

# Urban Liminal Spaces: Busan

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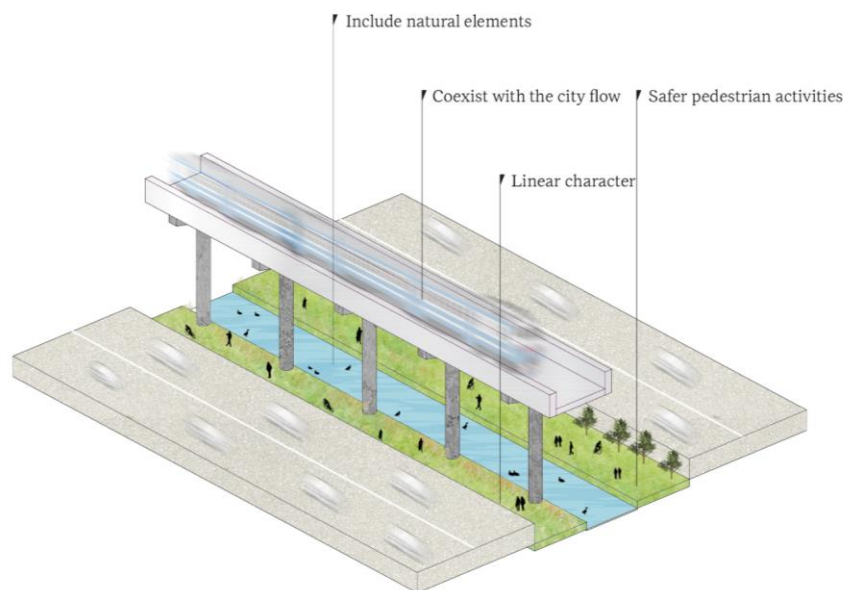
## INTRODUCTION

The term 'liminal space' implies to spaces that blur boundaries between areas of different use. Through these spaces, areas with different characteristics are smoothly connected and feel open to everyone. Based on the concept of liminal space, we explored 6 places namely, Oncheon stream, Old Dongrae station linear park (connected with Oncheon stream), Gwangalli Beach, Suyeong Riverside Walking Trail, Huinnyeoul Culture Village, and B-Con Ground (a bad example of liminal space in Busan).

Through photo documentation and observation during site visits, we found the following common features in these 6 places: 1. Include natural elements such as river, sea, water streams and green spaces; 2. Safer pedestrian activities such as walking, cycling, far from roadways. Not just the distance, but also there is a level difference between walkway and roadway; 3. Coexist with the city flow (water flow, traffic flow or subway lines over the space); 4. Linear character (spaces aligned along a stream, river, beach, or landscaping under the subway lines).

We focus on the 'Linearity' of these spaces as most of the areas in the city are occupied by roadways, metro lines, bridges and overpasses. Therefore, the spaces under such transportation lines remains unused, vacant and the only available public space for people of Busan.

Fig. 1: The common features of 6 liminal spaces



## BACKGROUND OF URBAN SPACE

Busan is an interesting city with mountains along the coast, characterized by old and new settlements. Due to the mountainous topography, the city structure is defined by slopes. Despite such unfavorable physical conditions, large neighborhoods such as Haeundae Centum City and Marine City were built along the coastline. Also, the old downtown areas of Gamcheon Culture Village, Huinnyeoul Culture Village, Ami-dong Tombstone Village were formed along the mountain slopes and packed vertically due to the lack of flatland in contrast to the population. Presently, these unique spatial characteristics of Busan have been developed as attraction points with increasing tourism potential in recent decades.

Most of the areas in Busan have the advantage of enjoying the natural landscape due to the proximity of the sea. Waterfront parks and walking trails are mainly built around rivers and seas. Famous beaches such as Gwangalli, Haeundae, Songjeong attract visitors through beach activities, shopping, eateries etc.,

Despite the topographical concerns, the physical background allows the city of Busan to continue to develop dynamically. However, due to lack of vacant land in the city, public spaces could be further developed using the empty and unused spaces below roads, overpasses, bridges, and metro lines that connect the uneven urban fabric of Busan.

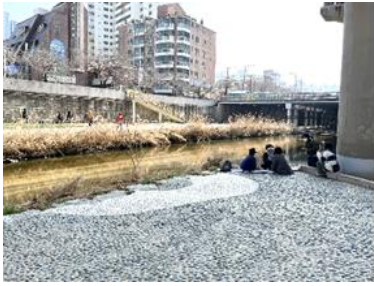
Fig. 2: Area of busan and location of case



## LIST OF URBAN LIMINAL SPACES IN BUSAN

### 1. Oncheoncheon Stream

The road for walking is stretching along both sides of oncheoncheon stream basin that stretches about 5 kilometers between Oncheon Bridge and Anrak Bridge. The place is located at a lower level than the roadway, so it is a quiet and safe space. Also, apart from pedestrian roads, there are bicycle paths. There are also wide places along the side of the road where a wide range of activities are possible. Users can enjoy light and shadow in some areas under the elevated tracks. In addition to walking, some people also sit on the steps of the river and talk, others exercise using the machine. It is adjacent to the residence area, so there are a lot of users. Here is a place where we can feel nature and spend our time in each way.



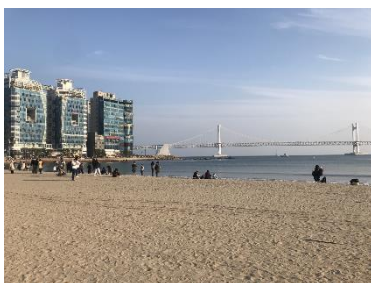
## 2. Old Dongrae station (Green line park)

This case is a line-park that maintains its position along with the old Dongrae station with historical and regional identity. The station has been used since the 1930s, and the front yard was used as a marketplace for dawn, providing a large and distinct axis of flow to local people. The station was closed, a new station was created behind it, and the railroad, which had been placed at the ground level in the past, was floated in the air. As a result, a new ground space was secured and a line-park could be created in the area. We can find a wide range of age groups in this park, from children to the elderly. The center of the park is empty, so you can enjoy activities such as bicycles and in-line skating. There is a bench at the corner, so you can relax. The street creates point zones because that is not straight but winding. And the point zones are used for residents as pavilions and exercise equipment. Especially, it is said that nearby residents often visit the trail because it connects to the Oncheoncheon.



## 3. Gwangalli Beach

The Gwangalli beach is a crescent-shaped beach located in Suyeong-gu, Busan. The beach covers a 1.4 km stretch with views of the Gwangan bridge and a skyline created by the high-rise towers along the coast. The beachfront accommodates many cafes, restaurants, bars and other stores while the surrounding area is characterized by high-rise apartment buildings. The natural landscape and the commercial front offer various activities and attract a high proportion of young people in the city. Identified as a signature landmark of Busan, the Gwangalli beach is a highly accessible recreational space with the proximity of public transit stops and residential areas.



## 4. Suyeong Riverside

Suyeong River is located in the eastern part of Busan that flows between Gwangalli and Haeundae, the new center of Busan. Centum City, a commercial area, is located in the east around the river, and residential area is located in the west. So It is a border area where the atmosphere of two regions changes significantly around the river. Also there are excellent trails and bicycle paths along the riverside, so it is possible to enjoy various activities safely without being affected by cars. In addition,



the lighting of the skyscraper makes it possible to enjoy the scenery of the Suyeong River in various ways depending on the time of day.



## 5. Huinnyeoul Culture Village

Huinnyeoul Culture Village was originally an old residential area, but it emerged as a tourist attraction because people visited it with its unique scenery. On one side of the narrow and long street, there are commercial areas and residential areas, and on the other side, there is ocean view due to the drastic slope. Various shelters are created for each section along the winding street, especially in the exercise space local elderly people usually visit and relax with friends. In addition, all the alleys that can travel like this are completely separated from the road due to the level difference, so you can see people moving in various directions safely. Although this village has become a tourist attraction, many people still live in this village. We think the reason is that there are various amenities (exercise area, benches, etc) for local people along with commercial areas for tourists. In fact, compared to other tourist attractions, local people are more active in using and managing well.



## 6. B-Con Ground

BCon Ground (B 'Busan', Con 'Container') is a recreational space built with container boxes under the Suyeong Overpass in Mangmi-dong, Busan. The BCon ground includes a community ground, shops, eateries, multi-purpose event space, BCon square, art gallery and a parking facility. This space was designed to activate the urban fabric of the surrounding residential area that was overshadowed by the overpass. Contrarily, the space appears disconnected from the neighboring context as the container boxes have no relevance with the spatial character of the area. Disconnected from the sidewalks and the nearby public transit stops, the space has poor accessibility and with vehicles passing on either side, problems related to pollution, noise and safety are also prevalent. These issues have resulted in low user turnout and closing down of a large proportion of stores. However, few elderly residents nearby use the first floor seating area for meeting and chatting with friends and neighbors.

