out as a part of the Saemaul Undong. The repair of stream embankments, for instance, used to be awarded to private contractors before, but nowadays such work is directly done by the villagers themselves if they are so willing. A river embankment repair project which normally would have cost 5 million won if the work was done by a private

¹³ The message of President cited from President's speech at the meeting of governors on June 20, 1972.

¹⁴ Refer to Footnote 13.

contractor can be performed at a cost of some 2 million won if performed as a part of the Saemaul Undong. Moreover, the outcome is far better than if done by private contractors. In this way, the project can directly contribute to the increase of income for the villagers who will receive wages for the work performed, and secondly this will encourage the spirit of teamwork among villagers. Furthermore, the government can save money. Three birds with one stone, indeed!¹⁵

In this Saemaul program of welfare finance, there are two types: one is villager's direct management of projects and the other is the villager's management of wage. Each category is further divided into three subcategories each. All these types of projects were aimed to increase the income of the all villager, the participation of all villagers, and the development of the spirit of cooperation.

The third document, "Current Status of the Korean Cow Raising Project (1973)," is a document outlining how each individual village used their self-reliance village prize money to raise Korean cows. This 30-page document is consisted of the minutes of the village meetings regarding the cow raising project, minutes of the Village Fund Committee, and the account book of the cow raising project. This project was to increase the income of 10 poor households of the village by lending them money so that they can raise Korean cows. Cows were distributed to them from August 30 to September 5, 1973. What is notable from this is that the Saemaul Undong not only trained village leaders but also provided poor households with self-reliance education. They not only aided poor households financially but also taught them how to overcome their poverty by training them through the cow raising project. In another words, they taught poor families the Saemaul spirits of self-reliance and self-help and an entrepreneurial mindset to move their businesses forward.

It is important to note that the Saemaul leaders did not manage their village businesses according to the orders of the government but through considerable education in actual business. As Professor Park Jinh-wan insists, the business education and field education received by Saemaul leaders was very distinct from traditional Korean education (Park Jinhwan 2005 Public Speech). The leaders not only learned how to manage their own business, but also to manage various other businesses of the village, which are the skills essential in capitalist economy. In addition to this, they were taught an entrepreneurial mindset so that they could overcome hardships and difficulties occurring in business. The entrepreneurial mindset and strong will that these leaders embedded are well described by poet Nosan Yi Eunsang's "Glory is ours." The strong will of the entrepreneurs are most well described in the following stanza:¹⁶

Burn like a crater

Move like a typhoon

15 Park Chung Hee. 1979. *Saemaul: Korea's New Community Movement*. Seoul: The Secretariat for the President, the Republic of Korea.p.219.

16 This poem is inscribed on the wall of the History Hall of the SaemaulUndong Central Training Institute.

Be strong like the rising tide

Overcome the ocean

Kick down even the highest of mountains

This mentality of ‘can-do’ or ‘nothing impossible’ is at the core of the education of the Saemaul Undong, especially the spiritual education or the education for attitudinal change, and corresponds to the entrepreneurship that Protestantism brought to Europe.

2. Visionaries and Trailblazers

The Saemaul Undong changed farmers’ way of life as well as the rural society they lived in. Although it was true that from the colonial era the rural areas had undergone great change with the penetration of modern capital and bureaucracy (Seop Park. Haeng Lee. 1997; Yeong-Mi Kim 2009:73), through the Saemaul Undong, transformation took place at a more qualitative level. That is, one might qualify this particular transformation as developmentalism. Indeed, even while ostensibly similar rural development program of the Rural Revitalization Campaign existed during Japanese occupation (Gi-Wook Shin and Do Hyun Han 1999), based on the conservative “agrarianism or agriculture-first principle,” this particular movement was actually designed as an escape from a market economy by emphasizing a “self reliant natural economy.” On the other hand, the Saemaul Undong was based on principles of developmentalism such as a “better living” and increasing non-farm cash income. Clearly, these kinds of goals were not meant as an escape from the market economy, but as a mechanism of reinforcement. This is what differentiates the Saemaul Undong from the romanticism of the “agriculture first” principle (Do-Hyun 2010: 44-52).

If we refer to Korea as a Developmental State in the 1970s, then we might also refer to the villages of the Saemaul Undong as ‘The Developmental Villages.’ The ones working on the scene in these developmental villages, putting plans into motion were none other than the Saemaul leaders.

When we no longer farm simply to survive, but to create surplus income, we can no longer refer to that as farming for survival. It’s agricultural enterprise. If one engages in agricultural enterprise, one can earn more money and live better. That’s why I was saying we needed to engage in agricultural enterprise, not ‘farming.’ That’s what I’d been saying since the 60s. But finally in the 70s, while participating in the Saemaul Undong, I could give lectures about this on a grand scale (Sa-Yong Ha 2004: 62).

This quotation is taken from the testimony of the enormously popular and legendary figure of the Saemaul Undong, Sa-Yong Ha. Although he had not received a modern education, he was acutely aware of which direction rural development needs to take, as well as agricultural enterprise. With the words, “when we no longer farm simply to survive, but to create surplus income, we can no longer refer to that as farming; it’s agricultural enterprise,” Ha demonstrated the breadth of his knowledge and his role as a pioneer thinker, based purely on his experience. Trailblazers like Ha existed in Korea during the 1960s (Yeong-Mi Kim 2009: 373) and many of them later became the leaders of the Saemaul Undong in the 1970s. As these pioneers united in the national Saemaul Undong campaign, armed with the will to escape hardship and overthrow poverty, they undoubtedly rendered the Saemaul Undong more than just a simple slogan.

Sa-Yong Ha innovatively propagated the use of green houses for cultivation as one means to earn more money through agricultural enterprise.

With plastic, we can build a greenhouse and grow large, healthy crops all year round. It’s unbelievable. People come from all around to see them. You read about it in the papers, you hear about it on TV and they come by the busload. They come inside the green house and are dumbfounded by what they see. They can’t believe how big the crops are. ‘My Goodness!’ they’ll say, ‘Is this something that grew in winter?’ They can’t believe their eyes (Sa-Yong Ha 2004:63).

X-GyuJeon stated, “Agricultural enterprise is a high income venture on a new horizon.” Planning to establish a high income venture in his village, Jeon even set out to investigate other first-rate villages for inspiration. At first, as recommended by a head of the Saemaul department in his county, he explored poultry farming. However, the foul odor was unbearable and he soon gave that up to focus on dairy farming instead. While the Ministry of Agriculture authorized two cows for every five hectares of land, as Jeon’s village lay in the mountains, it could not receive dairy farming assistance. Thus, the villagers dug up all mulberry trees meant for silkworm farming and planted corn. Then, Jeon met with the county governor, the vice county governor and the provincial governor, persuading them to provide assistance. In addition, the village received aid from the Minister of Agriculture-Forestry-Fisheries as well, allowing them to build 50 stables in the village and eventually rear 500 cattle. It was not all village leaders that could meet with a governor or minister and receive special aid in this manner, but for one as famous as Jeon, it seemed to be a matter of course. When an instructor from the Saemaul Training Institute visited this village, he remarked, “It’s out of this world. This village is a miracle.” X-GyuJeon comments,

For the nation to be rich and powerful, the people must live well. If the people live poorly, that is not a rich and powerful nation. Therefore, we have to live well. The first thing we have to do is live well. That's the essential (X-GyuJeon 2008:7).

After successfully introducing dairy farming, X-GyuJeon did not stop there, moving on to establish a deer ranch as well as a shiitake mushroom farm. Regarding this pioneering process, Jeon stated, “People must be in a complete state of frenzy for the Saemaul Undong to work (2008:9).”

After X-Ryeon Kim presented a successful Saemaul project at the Monthly Economic Trend Briefing held at the Blue House, he was meant to receive a truck as a reward, but insisted vehemently the government build him a greenhouse instead. The request was granted and in Kim’s village, a 1500 pyeong greenhouse for farming chili peppers was constructed. Eventually, the village made a fortune selling chili pepper seedlings. Kim claimed that in the early 1970s, “There was no other place where one could get chili pepper seedlings (X-Ryeon Kim 2008:3).” Additionally, he declared that his was the first village to use a green house for farming chili pepper. Bearing these achievements in mind, one might ascertain just how visionary a leader Kim was. Nevertheless, other leaders demonstrated similar successes. X-Mo Yu also fostered chili peppers as a cash crop, to the extent that he toured the country giving lectures as an expert in the field (X-Mo Yu 2008:10). X-Sun Lim increased his village’s income through grape farming. Then there was X-Weon Lee, who established a ‘hop seedlings class in his town, in order to “increase profits tremendously,” which ended up a great benefit to the villagers. These cases, involving the likes of X-Weon Lee, X-Sun Lim, X-GyuJeon and X-Ryeon Kim, never demonstrated traditional farming for survival, but put forth a vision of agricultural enterprise for a good living and succeeded. It was this clearly proposed vision that led to the success of not only these particular men, but countless other successful Saemaul leaders as well.

3. Empowering Women

Saemaul Undong also empowered women in rural areas by increasing women’s active participation and giving them the opportunity to be a community leader. In each village, one female leader and one male leader were selected and educated as Saemaul leaders. This allowed women to develop their leadership skills and opened many new opportunities. In rural Korea, women’s status was very low. Traditionally, women lived with the ideology of male dominant patriarchy. The Saemaul Undong could not go anywhere without involving half of the villagers. Women’s Association at the village were strongly encouraged. Female leaders were selected from village women’s associations. The women’s association at the village played a very active role in savings movement, anti-gambling campaign, a better living movement, welfare programs for women, and temperance movement during the Saemaul Undong. Those campaigns were essential parts of the spiritual revolution in the countryside and contributed to the spread of the spirit of Saemaul Undong. In addition, many

women leaders became pioneers in introducing innovative methods for income increase in the villages. The women's association led village savings drive and women leaders became president of the village credit union. Since the introduction of the Saemaul Undong, women's participation in the general assembly of the village was greatly encouraged and became widespread over time. These activities contributed to the improvement of the status of women in rural Korea.

Saemaul Undong published by the Institute of Saemaul Studies of 1981 states that the leadership and driving force shown by women in the Saemaul Undong surpassed those of men. The book says that it was the iron willed village woman who tried to awaken skeptical and hesitating village people to make the movement successful (Institute of Saemaul Studies. 1981: 250).

As shown in the case of Saemaul Leader Mr. Yu, women worked together with the village leader to remedy social problems of the village. Mr. Yu wanted to get rid of a problematic local tavern. Drinking was a serious social problem in his village and was an obstacle for mobilizing young men for the development of his village. In this instance, he put his wit into practice. He thought of utilizing women's power. In the past, women seldom visit men's leisure place and intervene in the issue of men's drinking. The Saemaul Undong changed the attitude of women and raised the voice of women. Thus, first, he invited members of the village women's Saemaul association to the general meeting of the village. Women were more active in a temperance movement. Some housewives thought that the cause of their poverty came from the habits of their husbands such as drinking too much and gambling. So, women welcomed Mr. Yu's invitation to the village meeting. He asked, "Those that oppose the removal of the tavern please raise your hands," and the majority of male attendees present were unable to do so. Moreover, some male participants that did raise their hands, intuiting the cold disapproving glare of the village women, soon quietly put them down. In this manner, women's power worked. And Mr. Yu acquired unanimous approval for getting rid of the problematic tavern (X-Mo Yu 2008:34-35).

According to Park Jin Hwan (2005: 164-165), although the presentations of successful cases by female leaders were less than those by male leaders, the story of female leaders were more persuasive and inspirational. Among them, Chung Mun-ja (Imsil county) and Yi Soon-ja (Jinyang county), Hong Young-mae (Cheongdo county), Choi Jae-hee in Yeonki county, are the best know figures.

4. Finding and Training of Village Leaders: The Saemaul Leader Training Institute

The upbringing of Saemaul leaders was based on the model farmers in the 1960s. There were instances such as Lee Se-yeong and Ha Sa-yong, who had participated in the Community Development (CD) projects and succeeded in their income increment projects before the Saemaul Undong of the 1970s. They were the first success stories in

the early stage of the Saemaul Undong in the 1970s. However, the majority of the Saemaul Undong leaders were found and trained in the 1970s. Counties, townships, and agricultural Cooperatives were responsible for finding them and the Saemaul Leader Training facilities were responsible for their training. The opening of the Model Farmer Training Classes was the starting point for the leaders training facility. With the third and final class, the Model Farmer Training Classes were closed in March 1972 and restarted with the new name of the ‘Saemaul Leader Class’ in July of the same year. The Female Leaders Class began in June 1972. According to the statistics at the end of 1981 there were 115 completed classes of the ‘Saemaul Leader Class’ and 100 completed Saemaul Female Leaders Class.¹⁷ Albeit for a short period of one to two weeks, business values were embedded into the leaders through education on what to do in the field, and trips to wealthy developed villages.

The effect of the training institute to the Saemaul leaders can be described as an image of a ‘blasting furnace’ or a ‘charcoal kiln.’ The Saemaul leaders training institute trained ordinary farmers to be agricultural CEOs. However the farmers kept their agricultural roots and mindset. This was done as though charcoal was made from a living tree. The leaders training institute did not just train these farmers to be leaders that educated the mind. They were taught Saemaul business practices, and to be practical leaders that planned out income making businesses. However the effect of the training institute was more close to a religious training organization than a business school.

Those that received the education describe the lectures of Kim Jun, a director, and Kim Yongki,¹⁸ a Christian elder who operates a similar farmers training center in Gangwon province as leaving the best impression on them (Jin Hwan Park 2005). The effect was so great that the trainees described Kim Jun as “a man born to be part of the Saemaul Undong Movement.”

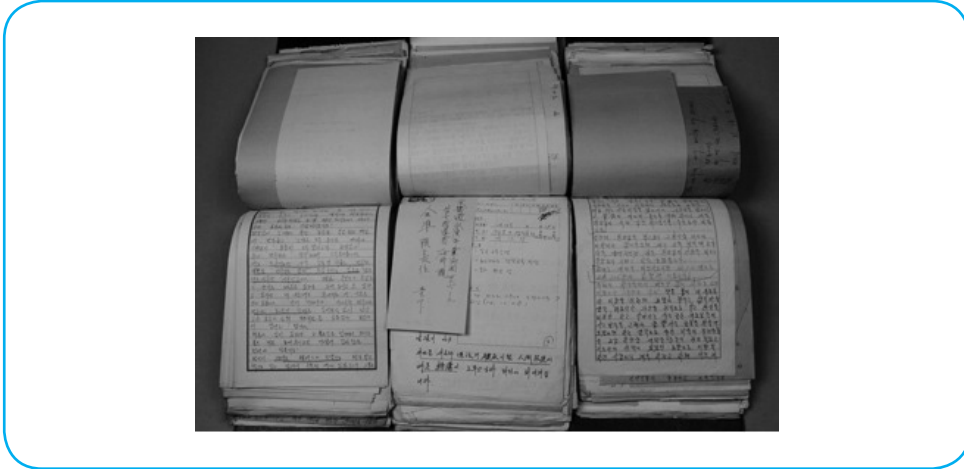
Director Kim Jun had previously given up being an Agricultural College professor and followed his passion for agricultural science to cultivate mountains with beggars and develop a community of trail blazers. Self-reliance, modernization, and social prosperity movements were his principles and life. This way of life truly blossomed when the Saemaul Undong was taught. The Saemaul leaders went through much change because of the teachings of the Saemaul Leaders Training Institute. This can be seen through the letters that they sent to the head of the training facility. These letters were sent by trainees after they had finished the training and had gone back to their villages. The training facility divides the letters according to sender, contents and processing. After this the original letter is attached to make a file. These letters reveal that Kim Jun was a true leader. He answered each letter with much affection and with utmost care. Not only that, but Kim Jun also treated the letters as though they are very precious documents. He is a responsive leader who listens to each and every one of his trainees’ stories rather than being a dominating teacher. These letters

¹⁷ Ten Years’ History of the Saemaul Leader Training Institute.p.137.

¹⁸ Mr. Kim Yongki is a very respected social leader and widely known in Korea. He played a very important role in the spread of the Saemaul Undong and in training village leaders. He operated a separate training center (Canaan Farmers School) which was his private one. His son operates the center.

are accounts of what trainees felt at the training facility as well as how they developed the Saemaul Undong back in their villages. They are documents that show the change in mentality and activities of the village leaders.¹⁹ The letters are invaluable resources for the study of the Saemaul Undong. 48 volumes are kept in the archive of the Saemaul Training Center (See Figure 3-1).

Figure 3-1 | Letters of Village Leaders



Through the texts of Kim Yong-hwan,²⁰ a trainee of the training institute, the modern methods of farming and the advancement of diversifying agriculture can be seen. Kim Yong-hwan reflects on the mistakes of his previous behaviors.

“I thank the teachers of the training facility for reviving my broken body and mind I quit smoking after 25 years at the training facility. I also stopped wasting my time by ceasing to drink once I got back to my village.”²¹

There are newborn farmers coming out of the blasting furnace that is the Saemaul training facility, a part of the Saemaul project. Farmers, especially the village leaders believe that they have been newly born out of this blasting furnace. One trainee has described his new identity by saying “[I am] a fresh piece of charcoal that has changed to never change again.” The trainees also state that they have made a fresh start within the short time period of the blasting furnace. Kang Changho of North Jeolla-do Province wrote in his letter, “even

19 A partial analysis was attempted in Han Do-Hyun (2006). This part is directly quoted from Han (2006).

20 October 24, 1975 letter from Saemaul Leader of Seomyeon, Gwangju. Collected Letters of The 1975 Class Trainees.mimeo.

21 The 36th Class. November 29, 1975 letter from Kim Hyeon-yong of Naegok-dong, Gangnam-gu, Seoul. Collected Letters of The 1975 Class Trainees.mimeo..

though the period of 10 days was short, this was my first ever recognized education and it has been a major event in my life. I will never forget this.”²²

Mr. Choe Chang-ho (33rd Class) of Gimhae,²³ South Kyongsang-do Province provides a stronger recollection of his experiences at the training facility. “After finishing the classes I could not speak properly for days once I got back to my village. Even though I have been living at my village for a long time, the times I cried and laughed and the many experiences I had at the furnace made me a fool for a time.”²⁴ There was a tremendous gap between modern practices learned at the training facility and the reality of his home. The gap between the two worlds confused Mr. Choe.

The ‘education of modernization’ of the Saemaul training facility emphasized personal accounts and testimonies as if it were an assembly of missionaries. This way the leaders had fresh ideas in their minds when they returned home and they had the belief that “it is possible for anyone if they just do it.” Some even said that “when presentations were made of successful exemplars, I cried and regretted my past actions.”²⁵

The success of the Saemaul training facility was only possible through President Park Chung Hee’s full support, as well as the manpower and budgetary support of the National Agricultural Cooperative Federation. As per the above letters, trainees were deeply moved at the dedication of the trainers, employees, and Director Kim Jun. To reinforce the activities of the training facility President Park Chung Hee took direct responsibility of the facility by changing the administration of the training facility from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry to the Presidential Office. Reports on organizing lectures and selection of trainers had to be made to parliament. However there was little education on reforms and ideals. The education focused on making farmers entrepreneurial agriculture CEOs and revolutionizing their skill set. This was a highly fortunate event for the development of the Saemaul Undong.

The area shown in [Figure 3-1] was the area where the Saemaul leaders were trained, with the Saemaul leaders training facility in the center. The training facility was a place where the Saemaul leaders of the underdeveloped villages travelled to developed villages for up to a week and saw examples of successes. There were also cases where the classes would be just a day or a half-day long. From this it could be seen that the training facility worked towards successfully and practically training the trainees until they were fully trained.

One of the unique characteristics of the Saemaul training facility was the education through examples of successes. During the education period, the trainees listened to the examples of successes for 21 hours over 12 days of education. It has been said that President

22 The 10th Class. November 29, 1975 letter from Kang Chang-ho from Jinan-gun, Jeollabuk-do Province. Collected Letters of The 1975 Class Trainees.mimeo.

23 October 27, 1975. Collected Letters of The 1975 Class Trainees.mimeo. October 27, 1975.

24 October 27, 1975 letter. Collected Letters of The 1975 Class Trainees.mimeo.

25 The 36th Class. December 5, 1975 letter from Jeong Gyeong-yeong from Hadong, Gyeongsangnam-do Province. Collected Letters of The 1975 Class Trainees.mimeo..

Park Chung Hee was the person that came up with the idea of using examples of successes as teaching materials (Jin Hwan Park 2005: 140). Leaders from underdeveloped villages were sent to live in more developed villages for a week and examine their Saemaul business for themselves. One thinks that this was much more innovative than by means of a case study. So the education through examples of successes can be seen as an internship that also served as a lesson to resolve problems and a clinic that solved these problems directly.

5. The Strengthening of Pride through Rituals: The National Convention of Saemaul Leaders

Through the training facility education the Saemaul leaders raised a sense of comrade and unity. This sense of cohesion played a big part in developing the Saemaul Undong to a nationwide movement. Furthermore the Saemaul leaders' Convention was a chance for leaders to meet fellow Saemaul leaders throughout Korea, as well as the head of the leaders, President Park Chung Hee. From the central network that was the Saemaul training facility, there were linkages between the villages. Furthermore, through Saemaul rallies and discussions between them, leaders shared their stories of hardship and overcame these hardships. Emile Durkheim, a Sociologist, defined the distinguishing characteristics of a religion as systems of belief, rituals, and the church, or a community of morality. The Saemaul Undong developed a form of community with morals and had many ceremonies.²⁶ The Saemaul Undong was strengthened through having Saemaul uniforms, Saemaul flags, Saemaul songs, sound songs (they contain many Saemaul themes), various assemblies and mass communication. These items and activities would have given the leaders a sense of pride and belief.

The peak of the rituals was the Monthly Economic Trend Report and the National Saemaul leaders' Convention. From the farmers' stand point, going to the Blue House and presenting their successes in front of the President and their fellow leaders could be on a scale similar to that of a church member meeting the Pope. This is not an overstatement considering the absolute power of the government in the 1970s.

Lee Se-yeong of Pungdeok Village in Jenae-ri, Judeok-myeon, Jungwon-gun, North Chungcheong Province,²⁷ was involved in the local social development movement of the 1970s. In his autobiography written in May 1973, he expressed his nervousness at the thought of being selected as the example village in the economic trend reports.

Reporting their successes at the Economic Trend Reports was an honor that only a limited number of Saemaul leaders were chosen to do. There was a need for an assembly that did more than bring about a sense of unity and edification between the leaders. The Saemaul Undong Leaders' Convention played this role. President Park Chung Hee attended the national Saemaul Leaders' Convention. Not only did the President attend, but the press

²⁶ Emile Durkheim. *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*.

²⁷ Now it belongs to Chungju City

extensively covered the Convention. This not only promoted the Saemaul Undong but it also played a big role in creating the sense of pride and edification of the leaders. Mr. Lee Se-yeong looks back on the convention that he attended in November 1973 in Gwangju.

It truly overwhelms me with emotion that I am one of the 50 leaders out of the 34,665 leaders nationwide to receive the medals..... After finishing dinner and while I was having dessert, the JeonnamIlbo that was delivered had a photo of me with the title “The Shining Faces of the National Saemaul Leaders’ Convention,” with a brief description outlining my Saemaul business. This made me realize that I was really receiving this medal I went to dreamland imagining myself receiving the medal from President Park Chung Hee.... After the medal ceremony was finished the President came down from the platform to the lower levels and shook hands with each recipient. The president fixed up my medal on my chest and looked at my face once again... He had a brown glow and an upright body posture and gave me the impression that he had a strong body even though I only looked at him for a moment.²⁸

Lee Se-yeong was not the only leader that went to bed imagining [themselves] receiving the medal from the President the day before the competition. The fact that they would see the President in person affected them greatly.

6. Protection from Political Conflict

There have been claims that the Saemaul Undong of the 1970s was the popular groundwork of the Yushin Regime. However, Professor Park Jinhwan, a high ranking official that pushed the Saemaul Undong, stated that the Saemaul Undong was not related to politics. There were occasional suggestions that the Saemaul Undong should be used for political purposes. However, President Park Chung Hee strongly opposed this (Park Jinhwan 2005: 200-201). There was “absolutely no” intention to use the Saemaul Undong by President Park Chung Hee, thus a national Saemaul leaders’ body was not made, nor was a list of the leaders given to members of parliament. This statement was backed up by Professor Kim Gim-yeong, who was in charge of educating the leaders.

We [The Saemaul Undong Training Institute] strive for no religious or political influence... and this was done on purpose... In order for this to be a movement of the civilians, the government influence should be excluded... Even President Park did not have a political motive... The people that came to the training facility receive the education (the leadership of society) were not like that... I thought that there would be promotions of the Republican Party or showing off President Park (in the contents of the education) however there was none of that... Saemaul leaders did not say anything... but leaders of Korean society would say after a few days ...²⁹ “I

²⁸ Saemaul Undong in Pungdeok Village, pp.327-328.

²⁹ As the training begins Sunday afternoon with the entrance of trainees, this is 3-4 days after the entrance.

thought that they guys would do some propaganda stuff...” But, there was no such thing as propaganda of the ruling party or praises for President Park... Later they asked us “What are you people (instructors)?” After we told them “we are dispatched employees of the National Agricultural Cooperative Federation,” they told us “we thought you were from the National Intelligence Service.”³⁰

The fact that the Saemaul Training Institute and the trainees were not used for political power was a very fortunate event for the Saemaul Undong. Parts of the educational materials were the subjects of reform and security. However, the Saemaul leaders were not used for political purposes. This could have been because they had already won the support of the farmers, or because (as per the claims of the Saemaul participants) it was the product of President Park taking great efforts to protect the Saemaul Undong from political conflict. If we were to look at the Saemaul leaders as CEOs, there is no question that the separation from politics by the leaders was a positive influence on the success of the Saemaul Undong Movement. This is comparable to the fact that in any developmental states, gaining relative freedom from the interests of political groups was very important. Thanks to this relative insulation from political struggles, village leaders could concentrate on developing their villages and became the embodiment of developmentalism,

7. Inspiration and Support from the Top Leader, President Park

One cannot separate the Saemaul Undong Movement of the 1970s from President Park Chung Hee. Professor Park Jin Hwan, who was an economic advisor appointed by President Park Chung Hee, assessed the situation as “President Park was born with the qualities of a Saemaul Leader, and was a great leader of the Saemaul education system.” (Park Jinhwan 2005: 209)

Not only was President Park a great leader in planning pushing forward the Saemaul businesses, but he was also a great Saemaul leader in the sense that he listened to the experiences of Saemaul leaders with modesty. According to present Political Sociology theory, it is important for democratic governments to have positive and timely reactions to the suggestions of its people. President Park Chung Hee of the 1970s has an image of being a dictator, but in the eyes of the Saemaul Undong leaders he was a great leader who listened to their stories. By listening to the experiences of the Saemaul Undong leaders, the leaders and President Park could develop a sense of unity.

The agents that created history, the Saemaul leaders, guaranteed their status through the close relationship between the farmers and President Park. The various projects with government support had titles that had connections with the President. The Presidential Awards and the Presidential Grants are standout examples. For example, the letter from a trainee as shown below emphasizes the President’s support and medal.

³⁰ Interview with Kim Gi-myeong, February 7, 2007.

I received Presidential Medal for Group (August 15, 1972) and a Grant of KRW 1,500,000, with which I built a 400-pyeong green house and my income is growing day by day”³¹

If one examines the examples of successes of the Saemaul Undong Movement, the Presidential Grant Project played a prominent role. It can be said that the Grant project was the core element to the Saemaul project of each village. The sense of unity with the President caused farmers to more actively participate in the Saemaul Undong. Furthermore, President Park called the Saemaul leaders to the Blue House to meet them in person. President Park also made high ranking officials listen to the examples of successes by farmers.

Having the farmers participate in the monthly economic trend reports run by the Economic Planning Board is a direct example of President Park’s leadership as the head of the Saemaul leaders. President Park had the Saemaul leader directly report the success stories to him during the monthly economic trend reports. One thinks that having each governor of his respective area reporting his own Saemaul business successes to the President and other governors kept a great demonstration effect intact. According to documents, from June 1971 to September 1979 there were 134 monthly economic trend reports over 99 months presenting their exemplary successes.³² Professor Park Jin Hwan writes that around 150 leaders presented their respective exemplary successes (Park Jin Hwan 2001:43). There are small differences between the records; however it could be seen that President Park regarded the Saemaul success stories during the economic trend reports very highly. This was a place where the village heads met the head of the Saemaul leaders, which was of great significance.

President Park always referred to the Saemaul success stories when he had the chance.³³

My cabinet ministers and I, once every month at the economic trend reports, listen to the excellent success stories from the Saemaul leaders. When I listen to these vivid experiences, sometimes my eyes fill with tears and sometimes I feel a lump in my throat. Regardless, there are countless times when I become solemn.³⁴

Each Saemaul leader is individually called to the Blue House by President Park himself. The farm leaders that are invited to the monthly economic trend report meeting at the Blue House are entitled to a new status. The farmers not only become the subjects of modernization but also the agents of modernization, and pass on their experiences to high ranking officials. Here President Park becomes one with the farmers to discuss matters. Here the communications issues between a rural village farmer and the head of state disappear. Here President Park listens to the urgent problems of each village and promises government

31 The 1st Class. October 29, 1975 letter from Han Sang-mu of Sinpyeong-ri, Pungyang-myeon, Goheung, Jeollanam-do Province. Collected Letters of The 1975 Class Trainees. mimeo.

32 Kim Il-cheol, op cit. p. 126.

33 This part is quoted from Park Jin-do and Han Do-Hyun (1999).

34 “January 14, 1975 New Year News Conference”, The Presidential Secretariat. President Park Chung Hee’s Speeches. 1978.

funds on the spot. Thus here, the farmers become the agents of modernization, and they meet the head of the government and resolve the ambitious business projects of their village. After they meet the president they go back to their homes, with more confidence as Saemaul Undong leaders who is committed to push the Saemaul Undong to a religious level.

While a great deal of Saemaul leaders met President Park Chung Hee, they each still vividly recall the deep impression left by this encounter. It is said that the Saemaul leaders were so fond of President Park that they considered him a “comrade” (Jin Hwan Park 2005:172). To illustrate this point, although directly before the meeting Park’s bodyguards issued a sedative, the leaders would get butterflies, implying the scope of their admiration for the charismatic president. Accordingly, they were deeply moved by the meeting between a “mere country farmer,” and the “great leader of a nation (Yeong-Mi Kim 2009:364).” Moreover, they were grateful that Park loved them and granted them significant authority within their own jurisdiction. It is said that, even though they did not receive any salary, since these leaders represented the president, there were none that defied their authority (X-Sun Lim 2008:8). During the reign of Park, the Saemaul leaders held authority to the extent that they could “walk right into the Capitol Building or a minister’s office’ at any time (X-Hyeon Yun 2008:4).”

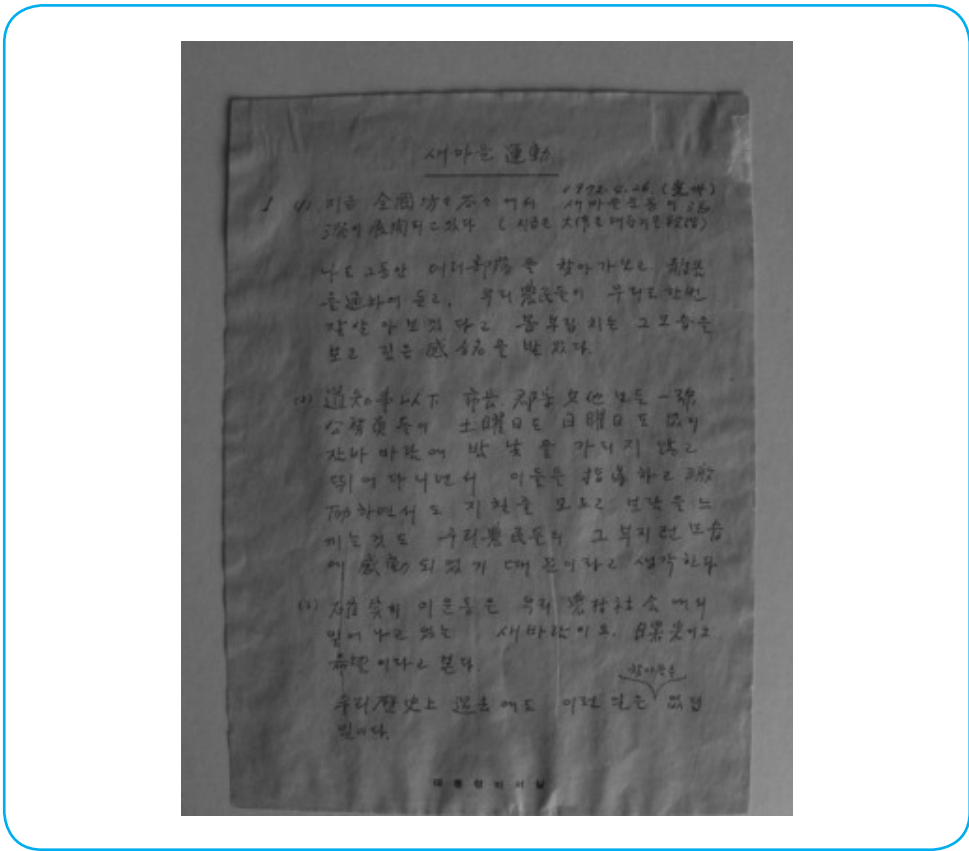
Leaders such as X-Geun Han and X-Muk Lim remember how the president actively aided and supported them, and carefully listened to their words. According to X-Geun Han, when a village pastor named X-Hwa Lee met with Park, he mentioned his village’s need for a phone. When the phone arrived the next day, it went along away toward lending credibility to the village leader (X-Geun Han 2008:4). The quick and efficient execution of a request made by a village leader was made possible by the instructions of President Park.

X-Weon Lee describes how, when Park toured the Gangweon Province, he would often be invited along (X-Weon Lee 2008:21). To that extent, Park espoused a deep concern for the Saemaul leaders. X-Sun Lim, of Wokcheon County, remembers how Park was “spiritually connected with” and “loved” the Saemaul leaders (X-Sun Lim 2008:7). X-Ryeon Kim, who presented a success story at the Monthly Economic Briefing at the Blue House, remembers how, “if the Saemaul leaders were lacking in strength, the president would lend support and assistance,” making sure the Saemaul leaders had the strength to see through their projects (X-Ryeon Kim 2008:14).

Of course, there were a great number of village leaders across the nation that never had the opportunity to meet President Park. However, they came into indirect contact with him through bounties and gifts. X-II Hong of Yongin County claimed that Saemaul leaders were greatly touched by the fact that President Park sent his secretary Jin Hwan Park to deliver the President’s gift to exemplary village leaders. After receiving the personal gifts from President Park, they strived all the more to fulfill the goals of the Saemaul Undong.

Those Saemaul leaders couldn't help but go into frenzy. It was Park's philosophy... I don't even know whether to call it a political philosophy or what. It was just unbelievable. When I was doing field training with leaders from lagging villages, President Park would send me a bounty twice a year. It wasn't conveyed through the provincial governor or the county governor either. Rather, Park Jin Hwan, the President's special economic secretary, came directly to my house dozens of times... He would come and encourage me. So, in the vitality of youth, one couldn't help but go into frenzy (X-Il Hong 2008:4-5).

Figure 3-2 | President Park's Manuscript for Saemaul Undong
(This handwriting shows his commitment for the Saemaul Undong)



Famous for land reclamation of changing the sea into farmland, the leader X-Muk Lim remarks, “Because [he] was involved in Saemaul,” he could meet the likes of powerful people like President Park. These words emphasize that it was the Saemaul Undong that made his meeting with the President possible. Im continues, “I could die now without regrets (X-Muk Lim 2008:35).”

X-Mo Yu describes how he met Park at the National Convention of Saemaul Leaders held in Gwangju, saying, “one was powerless against the charisma of this man (X-Mo Yu 2008:1).”

I remember when I was a Saemaul leader. President Park gave a speech saying, ‘Someday, when your descendants are asked about who their forefathers were, your descendants will answer, they were the Saemaul leaders who successfully led the Saemaul Undong in this village.’ Your descendants will answer that the Saemaul village leaders were our forefathers. Everyone who listened to that speech couldn’t help but be overcome with ecstasy. (Yeong-Mo Yu 2008)

The passage above captures the feelings of Yu Yeong-Mo, a Saemaul leader in North Chungcheong Province, when he heard Park Chung Hee’s speech³⁵ given at a national convention on November 22, 1973. Forefathers of the Saemaul Undong above would be compared to Pilgrim Fathers of New England. Although Saemaul Leaders worked for the economic betterment of themselves and villagers, their sacrifice and devotion reminded the audience of a religious dimension of this national campaign.

Within his career, upon receiving a medal from the president at the Blue House, he mused, “Am I really worthy of being here? What have I done to deserve to shake hands with the President? As long as I am alive, I’ll have to get along with my fellow man (X-Mo Yu 2008:20-21).”

Over the course of their training, there were many Saemaul leaders that met President Park. X-Gyu Jeon recalls his impression:

I think President Park was born to lead Korea. Once, he visited the Saemaul Undong Training Institute. Without a word, he stood quietly at the back of the classroom. Then, after the class he came to eat lunch with us. He just stood in line, just like the other trainees. Then he went and sat with us at the table. I saw this happen several times. He would talk about how to overcome poverty and hardship. It was our national leader just sitting and having a meal with us regular people. It was really something else (X-Gyu Jeon 2008:23).

35 The original content of the speech was as follows: “After we’re gone, what could be the greatest legacy we could leave for our descendants? When they are asked whom their forefathers were, I would tell them to answer, ‘My forefathers were those frugal, hard-working rural farmers that led the Saemaul Undong of the 1970s.’ I can think of no greater cause to devote one’s life to, nor a more honorable legacy to bequeath.” President’s Speech at the National Conention of the Saemaul Leaders on November 23, 1973.

One can discover the bond between the Saemaul leaders and President Park in the words ‘President bounties’ and ‘bounty-based projects’. Within the dossier on Gwang-Muk Lim kept by the Saemaul Undong Central Training Institute, there is a file called, ‘The First Project from President bounty of 1974’, consisting of about 160 pages (Do-Hyun Han 2010:55). Since the content of the file describes the various Saemaul projects of Im’s village, one can discover how bounties from the president played a major role within the Saemaul Undong. These presidential rewards, along with other medals of commendation, were presented at the Monthly Economic Briefing or the National Convention of Saemaul Leaders (X-Weon Lee 2008:25). At the Monthly Economic Briefing held at the Blue House from 1971 to September 1979, more than 150 Saemaul leaders presented success stories before the president (Park Jin Hwan 2005:60; Do-Hyun Han 2010:73).

Among those in attendance at the Monthly Economic Trend Briefing were the likes of the Deputy Prime Minister of the Economic Planning Board, as well as the chairmen of the National Assembly Subcommittees, all in all about fifty people. Following the instructions of President Park, starting in June of 1971, the farmer’s success stories was also added to the agenda (Jin Hwan Park 2005:59-60). As the leaders presented their stories, Park would ask them, “What project do you most desire to see undertaken in your village? What is your dream project?” Then, he would pledge to aid the proposed project (X-Geun Han 2008:4; X-Ryeon Kim 2008:22). The decision to repeatedly present successful Saemaul cases was twofold. On the one hand, the stories showed that the Saemaul Undong was essential for ‘Korea Inc.’, while on the other, they demonstrated the deep bond between the Saemaul leaders and President Park. That is, by meeting with the President in the Blue House and receiving awards, the authority of the Saemaul leaders became greater than it had ever been before. For example, in November 1978, the record of proceedings of the Village Development Committee of Pyeonggok-2-village in Eumseong Township, Eumseong County, Northern Chungcheong Province, proudly note how a village leader arrived at the Blue House and received a reward of 5,000,000 won.

The Saemaul leaders considered President Park an ally. While in the past, township or county governors, or other positions of leadership, had been considered as sources of much fear and anxiety, as the Saemaul Undong steadily moved forward, those in positions of power simply became means for Saemaul leaders to utilize towards their own ends. Moreover, while previously farmers had been the subjects of regulation and domination, the Saemaul Undong changed this. Particularly, those Saemaul leaders bestowed medals of commendation and achieving national fame became a powerful force for the countryside within the government. X-Geun Han, though only an elementary school graduate, became an instructor teaching his success story to the so-called social elite.

These days it'd be impossible, but back then we really helped and supported each other like that. Once, I went to present a success story at the Saemaul Leaders Training Institute and there were Ministers and Vice Ministers present.....In the beginning, they were not seriously listening to me. But after about an hour of listening to my success story, they bowed their heads and cried. The tears flowed (X-Geun Han 2008:4).

This scene depicting the likes of ministers, top businessmen and other social elites, despite their traditional hypersensitivity to social status, being moved to tears by the lecture of an elementary school graduate and country peasant, is unprecedented in Korean society. Here, men of great power and influence are listening intently to a simple farmer. Owing to President Park's interest in the Saemaul project, the Saemaul leaders would be treated "with the same respect one would give his or her own grandfather (X-Geun Han 2008:5)," even by people in positions of power.

2011 Modularization of Korea's Development Experience
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(New Community Movement)

Chapter 4

Compound Project for Villagers' Income Increase

Compound Project for Villagers' Income Increase

As mentioned earlier, the Saemaul Undong invented and utilized many new methods for income increase. In early periods of the movement, the government provided villagers with materials only. Over time, the government could afford to provide more. One is to implement public works so that farmers could earn labor income during the winter when farmers tend to be idle. In addition, the government felt the necessity to improve road conditions for the better access of farmers to markets or for better farming. The government paid attention to other problems of agricultural infrastructure such as small creeks alignments or readjustment. For those public works, the government introduced a new method as one of the Saemaul Method. The most impressive one is Compound Project. For the introduction of this innovative method, the government should allow the village to have a status of corporate entity as a company. With this legal status, village could sign an agreement for a public work contract, acting as if it were a company. [Figure 4-1] shows how the government sign an agreement with a village development committee. In the agreement, the contract specifies how the public work should be done and what kind of technology is required. This is an official and legal agreement, not just giving out a project to villagers. Thus, the village development committee of villagers had to take responsibility for any failure of the completion of the public work and flaws of the finished works.

Figure 4-1 | Business Contract between Village Development Committee and the Local Government

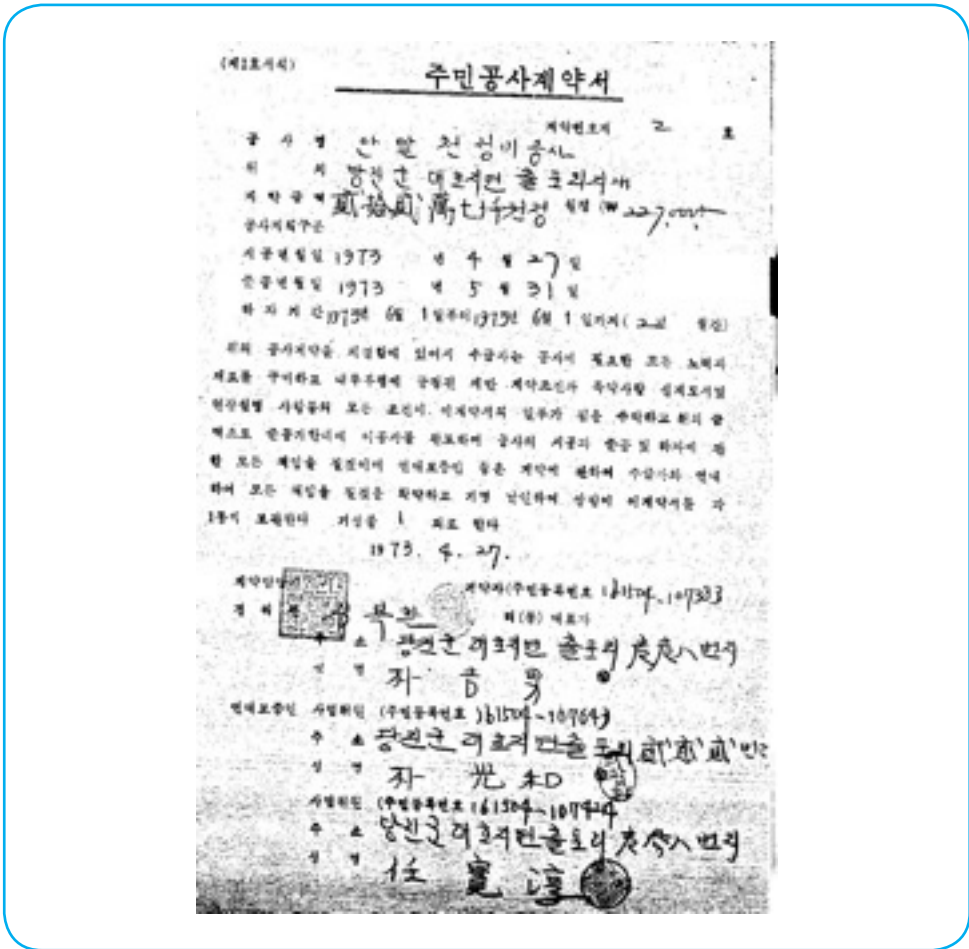
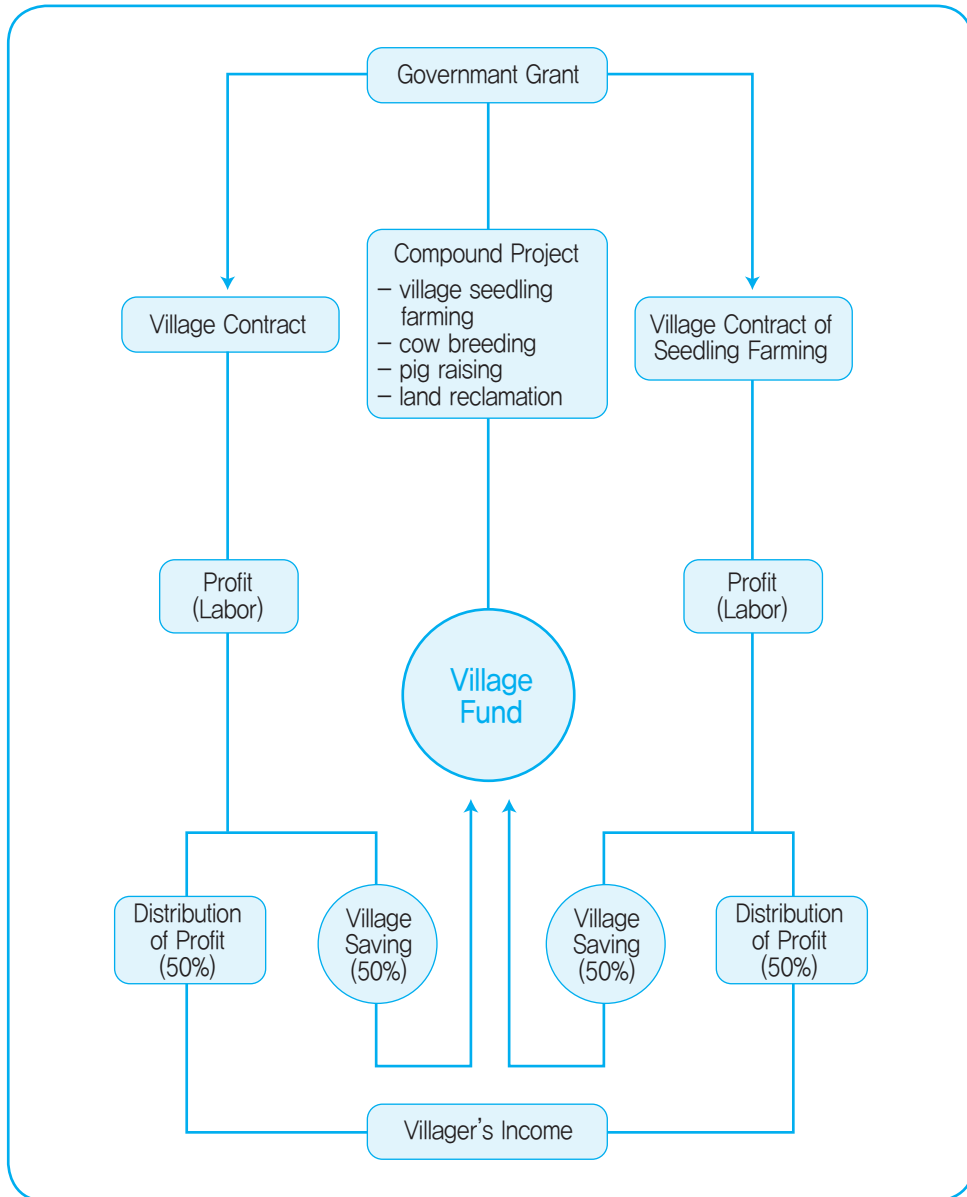


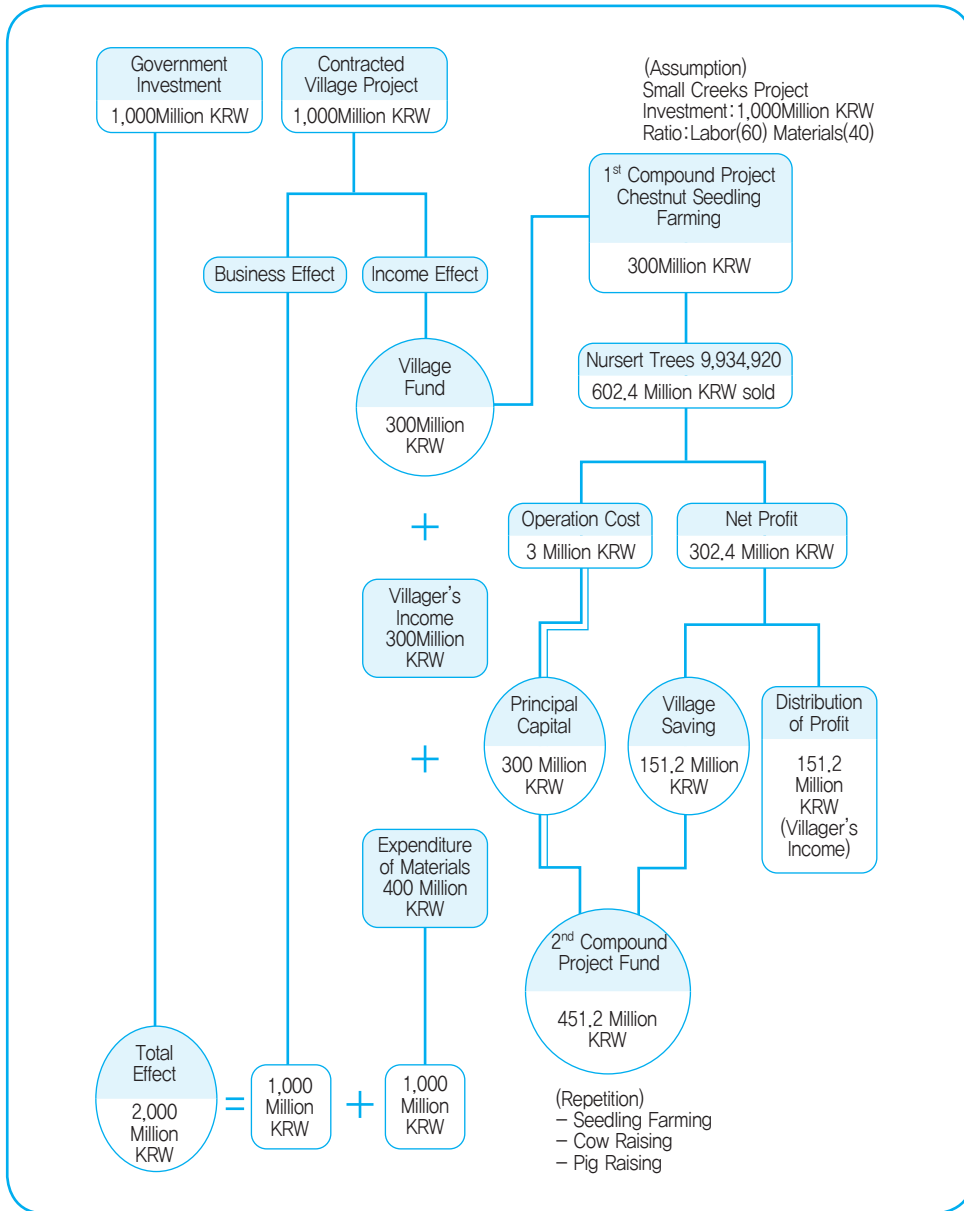
Figure 4-2 | Framework of Compound Project



Source: Kim, Jongho. 1973: 106

Compound Project is an extended concept of self-help for villagers' income increase. The government gives an initial fund for a public project less than 3,000,00 KRW. The government assumed that larger projects could not be handled by a village company. In the figure, on the left side, we see "Village Contract→Profit (Labor)→Distribution of Profit(50%) and Village Saving (50%)." From here, the village saving goes into village

Figure 4-3 | Example of Compound Project



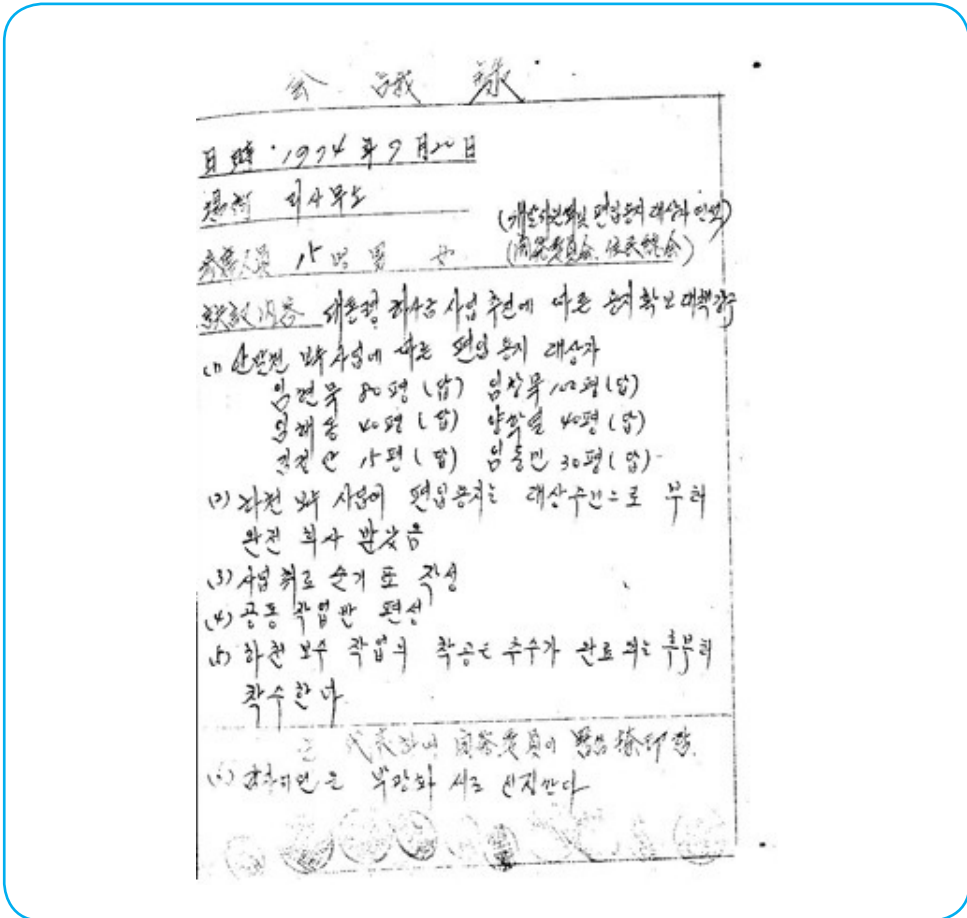
Source: Kim, Jongho. 1973: 107

fund and Distribution of profit goes for consumption by villagers. The important thing is that villagers contribute half of their labor income to the village fund. This village fund is expected to grow through the repetition of this process. Then, villagers could operate an income generating business by using this village fund. This improves the level of self-help of the villagers and the village. Another lesson of this method is that all villagers participate

in the establishment of the village fund and get their share from the project result according to their investment amount. Division of profit from the repeated compound project is done by the principle of a stock company. Although a stock company is a foreign concept for rural villagers in Korea of the 1970s, the government and village leaders were innovative and bold enough to introduce this concept to Saemaul projects.

[Figure 4-3] shows a concrete example. The government bestows an initial grant for a small creek project (see the top above right). Small creek readjustment projects were very popular in the rural Saemaul Undong. The project was in need for better irrigation and for better flood control. For the public works, it is assumed that the ratio of labor cost and material cost would be 6:4. Thus, from the initial investment of the government, the village development committee spends 40% of the fund on material purchase and operational cost. Village development committee allots 60% of the fund to villagers' labor income. From the labor income, a half is to be saved for the establishment of the village fund. In this scenario, 300million KRW becomes a village fund. This village fund is to be reinvested in some income generating project. In [Figure 4-3], the new project is chestnut seedling farming. The chestnut seedling farming is the first compound project. The first compound project gives villagers another 302.4 million KRW. Then, the village fund increases from 300 million KRW to 451.2 million KRW. For this first Compound Project, the government invested nothing. This compound project is repeated. Then the village operate compound project for income increase without the government support. This is a realization of self-help for villagers and villages.

Figure 4-4 | Land Donations by Land-owners, Chulpori



The Saemaul Movement asked villagers to provide free labor and land donation as a matching fund in the initial period. I call this a prototype of Saemaul Method. Although many people say this is the Saemaul Method, it is in reality just one of the many Saemaul methods. Compound project is more generous and realistic in that it acknowledges the labor cost. Compound project allows villager to get material benefit by participating in the government public projects. However, even in compound project, the land cost is not subsidized. Only voluntary and free donation of land is required. In the countryside, land is the most precious asset for villagers. Land donation is a big challenge for any Saemaul leaders who sign an agreement with local governments for the purpose of securing a public project for the welfare of villagers. For the benefit of the community, some private land owners sacrifice their property.

Figure 4-5 | Land Donations by Landowners for a Presidential Grant in Chulpori

동서회사 농락사

동년 대통령 농락 전사공으로 본부장 농락전
 농락사들 심의 받아 있어 이에 해당되는 대로
 아래와 같이 전사할것을 농락함

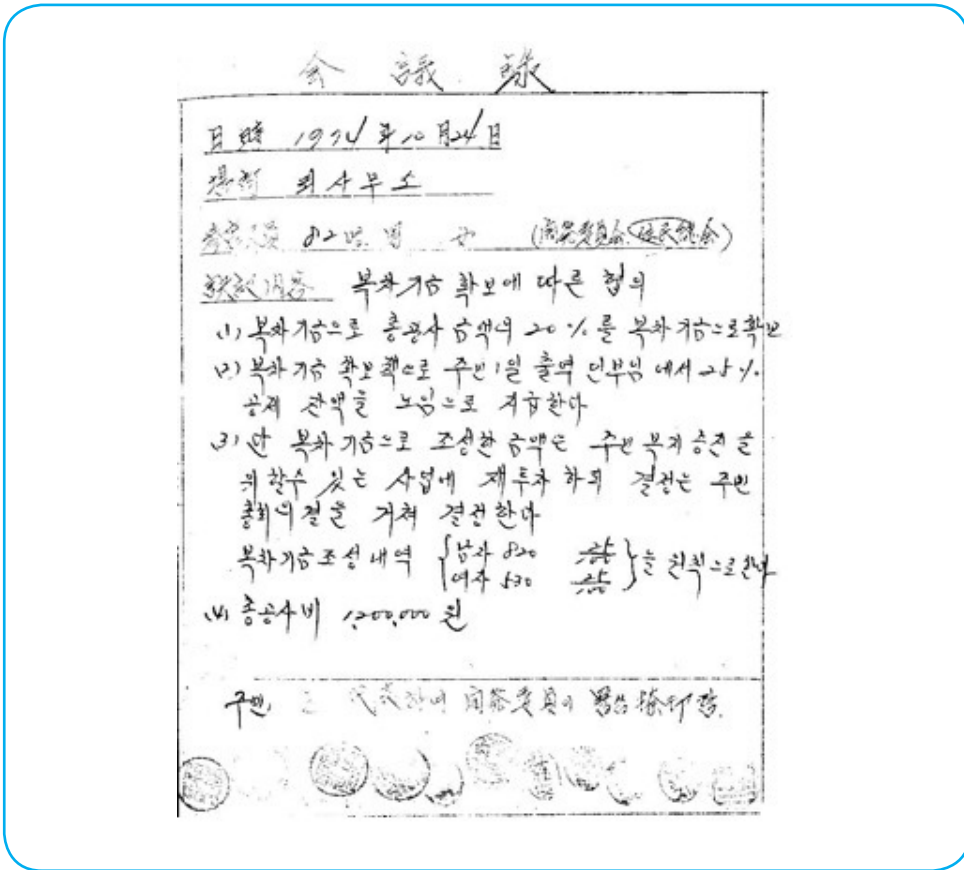
주소	전사내역	1974년 11월 10일			비고
		본인	전부	차액	
충모리	임권호	82	삼	80평	
"	임장복	82	삼	100평	
"	임리봉	101	삼	90평	
"	양현열	104	삼	40평	
"	김정안	105	삼	15평	

In Chulpori in Dangjin County, the village was successful in getting land donation from the concerned five land owners. Five villagers sign on the paper; they are called “persons who are happy to donate.” The land they donate are all paddy land. Paddy land was the most precious land category in the farming countryside.

From this initial project, Chupori village could start the first compound project. On October 24, 1974, villagers held a general meeting or townhall meeting to discuss this prospective compound project.

The minutes show that 20% of the initial project fund will be secured as a fund for compound project. For this amount, 25% of labor income will be saved for the village fund.

Figure 4-6 | Village Meeting for Deciding on the Next Compound Project in Chulpori



What is important is that the meeting stipulates that the village fund made of the labor income should be used for income increasing project and should be decided by the general assembly of the villagers.

Figure 4-7 | Records of Village Assembly Meeting for Compound Project

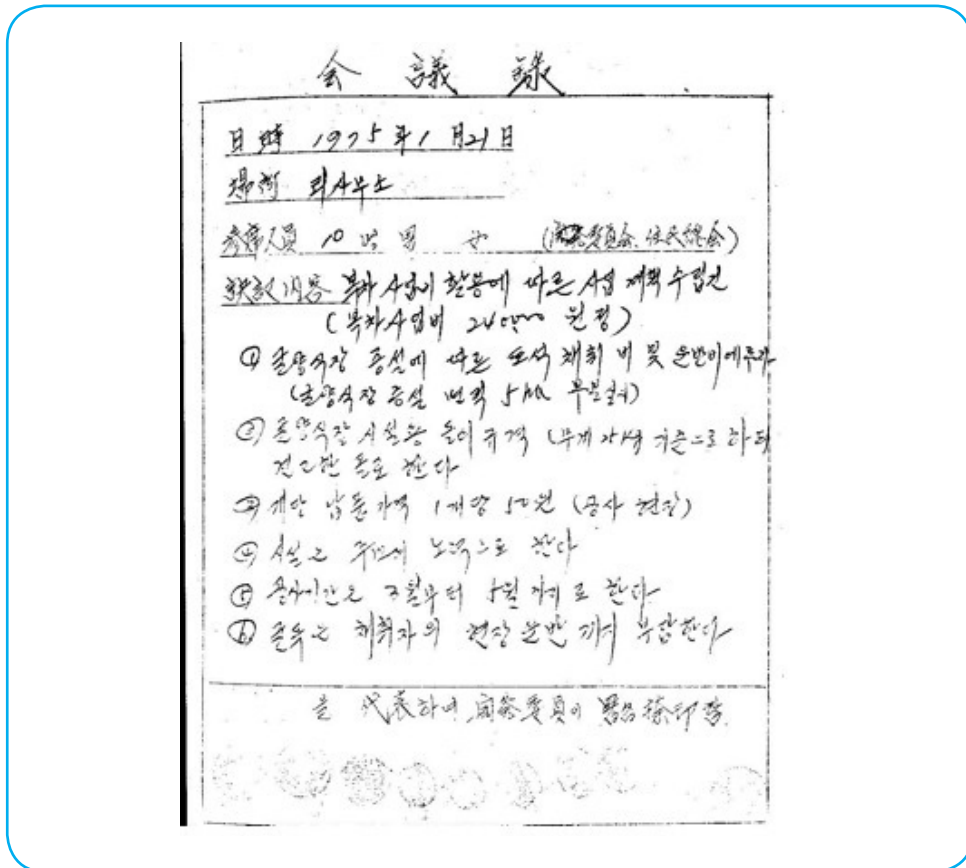


Figure 4-10 | Savings Passbooks of Village Credit Union and Agricultural Coop Bank



2011 Modularization of Korea's Development Experience
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Chapter 5

Virtuous Cycle for Sustainable Saemaul Undong

Virtuous Cycle for Sustainable Saemaul Undong

In the world history, there have been some nationwide campaigns which were successful during the initial first or second years, but few nationwide campaigns lasted more than ten years. National polls repeatedly show that Korean people are proud of the Saemaul Undong. Especially farmers say the years of the 1970s Saemaul Undong were the golden times. What made the 1970s Saemaul Undong sustainable? The key was the virtuous cycle of the Saemaul Circle.

What I should like to emphasize is that all such projects should be so implemented as to contribute directly to the increased income of farmers. In other words, we should watch out against projects which are good to look at but contribute little to increase of production or income—that is, projects that are just for showing off. The farmers’ sense of participation can be sustained only when they have the satisfaction of seeing their income grow.³⁶

The so called Saemaul Circle, a sequence of events, was for strengthening of community efficacy: support and stimulation by the government→motivation for the development of village infrastructures→participation in cooperative project (labor)→visible achievement→realization of benefit from the achievement→promotion of self-help and cooperation spirit→undertaking of a task on a greater scale (Goh Kon 2010; Chung Kap Jin 2011:72).

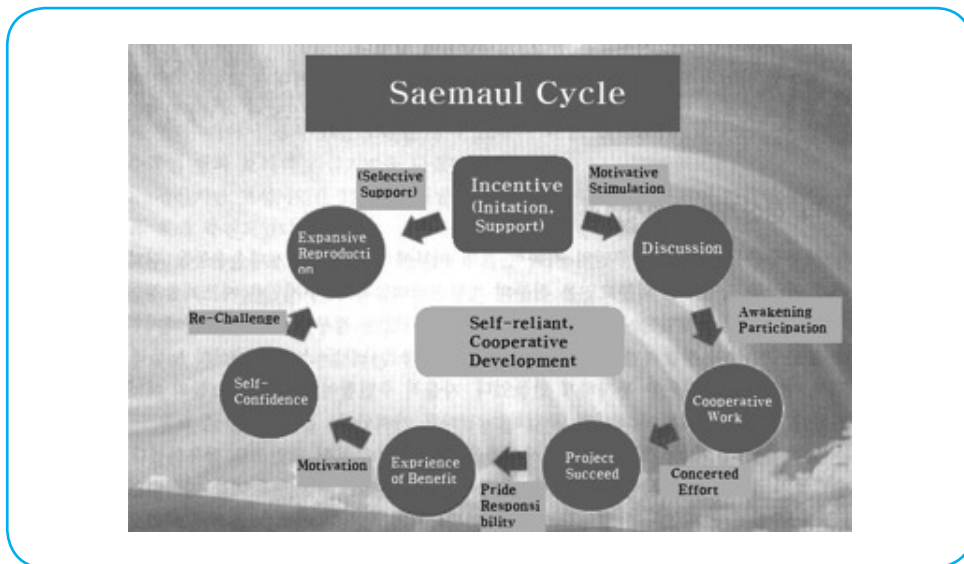
For the Saemaul Circle, income increase or material reward was important. For this villagers and village leaders made numerous innovations for income increase. Many people had misunderstanding that rural income increase could be possible mostly with the strong and active role of the government. If we investigate many successful stories of the Saemaul Undong projects, we find vibrant and dynamic innovation activities of village leaders and

³⁶ Park Chung Hee. 1979. *Saemaul: Korea's New Community Movement*. Seoul: The Secretariat for the President, the Republic of Korea.P.134.

villagers. Teachers and activists who participated in the 1970s Saemaul Undong tell us that each village has made its own unique success stories. Those success stories are grassroots innovations. By changing the traditional ways of farming or introducing new ways of farming or planting new varieties, they made their own success for rural income growth. Although the government was very active in supporting rural income increase projects, they were hesitant to support or allow risky projects of villages. Welfare financing guidelines clearly stipulate that plans that are “too ambitious” may not be pursued at the village level. Village leaders with vision challenged these guidelines and introduced innovations with their fellow villagers.

The Saemaul leaders did not resemble the traditional leaders or village heads of the past. Whereas the village heads had been charged with purely administrative responsibilities, Saemaul leaders were charged with creating faith in developmentalism and carrying out corresponding projects as a sort of “entrepreneurs” (Do-Hyun Han 2010a: 53-58). That is, these men were not only responsible for translating and communicating the broad policies and guidelines of the government to the average farmer, but mobilizing the villagers therein. Moreover, they were young adults and middle aged men in their 30s and 40s, and unlike their traditional counterparts, they were exposed to rationalism of modernity; they stressed effectiveness, efficiency and goal achievement as business entrepreneurs. In the spring of 1973, when Yeong-Mo Kim, a member of the Saemaul inspection team, surveyed 100 villages over the course of a year, he commented, “in the villages where one finds successful Saemaul projects, one also finds an outstanding Saemaul leader (Yeong-Mo Kim 2003:23).” Those village leaders were good at grassroots innovation for income increase.

Figure 5-1 | Saemaul Virtuous Cycle



Source: Kap Jin Chung 2011: 73

Village leaders and villagers targeted a modest and feasible project. Based on the experience of a modest success, they developed a bigger and more ambitious project. When they performed better, the government gave more support. What happened in the urban industry happened in rural Korea as well: those who have more will get more.

Let's examine the record of Chulpori again. This village started Saemaul projects on February 5, 1972, according to its minutes of village meetings. The village selected Im Kwang-Muk as Saemaul Leader. He was the only Saemaul leader of the village during the 1970s Saemaul Undong.

The villager also launched the campaign of the roof improvement and the living environment improvement. Surprisingly, the leaders and villagers embarked on a land reclamation project, which was quite a large project compared to other Saemaul projects. The land reclamation made the village and the leader famous.

With the success of land reclamation, village road readjustment, roof improvements, etc., the village received a special prize from Chungcheong Province. Chungcheong province acknowledged the hard work of villagers. According to the announcement, the achievement of Chulpori village was ranked as the top 4th in the county. Because of this outstanding achievement, the village was officially recognized as a self-reliant village [Figure 5-2].

Figure 5-2 | Certificate of Self-Reliant Village



A self-reliant village is the most advanced village. The goal of the Saemaul Undong was to make villages self-reliant. The village of Chulpo received the prize with Award grant. This grant was to be used for income increase project. In the certificate, the village was allowed to undertake five projects such as cow raising, small creek readjustment, clam breeding, roof improvement and re-forestation. All these projects could contribute to the income increase of villagers. The certificate tells that the villagers of Chupori were privileged to undertake a series of income generating projects with the support of the government. If we read the minutes and records of projects, the achievement of Chulpori was very impressive. But the ranking of its achievement was only the 4th in Dangjin County. This ranking shows that enthusiasm for the Saemaul Undong was very strong Dangjin County. We cannot explain the enthusiasm by relying on the theory of political pressure from the government. When I read the minutes and detailed daily records of Saemaul projects, reports of finished projects, records of labor participation, I find voluntary participation and active commitment for the success of the Saemaul projects. When I read the records of the land reclamation projects, I find that there were no supports for the land reclamation project, or any pressure. When villagers and the village leaders were frustrated because of destruction of some parts of the dam, the government did not respond to the repeated request of help from the villagers and the Saemaul leader.

Figure 5-3 | Cow Raising Project with the Self-Reliant village Award Grant in Chulpori

사립마을서 동리

1. 사업명: 한우양육 사업
2. 사업목적: 농촌소득증진 및 생활안정
3. 사업대상지: 1993.5~6
4. 사업내용

1리	2리	3리	4리	합계	비고
1리	4두			4두	
2리	3두			3두	
3리	3두	7두		10두	
4리	4두	7두		11두	
합계	14두	14두		28두	

5. 사업비용: 2리 1리 2리 합계
6. 사업비용

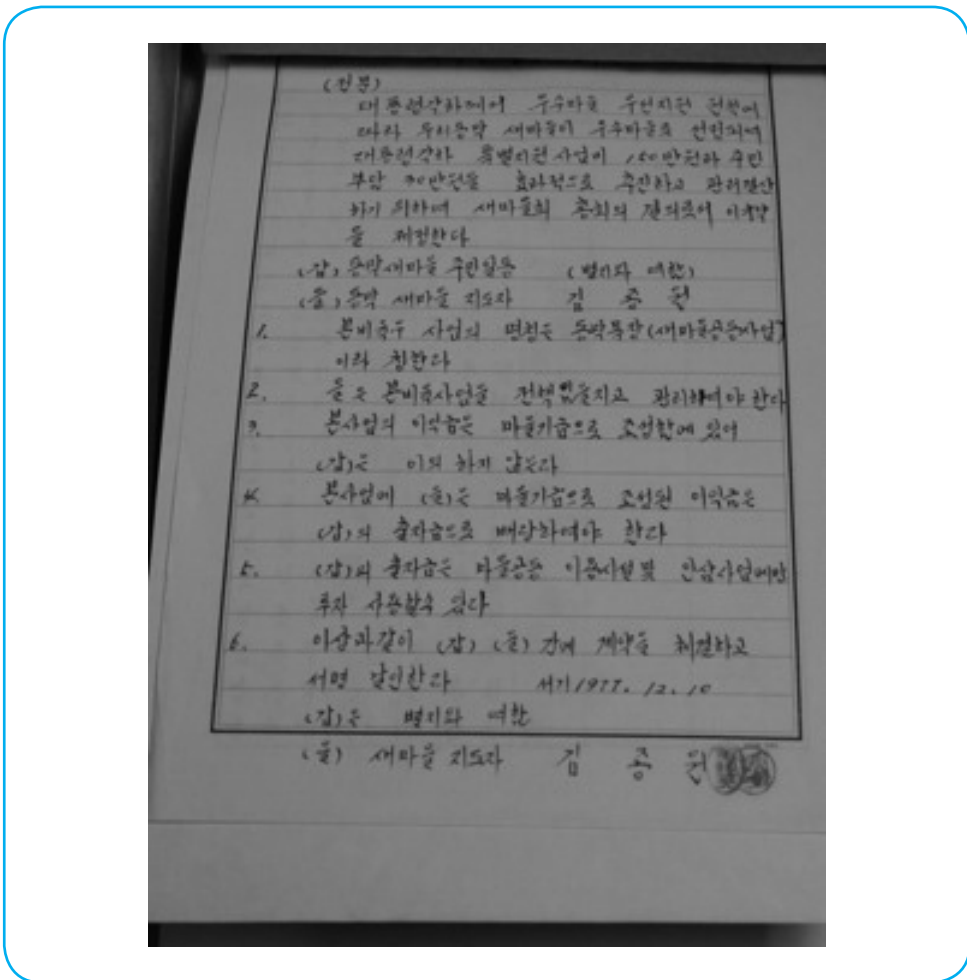
항목	비율	비고	비고
40만원	2만원	15만원	5.7만원

장인장 최귀의 면장 귀하.

[Figure 5-3] shows that the virtuous cycle operated well. The village development committee selected five poor farmers who did not own their own cow. These farmers received loans to buy cows. A farmer purchased a cow with his own money of 150,000KRW and the village fund of 250,000KRW.

Chulpori was successful in these Saemaul projects by using the Award grant which was given to the village of outstanding achievement of 1972. With this grant, the village accomplished more projects in 1973. All projects from this Award grant of 1973 contributed to the income increase of the villagers. Unsurprisingly, the village got the Presidential Award grant of 1,200,000 because of the outstanding achievement of 1973.

Figure 5-4 | Agreement between Village Leader and Villagers for Presidential Grant Project



Then, this village undertook a creek readjustment project of Anmal creek. From this project, they established a village fund as explained in the section of compound project. Thus, we clearly see that the village of great success enjoyed the fruit of the virtuous cycle of Saemaul Circle.

Another example of the virtuous cycle is shown in the case of Dongmak Village in Yongin County (currently Yongin city). This village received the Special Presidential Grant for their outstanding achievement of Saemaul Project [Figure 5-4]. The villager held the town-hall meeting. They decided on embarking on series of income increasing projects. First, they started a beef cattle raising as a project of a village common stock farm. They further decided that the profit from this beef cattle growing should be used to the village common facilities and to the business of ginseng farming. Ginseng farming guarantees a sustainable and stable high income. This example shows that villagers and village leaders were very active in creating the virtuous cycle of the Saemaul Circle. In other words, the Saemaul project was not given unilaterally by the government. On contrary, villagers and the leaders designed their own better future together. The virtuous cycle was not guaranteed unilaterally by the government either. Instead, the active participation and responsibility of villagers and the village leader mattered a lot.

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Chapter 6

Expansion of the Virtuous Cycle beyond Village

1. The Presentation of Success Stories
2. The Field Training of Leaders from Lagging Villages

Expansion of the Virtuous Cycle beyond Village

As the Saemaul leaders led village development, not only were they CEOs, but mentors influencing other leaders as well. This was because successfully developed villages served as dynamic educational case studies. Sometimes, the stories were even made into movies or published in other mediums and disseminated throughout the nation. Furthermore, some of the successful villages provided an on-site training ground for leaders from lagging villages, and acted as the site of field trips during Saemaul education. The leaders in these successful villages became mentors to the visiting trainees.

1. The Presentation of Success Stories

There was much talk about what led to success within the Saemaul Undong, because that in turn led to the more success. Thus, success stories from all over the country were shared. The magazine entitled, 'Saemaul Undong', published by the Ministry of the Interior, introduced as many as 178 success cases. Among these, some were presented at the National Convention of Saemaul Leaders and received medals of commendation from the President himself. Furthermore, some were also presented at the Monthly Economic Briefing held at the Blue House, where representatives of these cases also presented in front of the President and received medals and bounties.

Aside from receiving medals at the National Convention of Saemaul Leaders and the Monthly Economic Briefing, successful villages, as well as the leaders therein, were eligible for all kinds of assistance. Moreover, partnership opportunities with sister institutions involving Koreans in Japan, public institutions, and private companies were available. Also, successful villages received field visits from the likes of foreign dignitaries, presidents, prime ministers, ministers and governors, much to their pride. Finally, the improved

image of these villages would be featured in newspapers and on television,³⁷ providing an opportunity for these small villages to display their successes on the national stage. As leaders became known nationwide, they became the teachers of the Saemaul education on a grand scale, serving to modernize the nation.

“Without even using notes, by just presenting the success stories as they were, not only were the Saemaul leaders able to capture the hearts of their fellow leaders, but the social elites as well (X-Muk Lim 2008:9).” Therefore, the success stories were the most important facet of the Saemaul Undong education. Se-Yeong Lee (Currently Judeok township in Chungju city), who participated in community development campaigns since the 1950s, is currently recording these success stories (Se-Yeong Lee 2003: 321 – 322).

The core leadership lecturing on success stories at the Saemaul Leaders Training Institute consisted of 56 men, while a trainee admitted to the institute listened to an average of 10 success stories during their training period (Park Jin Hwan 2005:161-167). The leaders lecturing on these success stories soon became lecturers for the nation. Among these success cases, particularly dynamic ones were even turned into movies or television dramas. Legendary figure of the Saemaul Undong, Sa-Yong Ha, had this to say:

It was quite a frenzy. Every training institute wanted to recruit me. So, I set out to lecture. I even spoke for the governor. Later, The Ministry of Agricultural and Forestry put it in the movie called, ‘The Light in a Prairie’ (chowon-ui bit). Among the students, whether elementary or University students, there was probably no one who hadn’t seen it (Sa-Yong Ha 2004:70).

During the early stages of the Saemaul Undong, tasks like environment and roof improvement were emphasized, but these were not the goals of the movement in and of themselves. In reality, the goal of the Saemaul Undong was for poor villages to become prosperous villages. Thus, Sa-Yong Ha’s success story, “getting rich”, became a national success story. The stories of a poor farmer achieving prosperity, or a poor village becoming a profitable one, were examples of stories that became inextricable from the Saemaul Undong.

The fact that every training institute, wanted to recruit Sa-Yong Ha applied to other successful Saemaul leaders too. X-Gi Choi remarked, “I would go to the training institute to lecture, before going over to the village or stopping off at the industrial association to lecture yet again (X-Gi Choi 2008:20).” Although Choi was only an elementary school graduate, he became a national lecturer, teaching about his success stories “without so much as a note.” As well, being no more than elementary school graduates did not stop the likes of X-GyuJeon and X-Geun Han from lecturing on success stories, nor did it stop them

37 [December 27, 1973] Se-Yeong Lee and Ja-Ho Lee were each featured in the broadcast by KBS in which Pungdeok village was recommended as a contestant for the National Saemaul Competition [Se-Yeong Lee 2003: 333].

from becoming teachers and mentors to those Saemaul leaders seeking out their guidance (X-Gyu Jeon 2008:26; X-Geun Han 2008:10). Although X-Gyu Jeon's name does not appear in Park Jin Hwan's book, over the course of a month, he lectured several times at the Saemaul Leaders Training Institute (X-Gyu Jeon 2008:23). Ki-Myeong Kim, an instructor at the institute, stated of these lectures, "These were not the transformative words of great scholars, but words exchanged between comrades." The leaders would lecture to and listen to each other, creating a process of mutual growth and development.

2. The Field Training of Leaders from Lagging Villages

Among the educational techniques adopted during the Saemaul Undong, for those leaders from lagging villages, there was the field-training program. During the Saemaul Undong, village development was classified into three stages, consisting of 'basic villages', 'self-help villages' and 'self-reliant villages'. Villages where the Saemaul project had failed to move forward were known as basic villages. For the leaders of these villages, the training program consisted of several stages. During the first week of training, they would receive proscribed education at the Saemaul Undong Training Institute from leaders of self-reliant villages. Then, during the second week, they would visit more than twenty sites over three nights and four days (See Figure A-2 in Appendix). This was known as the field training (X-Muk Lim 2008:11). In other words, the leaders from basic villages would travel to self-reliant villages where they could directly experience and study the Saemaul Undong (Park Jin Hwan 2005: 169), and in groups of about 6-10, they would receive a room and board at the homes of the self-reliant village leaders (X-Muk Lim 2008; X-Weon Lee 2008); thus host wives made tremendous sacrifices too. Self-reliant village leaders would engage in the field training according to a schedule determined by the Saemaul Leaders Training Institute. Moreover, in order to increase the effectiveness of the experience, cooperation with exemplary leader lecturers was also emphasized. As such, leaders like X-II Hong had to visit the Saemaul Training Institute "a great number of times (X-II Hong 2008:5)."

To increase the effectiveness of field education, leaders from exemplary villages would employ creative methods particular to their own style. For example, although during the duration of the training program the consumption of alcohol was prohibited, some outstanding village instructors would drink late into the morning, trying to understand the basic village leaders.

Sure, we'd have a drink. We'd drink our fill. We'd cuss and complain, say this and that about the Saemaul education, about each other's villages and lives, and the night would pass before we knew it. That's where you can really get to know a person. That person's heart of hearts and such and such. We all think we're too busy with our own lives to help others and this kind of thing. But spending time like that together, they came to see things from a different point of view. And just like that within four days we'd become quite close. It was quite extraordinary (X-Muk Lim 2008:12).

During the night the leaders would hold candid conversation and during the day they would engage in serious training. While moving about the village, the basic village leader would ask the exemplary leader, "What did you do to produce these kinds of results?" Here, a leader remembers the fruits reaped through on-site education:

Well, even when we were making simple straw bags, the trainees would be looking on so intently. Are they idiots? (Not at all). They would be with the village people all the time, asking them about everything.....If you spend a week like that, you really learn something (X-Weon Lee 2008:15).

In one particular incident, X-Weon Lee's wife gave birth during a field training period. Some trainees had come to his house and even though Lee's wife was due at any moment, she prepared a meal for the them, after which she was rushed to the hospital. Not only was Lee unable to accompany his wife to the hospital that day, it was only after he finished the training with the visiting leaders that he finally visited the hospital to see his newborn child. He saw the training through to the end, commenting, "It was five days before I saw the face of my firstborn (X-Weon Lee)." In this story, one can certainly discern the dedication of the self-reliant village leaders and their families.

The field training program consisted of a follow up stage as well. After the basic village leaders had finished their training and returned to their villages to apply what they had learned, self-reliant leaders would later pay a visit so as to evaluate their progress. Upon one such occasion, it is reported that the wife of a basic village leader even performed a ceremonial bow to a self-reliant leader, so as to signify her great respect (X-Geun Han 2008:8). Besides X-Geun Han, other leaders have declared the pleasure and benefit of these follow up visits (X-Weon Lee 2008; X-Muk Lim 2008).

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Chapter 7

Challenges for Leaders

Challenges for Leaders

Village leaders sacrificed their lives and their material resources. In the course of Saemaul Undong, they faced many obstacles and challenges. Mr. Lim also met many obstacles which made him think of committing suicide once. The obstacles came both from nature and fellow villagers. The committed leaders stood in the head of the campaign. Many people tend to emphasize the initiative of the government or the leadership of late President Park Chung-Hee in Saemaul Undong. Without the active leaders in the villages, however, the movement could not record its success. Most challenges in the village were solved by the sacrifice of the committed village leaders. Mr Lim said in his testimonial about his sacrifice and hardship after he experienced a failure:

“People who did not experience a similar thing cannot understand my situation..... Villagers avoid me.(Suicide) it is the only solution for me.....When I came home, my wife quietly rose from her bed. She said to me, “You are hopelessly crazy. Now what shall you do?” As you imagine, our relationship could not be good because I did not take well care of my farming and house. For Saemaul Undong, I sacrificed my farming and family life. I cannot tell you (audience—Han) my wife’s complaints in detail. Up-to now, I have refuted my wife’s complaints or persuaded my wife so many times. But now I fully understand her complaints and feel a strong sympathy for her. I feel heartily ashamed of myself because she underwent all sorts of hardships.³⁸

Reading the testimonials of the village leaders, we find their opponents in their family, village, and even in the local governments. They solved those challenges by themselves without getting help from outside.

In many cases, the proposal of a vision did not necessarily coincide with success. For example, in X-Gyu Jeon’s village, in order to install an irrigation system in the fields, a swamp was dammed off. However, after heavy rains, the swamp overflowed and engulfed

³⁸ Ibid.

the villagers. In the aftermath, the angry villagers swarmed his house blaming him for the disaster, and Jeon's mother was even stricken blind in the commotion. Following these events, Jeon consulted with various national assemblymen before finally receiving a grant for relief aid from deputy prime minister Deok-Woo Nam, enabling his village to overcome the crisis. However, his mother's blindness was unfortunately incurable (X-Gyu Jeon 2008:3). X-II Hong's village also experienced similar flooding after blocking off a swamp. In this case, the village had barricaded as many as two swamps to create a carp-fish farm, but as the rainy season commenced, the swamp barriers gave way. For the villagers, it was quite a demoralizing experience. Fortunately, the Chief of Farmland Construction Department in his county came to investigate the crisis and, upon witnessing the damage, not only granted compensation, but saw the destroyed reservoir restored as well, alleviating the crisis. Evidently, the process of executing a vision did not always go as planned.

The Saemaul leaders existed to communicate a vision to the people. In this sense, there is no individual success, but only that of the entire village. Towards this end, the leader must first propose his vision. However, for its realization, participation of the villagers must be assured. While there were times when the people actively participated, there were also many times when they did not. Here, a leader must ceaselessly utilize his powers of persuasion and conflict management.

For the success of the Saemaul projects in his village, X-Gyu Jeon recognized the urgent necessity for road expansion. While most villages began with roof improvements, Jeon's was one of the few to first start with road expansion. Eventually, they expanded the farm road to a width of 5 meters and the village road to a width of 4.5 meters. While this was quite a commendable expansion, the process was not without complication. That is, the need for capital for road expansion caused much conflict. First of all, the government did not have the money to purchase the land required for road expansion, which was owned by private individuals. Therefore, they could do nothing but acquire these lands either through donation or coercion. While research existed claiming that land donations were a part of the "village community tradition" of the Saemaul Undong, in reality, it was a difficult process accompanied by much persuasion or coercion. X-Geun Han remarks, "villagers sometimes chased me with an axe threatening to kill me." As well, X-Muk Lim describes how receiving land donations completely destroyed his relationship with some villagers, whom to this day still refuse to speak with him.

While X-Gyu Jeon was expanding the village road to 4.5 meters, he had to tear down the villagers' wall, a washroom and a barn. Moreover, when engaging in roof improvement, if a house was so shoddy it could not support the slate needed for the new roof, it would be torn down and built anew. In Jeon's village, while working on the roof improvements, they ended up rebuilding as many as 10 houses. In order to accomplish these tasks within a two-year period, persuasion of the villagers was essential.

Even when they claimed not oppose it, that was a lie. I would visit once, twice... twenty times until they would agree. Villagers would say things like, 'You're just like a leech that won't let go.' I used to say, 'If we intend to farm, we'll have to carry out the Saemaul Undong. So we'll have to widen the roads and improve the walls and the roofs too. We're going to need a lot of materials.' 'I guess you'll have to donate some of your land.' I'd start with the land of owners who had move into the city. After observing the donation of former villagers in cities, villagers finally joined this donation drive (X-Gyu Jeon 2008:15-16).

This quotation is loaded with examples of how Jeon exercised powers of persuasion to secure land donations from the people. First, Jeon received land from former villagers living in cities so as to build momentum. However, though ceaselessly working to persuade villagers to give up some of their land, some steadfastly refused. In these cases, Jeon would continue the road construction around them until they were 'the only ones left,' and would finally give in out of guilt. Some old people living in the village would say to Jeon, "do you think I gave up my land for nothing? I gave in because you worked so hard to persuade me (X-Gyu Jeon 2008:16)." To that extent, Jeon's persistent persuasion moved the hearts of the people. Regarding the power of persuasion, Jeon remarked that magnanimity was the essential element.

The leaders and the people lived and breathed together. It's because we existed in harmony that we were able to achieve that kind of incredible task. We could call it a miracle. That's what I think. It was a harmonized effort. For having friendly relationship with villagers, I frequently visited villagers and helped them make a fire for heating. Sometimes, I would say to them, "hey, I'd like to have breakfast at your home here." It wasn't because I didn't have my own food, but because I wanted to mingle and be close with them. And the villagers understood that (X-Gyu Jeon 2008:17).

The Saemaul leader's ability to forge friendly relationships with the people was not only his essential virtue, but his essential strategy as well. For instance, since X-Mo Yu was quite a capable Go-Stop (Korean card game) player, he would gather up his pennies and teach the game to the locals, so as to get them on his side. Particularly, young people in their twenties and thirties were attracted by the game. In fact, it was the catalyst strengthening bonds between them, allowing Yu to create a core leadership team.

We would buy some liquor, meat and tofu for an evening snack and sit down to learn the game. Eventually, we'd get to talking about successful Saemaul projects too. I might talk about how much I learned from the National Convention of Saemaul Leaders in Gwangju. And when I talked about President Park, I couldn't help but cry. So, we would meet every day like that, playing Go-Stop, and it really brought us together. As we bonded, I was able to persuade them of the importance of working together to improve our lives (X-Mo Yu 2008:5-6).

After X-Mo Yu bonded with the young people over a game of Go-Stop, he would communicate to them his impressions of the national Saemaul leader conference or the lessons of successful villages, and then the young people would bond with the Saemaul Undong as well. Using persuasion, he secured the unity of the young generation and was able to carry out roof improvement almost entirely without any coercion. Moreover, using the straw they had gleaned from thatched roofs for compost, that year saw a rich yield in chili pepper farming. Eventually, they fixed the roofs, they widened the road, and the chili pepper farming went well, of which Yu remarks, “If I told them to jump they would ask how high (X-Mo Yu 2008:7-8).” Yu was an able leader who successfully mobilized his persuasion skills, civil engineering techniques and chili pepper farming technology altogether. Furthermore, he also worked to persuade the village to get rid of a problematic local tavern. In this instance, he again put his wit into practice. First, he invited members of the village women’s Saemaul association to a village meeting. He planned to use women’s power to pressure men in the meeting. Knowing that people were uncomfortable raising their hands at meetings, he asked, “those that oppose the removal of the tavern please raise your hands,” and the majority of male attendees present were unable to do so. Moreover, some male participants that did raise their hands, intuiting the cold disapproving glare of the village women, soon quietly put them down. In this manner, Yu acquired unanimous approval for getting rid of the problematic tavern. Finally, Yu utilized mechanisms of cooperation in the village to establish a pine mushroom cooperative management organization, which led to an increase in agricultural income (X-Mo Yu 2008:34-35).

Just as X-Mo Yu first forged strong bonds with young people in order to build a leadership team, X-Weon Lee did not at once gather all the people of the village together, but worked to form a core leadership team first. Moreover, requiring the cooperation of the Development Committee, he did not attempt to face the seven members all at once, but one at a time, “sitting down over a nice cup of Makgeollie (rice wine).”

By building trust with a committee member, it would make him feel special. Then, I would sit down with the next one and do the same thing. I would ask them, ‘Do you care only for yourself? You should help others, shouldn’t you?’ In this way I had a man-to-man talk with each of the members before holding a general meeting with all of them together (X-Weon Lee 2008:17).

In this manner, Lee employed a strategy of ‘defeating one by one’ to persuade the members of the development committee. Then, the development committee members later convinced the villagers to join in as well. Moreover, although the role of the development committee members was substantial in convincing the people, the elders helped too, saying, “even though Lee’s a university graduate, he’s working so diligently and selflessly for others. We should help him too.” The elders played a large part in helping the other people of the village to realize this (X-Weon Lee 2008:18). Lee claimed that it was difficult to sway

villagers to the cause during the first 3 or 4 years, but as they began to reap the fruits of their efforts, the villagers ended up cooperating quite well (X-Weon Lee 2008:17).

What made this persuasion and cooperation possible was the traditional structure of Korean society.

The advent of the 1970s Saemaul Undong marked the point at which farmers' eyes were opened. It was unbelievable. In the 1970s, everyone was completely self-motivated. With a shovel or a pick in hand they would come alive for the sake of the village. They got in high spirits. They widened the village roads by themselves. If the villagers wanted to do something for a better life, a village road wide enough for a power-tiller was needed. Then, if we needed to tear down the wall by my house to widen the road, so be it. So, I would donate this plot of my land for widening the village roads. I did it. These were not things we did because the government told us to. We did it for ourselves. We made the land, we made the village hall, but not because someone told us to do it. It wasn't something we were ordered by the government to do (Sa-Yong Ha 2004:77).

The desire to make one's village better than the next one spread like wildfire among the people.

The Saemaul Donation Executives would collect the money and the villagers would gather in the village hall and engage in amicable debate regarding how to put it to good use. In any case, everybody agreed we had to stay ahead of the neighboring villages (Se-Yeong Lee 2003: 290).

Hyeong-Bae Kim, Director of the Saemaul Department in The Ministry of Interior, visited my village on a field trip to select a village for the Saemaul projects success story that would be presented at the Monthly Economic Briefing in the Blue House. He said he would visit another village, Sinpung village in Yeonpung Township in Goesan County A message came from Jungwon County saying that the new phases in Yeonpung township in Goesan County would likely be featured in the Monthly Economic Briefing of May 1973. The message meant that my village had to compete with Sinpung Village for the chance of being selected for the Monthly Economic Briefing at the Blue House. Hearing about this news, villagers and members of the Women's Saemaul Association worked all the more enthusiastically to see through their own Saemaul projects (Se-Yeong Lee 2003:305).

Of course, cooperation and persuasion were not always achieved without difficulty. In one case, a villager came at X-Geun Han, shouting, "I'll kill you!" While this is an extreme example, X-Muk Lim, X-Sun Lim and X-Ryeon Lee all testify to the difficulty of persuading people. As X-Muk Lim describes, "When nothing else worked, I resorted to bullying, fighting or whatever I could do. I would use a little coercion. I had no other choice. (X-Muk Lim 2008:22)." In order to persuade people, X-Sun Lim sometimes had to hold a meeting concerning a single item on the agenda as much as thirty times, and even then there were times when town officials or the county governor had to be called in to compel agreement. He describes how, "It was a matter of knowing who was close to whom, or bringing the right group of people together for a particular project. Sometimes we'd bring in the town official or the county governor too. We had to know people really well (X-Sun Lim 2008:19-20)." As well, X-Ryeon Kim recalls, "We would go as far as to use lies and intimidation to get them to comply."

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Chapter 8

Conclusion

1. The Supportive Partnership of the Government and Farmers
2. The Enhanced Empowerments of Farmers and Rural Communities
3. Civic Efficacy
4. Community Failure Should be Prevented

Challenges for Leaders

The Saemaul Undong was a government-supported nation-wide campaign. The strong support and initiatives of the central government was one of the most important factors for the success of the Saemaul Undong. However, without active participation of farmers, the campaign could not have been successful. The ambition or desire from farmers fit well with the goal of national development by the government. This productive partnership made the campaign impressive success. The partnership was conducive to the development of enhanced empowerment of farmers and civic efficacy as well.

1. The Supportive Partnership of the Government and Farmers

Many third world countries mobilized people for the development of the country. The relationship between the government and farmers were often one-sided. In contrast, the central and local governments were very supportive of local leadership during the Saemaul Undong. This supportive relationship led to overcoming possible bureaucracy and communication problems in the government-supported campaign.

Even the President of the country invited village leaders to the cabinet meetings once a month. The selected leaders explained their success stories to the cabinet members. These invited humble farmers became national as well as local heroes in their hometown. When they returned to their hometown from the Blue House, they worked harder for the campaign of the Saemaul Undong. This strong attention from the top leadership of the country shaped the attitude of the central and local governments towards the campaign. Village leaders now could write to the important officials of the local and central governments about the challenges the local leaders faced. Voices of farmers and local leaders should be given a due care, which is much different from the situation in Korea's past.

In addition, the government provided farmers and local communities with civic and organizational skills. Training centers played the pivotal roles in helping farmers with civic skills. Civic skills were very helpful and essential for community movements. They learned how to organize meetings, how to form village consensus, and how to set the feasible goals, etc.

2. The Enhanced Empowerments of Farmers and Rural Communities

In the Saemaul Undong, capacity of farmers and communities were much enhanced. They learned to solve the challenges they faced in the village. For solving them, they developed effective cooperation among villagers and beyond the villages. At the village level, diverse associations and meetings were introduced to enhance villagers' participation. Village meetings were revitalized. They kept minutes of the meetings. Village meetings were very vibrant and active. Except formal village meetings, village leaders organized many informal meeting (drinking and luncheon or dinner meetings) to get the "consensus." Village democracy was actively practiced. We cannot deny that the local government agencies were involved in the formal meetings; sometimes oppressive atmosphere existed. However, local initiative and village democracy cannot be underestimated. Diaries and records of Saemaul Undong written by village leaders show that not the pressure of the government agencies but the tireless persuasion by the village leaders were the ultimate keys in getting the final agreement from the opponents in the movement.

If one were to meet these key players in the success stories of the 1970s, one would certainly have trouble calling them typical leaders. Rather, one might perceive them as simple country folks. Indeed, ground-level leadership in other countries shares this trait as well (Anderson et al, 2002:18). However, it was this very approachability and humility that was the Saemaul leaders' greatest strength. They looked upon their achievements as "nothing special" or "insignificant (Yeong-Mi Kim 2009:364)," always careful not to display unnecessary arrogance. As Seung-Mi Han described, this kind of leadership was well suited to the egalitarian rural polices proposed by President Park Chung-Hee (Han 2004). The leaders did not have to be extraordinary; but simply those already living among the rural folk. Thus, by selecting from among the rural villagers for its Saemaul leaders, the government was able to instill the spirit of the Saemaul Undong within the very roots of society. Furthermore, this strategy provided flexibility to meet the unique challenges of each village. As Anderson points out, within each village, and within each venture, since the characteristics therein were so unique, the leadership of the village, "had to be continually redefined to meet changing contexts (Anderson et al 2002: 10)."

3. Civic Efficacy

Civic efficacy means that people have self-confidence in solving their problems by self-help. By setting specific and feasible goals, they experienced “success based on self-help.” In the initial stage, most goals aimed to enhance the quality of life of farmers. From their success, farmers changed their former cynicism into optimism and self-confidence. When they succeeded in the Saemaul projects, they celebrate their success with the participation of all villagers. Villagers decide what kind of projects they would pursue together. Usually, they select a specific project villagers wanted to do for a long time in the past. Sometimes, villages choose more challenging projects such as Mr. Lim’s village. In Mr. Lim’s file, villagers wanted to have better fishing field and farm fields. Without enough budget and modern equipment, the villagers could not implement the project to change the sea into the land. Land reclamation was not easy for villagers to do. As I read from his file above, several failures made him think of committing suicide. Finally, he and his villagers were successful in changing the sea into the land. The size of the land reclamation itself is humble if we estimate it from the contemporary standard.

Villagers and village leaders utilize the experience of success for developing another Saemaul project for their village. When they develop a new project, they show their confidence in their success. I find this evidence from a 25% principle in Mr. Lim’s file. It seems that this principle of compound project shows villagers’ efficacy and the success of self-help principle. In Mr. Lim’s file, he explains how the villagers contribute to the next projects in the village. For example, when farmers received their labor wage after they worked for building local roads, they contributed 25% of their labor income for another Saemaul Undong. With the money, the village decided what kind of project they could implement. This 25% principle led to other successful Saemaul Projects in the villages.

The Saemaul Undong has been one of the most successful cases in the social development in the world. The rapidly growing Korean economy created was doubtless an important factor. Except the favorable external condition, many social factors worked together for the success of the Saemaul Undong. Civic efficacy and government-farmers partnership all were conducive to solve the rural poverty in Korea of the 1970s. The relationship between the government and local leaders (farmers) was not one-sided. The central government and local government paid due attention to the voices of farming leaders. What is more, they provided farmers with civic and organizational skills.

4. Community Failure Should be Prevented

In community development studies, scholars and practitioners tend to praise the role of local community. There is no doubt that the local initiative is important. However, there is no solid evidence on the romantic optimism for “community.” Community failure is not uncommon. Due measures should be taken so that community failure is avoided. In the Saemaul Undong, many diverse measures were introduced to prevent community failure.

In technology, the government provided technical service such as design, inspection, and on-site advice. The government also introduced monthly or annual review of village records and village business. And at the village level, transparency and democracy are important for preventing community failure. Overemphasis on the spirit of community will result in community failure; participants' individual welfare should be well considered.

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Interviewees

Alias (Year of Birth)	Education	Administrative Area	Major Work Experience	Medals
X-Gi Choi (1935)	Elementary	00Ri ,Gongdo Township, AnseongCounty, Gyeonggi Province	Village head, County Chair, Agricultural Cooperative	Effort Award
X-Il Hong (1933)	Elementary	00Ri, Namsa Township, Yongin County, Gyeonggi Province	Village head, Township mayor	Self-Help Award
X-Mok Lim (1934)	High School	00Ri, Daehoji Township, Dangjin County, South Chungcheong Province	Township Official (Temporary)	Effort Award
X-Geun Han (1927)	Elementary	00Ri, Seokmun Township, Dangjin County, South Chungcheong Province	Village head	Diligence Award
X-GyuJeon (1929)	Elementary	00Ri, Yugu Township Gongju County, South Chungcheong Province	Korea Young Men's Association, Village Head	Cooperation Award
X-Heon Yun (1930)	Elementary	00Ri ,Yeonsan Township, Nonsan County, South Chungcheong Province	Rural Volunteer Leader (County Chairman)	Saemaul Award
X-Sun Lim (1926)	University	00Ri, Dongi Township, Okcheon County, North Chungcheong Province	Chairman of Saemaul Undong Associations of OkcheonCounty	Saemaul Award
X-Ryeon Kim (1943)	High School	00Ri, Boeun Township, Boeun County, North Chungcheong Province	County official	Effort Award
0-Mo Yu (1942)	University	00Ri, Cheongpung Township , Jaechon County, North Chungcheong Province	Chair, Cooperative Agriculture (Icheon, Gyeonggi Province), Regional Director at the Central Training Center for Saemaul Undong	Effort Award
X-Weon Lee (1950)	University	00Ri, Gonggeun Township, Hwengseong County, Gangweon Province,	High School Teacher, Employee of Korean Federation of Livestock Cooperatives	Effort Award

Outside the 10 participants listed above, this paper also employs the testimony of Sa-Yong Ha. His testament is located in the archives of the National Institute of Korean History and was recorded in 2004. All other oral materials were recorded over the period of October to November in 2008.

Figure A-1 | Land Donation by Villagers for an Income Generating Public Work

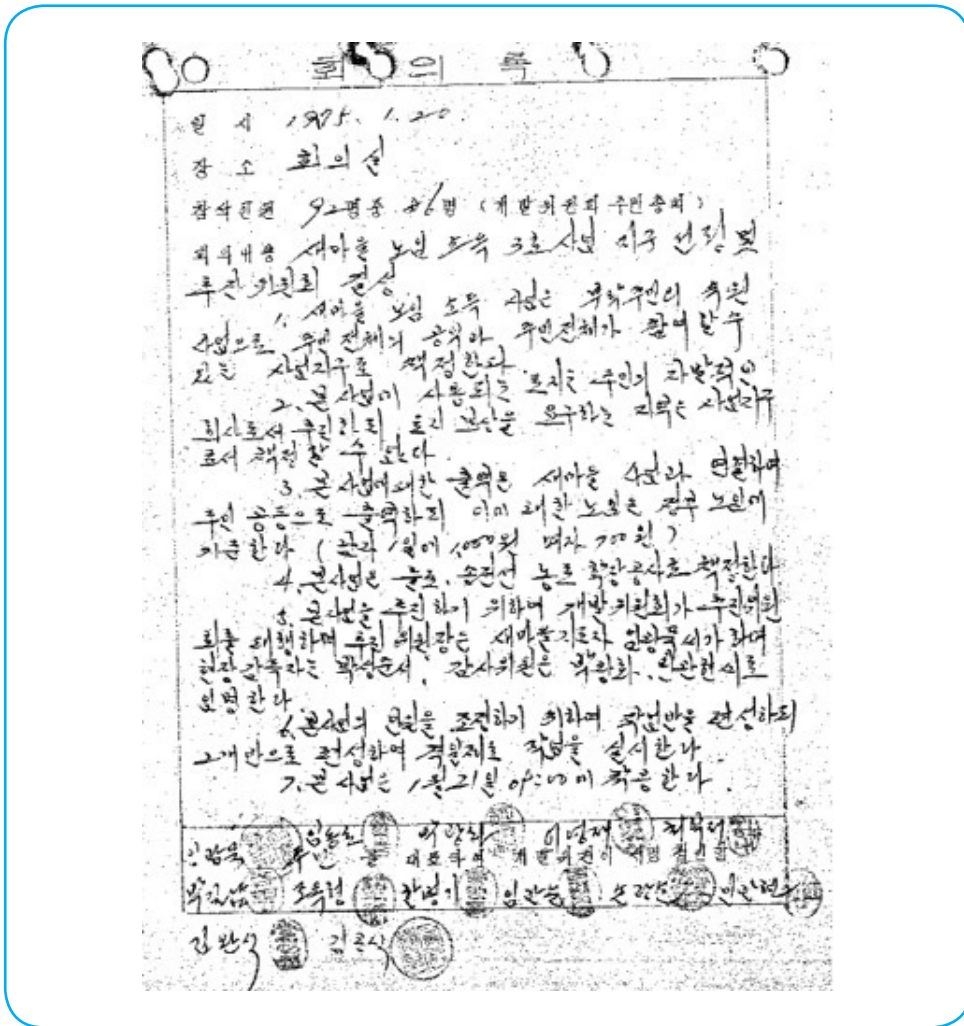


Figure A-2 | Training Villages for Leaders of Less Advanced Villages



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