

Ancient seagull's retreat now a corner shop for the chic

Apgujeong



I WONDER what Han Myung-hae (韓明澮), an ancient politician from the Joseon period (朝鮮時代 AD1392-1910), would have thought of today's Apgujeong (狎鷗亭). Would the *jeong* (pavilion) originator be upset to realise that his favourite work had disappeared? Or would he be glad to see his pseudonym, *Apgujeong*, flourishing in this renowned trendy district? writes Catherine Chan.

This is what people say about the place: "Apgujeong? Uh, this area is a really affluent neighbourhood." Or: "Okay, so if you want to see expensive and imported cars, world-famous brands like Louis Vuitton, Gucci, Prada, Giorgio Armani or Ferragamo, then go there!" Or even: "I met Kwon Sang-woo* (權相佑) the other day in Apgujeong."

You will also hear people say: "Yes, there are many homes in Apgujeong that belong to rich families, but so what? You see loads of spoiled, rich, **big-headed** kids there!" And: "Apgujeong? It's just like Shinjuku (新宿) in Japan."

Situated south of the Han river (漢江), Apgujeong has been **dubbed**: 'No 1 Fashion Area in Korea'. Here, many of Korea's rich **brats** hang out – driving (badly) expensive cars, wearing (**outlandish**) luxury clothes and eating quality (expensive) food.

Apparently, Apgujeong delivers some sort of message. It is where the **avant-garde brigade** hang out, **wherein** lie the trendy, with their chic fashions and lifestyle – the place that **faddists** boldly claim possesses the greatest number of **jet-setters** in the nation.

Apgujeong, pavilion for a gull?

It was said that in the Joseon dynasty, there was an influential politician (he was once the prime minister) named Han Myung-Hae who built a pavilion in the area. Han named the pavilion *Apgujeong*, his pen name (his other pen name is *Samyungdang* (四明堂)) and, since then, people have called the district Apgujeong.

Apgujeong is pronounced as 'xia ou ting' in Mandarin, meaning 'well-acquainted seagull

pavilion'. Perhaps Han wanted to 'have a good time with seagulls in the pavilion.' Yeah, perhaps that implied that he longed for a peaceful life.

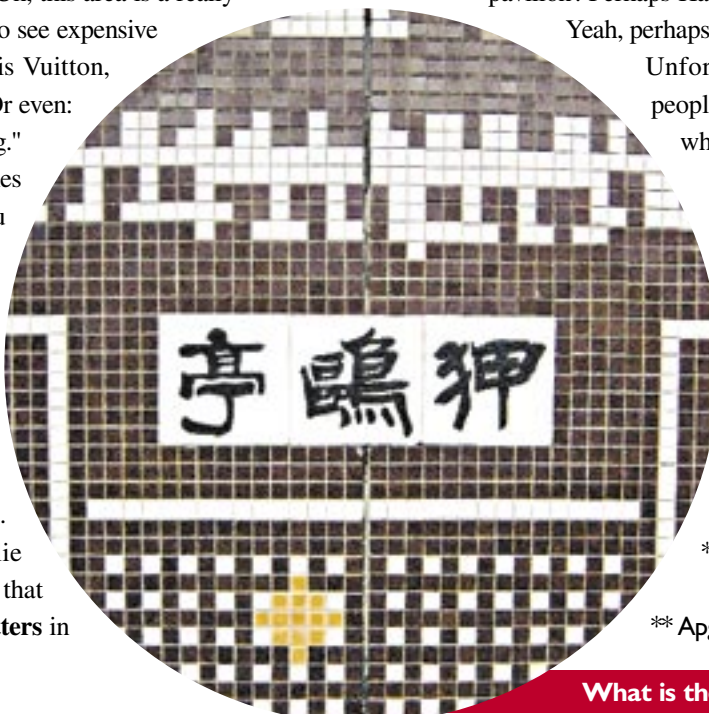
Unfortunately, the pavilion is no longer around, though some people believe the **demolished** edifice might have been located where the Hyundai Apartments now stand.

Well, if you do want to experience the mood of Apgujeong, this is what I suggest you do: go there by subway where you will see a beautiful pavilion portrayed on a brick wall in the Apgujeong Station.**

Apgujeong has been a hot spot for young people since the '90s. Every October, the Apgujeong Culture Festival is held here, featuring many events, including a film festival, a hairstyle show and a fashion show, as well as a dance festival and various street contests.

* Kwon Sang-woo is a Korean actor who is cast in the popular drama *Stairway to Heaven* (天國的階梯).

** Apgujeong Station is on Line 3 of the Seoul subway system.



What is there to see?

There are two major retail outlets in Apgujeong: Hyundai Department Store and the Galleria. Apart from these, there are numerous interior design boutiques, quality restaurants and cafes dotted around the district. Apgujeong is also ground zero for information technology (IT) firms and geeks, products such as games software, CDs, and Internet paraphernalia. These days, beauty-related businesses, including hair salons and dermatology and plastic surgery clinics, are ubiquitous.



photo: KTO



*Big word(s) and Amazing phrase(s) are published on page 13.

Glossary

1. pavilion (n. 亭子)
2. pseudonym (n. 筆名)
3. flourish (v. 使興旺)
4. affluent (adj. 富裕的)

5. big-headed (adj. 自負的)
6. dub (v. 授予...稱號)
7. brat (n. 頑童; 小傢伙)
8. outlandish (adj. 古怪的)

9. avant-garde (adj. 前衛的)
10. brigade (n. 隊伍)
11. wherein (adv. 在那裡)
12. faddist (n. 好趕時髦的人)

13. jet-setter (n. 名流人物)
14. demolish (v. 拆除)